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## Catholic Politics in China and Korea

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there are simply no other way, they had found out, that they could attract other people to them" (p. 31).

Perhaps the most representative of the stories is "The House of Mirrors." It is a story of a one-week stay in Maasin, Leyte. It tells of a boy who plays "Misty" on a piano in an old house of mirrors and photographs, and of a romantic girl who lives in a world of dreams. She asks the boy to play "Misty" for her on the piano every night when she is gone, and remembers for years afterward the house full of mirrors, the night on the beach, and a boy taking up medicine who played the piano. The girl is trapped in all her romantic daydreams and memories.

The exception to the pattern of college stories is the title story, "The Photographs," which won the *Focus Fiction Award* in 1977. It is a story of a failed Filipino who has gone abroad to apparent success and returns home to failure and despair — "... he was my uncle — a man we never knew and never loved but who belonged to us by blood ties. And as I gazed at the remains of the man, I wondered how a life come down to this?" (p. 15) But the central character is not very real and it is the reaction of the relatives that one remembers in the story rather than the tragedy of the hero.

Miss Maayo writes well. Her language is competent and her technique is often quite good. She is particularly good in the moments when she captures a character in a neat phrase or a striking detail. She has an ear for dialogue and a good insight into the way a woman's mind works. But her stories are still the stories of a college girl, not those of a woman. Perhaps that is due to the fact that these stories have been collected over fifteen years and often represented the young writer rather than the mature woman. One might wonder what her obvious talents could accomplish with a theme of greater moment and maturity.

*Joseph A. Galdon, S.J.*

CATHOLIC POLITICS IN CHINA AND KOREA. [American Society of Missiology Series I No. 2]. By Eric O. Hanson. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1980. xvi + 144 pages. \$9.95.

(George Dunne, the reviewer of this book, is the author of *Generation of Giants*, the lively and controversial history of the Jesuit effort begun by Fr. Matteo Ricci, and carried on by Frs. Adam Schall and Ferdinand Verbiest to inculturate Christianity in seventeenth-century China. Hanson's book and Dunne's review deal with the Chinese Rites controversy concerning the Jesuit methods. Hanson's thesis (it appears) is that the Chinese have *always* tried to penetrate and subject any other religion to their culture, not just the Chinese Communists. Dunne's own position is that Christianity could have succeeded in China were it not for the European-

izers who brought about the condemnation of the Chinese Rites in the eighteenth century, and linked Catholicism with French imperialism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, forcing the Chinese Catholics into the French mold, and thus provoking the viciousness of the Communist persecution. — Ed)

This is a book which, despite its misleading title, I heartily recommend, although perhaps not for reasons that will please the author. I recommend it as a well documented and quite readable summary account of the Catholic church's conflict with the eventual defeat by the Chinese communist regime in the 1950s, especially in Shanghai. There are also short sections dealing with Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam. There is a concluding chapter in which the author analyzes the problem faced by the church in the present situation and offers some sage advice to the Vatican about how best to handle it.

#### THE FOCUS OF THE BOOK

The author has little to say about the church's experience in other major cities of China, and virtually nothing about the rural church in the vast hinterland which is where most of the more or less 4 million Chinese catholics lived. In fact, his only reference to the rural church is to cite William Hinton who, he says, "presents the case against the presence of the church in rural areas." It would have been more accurate to say that Hinton presents the case against the presence of the church in Long Bow, which is a small village of some 2 thousand inhabitants in the province of Shansi. Accuracy would be further sharpened by pointing out that Hinton came to Long Bow after it had fallen under communist control, the Chinese priest driven out, the church pilaged and closed. All of his information came from sources hostile to the church. In any case, and this is the more important qualification, Long Bow does not necessarily typify the church in rural areas.

When I think of the church in rural China, I think of the remarkable Fr. de Geloës, S.J., over eighty years old when I first met him, which is more than fifty years ago. Six feet or more tall, long white beard, sitting straight as an arrow on his horse (he had been a gentleman steeplechase jockey in his youth), riding dozens of *li* to visit the ailing whether christian or not, or treating in his rude clinic, a converted barn in which straw took the place of beds, the dozen or more patients who came every day, some from as far as 100 *li* away. Tales about him were legion; how, for example, he had ridden 150 *li* into a bandits' lair and persuaded them to release to him a young girl they had kidnapped and were holding for ransom. Beloved by all, the people of his village, led by the non-christian notables, insisted upon erecting in his churchyard, while he still lived, a stone monument which carried, cut in Chinese

characters, a summary account of his life and of the innumerable acts of kindness which had endeared him to the people.

It could, of course, be said of him, as of Long Bow, that he was not typical. After having sired and raised a large family he had become a Jesuit in middle age, after the death of his wife, and had come to China as a missionary priest when well past middle age. He was, to be sure, exceptional. He was also eccentric. Nevertheless, in recalling him I also recall many other priests, Chinese and foreign, in the rural church whose devotion to the people, if not their eccentricities, rivalled that of Fr. de Geloës.

#### CHURCH IN SHANGHAI

In any case, except for the pages devoted to Korea, Taiwan and Vietnam, it is the church in Shanghai which is the principal protagonist in Eric Hanson's story. That is not surprising, inasmuch as Shanghai, with its Catholic community of some 140,000 faithful, one of the oldest centers of Christianity in China, was, as the author says, "the citadel of orthodox Catholic resistance" to the effort of the communist regime "to penetrate, regulate, and control" the Catholic church.

