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Statistics on religions and churches in the People' s Republic of China and in Singapore : update for the year 2021

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Statistics on Religions and Churches in the People's Republic of China and in Singapore – Update for the Year 2021

Katharina Wenzel-Teuber

Translated by Jacqueline Mulberge

This year our annual statistical update covers the results of a survey on the response to different Bible translations among Catholics in Mainland China. The subject is topical because religious communities are currently being asked to revise the translations of their sacred scriptures in the context of the government's policy of "Sinicization." In addition, new data are presented on the religions in multi-ethnic Singapore, where the population is 74.3% ethnic Chinese. The analysis of the results of the last population census of 2020 shows an increase in the number of people in Singapore's population who have no religion. Both topics will be dealt with at the end of this statistical update.

In the field of Buddhism and Daoism in Mainland China, with which as usual the update begins, there are new, official numbers for the ordinations of 2015–2020. This time there are no new data on Islam and the Protestant churches; here we take the numbers of the previous years. In general, hardly any results of new field studies on topics of religious life in the country could be found in Mainland China's religious studies journals in 2021.

Unless expressly stated, the numbers given in the following text refer to religions in Mainland China.

1. Buddhism, Daoism and Popular Beliefs

There are no official data on the number of Buddhists and Daoists in Mainland China. The White Paper on freedom of religious belief (State Council 2018) states: "China has numerous Buddhist and Taoist believers, but it is difficult to accurately estimate their numbers as there are no set registration procedures which ordinary believers must follow as part of their religion. [...] China also has many folk beliefs which are closely linked to local cultures, traditions and customs, in which a large number of people participate."

For this largest sector of religious life in China, the Chinese Spiritual Life Survey (CSLS) of 2007¹ still offers some orientation; among others it came to the following figures:

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1 For the CSLS, from May to July 2007, a sample of 7,021 individuals aged 16 to 75 years was interviewed in 56 selected localities of different size as to their religious self-identification. In July 2010, Yang Fenggang from the

185 million	self-identify as Buddhists, i.e. 18% of the population above the age of 16.
17.3 million	have taken the triple refuge (in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), i.e. have formalized their adherence to Buddhism through ritual.
12 million	of the adult population clearly identify with Daoism [corresponding to 1,17% of the population above 16 years, kwt]. ²
173 million	have exercised some Daoist practices or taken part in such, but these are difficult to distinguish from popular belief.

In the absence of other, more recent data, we refer once again to a study discussed here two years ago: On the basis of China Family Panel Studies (CFPS)³ surveys of 2012, 2014 and 2016, Lu Yunfeng, Wu Yue and Zhang Chunni of Peking University determined in 2019 the following percentage of “nominal” adherents of Buddhism and Daoism in the total population – meaning the participants of the CFPS 2016 survey who had indicated in at least one of the three surveys (2012, 2014, 2016) that they adhered to Buddhism (or believed in Buddha and Bodhisattvas) or Daoism (or believed in Daoist gods and immortals), with the following result:⁴

17.7% of the CFPS 2016 sample were “nominal” Buddhists.
1.27% of the CFPS 2016 sample were “nominal” Daoists.

These percentages are very close to the results of the CSLS.

The Chinese Buddhist Association reports in a self-portrait on its website in 2017 the number of adherents of Buddhism in China as “currently more than 100 million.”⁵

1.1 Buddhism

34,090	registered Buddhist sites for religious activities according to NRAA database 2022, ⁶ of which:
28,528	Han-Chinese Buddhism
3,857	Tibetan Buddhism
1,705	Theravada-Buddhism

Center on Religion and Chinese Society at Purdue University (West Lafayette, USA) presented the results of the study in Beijing. Figures quoted here according to Wenzel-Teuber 2012, pp. 30-36.

- The percentage 1.17% was calculated by the author of this statistical update (kwt) by analogy with the data given by CSLS for Buddhists (185 million equals 18% of the population over 16 years).
- China Family Panel Studies (CFPS, Zhongguo jiaoting zhuizong diaocha 中国家庭追踪调查) is an annual longitudinal survey conducted by the Institute of Social Science Survey at Peking University. Since 2012, data on religiosity has also been collected. A fixed panel of 16,000 households is surveyed in 25 of the 31 provinces, municipalities and autonomous regions of the PRC.
- Lu Yunfeng – Wu Yue – Zhang Chunni 2019, p. 173, Table 4. Cf. Wenzel-Teuber 2020, p. 25. Since Tibet, Qinghai and Inner Mongolia – areas where a particularly large number of Buddhists live – are not covered by CFPS, the proportion of Buddhists in the population of the PR China could actually be even higher; cf. *ibid.*, p. 23.
- “Zhongguo fojiao xiehui jianjie.”
- National Religious Affairs Administration (NRAA) database “Basic Data on Sites for Religious Activities” at www.sara.gov.cn/zjhdcjsjbx/index.jhtml, data retrieved on March 8, 2022. These figures from the NRAA database are unchanged from the last retrieval on March 1, 2021. The results of a detailed search conducted on March 17, 2016 which also takes into consideration the distribution according to province is found in Wenzel-Teuber 2016, p. 27, Table 1.

222,000 Buddhist religious personnel (monks and nuns) recognised and registered with the authorities according to NRAA 2017 (as also State Council 2018), of which:

72,000 Han-Chinese Buddhism
148,000 Tibetan Buddhism
2,000 Theravada-Buddhism

41 Buddhist Academies (State Council 2018)

Buddhist Ordinations 2015–2020

The National Assembly of Representatives of Buddhism in China met from December 1–2, 2020. As is customary, at this meeting of the highest body of official Buddhism which takes place every 5 years, the board of the Chinese Buddhist Association gave a report of its work since the last national assembly in April 2015. According to this report, since 2015

32,878 Persons [monks and nuns] were ordained (*shoujie* 受戒) in 69 ordination ceremonies (*chuanjie* 传戒).

Verification of qualifications for ordination has been stepped up over the past five years, pilot tests have tested the introduction of pre-ordination examinations, and record keeping on new ordinations has been improved, says the report.⁷

Database on state recognized “Living Buddhas” of Tibetan Buddhism in Sichuan

411 Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism in the Province of Sichuan

are included in a database entitled “Name Index of the Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism in Sichuan” (Sichuan Zangchuan fojiao hufo minglu 四川藏传佛教活佛名录, English: “List of Tibetan Buddhism Rinpoche in Sichuan”) that was put online again on February 5, 2021 after a revision. This figure, mentioned in a press release⁸ on the launch of the renewed database, was unchanged a year later (access on March 9, 2022). Listed are the names of the Living Buddhas, the school of Tibetan Buddhism and the monastery to which they belong, as well as the location. According to the website’s impressum, the database is run by the Information Centre of the United Front Department of the Sichuan Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China.⁹

7 Work Report at the 10th National Assembly of Buddhists 2020, p. 11. – The above-mentioned supervisory measures correspond to the provisions in the Chapter 5 on “Supervision and Administration” in the “Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel” (*Zongjiao jiaozhi renyuan guanli banfa* 宗教教职人员管理办法, Decree No. 15 of the NRAA dated Jan. 18, 2021, in force since May 1, 2021, Chinese text at www.sara.gov.cn/bmgz/351322.jhtml). The supervisory measures prescribed there include, for example, the obligation of religious organisations, institutes for religious education and sites for religious activities to keep records and to pass on data on religious personnel to the authorities, as well as the digital recording and management of the data by the authorities.

