



Религиоведение. 2023. № 2. С. 123–133.
Religiovedenie [Study of Religion]. 2023. No. 2. P. 123–133.

DOI: 10.22250/20728662_2023_2_123

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Reactions of Social Classes toward Christianity during the 17th and 18th Centuries: a Study in Vietnam and China

Abstract. The article studies and clarifies the complicated happenings in the reaction of social classes in China and Vietnam to Christianity during the 17th and 18th centuries. To study this issue, the authors used the original historical materials related to Christianity of the Qing dynasty (China) and the monarchies in Vietnam in the 17th and 18th centuries. Besides, the authors also inherit some research achievements by Chinese and Vietnamese scholars on Christianity history in both countries. Moreover, the authors also exploit the original historical materials recorded by Western missionaries working in the two countries during the 17th century to 18th century. The authors combine two main research methods of History Science (historical and logical) with other research methods (systemic, analysis, synthesis, and comparison) to complete the study of this issue. The article will have a specific contribution in terms of academics, such as clarifying the attitude of kings, royalty, nobles, intelligentsia, officials, and civilians in China and Vietnam towards Christianity and providing a more multi-dimensional, objective, comprehensive and profound perspective in the study of Vietnam and China history in general as well as the history of spreading Christianity in the two countries in particular during the 17th and 18th centuries.

Key words: social classes, China, Vietnam, Qing dynasty, Christianity, missionary



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Реакция социальных классов на христианство в 17 и 18 веках: исследование во Вьетнаме и Китае

Аннотация. В статье исследуются и проясняются сложные явления в реакции социальных классов Китая и Вьетнама на христианство в XVII и XVIII веках. Для изучения данного вопроса авторы использовали оригинальные исторические материалы, связанные с христианством династии Цин (Китай) и монархий во Вьетнаме XVII и XVIII вв. Кроме того, авторы также обращались к более ранним исследованиям китайских и вьетнамских учёных по истории христианства в обеих странах. Также, авторы также используют оригинальные исторические материалы, записанные западными миссионерами, работавшими в двух странах в XVII–XVIII веках. Для полноты изучения данного вопроса авторы сочетают два основных метода исследования исторической науки (исторический и логический) с другими методами исследования (системным анализом, синтезом, сравнительным методом). Статья вносит вклад в прояснение отношения королей и императоров, а также членов их семей, знати, интеллигенции, чиновников и гражданских лиц в Китае и Вьетнаме к христианству и в изучение истории Вьетнама и Китая в целом, а также в изучение истории распространения христианства в двух странах – в частности, в XVII–XVIII веках.

Ключевые слова: социальные классы, Китай, Вьетнам, династия Цин, христианство, миссионерство

Introduction

Christianity was introduced and developed strongly in China and Vietnam during the 17th and 18th centuries. This process was always associated with the role of Western missionaries. However, it did not occur as quickly and smoothly as they wanted for various reasons. One of the leading causes was that when the “seeds of Christianity” had just been “cultivated” in China and Vietnam, it was immediately encountered with multi-dimensional reactions of the social classes, from the native ruling class to the civilians. The unique thing is that while the kings of the two countries refused to accept Christianity, on the contrary, some royalty and nobles believed in Christianity. Within the Chinese and Vietnamese intelligentsia and official class also a fierce struggle between the two trends of anti-Christianity and pro-Christianity. Meanwhile, in the society of China and Vietnam in this period, the civilians were the largest force that believed in Christianity. All of these have created a colorful picture of the attitudes of classes in Chinese and Vietnamese society towards Christianity in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The emperor refused, and the royalty and nobles welcomed

Since the beginning of the mission in Vietnam and China during the 17th century, Western missionaries have tried to entice the indigenous ruling class to convert to Christianity. Missionaries wanted to rely on their social status and political and economic power to expand the spread of Christianity. Therefore, after arriving in the two countries, the missionaries sought to approach and convert the native Emperor – the head of the central authoritarian monarchy. However, all their efforts seemed to fail. In China, from the end of the Ming Dynasty to the end of the 18th century, researchers could not find any historical record of the Ming and Qing Emperors’ belief in Christianity. Not to mention the periods of Kangxi 康熙, Yongzheng 雍正, and Qianlong 乾隆 when Christianity was banned, even under the period of Shunzhi 順治 Emperor, the relationship between the Western missionaries, especially Johann Adam Schall von Bell with the emperor was good. Still, this Jesuit missionary could not persuade Shunzhi 順治 to believe in Christianity [Tang Kaijian, 2001, 126]. In Vietnam, from the 17th century to the 18th century, there aren’t documents recorded by Vietnamese mentioning the Nguyen Lords in Cochinchina or Le Kings – Trinh Lords in Tonkin believed in Christianity. Meanwhile, based on several Western missionaries’ records, some literature on Vietnam’s Church history mentioned that Nguyen Hoang Lord thought in Christianity after coming to Cochinchina (1558) [Romanet du Caillaud, 1915, 148–150; Ordonez de Ceballos, 1691, 207–209]. However, Vietnamese and foreign researchers have confirmed that these are only mythical and unfounded records [Borri, 1931, 338; Bonifacy, 1929, 4–5; Truong Ba Can, 2008, 34–36].