That this was the objective of government and party policy the author clearly establishes. He affirms, moreover, that this has been traditional Chinese state religious policy and gives this as the "central proposition" of his book. I do not agree that he has established this thesis. He presents no evidence that this was the case during the Han dynasty (202 B.C. – 220 A.D.), when Buddhism probably first entered China; or during the T'ang dynasty (618-907 A.D.), during the earlier part of which Nestorian Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism all enjoyed imperial favor and all flourished; or during the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368 A.D.), when the Franciscans brought Roman Catholicism to China; or, for that matter, during the later Ming dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.), when the Jesuits reintroduced the Catholic faith; or the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1911 A.D.), under whose K'ang-hsi emperor (1633-1723) the church enjoyed her brightest prospects until the unfortunate Roman decisions in the Rites controversy destroyed the foundation of her hopes. During nearly all of these dynasties there were periods of religious persecution, but that is not the same as penetration with a view to regulating and controlling. Nor can the K'ang-hsi emperor's employment in his service of the talents of Jesuits in Peking be described as an effort to "penetrate" the church.

In addition to this "central proposition" of his book, the author lists eight other propositions which he is satisfied and that his study has "confirmed." Because I am not convinced that his book actually proves these propositions, I would prefer to call them assumptions. Two of them I would question. That "the Chinese elite tolerated foreign religious influence only during periods of

social, economic, and political crisis" would not seem to be confirmed by the history of the early T'ang, of the Yuan, or of the K'ang-hsi reign. Similarly, despite the considerable provocation offered by the papal legate, Cardinal Tournon, and others, it does not appear that the great K'ang-hsi emperor, who in 1692 issued an imperial edict of toleration for the Christian religion, ever attempted to destroy the substantial independence of the church. This does not accord with another of the author's assumptions that "a strong Chinese state did not tolerate an independent Catholic church."

In a footnote, the author remarks that "Dunne and another Jesuit historian, Frank Rouleau, are presently conducting a new Rites Controversy . . ." In his commentary he entirely misses the point which has nothing to do with whether or not the persecution of Christianity by the emperors who followed K'ang-hsi were related to the question of the Rites. It may be true, as Rouleau says, that "the new ruler (Yung-chen) and his successors knew almost nothing about the Chinese Rites and cared less," although as far as Yung-chen is concerned this is probably an exaggeration. He, like his predecessor the K'ang-hsi emperor, both Manchus, was a diligent student of the Confucian classics. The tragedy of the Rites Controversy was not that persecutions followed. They may have followed in any case. The tragedy was, as I have written elsewhere, that the Roman decisions "forced the Church into a position of seeming hostility to Chinese culture, thereby destroying the possibility of a rapprochement with the Chinese world of letters."

"Catholicism," writes Hanson, "became the chief Christian enemy of the Confucian stato during this (the nineteenth) century" . . . and "the missionaries in turn regarded the empire and its Confucian system as the prime enemy of the church." Precisely; he is right on both counts, but it does not seem to have occurred to him that the principal cause of this were the Rites decisions which, as I have just pointed out, mandated, as it were, hostility to the Confucian system.

The biography of Fr. Vincent Lebbe, with which the author is familiar, provides copious documentation of the bitter resistance of the missionary church in China to even the most minor concession to Chinese culture or sensibilities throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century, until the direct intervention of Pius XII initiated a re-orientation of policy. Again, this resistance was a direct consequence of the Rites decisions which gave cultural adaptation a bad name and sacralized europeanism.

That is the point of my controversy with Rouleau: whether, as he has implied, the Rites decisions were of minor importance or, as I insist, a mistake and a disaster, as no less an authority than Archbishop (now Cardinal) Giovanni Benelli, when Paul VI's sub-secretary of State, described them in 1973. (Cf. my article, "The Church in China" in *The Tablet*, 23 February 1980).

## SUGGESTIONS

In view of the fact that the book is written, not for specialists, but for the general reader, it might be helpful to add some explanations. For example, what were the VNODD and the DMH? It might even be useful for many to explain who Bao Dai is. Likewise, a word of explanation might be added to the account of the mass accusation meetings of the Canadian nuns in Canton and of the nuns who conducted the Senmouyeau Orphanage in Zikawei, Shanghai.

One of the more shameful tactics of the communist authorities to discredit the church was to accuse nuns who had devoted their lives to caring for orphaned children of murdering their charges and burying the bodies within the mission compound. This calumny did not originate with the communists. It had been heard more than once in xenophobic outbursts of the past. The communists appropriated it for their own purposes.

The author perhaps assumes, and probably with reason, that his readers are not likely to believe these absurd charges. Still, the skeletal remains of children buried in the compounds, probably thousands in the case of Senmouyeau which had been operating for almost a century, are there. It might be useful to explain where they came from. Having lived for four years directly across the canal from Senmouyeau and visited it countless times, I am quite familiar with what went on there. An association of pious Catholic laywomen had as the principal object of its zeal the rescue of abandoned babies. Some days as many as fifteen were brought to the orphanage. All were baptized by the newly ordained priests in the Jesuit theologate across the canal. Most were in such an advanced stage of malnutrition or disease upon arrival that no amount of medical attention or tender care could save their lives. They were buried in the cemetery within the compound. The others were raised, educated and taught artisanal skills, the girls by the nuns, the boys by the Jesuit brothers. Many of them later married — the nuns and the brothers collaborating to arrange get acquainted meetings — settled and raised families in the village of Zikawei. Few incidents in the communist regime's efforts to "penetrate, regulate, and control" the church are as shameful as this revolting distortion of a magnificent work of loving devotion to the abandoned little ones of China.

Much of what I have written has been critical. I hope this does not discourage anyone from reading this book. The objectives which it seems to me the book achieves, although not necessarily the same as those which the author thinks he has achieved, make it well worth while.

*George H. Dunne, S.J.*