8 “Zui xin zui quan zui quanwei! Sichuan 411 ming Zangchuan fojiao hufo minglu chongbang shangzian.”

9 The Chinese state claims control over the traditional process of identifying and enthroning Tibetan Buddhist re-incarnations (Tibetan: *tulku*, Chinese: *hufo* 活佛, literally “Living Buddha”), i.e. the lineages of Tibetan religious teachers. To this end, in 2007 the NRAA adopted “Measures for the Administration of Reincarnations of Living

1.2 Daoism

8,349 registered Daoist sites for religious activities according to NRAA-database 2022,¹⁰ of which

4,011 Quanzhen tradition

4,338 Zhengyi tradition

ca. 40,000 Daoist religious personnel (State Council 2018)

10 Daoist academies (State Council 2018)

Daoist Ordinations 2015–2020

At the National Assembly of Representatives of Daoism in China, held from November 27–28, 2020, the board of the Chinese Daoist Association also gave a report about its work during the last five years. The report stressed the strengthening of the administration of the Daoist clergy. In particular, according to the report, the aim was to get a good grip on the ceremonies of *guanjin* 冠巾 (Quanzhen tradition) and *chuandu* 传度 (Zhengyi tradition), so that they could be used as a first “gateway” (*guankou* 关口) to acquire the official status of a religious clergy. Uniform *guanjin* and *chuandu* certificates have been designed and produced nationwide, and certificates for Daoist religious personnel have been replaced, the report said.¹¹

Between 2015 and 2020 according to the report, certificates were given as follows:

more than 10,000 *guanjin*-certificates (Quanzhen tradition)

more than 20,000 *chuandu*-certificates (Zhengyi tradition)¹²

Possession of a *guanjin* or *chuandu* certificate is, according to the currently valid regulations of the Chinese Daoist Association (CDA), the presupposition for recognition as a Daoist religious clergy,¹³ i.e. as *daoshi* 道士 – Daoist priest or Daoist priestess.

As Lai Chi Tim, professor for Daoism-Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, wrote in the year 2017, the measures for the issuance of certificates for Daoist religious personnel have been standardized in the last ten years (i.e. now fifteen years). In the monastic Quanzhen Daoism, according to Lai, a traditional regulation for the ordination of *daoshi* was reintroduced in 2007, namely through the ritual of “taking the cap” (*guanjin* 冠巾), also commonly called “small ordination” (*xiao shoujie* 小授戒), in which the monk or nun receives a Daoist cap, a Daoist robe and an ordination name from his or her master.

Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism” (*Zangchuan fojiao huofu zhuanshi guanli banfa* 藏传佛教活佛转世管理办法, Chinese text at www.sara.gov.cn/bmgz/316496.jhtml).

10 The number of registered Daoist sites in the NRAA database has remained unchanged since 2018.

11 Work Report at the 10th National Assembly of Daoists 2020, p. 32.

12 *Ibid.*

13 See Article 3.3 of *Daojiao jiaozhi renyuan rending guanli banfa* 道教教职人员认定管理办法 (Measures for the Recognition and Administration of Daoist Religious Clergy, 2020). Text at www.taoist.org.cn/getDjzsById.do?id=1664 (accessed on March 9, 2022). Measures of the CDA for the administration of the *guanjin*- and *chuandu*-activities can also be found in the collection of regulations on the website of the CDA at www.taoist.org.cn/getDjzsByC2Action.do?c2=gzzd.

Since then, *guanjin* ceremonies have been organized in Quanzhen temples all over China. Similar to the Quanzhen *guanjin* ritual, according to Lai, the CDA requires that an adept of the Zhengyi tradition must undergo an ordination ritual usually called *chuandu* 傳度 in order to become an officially recognised *daoshi* of the Zhengyi tradition and receive a credential as a Daoist religious personnel. According to Lai, *chuandu* means literally that the student receives a “method of saving the world” (*du shi zhi fa* 度世之法) from the master.¹⁴

Given that the number of new *guanjin* and *chuandu* certificates issued between 2015 and 2020 with the combined total of 30,000 already accounts for three-quarters of the State Council’s 2018 figure of 40,000 Daoist religious personnel, it can be assumed, according to the author of this statistical update, that among the recipients of the new certificates many have been active as *daoshi* for a long time. With reference to the Zhengyi Daoism, Lai explains that according to the requirements of the CDA a Daoist priest of the Zhengyi tradition who resides in a temple (*gongguan daoshi* 宮觀道士) must first go through a *chuandu* ceremony. However, apart from these Zhengyi priests residing in temples (who can be married), there are according to an estimate given by Lai another 60,000 married Daoist priests who live with their family (*sanju daoshi* 散居道士) and perform ritual services in local communities, thus carrying out rituals mainly outside temples.¹⁵

According to the currently valid regulations of the CDA, *daoshi* of the Quanzhen tradition, who have “taken the cap” at least two years before, can receive the next level of ordination (*shoujie* 授戒 or *chuanjie* 傳戒).¹⁶ According to Lai, only a small number of the Quanzhen monks and nuns receive this form of ordination. It took place in 1989 for the first time after a 50-year interruption. In 1995, 2012, 2016, 2017 and 2018 further *chuanjie* ordinations took place. According to the CDA work report mentioned above, at the three *chuanjie* ordination ceremonies held in 2016 (at the Changchunguan, Wuhan), 2017 (at the Laoshan Taiqinggong, Qingdao) and 2018 (at the Nanyue Hengshan daoyuan, Hunan), a total of more than 500 Quanzhen Daoists received the *santan dajie* 三坛大戒 (“triple platform ordination”).¹⁷

In a parallel provision of the CDA, *daoshi* of the Zhengyi tradition who have at least two years of *chuandu* may receive the ordination of “conferring registers” (*shou lu* 授箓).¹⁸ According to the above-mentioned CDA work report, a number of such “conferring registers” ceremonies took place between 2015 and 2020 with national, and in some cases international, participation, but no information is given on the number of ordained persons.¹⁹

14 Lai 2017, pp. 86-87, 89-90.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

16 See Article 9.2 of *Guanyu Quanzhen pai daoshi chuanjie de guiding* 关于全真派道士传戒的规定 (Provisions for the Ordination [*chuanjie*] of Daoist Priests of the Quanzhen School), first version 1989, most recent revision 2020. Text at www.taoist.org.cn/getDjzsById.do?id=1656 (accessed on March 9, 2022).

17 Cf. Lai 2017, pp. 87-89; Work Report at the 10th National Assembly of Daoists 2020, p. 32.

18 See Article 9.3 of *Guanyu Zhengyi pai daoshi shoulu de guiding* 关于正一派道士授箓的规定 (Provisions for the Conferring of Registers of Daoist priests of the Zhengyi School), first version 2001, most recent revision 2020. Text at www.taoist.org.cn/getDjzsById.do?id=1657 (accessed on March 9, 2022).

