

Heshihen, Superintendent of the Wuyindian Workshops: A “Rites Controversy” Figure of the Department of Imperial Household

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Abstract

Heshihen, also known as Henkama in Western literature, is one of the three sons of Asitan, the famous translator of early Qing period. Source materials and researches on Hesu and Osu, his two brothers, are relatively rich. However, all kinds of descriptions about this man are not quite free from shortcomings.

For ten more years before his death, Heshihen served with the title of “Superintendent of the Wuyindian Workshops”, in charge of compiling, editing, and printing books to the Imperial order. Concurrently, he was also charged to take care of the business of Western missionaries. He helped to bring out the *Brevis Relatio* (1700), and functioned in several ways during Carlo Tommaso Maillard de Tournon, the Papal legation’s court-visit and its aftermath. As a result of frequent contact with the Westerners, he was duly recorded in their works.

This paper tries to explore available materials, and makes inquiries into his family and his personal achievement. Emphases will be laid both on his two major roles.

Keywords: Department of Imperial Household, *booi* (bondservant), Wuyindian, Heshihen (Henkama), Carlo Tommaso Maillard de Tournon, Rites Controversy