

The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci Study Guide

**The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci by Jonathan
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Plot Summary

The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci concerns the missionary efforts of the late 16th century Jesuit priest, Matteo Ricci, to convert the Chinese people to Christianity. Matteo Ricci is born in Macerata, Italy on October 6th, 1552 within the "papal domain" or the Papal States in what is today Italy. In 1561 he begins his education at a Jesuit school and in 1568 he leaves for Rome to study law. On August 15th, 1571, he joins the new Catholic order, The Society of Jesus and becomes a Jesuit, after which he studies at a Jesuit college in Florence and then in Rome. During this time, the Jesuit Order is young and it encourages its priests to travel across the world and convert the peoples of earth to Catholicism. So Ricci decides to become a missionary and sails to Macao, China. For the next twenty-eight years, Ricci attempts to convert the Chinese people to Catholicism, and it is during this period that most of the book takes place. Ricci believes that he can convert the Chinese elites by impressing them with his learning. During his Jesuit training, he learns to use mnemonic devices to commit vast stretches of text into memory.

Ricci's most important task is communicating the basic Christian idea to the Chinese in a way they can appreciate. It is for this purpose that he turns to the mnemonic devices he learns as a student. He teaches the Chinese to create "memory palaces," or imaginary buildings that will store images and pictures in certain locations, enabling them storage of large amounts of information in the form of visual symbols organized within an imagined structure. To communicate the Christian idea to the Chinese, he creates a memory palace for them with a reception hall that contains four images derived from Chinese ideographs that are in turn associated with four pictures representing stories and individuals in the Bible. Each image has a caption and three have his commentaries. The pictures are associated with these Chinese ideographs in order to summarize Christian ideas for the Chinese people.

The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci is structured around the idea of the memory palace and the four pictures and four images that Ricci places in the memory palace of his Chinese students to help them understand Christianity. However, the ideas embodied in each image and picture are used by the author to give the relevant historical and intellectual background of Ricci's life and ideas, along with the history of his life and experiences prior to and during his stay in China. Thus, the nine chapters of the book introduce the memory palace, the four images and four pictures, but also say much, much more about life and culture in China and Europe in the last 16th and early 17th centuries, particularly within the Jesuit Order and related groups.



Chapter One, Building the Palace

Chapter One, Building the Palace Summary and Analysis

In 1596, a Jesuit named Matteo Ricci teaches the Chinese people how to build a memory palace; the palace's size is determined by how much they wish to remember. However, these palaces are not to be built in the physical world, but within the mind. Further, they can only be built in three places—drawn from reality that exists, from pure imagination and fiction or a combination of the two. These constructs allow concepts to be created and stored in the mind; Ricci believes that humans can remember anything by associating a memory with an image. Ricci explains to the Chinese that this idea derives from the Greek poet Simonides. He tells them this so that they will inquire about the religion that gives him this power of memory. He is pleased to be with the Chinese and fights hard to live among them.

Ricci is born in Macerata in 1552 and joins the Jesuits in 1571. He is trained in theology, humanities and the sciences, and spends five years as an apprentice in India and goes to China in 1583 as a missionary. By 1595, he knows the Chinese language and comes to live in a home in the administrative and commercial city of Nanching; he then draws up a book of famed aphorisms and teachings of the great members of Western civilization and teaches Chinese scholars mnemonic techniques. Ricci instructs one of the highest families in Chinese society, headed by Governor Lu who is employed high in the Ming dynasty bureaucracy and serves the regime in many capacities. Lu is now preparing his sons for their bureaucratic examinations. Ricci uses his mnemonic techniques to help Lu's sons pass the exams, which he hopes will ingratiate himself to them; he will then use their influence to advance the Catholic cause.

The author speculates on where Ricci may have picked up on the idea of mnemonic devices, suggesting alternative theories. Mnemonic devices have been shown to be extremely powerful and have been used in various different historical contexts over the period humanity has known of them. Many used mnemonic devices to memorize poems in ancient Greece, to give one example. The Chinese are stunned by Ricci's abilities but they are not uncommon among his order. His abilities do have limits. In his book on memory, Ricci recounts one of his own memory palaces in which he places four memory images in his reception hall. There are four religious pictures there, each with a caption and three with his own commentaries attached. The pictures are of Christ and Peter at the Sea of Galilee, of Christ and the two disciples at Emmaus, of the men of Sodom falling blinded before the angel of the Lord, and of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child. The pictures are meant to help the Chinese understand the life of Christ.

Many are becoming critical of learning through mnemonic devices, however. Cornelius Agrippa criticizes the use of these "monstrous" images for causing "madness and frenzy instead of profound and sure memory" in his book from the 1530s. Erasmus and Melancthon both see mnemonic devices as harkening back to an age of monkish



superstition. Rabelais mocks the practice. However, most Catholic theologians of Ricci's time are not moved by these criticisms. Aquinas in the 13th century defends the use of these devices as part of the moral regulation of memory. Ludolfus of Saxony, a devotional writer from the 14th century, argues that mnemonic devices can be used to relive the life of Christ. The founder of the Jesuit order, Ignatius of Loyala, is fascinated by Ludolfus and encourages the use of mnemonic devices as a result. Ignatius believed that these memory palaces can be used to remember the multitude of one's sins and where they took place, although some think Ignatius goes too far (such as the Dominicans, who brand Ignatius a heretic).

It is true that mnemonic devices are seen as a kind of magic and the line between true religious experiences and magical powers is a vague one. In fact, the author shows that the Chinese perceive Ricci's abilities as magical. During this time, the Renaissance is leading to the revival of the study of magic, and so the Chinese reaction is understandable. Ricci's use of mnemonic devices can be understood not only as part of an aggressive Counter-Reformation but as part of the long Christian tradition of missionaries confronting purported magicians. Many ardent Catholics have many beliefs about magic, often hidden within a largely theologically accepted Neo-Platonic metaphysical system. Mnemonic devices are already being constructed during the Renaissance in order to retain substantial scientific, mathematical and musical information. Ricci simply applies these ideas to theology and missionary work in order to convert the Chinese away from their Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian religions.

The book will explore Ricci's four memory images from his treatise; these images will point the way towards understanding all that he knows about Catholic theology and iconography during this period of Western history. There are four images and four pictures corresponding to these images. These eight elements comprise the next seven chapters. The author encourages the reader to focus on the connections between Ricci's classical influences and his Chinese present, for Ricci often integrates these ideas for his own purposes, particularly to connect Christian and Chinese symbols.