19 Work Report at the 10th National Assembly of Daoists 2020, pp. 32-33.

2. Islam

In the People's Republic of China ten ethnic groups are considered Muslim. In the statistics presented by Chinese authorities and academics their population numbers are generally equated with that of the Muslims in China. According to the 6th population census of 2010, around 23 million people belong to these ten ethnic groups, that is 1.74% of the entire population,²⁰ distributed as follows:

Table 1: Muslim Population according to Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Population 2010 (Persons)	Percentage of the Total Muslim Population (%)
Hui	10,586,000	45.74
Uighur	10,069,000	43.51
Kasakh	1,462,600	6.32
Dongxiang	621,500	2.69
Kirghiz	186,700	less than 1
Salar	130,600	less than 1
Tajik	51,100	less than 1
Usbek	10,600	less than 1
Bao'an	20,000	less than 1
Tatar	3,556	less than 1

Data: 2010 census. Table compiled according to Liu Xiaochun 2014, p. 71.

A 7th national census took place in the PR China in 2020. As far as is known, a detailed evaluation of this census with regard to the population of the Muslim ethnic groups has not yet been published.

According to the White Paper (State Council 2018), Islam in the People's Republic of China has

35,000 sites for religious activities [mosques]
 57,000 religious personnel
 10 institutes for religious education [Qur'an institutes]

3. Protestant Churches

The official figures on Protestantism in China are still those from the work report of the official Protestant governing bodies, Chinese Christian Council and Three-Self Movement, at the 10th National Assembly of Chinese Protestantism in November 2018 (Gao Feng 2018) and from the White Paper on freedom of religious belief (State Council 2018):

38 million believers (Gao Feng 2018 and State Council 2018)
 60,000 churches (Gao Feng 2018 and State Council 2018)

20 Liu Xiaochun 2014, pp. 70-71. – In 2014, Liu Xiaochun published an analysis of the population structure of the members of ethnic groups considered Muslim based on data from the last, 6th, national census in China in 2010. It was presented in detail in Wenzel-Teuber 2016, pp. 30-34.

14,000	professional clerics (male and female pastors, teachers, presbyters) as well as 22,000 male and female preachers (Gao Feng 2018)
57,000	religious personnel (State Council 2018) ²¹
22	theological seminaries (Gao Feng 2018)

The number of 38 million probably originates from a study by the researchers Lu Yunfeng, Wu Yue and Zhang Chunni (Peking University). They analysed religion-related data from the 2012, 2014 and 2016 surveys of the China Family Panel Studies (CFPS) and concluded that there were around 40 million Protestants in China in 2016.²²

There are also higher estimates, such as that of the Pew Forum which in 2011 arrived at the number of 58 million Protestants.²³ In 2020 five researchers and pastors told the Protestant portal ChinaSource their “preferred estimates” for the current number of Protestant Christians in Mainland China; these ranged from 50 million to 116 million (the latter being an estimate of Yang Fenggang, Purdue University).²⁴ On the other hand, lately some have also reported a decrease in the number of Protestant Christians.²⁵

4. Catholicism

It has become more difficult to give reliable statistics on the Catholic Church in Mainland China. The data provided by the Holy Spirit Study Centre (HSSC) of Hong Kong Diocese continue to serve as a basis, however, its last statistics on the Catholic Church in Mainland China published in early 2021 in its periodical *Tripod* refer to the status at the end of 2020.²⁶ The HSSC did not publish any new data for 2021. Account is also taken of information from the official Catholic governing bodies, according to their work report presented in 2016 at the 9th National Assembly of the Representatives of the Chinese Catholic Church (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016), and the White Paper on freedom of religious belief (State Council 2018). Other important sources are the website of the Shijiazhuang (He-

21 Why the entry for the number of religious personnel / clerics and preachers is so much higher in the State Council's White Paper than in the work report of the Protestant bodies is not clear.

22 Lu Yunfeng – Wu Yue – Zhang Chunni 2019. Cf. discussion of their detailed study in Wenzel-Teuber 2020, pp. 21-30, here esp. p. 27. On CFPS see above, note 3.

23 Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (ed.), *Global Christianity. A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population* (with “Appendix C: Methodology for China”), www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2011/12/ChristianityAppendixC.pdf, published on Dec. 19, 2011, last accessed on March 25, 2022; cf. Wenzel-Teuber 2013, p. 21.

24 Joan Pittman, “How Many Christians in China? Preferred Estimates,” three-part series on the portal ChinaSource, 2020, at www.chinasource.org/resource-library/series-index/how-many-christians-in-china (last accessed on March 25, 2022); cf. Wenzel-Teuber 2021, pp. 33-34.

25 For example, two pastors of the official governing bodies of the Protestant churches of Shandong Province and Guangzhou City reported in October 2018 at the “Forum of Christianity Research 2018” organized by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences that the number of Protestant Christians in their area was sinking. See “Kan Baoping mushi: Bu yao jujiao yu neidi jidutu shuliang zhenglun, yao jieli jianzao jiankang jiaohui” 闞保平牧师: 不要聚焦于内地基督徒数量争论, 要竭力建造健康教会 (Pastor Kan Baoping: We should not concentrate on the dispute regarding the number of Protestants in the country, but rather give our best to build up a healthy church), *Fuyin shibao* 福音时报, Nov. 15, 2018; <https://gospeltimes.cn/index.php/portal/article/index/id/46244> (last accessed on March 14, 2022); cf. Wenzel-Teuber 2020, p. 29.

26 HSSC 2021.

bei Province) based Catholic newspaper *Xinde* 信德 (*Faith*), www.xinde.org (in the following shortened to: *xdo*; other web address: www.chinacatholic.org), and other Catholic websites in Chinese, such as the portal *Zhenli wenhua* 真理文化 (*Veritas Culture*), www.yzzhenli.org.



Map: d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=27749&lang=de

People's Republic of China: Provinces, Direct-Controlled Municipalities and Autonomous Regions – List of Abbreviations

AH Anhui, BJ Beijing, CQ Chongqing, FJ Fujian, GD Guangdong, GS Gansu, GX Guangxi, GZ Guizhou, Hain Hainan, HB Hubei, Heb Hebei, Hen Henan, HL Heilongjiang, HN Hunan, JL Jilin, JS Jiangsu, JX Jiangxi, LN Liaoning, NM Inner Mongolia, NX Ningxia, QH Qinghai, SC Sichuan, SD Shandong, SH Shanghai, SN Shaanxi, SX Shanxi, TJ Tianjin, XJ Xinjiang, XZ Tibet, YN Yunnan, ZJ Zhejiang.

4.1 General Data

Faithful

ca. 10 million	total number of Catholics, including both the official part of the Church and the Catholics in the underground, according to HSSC 2021
over 6 million	number of Catholics according to data of the official Catholic governing bodies (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016)
6 million	number of Catholics according to state data (State Council 2018)

Dioceses

147	(116 dioceses plus 31 other ecclesiastical circumscriptions), according to the Catholic hierarchy (HSSC 2021)
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95 dioceses plus 7 under the care of other dioceses, according to the Chinese government (HSSC 2021)

Bishops

98 of whom

71 bishops in the official Church

27 bishops in the underground Church²⁷

Since September 2018 all Chinese bishops have been recognized by the Pope.

