

George Minamiki, S. J.,  
*The Chinese Rites Controversy  
from Its Beginnings to Modern Times*

(Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985)

Shim, Paek-seop

George Minamiki presents an interesting and detailed historical account of the problem of inculturation. The title announces an examination of the four hundred year controversy over the Chinese rites. But it is questionable if this title is proper for the following structural reasons. Except for the introduction, the conclusion and the appendices this book is largely composed of two contrasting parts. The first part deals briefly with the age of controversy in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries. The second part discusses in detail the events in Japan, Manchukuo, and China in the 1930s and the Church's changed policy on the Chinese Rites issue. The first part corresponds to the first three chapters with seventy six pages while the second to the latter five chapters with one hundred and twenty eight pages except for the end notes. The quantitative ratio of the first part to the second is three to five in the number of both chapters and pages. The contents also show the priority of the second part to the first as confirmed in the introduction (pp. xii, xv - xvii).

In the introduction the author presents the issue of the Chinese

rites controversy as the problem of how Western man was to judge Confucian and ancestral rites. He briefly introduces the history of the controversy to be dealt with in the first and second part of the book. Then he notes the need for a detailed and full account of the modern phase of the Chinese rites controversy. Finally he concludes that he laid greater stress on the modern developments in the 1930s and that the early controversy will be dealt with as the background needed to fully understand these developments.

Chapters from one to three comprise the first part of the book which deals with the rites controversy. Chapters one and two explain the background of this controversy. Chapter one considers the Confucian and ancestral rites in the Ming period when the missionaries first appeared in China. After depicting the social, cultural and religious background of the Ming dynasty as a culturally homogeneous society and 'diffused religion' in contrast to 'institutional religion' Minamiki points out the importance of filial piety of Confucianism as the background for the Confucian and ancestral rites. Then he explains the history of these rites until the time the first Jesuit missionaries arrived in China and analyzes how and why the missionaries met the difficulties in interpreting various symbolic objects and gestures of the rites.

Chapter 2 analyzes Matteo Ricci's attitude and policy toward the ancestral and Confucian ceremonies based on the *Storia*, Ricci's memoirs of his activity and observations. In short, where there was no clear suggestion of superstition, Ricci was for tolerance, but at the same time he tried to bring the ceremonies gradually into conformity with Christian practice. This position and the judgment of Ricci and the other Jesuits derived from the conviction that the rites were not superstitious in their original form. This judgment was

influenced by the Jesuits' contemporary Confucian scholars. These neo-Confucian scholars had no risk of superstition, but this was not true for the ordinary people. The Jesuits were preoccupied with the question of the original meaning of the rites and with the thinking of the neo-Confucianist scholars, and thus they did not give sufficient attention to the wider sociological aspect of the problem.

Chapter 3 is the culmination of the first part. Minamiki examines the pertinent decrees and edicts that were issued during the age of controversy one by one in chronological order in connection with the second part. (1) Juan Baptista Morales, a Dominican missionary, submitted seventeen propositions to the Propaganda Fide, which criticized the Jesuits' missionary practices and condemned the Chinese rites as superstitious. In 1645 Pope Innocent X approved these propositions. (2) The Jesuit missionaries sent Martino Martini to present their objection to Morales and their opinion to the Propaganda Fide. Pope Alexander VII approved this opinion in 1656. (3) The Dominicans asked the Holy Office whether (1) was still in force. In 1669, the Holy Office replied both (1) and (2) remained in force. (4) In 1693, Charles Maigrot, a member of the Paris Foreign Mission Society and vicar apostolic of Fukien, issued a mandate which forbade the missionaries to follow (2). (5) In 1700 the emperor K'ang Hsi approved the Jesuit interpretation of the rites through an imperial rescript but it was criticized and completely ignored in subsequent decrees of the Church. (6) The decree of Clement XI, completed in 1704 after long deliberations, subscribed to most of (4). He also published an apostolic constitution in 1715. As its title, *Ex Illa Die*, indicates, it was meant to cut off the future discussion of the rites controversy. It ordered the missionaries to take an oath to comply with all the directives of the constitution. (7) The