Chapter Two, The First Image: The Warriors

Chapter Two, The First Image: The Warriors Summary and Analysis

For his first image, Ricci uses the Chinese ideograph for war or "wu." Ricci cuts a representation of wu diagonally and uses the two pieces as their own ideographs, which mean "spear" and "to stop/prevent" for the top and bottom halves. This splitting is a Chinese practice dating back two thousand years. The two ideas are then recombined into a single image of a warrior who is ready to strike an enemy with his spear and a second warrior who grabs the first one by his wrist to prevent himself from falling from the blow. Ricci notes that the images must be "lively" and produce strong feeling. The differences in images should be exaggerated. Ricci next gives some rules for picking a location to store information—the area of the ideograph should be "spacious" and the list "clear and even" but not too bright. The spaces must be "clean and dry" and so on. Ricci builds the reception hall of his memory palace according to these rules—in the southeast corner of his memory palace, he stores the two warriors—they will be forever frozen in conflict.

Ricci grew up in Macerata, during a period of war and violence. Two families—the Alaleona and Pellicani families—had been fighting for twenty years; at age three, another family jumped into the fray and when Ricci was five, a Benedictine friar was killed by yet another family. Many such events followed these. Clergy and city fathers struggled to end the violence, but murder was still common when Ricci left for Rome to study in 1568. Furthermore, the rural poor outside of Macerata's walls had been fighting bandits. Thus, violence was not confined to the city and followed Ricci on his way to Rome. Macerata was also an administrative city of the papacy, and so was affected by papal politics. Additionally, there were great tensions with Muslims in the Ottoman Empire—and Macerata was in constant danger of attack from the Turks. Military technology and tactics were shifting to more accurate and lighter firearms, changing the relationship between infantry and cavalry. Hand blows decreased as a tactic, for instance. As a result of this, Ricci grew up thinking of war as a scientific operation and wrote some reflections on war in 1607. He had studied various local wars in the past, which influenced him, particularly the Punic Wars which were analogous to the wars of the Counter-Reformation.

Ricci meets King Sebastian of Portugal in Lisbon, who later dies without an heir. This decreases the prestige of Christendom in a time when missionary work was important, and the Jesuits were much concerned about this. Concerns about the decline of the prestige of Christendom applied particularly to Jesuit missions in India, where various ports were vulnerable to Muslim assault. Ricci did not think much of the ability of Indians to absorb European education; this was a view he apparently absorbed from the



charismatic Jesuit missionary to India, Alessandro Valignano, who had come to Goa—then Ricci's city of residence—in 1574. Valignano aimed to inspire the Asian missions of the Jesuits with zeal and established new mission bases throughout Asia. As mentioned, he had little hope for the Indians, and he found the Japanese to be completely impervious to Christianity—their mixture of "cruelty, dignity, depravity, and hypocrisy" would prevent them from truly living the faith. Valignano found the Chinese more amenable, believing them "soft" and like women, ready to do what they were told; he also saw them as ambivalent about war, a view Ricci came to share. The Chinese seemed to prefer pomp and circumstance in the military to actual combat. However, this opinion, the author argues, only illustrated Ricci and Valignano's ignorance about recent Chinese history where many groups of bandits and pirates had been suppressed. Ricci found the punishments dealt out by the Chinese bureaucracy inappropriate, disproportionate and cruel. Those in charge of the use of force were seen as particularly corrupt. This opinion was strengthened in 1606 when a young Chinese Jesuit, Francesco Martines, was killed.

A difficulty for Ricci was the fact that the Japanese general Hideyoshi Toyotomi announced that he would conquer Korea and then overthrow the Chinese emperor. Hideyoshi had 15,000 Christians in his notoriously vicious army; this made many Chinese despise Christians and made people fear Ricci when he would visit them. These fears had led to the death of Francesco, in all likelihood. It was partly for this reason that Ricci had to proceed lightly in his mission work. Towards the end of his life, Ricci was struck that the Chinese so feared foreign nations when they themselves were so large and had such a large army. He the Chinese terrified of foreigners, wanting no one to come in unless they would stay their whole lives. However, Ricci was committed to their conversion, and was strengthened by the Council of Trent reinvigorating the Catholic Church's commitment to doctrine. These features of Catholic and Chinese lives provide much of the background for Ricci's concerted efforts at subtle, intelligent mission work.



Chapter Three, The First Picture: The Apostle in the Waves

Chapter Three, The First Picture: The Apostle in the Waves Summary and Analysis

Ricci gives Cheng Dayue the first picture to place in the "Ink Garden"—a picture of the Apostle Peter trying to walk on water in the Sea of Galilee, as Jesus was at that moment. Since the Bible has not been translated into Chinese, Ricci can use the story as he pleases. He presents a new version of the story, with Jesus as a wise man, akin to Chinese sages in their tradition. Ricci gives a new interpretation out of necessity, in part to use the picture for mnemonic purposes that the Chinese might remember the story. Ricci has a variety of images from the gospels with him at the time, and decides to keep the picture of Peter and Christ. He needs to get the image to represent Christ's death and atonement and this is why he chooses to alter the original story.

Ricci has always been surrounded by water, particularly during the great days of exploration in the 16th century. He has also taken a trip from Portugal to India throughout much of 1578. Throughout his life, he develops strong map-making skills and skill for navigating bad weather, particularly on the trip from India to China. The Jesuits know the Chinese seas well enough to send two copies of their letters via two different passages when they write home. Marine catastrophes are commonplace, in part due to "insane" overloading of goods, people and services in ships. Pirates and privateers abound as well. Ricci's trip to India from Portugal is particularly complex, from the few indications of the trip we have; no surviving direct accounts remain. He often explains the hand of God to the Chinese in terms of a ship pilot, an analogy he apparently develops on the voyage. Ricci's trip from Lisbon to Goa in early 1578 is on a small fleet of ships: the St. Gregory, the Good Jesus and the St. Louis, with Ricci aboard the St. Louis, the flagship. Some accounts of the other ships survive, so some of his journey can be reconstructed. During the trip, Ricci is not yet a priest, and does not yet have experience in Jesuit practice. On the trip, the Jesuits practice their own devotions, which includes an hour of prayer after dawn, confessions every eight days, and so on. For recreation, the ship passengers often hunt sharks. The Jesuits also tend to the sick. In Mozambique, apparently the ships pick up several hundred slaves to transport.