Priests

ca. 4.000 total (the number of new unofficial priests and of those who refuse to officially register were not available) (HSSC 2021 for the end of 2020)

Seminaries and Seminarians

6 major seminaries (theological seminaries) with a total of around 350 seminarians in the official Church (HSSC 2021 for the end of 2020)

Of the original 10 major seminaries in the official Church of Mainland China, therefore, only six are still functioning, even though government agencies (e.g. State Council 2018) continue to give their number as nine. No data is available for formation communities in the underground Church.

Sisters

4,600 in total, of whom

approximately 3,250 in the official Church in 87 congregations (HSSC 2021 for the end of 2020)

approximately 1,350 in the underground in 40 congregations (HSSC 2021 for the end of 2020)

Churches

More than 6.000 churches and prayer sites (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016 and State Council 2018)

4.2 Baptisms

Again no baptism statistics were published for 2021. Baptisms were only sporadically made known through reports on *xdo*. The baptisms given in Table 2 are, therefore, only individual examples from which the total number of local distributions cannot be deduced. However Wenzhou, the “Chinese Jerusalem,” is noticeable for especially numerous

²⁷ The numbers of bishops were calculated by the author of this statistical update on the basis of the figures of HSSC 2021 (as of the end of 2020), taking into account the deceased bishops and episcopal consecrations that became publicly known in 2021 (cf. point 4.3 below). According to the same calculation, 68 of the 71 official bishops were in office at the end of 2021, as well as 14 of the 27 underground bishops; however, retirements are not necessarily announced in the media, so these figures are uncertain. For the end of 2020, HSSC 2021 had reported the number of bishops as follows: 99, of whom 72 were bishops in the official Church (66 in office) and 27 bishops in the underground Church (14 in office).



Easter Vigil 2021 in Hangzhou: A good amount of baptismal water is blessed (above), 11 catechumens receive baptism and confirmation. Photos: *xdo*.

baptisms. Many baptisms took place during Easter Vigil on April 3, 2021. Some reports mention that, due to Corona, for a long time no courses for baptismal candidates could take place or that the churches were closed. As far as can be ascertained from photos or text, those baptised were adults.

Table 2: Examples of Baptisms in a Few Selected Catholic Communities of Mainland China in 2021

Province / Municipality	Diocese	Location	Date	Number if baptized
BJ	Beijing	Beijing, West Church	Sept. 12	8
Heb	Tangshan	Wujiashuang Cathedral	April 3	16
JS	Suzhou	Yangang, Changshu	April 3	5
JX	No data	Jiujiang	May 16	3
LN	Liaoning	Chaoyang	Dec. 19	33
NM	Hohhot	Hohhot	April 3	19
NM	No data	Baochang, Taibus Banner	April 3	4
NM	No data	Aozhen, Otog Front Banner, Ordos	June 23	10
SD	Jinan	Jinan, Cathedral	April 3	1
SD	Zhoucun	Zhangdian, Cathedral	April 3	3
ZJ	Hangzhou	Hangzhou	April 3	11
ZJ	Wenzhou	Huangzhong, Longgang	Jan. 9	over 50
ZJ	Wenzhou	Wenzhou, Ximen Church	April 3	38
ZJ	Wenzhou	Wenzhou, Ximen Church	Nov. 13	10

Sources (2021): *xdo* Jan. 4, 14; April 5, 6, 8; May 17; June 23; Sept. 14; Nov. 15; Dec. 20.

The last baptismal statistics published by *Xinde* give the number of 48,365 baptisms for 2018 in the Catholic communities of Mainland China.²⁸

4.3 Bishops

Deceased Bishops of Mainland China in 2021

Bishop em. Zong Huaide 宗怀德, Joseph (1920–2021), Sanyuan (SN).

Bishop em. Cao Xiangde 曹湘德, Matthew (1929–2021), Hangzhou (ZJ).

Bishop em. Yang Xiangtai 杨祥太, Stephan (1923–2021), Handan (Heb).

Episcopal Consecrations in Mainland China in 2021

Liu Hui 李辉, Antonius (b. 1972), Coadjutor Bishop of Pingliang (GS), July 28.

Cui Qingqi 崔庆琪, [O.F.M.], Joseph (b. February 1964), Bishop of Wuhan²⁹ (HB), September 8.

Since the signing in 2018 of the Sino-Vatican Agreement on the Appointment of Bishops, altogether six new bishops were consecrated with mutual consent (as of March 21, 2022).

Public installation of bishops consecrated without government permission did not take place in 2021.

²⁸ Cf. Wenzel-Teuber 2019a, pp. 24–26.

²⁹ Pope Francis appointed Cui as bishop of Hankou/Wuhan on June 23, 2021. The three dioceses established by the Vatican, Hankou, Hanyang and Wuchang, were amalgamated by the official Chinese Church as the diocese of Wuhan many years ago.

4.4 Priests

Table 3: Priestly Ordinations in the Catholic Church in Mainland China in 2021

Province / Municipality	Diocese	Number of Ordained	Date of Ordination	Ordaining Bishop*	Names of Those Ordained
AH	Anhui	1	July 31	Liu Xinhong	Gao Ruifeng 高瑞峰
CQ	Wanzhou	1	May 5	He Zeqing	Chen Xiaoli 陈晓利
GD	Jiangmen	2	Jan. 14	Liang Jiansen	Chang Jiangfeng 常江峰, Cheng Sangen 程三根
Hain	Hainan	1	May 1	Gan Junqiu (Guangzhou)	Zan Pengbo 咎鹏博
Heb	Chengde	3	April 11	Guo Jincai	Li Bingbing 李兵兵, Li Pengju 李鹏举, Xue Zhiyong 薛志勇
Heb	Zhangjiakou	3	May 11	Guo Jincai (Chengde)	Song Li 宋利, Sun Yibao 孙义宝, Zhang Jianwei 张建伟
Hen	Zhengzhou	1	April 20	Zhang Yinlin (Anyang)	Chang Xiaoliang 常晓亮
Hen	Shangqiu	1	April 21	No date	Yan Shuai 闫帅
HN	Hunan	2	April 13	No data	Liu Yongfen 刘勇芬, Zhai Shengbo 翟胜波
JS	Suzhou	1	May 3	Xu Honggen	Chi Shaolong 池少龙
JS	Nanjing	3	June 11	Lu Xinping	Kang Yayi 康雅义, Ma Yateng 马亚腾, Zhou Jun 周俊
JS	Haimen	1	Oct. 1	Shen Bin	Liu Xingfeng 刘星峰
LN	Shenyang	1	Oct. 28	Pei Junmin	Li Hongdong 李洪冬
NM	Wumeng (Jining)	1	April 23	Yao Shun	Zuo Wei 左伟
SC	Nanchong	1	May 14	Chen Gong'ao	Hu Xiaodong 胡晓东
SC	Yibin	1	Sept. 26	Luo Xuegang	Wang Yuke 汪宇科
SH	Shanghai	4	June 5	Shen Bin (Haimen)	Mi Jizhou 米计周, Ning Yongwang 宁永旺, Wu Shun 武舜, Zhou Jia 周嘉
SN	Weinan	1	Jan 6	Tong Changping	Li Yongxin 李永信
SN	Xi'an	2	April 29	Dang Mingyan	Dang Gang 党刚, Long Zhiguang 龙志广
SN	Sanyuan	1	Aug. 4	Han Yingjin	Wang Tao 王涛
SX	Jinzhong	1	June 24	No data	Chang Jie 常杰
SX	Hongdong	2	June 29	Liu Genzhu	Guo Kaikai 郭开开, Zhao Chongfu 赵重福
YN	Dali	2	March 19	Ma Yinglin	Jin Xiangnan 金相楠, Paozhong Nuoweng 跑中糯翁 (both ethnic Jingpo)
ZJ	Taizhou	2	Sept. 25	Jin Yangke (Ningbo)	Wen Xiaomin 文小敏, Zhu Xinchao 朱鑫超
ZJ	Wenzhou	1	Sept. 25	Jin Yangke (Ningbo)	Shi Yongxiang 史永详
Total		40			

* The diocese is only given here if the ordaining bishop is not the competent local ordinary of the diocese where the ordinations took place but was invited from another diocese to administer the ordination.

