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Religions & Christianity in Today's China

Vol. VII 2017 No. 1

中國宗教評論



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Editorial

Dear Readers,

Today we can present to you the first issue 2017 of our online journal *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* (中国宗教评论).

This number as usual includes the regular series of News Updates on events and general trends in the field of religions and especially Christianity in today's China.

You can furthermore find a report by Dominic Niu (Beijing) on “The Sixth Conference on the Role and Influence of Christianity in Contemporary Chinese Society” which was held from November 22–23, 2016 at Renmin University in Beijing.

In his very interesting article “*Manuale missionariorum*: Manual for Evangelization in the Apostolic Vicariate of South Shandong,” Prof. Dr. Karl Josef Rivinius SVD (Sankt Augustin/Germany) describes the challenges the first Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) met in South Shandong in the end of the 19th century and the then newly compiled handbook *Manuale missionariorum* which served as the mandatory framework for their mission work.

Religions & Christianity in Today's China is freely available on the website of the China-Zentrum, www.china-zentrum.de. Additionally, readers who subscribe to *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* will regularly receive e-mail updates providing web links to the contents of each newly published issue.

The China-Zentrum is a non-profit organization. For the publication of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* we are dependent on the generosity of our friends and readers. In order to help us cover inevitable costs, we would be very grateful if you could consider sending a voluntary contribution.

Sankt Augustin, March 2017

The Editors

News Update on Religion and Church in China September 26 – December 2, 2016

*Compiled by Katharina Wenzel-Teuber and Katharina Feith
Translated by David Streit*

The “News Update on Religion and Church in China” appears regularly in each issue of Religions & Christianity in Today’s China (RCTC). Since the editorial staff learns of some items only later, it can happen that there are chronological overlaps between “News Updates” of two consecutive issues of RCTC. In these cases stories referred to in earlier “News Updates” will not be repeated. All “News Updates” can be found online at the website of the China-Zentrum (www.china-zentrum.de). – The last “News Update” (RCTC 2016, No. 4, pp. 3-20) covered the period July 1 – October 2, 2016.

General – Civil Society, Law

November 28, 2016:

Ministry of Public Security publishes guidelines for the registration of foreign NGOs

On January 1, 2017, the controversial “Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Administration of Activities of Overseas Nongovernmental Organizations in the Mainland of China” went into effect. This new law allows foreign NGOs to engage in activities in Mainland China only after registering a representative office. If the foreign NGO has no registered representative office, it may carry out temporary activities in Mainland China after its Chinese cooperation partner has submitted documentation on the planned activities to registration authorities for the record.

On November 28, the Ministry of Public Security issued Guidelines for the Registration of Representative Offices and Submitting Documents for the Record of Temporary Activities of Overseas Nongovernmental Organizations. According to Kristin Shi-Kupfer of the Mercator Institute for Chinese Studies (MERICS) in Berlin, this guideline is consistent with the very restrictive nature of the law. In a November 29 press release, she said it was still not clear on what legal basis foreign NGOs (and their staff) already working in China could continue to work beyond December 2016: “To date, for example, there is no list of the possible NGOs or Chinese partners and supervisory organizations, which will be needed for registration in the future. [Such a list has been published in the meantime, on Dec 20, 2016. RCTC editors’ note.] It is also questionable whether NGOs currently in China will be able to continue to use their previous transfer channels and accounts for funds.” In addition, “there are hardly any incentives for Chinese institutions to cooperate with foreign NGOs but there are plenty of risks.” Chinese institutions would be held legally responsible should their foreign NGO partners violate regulations. On November 8, following a briefing on the new law in Shanghai for representatives of 11 consulates, the Ministry of Public Security announced that there would be no transitional period for non-regis-

tered foreign NGOs (merics.org, China Update 21/2016 and China Flash Nov. 29).

An official English translation of the Guidelines (境外非政府组织代表机构登记和临时活动备案办事指南) can be found at www.mps.gov.cn/n2254314/n2254409/n4904353/c5587463/content.html.

Religious Policy

September 26, 2016:

State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) holds conference on the Sinicization of Religions

The conference was attended by religious representatives, experts in religious studies, ethnologists, lawyers and representatives of the religious authorities of the government. It originated with a call issued by President Xi Jinping at a conference on united front work in May of 2015 which he repeated at the National Conference on Religious Work held in April 2016, demanding that in the area of religious work the principle of Sinicization must be firmly adhered to. In the paper which he delivered at the conference on September 26, SARA Director Wang Zuo'an explained what was meant by the Sinicization of religions. Among his comments, Wang said that all religions – those of foreign origin as well as indigenous religions – must be Sinicized (i.e., made Chinese). He reasoned that a religion which may have been adapted to Chinese society in the past may not necessarily be adapted to Chinese society today. Wang emphasized the importance of Sinicization with regard to a religion's adaptation to socialist society. According to Wang, Sinicization is also a strategy for solving problems in the religious sphere, in particular infiltration from abroad by way of religion, the spread of religious extremism and "anti-Sinicization" (*ni Zhongguohua* 逆中国化). In addition to political identification with the leadership of the party, Wang called on the religions to engage in cultural fusion. In the interpretation of religious writings and teachings, in the form of religious activities, in religious music, clothing and buildings, a clear Chinese style should be expressed, Wang said. He further declared that reforms within China's religious systems should also be strengthened; care must be taken to prevent feudal privileges from gaining new life and Chinese religions from falling back under the control of a foreign power (*Zhongguo zongjiao* 2016, No. 10, or online at http://fo.ifeng.com/a/20161118/44496106_0.shtml).

October 10, 2016:

"Joint Conference of National Religious Organizations" meets at the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) – Call made for the reduction of poverty

Representatives of the official religious organizations had already been called upon by SARA in the past to issue common statements on certain political or social problems. Now, as SARA reports, a "Joint Conference" has been established as a fixed mechanism. The Joint Conference of National Religious Organizations (全国性宗教团体联席会议) is meant to provide a platform for exchange, cooperation and dialogue among religions, said SARA Director Wang Zuo'an in his speech at the group's first meeting. In addition to the national organizations of the five officially recognized religions, the Chinese YMCA and YWCA are also part of the Joint Conference.

At their October 10 meeting, the religious organizations adopted a call for the five major religions to participate in poverty reduction efforts in Sandu County. According to the statement, approximately

800,000 registered poor currently live in the Sandu Autonomous County of the Sui Nationality in Guizhou Province. The region was declared the “National Basis for the Practice of Charitable Welfare of the Religious Circles.” Since 2015, the five major religions have been conducting investigations and projects in the region (the report and the text of the call can be found at: www.sara.gov.cn/xwzx/xwj/378386.htm).

See also the entry of October 24–27 / November 1, 2016 in this section.

October 11, 2016:

New: Institutes for religious education now included in database of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA)

Since 2014, the SARA has been in the process of building an online database on its website. Since the end of 2015, all of the sites for religious activities (temples, etc.) of Buddhism and Daoism which have been registered with the state are now available on that website (see also an evaluation in *RCTC* 2016, No. 2, pp. 26–28).

On October 11, 2016, a second online database was set up containing all registered institutes for religious education. The information listed includes the religion, the sponsoring organization of the respective educational institution, the school's name and address, as well as the name of the person in charge. According to the database, there are currently 36 Buddhist, 10 Daoist, 10 Islamic, 21 Protestant and 9 Catholic educational institutes registered. According to the report provided at the launch of the database, there are approximately 10,000 people currently studying at the 86 institutes for religious education. Since the reopening of the institutes for religious education, some 40,000 students have completed their studies there. The report stresses that each [official] religious organization on the national or provincial level must first apply for permission to establish an institute for religious education and that the institute must then be approved by the SARA.

The list of the nine Catholic seminaries registered in the database includes the two seminaries in Taiyuan and Shanghai which have been temporarily closed. The seminary in Jilin, however, is not listed among those officially approved.

The database may be consulted at: <http://sara.gov.cn/zjxyys/index.htm>.