Ricci's future voyages do not have the drama of the first. A later voyage from Nanjing to Nanchang brings him his most significant dream. He dreams that God comes to him and tells him to begin his preaching in Peking. This dream bears an analogy with Paul on the road to Damascus and the appearance of Christ to Ignatius of Loyola in 1537.

Ricci learns about China through his own journeys across its rivers, lakes and canals. Most Chinese do not go near to the water, as many dangers lurked there. He keeps his



eyes open for technical details to use in his mission work. Ricci is usually impressed by the large number of boats on China's main rivers.

Emperor Wanli rules China from 1573 to 1620, covering the entire period of Ricci's life there. Wanli refuses to get involved in particular affairs, leaving these matters to his administrative eunuchs who amass great power. Ricci comes to know and work with some of them. They sometimes help him travel, as China's rivers are often dangerous. He even thinks the Yellow River brings more harm than aid. Ricci also meets Buddhist monks along the rivers.

Matteo regrets not having more access to the Bible. His Chinese converts complain of the lack of Christian works available to them. Ricci is able to acquire a wonderful Plantin Bible to use with them, which helps a great deal. The Bible is a "pinnacle" of Counter-Reformation investment—it takes Christopher Plantin, a residence of Antwerp, five years to produce with funds provided by King Phillip II of Spain. In 1604, one of the Plantin Bibles comes to Nanjing. During the voyage, the transport boat breaks apart and the books go into the water, but the Plantin Bible does not sink. Ricci believes this is God's will at work. Floods are a destructive and common part of life in China, so this is a miraculous event. Floods often cause other problems as well, which are recorded by the author. A young sick Chinese man, Scielou loses many of his possessions during a flood.



Chapter Four, The Second Image: The Huihui

Chapter Four, The Second Image: The Huihui Summary and Analysis

The second example of constructing a memory image is the Chinese ideograph yao. Ricci chooses an ideograph easy to write but difficult to translate. It can mean to want something, to need something, something important or that something must be done. The ideograph is largely contextual in meaning. Yao is used for "shall" in Ricci's translation of the Ten Commandments in 1584. However, when he translates some devotional prayers, he uses yao to mean "fundamental." Again, Ricci cuts the ideograph in two (this time horizontally), the upper meaning "west" and the lower meaning "a woman." A Chinese person would initially understand the split ideograph to mean "a woman from the Xixia territories, who is a Muslim." Ricci prefers to translate it as "a woman from the northwest, who is a huihui." Huihui is not only a Muslim person but also applies to Jews and Nestorian Christians in China. The Nestorians were the "huihui of the cross." In China, the three Western religious systems—Christianity, Judaism and Islam—are grouped together in an ideograph, so Ricci can use the symbol to represent the people of the one true God—a belief they share in common. The tribeswoman image is placed in the northwest corner of Ricci's reception hall in his memory palace, close to the warriors but not so close as to be confused with them.

Ricci draws a map of the world in 1584 with Chinese names for the countries of the world. He hangs it in his house in Zhaoqing, a prosperous city. A Western visitor copies the map and has wood-block prints made of it, so that the map circulates. Ricci then makes a more accurate map and by 1602 prints his own version. The map describes the political organization of the peoples of the West and notes the Holy Land and holy cities. The map illustrates cross-cultural similarities, similarities often noted by the fairly cosmopolitan Jesuits, who hear confessions in Rome in many languages.

Missionary fervor is strong among the Jesuits. Ignatius of Loyola had encouraged his order to carry out the will of the Roman pontiff throughout the world, whether among the Turks, those among the Indies or any heretics. Some clues indicate that Ricci is influenced by this spirit of mission work. The Jesuits are rigorously trained in many fields for these activities, yet they receive little instruction in alternative doctrines. However, they are unusually ecumenical vis-à-vis Judaism and Islam, emphasizing many similarities between them. This is odd, particularly considering the great degree of Muslim power at the time. Some Jesuits, including Ricci, are also very concerned about the Inquisition. At the time, there is a reasonable degree of peace between the three religions in many areas, although life for Jews in Christendom is very difficult. In India, the Jesuits mostly focus on indigenous Christians in the area—Nestorians—rather than Jews or Muslims. They are concerned to root out the Nestorian heresy.



Ricci carries a certain ecumenism with him to China, sometimes dressing like a Buddhist monk in order to respect the dress expected of a religious man in China. He later discovers that this is not a way to gain high stature, so he stops. Thus, Ricci shifts perceptions of his social status slowly. He also begins to study the major religions of China—Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism—and believes that they bear various similarities to some Greek doctrines, particularly those of the Pythagoreans. He finds Buddhism and Taoism to have Trinitarian aspects. He notes the presence of many Muslims in the east, but is unsure how they ended up there; he also finds Chinese Muslims to be rather weak in their faith. He is surprised to find pockets of Christians in Nanjing, many having converted to Islam or Islam-related theological views. The Nestorians have their own practices as well. He hears news that in the east there are Muslims with many Christian beliefs. He is particularly startled to discover Chinese Jews. Ricci ultimately fails to completely shed his Buddhist image and attain a Confucian one, despite his inquiries into other faiths and social practices. Sometimes his zeal ebbs, but occasionally a Jesuit historian named Gian Pietro Maffei lifts his spirits. Others strengthen him as well. Ricci comes to accept his label as a huihui, which means that he too is represented within the memory palace.



Chapter Five, The Second Picture: The Road to Emmaus

Chapter Five, The Second Picture: The Road to Emmaus Summary and Analysis

The second picture for Cheng Dayue depicts the story of Christ encountering two disciples on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection. The passage has many hidden meanings, and Ricci cannot explain these intricacies to the Chinese easily, if at all. So he alters the story in order to make it palatable to the Chinese. Many details are left out; the main focus of the picture is three men in intense conversation but who also seem still and frozen. The Chinese will see two men accepting the resurrection of God and the third preparing for His return to heaven.

