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Franciscan spiritual literature in Early Qing China: Pedro de la Piñuela's *Moxiang shengong* (1694) and its Western sources

Introduction

Soon after arriving in Asia, Jesuit missionaries published apologetic and catechetical works for the immediate needs of conversion. Later on, they also introduced writings on spirituality to nourish the spiritual life of the Catholic communities. In Japan and China, the classic text *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis and the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola appeared in different versions. When the Franciscans arrived in China in the 1630s, they relied on the Jesuits' Chinese writings. At the end of the seventeenth century, they even reprinted some Jesuit works in Canton. To foster their own mission, the Franciscans wrote also their own catechisms and spiritual works.

This article presents Pedro de la Piñuela, OFM (1650–1704), a missionary who left Mexico and worked in China at the end of the seventeenth century. His *Moxiang shengong* 默想神功 (*Spiritual practice of meditation*) was published at Canton in 1694. In a report written in 1700, Pedro de la Piñuela referred to his work as *Exercitium orationis ex Sancto Petro de Alcantara, cum additionibus*.¹ Since Pedro de Alcántara wrote one single book, Antonio Sisto Rosso deduced correctly that the *Moxiang shengong* was based on the *Tratado de la oración y meditación*.² However, there has not been so far any further research, to my knowledge, on the *Moxiang shengong* and its dependency on the treatise of Pedro de Alcántara, nor has there been research to identify the *additiones* mentioned by Pedro de la Piñuela. With this background, this article endeavors to conduct textual analysis on the Chinese text and its Spanish sources.³

¹ See Pedro de la Piñuela, "Catalogus religiosorum S.P.N.S. Francisci," in *Sinica Franciscana*, edited by Anastasius van den Wyngaert (Quaracchi, Firenze: Apud Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1942), p. 329.

² See Antonio Sisto Rosso, "Pedro de la Piñuela OFM, Mexican missionary to China and author," *Franciscan studies* 8 (1948): 255–262.

³ Since this article only studies the Spanish sources, further research is required on the Chinese sources, especially on the Chinese spiritual treatises published previously by Jesuits, such as Prospero Intorcetta.





Pedro de Alcántara and his treatise

The Franciscan mystic Pedro de Alcántara was born in 1499 in Alcántara, in Extremadura Alta (Spain), as Juan de Garavito y Vilela de Sanabria. From 1511 to 1515, he studied philosophy and law at the famous University of Salamanca, but then left to join the Observant branch of the Franciscans (province of San Gabriel), taking the name of Fray Pedro de Alcántara.⁴

He was known for his mystical experiences and his ascetic life with mortifications of the flesh, sleeping only an hour and a half each day, and eating once every three days. He was also a great preacher, engaging constantly in apostolate in Spain and Portugal. In the Franciscan province of San Gabriel, he held positions of guardian and novice master, being involved with the spiritual training of young friars. Elected in 1538 as Minister Provincial, he promoted very strict rules in his province. In 1554, he went to live as a hermit, attracting many disciples around him. In the period of 1555-1559, he founded in Spain and Portugal a significant number of convents, always promoting the reformed Franciscan life. In 1559, he was named General Commissary of the Reformed branch of Spain, later known as *franciscanos alcantarinos*, and imposed strict rules, like long hours of meditation, sleeping on the floor, and a vegetarian diet. He died in 1562 at Avila, at the age of 63 years old. He was beatified in 1622, and canonized in 1669, with his feast day being set on 19 October. He exerted a strong influence beyond the Franciscan communities, being the friend of the Jesuit San Francisco de Borja (1510-1572) and the Carmelitan Saint Teresa of Avila (1515-1582). He met also with the Spanish king Carlos V (r. 1516-1558) and the kings of Portugal.⁵

Pedro de Alcántara left rules for the Franciscan convents, some letters, a commentary on psalm 51 (*Miserere*) and a *Camino de la Perfección*, but his most important work was the *Tratado de la oración y meditación*, published in Lisbon in 1556. Modern research shows that Pedro de Alcántara had compiled and arranged the first part (the contents of the meditations) from a treatise with the same name and published in 1554 by the Dominican Luis de Granada (1504-1588), but Pedro de Alcántara added new materials to the first part, and the second part (the advice for meditation) is mostly original.⁶

⁴ For his biography, see Arcangel Barrado Manzano, O.F.M., *Pedro de Alcántara (1499-1562). Estudio documentado y crítico de su vida* (Madrid: Editorial Cisneros, 1965).

⁵ See Pedro de Alcántara Martínez, OFM, *San Pedro de Alcántara*, en *Año Cristiano*, Tomo IV (Madrid: Ed. Católica BAC, 1960), pp. 152-160.

⁶ In the past, some have held that Pedro de Alcántara wrote the treatise for the people of Badajoz (Extremadura) already in 1532, thus before the treatise by Luis de





Moreover, Pedro de Alcántara has a specific readership in view, not the religious, but lay people who are beginners in meditation. Therefore, he compiled and deleted many parts from the treatise by Luis de Granada, while rearranging the structure of the meditations. In this way, he sought to make the treatise more accessible to lay people in accordance with Franciscan ideals.

As mentioned above, Pedro de Alcántara's treatise consists of two parts. The first part proposes a series of thematic meditations: it begins with seven daily meditations, from Monday to Sunday, with each having a few specific points for meditation, and is followed by a series of seven daily meditations on the Passion of Christ. The first part ends with six steps to follow during meditation. The second part is much shorter, consisting of general advice about the form. The dependence of Pedro de Alcántara's treatise over the Dominican Luis de Granada invites us to look for Franciscan specificities not in the meditations themselves, but in the advice for meditation.

Pedro de la Piñuela and his translation of Pedro de Alcántara's treatise

The year 1524 is usually considered as the foundation of the Franciscan mission in New Spain (Mexico). Most of the Franciscans there belonged to the Observant branch. Faithful to the strong apostolate zeal of Saint Francis, those Franciscans felt the duty to go to mission abroad, but while engaged in their apostolic works and establishing new missions, they often felt drawn to return to an eremitic life.⁷ Unlike most of his Franciscan brethren born in Spain, Pedro de la Piñuela was a *criollo*, meaning that he was of Spanish ancestry from his both parents. He himself was born in 1650, joined the Franciscans as an Observant friar, stud-

Granada. Others have considered that Pedro de Alcántara had only presented a shorter, more popular, version of the treatise by Luis de Granada. See León Amoros, "San Pedro de Alcántara y su tratado la oración y meditación," in *Archivo ibero-americano: revista de estudios históricos publicada por los Franciscanos* 22 (1962): 163-221. Bert Roest stresses Pedro de Alcántara's use of a wider range of patristic and medieval sources, especially Giovanni Cauli, Alonso de Madrid, Francisco de Osuna, Antonio de Guevara, and the *Instrucción para novicios* by Martin de Santa María Benavides; see Bert Roest, *Franciscan Literature of Religious Instruction Before the Council of Trent* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), p. 554. I consult the digital version of the treatise:

http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1499-1562,_Alcantara._de._Pedro._Santo,_Tratado_de_La_Oracion_Y_Meditacion,_ES.pdf

⁷ See Steven E. Turley, *Franciscan Spirituality and Mission in New Spain, 1524-1599* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).





ied theology in the city of Mexico, then left for Philippines on 19 March 1671. He was ordained priest in Manila in 1673. He arrived Xiamen 廈門 on 4 June 1676. In China, he was known as Pedro Shi, or Shi Duolu 石鐸瑒. He took the Chinese family name of Shi 石, which means stone, probably in reference to his religious name (in Spanish, Pedro is close to *piedra*).

