



# **A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552-1610**

*R. Po-chia Hsia*

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## **A Jesuit in the Forbidden City: Matteo Ricci 1552-1610** R. Po-chia Hsia

A 16th century Italian Jesuit, Matteo Ricci was the founder of the Catholic Mission in China and one of the most famous missionaries of all time. A pioneer in bringing Christianity to China, Ricci spent twenty eight years in the country, in which time he crossed the cultural divides between China and the West by immersing himself in the language and culture of his hosts. Even 400 years later, he is still one of the best known westerners in China, celebrated for introducing western scientific and religious ideas to China and for explaining Chinese culture to Europe.

The first critical biography of Ricci to use all relevant sources, both Chinese and Western, *A Jesuit in the Forbidden City* tells the story of a remarkable life that bridged Counter-Reformation Catholic Europe and China under the Ming dynasty. Hsia follows the life of Ricci from his childhood in Macerata, through his education in Rome, to his sojourn in Portuguese India, before the start of his long journey of self-discovery and cultural encounter in the Ming realm. Along the way, we glimpse the workings of the Portuguese maritime empire in Asia, the mission of the Society of Jesus, and life in the European enclave of Macau on the Chinese coast, as well as invaluable sketches of Ricci's fellow Jesuits and portraits of the Chinese mandarins who formed networks indispensable for Ricci's success.

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