Ricci is one of seven children in Macerata in the year 1559. The Jesuits in Rome publish their first book in this year as well. They are searching for the ideal font for their work which marks them as entering the world of Renaissance humanism. Ignatius encourages the Jesuits to publish Latin works, removing offensive and vulgar material but keeping the grandeur and the moral of the stories the same. This press practice continues to expand and Arabic and Hebrew fonts are added. Jesuit universities are also formulating their curriculum, which has been carefully formulated by 1566, when Ricci joins the order. Ignatius wants students to commit many subjects to memory, and some Jesuits take this to mean memorization. Presumably Ricci develops his mnemonic techniques at this time. He becomes particularly adept at combining vivid imagery and lengthy sequence with his mnemonic skill. This enables him to pull off some dramatic successes in China. He is able to memorize practically all Chinese ideographs in five months. Further, he discovers how to use ideographs to create memory images. Chinese sentences can be represented as a series of images. Twelve years later he knows Chinese well enough to teach his methods. By 1594, he can write on his own. He then sets to the task of book memorization and impresses the Chinese on numerous occasions and begins to teach the technique. The Chinese are eager to learn to pass their exams which lead to better jobs in the bureaucracy. Ricci hopes to interest the Chinese in his culture and in his God. He has already memorized many western books when he goes to China and uses his memory to write his own books and cite the others. Ricci even uses his techniques to learn mathematics. He appears to have drawn his techniques from his college teacher, Clavius, who he corresponds with for much of his life. Jesuits often emphasize the sciences as well; thus, when he learns about Chinese science, he is impressed. However, many of their sciences lack fundamental principles, which he claims to be able to teach them, teaching them the branches of mathematics as divided like branches of a stream. His goal throughout all of his teaching is to draw the Chinese toward Christianity. He writes a book on friendship for this purpose that is more well-received in Chinese than anything else he

writes. He often tries to argue that the Chinese concept of the divine is not too different from the Christian idea.

His belief that by impressing the Chinese they might come to faith proves justified. One of his first friends in China, Qu Rukuei converts in 1605, as does a scholar from Shanghai, Xu Guangqi. A senior bureaucrat, Li Zhizao, converts in 1610, just before Ricci dies. The author wants the reader to know that the Chinese receptivity to Western science is genuine. Their religions do not stand in the way of their adopting Western scientific ideas. Ricci continually uses the printing press to disseminate Western ideas, and not only scientific ones; he is able to draw Confucian and classic Roman ideas into a single discourse. He writes a book, True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven, to summarize Christian doctrine for the Chinese and is able to use powerful western imagery to make his arguments. Ricci is largely accepted into Chinese high society in 1601 and goes to endless dinners. He believes that he will die from too much activity. He becomes delirious on May 10th and babbles about his desire to convert the Chinese and the emperor. He has prepared well for his death some days before.



Chapter Six, The Third Image: Profit and Harvest

Chapter Six, The Third Image: Profit and Harvest Summary and Analysis

The reception hall contains two warriors and a huihui; Ricci chooses the Chinese character li for his next image, which means profit. Again, he divides the ideograph down the middle with two new ideographs, one for "grain" and the other for "blade" or "knife." The memory image is of "a farmer holding a sickle, ready to cut the crops in the field." There is more to this image, as one might expect. The word "li" can sometimes be formulated as "ly" and "ly" has many meanings, allowing Ricci to use different meanings in different contexts. He is able to illustrate various Christian lessons with the symbol. Ricci also uses "Ly" as a Romanization of his own name. The northwest corner of the reception hall to the left of the huihui woman and diagonally across from the two warriors is where the man gathering crops will stay.

Commercial life is flourishing during these times and the pursuit of profit often cuts across cultures and religious differences. This leads to conflicts over money. The Jews in Portugal face persecution over such matters, and conflicts between Protestants and Catholics often erupt over financial matters. Further, when a courier of Jesuit letters is caught trying to make money by keeping tribute given to guards at the Xiangshan border, he is arrested, beaten and imprisoned. The letters are ordered translated, placed in the Canton archives and the Jesuits in Shaozhou are ordered to leave.

The Catholic attitude towards profit and property was always in flux. Ignatius encourages the Jesuits to share all of their possessions but such instructions are often impractical. Money is also held in high esteem culturally in Macerata, Rome and surrounding areas. Ricci often wishes he had money to procure books and further his other plans for the conversion of the Chinese people. Since he has none of his own, he has to wait for shipments from Europe. He is also aware of the great sums spent by the Catholic Church on art and architecture in Rome, along with the funds the Jesuits spend on a new university. Ricci loves Jesuit structures though and the Jesuits have difficulties building their structures because of restrictions on who can paint and build for them, so such constructions are few. The Jesuits also depend financially on the success of international trade and seek to produce high levels of profits through these trades. Many other groups, such as the Japanese, try financial tricks to make more money and the rising European states allied with the Papacy often punish Christians who participate. Jesuit participation in these activities, particularly opening trade with Japan, is considered circumspect; the Council of Trent urges great penalties on members of orders who participate in trade. Ricci notices that despite this, Valignano is involved in such trading. The Jesuits also need to make sure that the goods and services they ship are not destroyed and have to engage in financial activities to ensure safe passage of



their shipments. Ricci and Ruggieri often want money to procure the proper gifts for the Chinese to impress them, as conversions number around fifteen per year. Ricci struggles with funds to build his first residence and manage land; he also has difficulties financing the building of the next Jesuit missionary base in Shaozhou. Ricci has to learn to be a shrewd financial negotiator as a result. As a result of restrictions on his ability to make and receive money, Ricci's financial situation is unstable; he ranges from poverty to riches on a regular basis. At one point, his trading and manufacturing of metals earns him and other Jesuits a reputation for possessing alchemical powers. The Chinese always associate Ricci with alchemy as a result; his alchemist reputation is strengthened because he always seems to have what he needs despite refusing to engage in usury. The Jesuits are not a mendicant order in that they do not live in poverty as a whole and subsist entirely on alms; instead, they possess great wealth together and have to manage it properly. So they always accept financial help, donations and gifts; the author details a few of these gifts and donations. They seem to not be corrupted by their practices, besides having to return escaped slaves from China. Despite these troubles, Ricci is able to give many gifts to the Chinese that often impress them, including religious paintings, a large clock, books, prisms, hourglasses, belts, cloth, a rhinoceros horn, and a small harpsichord. Ricci calculates his gift-giving carefully. He even uses music in combination with his gift giving, using a Jesuit priest who can play the harpsichord to impress the Chinese and teaching the Chinese elite eunuchs to play Western music. The themes always deal with religion and morality, as one might expect. He even interjects "ly" into the lyrics, with one line that can be read as "keep the heart inside, for that brings profit" but also as "living inside the court, there's Ricci." Ricci is not yet there but hopes to gain entry eventually.