Although it was impossible to entice the Qing Emperor in China and the Vietnamese rulers to believe in Christianity, Jesuit missionaries were relatively successful in conquering the faith of others. In China, several royalty and nobles converted to Christianity at the end of the Ming and early Qing dynasties. Among them, the royal family of Sunu 蘇努 was the most famous case. Although he was not religious, his descendants were mainly Christian believers. They maintained this tradition until the end of the Qing Dynasty [Feng Zuozhe, 1990, 9; Chen Yuan, 1980, 161–162].

In Vietnam, from the 17th century to the 18th century, there were no records of royalty and noble as Christians in the historical sources of the monarch dynasties. However, this issue was mentioned in the Vietnam missionary history literature. In 1625, in Cochinchina, Minh Duc Vuong, wife of Nguyen Hoang Lord, was baptized and converted to Christianity with the Holy name Maria Mandalena [Rhodes, 1953, 57]. In the letter in Sinoa (Cochinchina) on August 6, 1741, the Jesuit missionary Jean Siebert said that many Christians in this kingdom belonged to the upper class. Two brothers of the late Lord converted to Christianity with all their family members [Montézon et al., 1858, 266–267]. Meanwhile, from 1723 to 1765, the missionary of the Foreign Missionary Society of Paris, Louis Néez – Vicar Apostolic of Western Tonkin, was protected by many princes and brothers of the Trinh Lord. The sixth brother of the Trinh Lord’s wife was a Christian believer and was baptized before his death. Another brother of the Trinh Lord had all of his children receive baptism. Another brother or uncle of the Trinh Lord who received the baptism in his youth and had long forgotten the religious obligations also was encouraged by Bishop Néez to return to Christianity [Launay, 1894, 577–578].

Thus, during the first period of introduction and development in Vietnam and China, Christianity was more or less welcomed by a part of the royalty and noble class. Their acceptance of Christianity might be because they expected to learn more about the Christian doctrine as an alternative way to satisfy their spiritual needs or merely curiosity towards this religion, which was not similar to their previous traditional cultural values. Besides, for some nobles, it was a way of showing their admiration for the quality and erudite of Jesuits.

Anti-Christianity and pro-Christianity: The division and struggle within the intelligentsia and official class in China and Vietnam

In addition to the royalty and the nobles, to fulfill the goal of penetrating the network of social relations of the upper society [Li Tiangang, 1998, 18], the missionaries also had the ambition to dominate the spiritual life of the intelligentsia and official class to provide support for Christian development at the court and localities, as well as forming a counterbalance with the anti-religious forces.

In Vietnam and China society during the monarchy period, the intelligentsia and officials were a class who trained methodically through the imperial examinations. They attached importance to academic learning. Therefore, theological philosophy and the other sciences of the Jesuits made the class of intelligentsia, officials, and missionaries of this religious order share the same voice. The missionaries also sought to meet the officials, offer gifts, and associate with celebrities for missionary purposes. Meanwhile, the intelligentsia and officials wanted to see the “strange items” [Shi Jinghuan, 1983, 76–77], i.e., items of Western origin, especially products related to science and technology, or directly interacted with the missionaries to understand their Western knowledge. Therefore, when they heard the missionaries set foot in the area they governed, they summoned or sometimes actively invited them to their headquarters. It created a good premise for Western missionaries to spread Christianity to this class.