constitution aroused the indignation of the emperor. Charles A. Messabarba, a papal legate, addressed a pastoral letter which granted eight permissions to appease the emperor. Some of the permissions reversed decisions in (6). (8) In 1735 Clement XII issued a brief which annulled (7). In 1742, Benedict XIV issued the bull *Ex quo singulari*, the last decree on the matter of the Chinese rites. Its central purpose was to confirm (6) and (4). It condemned (7) very rigorously and definitively ended the long controversy over the Chinese rites. The Christians were deprived of all the traditional external signs which manifested their reverence to the dead.

The author transitions from the first to the second part of this book in chapter 4, which briefly considers the years from 1742 to the 1930s situation centered around the historical context in which the modern phase of the rites question will take place. During this period the Catholic Church made no major papal pronouncements on the Chinese rites and the missionaries gradually fell into line with the official guidelines of *Ex quo singulari* despite complaints against the Church's stand. Meanwhile, the cults of ancestors and of Confucius underwent enormous changes. They were seriously threatened because of sociopolitical turmoil.

Minamiki completely changes his topic from the Chinese to the Japanese in chapter 5. First, he introduces the change from a feudal society to a modern era of Meiji. This change was aimed at building a strong nation through unifying Japanese society. Most of the Meiji reformers, who were former samurai, found a spiritual instrument to build a unified political state against the Western powers in Shinto, the indigenous belief of the people. The form of Shinto espoused by the government was called state Shinto, distinct from the numerous sectarian forms of Shinto. The state Shinto developed a cult which

was aimed at deepening the national feeling of solidarity. But after failing in the establishment of the state Shinto as a national religion, the state Shinto was divorced from the realm of religion. Meanwhile, only five decades from the beginning of the reform, Japan had already become a major power at the Versailles Peace Conference. The government pursued the policy of colonial expansion and set up the puppet state of Manchuko in 1932.

Chapter 6 is the central part of the entire book. Minamiki's intention is to highlight the policy of the Japanese military government in regard to Shinto was responsible for reopening up the rites issue and tries to give priority to the developments in Japan rather than in Manchukuo. After a detailed explanation of the modern developments in the Japanese Catholic church and Japanese government policy, the author describes an incident at the Yasukuni shrine in 1932, during which some students from Sophia University allegedly refused to bow to the war dead. The whole country of Japan was on a wartime footing then because the Japanese Kwantung army had seized and occupied Manchuria. The military government resorted to state Shinto in order to mobilize the nation spiritually, and they were asked to bow before the shrine. The students' refusal led to a confrontation between the Church and the government. Eventually, after the government declared that the inclination of the head in front of the shrine was a purely civil act of patriotism with no religious significance, the Church permitted Catholics to bow before the shrine in December of 1935. With this permission native Catholics could join their non-Catholic compatriots before the Shinto shrines.

Chapter 7 examines the role of the Japanese government's involvement in Manchukuo in moving the Church to reconsider the

rites. Manchuko, the Japanese puppet state, proclaimed Wangtao, the Royal Way, which was based on Confucianism as the unifying spirit of the new regime. In a manner almost identical to Shinto this "unifying spirit" was forged by the Japanese army. As in Japan, the Church authorities acted after the government made the official statement that the ceremonies were non-religious and only civil in meaning. They permitted native Catholics to participate in the ceremonies in May of 1935. This permission preceded a similar permission from Rome to the Church in Japan. It was the first official document from Rome after the age of controversy on the Chinese rites to manifest a shift in the Church's position. But the developments on the rites question in Manchuria depended on the Japanese attempts to solve the problem.

Chapter 8 depicts the historical developments of Eastern Asia and the Church which resulted in a final decision on the Chinese rites question in 1939. In the wake of these developments in Japan and Manchukuo, the Sacred Congregation of the Propaganda of the Faith issued a decree that announced to the native Catholics and missionaries in China a new stand by the Church with regard to the Confucian and ancestral rites. The decree nullified many of the prohibitions laid upon the consciences of the people. But this final instruction simply extended the permissions granted in Manchukuo and Japan to the territory of China and added the section on the abrogation of the anti-rite oath enjoined upon the missionaries by the bull of 1742.