Chapter Seven, The Third Picture: The Men of Sodom

Chapter Seven, The Third Picture: The Men of Sodom Summary and Analysis

The third picture is a series of prints which conveys Lot's life—it contains four pictures. The first depicts God promising to destroy Sodom because of its wickedness; the second depicts God blinding the men of Sodom when they try to rape the angels. The third depicts Lot, Lot's wife and their two daughters running away from the city before it is destroyed and Lot's wife, looking back, being turned into a pillar of salt. In the fourth, Lot's daughters get Lot drunk and sleep with him in order to continue their family line. By choosing this picture, Ricci intends to convey the sin of Sodom to the Chinese, but the pictures by themselves cannot fully convey Ricci's intended message. He alters this story as well to communicate the idea that sin brings God's judgment. He never explains why Lot's wife turns to salt or why Lot's daughters sleep with him.

The death of Pope Paul IV in August 1559 brings joyous rioting to the city. The Pope is very unpopular due to the Inquisition and the headquarters of the Inquisition is ransacked as a result. The Pope has to be buried deep and late at night so that his corpse is not stolen. The surprise is that Pope Paul desired to reform the church, but had raised hostility of many due to his attempts, particularly the King of Spain, who he despised. As a result, he gives the Inquisitors great power so that they can vie with the King of Spain for political control. Ricci is only a child when these events occur but the moral of the events is clear—power and weakness rise and fall together and political abuses of power destroy public morality and respect for tradition. Ricci analogizes this event to the story of Sodom. Rome contains vast ranges of piety and degradation, so Ricci is familiar with these moral extremes. Ricci's experience in Lisbon is similar, particularly due to the presence of slaves. The Jesuits own many slaves during this time and they participate in the sale of Chinese slaves. Ricci partly blames the Chinese for this practice.

Yet Ricci finds much to appreciate in China, such as its diversity, size, gardens, porcelain, cooking methods, calligraphy and many other things. He also admires the Confucian moral system, despite the pantheism widespread in China. Morality is promoted by the Chinese bureaucracy; Ricci seems to like this practice as well. However, the people live in terror of their ruler and his bureaucracy headed by eunuchs; he believes this fear reflects the nature of hell.

Ricci has a chance to communicate with the emperor indirectly, when he asks Ricci about European burial practices as he constructs his own tomb, but Ricci will never be able to speak with him directly. He still impresses many of the eunuchs, who are often at the forefront of important politics events. The author recounts some of their exploits. Ricci often finds their practices corrupt and condemns them from time to time with the



ferocity of a Protestant condemnation of Roman Catholicism. Ricci also deplors the poverty widespread in Peking and often sees China as a country full of slaves, a practice he attributes to human sin. Despite condemning the sin of sexual immorality, Ricci is dismayed when accusations of sexual misconduct are made against fellow Jesuits. The sins of sodomy are prominent in the minds of the Jesuits, not only due to the writings of Aquinas but due to the widespread practice of Christians associating their religious and political enemies with the practice of sodomy. Some Jesuits believe that one of the early Jesuit missionaries to China, Francis Xavier, had engaged in sexual misconduct, damaging Chinese perception of the holiness of the Jesuit order. Homosexuality is apparently widespread among men at the time in the Ming Dynasty, but Ricci is unaware of this. Nonetheless, in both Europe and China, Ricci has reason to have the idea of sexual sin at the forefront of his mind. Ricci also emphasizes sexual purity to maintain the Jesuit image of chastity. This is an important emphasis of Ignatius' so Ricci is eager to communicate the practice as characteristic of the Jesuit order. Ricci often leads Chinese converts through spiritual exercises that include celibate discipline.



Chapter Eight, The Fourth Image: The Fourth Picture

Chapter Eight, The Fourth Image: The Fourth Picture Summary and Analysis

The chapter opens with Ricci writing a letter to his friend Girolamo Costa in August 1599; they enter the Jesuit order within a year of each other and have been friends a long time. Ricci reports to Costa that the Chinese marvel when he tells stories of the shrine to Mary at Loreto. Ignatius attributes special significance to the shrine, which makes it even more popular. Macerata is a stop on a pilgrim route from Rome to Loreto; this gives his town something of a focus on Mary. The author speculates that Ricci is drawn to Mary since he receives little attention from his mother, being one of seven children. Ricci has been attacked recently and has lost partial use of one of his feet, giving him a limp that pains him; Ricci's reflections on the Virgin Mary give him solace. Ricci even takes Marian relics with him to China. In China, some Chinese Christians set up groups known as "Marian sodalities," groups of religions men and women who "pledged themselves to lives of heightened spiritual service" whose purpose is to strength the religious institutions they already live in. It is not clear whether Ricci is a member of a Chinese sodality, but he is a member of one in Rome. His sodality in Rome has been given special prestige from a papal bull issued in 1584 which calls it the "first and principal" Marian sodality. Luke Li establishes a Peking sodality in 1609.

Some believe that the Marian sodalities are clandestine recruitment organizations for the Jesuits, to ferret out who is devout, and indeed some Jesuits are drawn into the order through these organizations. General Acquaviva is drawn in through a similar sort of organization. The Jesuits widely believe that Mary will give them special aid in times of trouble. The Jesuits in China do not believe that the Chinese are ready for the doctrine of the Incarnation, so they allow Chinese Christians to believe that God represents himself as Mary, pregnant with Jesus. Various paintings of Mary appear in China as well, sent from Europe; the pictures are received piously. Not surprisingly, the Chinese begin to have dreams of her presence. As images of Mary spread, the Jesuits try to reduce the images used by other faiths without advocating idol smashing.

This increase in Marian piety also leads to criticisms of Buddhism, as Buddhists have set up many charitable organizations that compete with the Marian sodalities. Ricci also spends much time trying to undermine Buddhist philosophical and theological arguments and doctrines. He is particularly hostile to the doctrine of reincarnation, which he thinks leads to the high infanticide rates in China. One Chinese Buddhist scholar, Yu Chunxi, complains in a letter to Ricci that he is defaming Buddhism without having carefully studied it. Ricci responds with a detailed defense of his attacks and thinks he responds effectively. He believes he has silenced Yu, but this is a mistake, for Yu sends the letter to his teacher Zhuzong. Zhuzong is unimpressed with Ricci's



arguments and tells Yu that Ricci is not worth his time. Zhuzong publishes a criticism but Ricci dies before he can see it. However, Ricci does offer advice to other Jesuits on how to handle such disputes. Ricci has a similar interaction with a brilliant but irascible scholar named Li Zhi, although Li is more accepting of Ricci's criticisms. Ricci hopes for Li's conversion, but Li kills himself in prison. Ricci then aligns himself with those who criticize Li's immoral suicide.