In fact, in Vietnam and China, with constant efforts, missionaries attracted the attention of intelligentsia and officials for Christianity. However, the missionaries’ approach to this class and its successful degree differed in both countries. In China, missionaries used a variety of methods to connect with the intelligentsia and officials, such as establishing relations with Chinese officials [Pfister, 1932, 226]; meeting some of the mandarins’ requirements [Cui Weixiao, 2006, 182]; visiting houses, giving poetry or discussing with the Chinese intelligentsia. Especially they also collaborated with Chinese intelligentsia to compile and translate documents [Truong Anh Thuan, Nguyen Van Sang, 2020, 410–411]. The effective application of these methods helped missionaries to establish an extensive network of social relations, enhance their social status, and attract a part of the Chinese intelligentsia and officials who wanted to convert to Christianity. The three mandarins of Xu Guangqi 徐光啟, Yang Tingyun 楊廷筠, and Li Zhizao 李之藻 [Yan Kejia, 2001, 47–57], along with a series of famous intelligentsia and officials believing in Christianity in the late Ming dynasty and early Qing dynasty [Du Hede, 2005, 253; Yan Kejia, 2001, 57; Zhongguo di yi lishi dangan guan, 2003b, 844–865] were some typical examples. Meanwhile, ways of establishing relations between the Western missionaries with the intelligentsia and officials in Vietnam were not as abundant as in China. The missionaries mainly used three measures, including taking advantage of the relationship with the officials and their relatives to attract others to believe in Christianity, visiting and giving gifts, and arguing with the heads of other religions (Buddhism, Taoism) and Confucian intellectuals [Bartoli, 1663, 751–754, 765–766; Rhodes, 1651, 146–147]. As a result, the spread of Christianity to the intelligentsia and officials in Vietnam had some achievements. Based on data recorded by Jesuits in the XVII century in Cochinchina, several intelligentsia and officials, after understanding the Gospel, became baptized and joined Christianity, such as Jeanne’s husband, who was the ruler of an area near Faifo (Quang Nam province), or Paul – an advisor of Quang Nam Governor, or Peter – a retired official, or Ursula’s husband – a Cochinchina’s ambassador to Cambodia, or Joseph and his disciples in Quang Nam town [Luis, 1628, 128–129; Truong Ba Can, 2008, 45–52].

However, researchers cannot just rely on some of the above cases to conclude that attracting the class of intelligentsia and officials in Vietnam and China to believe in Christianity was easy. From the perspective of scholar Truong Ba Can, rich and noble people

found it challenging to accept Christianity. Wealthy people often had enough money and power to have many wives, while Christianity only allowed monogamy. Besides, those authorities must regularly participate in sacrifices as required by civil society, while Catholics only will enable the worship of one God [Truong Ba Can, 2008, 555]. In fact, the intelligentsia and officials in China and Vietnam either because they wanted to learn Western science and Catholic doctrine or obey the orders of the central court through missionaries to establish trade relations with Western merchants [Chappoulie, 1943, 173, 237; Baldinotti, 1903, 71–78; Maybon, 1919, 93], which at times showed a caring attitude towards Christianity and a small part follow this religion [Luis, 1628, 131–132]. Meanwhile, the majority are afraid and refuse to accept this religion. In the *Divers Voyages et Missions*, missionary Alexandre de Rhodes also acknowledged the difficulties of attracting Vietnamese intelligentsia and officials to believe in Christianity [Rhodes, 1653, 135–137].

From the 17th century to the 18th century, in Vietnamese society, Christianity faced the opposition of the class of intelligentsia and anti-religious officials in the court and local areas. Although there was still the existence of other anti-Christianity forces in the society of Vietnam at that time, with political and economic power, intelligentsia and officials had greatly influenced the planning of Vietnam rulers' policy toward Christianity. The birth of the decrees prohibiting Christianity in 1625, 1630, 1635, 1661, 1664, 1690 [Rhodes, 1653, 93; Vo Phuong Lan, 2008, 18–31] in Cochinchina or in 1628, 1632, 1643, 1649, 1658, 1663, 1712 [Rhodes, 1651, 211; Vu Khanh Tuong, 1956, 352, 369, 478; Truong Ba Can, 2008, 162–166; Launay, 1927, 543] in Tonkin were from one of the leading causes, which were the urging and appeal of the intelligentsia and officials. In China, the differentiation of attitudes toward Christianity between the intelligentsia and the officials class was more profound than in Vietnam. From the end of the Ming dynasty, that differentiation was expressed with two opposite trends. There are some intelligentsia and officials who think that “Tianxue 天学” (i.e., Christian doctrine) and “Confucianism” have the same nature or because they admire the pragmatism of Western knowledge and ethical qualities of the Jesuits, so had shown tolerant, friendly attitude towards Christianity, frequently exchanging, establishing relationships with missionaries, and some even believe in Christianity. Meanwhile, at the end of the Ming Dynasty, the Chinese intelligentsia and officials class also appeared as part of mandarins saying that “Tianxue” had many contradictions with “Confucianism” and threatened the leading position of Confucianism. They argued that the presence of missionaries in China was a potential risk to national security. This, plus the conservative and extreme view on the superiority of Chinese culture, ignoring or deliberately refusing to acknowledge the erudition of the Jesuits, had made several intelligentsia and officials have an antagonistic attitude towards Christianity and the missionaries. All of these causes led to the consequences that a part of the intelligentsia and official class publicly expressed opposition to Christianity at the end of the Ming dynasty. Although at that time they still did not account for the overwhelming number, the anti-Christianity intelligentsia and officials forces at the end of the Ming dynasty also created many negative influences on the missionaries of Jesuits, among which the Nanjing Christianity case 南京教案 in 1616 [He Xiaorong, 2013, 303–311; Pan Qun, Zhou Zhibin, 2012, 216–225] was the event that marked the first time that Chinese Christianity had encountered persecution.