October 24–27 / November 1, 2016:

Plenum of the CP Central Committee meets, declares Xi Jinping to be its “core” / Religious representatives study the “spirit” of the plenum

In the communiqué adopted by the plenum, the whole party is called to “closely unite around the Central Committee of the CPC with Comrade Xi Jinping as its core.” The news agency *Reuters* has written that having been given the title of a “core” leader, Xi has effectively been put “on par with previous strongmen Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping.” In addition, the plenum adopted a policy statement titled: “Certain Norms on Inner-Party Political Life under the New Situation.” In a chapter on political discipline, the statement reaffirms that party members “are forbidden from engaging in feudal superstitions, practicing religions and joining cults, as well as from tolerating and supporting religious extremist forces, ethnic separatist forces, violent terrorist forces and their activities.”

Already on November 1, the newly founded “Joint Conference of National Religious Organizations” was convened in order that they might discuss the spirit of the party's Central Committee. According to a report from the State Administration of Religious Affairs, the assembled religious representatives

promised “to lead the believing masses to closely unite around the Central Committee of the Party with Xi Jinping as its core” (*Reuters* Oct. 27; *sara.gov.cn* Nov. 2; *Xinhua* Oct. 27 according to a translation provided by *BBC Global Monitoring*; *Xinhua* Nov. 2).
See also the entry of October 10, 2016, in this section.

November 1, 2016:

Xinjiang: “Regulations for the Prevention of Offenses Committed by Minors” prohibit parents from “inducing” their children to participate in religious activities

The new administrative legal measure was adopted on September 29, 2016, by the People’s Congress of the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang of the Uyghurs. It was published on October 12 and became effective on November 1. The new regulations state in article 9 that “Parents or other guardians and relatives of minors shall not: [...] 3. Organize, induce, or force minors to participate in religious activities; [...] 5. Incite, force or induce minors to participate in terrorist or extremist activities or in underground studies of the Qur’an, or to tolerate their [participation] in such activities; [...]. Should any of the above-mentioned acts be committed against minors, each organization and individual has the duty to stop them and report them to the police.”

The text of the regulations 新疆维吾尔自治区预防未成年人犯罪条例 can be found at: http://news.xinhuanet.com/legal/2016-10/13/c_129321033.htm (*guancha.cn* Oct. 12; *xinjiangnet.com.cn* Oct. 13).

Daoism

October 23, 2016:

Public sacrificial rites for Zhuangzi offered in Mengcheng (Anhui Province)



Group recitation from the book *Zhuangzi* at the sacrificial ritual for the Daoist sage in Mengcheng on October 23, 2016.

In the Zhuangzi Temple in Mengcheng, considered the home of Zhuangzi, about a hundred Zhuangzi researchers and lovers performed a solemn autumn sacrifice in honor of the Daoist philosopher. Photos on the website of the official newspaper *China Daily* show rituals such as the sacrifice of tea and incense, the veneration of a statue of Zhuangzi and readings from the classic text *Zhuangzi*. According to *China Daily*, the ceremonies were part of an old sacrificial ritual that has existed since the Song Dynasty, but which had been interrupted for a long time and has now been spontaneously resumed in 2012 by the local population. In a report on the website *Anhui wang*, it was said that the local authorities are encouraging such events as part of their efforts to establish cultural tourism (ahwang.cn Oct. 24; chinadaily.com.cn Oct. 24; xinhuanet.com Oct. 24).

Buddhism

October 27, 2016:

First forum on “Heart-Sutra’ Culture” in countries along the new Silk Roads

In Nanjing, around 240 high-ranking monks, scholars, diplomats and foreign students from 30 countries came together for a forum organized by the magazine *Renmin Zhongguo* and the Buddhist Association of Jiangsu. Jiang Jianyong, vice-director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs, said at the opening that up to the present the Silk Roads have served to further not only trade relations, but also cultural exchange. In this grand tradition, Buddhism is embedded as a particularly beautiful, radiant pearl, thus Jiang. In a joint action, forum participants were invited to write out the verses of the Heart Sutra in their respective mother tongues (sara.gov.cn Oct. 28).

The new Silk Roads (“One Belt One Road”) are a geostrategic project sponsored by the government of Xi Jinping; cf. *China heute* 2016, No. 3, pp. 172-183 (in German).

November 19–23, 2016:

Dalai Lama visits Mongolia, confirms high ranking reincarnation of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism – China protests

According to a report on the website of the Dalai Lama, more than 12,000 of his followers participated in a teaching given by the 14th Dalai Lama in Ulaanbaatar on November 20. In a message directed to Mongolian youth, the Dalai Lama paid tribute to the preservation of the Buddhist faith throughout the time of Communist rule and exhorted young monks to study hard. On November 23, he told a press conference that he was convinced that the reincarnation of the 9th Jebtsundamba Khutuktu was born in Mongolia.

The Jebtsundamba Khutuktus are the patriarchs of Mongolian Buddhism and belong to the Gelug school (also referred to as “Yellow Hat” school), of which the Dalai Lama is the head. The geopolitical significance of this reincarnation is complex, as M.A. Aldrich has pointed out in an article in *The Diplomat*. The first eight patriarchs were officially recognized by China’s Qing government as the religious leaders of northern Mongolia. The 8th patriarch died in 1924 and in 1929 the communist People’s Republic of Mongolia, prohibiting any attempt to locate his reincarnation, declared an end of the lineage. Nevertheless, a reincarnation was found in Tibet in 1936, but his identity was kept secret; he fled to India in 1959. In 1991, after the end of communism in Mongolia, the 14th Dalai Lama publicly recog-

nized this reincarnation. For his part, before his death in 2012, the 9th Patriarch declared that he would be reborn in Mongolia. Aldrich suspects that already ahead of the trip, Beijing was deeply concerned that the Dalai Lama could harm Chinese interests among Tibetan Buddhists by his recognition of the 10th Patriarch. Moreover, Aldrich considers it possible that the process of identifying the 10th Patriarch is, in effect, a “dry run” for a future identification of the 15th Dalai Lama outside the PRC. China protested vigorously against the visit of the Dalai Lama and afterwards called off bilateral talks on the question of Chinese loans to Mongolia, which is in a deep economic crisis (*Associated Press* Nov. 19; *dalailama.com* Nov. 20, 22, 23; *The Diplomat* Dec. 3; *South China Morning Post* Nov. 26; *Xinhua* Nov. 20).

Islam

November 26–28, 2016:

10th National Assembly of the Representatives of Islam in China

Following its regular cycle of leadership change, the highest official body of the Chinese Muslims has elected the new leadership of the Chinese Islamic Association (CIA). The new chairman is Imam Yang Faming, an ethnic Hui from Ningxia, who was born in 1965. He replaces Chen Guangyuan, born in 1932, who had been chairman of the association since 2000. Yang Faming, who was previously vice-chairman of the CIA, is a member of the Chinese Political Consultative Conference. He has, among other things, taken courses at the Chinese Koran Institute (1990/1991), the Central School of Socialism (1994) and the Al-Azhar University in Cairo (1999). Wang Zhongping was elected secretary general. In



Top: Address by the new chairman of the Chinese Islamic Association, Imam Yang Faming.
Bottom: Deputies during the National Assembly of the Muslims. Photos: chinaislam.net.cn.



addition, the delegates also chose 20 vice-presidents of the CIA. The former secretary general, Guo Chengzhen, also a Hui, who served as a staff member of the State Administration of Religious Affairs from 1989 to 2011, no longer appears among the ranks of the new leadership. As reported by Renmin University, eight members of the new leadership of the CIA, including Yang Faming, are graduates of Renmin University’s “course for patriotic religious figures.” In these 4-month courses, which were initiated in 2006, 600 representatives of the 5 major religions have been educated politically, culturally and professionally; many of the graduates hold positions at the national level in their respective religious organizations.

The 10th National Assembly adopted revisions to the statutes of the CIA, which place stronger emphasis on the fight against extremism. The delegates were welcomed by Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the Political Consultative Conference (*China Daily* Nov. 29; news.ruc.edu.cn Dec. 1; sara.gov.cn Nov. 26, 29; takungpao.com Nov. 28; *Xinhua* Nov. 28).