From 1676 to 1684, Pedro de la Piñuela worked in Fujian province, establishing four churches and baptizing more than 400 hundred persons. In 1686, he was sent to Chaozhou 潮州 in Guangdong 廣東 province, but one year later was sent to Jiangxi 江西 province, reporting in 1693 that he had converted there more than one thousand persons in six years. At the provincial chapter held in Manila on 6 June 1699, he was elected Provincial commissary of the Franciscan Mission in China, and came to live in Canton. He died on 30 July 1704 in Xiamen.⁸

It is not by pure chance that he selected the work of Pedro de Alcántara – most probably Pedro de la Piñuela was ignorant about the Dominican origin of the work. Indeed, his biography reveals strong similarities with Pedro de Alcántara's life: they both belonged to the same Observant branch of the Franciscans, shared the same first name (Pedro), and were characterized by the same strong apostolic zeal. Pedro de Alcántara was the founder of Franciscan convents in Spain and Portugal, and Pedro de la Piñuela founded in China a number of churches, one of which was the church of Taining 泰寧 in Fujian 福建 province (1681) which he named in honor of Pedro de Alcántara, who had been canonized twelve years before (1669). Besides the strong affective connection of Pedro de la Piñuela with Pedro de Alcántara, the treatise itself was well suited to the context of the Franciscan mission in China, being an introduction to meditation for lay people.

According to the preface, Pedro de la Piñuela had already finished the work in 1694 (year *jiaxu* 甲戌), and it was approved by Jaime Tarín (1644-1719) who was the Provincial Commissary between 1690 and 1696. Therefore, the work was likely first printed in 1694, or in any case before the end of 1696. Since the work is listed in the list of the Franciscan publications of Canton (廣東省方濟各會堂書版目錄), it can be inferred that it was first printed in Canton.⁹ In 1699, the book

⁸ See Antonio Sisto Rosso, "Pedro de la Piñuela OFM, Mexican missionary to China and author," *Franciscan studies* 8 (1948): 255-262.

⁹ See Thierry Meynard [Mei Qianli 梅謙立], "Shiqishijimo Guangzhou Tianzhujiao chubanye yu bendishehui de hudong 十七世紀末廣州天主教出版業與本地社會的互動" [Interaction between the Catholic Printing Press and local society in Canton in the 17th century], in *Guoji hanxue yanjiu tongxun* 國際漢學研究通訊 [Newsletter for international China studies] 18 (2020): 109-140.





was reprinted in Jí'nan 濟南, Shandong 山東 Province. Not long after, the work was arranged in two volumes or *juan* 卷. The text is basically the same, but was polished by the local Chinese Catholics of Jiangxi. Some Chinese characters were replaced by others, and some expressions were changed, to convey a clearer meaning. Furthermore, some explanatory annotations on terms used in the main text were added in the page header. This revised and annotated edition was published around 1700 in Nanchang 南昌, the capital of the province of Jiangxi.¹⁰ The Nanchang edition has been consulted for this study, but the annotations made by Chinese Christians are not discussed.¹¹

Structure of *Moxiang shengong* and *Tratado de la oración y meditación*

We present below a chart showing the correspondences between the Spanish and the Chinese texts.

¹⁰ For the different editions, see Antonio Sisto Rosso, "Pedro de la Piñuela OFM, Mexican missionary to China and author," *Franciscan studies* 8 (1948): 264-265; Robert Streit, *Bibliotheca missionum* (Freiburg: Herder, 1929), vol. 5, p. 864.

¹¹ Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Borgia Cinese 355.4. Reproduced in *Fandigang tushuguan cang Mingqing Zhongxi wenhua jiaoliushi wenxian congkan* 梵蒂岡圖書館藏明清中西文化交流史文獻叢刊 [Archive Series on the History of Chinese-Western Cultural Exchanges from the Vatican Library], edited by Zhang Xiping 張西平 (Zhengzhou 鄭州: Daxiang 大象, 2014), vol. 38, pp. 593-720.





	Prólogo
卷上 默想 利益	Ia C1 Del fruto que se saca de la oración
卷上 默想 切要	
卷上 默想規 程 (瞻禮二… 、主日)	Ia C2 De la materia de la meditación (lunes... domin- go)
	Ia C3 Del tiempo y futo de estas meditaciones susod- ichas
卷上 默想受難 規程 (瞻禮二… 、主日)	Ia C4 De las otras meditaciones de la Sagrada Pasión y de la manera que habemos de tener en meditarla (lunes... domingo)
卷下 默想前 後六端 (豫 備、習熟、用 工、感謝、奉 獻、祈禱)	Ia C5-11 De seis cosa que pueden entrevenir en el ejer- cicio de la oración (preparación, lección, meditación, hacientamento de gracias, ofrecimento, petición)
卷下 求神愛 祝文	Ia C11 Petición especial del amor de Dios
卷下 默想總 括三路 (煉 路、明路、合 路)	
卷下 默想之 路甚多	
卷下 默想要 知七端	Ia C12 De algunos avisos que se daben tener en este sancto ejercicio
	IlaC2 De nueve cosas que ayudan a alcanzar la devo- ción
	IlaC3 De diez cosas que impiden la devoción
卷下 默想時 祛魔誘	Ila C4 De las tentaciones mas comunes que suelen fatigar a los que se dan a la oración y de sus remedios
	Ila C5 De algunos avisos necesarios para los que se dan a la oración





This chart confirms Pedro de la Piñuela's own claim about the dependence of the Chinese text on the Spanish text. The *Moxiang shengong* follows the overall structure of the *Tratado de la oración y meditación*, first presenting the advantages of meditation and their content (the two series of seven daily meditations), followed by a discussion on the six steps during the meditations, and finally presenting some meditation advice.

The division in two *juan* adopted by the Nanchang edition makes the structure of the work even more apparent: first the matter of the meditation, and then the steps of the meditations with the advice.