Ricci faces some other challenges when one of his companions falls ill while he is at the Shaozhou mission. Ricci is left alone with few companions in Shaozhou. During one of the nights he is left alone, he is inspired to take an oil painting of the Virgin Mary received from the Philippines and place it on the little Shaozhou Church's altar. He then puts candles around the painting, such that it shimmers. Many come to see the painting that night as a result. Thus, the fourth image placed in the reception hall of Ricci's memory palace is the Chinese ideograph for goodness, or "hao." The divided ideograph means both "woman" and "child," creating an obvious reference to the Virgin Mary. This creates the image of a maidservant holding a child in her arms, playing with the child she is holding. Ricci places the picture in the last vacant corner of the reception hall, in the southwest. Opposite her are the warriors, diagonal from her is the huihui woman, to her left is the peasant who is profit, waiting above his grain harvest. The image is a print the Jesuits make in Japan of the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child. Angels place a crown around her head which says, in Latin, "Hail Mary, full of grace." The other images have inscriptions, but for this photo he only writes two words, Tien Chu, which means "Lord of Heaven." There is a slight misprint in the inscription, however, but Ricci apparently lets it slide.



Chapter Nine, Inside the Palace

Chapter Nine, Inside the Palace Summary and Analysis

Matteo Ricci completes his memory palace; he imagines the walls, colonnades and other features of the palace. Stored within the palace are many memories of his times in China. The four images are also there: Peter on the water, unable to stand, the two disciples meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus, Sodom's men being destroyed and the image of the Virgin Mary with the Christ Child. The reception hall holds images that represent them—the two warriors, the huihui woman, the farmer who is his name and again, the woman with child who represents goodness. Ricci notes that many in the future may not grasp the importance of these images, which may seem insignificant.

The chapter is a description of the appearance of Ricci's memory palace. It is unclear whether this is ever described directly in Ricci's writings.



Characters

Matteo Ricci

Matteo Ricci is The Memory Palace's main character and the main object of study. The entire book covers the missionary efforts of the late 16th century Jesuit priest, Matteo Ricci to convert the Chinese people to Christianity. Matteo Ricci is born in Macerata, Italy on October 6th, 1552 within the "papal domain" or the Papal States in what is today Italy. In 1561 he begins his education at a Jesuit school and in 1568 he leaves for Rome to study law. On August 15th, 1571, he joins the new Catholic order, The Society of Jesus and becomes a Jesuit, after which he studies at a Jesuit college in Florence and then in Rome. During this time, the Jesuit Order is young and it is encouraging its priests to travel across the world and convert the peoples of earth to Catholicism. So Ricci decides to become a missionary and sails to Macao, China. For the next twenty-eight years, Ricci attempts to convert the Chinese people to Catholicism, and it is during this period that most of the book takes place. Ricci believes that he can convert the Chinese elites by impressing them with his learning. During his Jesuit training, he learns to use mnemonic devices to commit vast stretches of text into memory. He uses these mnemonic devices to gain standing in Chinese society. Ricci is exceedingly intelligent, crafty and zealous. Everything he does is for the purpose of bringing the Chinese people to Christianity. He even dreams of converting the Chinese emperor himself. His entire life, training and culture prepare him to be one of the most intelligent, profound and ecumenical missionaries in Christian history.

The Chinese

The Jesuit Order is young in the late 16th century, when Matteo Ricci joins them. As such, they are full of optimism and are eager to send missionaries out across the world. The Jesuits have already set up a mission base in China and in Japan. However, they are not having much success converting the Japanese or the Chinese. Many Jesuits start in India, and move to China when they come to believe that the Indians are impervious to conversion. Many Jesuits believe that the same thing is true of the Japanese, that they are too corrupt and strange to be brought to Christianity. While the Jesuits believe that converting the Chinese will be difficult, some Jesuits, like Ricci and Valignano believe that the Chinese have religious ideas similar to Christianity and are generally open to hearing alternative ideas and accepting them. So Ricci goes to China and sets up missionary bases in Peking and Shaozhou. The Chinese are the other main character in The Memory Palace. The author does not focus in too much detail on particular Chinese individuals, save some of Matteo's friends and converts and the Chinese Emperor and his administrative Eunuchs. However, in general, the Chinese people comprise practically all of the characters that Matteo Ricci interacts with on a daily basis. In fact, the author often refers to groups of Chinese people, and so it is appropriate to treat them as a group.



The Jesuits/The Society of Jesus

The Jesuit order is only fifty years old when Matteo Ricci joins; they are a celibate order who take vows of poverty and promise to do whatever the Pope asks of them. Their zeal brings them to create missions all over the world. Ricci heads one in Peking.

The Virgin Mary

The mother of God in Christianity, Mary is widely venerated among Chinese Christians in Ricci's time.

God

The supreme being and creator of the universe in Islam, Christianity and Judaism. Ricci tries to convince the Chinese that their "Lord of Heaven" is in fact God.

Alessandro Valignano

An older Jesuit and inspiration to Ricci, Valignano does missionary work in India, Japan and China.

Emperor Wanli

The emperor of China during the entire period of Ricci's twenty-eight years there. Ricci desperately wants to convert him to Christianity.

The Huihui Woman

A woman who can represent Muslims, Jews, and Christians all at once, the huihui woman is used as one of the images in Ricci's memory palace.

Nestorian Christians

Ancient Christians who believe that Christ has one nature and not two, as orthodox Christianity teaches. Nestorian Christians survive in China and Ricci thinks it is important to convert them.

Chinese Jews

Chinese people who adopt the Jewish faith; Ricci is surprised they exist.



Buddhists

Followers of one of the main religions in China, Ricci believes that he can find Trinitarian elements in their theology; he also makes several prominent criticisms of Buddhism.

Confucians

The followers of Confucius whom Ricci greatly respects. He often tries to bring out similarities between the Confucian and Christian moral systems.