Protestantism

November 8, 2016:

Amity Printing Company celebrates its 30th anniversary – 150 million Bibles printed

According to the website of the Amity Printing Company in Nanjing, the firm celebrated its 30th anniversary on the 8th of November. Founded in 1986, by 2007 the company had printed 50 million Bibles. “From 2007 to 2012 it took only five years to print the next 50 million copies. From 2013 to 2016 it took only three years for the third 50 million.” By June of 2016, the production of Bibles – both hardback and paperback editions – had already passed 2 million copies a month. On July 18, Amity’s 150-millionth Bible rolled off the presses. The company was founded in 1986 as a joint venture between the Amity Foundation and the United Bible Societies (UBS). One way the United Bible Societies have been supporting biblical printing over the decades has been by donating fine Bible-quality paper to publishers. Amity’s website proudly states that since its beginning, the company has printed more than 74 million Bibles for export in over 90 different languages (*AsiaNews* Nov. 17; <http://amityprinting.com/news-events/item/838-celebrating-the-completion-of-the-150-millionth-bible>; see also *RCTC* 2013, No. 1, p. 11).

November 29–30, 2016:

Official Protestant leadership bodies decide on work plan for 2017

At a joint meeting of the Standing Committees of the Chinese Christian Council and the Protestant Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) in Shanghai, attended also by representatives of the State Administration of Religious Affairs, a report was presented on the bodies’ work in 2016. As to their goals for the year 2017, Pastor Xu Xiaohong, vice-chairman of the TSPM, identified the following focal points: 1) continuing with theological construction and a renewed reflection on the Sinicization of Christianity; 2) further research on Church Order and on the basic situation of the church(es); 3) standardization of seminary training; 4) integration of the various resources for social services, active participation in welfare activities, etc.; 5) increased exchange with foreign countries; resistance to foreign infiltration (*sara.gov.cn* Dec. 1).

Orthodox Church

September 29, 2016:

Orthodox Cathedral of Harbin recognized as a part of China’s architectural heritage

The former Russian Orthodox Cathedral of St. Sophia in Harbin, along with 97 other sites throughout the country, has been chosen to be on the first list to be made of China’s architectural heritage sites from the 20th century. The list was published on September 29 by the China Cultural Relic Association and



Cathedral of St. Sophia in Harbin. Photo: mospat.ru.

the Architectural Society of China. According to experts quoted in *AsiaNews*, the members of the jury also selected other sites such as the Great Hall of the People in Beijing and the Yangtze River Bridge in Wuhan, both of which were chosen as architectural witnesses of Chinese history in the 20th century. The Cathedral of St. Sophia was built in neo-Byzantine style in 1907 and was already listed as a national cultural heritage site in 1996. In 1997, the church was extensively restored and is now being used as a museum.

On May 1 last year, the first Orthodox priest to be ordained in China in 60 years, Alexander Yu Shi, an ethnic Chinese, celebrated the Divine Liturgy on Easter Day for the small Orthodox community of Harbin, which has been without a priest for the past 15 years. The liturgy was to have taken place in the Pokrov Church (Protection of the Mother of God) but it was under scaffolding during a state-sponsored renovation, so Father Shi celebrated the Easter liturgy in both Church Slavonic and Mandarin at the altar of the Catholic church opposite. Then, swinging his incense-filled thurible, he led the small congregation in procession across the square to the scaffold-clad Orthodox Church of the Protection of the Mother of God where he cried aloud three times in Chinese: “Christ is Risen!” and the people responded with shouts of: “He is truly Risen!” The Orthodox Church in China is only recognized locally in a few areas. There are about 15,000 Orthodox Christians living in China, mostly in Heilongjiang, Harbin, Inner Mongolia (Labdarin) and Xinjiang (Kulj and Urumqi) (*AsiaNews* Oct. 12; *journeytoorthodoxy.com* May 2016; see also *RCTC* 2016, No. 2, p. 9.).

Catholic Church

October 12–13, 2016:

Conference in Beijing on the inculturation and Sinicization of the Catholic Church

The state-sanctioned Catholic leadership bodies, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the official Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference, organized the fourth “Forum on the Inculturation of the Chinese Catholic Church and on a Sinicized Theology” in the National Seminary. Holding fast to Sini-

cization is key to the healthy development of the Catholic Church in China and must be “tackled with great energy,” declared Chen Zongrong, vice director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs, at the forum’s opening. Bishop Ma Yinglin (who is not recognized by Rome), chairman of the Bishops’ Conference, reminded participants of past efforts at inculturation and Sinicization in history and since 1949, and described the process as a great and long-term task for several generations. The forum’s focus was on “Interreligious Dialogue and Sinicization.” A representative of the Chinese Islamic Association was invited to attend the forum as a dialogue partner (see forum report at: www.chinacatholic.cn/html1/report/1610/70-1.htm, Oct. 20).

October 27, 2016:

Death of Bishop Francis Tong Hui of Yan’an

Bishop Emeritus Francis Tong Hui of Yan’an, Shaanxi province, has died of pneumonia at the age of 83. For the last five years the Diocese of Yan’an has been led by Bishop John Baptist Yang Xiaoting, who in 2010 was ordained coadjutor bishop and took on the role of local bishop, or Ordinary of Yan’an, in 2011, following the retirement of Bishop Tong Hui.

Bishop Tong Hui had been officially recognized by both the Vatican and the Chinese government. According to a report from *UCAN*, towards the end of his life Bishop Tong suffered for several years from symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease.

Bishop Tong was born on August 15, 1933, in Lintong, Shaanxi, and was ordained a priest in 1956. In 1965 he was arrested and was released only 15 years later. In 1994, he was consecrated Coadjutor Bishop of Yulin (now Yan’an) and took over the diocese in 1999, as the successor of Bishop Wang Zhenye. The territory of the diocese of Yan’an served as the finish line for Mao’s Long March and was for many years the power base of the Communist Party. Today, the diocese has 33 priests and 65,000 Catholics (*AsiaNews* Oct. 28; *UCAN* Oct. 28; <http://directory.ucanews.com/dioceses/china-yanan-yulin/238>).

November 20, 2016:

Jubilee Year of Mercy ends – Holy Doors at pilgrimage sites are solemnly closed

At the end of the holy Jubilee Year of Mercy, which had been proclaimed worldwide last year by Pope Francis and which was intensively celebrated by the Church in China, the Holy Doors were solemnly closed during special rites in each diocese.



Closing of the Holy Door at the Cathedral of Jinan (Shandong Province) on November 13, 2016. Photos: china-catholic.org.

November 22–23, 2016:

6th conference on “Role and Influence of Christianity in Contemporary Chinese Society” was held at Renmin University in Beijing

The 6th conference in the series was devoted to the theme “The Contemporary World Order and Its Relationship to Religion.” Organizers were once again the Advanced Institute for Religious Studies at Renmin University and two Catholic research institutions, the Yuan Dao Study Society (Hong Kong) and the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (Shijiazhuang).

At the opening ceremony, former high-ranking representatives of the party’s national United Front Work Department also took part. Zhuo Xinping of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences said in his opening speech that the process of Sinicization presented a great opportunity for Christianity in China. Peter Choy, director of the Yuan Dao Study Society and rector of the Holy Spirit Seminary in Hong Kong, extended greetings on behalf of Hong Kong’s Bishop John Cardinal Tong Hon.