Some discrepancies can be observed between Pedro de Alcántara and Pedro de la Piñuela's texts. Not all parts of the *Tratado de la oración y meditación* are translated: the prologue and some sections from the second part are left untranslated. On the other hand, some parts present in the Chinese text are not in the treatise of Pedro de Alcántara, and this explains why Pedro de la Piñuela talks about *additiones*; we shall try below to elucidate the sources.

The preface, first chapters, and contents of the meditations

In the preface to his treatise, Pedro de Alcántara narrates the circumstances for writing the work, but Pedro de la Piñuela's preface to the *Moxiang shengong* is completely different, being built around four questions. First, what kind of book is *Spiritual practice of meditation*? It is answered: a true book which leads the soul into the kingdom of heaven. In response to the question why meditation is fruitful, it is asserted that observing the ten commandments suffices for entering the kingdom of heaven, but just as the candidate for the imperial examinations strives to obtain the first rank at each of the three levels (*sanyuan* 三元) and to hold the highest position, one strive to obtain the ninth degree in heaven through meditation. Then it is asked why meditate on the Creed (*xinjing* 信經) and on the Four Last Things in life (*simo* 四末). It is answered that it is because in these real things the teaching of heaven (*tianjiao* 天教) differs from the Buddhist concept of emptiness (*kong* 空) and from the Taoist concept of nothingness (*wu* 無). Finally, in explaining how one can feel self-pity, it is argued that only by thinking on the four last things can the soul know salvation through the Holy Cross (*shengjia* 聖架) and be united with our Lord (*yuwuzhu qihe* 與吾主契合).

In the first chapter of his treatise about the usefulness of meditation, Pedro de Alcántara starts explaining the inner conflict between the spirit and the flesh, according to the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans: med-



itation is necessary to fight against the law of sin. However, Pedro de la Piñuela does not start with such a pessimistic premise on human nature, probably because this goes against the Confucian theory of human goodness. Instead, he starts by distinguishing external practice (*xinggong* 形功) and spiritual practice (*shengong* 神功), explaining that the latter is necessary to accomplish the former. For this, it is first of all necessary to remove all obstructing evil feelings (*eqing* 惡情) and to develop what is called *dewoxi'an* 得窩西安 or *devoción*. Pedro de la Piñuela explains further that devotion does not spring from our human nature and personal feelings but from the *Sibiliduo sanduo* 斯彼利多三多, or *Spirito Santo*, the help of which is acquired through meditation. He explains the role of the will (*dingzhi* 定志, or *voluntad*), and he quotes an anonymous saint (not identified either in the treatise of Pedro de Alcántara) who exalted meditation saying: “[Meditation] can wash the sins of the soul, obtain a zealous love, strengthen the faith and confirm hope, enjoy spiritual life, nourish the senses, and purify the will by dispersing the sorrows.”¹²

The second chapter continues the main idea that Pedro de la Piñuela had developed in the first chapter about the necessity of meditation: without meditation there cannot be any merit (*shangong* 善功). As the biological life is nourished by the primordial *qi* (*yuanqi* 元氣), the spiritual life is nourished by the soul and by divine grace (*enchong* 恩寵). He quotes a certain Carthusian (*jiaerdushanuo* 嘉爾都沙諾): those constantly dedicated to meditation cannot lose their soul. Pedro de la Piñuela adds that peasants, shepherds, servants and all others who are restricted in their freedom can practice meditation. This conveys the important idea that meditation is a great leveller of human distinction: it allows everybody, even the humble and downtrodden, to have a deep spiritual life. At that time in China, the School of Mind (*xinxue* 心學) was promoting the idea that everyone, regardless of education and social background, has the potential to become a sage through self-cultivation.

The statutes of meditation (*moxiang guicheng* 默想規程) in the third and fourth chapters constitute the central part of the work, describing fourteen topics (*timu* 題目), that is, one series for seven evenings which consist in meditating human life (particular sins, human existence in general, prospect of death, final judgment, glory of the blessed, divine graces), and another series for seven mornings centered on the passion

¹² For the Spanish original: Ia, c.1: En la oración (dice él), se alimpia el ánima de los pecados, apaciéntase la caridad, certificase la fe, fortalecese la esperanza, alégrase el espíritu, derrítense las entrañas, purifícase el corazón, descúbrese la verdad, véncese la tentación, huye la tristeza, renuévanse los sentidos, repárase la virtud enflaquecida, despídese la tibieza, consúmese el orín de los vicios, y en ella no faltan centellas vivas de deseos del cielo, entre los cuales arde la llama del divino amor.



of Jesus (Last Supper, Garden of Gethsemane, denial of Peter, Crown of Thorns, Crucifixion, Sepulture, Resurrection). Following Pedro de Alcántara, Pedro de la Piñuela allows for busy people who cannot meditate twice a day to do it at least once a day, starting the first week with the seven meditations on human life, and the second week with the seven meditations on the Passion.

Pedro de Alcántara does not provide titles for the fourteen meditations, but Pedro de la Piñuela has a short title for each. In the Spanish text, many questions use the second person, for example:

Discorre por todos los beneficios divinos, y por los tiempos de la vida pasada, y mira en qué los has empleado; pues de todos ellos has de dar cuenta a Dios. Pues dime ahora, ¿en qué gastaste la niñez? ¿En qué la mocedad? ¿En qué la juventud? ¿En qué, finalmente, todos los días de la vida pasada? ¿En qué ocupaste los sentidos corporales y las potencias del ánima que Dios te dio para que lo conocieses y sirvieses? ¿En qué se emplearon tus ojos, sino en ver la vanidad? ¿En qué tus oídos, sino en oír la mentira, y en qué tu lengua, sino en mil maneras de juramentos y murmuraciones, y en qué tu gusto, y tu oler, y tu tocar, sino en regalos y blanduras sensuales?

Those questions in the second person are like accusations brought by one's conscience, as if there were an inner fight within the self, as mentioned above in reference to the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans. In the Chinese translation, the form if not the content is rendered differently:

想從前蒙天主賜我甚多恩惠而不能報, 方在孩童以嬉戲而虛費光陰, 及至長大又纖毫功勞可錄。吾主生我靈魂肉身三司五官, 俱不能用之於正, 視所不當視, 聽所不當聽, 言所不當言, 各官貪享逸樂而怠於為善。

To think about the so many graces that I have received in the past from God without being able to pay back, for example during my youth playing and loitering, until adulthood without the smallest achievement to record. My Lord gave me life, soul, flesh, three human capacities and five senses, which I don't use for correct things, but to see what I should not see, to listen to what I should not listen to, to speak about what I should not say. The five organs covet and enjoy what is pleasing and are too





lazy to do good.