By the time of the Qing dynasty, except for the period of the Shunzhi 順治 Emperor, from Emperor Kangxi 康熙 onwards, the trend of anti-Christianity in the class of intelligentsia and officials became more and more apparent. Under the reign of the Kangxi Emperor, the introduction and robust development of Christianity in China, along with the growing influence of some Western missionaries on the Qing court, especially Johann Adam Schall von Bell (Chinese named Tang Ruowang 湯若望), encountered fierce opposition from the intelligentsia and officials class. And with “the calendar case” (1665) [Pingyi Chu, 1997, 7–34; Huang Yi-long, 1991, 1–20; Wang Yamin, 2008, 22], the forces of the anti-Christianity mandarin in the royal court headed by Yang Guangxian 楊光先 played an essential role in “firing the first cannon” on Christianity and the missionaries. This case about the form was a debate on the calendar field between Western missionaries and a group of Qing dynasty intelligentsia and officials. Still, in essence, it reflected the resistance of the intelligentsia and officials to Christianity, the knowledge of Western missionaries, and their influence on the Qing emperor.

After this event, in the 8th year of the Kangxi 康熙 Emperor (1669), a national ordination that banned Christianity was announced [Ma Qi et al., 1985, 417], marking the victory of the anti-Christianity forces in the Qing royal court. However, from 1669 to 1692, with the perseverance and effort of the Jesuits, primarily through the relationship with mandarin Su Etu 索額圖 – who regularly dealt with Jesuits and had shown some sympathetic to Christianity, the missionaries gradually persuaded the Kangxi 康熙 Emperor to promulgate the decree allowing Christianity to spread freely in China (1692) [Han Qi, Wu Min, 2006, 185]. Thus, the birth of two anti-religion ordinances and the freedom of religious propagation in the same period essentially reflected the pulling struggle between the anti-Christianity intelligentsia and officials with the missionaries and the pro-Christianity intelligentsia and officials. This phenomenon only happened under the Kangxi 康熙 Emperor period.

In the successive emperors, although the struggle between the two pro-Christianity and anti-Christianity factions in Chinese intelligentsia and officials class continued, the advantage became closer and closer to the anti-Christianity forces that the emperor was the representative. In particular, from the Kangxi 康熙 reign onwards, the attack on Christianity and the missionaries not only took place at the central court and also flared up in many parts of the country, which showed anti-Christianity forces increasingly more vital, not only present in the central royal court and also in the localities. At the time, stemming from the perception of Christianity's harm to national security and some other causes, the officials of the Han and Manchu people at the central and local continuously submitted reports on the Christian situation. They proposed several measures to solve this problem [Li Tiangang, 1998, 73–74; Jiang Lianghai, 1980, 374, 414–415; Zhongguo di yi lishi dangan guan, 2003a, 120, 162; Zhongguo di yi lishi dangan guan, 1999, 133–137].