Sources (2021): asianews.it June 7; xdo Jan. 8, 15; March 19; April 13, 21, 27, 30; May 2, 3, 6, 11, 14; June 14, 30; Aug. 2.; Sept. 27, 29; Oct. 6; Nov. 6; www.yzzhenli.org/index/content/9438/【壹明头条】|2021年中国大陆教会晋牧、晋铎及神职安息主怀名单/.

Priestly Ordinations

40 deacons were ordained priest in Mainland China in 2021 (see Table 3) – one more than in the previous year, but much less than in the years before that. The number is certainly incomplete; there were probably additional priestly ordinations in the underground Church. In previous years the following numbers of newly ordained priests were counted: 2020 – 39 new priests; 2019 – 48; 2018 – 75; 2017 – 97; 2016 – 61; 2015 – 59; 2014 – 78; 2013 – 66; 2012 – 78.

In many dioceses in south China, part of the priestly vocations continue to come from traditional northern Chinese Catholic families. One example is the priest Liu Xingfeng, who was ordained on October 1, 2021 for the Diocese of Haimen in Jiangsu Province. He comes from a Catholic family in Fenyang Diocese in Shanxi Province. Apart from him, out of four siblings, his sisters Liu Xuemei and Liu Xueyan also followed a spiritual vocation, they belong to the diocesan Sisters' congregations of Fenyang and Yuci, both in Shanxi (*xdo* Oct. 6, 2021).

Deceased Priests in 2021

For some years the Chinese Catholic media has appeared worried by the growing number of priests who die comparatively young. A list on the website *Zhenli wenhua* (*Veritas Culture*) has the names of 15 priests who died in Mainland China in 2021. On average they only lived to be 53 years old.³⁰

4.5 Sisters



Joy of the St. Joseph's Sisters of Beijing Diocese: Sister Liu Chunli (left) entered the novitiate on March 18, 2021.
Photo: Sanzhi gaoyang gongzuoshi / *xdo*.

30 www.yzzhenli.org/index/content/9438/ 【壹明头条】|2021年中国大陆教会晋牧、晋铎及神职安息主怀名单/. – The oldest of the deceased was 102 years old, the youngest only 32. However, the large generation gap among the Chinese priests has to be taken into account. Whereas of the priests of the old generation trained before 1949 or in the 1950's only a few very old ones are still alive, the priests of the "young" generation who were trained after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) are for the majority under the age of 60.

Vows of religious sisters are reported far less regularly than ordinations of priests. The first, temporal or final vows given in Table 4 are, therefore, only to be regarded as examples. Sisters in the majority of diocesan women's congregations continue to play an important role in the life of China's Catholic Church. As with priestly vocations, for many years the number of women's vocations has also been diminishing strongly – as the very low numbers of novices and first professions in Table 4 show.

Table 4: Examples of Entrance to Novitiate and Professions of Women Religious in Mainland China in 2021

Province / Municipality	Diocese	Congregation	Date	Entrance to Novitiate	Vows
BJ	Beijing	Sisters of St. Joseph	March 18	1	several temporal
ZJ	Wen-zhou	Sisters of St. Therese, the Little Flower	Jan. 9		1 first ³¹
SD	Linyi	Diocesan congregation	May 11		2 temporal, 4 perpetual
Heb	Handan	Sisters of the Holy Spirit the Consoler	Oct. 1		6 temporal, 3 perpetual
JS	Haimen	Sisters of St. Theresa of the Child Jesus	Oct. 1		16 temporal
GD	Shantou	Sisters of the Queen of all Hearts	Nov. 18	1	2 temporal

Sources (2021): *xdo* Jan. 14; March 19; May 13; Oct. 1, 6; Nov. 24.

4.6 Survey of the Use and Reception of Different Bible Editions among Catholics in Mainland China

In early 2014, Monica Romano, who holds a degree in Chinese Studies and a PhD in Ethnology and Ethno-Anthropology from the Sapienza University in Rome, used an on-line tool to survey Chinese Bible users about their Bible reading habits, ownership and preferred use of different Chinese Bible editions, their understanding of individual Bible passages and their expectations of future Bible translations. Chinese Catholics and Protestants and some non-Christians from China and other countries (especially Italy) took part in the survey. In an essay published in 2022, which will be presented here, she analysed exclusively the replies of Mainland Chinese Catholics from different dioceses in the whole of China.³²

The total of 289 Catholic respondents of the survey in Mainland China comprised the following: 55% were men, 45% women. 99% of the respondents were baptised. 35% of them were priests, seminarians or religious sisters. 18% were between 18–24 years, 25% were 25–30 years, 32% were 31–40 years, 19% were 41–50 years and 5.5% were over 51 years old. 55% had a university qualification [i.e. Bachelor], another 13% a postgraduate degree. 54% of those questioned had no formal theological training, 32.5% had studied Theology, 23.5% Canon Law, 22% Church History, 19% Christian Ethics and 17% Biblical studies. 12% of the lay persons surveyed were students. The participants in the survey were recruited through local contacts and, to a lesser extent, via social media. This sur-

31 According to the report, this was the first time since 2013 that first vows were taken in this congregation; *xdo* Jan. 14, 2021.

32 Romano 2022, esp. p. 81, note 12.

vey method, said Romano, does not claim statistical relevance, but the aim was to collect feedback from a wider audience than would have been possible solely through individual interviews.³³

The following Chinese Bible editions play a part in the survey:

- **Studium Biblicum Version** (*Sigao shengjing* 思高圣经): This first complete Catholic Chinese Bible was translated from the original languages by the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum in Hong Kong. It appeared in Hong Kong from 1961 in parts, and in 1968 for the first time as a single-volume edition. From 1992 it was also published in Mainland China.³⁴ The Studium Biblicum translation – as also confirmed by the survey – is still considered the standard Chinese Catholic edition of the Bible today.
- **Pastoral Bible** (*Muling shengjing* 牧灵圣经): This is a Chinese version of the Christian Community Bible, which appeared in the Philippines in 1988 as an English version of the *Biblia Latinoamericana*. It was produced by a group of Chinese translators coordinated by the Claretian Father Bernard Hurault (1924–2004), published in 1998 in Hong Kong and in 2000 printed in Mainland China. As Romano explains, through its clear and fluent language it achieved a certain popularity, although, however, it was also accused of inaccuracies and the biblical and theological formations of the translators was questioned.³⁵
- **Sheshan** 佘山 NT: This refers to a translation of the New Testament made by the Shanghai Bishop Jin Luxian (1916–2013). It first appeared in 1994 with the title *Shengjing xinyue quanji* 圣经新约全集, in 2004 a revised edition appeared. As its textual basis *La Bible de Jérusalem* was used. Named after the Shanghai Seminary on Sheshan, this translation is commonly referred to as the Sheshan edition.³⁶
- **Union Version** (*Heheben* 和合本): The Union Version is the most widely used Protestant translation of the Bible in modern Chinese. It has always been considered – as Romano puts it – “the Chinese Bible par excellence.” It was produced by an inter-denominational translation team and first appeared in 1919.³⁷
- **Today’s Chinese Version**: This Protestant Bible edition was translated from the *Today’s English Version* in the 1980’s by the United Bible Societies. A Catholic version of the NT was also published in which only the Chinese terms for “God” and “Holy Spirit” were exchanged according to Catholic usage. Translation was made according