Thus, after an imposed silence of almost two centuries, the rites question was reopened by Japanese militarists and within few years it came to a belated close.

In the conclusion, Minamiki clarifies his aim as presenting the

historical settings of the many decisions he cited in the book and then analyzes some pertinent issues. (1) He first raises the question about the symbolic meaning of the objects and gestures involved in the rites. He criticizes the position of the early Jesuit missionaries because they concentrated on the original meaning of the primitive rites under the guidance of the Chinese literary elite and ignored their current meaning. On the other hand, he supports the change of the Church's position on the grounds that the meaning changed because of Asian modernization. (2) He focuses on the term superstition. The suspicion of superstition was the ground for the condemnation of the rites while characterizing the rites as civil and political permitted the toleration of them. (3) The principle of passive cooperation played a major role in saving the rites for native Christians. The principle was begun by sympathetic missionaries, but received the most attention in the modern phase. (4) What if Church authorities had been as receptive to K'ang hsi's imperial rescript of 1700 as they were in the 1930's? There is no answer. But their action in the 1700s set back the work of the Jesuits because the rites question was so close to the heart of Chinese society. Finally, the author cites a speech given by an Archbishop that pointed out the negative aspects of the concentration of all the decision making power in Rome particularly in regard with the Chinese rites controversy.

Theodore Nicholas Foss reviewed this book as follows. Minamiki presents a detailed historical account of the modern phase of the rites controversy. He treats the earlier period in a summary fashion, as a historical background to the modern phase. He avoids taking a personal stand, but the book is the result of a personal interest as a Japanese-American Jesuit who teaches Japanese language and

culture. Japanese expansionist actions in the 1930s acted as a catalyst for the Church to change its policy. The history of this period is the real strength of this book. There is a relevance for our time. One can see in this history how a growing regard for non-Western culture gradually informs the Church in the present era. This book is a labor of love. Minamiki's work is a much needed general introduction. His presentation is most interesting, particularly in recording the controversy's individuals and events of the modern China, Manchuria, and Japan.

Carl N. Gabrielson writes in his review that Minamiki attempts to outline how the Church reversed the early condemnation of the rites into toleration. He can explain the shift through analysis of many important issues raised in the conclusion of this book. He has done considerable research in the various documentary sources related to his topic, provides an appropriate amount of background concerning the rites, and succinctly untangles the web of negotiations between the missionaries and the hierarchy in Rome. He is careful to maintain an appropriate neutrality in his historiography, though he favors the policy of the modern period. He is sympathetic to the difficult situations of decision makers. He has carefully delimited the bounds of his study to the Western side of the controversies. In so doing, he left an important area out of consideration, namely, how the Church is to relate to cultures in which political establishment manipulates religion to its own purpose. Minamiki does not draw any cautionary conclusions.

This book highlights that Japanese expansionist policy of religion in the 1930s played the most important role in changing the Church's position from condemning to tolerating the Chinese rites. The refusal of Sophia University students to bow at the Yasukuni



shrine is explained as a decisive catalyst for the Japanese military government to try to change the Church's policy by declaring that the cult of state Shinto had no religious significant. Minamiki supports the Japanese and the Church's position by explaining the history of state Shinto and Asian modernization. The early history of the controversy is situated as the contrasting background of this modern phase. In short, it is possible to say that it would have been better to change the title to something such as 'the modern Japanese role in the Chinese rites controversy.'

This book presents the following notable points. First, the early Jesuit missionaries, influenced by the Chinese literary elite, erred by concentrating on the original meaning of the rites. But the meaning underwent a change and they ignored the important current meaning. Moreover, they neglected the risk of the superstition of the ordinary people because of their dependence upon the Chinese elite. Second, the symbolic meaning of the rites was superstitious until it was changed by modernization. Therefore, it can be justified both that the Church authorities condemned the rites as superstitious and that the Japanese government declared the state Shinto as a purely civil act of patriotism without religious significance.

