

Studies on Dissemination of Christianity in Fukien. By LIN Jinshui, WU Weiwei, and CUI Junfeng. Beijing: Ocean Publisher, 2015. 340 pp.

The coastal province of Fukien (now Fujian) in the southeast of China, being accessible by boat and among the first areas open to foreign trade, has been a gateway between the east and west and consequently an outpost for the dissemination of Christianity and a focal point of relevant religious studies. The succession of three influential scholars of religious history born and bred in Foochow (now Fuzhou), the capital city of Fujian Province, is particularly interesting to students of sino-western exchanges. The first is Hong Ye (William Hung, 1893—1980), one of the founders of the Harvard-Yenching Institute, who was both a prestigious Confucianist with a traditional Chinese education behind him and a Christian with a standard western higher education. Throughout his life he was bridging Confucian culture and Harvard scholarship. The second is one of Hong Ye's students, Chen Zenghui of Fukien Christian University (now Fujian Normal University), who, in his myriad historical works, created a panorama of modern Chinese society. He adopted Harvard's research methodology, a legacy from his teacher; and he drew heavily from historical archives in English, French, Russian, Spanish and Italian, as he was versed in many languages. The third is Chen Zenghui's student, Lin Jinshui of Fujian Normal University, who was the first Chinese scholar to criticize the then-prevalent view that Christianity was western cultural aggression and that missionaries were tools of imperial invasion. He is nicknamed Matteo Ricci in Chinese academic circles because of his disinterested style and his influential research. These three Harvard-educated scholars successively became leading Chinese researchers of sino-western exchanges. Together, they unintentionally formed an intellectual tradition featuring objective instead of nationalist attitude towards the west, positive attitude towards cultural exchanges and archive-based research method. This tradition is inherited by a strong team of researchers with Fujian Normal University today, who jointly wrote this book, relating to the readers the tears and blood that accompanied the tortuous dissemination of Christianity until it took root and became part of Fujian's local culture.

This encyclopedic book consists of three parts. Part I is the history of the dissemination of Christianity in Fujian, consisting of five chapters. Chapter 1 is about the lectures that Italian Jesuit Jules Aleni (1582–1649) gave in Foochow College. He talked about the similarities of Catholicism and Confucianism and suggested religious fusion. Chapter 2 is an account of the century-long ban of missionary work in China started by Emperor Yongzheng in 1723 and the secret Catholic missionary work in Fujian. The system of patriarchal clans provided protection over the inheritance of faith and sinicised underground Catholic churches were established in spite of the threat of harsh punishment. Chapter 3 is

an introduction to six missions working in Fujian: the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America; the London Missionary Society; the English Presbyterian Mission; the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions; the Methodist Episcopal Mission; and the Church Missionary Society. In the late Qing Dynasty, when the ban on missionary work was lifted and missions began to ease the religious or cultural conflicts with local people by building schools and hospitals, Christian enterprise began to develop rapidly in Fujian. Chapter 4 focuses on the missions' work in south Fujian; how they handled religious conflicts and collaborated with the local people. Chapter 5 deals with the establishment of churches in northern Fujian and their organizational system. The five chapters offer a macroscopic historical picture of the dissemination of Christianity in Fujian.

Part II is devoted to Christian enterprises in Fujian, such as schools, hospitals, periodicals and charity organizations run by missionaries. It underscores missionaries' important role of bridging the east and west, and their contribution to the modernization of Fujian society by introducing western thoughts and technology. Part III is composed of case studies from microscopic perspectives, such as studies on Robert Samuel Maclay and Justus Doolittle, whose writings offered insights into Fujian as viewed through western missionaries.

This book examines the dissemination of Christianity in Fujian both microscopically and macroscopically. It is so inclusive that, although it is restricted to Fujian, having read it the reader will have at least half the picture of the dissemination of Christianity in China. Christianity could not develop in a cultural vacuum without interacting with the local traditions. The Christian enterprise started to facilitate the development of Fujian after missionaries became tolerant of cultural differences and found themselves in honeymoon with Fujian society. Although western missions left China in the 1950s, the indigenized churches they established survived till this day. The future dissemination of Christianity must continue to follow the mainstream of indigenization to ensure smooth development, as has been proven by historical experience. The fusion of religions or cultural traditions means coexistence of both instead of the replacement of one by another. These are some of the messages for the book's intended readers, who are not just historians or religious researchers, but missionaries as well.

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