33 Romano 2022, pp. 53–56.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 57. – On the Studium Biblicum Version, the Pastoral Bible and the Sheshan NT see also John Baptist Zhang Shijiang, “Die Förderung der Bibel im gegenwärtigen China und die Evangelisierung,” in: *China heute* 2007, No. 6, pp. 230–236. For a comparison of the Studium Biblicum Version with the Pastoral Bible see Raissa De Gruttola, “Reading and Praying with the Studium Biblicum Version (*Sigao Shengjing*),” in: Cindy Yik-yi Chu (ed.), *The Catholic Church, The Bible, and Evangelization in China*, Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan (Christianity in Modern China) 2022, pp. 33–49.

35 Romano 2022, p. 52 and pp. 80–81, note 4.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 52 and pp. 79–80, note 3. – In the imprint of the 1994 edition, the Sheshan Seminary appears as the translator.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 83–84, note 32. – On the Union Version cf. also Shen Xuebin, “Die ‘Union Version’ der Bibel und die Sinisierung des Christentums,” in: *China heute* 2021, No. 2, pp. 106–110.

to the principle of “functional equivalence” and not according to the greatest possible formal correspondence with the original text.³⁸

Survey Results

“Every week how often do you read the Bible?”

More than 43% of respondents stated that they read the Bible every day, 21% two or three times a week, 7% only on Sundays. 21.5% stated that they did not read the Bible every week. Of the priests, seminarians and sisters questioned, 81% read the Bible daily. Younger ones read the Bible less frequently than older respondents: only 14% of the 18–24 year olds, but 60% of the 31–50 year olds read it daily.³⁹

How many Bible editions do you have?

99% of the Catholic respondents had a Bible at home. 24% had only one Bible edition, 33.5% had two, 19% three, 10.5% four, 3% five and 10% more than five Bible editions. The proportion of those who only had one Bible edition was higher in the younger age groups. The priests, seminarians and sisters among the respondents tended to have more Bible editions: 17% of them had four and 12% five or more editions, whereas in the group of lay persons 7% had four and as many as 9% had five or more editions.⁴⁰

Which Bible translations do you have?

88% of the Catholic respondents had the Studium Biblicum Version, 40% the Pastoral Bible. In third place was the Protestant Union Version with 21%. 18% had the Sheshan NT. Only 7% had the Today's Chinese Version. (See Chart 1 on the following page).

The data confirm that the Studium Biblicum Version remains the most widespread Catholic Bible translation. However, the proportion of respondents who had this edition increased with age, it was lowest among the 18–24 year olds with 81% and highest among the 41–50 year olds with 96%. A similar tendency appeared with the Pastoral Bible. The proportion of those who had the Union Version was highest in the age group of the 31–40 year olds at 28%. 98% in the groups of priests, seminarians and sisters had the Studium Biblicum Version in contrast to 83% in the group of the laity.⁴¹

Which Bible translations do you generally use?

Here multiple answers were possible.

The great majority of the respondents, namely 85%, responded that they generally used the Studium Biblicum Version. However, this proportion was somewhat lower than the proportion of those who possessed that edition (88%). 15% of respondents also generally

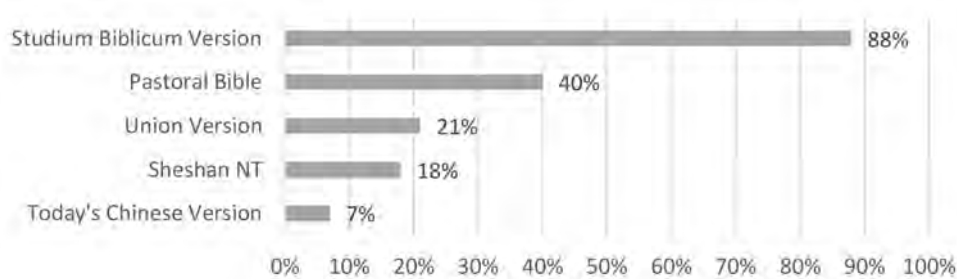
38 Romano 2022, pp. 84-85, note 33.

39 *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59. – As for the lower reading frequency of 18-24 year olds compared to the older ones, this could also be due to the fact that the group of priests and women religious among the respondents who frequently read the Bible is more likely to belong to the middle age groups. According to Canon Law, the minimum age for ordination to the priesthood is 25. However, Romano does not give any information on how lay people on the one hand and priests, sisters and seminarians on the other hand are distributed among the age groups.

40 *Ibid.*, pp. 60-63.

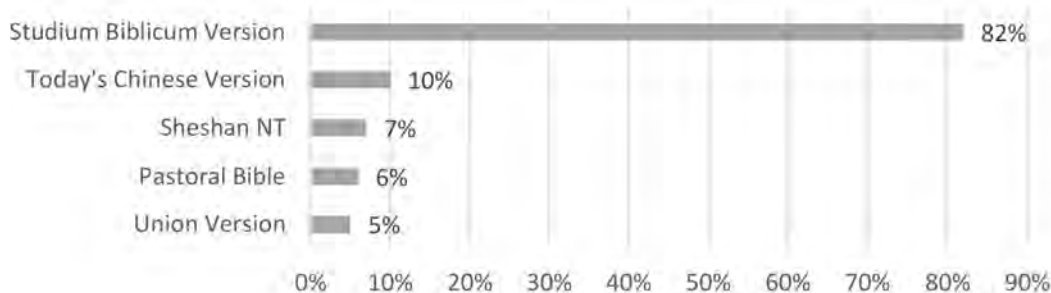
41 *Ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

Chart 1: Which Bible translations do you have?



Source: Romano 2022, p. 65, Fig. 4.8.

Chart 2: Which are your preferred Bible translations?



Source: Romano 2022, p. 71, Fig. 4.17.

used the Pastoral Bible. The Sheshan NT, the Union version and Today's Chinese Version were each used by 6%.

In terms of general Bible use, there was also a tendency for the Studium Biblicum edition to be used more in the older age groups than by the younger ones. 95% of priests, seminarians and sisters generally used this version, compared to 79% of the laity.⁴²

Which Bible translation do you use most?

Only one answer was possible here. 83% of respondents named the Studium Biblicum Version.⁴³

Which Bible translations are mostly used for Mass and Church/group activities?

