

Christian Contribution to China in History

基督教在中国历史上的贡献

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Abstract 内容摘要

Christianity has a history of about 1400 years in China. It reflects a complicated process of encounter, confrontation, dialogue, exchange and confluence between Christianity and Chinese culture. Since the Tang-Dynasty Christianity was the main representative of the Western religion and its knowledge, which had a deep influence on China and promoted the development of Chinese culture to a certain extent. After the “Rites Controversy” the peaceful exchange between Christianity and China stopped. Especially after the “Opium War” in 1840, Christianity was understood as an instrument of “cultural imperialism” of the Western powers by the majority of Chinese. In this context the exchange and the mutual understanding were extremely difficult. Nevertheless they didn't stop completely. With the efforts of many Christians and also through the cooperation from many Chinese, this exchange continued in various areas, which made possible the Christian contribution to China in history. From the perspective and consideration of encouraging dialogue again between China and Christianity, this paper here will try to describe the historic contributions of Christianity to China in spiritual cultivation, public education, development in news and publications, social welfare and philanthropy, and other cultural exchanges. The opinion of the author is: a correct evaluation of this contribution is very important for us to have an all-sided understanding of Christian history in China and to continue dialogue and exchange in contemporary new situation.

基督教在中国已有 1400 年的历史。这历史显示出基督教与中国文化之间的相遇，冲突，对话，交流及汇合的复杂过程。自唐朝以来，基督教是西方宗教与其知识的主要代表，对中国有着深远的影响，也促进中华文化的发展。“礼仪之争”之后，基督教与中国的和平交流中断。尤其是 1840 年的鸦片战争以后，基督教被多数的中国人视为是西方势力的“文化帝国主义”的工具。在这情形下，要达到交流与彼此了解是非常困难的。虽然如此，在这方面的努力并没有完全停止。在许多基督徒的努力与很多中国人的合作之下，在许多方面仍有交流，使基督教在历史上对中国有所贡献。

为了鼓励中国与基督教能再有对话，这篇文章尝试描述基督教在以下的几个层面对中国作出历史性的贡献：灵命的建立，公众教育，新闻与出版的发展，社会福利与慈善事业，以及其他的文化交流。作者的立场是：正确的检讨这些贡献，对我们全面了解中国的基督教历史是非常重要的，也能在目前的新的处境里继续对话与交流。