In this analysis Minamiki helps us to understand the difficult situations of the decision makers of Church authorities, but not the accommodation policy of the early Jesuits even though he is a Jesuit. It is important to find the original meaning of religious symbolism, and this has been widely accepted as a contribution of the Jesuits in the study of Chinese culture. His emphasis on the religion of ordinary people is worthy of notice, but he does not apply it to the case of the state Shinto. Minamiki shows a different position as well, if not often. He indicates the problem of

concentration of all the decision making in Rome and that of cultural distance between Rome and China. He acknowledges that Church authorities' rejection to K'anghsi's rescript set back the work of the Jesuits. He even expresses military expansionism as fanatical loyalty to the emperor. But on the whole his attitude toward the policy of the Church and the Japanese expansionism is between a neutral and a positive one.

Historiography cannot be completely free from the problem of a viewpoint, on which both 'what to select' and 'how to deal with it' depend. Thus I do not agree with Foss and Gabrielson that the author avoids taking a personal stand and maintains an appropriate neutrality. Minamiki writes in the introduction that he stresses the modern developments only because the details of this period are less known. This does not fully explain why he wrote this book. There are many other things which are less known. As Foss suggests, this book is the result of a personal interest as a Japanese-American who teaches Japanese language and culture. Moreover, it can be read as a labor of patriotism. Minamiki does not raise the problem of the term patriotism which was used to justify state Shinto. He only defends defining it as civil and patriotic without religious significance. State Shinto is a political ideology of Fascism which can be more threatening to our faith and human rights than so-called superstition. Some readers, in particular many Chinese and Koreans, would be expected to reject certain points of this book for this reason.

Beyond the standpoint of Minamiki, this book has many positive elements: his extensive investigation and proper organization of materials, a careful approach to understand and describe the controversy within the historical context, and a new attempt to make

a connection between the age of controversy and the modern phase of 1930s. He considers outcomes of various fields of humanities and social sciences in his analysis. At the same time the first part of his book is based on Western printed sources such as the various ecclesiastical decrees and instructions, and the second part utilizes unpublished materials and oral interviews that Minamiki conducted for ten years beginning in the early 1970s. This book is sure to help understand an ecclesiastical policy within the historical context, even though more analysis is needed to illuminate the dynamic relationships among the various powers within the Church and European countries.

As a Jesuit from Korea I have a great interest in the history of the East Asian Church. The Chinese rites controversy effected much of Korean Catholic Church history as well. The condemnation resulted in many unnecessary conflicts, pains and martyrs in Korea. The changed policy of toleration led the Korean Catholic Church to the compromise with the colonial government of imperialist Japan. This has been remembered thus far as a serious historical error by the Church toward its own nation. Some of Protestant denominations resisted the Japanese force to worship at the shrines, which strengthened the Protestant position after the war. This book gives me many serious problems to consider. How is 'diffused religion' such as Confucianism different from Christianity? What is the best way to establish dialogue between them? Where should I stand to see this history and the religions? Why did the Church change its policy to toleration so late and in such a way connected with Fascist policy? How should I accept this regrettable history and transmit it to Korean Catholics and people?

〈국문요약〉

## 조지 미나미키의 『중국 전례 논쟁사』

(시카고: 로올라 대학교 출판부, 1985)

심 백 섭\*

조지 미나미키(George Minamiki, 1920-2002)는 일본계 미국인으로 태어나 캘리포니아에서 성장한 예수회 사제이다. 그가 노틀담 대학교(University of Notre Dame) 교수로 재직 중이던 1985년에 펴낸 이 책은 중국 전례 논쟁이라는 흥미로운 주제를 역사적 전개 과정과 함께 다루고 있다. 책 제목은 중국 전례 논쟁사 전체를 다룰 것이라는 기대를 갖게 하기에 충분하다. 그러나 이 책은 그 무게 중심을 17-18세기의 논쟁을 간략하게 다룬 전반부(3개 장의 본문 76쪽 분량)가 아니라, 1930년대의 일본과 중국, 그리고 가톨릭 교회의 전례 정책상의 변화를 자세하게 다룬 후반부(5개 장의 본문 128쪽 분량)에 두고 있다.