The Chinese tradition largely ignores the inner spiritual conflict between two spirits. To adapt to the Chinese context, Pedro de la Piñuela decreases the intensity of the drama, changing the discourse to the first person. Most of the time, questions are changed into affirmations, though there are exceptions. For example, the three questions of Pedro de Alcántara: “Against whom did you sin? Why did you sin? How did you sin? (*Contra quién pecaste, por qué pecaste y en qué manera pecaste?*)” are maintained as questions, but the second person has disappeared in Chinese: “To think about the evil of the sin in three points: first, to sin against whom?; second, to sin for what? ; third, with what state of mind to sin ? (想罪中之惡有三端, 一, 獲罪者為何人; 二, 獲罪者為何因; 三, 獲罪者為何心).

The Christians for whom Pedro de Alcántara wrote were baptized and raised as Catholic. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the numerous spiritual texts made for the laity suggest a substantial demand for such texts, yet the majority of Christians in Europe were satisfied with sacramental practice, and did not have time, or feel the need to engage in meditative practice. In contrast, Chinese Catholics were recent converts. Though the majority like in Europe may have not feel the need to engage in daily meditation, the demand in China for spiritual texts was perhaps even higher than in Europe due to their rarity. Both in Europe and China, the spiritual treatise functions as a call to deepen the personal relationship with Christ, the difference being that the Chinese text often makes references to the time the Chinese had personally converted and embraced the Christian religion (*zi fengjiao yilai* 自奉教以來).

Six steps of meditation

As we said above, Pedro de Alcántara had mostly compiled and rearranged the content of the meditations from the Dominican Luis de Granada. His originality is mostly seen in the steps and recommendations for the various meditative exercises. This is reflected to a significant extent in Piñuela’s translation, yet again with emendations. With regard to the order of meditation, the Chinese text, like its Spanish source gives six steps: *yubei* 豫備 (*preparación*), *xishu* 習熟 (*lección*), *yonggong* 用工 (*meditación*), *ganxie* 感謝 (*hacimiento de gracias*), *fengxian* 奉獻 (*ofrecimiento*), *qidao* 祈禱 (*petición*). In the introduction to the last step, Pedro de Alcántara’s Spanish text includes a long prayer called the “Special re-





quest for the love of God" (*Petición especial del amor de Dios*). Pedro de la Piñuela's version provides an abridged Chinese version, highlighting this prayer by presenting it as an independent chapter (*qiushen'ai zhuwen* 求神愛祝文). This prayer expresses the ardent desire of the soul to be united with God and asks help from the Holy Trinity, Virgin Mary and all the saints. To signal correspondences and differences, we provide here the Spanish text, followed by the Chinese and its English translation:

Sobre todas estas virtudes, dame, Señor, tu gracia, para que te ame yo con todo mi corazón, con toda mi ánima, con todas mis fuerzas y con todas mis entrañas, así como tú lo mandas. ¡Oh, toda mi esperanza, toda mi gloria... Oh, vida de mi ánima y descanso alegre de mi espíritu! ¡Oh, hermoso y claro día de la eternidad, y serena luz de mis entrañas, y paraíso florido de mi corazón!... Apareja, Dios mío, apareja, Señor, una agradable morada para ti en mí, para que, según la promesa de tu santa palabra, vengas a mí y reposes en mí... Hiere, Señor, lo más íntimo de mi ánima con las saetas de tu amor, y embriágala con el vino de tu perfecta caridad.

¡Oh! ¿Cuándo será esto? ¿Cuándo te agradaré en todas las cosas? ¿Cuándo dejaré de ser mío? ¿Cuándo ninguna cosa fuera de ti vivirá en mí? ¿Cuándo arden tísimamente te amaré? ¿Cuándo me abrasará toda la llama de tu amor? ¿Cuándo estaré todo derretido y traspasado con tu efficacísima suavidad?... ¿Cuándo, quitados todos impedimentos y estorbos, me harás un espíritu contigo, para que nunca ya me pueda más apartar de ti?...

¡Oh Altísima, Clementísima, Benignísima Trinidad, Padre, Hijo, Espíritu Santo, un solo Dios verdadero, enséñame, enderézame y ayúdame, Señor, en todo! ¡Oh Padre todopoderoso, por la grandeza de tu infinito poder, asienta y confirma mi memoria en ti e hínchela de santos y devotos pensamientos! ¡Oh Hijo Santísimo, por la eterna sabiduría tuya, clarifica mi entendimiento y adórnalo con el conocimiento de la suma verdad y de mi extremada vileza! ¡Oh Espíritu Santo, amor del Padre y del Hijo, por tu incomprensible bondad, traspasa en mí toda tu voluntad y enciéndela con un tan grande fuego de amor, que ningunas aguas la puedan apagar! ¡Oh Trinidad Sagrada, único Dios mío, y todo mi bien! ¡Oh si pudiese





yo alabarte y amarte como te alaban y aman todos los ángeles!...
¡Oh María, María, María, Virgen Santísima, Madre de Dios, Reina del cielo, Señora del mundo, Sagrario del Espíritu Santo, Lirio de pureza, Rosa de paciencia, Paraíso de deleites, Espejo de Castidad, Dechado de inocencia! Ruega por este pobre desterrado y peregrino, y parte con él de las sobras de tu abundantísima caridad. Oh vosotros, bienaventurados Santos y Santas, y vosotros, bienaventurados espíritus, que así ardéis en el amor de vuestro Criador, y señaladamente vosotros, Serafines, que abrasáis los cielos y la tierra con vuestro amor, no desamparéis este pobre miserable corazón, sino limpiadlo, como los labios de Isaías, de todos sus pecados, y abrasadlo con la llamada de ese vuestro ardentísimo amor, para que sólo a este Señor ame, a Él sólo busque, a El sólo repose y more en siglos de los siglos. Amen.