Besides, the success of the anti-Christianity movement of the mandarins of the Qing dynasty was also reflected by the arisen of a series of Christianity cases. Especially in the 60 years of Qianlong's reign (1736–1796), there were 11 minor Christian cases nationwide and two major cases (1746, 1784) [Ma Zhao, 1998, 55–56; Liu Fang, 2006, 16–64] in which local mandarins, through their report, had greatly influenced the Qianlong 乾隆 Emperor's plan to deal with Christian problems. They also became a powerful force in implementing imperial policies for this religion. Also, if it was viewed overall, it could be seen that the influence of the anti-Christianity mandarins in the royal court and localities at a certain level also changed the policies of the Qing dynasty toward Christianity through the reigning periods. From the policy of “limiting the growth of Christianity” in the last years of the Kangxi 康熙 dynasty to the policy of “banning Christianity but not strictly” during the Yongzheng 雍正 period, followed by a policy of “sometimes strictly forbidden, sometimes tolerant” in the Qianlong 乾隆 period and the peak was the policy of “extermination of Christianity” in Jiaqing 嘉慶 period [Zhang Yingshun, 2016, 131–132], the above evolutions in the Christian policy of the Qing Dynasty not only stem from the awareness of the Qing emperor but also reflect the power and influence of the anti-Christianity intelligentsia and officials class in China at the time.

The civilians – The largest Christian force in China and Vietnam

In their missionary strategy, the Western missionaries in Vietnam and China always paid particular attention to the Emperors, the royalty and nobility, and the intelligentsia and official class to attract these people to believe in Christianity. According to documents of missionaries in the 17th and 18th centuries, several people in the royal family of the monarchical dynasties, along with a section of the mandarins and their family members in China and Vietnam, converted to Christianity. However, at that time, the presence of Christianity in China and Vietnam led to the conflict between kingship and theocracy. Besides, the Christian doctrine also had many differences between the two countries' dominant ideological systems and traditional cultures. Therefore, to protect the rights of the dynasty and themselves, the majority of the ruling and upper classes in Chinese and Vietnamese society refused to accept the Gospel.

Despite this, the missionaries in China and Vietnam succeeded in conquering the spiritual life of the civilian class. Most Christians in Cochinchina and Tonkin (Vietnam) were poor farmers and craftsmen. They earned their living through daily hard work. They have been heavily exploited by high taxation and hard physical labor [Montézon et al.,

1858, 266–267]. In a report on missionary work in Ke Ngoi village (Tonkin) during the year 1765–1766, Bricart missionary said that two-thirds of this village’s population was non-Christian. The Christians were often the poorest and most miserable people [Montézon et al., 1858, 266–267]. In China, the letters and records of missionaries also indicated that the believers of Christianity were mainly civilians. Their occupation was relatively diverse. They possibly were the farmers, hirelings, caregivers of the children, tailors, small traders, musicians, boat builders, fishermen, painters, artisans, and soldiers [Pfister, 1934, 587; Zhang Ze, 1992, 54; Du Hede, 2001, 46].

Therefore, why did the civilians believe in Christianity in Vietnam and China? The historical data of the Qing dynasty in China, the monarchical dynasties in Vietnam, and the Western missionaries’ records did not mention this issue. However, through indirect exploitation from different documents, researchers can know that the belief in the Christianity of the civilians in two countries, China and Vietnam, was influenced by the fluctuations in both countries’ political and economic situations. The poverty caused by war, natural disasters, and epidemics made the lives of poor people more difficult. In that situation, missionaries could easily conquer their faith through material support or advice on finding happiness in heaven.

Meanwhile, in the 17th and 18th centuries, Vietnamese society was troubled, uncertain, poor, and backward. Besides, wars, natural disasters, epidemics, and heavy taxes made human life miserable. For the poor people dominated by the ruling class, Christianity would be an effective solution to free them [Truong Ba Can, 2008, 554]. In China, at the end of the Ming dynasty, after the fierce persecution in the Nanjing Christian case 南京教案, the missionary in China still achieved positive results, attracting many civilians to convert to Christianity [Pfister, 1932, 90, 128–129, 138–139]. Many civilians wanted to find spiritual support because of the hard life at that time. The tax officials in locals were brutal, like the “tigers” or “wolves” [Zhou Pingping, 2004, 101]. The inflationary currency increased grain prices significantly, which led to severe consequences for residents in cities and towns. From 1626 to 1640, natural disasters devastated China and caused people to scatter everywhere. Crop failure, locust infestation, and smallpox made the lives of Chinese civilians tragic. They felt the end of the world approaching. Many people went into the city to make a living, and some had to take begging or robbery as a livelihood. Therefore, civilian discontent increased incessantly [Zhou Pingping, 2004, 101]. It was why they placed many expectations on Christianity which was a new factor and had many differences from traditional morality. Moreover, it was considered spiritual support and an effective solution to free them from cruel lives.

