

## **Christianity and Modern China: A Lecture by**

**Prof. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia 夏伯嘉**

As part of its ongoing Chinese Studies Lecture Series, on October 17, 2011, the National Central Library invited Prof. Ronnie Po-chia Hsia to the New York TECO Culture Center (the New York branch of Taiwan Academy) situated near Times Square to give a lecture. In his lecture, entitled *Christianity and Modern China*, he described the impact of Catholic missionaries on China. Prof. Hsia is an Academician at Academia Sinica, Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of History at Pennsylvania State University, and a researcher in the Institute of European and American Studies at Academia Sinica. His main fields of research are the Protestant and Catholic reform movements during the religious reform era in Europe, anti-Semitic movements, and Sino-European cultural exchange.

Prof. Hsia remarked in his lecture that Matteo Ricci was the first Western scholar to meticulously study China's ancient books. He used his own superior scholarly knowledge to transmit Western scholarship to the Chinese, initiating late-Ming scholar-officials' practice of studying Western knowledge. Ricci's work *De Christiana Expeditione Apud Sinas* also became an important reference for Western scholars of Chinese history. As a missionary, Matteo Ricci successfully introduced Catholicism to China and due to his and the first generation of Jesuit missionaries careful efforts, by the late Ming there were more than 70,000 Catholics in China. Specializing in researching the influence of Catholic missionaries on China, Prof. Hsia gave those attending the lecture a unique understanding of the impact the 16<sup>th</sup> century Italian missionary Matteo Ricci had on China.



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