A conference report carried by *Zhongguo minzu bao* (*China Ethnic News*) focused on the conference contributions on religion and on the new Silk Roads (“One Belt One Road,” OBOR). Among other things, Yan Kejia of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS) said that China’s religions should “go out” and play an active role in the world as, for example, in the resolution of regional conflicts. Zhang Hua (SASS) pointed to the Protestant Amity Foundation as an example of how China’s religions are already active abroad – in 2015, Amity became the first Chinese NGO to formally establish an office in Africa, at Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, and since March of 2016, an international office in Geneva, Switzerland. Fr. Michael Bauer, pastor of the German-speaking Catholic community in Shanghai, reminded listeners that President Xi Jinping had mentioned the Polish China missionary Father Michał Boym, SJ (1612–1659) during a speech in Poland in June 2016 and the Italian China missionary Fr. Matteo Ricci, SJ (1552–1610) at the G20 meeting in Hangzhou. He added that unless the exchange within OBOR has a theological and spiritual dimension, it will miss out on a deeper significance. Yang Huilin of Renmin University called for increased dialogue capability of China’s culture and religions with regard to OBOR. According to the conference report, conference participants also made “some constructive proposals on Sino-Vatican relations” (chinacatholic.org Nov. 22; *Zhongguo minzu bao* Nov. 29 based on iwr.cass.cn).

The 5th conference of the series took place in Hong Kong in November 2015, see *RCTC* 2016, No. 1, p. 13. For a more detailed account of the 6th conference, see the conference report by Dominic Niu in this issue of *RCTC*.

Sino-Vatican Relations

October 5, 2016:

First public meeting of a pope with a bishop from the People’s Republic of China (Mainland)

Bishop Xu Honggen was in Rome with a pilgrimage group from his diocese of Suzhou (Jiangsu Province) and met Pope Francis during the public audience in St. Peter’s Square. A photo of the meeting quickly made the rounds among the Catholic social networks in China. Bishop Xu is recognized by both the Pope and by the Chinese government. Of course, bishops from both parts of the Church of China have visited various popes in Rome over the past decades. These meetings, however, have always

been treated very discreetly, because the Chinese government does not allow Chinese bishops (who, in any case, often have difficulty getting permission to go abroad) to visit the Vatican. According to *UCAN*, the meeting drew mixed reactions from Chinese Catholics: Whereas a blogger-priest from the official Church called the meeting “a sign of the spring blossom” for the Chinese Church, an underground priest told *UCAN* that the Pope “has fallen into a trap” (*UCAN* Oct. 13).

Around October 10 / November 7, 2016:

Alleged ordinations of bishops in the underground Church without papal nomination made known publicly – Vatican warns about ordinations without mandate

Contradictory information has been circulating on the internet. According to *UCAN*, during Sunday Mass on May 22 of 2016 the underground priest Father Paul Dong Guanhua from the Diocese of Zhengding in Hebei Province announced that he had been secretly ordained as a bishop 11 years ago. He told *UCAN*: “I was ordained by an elderly bishop in 2005 but I will not tell you whom.” On September 11 Dong reportedly appeared for the first time as a bishop in public – complete with mitre and crozier.

The Diocese of Zhengding (called Diocese of Shijiazhuang by the official Church) already has a bishop, 81 year old underground Bishop Julius Jia Zhiguo, who is recognized by the Pope. On September 13, Bishop Jia declared in a letter that Father Dong has incurred automatic excommunication according to Canon Law Article 1382 for accepting episcopal consecration without papal approval. Bishop Jia is thought to have suspended Father Dong from active ministry years ago.

At the beginning of September, Dong posted his cell-phone number on the Catholic website *Tianzhujiao zaixian*, and wrote that if any diocese needed a bishop to perform an ordination, they could call on him. Dong Guanhua told *UCAN* that on September 7 he had consecrated a 51-year-old bishop, whose identity he did not reveal. According to reports, Dong claims to be relying on special faculties granted by Pope John Paul II to the underground Church but repealed by Pope Benedict XVI in 2007 in his letter to the Catholic Church in China.

According to *UCAN*, the news of the illicit consecrations sent “shockwaves” among the Catholics in China. Reports point out that these incidents complicate the situation of the Catholic Church in China and the Sino-Vatican negotiations; but they are also seen by some as an indication that parts of the Church in the “underground” feel increasingly isolated.

The Holy See only responded publicly on November 7, 2016, when Vatican spokesman Greg Burke read a statement on the reports of bishops’ ordination of priests of the underground community without papal mandate: “In recent weeks, there has been a series of reports regarding some episcopal ordinations conferred without Papal Mandate of priests of the unofficial community of the Catholic Church in Continental China. The Holy See has not authorized any ordination, nor has it been officially informed of such events. Should such episcopal ordinations have occurred, they would constitute a grave violation of canonical norms. The Holy See hopes that such reports are baseless. If not, it will have to await reliable information and sure documentation before adequately evaluating the cases. However, it is reiterated that it is not licit to proceed with any episcopal ordination without the necessary Papal Mandate, even by appealing to particular personal beliefs” (*Églises d’Asie* Oct. 19; *UCAN* Oct. 19; Nov. 9; *Vatican Insider* Oct. 10, 24; Vatican Press Office Nov. 7).

Beginning of November 2016:

Sino-Vatican Dialogue in Rome – Rumors of “early agreement” and warnings in the media

The latest round of negotiations between China and the Vatican took place in Rome in early November, according to sources cited by an *UCAN* report of November 25. Prior to this, various media such as *Reuters* reported that an agreement was to have been “finalized” at this meeting. *Reuters* reported that the Vatican was prepared to recognize four of the eight illegitimate bishops but this has not been officially confirmed by either the Vatican or the Chinese government. *Reuters* also claimed that the Vatican wanted to conclude an agreement on the ordinations before the convocation of the 9th National Assembly of Chinese Catholic Representatives in December so as to avoid tensions like those experienced in 2010 and prevent the danger of a “schism.” Similarly, the *Global Times*, which is under the auspices of *Renmin ribao*, wrote in an article of October 25 of the “final stage” of the negotiations. The *Global Times* listed some of the obstacles still existing, quoting the religious scientist Yang Fenggang of Purdue University (Indiana, USA), who warned that many Catholics in the underground could refuse to accept an agreement if they felt that the Vatican had made too many concessions. “However, if the compromises are perceived by underground Catholics as reasonable, it may help to bring all underground Catholics into the open, although it may take some time to heal and restore the relations between some underground and aboveground Catholic bishops and priests,” Yang added.

While the *Vatican Insider* and others of the media have argued strongly that an agreement should be reached, on the international front a number of dissenting voices are also being raised. In August 2016, for example, a “group of citizens from around the globe gravely concerned about the Vatican rushing to establish diplomatic relations with China” launched the website VaticanChina.org. The website is calling on people to send petitions to Cardinal Secretary of State Parolin and to Pope Francis. Sophie Richardson, director of the China Program of Human Rights Watch, warned the Vatican against “tak[ing] on faith any offers from Beijing until it offers religious freedom to all across China.” One prominent person, who has long been a voice among those warning against trusting Beijing too much is Hong Kong’s bishop emeritus Cardinal Zen (see below).

On November 25, citing one of its Church sources, *UCAN* wrote that an agreement is still a long way away. The presence of an illegitimate bishop at the episcopal consecrations in Chengdu and Xichang, as well as the convocation of the 9th National Assembly all give weight to this less optimistic view of things (see the entries of November 30, December 1, and December 2, 2016 in this section) (*Global Times* Oct. 25; Human Rights Watch Nov. 1; *Reuters* Oct. 21; *UCAN* Oct. 25; Nov. 25).

November 2016:

Cardinal Joseph Zen warns repeatedly against the danger of “compromises” and “surrender” in Vatican negotiations with China

In China there is a totalitarian regime that wants to control everything; the danger of the Vatican’s being deceived is very great, said Hong Kong’s bishop emeritus in an interview with the German *Katholische Nachrichten-Agentur* (KNA). He said pretty much the same thing when speaking with the *The Wall Street Journal*. In an event organized by the Justice and Peace Commission of the Diocese of Hong Kong on 13 November, Zen said that any agreement which conceded the nomination of candidates for the office of bishop to the official (not recognized by Rome) Bishops’ Conference, should be avoided at all costs. This would reduce the Vatican to a passive role, and it is also not realistic to think that the Vatican

could repeatedly reject candidates proposed by the Chinese side. Speaking to the KNA, Zen emphasized firmly that he was criticizing the Vatican, not the Pope himself. He added that if the Pope should give his consent to an agreement, then he (Zen) would withdraw entirely from public life (*Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Nov. 26; KNA as taken from *katholisch.de* Nov. 21; *The Wall Street Journal* Nov. 3).

