Shenwen Li, Frederic Laugrand and Nansheng Peng

Rencontres et médiations entre la Chine, l'Occident, et les Amériques, missionnaires, chamanes et intermédiaires culturels. Québec City: Presses de l'Université Laval, 2015. Pp. 464. Hb, \$49.95 (CAN).

The articles collected in this book are written in three different languages: four in English, five in Chinese (each with a French summary), (and fifteen in French). The articles were originally delivered as papers at a symposium in October, 2012 in Canada. As the three editors, Shenwen Li, Frederic Laugrand, both from Laval University, and Nansheng Peng from Huazhong Normal University in China, explain in the introduction, the objective is a better understanding of the interaction among China, Siberia, Europe, and the Americas (1). In other words, they are investigating what the French anthropologist Bruno Latour calls “diplomatic action” (cf. Bruno Latour, “Le rappel de la modernité: Approches anthropologiques,” *Ethnographiques.org* 6 [2004]) specifically interactions between different symbolic systems with common features. In fact, several symposia have already focused on a comparison of symbolic resources such as mythologies, ritual practices and imaginary systems, but very few have concentrated on China and the Americas with a stress on shamanism and indigenous cultural interaction with Christianity. As missionaries were the principal agents of the encounter, several contributions focus on them.

The book is divided into four parts with different themes. The first part, “Shamanism and inter-ethnic and inter-cultural encounters in the Chinese peripheries,” is anthropological. The first article of the seven on this theme, written by Zhizhong Zhao, gives an account of Shamanism in China and concludes by highlighting the relation of Shamanism with ethnicity and the significant decline of this religion nowadays as ethnic minorities in North China are assimilated into the Han culture (25). In the second article, Jean-Luc Lambert analyses songs from ethnic minorities from Siberia, written after the evangelization ordered by Peter the Great at the beginning of the 18th century. Lambert’s article demonstrates how local people integrated historical facts in their songs. This movement operated a shift about the interpretation of filiality from an ethnic lineage to a Christian lineage. It also gave them words to denounce state violence at several phases of their history by transferring into the songs, elements of the political violence caused by colonization. The third article compares shamanic practices in Kazakhstan and Ladakh. The fourth article by Benoit Vermander narrates the author’s experience of encounter, which by definition crosses boundaries and implies redefine identities. A consequence of this is the realization that “what we share in the exchange, what we somehow recognize as universal cannot be substantially defined” (97). The

fifth article brings the reader to a totally different place: the Amazonian part of Peru. Françoise Morin shows how three waves of “religious visitors” (Catholic missionaries, Protestant missionaries, spiritual tourists) have interacted with local shamanism. She shows how shamanism has both offered and is offering new opportunities in a globalized world: symbolic traditions that ignored one each other before, are now brought together. The sixth article by Bernard Saladin D’anglure, provides a nice counterpoint to Vermander’s narrative as it also details an experience with the Inuit people. The author concludes by stating the proximity of shamanism with pre-Taoist religion (for example the Qi in Taoism could be related with the Sila in Inuit philosophy, and the Yin and Yang with the Arnaq and Angst notions). The seventh article, from Frederic Laugrand, continues Saladin D’Anglure’s perspective and elaborates on this proximity. Then Laugrand uses Francois Jullien’s “analogical thinking” concept to describe what these religions have in common (137).

The second group of articles analyzes Chinese culture from the perspective of foreign missionaries. This part is about the History of representations. The first article, by Pierre-Etienne Will, highlights that missionaries were foreigners in China and that they understood Chinese culture, through the filter of their personal experience (cf. difference between Gabriel de Magalhaes and Matteo Ricci: for example, the evaluation of Chinese institutions by both is radically different: when Ricci does not evoke the limits of imperial examination system, Magalhaes is much more critical and criticize the hypocrisy and corruption). Another article, by Daniel Yvan, presents Paul Claudel’s perception of Confucian rites as Claudel had the opportunity to get in touch with both “living” Confucianism and its bookish counterpart. The fifth article, from Martine Raibaud, details how missionaries understood social changes during the rise of Communism. The sixth article, by Olivier Servais, makes a precise analysis of representations of Chinese and Amerindian cultures in the Belgian review *Vivant univers*.

The third group of articles centers on strategies of evangelization. The first article by Artur Wardega, presents Tomas Pereira (1645–1708), a not very well known figure. This Portuguese Jesuit was indeed an intimate friend of Emperor Kangxi. The second and third articles both by authors from Huazhong Normal University, describe nineteenth century Christian missions to Muslims in China. Cui Wei Yang and Micheline Lessard, in the fourth article, explain Timothy Richard’s theology and its impact on Late Qing China’s Reforms. The fifth article presents the life of John Ross. The sixth depicts the apostolate of French Canadian Jesuits through their schools. In the seventh article, Diana Lary gives a complete overview of the different options taken by the Canadian Christians during the Japanese invasion.

The fourth part focuses on the role played by literature and arts in exchanges between China and other parts of the world. The first article, by Angel Pino, highlights the paradoxical dialogue between the Jesuit Jean Monsterleet and Ba Jin, a Chinese anarchist poet, after the Second World War. As the poet writes to Monsterleet, between them there is a difference not of objective but of method. The first one believes in conversion, whereas the second one in revolution (397). The second article offers a classical analysis of the work of Giuseppe Castiglione, and the third article the artistic interactions of the Jesuits with Kangxi's court. The last article tries to comprehend the work of translation in the light of Han dynasty interactions with foreigners.

This book offers more of a patchwork of studies without a clear dialogue among them instead of a coherent, fully articulated whole because it traverses so many lands, academic perspectives, and historical periods. The perspective of this book which is to put China, Shamanism and History of western missionaries together, provides some interesting insights in understanding the circulation of ideas between the three continents even though regarding Jesuits history it is much more a resumption than the presentation of "new discoveries."

Yves Vendé

Sun Yat-sen University

yves.vende@gmail.com

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