Here again the Studium Biblicum Version came in first place by far. In group activities (such as training courses, retreats or Bible classes) the Pastoral Bible had 15%. The Protestant Union Version was used neither for the Mass nor for Church group activities.⁴⁴

What is the best Bible translation from the pastoral point of view?

77% named here the Studium Biblicum Version, 8.5% the Pastoral Bible, another 3.5% the Union Version and also 3.5% the Sheshan NT. A further 3.5% were apparently of the

⁴² Romano 2022, pp. 67-69, esp. p. 67, Fig. 4.11, and p. 68, Fig. 4.13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

opinion that from a pastoral point of view none of the existing Bible translations deserved to be rated “the best.”⁴⁵

Which are your preferred Bible translations?

Up to three names were permitted. The distribution of the responses is found in Chart 2.

Here again the Studium Biblicum edition came out top with 82%, far above the other editions. [An astonishing second place with 10% goes to Today’s Chinese Version – which only 7% of the survey participants own. The Pastoral Bible, at 6%, ranks even behind the Sheshan NT at 7%].

The difference in preference among priests, seminarians and sisters compared to the laity was relatively large: whereas 95% of the first-mentioned preferred the Studium Biblicum Version, it was preferred by only 75% of the lay persons. On the other hand, the preference for the Pastoral Bible was slightly higher among the laity and significantly higher for the Today’s Chinese version than among the priests, seminarians and sisters.⁴⁶

Some of the survey participants gave reasons for preferring the Studium Biblicum Version. The majority considered this translation to be more authoritative, more accurate and reliable, because it is based on the original texts. Other persons stated that they were more familiar with this version because it is commonly used in their Church community and contains the proper names of persons and places that are customary there. Some value the detailed commentary or the style of the language.⁴⁷

Is the Bible difficult to understand?

10% of respondents find the Bible difficult to understand, for 3% it is very difficult and for 48% somewhat difficult.⁴⁸

Preferred translations of Jn 1:14 and Lk 4:18

Monica Romano also presented the survey participants with different translations of individual Bible passages and asked for their preferences. This part of her study is particularly engaging because it illustrates problems and fundamental choices in translating the Bible into Chinese.

“And the Word became flesh” (Jn 1:14)

Here 71% of the respondents preferred the translation of the Studium Biblicum Version, “shengyan chengle xuerou” 圣言成了血肉. Here especially the translation of *logos* (word) is debatable, which in the Catholic context is usually translated with *shengyan* (“holy word”), but in Protestant Bible translations is consistently translated with the term *dao* 道 – a central concept of Chinese philosophy and culture like *logos* in the Greek context. Some of the respondents stated that *shengyan* is the better translation, because *dao* is ambiguous and could be associated with Daoism. There were, however, participants in the

45 Romano 2022, p. 78, Fig. 4.25.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 72, Fig. 4.19.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 72.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 74, Fig. 4.22.

survey who advocated *dao*, because that term connected the translation more closely to the Chinese cultural tradition.

Another difficulty is the translation of the term “flesh.” The Studium Biblicum Version translates *xuerou* (literally “blood and flesh”). Other Bible translations, such as the Pastoral Bible and Today’s Chinese Version, avoid the literal translation and instead use *ren* 人 (human being), thus more freely translating “And the Word became a human being.” 77.5% of the priests, seminarians and sisters asked and 67% of the lay persons stated that they preferred the *xuerou* translation.⁴⁹

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me” (Lk 4:18)

In this passage the difficulty in translating – as Romano explains – lies in the term “anointed,” which is difficult to understand without some knowledge of the Jewish cultural background. Almost 40% of the respondents expressed a preference for the translation of the Studium Biblicum Version, “yinwei ta gei wo fule you” 因为他给我傅了油, which translates “anoint” literally with “to put on oil” (*fu*⁵⁰ you). A further 20% of the respondents (25% of the priests, seminarians and sisters, as well as 18% of the laity) opted for the translation of the Sheshan NT: “yinwei ta gei wo fule you” 因为他给我敷了油, that translates “anoint” similarly literally but with a different character (*fu* you 敷油, literally “apply ointment”). Almost one third, however, preferred the more free translation of the Today’s Chinese Version, which translates as “yinwei ta jianxuanle wo” 因为他拣选了我 (literally “because he has chosen me”); in the group of lay persons this preference was at 42% clearly higher than in the group of the priests, sisters and seminarians with 13%.⁵¹

What should be done [in the future] to provide Chinese Catholics with the best [possible] Bible translation?

This final question was about expectations for the future of Chinese Bible translation and whether the survey participants thought a new translation of the Bible was necessary.

Responses of the Laity

42% of the lay persons asked were in favour of continuing to use the same translation. 37.5% were in favour of making a new translation and 7% were in favour of changing the translation being used. 10% replied with “Don’t know,” 3.5% “Other.” More women (41.5%) than men (34%) were in favour of a new translation. Differentiated by age groups, the wish for a new translation was surprisingly highest in the group of 41–50 year olds.⁵²

Responses of the Priests, Seminarians and Sisters

This group was given an additional response option to choose from, namely to “revise an existing Bible translation.” 37% of this group chose the option to revise an existing translation, 34% were for continuing to use the same translation and 16.5% were for making a new translation. 11% replied with “Don’t know,” and only 1% voted for changing the

49 Romano 2022, pp. 74-75.

50 Romano reads the character *fu* 傅 erroneously as *chuan* 傳 and so arrives at the translation “to spread oil.”

51 Romano 2022, pp. 75-76.

52 *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

translation being used. Among the religious women the number of those who voted for a new translation (35%) was clearly higher than among the priests and seminarians (7.5%). Almost all – namely 97% – of those who were in favour of a Bible revision indicated that the Studium Biblicum Version should be taken as the basis.⁵³

Monica Romano comes to the conclusion that the Studium Biblicum Version, even 50 years after its publication and 30 years since its introduction in Mainland China, continues to be the most widespread and most commonly used Bible translation among Chinese Catholics on the Mainland. It is considered authoritative, reliable and elegant. Nevertheless, according to Romano, more than one-third of the Catholic respondents expressed the wish for a new Bible translation or a revision based on the Studium Biblicum Version.⁵⁴

5. Religions in Singapore: Results of the 2020 Census

Every ten years a census is taken in Singapore. In June 2021 the Singapore Department of Statistics published a brochure with the results of the 2020 census regarding demographic characteristics, education, language and religion (Department of Statistics Singapore 2021a). Since in 2020, according to the census, 74.3% of the 4,0442 million Singaporeans – that is, over 3 million persons – were ethnic Chinese, the data is of interest for our statistical update on Chinese religiosity. For the census, the basic population count and characteristics were compiled from administrative records. Further, more detailed information – including on religion – was obtained from the survey of a sample of 150,000 households.⁵⁵

As shown in Table 5, Buddhists form the largest religious group, followed by those with no religion, Christians of all confessions and Muslims. The fifth largest group are the Daoists / adherents of Chinese folk religious traditions. Hindus and Sikhs play a smaller role.

Table 5: Singapore's Resident Population Aged 15 Years and Over by Religion

Religion		Number of Persons
No Religion		692,528
Buddhism		1,074,159
Daoism*		303,960
Islam		539,251
Hinduism		172,963
Sikhism		12,051
Christianity	Catholics	242,681
	Other Christians	411,674
Other Religions		9,827
Total		3,459,093

*"Daoism" includes Chinese traditional beliefs.