November 10, 2016:

Diocese of Changzhi (Shanxi): First public ordination for more than a year – with the consent of the Pope and the government

54 year old Father Peter Ding Lingbin has been ordained bishop by Bishop Li Shan of Beijing; the co-consecrators were Bishop Li Suguang of Nanchang (Jiangxi) and Bishop Wu Junwei of Yuncheng (Shanxi). Bishops Meng Ningyou of Taiyuan, Zhang Yinlin of Anyang, and the 87 year old Bishop Jin Daoyuan concelebrated. In 2000, the latter was consecrated Bishop of Changzhi without papal mandate. The Vatican later recognized him, but without authorizing him to assume leadership of the diocese as its ordinary. All the bishops participating in the consecration of Bishop Ding are thus recognized by the Pope. As in other cases, the papal appointment had been read “privately” before the assembled priests, and the appointment by the official Chinese Bishops’ Conference (not recognized by Rome) was read in public. It was the first public bishop’s consecration since Bishop Zhang Yinlin’s in Anyang on August 4, 2015 and the second since that of Bishop Ma Daqin in Shanghai on July 7, 2012. According to *UCAN*, Ding was nominated by the Pope as a bishop in 2013 and shortly afterwards elected bishop candidate in the “democratic” procedure prescribed by the government. Though Rome appointed him to be the local bishop or ordinary, the Chinese government only recognizes him as a coadjutor of Bishop Jin Daoyuan.

Some 20 other priests in China have already been appointed by the Pope to be bishops of the many vacant dioceses, some of whom have not been approved by the government for consecration.

Bishop Ding Lingbin was born in 1962. Before entering the seminary, he worked as a doctor for several years. The Diocese of Changzhi currently has 55,000 Catholics, 47 priests and 19 seminarians (*AsiaNews* Oct. 24; Nov. 9, 10; *UCAN* Nov. 14, 30).

November 30, 2016:

Ankang and Chengdu: Episcopal ordinations with the consent of both Pope and government – in Chengdu, however, with the participation of an excommunicated bishop

In the small Diocese of Ankang in the south of the Province of Shaanxi, Father Johann Baptist Wang Xiaoxun, born in 1966, was ordained a coadjutor bishop. After his appointment by the Pope, he had already been elected bishop candidate in 2010. The consecrating bishops, Bishop Yang Xiaoting of Yan’an, Bishop Dang Mingyan of Xi’an and Bishop Yu Runchen of Hanzhong, as well as the concelebrating Bishops Han Yingjin of Sanyuan, Tong Changping of Weinan and Wu Qinjing of Zhouzhi (all from Shaanxi) are all recognized by the Pope. The 85 year old local bishop Ye Ronghua, who is ill, did not take part in the consecration. The Diocese of Ankang has 4,000 Catholics, 9 priests and 6 sisters. The consecration in Chengdu (Sichuan Province) took place under a strong police presence. Already in the run-up to the ordination, *AsiaNews* reported that even before the ceremony, Catholics had protested against a possible participation of ex-communicated Bishop Lei Shiyin of Leshan, also in Sichuan Province. Father Tang Yuange, born in 1963, was elected bishop in 2014, and his appointment by the Pope was known in October 2015, according to *UCAN*. The principal consecrator was Bishop



The protest banner, signed: "The faithful of the Catholic Church of Ping'anqiao" (= the cathedral), reads: "According to Can. 1382, we strongly protest that automatically excommunicated Lei Shiyin comes to our church to take part in and celebrate at the episcopal ordination." According to *AsiaNews*, it hung there in front of the church for several hours before and after Sunday Mass on November 27, until police finally removed it. Photo: china.ucanews.com.

Fang Xinyao of Linyi, Chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, together with Bishops Luo Xuegang of Yibin and Bishop He Zeqing of Wanxian (Wanzhou) as co-consecrators. Bishops Chen Gong'ao of Nanchong, Xiao Zejiang of Guiyang and Lei Shiyin concelebrated. Apart from Bishop Lei Shiyin, all the other bishops are recognized by Rome. The Diocese of Chengdu has 100,000 Catholics, 20 priests and 9 religious sisters (*AsiaNews* Nov. 30; *UCAN* Nov. 30).

December 1, 2016:

***Vatican Insider*: National Assembly of Representatives of the Chinese Catholic Church to take place at the end of December 2016**

The scheduled date will be December 26–30, 2016, said *Vatican Insider*, this was also confirmed by *UCAN*. This means that the 9th Assembly will start immediately after Christmas and will last two days longer than the last Catholic National Assembly or the Muslims' National Assembly of November 26–28, 2016 (see entry above).

As with the other four major religions of China, the five-year National Assembly is the highest-ranking body of official Catholic Church structures in China, prescribed and controlled by the state. It elects the leadership of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and of the official Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference, which is not recognized by Rome. This is the structure which Pope Benedict XVI described in his letter to the Catholic Church in China of 2007 (without mentioning organizations), as "extraneous to the structure of the Church" and "incompatible with Catholic doctrine." The last or 8th National Assembly took place in December of 2010 under very great pressure and coercive measures on the part of the authorities (see: *China heute* 2011, No. 1, pp. 4-7 [in German]). The 9th National Assembly had been postponed due to the ongoing Sino-Vatican talks. That the Assembly has been re-scheduled to take place this year, veteran China watcher Father Jerroon Heyndrickx, CICM, described as a "curve ball" for the Vatican (*Reuters* Oct. 21; *UCAN* Dec. 7; *Vatican Insider* Dec. 1).

December 2, 2016:

Bishop's ordination in the Diocese of Xichang (Sichuan) with the consent of the Pope and the government, but with the participation of an excommunicated bishop

In Xichang, Father Johannes Lei Jiawei, born in 1970, was ordained as the local bishop or ordinary of the diocese under very strict security measures. The principal consecrator was once again Bishop Fang Xinyao of Linyi, Chair of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. The co-consecrators were Bishop Xiao Zejiang of Guiyang and Bishop He Zeqing of Wanxian (Wanzhou). Bishops Chen Gong'ao of Nanchong, Luo Xuegang of Yibin, Tang Yuange of Chengdu and Lei Shiyin concelebrated.

UCAN reported that priests of Xichang were told that the participation of excommunicated Bishop Lei Shiyin was "on order from higher state authorities." Father Lei Jiawei had already been elected bishop candidate in 2010. In 2015, the Vatican appointed him to serve as administrator of the diocese, which had been without a bishop since 1999. According to UCAN, Rome had hesitated for a long time before finally appointing him bishop. Questions had allegedly been raised about his priestly morality but in an interview with UCAN, Bishop Lei Jiawei dismissed them as "rumors." Bishop Lei was also infamous among Catholics across China for singing "red" Communist songs on stage while wearing his vestments in 2011.

The Diocese of Xichang has 11 priests and 11 religious sisters to serve some 25,000 Catholics spread out over 14 parishes and 10 mission stations. It is situated in an area which has the largest concentration of the Yi ethnic minority in China (*AsiaNews* Dec. 2; *china.ucanews.com* Dec. 2; UCAN Dec. 2).

There was no official reaction from the Vatican to the participation of Bishop Lei Shiyin at the two consecrations [it came later, on December 21]. The sentiment that swept among Chinese Catholics though was one of shock and consternation. Father Peter Peng from Hebei wrote in a blog entry that a legitimate consecration compromised by the participation of an illegitimate bishop was like "rice mixed with sand" – hard to swallow, even if some Church people in China were so accustomed to eating it that they called it delicious (UCAN Dec. 8).