吾天主賜我諸德，尤望賜我聖寵，能以全心、全靈專志愛爾，如☒我愛爾。我望之慰、我心之味、我靈之生命、我神體之安所、我明悟之朗耀，求爾除滅我心之偏邪，立一大殿于其中為爾永居，使愛情之箭透我心，愛情之味養我靈。

噫嘻，何時得遂此願。何時盡絕不合爾意之情？何時盡克私意，而遵守爾旨？何時絕不記臆我身，惟記臆吾主？何時盡捐諸物諸事于我心，惟獨存吾主？何時愛情之火炙熱我心？何時得享爾之愛情？何時賜我得合于爾，永遠不離于爾？

至仁、至慈皇皇聖三，罷德肋及費略及斯彼利多三多，三位一體，教我，治我，佑我。聖父為爾全能，求爾滿我記含于義善定心在爾。聖子，聖父之上知，求爾賜我明悟，能通微妙事情。聖神，聖父及聖子所發之愛，為爾無比之善，求爾賜我聖火照耀我愛欲，永遠不熄不滅。至聖聖三賜我愛爾，如天神贊美爾，敬慕爾，方為真愛。

卒世童貞，至聖瑪利亞，天主聖母，天堂母皇，世人母主，潔淨之華，快樂之原，童身之鏡，義德之表，求爾分我希微愛情能愛爾所愛之子。天上最尊諸天神，于爾愛之火徧炙宇宙，求爾諸品，弗遺失我，且煉我心之罪，焚之于愛情烈焰。真福聖人聖女，何時能向爾諸品讚美吾主，愛慕吾主，永遠享其樂福？亞孟。





Lord of Heaven, give me virtues, and especially your grace, so that I can love you with all my heart, soul and will, as you want me to do. You are the consolation of my hope, the delight of my heart, the life of my soul, the refuge of my spirit and body, the light of my understanding. I beg you to dispel the perversity of my heart, to establish [in me] a great hall to be your permanent residence, so that the arrows of love pierce my heart and that the delights of love nourish my soul.

Alas, when will this wish be fulfilled ? When will the situation of [me] not uniting with you will end ? When shall I overcome my selfish intention and obey your decree ? When shall I think not anymore about myself, but only about you ? When shall I give up all things in my heart, and only have you ? When will the fire of love pierce my heart and cure it ? When shall I enjoy your love ? When will you allow me to be united with you, to stay with you for ever ?

Most merciful, most clement and august Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Three Persons in one Substance, teach me, lead me, bless me. Holy Father, you are omnipotent; I beg you to fill my memory with just and good thoughts in you. Holy Son, the superior wisdom of the Holy Father, I beg you to give me understanding, so that I know subtle things. Holy Spirit, the love sent forth by the Holy Father and the Holy Son; you are their incomparable good; I beg you to give me the holy fire to illuminate my love, a fire which will never be extinguished. Most Holy Trinity, give me your love like the one of the angels who praise you and venerate you; this is the true love.

Always Virgin, Most Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Heaven, Mother of the living, Model of purity, Fountain of joy, Mirror of chastity, Flower of Virtues, I beg you to share with me a little bit of love so that I may love your beloved Son. Most venerable angels in Heaven, with the fire of your love, you cure the world ; I beg all your hierarchy not to abandon me, but to purify the sins of my heart, to burn them in the flames of love. Blessed, holy men and women, when shall I turn towards your virtues and praise our Lord, venerate Him, and enjoy beatitude for ever? Amen.





We may notice the strong trinitarian dimension of the prayer. The metaphor of the fire runs throughout the text. The fire of love is communicated by the Holy Spirit to the person who has a burning love for God. Love has also the function of purifying and healing the heart. The Chinese text twice expresses the notion of healing with the term *jiu* 灸, or moxibustion in Traditional Chinese Medicine. This technique consists in burning small cones of dried leaves on certain designated points of the body, generally the same points as those used in acupuncture. This metaphor of love as a healing fire would have been easily understood by the Chinese.

Triple way or three ways?

As shown above in our chart, the contents of the meditations and the recommendations are interrupted in the Chinese text by two chapters constituting the *additiones* mentioned by Pedro de la Piñuela. The first of those two chapters presents three ways of spiritual life, about which Pedro de Alcántara says nothing. Here, Pedro de la Piñuela draws from his fellow Franciscan Saint Bonaventure (1221-1274)'s *Triple Way*, or *De triplici via*.¹³ Pedro de la Piñuela vaguely refers to a certain *Wendula* 文度辣 (Saint Bonaventure) who had summarized (*zongkuo* 總括) the three ways (*san lu* 三路) of spiritual life. He qualifies *Wendula* a "holy doctor", or *shengshi* 聖師; indeed, Bonaventure was canonized in 1484 and proclaimed doctor of the church in 1587.

Since Bonaventure composed the *De triplici via* for his fellow Franciscans, he made some remarks about the religious and priestly life of the Franciscans. Pedro de la Piñuela, writing for Chinese lay people, deleted most of those references. Yet Piñuela retained Bonaventure's desire to show that the spiritual practice for each of the three ways was grounded on the three human capacities of memory, intellect and will. The way of purification, or *lianlu* 煉路 (*purgativa*), involves therefore self-knowledge, memory of the sins, and desire for correction (*qian'gai* 遷改).¹⁴

Following Bonaventure, Pedro de la Piñuela presents the three ways

¹³ See the first chapter of *De triplici via*: "About the meditation by which the soul is purified, illuminated and perfected" (*De meditatione qua anima purgatur, illuminatur et perficitur*). For an analysis of this work, see Dayton Phillips, "The way to religious perfection according to St Bonaventure's *De triplici via*," in *Essays in Medieval Life and Thought*, ed. by John Hine Mundy, Richard W. Emery & Benjamin N. Nelson (New York: Biblio and Tannen, 1965), pp. 31-58.

¹⁴ Bonaventure, *De triplici via*, c.3, n.1, p. 12a: *purgativa, quae consistit in expulsiōe peccati*.





as successive, moving from the basic practice (*chugong* 初功) of the purgative way to the second step of the illuminative way (*di'ergongfu* 第二工夫), and to the final step of the unitive way.¹⁵ For example, at the end of the section on the purgative way, Pedro de la Piñuela quotes Saint Bonaventure as saying: “The human mind easily develops the feeling of love towards God; through humility, it makes progress in goodness; then it enters into the illuminative way” (人知其心易發愛主之情, 其時謙恭可以進善, 遂入于明路矣). However, for Bonaventure, the three ways are not entirely construed as three successive ways, but as simultaneous and organically connected. For that reason his book is not intitled the *Three Ways*, but the *Triple Way* (*De triplici via*). For example, concerning the purgative way, Bonaventure writes: “The purgative way starts with the sting of conscience and ends with a feeling of spiritual joy; it is pursued in pains, but consumed in love.”¹⁶ However, Pedro de la Piñuela is not completely ignorant of the integrated method of Bonaventure, because he describes the purgative and the illuminative ways as being both “ways of perfection” (*jinshanzhilu* 進善之路), underlining their complementarity by using the Chinese metaphor of the two wings (*liangyi* 兩翼).