이러한 입장은 서론에서부터 나타나고 있다. 서론에서 저자 미나미키는 중국 전례 논쟁사 전반을 간략하게 소개한 다음, 전례 논쟁에 대한 1930년대의 근대적 전환 또는 발전을 자세하게 다루어야 할 필요가 있음을 강조한다. 결국 그에게 있어 초기의 논쟁은 1930년대의 전환을 충분히 이해하기 위한 배경으로서 의의가 있다는 것을 역설하고 있다.

이 책의 전반부(1장부터 3장까지) 중에서 1장과 2장은 유교 의례와 제사, 그리고 그에 대한 마테오 리치를 비롯한 예수회원들의 긍정적 해석 등 중국 전례논쟁의 배경에 대해 언급한다. 3장은 17세기 중반부터

\* 서울대학교 종교학과 박사과정, 예수회 사제

18세기 중반에 이르기까지 논쟁의 역사와 관련된 교령과 칙령 등을 연대기 순으로 검토하면서 1742년 교황 베네딕도 14세의 교서를 끝으로 유교 제사 금지가 확정되기까지의 과정을 고찰한다.

책의 후반부(4장부터 8장까지) 중에서 4장은 1742년에서 1930년대까지의 상황을 역사적 맥락을 중심으로 간략하게 살피고, 5장은 논제를 중국에서 일본으로 옮겨 메이지 시대의 강국 건설을 위해 민족 감정을 고취시키는 데에 동원된 國家 神道에 대해 설명한다. 6장은 이 책 전체의 중심부로서, 1930년대 군국주의 일본 정부가 야스쿠니 신사 참배를 종교적 의미가 없는 단순한 국민 의례라고 선언함으로써 가톨릭 교회로부터 신사 참배 허락을 받아 냈으며, 이것이 전례논쟁을 재검토하는 데에 결정적 계기가 되었음을 부각시킨다. 7장은 제국주의 일본이 세운 괴뢰국인 만주국에 神道와 동일한 王道를 만들어 역시 로마 교황청의 허락을 받아 냄으로써 전례 논쟁에 대한 교회의 입장 변화를 이끌어 낸 데에 대한 일본 정부의 역할을 조명한다. 8장은 마침내 1939년 교황청 내 포교 성성이 중국 전례문제에 대한 최종안으로서 1742년의 교서 내용을 반복하는 교령을 선포하게 되었는데, 이는 일본과 만주국에 부여된 허락을 중국 영내로 확장하는 데에 불과한 것으로, 두 세기에 걸친 강요된 침묵을 깨고 전례문제를 재개하는 데에 일본 군국주의자들의 공로가 큼을 밝히고 있다. 결론 부분에서 저자는 초기 예수회 선교사들이 중국의 지식 엘리트들의 영향을 받아 중국의 고대 의례의 원래적 의미만 보고 당대적 함의를 놓쳤다고 비판하는 한편, 교회의 입장 변화는 아시아 사회의 근대화로 인한 의례적 의미의 변화를 반영하는 것이라고 평가하였다.

이상에서 살펴본 바와 같이 이 책은 1930년대의 일본 제국주의자들의 종교정책이 중국 전례에 대한 교회의 입장을 단죄로부터 관용의 입장으로 선회시키는 데에 가장 큰 역할을 했음을 부각시키고 있다. 그리고 이에 부응하여 책의 구도도 17-18세기의 논쟁사를 1930년대와 대조시키는 배경으로서 위치시키고 있다. 그리하여 이 책은 책 제목을 차라리 ‘중국 전례논쟁에서의 제국주의 일본의 역할’이라고 붙이면 더 적합

하다고 할만한 것이 되고 말았다.