Hong Kong

November 13, 2016:

Hong Kong: Auxiliary Bishop Michael Yeung appointed Coadjutor Bishop of Hong Kong

On 13 November, Pope Francis appointed 71-year-old Auxiliary Bishop Michael Yeung Ming-cheung Coadjutor of the Diocese of Hong Kong with the right to succeed Cardinal Tong. In announcing his appointment during a Mass at the end of the Jubilee Year of Mercy in Hong Kong's Cathedral, Bishop Yeung expressed his gratitude to his two predecessors, Cardinal Zen Ze-kiun, SDB, and Cardinal Tong Hon, who stand "like two big trees offering shelter" while storms are buffeting the people and society of Hong Kong.

Dr. Anthony S.K. Lam from Hong Kong's Holy Spirit Study Centre described the new coadjutor as a "man of great responsibility and serious about his principles. He [...] knows how to use the media in a healthy way [...]."

Michael Yeung was born in Shanghai in 1945 but came to Hong Kong with his family at the age of 14. After a few years in the business world, he entered the major seminary in Hong Kong at the age of 26

and began his studies for the priesthood. In 1978, he was ordained a priest for the diocese of Hong Kong. He graduated from Syracuse University in New York State (USA) with a major in Social Communication, followed by a degree in Educational Sciences at Harvard. In Hong Kong, prior to his episcopal ordination in 2014, he held various positions in both pastoral and administrative areas. Among his many tasks, he was appointed director of Caritas Hong Kong from 2003–2014. From 2009 onward, he was one of several Vicars General for the diocese.

Asked for details about his eventual retirement, Cardinal Tong told *UCAN* that he was waiting for further communication from the Holy See. Prior to the consecration of his three auxiliary bishops on August 30, 2014 – Bishop Ha Chi-shing, OFM, Bishop Lee Bun-sang (since transferred to Macau) and Bishop Michael Yeung – Cardinal Tong confided that the Holy See was extending his appointment as Bishop of Hong Kong for another three years. (Cardinal Tong turned 75 on July 31, 2014) (*Fides* Nov. 14; *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Nov. 19; *UCAN* Nov. 14, 17; catholic.org.hk).

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The Sixth Conference on the Role and Influence of Christianity in Contemporary Chinese Society (第六届基督教在当代中国社会的作用及其影响) Held in Beijing

Dominic Niu

This international conference took place from November 22–23, 2016 at Renmin University (Renmin daxue 人民大学). It was the 6th gathering since its inception in 2011 and had chosen “The Contemporary World Order and its Relationship to Religion (当代世界秩序与宗教关系)” as its theme. This time, the conference was jointly organized by the Advanced Institute for Religious Studies of Renmin University of China (Zhongguo renmin daxue Zongjiao gaodeng yanjiuyuan 中国人民大学宗教高等研究院), Yuan Dao Study Society of Hong Kong (Xianggang Yuandao jiaoliu xuehui 香港原道交流学会) and Hebei Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (Hebei Xinde wenhua xuehui 河北信德文化学会).

Among the participants were officials (including ex-officials) from the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (Zhonghua Zhongyang Tongzhanbu 中共中央统战部) as well as the National Bureau for Religious Affairs SARA (Guojia zongjiao shiwuju 国家宗教事务局) and some members of religious administration offices at provincial level, journalists from state-run media such as *Zongjiao zhouban* 宗教周刊 (*Religion Weekly*) and *Zhongguo minzu bao* 中国民族报 (*China Ethnic News*), researchers from various academic institutes and universities, as well as representatives from Christian churches.

What is noteworthy was the significant presence of participants from the Catholic Church: they composed more than half of the 60 plus registered participants and most of them were priests and sisters who had obtained advanced academic degrees overseas and are currently involved in teaching ministries in various seminaries, both in Mainland China as well as in Hong Kong. This, however, should not strike anyone as a surprise since two of the three organizers, namely Hebei Faith Institute and Yuan Dao Study Society, are Catholic organizations. Hence, as one will note below, even though the conference itself was (somehow misleading) on “Christianity” (*jidujiao* 基督教), the topics discussed during the two days were largely focused on Catholicism.

The opening session was presided by Prof. Yang Huilin 杨慧林, a former vice-president of Renmin University. He pointed out that the conference could provide a good opportunity to help people form correct knowledge about and a good attitude toward religion, to enhance mutual understanding among people from political, academic and religious

backgrounds and to lend more theoretical support to an ever more positive and active role of religion in the societal development. The opening speech was given by Dr. Zhuo Xinping 卓新平, head of the Institute of World Religions (Shijie zongjiao yanjiusuo 世界宗教研究所), a branch institution under the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan 中国社会科学院). He first gave a brief overview of the current environment Christianity is faced with in China, which, according to him, does not look promising at all. As a matter of fact, perception by the society at large can even be deemed worse in comparison to 30 years ago. Nevertheless, he also pointed out that Christianity was no stranger to unoptimistic situations in history, and thus, instead of lamenting the challenges and obstacles, one needs to think positively and find opportunities for a better development. It is possible that Christianity could co-exist with others in harmony in a Marxist society, if it can adapt itself well to the reality. The “One Belt One Road” policy would provide new opportunities for such necessary adaptation. He raised an intriguing question toward the end of his address: Whereas China had the creativity to form the famous “one nation two systems” (yi guo liang zhi 一国两制, with regard to Hong Kong) strategy, could then the Vatican also come up with a matching “one religion two rules” (yi jiao liang zhi 一教两治) policy?

Fr. Cai Huimin 蔡惠民, director of Hong Kong Yuan Dao, and Fr. John Baptist Zhang 张士江, director of Hebei Faith Institute, also expressed their wishes for a successful gathering. In his speech, Fr. Zhang gave a parallel comparison between Pope Francis and President Xi Jinping 习近平, both of whom are for him charismatic leaders with vision, courage and creativity. Thus, with regard to the Sino-Vatican relationship new horizons could be opened up in this period.

The discussion of the conference itself was organized around four subthemes presented in four sessions. Each session featured 2-3 speakers with respondents supplying observations and feedback. The topics were as follows: The religious dialogue in international or local conflicts and coordination (国际或地区冲突与协调中的宗教对话); Neo-geopolitics and religious relationship (新地缘政治与宗教关系); Religious culture of the “One Belt One Road” and public diplomacy (“一带一路”的宗教文化与公共外交); Against the neo-geopolitical background: relationship between the Church in China and the Universal Church (在新地缘政治的背景下: 中国教会与普世教会的关系).

The two speakers for the first session were both famous scholars in the area of Christianity studies. Prof. Zhang Zhigang 张志刚 of Peking University (Beijing daxue 北京大学) gave a review of important researches devoted to religious phenomena in the international conflicts, whereas Dr. Yan Kejia 晏可佳 of Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (Shanghai shehui kexueyuan 上海社会科学院) traced the history of religious dialogue in the past 30 years in China, in which he particularly noted two parallel dialogues, namely the dialogue within religious circles and the study of religious dialogue in the academic circles. He encouraged people from the religious side to be more actively involved in the exchange with the academic world in this respect.

The second session featured three speakers. Dr. Tan Lizhu 谭立铸, director of the research office of the Chinese Catholic Theological Committee (Zhongguo tianzhujiao shenxue yanjiu weiyuanhui 中国天主教神学研究委员会), gave a talk on the Catholic

Church's work among the refugees (immigrants) that, as might have been expected, highlighted Pope Francis' commitment to the care of the poor and the immigrants. Dr. Liu Guopeng 刘国鹏 of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences helped the audience to better understand the organization of the Vatican State with a presentation on the relationship between the Roman Curia and the top ranking authoritative institutions of the universal Catholic Church. Finally, Rev. Dr. Chen Jianguang 陈剑光 of the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Xianggang Zhongwen daxue 香港中文大学) shared with the participants the challenges and barriers the "One Belt One Road" policy has to face in an international religious setting. To be noted here is that the comments of one of the respondents, Fr. Jerome Heyndrickx CICM (Han Deli 韩德力), were very well received. Among other things, he mainly emphasized the importance of dialogue, which was badly lacking in the Chinese Church history. Both Pope Francis and President Xi Jinping are persons of dialogue and thus, given the much different situations today, dialogue could then lead to something we had all hoped for. Nevertheless, one must not be overly optimistic as problems accumulated in the past could not be resolved by one or two meetings. Those who question the process of negotiations between China and the Vatican have reasons to do so and their doubts are also being heard by the Pope and their concerns have also been laid on the negotiating table.