Concerning the purgative way, Bonaventure does not describe the concrete means for ascetic practice, since his focus is on the inner transformation of the soul.¹⁷ Pedro de la Piñuela refers to asceticism (*kugong* 苦功), and he explains further that the purgative way is different for each person according to his personal endowment (*zibing* 資稟 or *fuzhi* 賦質); this discussion about the adaptation of the practice to the specificity of people does not seem to be present in Bonaventure's treatise. The expression *zibing* is used occasionally by the Song philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200), though he uses most often the equivalent *qibing* 氣稟. Since Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), the Italian Jesuit missionary who is traditionally considered the founder of Catholic Church in modern China, most missionaries had strongly rejected the concept of *qi*, which was perceived as the key concept of Chinese materialist monism; for this reason Pedro de la Piñuela may have preferred using *zibing*, or the even rarer *fuzhi*.¹⁸

¹⁵ The same triad is not specific to Bonaventure and can be found in other Franciscan authors like David of Augsburg (1200-1272) and in non-Franciscan spiritual authors at that time.

¹⁶ *Incipit ergo uia ista a stimulo conscientiae et terminatur ad affectum spiritualis laetitiae, et exercetur in dolore, sed consumatur in amore.*

¹⁷ See chapter 1 of *De via purgatiua et triplici eius exercitio*, in Bonaventure's *De triplici via*.

¹⁸ See Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, Revised edition by Thierry Meynard, Translated by Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen (Boston: Jesuit Sources, 2016), p. 55.



Concerning the illuminative way, Saint Bonaventure defines it as the knowledge of the natural, ecclesial and supernatural graces,¹⁹ but Pedro de la Piñuela mentions only the knowledge of natural grace, or “wondrous moral virtues” (*daodezhijingmiao* 道德之精妙), which are described as a mixture of Confucian virtues, such as modesty (*qianrang* 謙讓), filial piety (*xiaoshun* 孝順), and benevolence (*renci* 仁慈), with Christian virtues like chastity (*zhenjie* 貞潔) and spiritual poverty (*shenpin* 神貧). Those graces together lead to imitate (*fangxiao* 倣效) Christ.²⁰

Concerning the third way, *helu* 合路 (*unitiva*), it is described more succinctly by Pedro de la Piñuela, but we can still observe the influence of Bonaventure who describes the union not so much as intellectual, but as volitional (*chengxing qizhi* 承行其旨).

For Pedro de la Piñuela, the purgative way is mostly suited for people who are proud and self-confident, while the illuminative way is suited for people who are humble and virtuous, but this does not seem to be drawn from the *De triplici via*. Pedro de la Piñuela presents here a method which is context-dependent, allowing different ways for different people. This is by no means the traditional way of three consecutive ways that each person has to go through, and this does not represent either the integrated method of Bonaventure. It would seem that Piñuela creates a kind of middle ground here, or provides a sort of pragmatic alternative. In brief, Pedro de la Piñuela indicated the complementary of the three ways according to Bonaventure, but he emphasizes even more strongly the specificity of each way for such and such person according to his personal endowment, or for such and such stage in the spiritual journey of a particular person. This shift of emphasis from the Bonaventurian “triple way” to a context-dependent method reflects the more pragmatic attitude of Pedro de la Piñuela in the context of newly converted Christians for whom he felt that they needed to practice first either the purgative or the illuminative way, before they could be able to integrate the three ways into the integrative Bonaventurian triple way.

Widening the range of meditations for pastoral reasons

Besides the Bonaventurian triple way of mental meditation described

¹⁹ For the natural grace, Bonaventure, *De triplici via*, c.1, n.11, p. 6b: *Ad complementum naturae spectat, quod dedit Deus ex parte corporis membrorum integritatem, complexionis sanitatem, sexus nobilitatem ; ex parte sensus dedit uisum perspicuum, auditum acutum et sermonem discretum ; ex parte animae dedit ingenium clarum, iudicium rectum, animum bonum.*

²⁰ 12a: *illuminativa, quae consistit in imitatione Christi.*



above, Pedro de la Piñuela mentions that there are more than twenty other ways for meditation, with meditations understood here in a very broad sense. He describes six of them, and it seems that this chapter is independent both from the *Tratado de la oración y meditación* and from the *De triplici via*. He may have consulted other texts, or he may have written this part independently.

The first way is reciting prayers (*zhuwen* 祝文), including “reciting the beads of the Holy Mother” (*nian shengmuzhu* 念聖母珠). Pedro de la Piñuela does not provide any details about the Rosary, a form of prayer developed by the Dominicans, and adopted widely by other religious orders, including the Jesuits who had first introduced it in China.²¹ He mentions that prayer aims at developing humility or *qiangong* 謙恭, and also that prayer relies mostly on the concentration of the will (*zhuanxin yizhi* 專心一志).²² While prayer suits people who have difficulties in meditating, praying with concentration of the will is better than meditating without observing the commandments. Pedro de la Piñuela uses the Buddhist term “recitation of sutras” or *songjing* 誦經, but it alludes to the specificity of Christian recitation compared to Buddhism, because Christians should pay attention to the meaning of the words of the prayer (*jingyi* 經義).

Moreover, people who cannot do mental meditation can do spiritual reading, or *lectio divina*, paying attention to the meaning of the text, repeating the text over and over.²³ Indeed, the Jesuits had already published in China a significant corpus of Christian literature for spiritual reading. Yet, Pedro de la Piñuela seems to be concerned about a correct understanding of those books, and he suggests people to find a priest (*shenfu* 神父) for guidance.

Another alternative for people who cannot make rational deductions

²¹ See the *Rules for reciting the Beads [of the Rosary]*, or *Songnianshu guicheng* 誦念珠規程 (c. 1619, 1638). Around ten years after the publication of the *Moxiang shengong*, Pedro de la Piñuela published in Canton the *Classic of the garland of the Holy Mother*, or *Shengmu huaguanjing* 聖母花冠經 (c. 1702), presenting a Franciscan version of the Rosary based on Saint John of Capistrano, OM. (1386-1456).

²² In fact, for Bonaventure, prayer involves all our human capacities (memory, intelligence and will).

²³ Pedro de Alcántara gives similar advice; Pars Ia, c. 12, Quinto aviso: Finalmente, si todavía te pareciese que era tiempo perdido perseverar en la oración y fatigar la cabeza sin provecho, en tal caso no tendría por inconveniente que, después de haber hecho lo que es en ti, tomasen algún libro devoto y trocasses por entonces la oración por la lección; con tanto que el leer fuese, no corrido ni apresurado, sino reposado y con mucho sentimiento de lo que vas leyendo, mezclando muchas veces en sus lugares la oración con la lección, lo cual es cosa muy provechosa y muy fácil de hacer a todo género de personas, aunque sean muy rudas y principalmente en este camino.





(*tuilun* 推論) is experiencing the omnipresence of God (*Tianzhu wu-suobuzai* 天主無所不在) who listens to all our words, sees all our movements and knows all our thoughts, so that one implores forgiveness for mistakes, and that one sets our will in doing good.