Taoists

The members of the third major religion in China; Ricci attempts to draw similarities between this religion and Christianity.

Ignatius of Loyola

The founder of the Jesuit Order and inspiration to Ricci.

Cheng Dayue

A prominent member of the Chinese upper class, he compiles a famous "ink garden" that includes Ricci's images and pictures.



Objects/Places

The Plantin Bible

A beautifully translated and illustrated Bible. Ricci receives a copy during his mission work in China, much to his delight. Before this, he does not have a copy.

Mnemonic Devices

Heuristics by which one can remember large quantities of information. Ricci makes use of mnemonic devices to impress the Chinese people and draw them into the Christian faith.

Macao, China

A city in China where the Jesuits establish one of their first mission bases.

Peking, China

The central Chinese city where Ricci lives and creates his own mission base.

Goa, India

A city in India where Ricci spends some time before going to China.

Shao Zhou

A Chinese province where Ricci tries to set up a second mission base.

Nanchang

The province where Ricci spends most of his time in China.

Rome

Where Ricci goes to study law and the center of the Roman Catholic Church.



Macerata, Italy

The city where Ricci is born and raised.

The Memory Palace

The mnemonic device Ricci uses to communicate the Christian idea to the Chinese.

Chinese Ideographs

Mandarin Chinese has seventy-thousand ideographs that comprise the language. They are symbols that Ricci not only memorizes but uses to communicate his ideas to the Chinese in his memory pictures.

The First Image

The split ideograph depicts two warriors that Ricci places in his memory palace.

The First Picture

The first painting Ricci associates with the first image, it is a painting of Jesus asking Peter to walk on water in the Book of Matthew.

The Second Image

The second image Ricci places in his memory palace is the representation of an ideograph split in two that represents the Huihui woman.

The Second Picture

A painting depicting the risen Jesus talking to two disciples of his on the road to Emmaus.

The Third Image

A split ideograph depicted as a man who profits from his harvest that Ricci places in his memory palace.



The Third Picture

The third picture is a series of four images representing Lot and his family's trials in Sodom, during and after God destroys it.

The Fourth Picture

A painting of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child.

The Fourth Image

An image of a maidservant holding a child and playing with it which represents another Chinese ideograph. This is the final image to be placed in Ricci's memory palace.



Themes

The Memory Palace

The most obvious theme of *The Memory Palace* is the idea of the mnemonic device that Matteo Ricci calls the memory palace. A mnemonic device aids in the learning or memorization of some idea or concept. They usually associate a new or unlearned idea with something familiar. Roy G. Biv is one such Mnemonic device, associating the colors of the rainbow with a name that is easy to remember. Matteo Ricci was a master of mnemonic devices, having learned to use them effectively during his years of extensive Jesuit training in Rome and Florence. Ignatius wanted his Jesuit priests to have a vast sum of knowledge, and he also wanted them to memorize important texts. Thus, Ricci needed a method of memorization, and this was one available.

Ricci is able to use his skill with mnemonic devices to impress the Chinese. He believes that by impressing them with his knowledge, he will be able to convert them to Christianity more effectively. However, he does not merely use mnemonic devices to impress the Chinese or even learn Chinese; he also uses a mnemonic device to communicate the essence of Christianity to a people unfamiliar with it. The mnemonic device is known as the memory palace. One imagines a palace in one's mind constructed so that one may remember its architectural features. In the palace is a reception hall that will contain various images in the form of paintings. Matteo Ricci was able to convert four paintings about important events and figures in the Bible into images of Chinese ideographs that the Chinese would already be familiar with. By likening the unfamiliar pictures with the familiar ideographs, Matteo Ricci could place the ideographs in the memory palace of his Chinese students, enabling them to easily remember some of the most important lessons and doctrines of Christianity.

Missionary Work

In 1534, Ignatius of Loyola and six friends of his from the University of Paris formed the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuit Order. They made vows of poverty and chastity to bind themselves together and promised to do hospital and missionary work in Jerusalem, and to always and immediately obey the Pope in whatever he asked. In 1540, after some political conflicts, the order was officially accepted into the Catholic Church. The Jesuits began to expand rapidly, achieving great fame and power due to their great knowledge, powerful charity, political strategizing and zeal for their religion. Within fifty years of the founding of the Jesuit order, Matteo Ricci became a member. Since the Jesuit Order was still young, its members were eager to reach across the world and do mission work. After extensive training in science, mathematics, theology, philosophy, rhetoric, linguistics, cartography and so on, an education all Jesuits received, Matteo Ricci made his way to Macao, China and then to Peking where he set about his own missionary work. Political circumstances in Italy, where Ricci grew up, along with the culture of the time, gave Ricci reason to engage the Chinese subtly, to impress them



with his scientific and philosophical skill and carefully explain Christianity to them rather than force it upon them. Further, political and cultural circumstances in China forced this upon him as well. However, in everything Matteo Ricci did in China, he aimed to convert the Chinese to Catholicism. Even in a delirium on his deathbed, Matteo Ricci ranted about converting the Chinese Emperor to Catholicism. His teaching, no matter what it was, his gift-giving to the Chinese elite, and all his charitable work aimed at one thing: conversion.

Utilizing Chinese Culture

Matteo Ricci's goal of converting the Chinese was not implemented in the fashion one would typically expect from a zealous missionary. The popular stereotype of the Christianity missionary is of a person who forces his or her beliefs on others without being open and respectful of the beliefs of those he or she is trying to convert. Not so with Matteo Ricci. Ricci believed that God had already been working in Chinese culture and that the Chinese already possessed within their own culture the idea of God as "The Lord of Heaven." Matteo Ricci often tried to work within Chinese culture and Chinese values, morality and religion to make his case for Christianity and to explain it. He learned the Chinese language, wrote in Chinese, spoke in Chinese, taught members of the Chinese elite, gave gifts to Chinese leaders that were carefully selected to impress them from their own culture's perspectives and engaged in thoughtful dialogue with intellectuals and scholars from the traditional Chinese religions. The entire point of the memory palace is to show how Matteo Ricci associated Christian ideas with common Chinese symbols in order to translate basic Christian doctrines to a people that were almost entirely unfamiliar with them. This method was partly imposed on Ricci by the Chinese political and cultural circumstances of the time, but he also had learned some of it from his own experiences and generated his own techniques.