이 책에서 주목을 끄는 논점은 다음 두 가지로 압축된다. 하나는, 초기 예수회 선교사들이 중국의 엘리트 지식인들의 영향을 받아서 전례의 원래적 의미에만 집중한 나머지 중요한 당대적 의미, 특히 일반 민중들의 미신적 경향을 무시했다고 하는 비판이다. 또 하나는, 전례의 미신적 의미의 유무는 근대화가 결정적 변수가 되므로, 근대화 이전의 전례를 미신이라고 단죄한 교회 당국자와 근대화 이후의 國家 神道를 종교적 의미가 없는 순수한 국민의례라고 선언한 제국주의 일본 정부가 모두 정당화될 수 있다는 것이다.

저자인 미나미키는 이러한 분석을 통해 정책 결정자인 교회 당국자가 처한 어려운 상황을 이해해 주는 입장을 취하지만, 스스로도 예수회 원인 그가 초기 예수회원들의 적응 정책에 대해서는 몰이해적인 태도를 보여준다. 종교적 상징의 원래적 의미를 발견하는 작업은 중요한 것이며 이것은 초기 예수회원들이 중국 문화 연구에 대한 공헌이라는 것이 폭넓게 인정되고 있는데도 말이다. 저자는 미신의 혐의가 짙은 일반 민중들의 종교에 대한 문제점은 강조하지만, 황제 숭배의 혐의가 짙은 國家 神道の 문제점에 대해서는 충분한 주의를 기울이지 못하고 있다. 물론 그가 로마에서의 의사 결정 과정의 문제, 예수회적 선교를 승인한 강희제의 칙령에 대한 교회 당국자의 거부가 지닌 문제점, 그리고 천황에 대한 광신적 충성의 문제를 지적하지 않는 것은 아니지만, 전체적으로 교회와 일본 제국주의의 정책에 대한 그의 태도는 중립적인 것과 긍정적인 것 사이에 놓여져 있다고 판단된다.

역사 서술은 관점의 문제로부터 완전히 자유로울 수 없다. 어떤 자료를 선택하며 선택한 자료를 어떤 방법으로 다루어야 할 것인가의 문제 또한 관점에 의존하는 바가 적지 않다는 점을 고려할 때 관점의 중요성에 대해 크게 주목하지 않을 수 없다. 따라서 이 책은 일본어와 일본 문화를 가르치는 일본계 미국인의 개인적 관심의 결과물이며, 나아가 애국심에서 나온 노작이라고도 할 수 있다는 점에 유념할 필요가 있다. 저자인 미나미키는 國家 神道를 정당화하는 데 쓰인 애국심이라는 용

어에 대해서 문제를 제기하지 않는다. 그는 國家 神道를 종교적 의미가 없는 애국적 국민의례라고 하는 정의를 고수할 뿐이다. 그러나 國家 神道는 소위 미신이라고 하는 것 이상으로 그리스도교 신앙과 인권에 대해 위협이 될 수 있는 하나의 정치 이데올로기로서 파시즘에 다름 아니다. 바로 그러한 이념의 폭력으로 인해 역사적 희생과 상처를 강요받았던 한국과 중국 등의 독자들에게 이 책은 화해와 치유보다는 새로운 반발과 불화를 빚지나 않을까 염려된다.

중국 전례 논쟁은 한국 천주교회사에도 많은 영향을 미쳤던 중요한 문제가 아닐 수 없다. 이 중요한 문제에 대해서 광범위한 자료 수집과 신중하고 새로운 접근, 다양한 성과물의 검토와 반영 등 저자가 기울인 노고들이 적지 않음을 인정하면서도 그만큼 더 큰 아쉬움을 느끼는 소이가 있다. 그것은 자기 관점에 대한 성찰의 소홀, 그리고 그로 인한 관점의 정당성 또는 보편성 확보의 실패이다. 이러한 아쉬움은 우리 자신에 대해 그동안의 게으름을 반성하게 하고 앞으로의 분발을 촉구하게 하는 것으로 이어져야 한다. 동아시아 전체를 고려하는 보편적 관점과 신앙의 수용이 인권의 향상과 충돌하지 않는 정당한 관점을 아울러 확보한 가운데 전례 논쟁에 대한 충실한 학문적 내용물을 담은 성과가 나오기를 희망한다.