Pedro de la Piñuela continues with the annihilation of personal will (*jinjue yiyi* 盡絕已意) to accomplish only the will of God. He mentions the case of a just man who was able to overcome evil by saying prayers and meditating every single moment for thirty years. Perhaps, he refers here to some quietist ideas developed in Spain in the sixteenth century, for example by the Spanish Franciscan Francisco de Osuna (c.1492-c.1540) in his *Third Spiritual Alphabet* (*Tercer Abercedario*, 1527).

All these four meditations constitute possible alternatives to the triple way of Saint Bonaventure. Instead of integrating progressively the three human capacities, three meditations rely on one or another human capacity (reciting prayer and contemplating the omnipresence of God rely on the will; spiritual reading rely on the intellect), whereas one relies on the negation of human capacity to annihilate the will.

Then he continues with another way which is not centered on one's soul, but on the salvation of the souls of others, that is to pray for the conversion of pagans and for the end of heresies. The fight against heresies was indeed a recurrent element in Franciscan missions.²⁴ In the context of China as a new field of evangelization, this prayer would have had much relevance.

The last way is for people unable to meditate because their worries (*youchou* 憂愁) are too many and too deep; they should ask forgiveness for their sins, and offer their tears and pains to the Creator. The vast majority of Catholics in Fujian and Guangdong province came from the lower classes, and their material and psychological difficulties, which might have encumbered meditation, would have constituted the core of their prayer life.

This chapter constitutes a significant and original contribution of Pedro de la Piñuela. He does not seem to rely here so much on written Western sources, but on some twenty odd years of pastoral experience in China. Although he had methodically presented in his work the contents of Pedro de Alcántara's mental meditations and Bonavenutre's anthropological framework, he was aware that many Chinese people had difficulties with mental meditation. Hence he presented six other methods to adapt: as diverse soils produce different fruits, people of different char-

²⁴ For missions in New Spain, see Bert Roest, "Early Mendicant Mission in the New World: Discourses, Experiments, Realities," in *Franciscan studies* 71 (2013): 197-217, here 206.





acters (*gerenzhixing* 個人之性) have different spiritual practices. Some Chinese Catholics found more help saying prayers, like the rosary, which indeed is until now the most popular prayer. Others were reading pious books that the Jesuits had already been publishing in China for over a century, as well as the new books coming out from the Franciscan press in Canton. Others were contemplating the omnipresence of God in a way bearing some similarities with the Chan 禪 tradition, though with a completely different aim. Others prayed for the conversion of pagans, who constituted the vast majority of the population. Others offered their suffering and pain to God.

Advice for obtaining spiritual taste

In the final two chapters of the work, Pedro de la Piñuela returns to Pedro de Alcántara's treatise. In the first of those two chapters, he presents seven important points to master (*yaozhi qiduan* 要知七端), while providing advice for mental meditation. By placing these recommendations here, he suggests that they are suitable not only for mental meditation, but also for the other forms of meditation just discussed above.

He gives seven points (*duan* 端). The first is not to pay too much attention to the rules and steps of meditation, but on whether or not one feels devotion and a feeling of awe and love (*weiaizhiqing* 畏愛之情). This corresponds indeed to the first advice given by Pedro de Alcántara: what serves more for the aim of devotion should be considered as better.²⁵

Pedro de la Piñuela's second point is not to use intellect alone during meditation, but even more love (*aiyu* 愛欲) to express a feeling of reverence (*jing* 敬) towards the Lord. As he explains, relying on the intellect alone makes the will unfocused and the meditation useless. Yet love should respect some fixed rules (*dinggui* 定規); exaggerated suffering and tears (*tongkuliuti* 痛哭流涕) are not helpful, and even a hindrance for obtaining the sweetness (*ganwei* 甘味) of the Lord of Heaven. This second point corresponds to the second and third recommendations given by Pedro de Alcántara.

According to Pedro de la Piñuela's third point, even when one does not feel a strong sweetness during meditation, one should not consider it as useless, for such a thought comes in fact from evil (*xiemo* 邪魔); on the contrary, one should patiently hope that the Lord of Heaven descends and consoles the soul. This corresponds to the fifth advice of Pedro de

²⁵ Pars Ia, c. 12: como el fin de todo esto sea la devoción, lo que más sirviere para este fin, eso se ha de tener por lo mayor.





Alcántara.²⁶

The fourth point is that, when a person experiences the blessings of the Lord and feels spiritual taste (*shenwei* 神味), he or she should not interrupt the practice of meditation because the more holy blessing there is, the more moral virtues there are as a reward. For life to spring from dry soil, both a drop of water and a torrent of water are useless; instead, water must be applied regularly. Similarly, it is necessary to pray every day for a significant amount of time. To pray for a few quarters of an hour is not as good as to pray for a period of two hours, because one hour is already needed just to recollect the five senses, eradicate evil thoughts, and stabilize the will. For lay people, whether in Europe or in China, the objective of two hours of daily meditation is quite high. This fourth point corresponds to Pedro de Alcántara's sixth recommendation.²⁷

The fifth point is that meditation is necessary for all the other moral virtues, and that meditation and the moral virtues should be mutually beneficial. The Spanish text uses the comparisons of a guitar (*vihuela*) and of a clock (*reloj*) to express the necessity of harmony between meditation and moral virtues.²⁸ In his Chinese version, Pedro de la Piñuela expresses similar ideas with the metaphors of playing the zither (*guqin* 鼓琴) and of mechanical clocks (*zimingzhong* 自鳴鐘).²⁹

The sixth point attributes the lack of efficiency in meditation to a shallow and partial practice, or to failure to master the seven passions. The seventh point pursues this ascetic line of removing every evil from one's eyes or ears.

In brief, those recommendations reflect the objective of experiencing divine consolations, or spiritual taste, during meditation. Unlike Jesuit spirituality and its focus on discerning the concrete decisions needed for

²⁶ The fourth advice, omitted in the Chinese text, is for the heart to keep the balance between the two extremes of being fallen or raised. Pars Ia, c. 12: tener el corazón no caído ni flojo, sino vivo, atento y levantado a lo alto.

²⁷ Pars Ia, c. 12, Quinto aviso: todo lo que es menos de hora media o dos horas es corto el plazo para la oración. In both the Spanish and the Chinese texts are found the *Offering of the poor widow* (Luke 21:2).

²⁸ It should be noted that the Chinese text does not continue with the Advices of the First part, but borrows here from the Seventh Advice of the Second Part; Pars IIa, c. 5, Septimo aviso: Por esto, pues, el siervo de Dios debe poner los ojos no en una virtud sola, por grande que sea, sino en todas las virtudes; porque así como en la vihuela una sola voz no hace armonía si no suenan todas, así una virtud sola no basta para hacer esta spiritual consonancia si todas no responden con ella. Y así como un reloj si se embaraza un solo punto para todo, así también acaece en el reloj de la vida espiritual si falta una sola virtud.