Style

Perspective

The author of *The Memory Palace* of Matteo Ricci is the renowned Sterling Professor of History Emeritus Jonathan Spence of Yale. His main area of study is Chinese history from 1600 to the present day and to date he has written thirteen books on Chinese history. As such, the perspective of *The Memory Palace* is that of a professional historian of the highest quality. The author comes off as erudite, detailed, measured, nuanced, maintaining a clear, compelling narrative. *The Memory Palace* is full of citations and discussions of the best understanding the historical community has of Matteo Ricci's life and times. We see the original painting and ideographs the Matteo Ricci worked with reproduced in the book. Often *The Memory Palace* take detours into 16th century Chinese or Italian history, important theological debates, the state of 16th and 17th century science, East Asian relations, Greek and Roman philosophy, Confucian theology and so on. The author does not appear to have an ax to grind of any kind. Instead, he appears most interested in communicating different aspects of Matteo Ricci's life, personality, culture and his interaction with Chinese culture, particularly by associating his different topics with the pictures within Matteo Ricci's Memory Palace. The author neither white-washes Ricci's life, nor criticizes him. Spence appears to have great respect for Ricci, but always points out when Ricci's opinions had ill influences, or when his perspective had elements of bigotry and he catalogs Ricci's historical errors. However, this is done without unfairly tarnishing Ricci or the Chinese people of the 16th and 17th centuries.

Tone

The tone of *The Memory Palace* is much like the perspective; since the author is a distinguished historian with no obvious bias or axe to grind, the tone of the book is erudite, detailed, measured, nuanced, and throughout maintaining a clear, compelling narrative. The author seeks to give a detailed story of the history of Matteo Ricci's mission work in China and his life prior to this, along with outlining the cultural, historical and theological features of the late 15th and early 16th centuries in both Europe (particularly Italy) and China. Again, the book is full of citations, discussions of scholarly work on Ricci's life, images of paintings and ideographs, histories of these paintings, of books, scientific ideas, theological ideas and so on. The author never seeks to make statements about Ricci stronger than the textual and historical evidence allows. He appears deeply familiar with all of Ricci's available writings, along with the writings of a large number of Chinese scholars of that period. The book covers seven major aspects of Ricci's time in China through the four images and four pictures that Ricci placed in his memory palace. In many ways, the story is not about the memory palace; instead, the author structures the story's themes and aspects around the elements in Ricci's memory palace, thus giving a narrative structure to detailed historical scholarship.



Structure

The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci initially appears to have the ordinary structure of a work of historical scholarship. It contains nine chapters, the first of which is an introduction to the main character of the book, his life and his times. The next seven chapters discuss various aspects of his life and the history and culture surrounding it, while the final chapter concludes. The book also contains various maps and timelines relevant to Ricci, his time and travels. However, the author uses a fascinating literary device to organize the text. Instead of merely telling a chronological tale, Spence associates different aspects of Ricci's life, influences and ideas with elements of Ricci's memory palace. The first chapter "builds" the palace, explaining the relevance of mnemonic devices to Ricci's work while introducing him. The pictures and images placed within the memory palace each relate to some aspect of Chinese life that tied to European Christian ideas. For instance, Spence uses Chapter Six, which discusses the third image of profit and harvest, to cover the role of financial, economic and commercial matters in this time within both the Jesuit Order and in China; in Chapter Seven, the third picture of the men of Sodom is used to discuss late 16th and early 17th attitudes towards sexuality of various kinds and sins generally speaking. The middle seven chapters each have a short section discussing the particular image or picture the chapter is named for, depicts the relevant ideograph, painting or both and then transitions into the main body of the chapter, which covers the particular topic Spence wishes to discuss. The final chapter tours his memory palace. One fascinating aspect of the structure of the book is that it can be conceived of as using the memory palace mnemonic device itself, by associating various aspects of Ricci's life and times with the symbols and paintings within the book itself.



Quotes

"In 1596, Matteo Ricci taught the Chinese how to build a memory palace." (1)

"The whole point of writing something down is that your voice will then carry for thousands of miles, whereas in direct conversation it fades at a hundred paces." (22)

"For the first image in his memory palace, Ricci decides to build on the Chinese ideograph for war, pronounced wu." (24)

"Better to have no Christians than Christians of that type." (42)

"The Chinese place absolutely no trust in any foreign country, and thus they allow no one at all to enter and reside here unless they undertake never again to return home, as is the case with us." (54)

"'Go forward to that city'—and here it seemed to me that he was showing me Peking—'and there I will help you.'" (82)

"For his second example of how to construct a memory image, Ricci chooses the Chinese ideograph yao." (93)

"And at once they began to beg me to consent to teach them this divine rule by which such a memory was made." (139)

"The important aim for Ricci in all this was to involve the Chinese in his scientific achievements so they would prove more receptive to the Christian faith." (149)

"Since the word for profit, li or ly, which ended the song, was also the word Ricci had taken for his own name, each time someone in the court sang the words 'Keep the heart inside, for that brings the profit,' he would also in fact be singing 'Living inside the court, there's Ricci.' It was not yet quite true, of course, but he hoped to get there eventually; and in the meantime those unheard voices would be carrying his dreams up into the quiet evening air." (200)

"Ricci remarked of China that 'this country is full of slaves.'" (219)

"If we only prove ourselves her faithful clients, she will take us into her confidence and will herself protect us." (244)

"For the fourth image to be placed in the reception hall of his memory palace, Ricci chooses the Chinese ideograph for goodness, pronounced hao. He divides the ideograph vertically down the center to yield two separate ideographs, one with the meaning 'woman' and one with the meaning 'child'." (262)

"If often happens ... that those who live at a later time are unable to grasp the point at which the great undertakings or actions of this world had their origin. And I, constantly



seeking the reason for this phenomenon, could find no other answer than this, namely that all things (including those that come at last to triumph mightily) are at their beginnings so small and faint in outline that one cannot easily convince oneself that from them will grow matters of great moment." (267)



Topics for Discussion

What is the tie between Ricci's first image and his first picture?

What is the tie between Ricci's second image and his second picture?

What is the tie between Ricci's third image and his third picture?

What is the tie between Ricci's fourth image and his fourth picture?

Describe Ricci's method of missionary practice. What do you think of it? Do you approve of it? Why or why not?

How effective was Ricci at conveying the Christian idea to the Chinese? Please answer in detail.

Do you think the memory palace idea was an effective method of communicating Christian ideas to the Chinese?