The second day was opened with three talks looking into the "One Belt One Road" policy. Fr. Zhou Shouren SJ 周守仁 from Hong Kong and Fr. Michael Bauer (Bai Hanxi 柏寒夕), pastor of the Shanghai German speaking Catholic community, brought insights from religious and theological perspectives, while Prof. Ren Dayuan 任大援 of the Chinese National Academy of Arts (Zhongguo yishu yanjiuyuan 中国艺术研究院) looked at the issue from a historical perspective, namely the exchange of ideas between the missionaries and the Chinese intellectuals in the Late Ming and Early Qing period.

The fourth session was perhaps the most intriguing session, highly awaited by all the participants, since it focused on the Sino-Vatican relations. First, Fr. Dr. Geng Zhanhe 耿占河 of Hong Kong Yuan Dao analyzed the larger international background of Sino-Vatican negotiations and maintained that its process is affected by China's international relationships, particularly to the U.S., Japan, and Taiwan, and the improvement of Sino-Vatican relationship will only bring benefits to both sides. Then, Fr. Tan Leitao SVD 谈雷涛, student at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, offered instead a review of Catholicism's encounters with Chinese authorities in history and proposed that a good relationship between the two sides had always contributed to the well-being of China, whereas a broken relationship only brought harm and destruction. Finally, Dr. Wang Meixiu 王美秀 of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences gave an expert's review of the Sino-Vatican relations in the past 70 or so years. She expressed the hope that this time around, with a true reconciliatory attitude, building upon common concerns, needs and interests, the negotiation process could bear real fruit.

Among the respondents for this session, the now famous papal interviewer Dr. Francesco Sisci (Xi Shi 希士), a research fellow at Renmin University, gained much attention. He first stressed that although an Italian, he is actually atheistic in his personal beliefs. He briefly introduced the background and the preparation of his historical interview with

Pope Francis. For him, the Pope is not just any person, but a real world power; on the other hand, the recent events proved that the Vatican could be a powerful voice for the disadvantaged nations, and thus an improved relationship could help China gain a better international living space in the long run. Finally, he reminded us that the Vatican's ultimate goal is not proselytism but rather the promotion of peace.

During the closing session, Prof. Yang Huilin offered a very insightful summary, as well as learned reflections of the entire conference. Mr. Zhao Xueyi 赵学义, the former head of the Second Department of SARA, the department in charge of affairs in the Catholic Church, shared his experiences working with the Catholic Church. He believed that, comparable to the Sino-US negotiations in the 1970s, issues between the Vatican and China will be eventually resolved.

Looking back now, one probably has to say that this was by and large a "Catholic" conference. Besides the prominent presence of Catholic participants mentioned before, another significant character of this conference would be the obvious interest in and talks on Sino-Vatican relations. As a matter of fact, as Fr. John-Baptist Zhang noted, it was the first time ever that this topic could be discussed in such a setting. Let's then hope that this can also serve as a sign of something even more positive to come in the near future.

Manuale missionariorum: Manual for Evangelization in the Apostolic Vicariate of South Shandong

Karl Josef Rivinius

Translated by Jacqueline Mulberge

1. Initial Situation

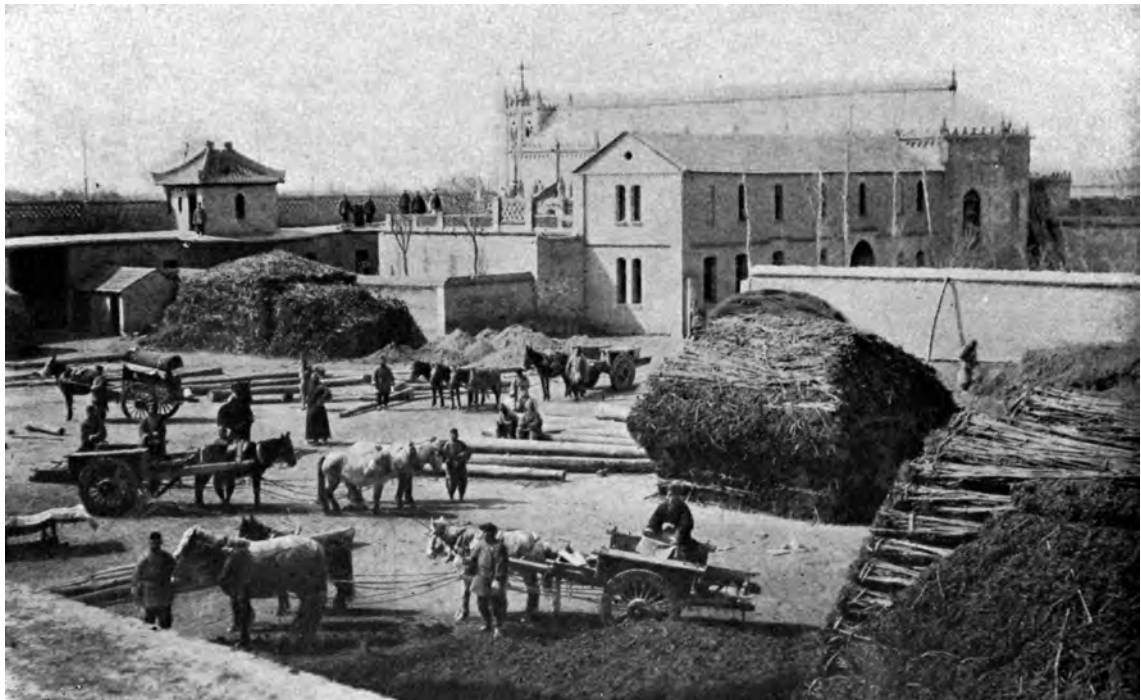
In 1882 the first Steyl missionaries, under the leadership of Pro-Vicar John Baptist Anzer, began their missionary service in the south of the Province of Shandong, the mission territory assigned to them, which had between nine and twelve million non-Christians. Due to the geographical, topographical, demographic situations and administrative policies, but mainly in view of the missionary aspect, the beginnings proved problematic and exceedingly energy sapping. The town of Poli lay in a low plain and almost every summer suffered devastating flooding from the Huanghe (Yellow River) with the most catastrophic consequences. With its location on the outer northwest border of the Steyl mission area, the considerable distance from Poli as base and starting point for mission activity compounded the difficulties of communication with the remainder of the region. The newcomers, who were only rudimentarily prepared for their work, had as yet no command of the language and, in addition, had neither a tradition on which to build, nor independent experience with regard to proclamation of the faith in the given context to fall back on. On top of that, they had to learn how to respond appropriately to the different mentality and manners of the local population. They lacked everything; they had to begin from scratch.

First they needed to acquire some land on which to build a house with an oratory and the possibility for meetings and then to procure the basic necessities for daily life. Only then could they tackle the development of an infrastructure. Apart from that, developed and structured communities of the faithful were lacking. When he arrived, Anzer found a group of 158 Christians among the approximately one thousand strong population of Poli; a few scattered Christian families and individual Christians lived in several settlements up to five hours distant. For an effective and sustainable proclamation of the faith there was a lack of families with a long Christian tradition from among whom catechists – a genuine and indispensable treasure as co-workers of the missionaries – as well as especially a native clergy could be won, for these groups formed the basic pillars of missionary activity.

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Among other reasons, this was due to the fact that for decades the Spanish Franciscans had neglected the entire region.