²⁹ Let us recall that the missionaries had introduced mechanical clocks in China, and that Canton became an important center of production. See Tang Kaijian 湯開建, *Setting off from Macau: Essays on Jesuit History during the Ming and Qing Dynasties* (Brill: Boston, 2016), pp. 257-281.





orienting one's life and actions, this spirituality aims at a personal encounter by which the soul savors God's love, *hic et nunc*.

Removing evil temptations

The final chapter is about removing evil temptations (*moyou* 魔誘), and Pedro de la Piñuela follows quite closely the last chapter of Pedro de Alcántara's treatise.³⁰ The first temptation is to consider meditation as useless (*wuyi* 無益; *poco fruto*), and to overcome this, one has to recognize one's own sinfulness. Some saints in the past have not experienced any sweet taste (*ziwei* 滋味) in years of meditation, because the Lord of Heaven first puts people to the test with bitter taste (*kuwei* 苦味), and then bestows spiritual taste (*shenwei* 神味).

The second temptation consists in the collection of perverse ideas, or *wangnian yeji* 妄念業集 (*pensamientos importunos*), where the word *ye* 業 has the Buddhist meaning of karma. To overcome this temptation, it is necessary to have vigor and perseverance (*mengli hengxin* 猛力恆心; *pelear varonil y perseverantemente*), praying with those words: "Lord, look at the thorns that I am producing; destroy all those real evil thoughts; I beg You to protect and save me."

For the third temptation about fears and fantasies, Pedro de la Piñuela expresses it as the fear of ghosts (*jingju guiwu* 驚懼鬼物). The counterpoise to this fear is to show courage, to believe that the Lord of Heaven does not allow ghosts to do harm, and also to pray to one's guardian angel (*tianshen* 天神).³¹

The fourth temptation is sleepiness during prostrated meditation. To resist this temptation, one ought to fast, not to drink wine, to stand straight, then to kneel, to extend the two arms in the shape of a cross, to beat oneself with a whip (*dabianzi* 打鞭子), and to wear a copper-belt (*xitongdai* 繫銅帶). The Spanish text does not mention explicitly the whip, but it has the expression of "engaging in discipline or another ascetic practice to wake up and puncture the flesh" (*hacer alguna disciplina u otra cualquiera aspereza que despierte y punce la carne*). Here again, one's own efforts are not the most important, and one is reminded to beg the Lord of Heaven for salvation from all temptations. Moreover, a certain amount of sleep is necessary for fruitful spiritual practice; in case of illness, one should not worry too much about it, unless the soul loses all

³⁰ See Pars IIa, c. 4: De las tentaciones mas communes que suelen fatigar a los que se dan a la oración, y des sus remedios.

³¹ This corresponds to the fifth advice of Pedro de Alcántara about fears and fantasies (*temores y fantasias*). Pedro de la Piñuela has left aside the third advice, about blasphemies, and the fourth advice, about unfaithfulness.





taste.

The fifth temptation is to be presumptuous about one's own spiritual prowess (*zikua* 自誇; *presunción*). To counteract it, one is to remember that in comparison with the saints of the past, one has not yet accomplished one out of ten thousand (*wowanbujiyi* 我萬不及一). This corresponds to the metaphor in Spanish of being a dwarf facing a giant.³²

Another temptation is to teach others, and the solution is to pay attention first to one's own soul. The final temptation is to desire some special revelations (默示以各等之事). The Chinese text excludes mention of raptures (*arrebatamientos*) that are mentioned in the Spanish text. The solution here again is modesty.

Finally, Pedro de la Piñuela states that all the preceding discussion is aimed at opening the gate for people to make progress; while rules need to be followed, it is more important to humbly beg the Lord to come. It is also recalled that illumination (*qidi* 启迪) cannot be written in books.

As in the previous chapter, this final section provides here precious advice for meditation, but with a specific focus on overcoming difficulties. This shows the pragmatic approach of our Chinese treatise on meditation. Those two last chapters are not so much for the practitioner to be read, but they are like reminders for the spiritual director.

Conclusion

This study confirms that the *Moxiang shengong* is based on Pedro de Alcántara's *Tratado de la oración y meditación*, as Pedro de la Piñuela had himself indicated. Furthermore, we have shown that it is an abridgement, and that a few sections are left untranslated. As in the *Tratado de la oración y meditación*, the actual contents of the meditation in the *Moxiang shengong* are intended to be meditated by the exercitant. At the same time, the recommendations are not so much written for the exercitant but for the spiritual director who guides the exercitant. This indicates that the *Moxiang shengong* was intended to be used by the Chinese Catholics for their meditations, and by the Franciscan priests who were guiding them.

Quite significantly, Pedro de la Piñuela included in his translation several parts taken from Saint Bonaventure's *De triplici via*, and this source has thus far been overlooked. Indeed, Pedro de Alcántara's treatise offered to Pedro de la Piñuela a convenient and short manual for meditation, but as such the text lacks a philosophical-anthropological

³² Pars IIa, c. 4: y veras que eres ante ellos como un enano en presencia de un gigante. The opposite temptation of distrust in oneself (*disconfianza*) is not mentioned by Pedro de Alcántara.





underpinning. Bonaventure's triple way is theoretically important because it displays the deep anthropological basis of Franciscan spirituality, based on the transformation of human memory, intelligence and will. However, the text of Piñuela tends to shift away from the integrative transformation advocated by Bonaventure in his "triple way," as well as from the traditional "three ways," toward a more pragmatic method that is accommodated to the needs of different persons.

In terms of reception, this small manual did not leave many literary traces in seventeenth century China, but it probably impacted the lives of many people who used it for meditation, finding inspiration for their life. Indeed, the year *Moxiang shengong* was published in Canton, a fellow Franciscan Bernardino de Llagas Mercado (1655-1713), based at the church of Huizhou 惠州, some 140 kms from Canton, gave a copy of the book to the Catholic Han Jun 韓雋 (dates unknown). Soon afterwards, Pedro de la Piñuela himself came to Huizhou, and after Mass, Bernardino de Llagas introduced Pedro de la Piñuela to Han Jun, telling him: "Here is the author of the *Moxiang shengong* that you admired so much." In the same year of 1694, Han Jun wrote a preface to a new book by Pedro de la Piñuela, called *Yongzan dingheng* 永暫定衡 [*Measure between the eternity and the temporal*], in which Han Jun tells the story.³³ This illustrates how Franciscan literature was meeting the spiritual needs of the Chinese Catholic at that time.

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³³ Thierry Meynard [Mei Qianli], "Shiqishijimo Guangzhou Tianzhujiao chubanye yu bendishehui de hudong," p. 130.

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