Besides, the Christian beliefs of the people in the two countries, China-Vietnam, also came from the characteristic of “family evangelism” [Zhang Yingshun, 2016, 57], i.e., members of the same family kept their belief in Christianity over generations. Based on the historical data on the operation of Western Christianity in China during the Qing dynasty, researchers may know that many Chinese families followed Christianity, mainly because their ancestors were Christians [Zhongguo di yi lishi dangan guan, 2003c, 270, 295, 549, 877, 1039, 1063–1064, 1079, 1100, 1127, 1147, 1177–1179, 1202, 1232–1236]. In Vietnam, in historical documents, although there were not many specific records of Vietnamese families believing in Christianity, however, in fact, this phenomenon has been preserved in the Christian community up to now. It had become a collective tradition of Vietnamese Christians. Even non-Christians who want to get married to Christians must study the doctrines and follow Christianity. Moreover, in some documents of Western missionaries, there was a mention of the “hộ đạo (parish)” of Vietnamese people. The term “hộ đạo (parish)” appeared in the 17th century when Jesuit missionaries came to Vietnam to preach the Gospel. They went into the villages of Vietnamese people to evangelize and establish pastoral communities, attracting more and more followers and laying the foundation for the birth of the parish. Therefore, the “hộ đạo (parish)” was founded based on traditional Vietnamese villages [Nguyen Hong Duong, 2000, 32], bringing together Christian families living close to each other, having the same bloodline or the same place of practice Christian rituals. Thus, the existence of the “hộ đạo (parish)” organization was proof to confirm the tradition of Christian beliefs of members of the families living in Vietnamese villages.

Conclusion

From the 17th to the 18th centuries, the attitudes of the classes in Chinese and Vietnamese society towards Christianity were manifested in different directions. Even within each social class, there was a conflict of behavior toward this religion. The ruling force, the emperor, was the supreme representative, aware of the conflict between Christians with traditional culture and Confucianism that governed contemporary society's ideological life. In addition, with the skepticism and worry about the intimidation of religious power, they refused to accept Christianity and implemented more and more fiercely the policy of anti-Christianity. Meanwhile, the attitude toward Christianity of the Vietnamese and Chinese intelligentsia and officials had a deep differentiation. It led to the formation and struggle between "anti-Christianity" and "pro-Christianity" factions. In this struggle, the "anti-Christianity" forces became more and more dominant. It combined closely with the increasingly fierce Christian ban policy of the Qing dynasty in China and monarchial dynasties in Vietnam to become the mainstream in the attitude of conduct toward contemporary Christianity.

However, in contrast to the anti-Christianity process, from the 17th century to the 18th century, the royalty and nobles of the Qing in China and monarchial dynasties in Vietnam, there were still some people who converted to Christianity. In particular, through many ups and downs in the development process, the most significant Christian believers force in Vietnam and China remained civilians, especially the poor. Each country's economic, political, and cultural upheaval was the main reason which promoted this social force to convert to Christianity. Especially when the policy of banning Christianity was strictly enforced by the Qing in China and monarchial dynasties in Vietnam, the missionaries found it difficult to entice the ruling class and the mandarins to believe in Christianity. Therefore, they had to change the missionary object from "Christianizing" all social classes to conquering the spiritual life of civilians. Thus, Christianity came to the civilians in Vietnam and China as a process of resonance from both sides.

Thus, from the 17th century to the 18th century, the attitudes of the classes in Vietnam and China societies towards Christianity were relatively complicated. The attitude towards Christianity of each social class is influenced by political, economic, cultural, and social fluctuations in each country. It also depended on each class's political status, economic realities, and educational level. Attitudes towards Christianity of the upper classes, especially of the ruling and intellectual forces in contemporary Chinese and Vietnamese society, do not merely reflect conflicts in the religious sphere; it is also the reaction of the Eastern culture that this force represents with the Western culture that Christianity is typical. And this reaction became one of the critical factors leading to the development of the ups and downs of Christianity in the two countries of Vietnam and China in the period of the 17th – 18th centuries.

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Текст поступил в редакцию 16.12.2022.

Принят к печати 20.02.2023.

Опубликован 29.06.2023.

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Submitted for publication: December 16, 2022.

Accepted for publication: February 20, 2023.

Published: June 29, 2023.