Table compiled from data in Department of Statistics Singapore 2021a, p. 198, Table 51.

⁵³ Romano 2022, pp. 77-78.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ Department of Statistics Singapore 2021a, p. i. A note in the publication states that figures in the statistical tables may not add up to the totals due to rounding; *ibid.*, p. vi.

The breakdown of religious affiliation by ethnic group is interesting – see Table 6. It shows that Buddhists and Daoists are almost exclusively found among the ethnic Chinese and that also a large majority of the Christians belong to this ethnic group.

Table 6: Singapore's Resident Population aged 15 Years and Over by Religion and Ethnic Group

Religion	Total	Chinese	Malays	Indians	Others
Total	3,459,093	2,606,881	447,747	299,056	105,410
No Religion	692,528	669,097	1,640	6,443	15,347
Buddhism	1,074,159	1,052,114	447	2,031	19,566
Daoism*	303,960	303,095	133	63	669
Islam	539,251	11,953	442,368	69,964	14,966
Hinduism	172,963	458	223	171,326	956
Sikhism	12,051	11	80	10,265	1,695
Christianity	654,355	562,861	2,743	37,605	51,146
– Catholics	242,681	184,158	1,097	21,853	35,573
– Other Christians	411,674	378,703	1,646	15,752	15,573
Other Religions	9,827	7,292	113	1,357	1,065

*“Daoism” includes Chinese traditional beliefs.

Table compiled from data in Department of Statistics Singapore 2021a, p. 200, Table 52.

In its evaluation, the Singapore Department of Statistics also shows developments in the religiosity of the Singaporean population since the last census in 2010. It indicates that between 2010 and 2020, the proportion of those who reported no religious affiliation increased.⁵⁶ A look at Table 7 shows, however, that the increase of those with no religion occurred mainly at the expense of Buddhists and Daoists / Chinese folk religious traditions, whereas the proportion of Christians and Muslims actually increased a little.

Table 7: Singapore's Resident Population Aged 15 Years and Over by Religion in 2010 and 2020 (%)

	2010	2020
Population aged 15 years and over	100	100
Buddhism	33.3	33.1
Daoism*	10.9	8.8
Christianity	18.3	18.9
Islam	14.7	15.6
Hinduism	5.1	5.0
Other Religions	0.7	0.6
No Religion	17.0	20.0

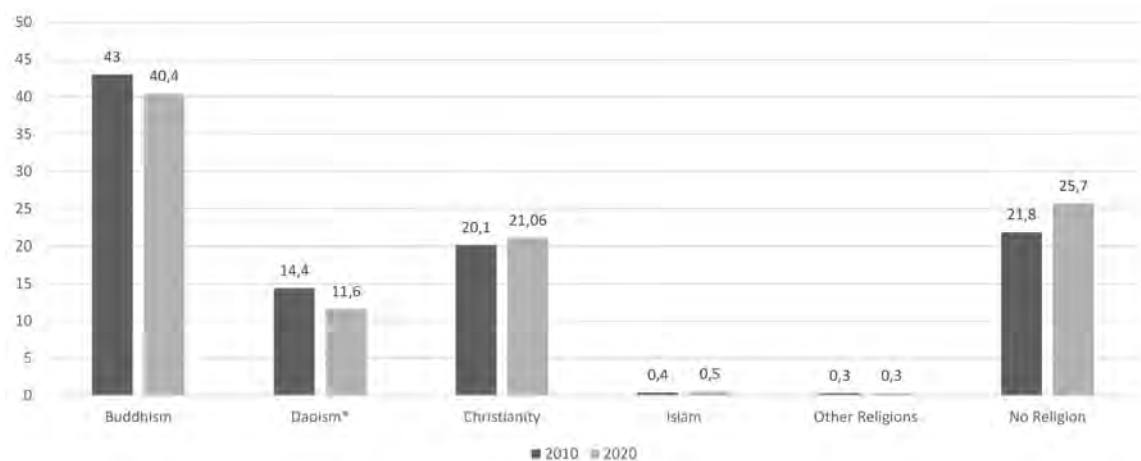
*“Daoism” includes Chinese traditional beliefs.

Table compiled from data in Department of Statistics Singapore 2021a., p. x.

This development becomes even clearer if we only look at the ethnic Chinese Singaporeans (Chart 3):

⁵⁶ Cf. Department of Statistics Singapore 2021b.

Chart 3: Singapore's Ethnic Chinese Resident Population Aged 15 Years and Over by Religion in 2010 and 2020 (%)



*“Daoism” includes Chinese traditional beliefs.

Chart compiled from data in Department of Statistics Singapore 2021a, p. x.

Chart 3 shows that among Singapore's ethnic Chinese population, the proportion of adherents to Buddhism and Daoism / Chinese folk religious traditions – traditionally the most widespread religious faiths in China – has decreased by even more percentage points over the past ten years than in the population as a whole. In contrast, the proportion of Christians and Muslims increased slightly. It is perhaps interesting to note in this context that during the same period, the use of the Chinese language among Singaporeans also declined: According to data from the Department of Statistics, among ethnic Chinese Singaporeans, the proportion speaking Mandarin Chinese at home fell from 47.7% (2010) to 40.2% (2020), and those speaking a Chinese dialect at home fell from 19.2% (2010) to 11.8% (2020), while at the same time the proportion speaking English at home rose from 32.6% (2010) to 47.6% (2020).⁵⁷

If one compares the results on the religious affiliation of ethnic Chinese according to the Singapore census with estimates on the religious affiliation of the population in Mainland China, it is striking that the proportion of those who profess a religion is disproportionately higher in Singapore than in Mainland China: While around three quarters of all ethnic Chinese Singaporeans indicated a religious affiliation, there are, according to official government figures (State Council 2018), only “nearly 200 million” religious adherents in Mainland China out of a total population of 1.4 billion. The proportion of Buddhists, Daoists and Christians in the ethnic Chinese population of Singapore is significantly higher than, according to available estimates, in the population of Mainland China. For instance, the CSLS cited above arrives at 18% Buddhists in the Mainland Chinese population over 16 years of age – compared to 40.4% in Singapore's Chinese ethnic population according to the 2020 census. 21.6% Christians in Singapore's population of Chinese descent far exceeds even the most optimistic estimates for the number of Christians in Mainland

57 Cf. Department of Statistics Singapore 2021a, p. x.

China.⁵⁸ Even though the data come from very different sources and are only comparable to a limited extent, a much stronger role of religion in the social life of Singapore's ethnic Chinese can clearly be seen in comparison to Mainland China.

6. Sources and Abbreviations

- CFPS [China Family Panel Studies, *Zhongguo jiating zhuizong diaocha* 中国家庭追踪调查]: see Lu Yunfeng – Wu Yue – Zhang Chunni 2019.
- CSLS [Chinese Spiritual Life Survey]: Yang Fenggang with Hu Anning – Jiang Fan – R.J. Leamaster – Lu Jun – Tang Zhenyu (Center on Religion and Chinese Society, Purdue University), “Quantifying Religions in China,” 5-page manuscript of a presentation at the Seventh Annual Conference for the Social Scientific Study of Religion in China, Beijing, July 26–27, 2010.
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