In a combined effort Pro-Vicar Anzer, the priests Joseph Freinademetz and Anton Wewel, as well as subdeacon Gottfried Riehm, strove with the help of local workers to build a residence in Poli.¹ At this time Anzer's qualities already became clearly apparent: his organizational talent and discernment, his business abilities and competent creativity, his political sense and intelligent farsightedness, his ability to make rapid decisions, his unique energy in following through with desired objectives, his tireless and dauntless creative flair, that did not stop in the face of any difficulty, as well as his distinct ambition and multiple aspirations.



Mission Station of Poli in later years.

As soon as the newcomers from Steyl had adjusted somewhat in Poli, become a little accustomed to the different world and learnt the customary turns of speech of the dialect spoken in that region, they began to proclaim the faith. In the early times they proceeded rather unsystematically from case to case. That fact was mainly due to there being so few missionaries but also to the local situation. Only over the course of the years were they able to establish a number of stations as bridgeheads from where they endeavoured to find and gain new mission fields for Christianity. The missionary generally went with a local catechist to the villages and market places.² Once there he rented a house or a room.

1 More on this: Bruno Hagspiel, *Along the Mission Trail. Vol. IV: In China*, Techny 1927, pp. 258-266; Karl Josef Rivinius, *Im Spannungsfeld von Mission und Politik: Johann Baptist Anzer (1851-1903), Bischof von Süd-Shandong*, Nettetal 2010, pp. 104-127.

2 "Motives of prudence and, in many vicariates, express regulations, forbid the missionary in China from traveling about alone through the country. Hence, when setting out on a mission tour, he must be accompanied by a servant, or by a catechist" (Hagspiel, *Along the Mission Trail*, p. 328).

Moved by curiosity about the foreigner or prompted by word of mouth, the people came mainly in the evening at first, because during the day they had to work for their living. First they spoke about everyday matters and then the talk turned gradually to God; that was followed by a general instruction in the faith. The catechist translated and filled in according to the ability of those present to understand the explanations given by the priest. Great value was placed on learning the important prayers: the “Our Father” and “Hail Mary,” the Creed, and on the fundamental truths of the faith. Most of the prayers were prayed by all together in a prayer room or in the chapel if there was one; evening prayer was recited by the women and girls before sundown, by the men and boys after sundown. Through communal prayer it was hoped to bring about a strong, identity-giving solidarity: it was meant to engender a sense of unity in a non-Christian society.



Sisters providing medical care for the sick.

In view of the social deprivation of orphaned and abandoned children, action was needed. First Anzer placed some girls in Christian families, while he took a few boys into his own house. These measures, however, could only be a temporary stopgap, because numerous other orphans without familial links were still not taken care of and needed help, so that the ever more pressing need to establish an orphanage for boys and one for girls was real, if one was not to culpably neglect the command to love one's neighbour and to condemn these children to spiritual ruin. Building houses for orphans and foundlings and a projected minor seminary, extending the mission compound with diverse workshops, running a farm to ensure a means of livelihood and taking care of mission helpers, workers, male and female catechists, medical care of the sick, as well as founding new stations, two

of which apart from Poli were already finished in autumn of 1882, cost a great deal of money which it was extremely difficult to raise.³

2. Establishing Contacts with Non-Christians and Annual Pastoral Visits



Departing for a mission visitation.

In the first decade the evangelizers from Steyl were predominantly wandering missionaries. In the different regions of the extensive area, it was necessary to open up a new area for Christianity and the Church, as well as to visit and provide pastoral care for their scattered faithful. The journeys, generally accompanied by untold hardship,⁴ which the missionaries described often graphically in their reports, gave them many an opportunity to make contact with non-Christians, draw their attention to the Christian religion and to talk about religious topics. The necessary stopovers in inns also often gave the missionaries the possibility of a friendly conversation with those who thought differently, as their numerous descriptions show. On those and other occasions, the observance of the custom-

3 After a decade of evangelization Anzer was able to show the following results: There was “an orphanage for girls run by local Christian catechists who were no less willing to make sacrifices than our compassionate sisters, and who had enjoyed a good and proper training; a boys’ orphanage run in exemplary fashion by one of its former students; the minor seminary with its fifteen young students, who are my consolation and my joy; the school for catechists, that is to meet the need for well-trained, reliably pious catechists; a high school for girls, only established last winter, which the vicariate saw as promising to be a powerful support for the improvement of women and the spread of Christianity among the female sex; a pharmacy well stocked with European medicines, the reputation of which extended well beyond the boundaries of the vicariate; furthermore a printing press, a carpenter’s workshop, farm: all that found a home there” (Karl Josef Rivinius, *Der umstrittene Bischof. Johann Baptist Anzer und die Steyler Missionare in China* [The Controversial Bishop, John Baptist Anzer, and the Divine Word Missionaries in China], Sankt Augustin 2013, pp. 135f.).

4 One such revealing description of the means of travel, as well as the roads and travel situation is found in: Hagspiel, *Along the Mission Trail*, pp. 144-158.



Sister Blandina SSps visiting her district.

ary etiquette of the country, as well as affability and a friendly approach by the missionaries were highly important. In addition, the opening of new mission stations provided the opportunity of coming into contact with non-Christians. The latter were not equally friendly everywhere but in general curiosity about the foreigners outweighed the animosity, for many of them had never seen a foreigner until then. Thus the newly established mission station in the town of Jining reported, “There was no lack of visitors during the first months. Inquisitive persons came from the most diverse classes. And since what we wanted was to win the people, we did our best to attend to all who presented themselves. Many an hour was spent in the reception room, sometimes with a religious conversa-

tion but very often also in listening to casual talk and in patiently answering the questions of curious people who appeared to be stuck to their chairs.”⁵

Generally it was up to the initiative and creative imagination of the individual missionary to make the most of the respective opportunity and to act accordingly. Many a time it was simply a small matter, such as playing a musical box or showing pictures and books, the watch, the writing utensils pen and ink, as well as other European products that aroused interest that allowed them to become acquainted with the people and gain their trust.

After setting up Christian communities in a village that would be administered by leaders as representatives of the responsible pastor, the priests endeavoured to consolidate the faith content and deepen the religious life. The prescribed annual mission served this purpose as a time of spiritual renewal during which other significant matters were also dealt with.⁶ It was the backbone of parish pastoral work, because during such days the faithful were filled with new Christian life and a process of developing parishes with a strong faith was initiated. The visit of the missionary on that occasion, for which the Christians prepared a formally perfect reception, was a tremendously important and great event that was arranged with appropriate festivity. Among other things the leaders had to ensure that during this annual pastoral visit all the Christians were invited to receive the sacraments, without putting pressure on them. The date – the time after the conclusion of the wheat harvest at the end of May / beginning of June, in the winter or around the Chinese New Year (family festival!) was the most favourable, since the people then had time and had something to eat – the date was made known to the faithful, also those living in the outer areas, early enough so that they could plan accordingly. The duration of the annual pastoral visit depended to a great extent on the numbers of those going to confession.

5 Augustin Henninghaus, *P. Josef Freinademetz SVD. Sein Leben und Wirken. Zugleich Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mission Süd-Schantung*, Yenchowfu 1920, p. 305.

6 Concise information on this significant event: Hagspiel, *Along the Mission Trail*, pp. 326-328.

If it had not already been done, at the beginning of this spiritual time the names of all the faithful, the baptized as well as the catechumens, were entered in the register of the Christian community, on the one hand so that they were known by name and could more readily be informed about the arrival of the priest and on the other hand so that the review of the register showed whether there were serious disturbances in the community, whether unmarried brides were living in the houses of their fiancés, whether there were children who due to a lack of care on the part of their parents had not yet received the sacraments, and other such matters. This information could be very helpful for the missionary both within and outside of confession.

The first few days served as thorough preparation: through special devotions and three or four sermons or catecheses daily on the central truths of the faith, the last things, and on the worthy and fruitful reception of the annual confession and Holy Communion. During that time the faithful prayed together – as far as possible before the Blessed Sacrament – for the conversion of sinners and their non-Christian neighbours, for the strengthening of the faith and other relevant intentions. Before the faithful were admitted to the sacraments, they had to undergo an examination of their knowledge of the faith. Usually one or the other day of fasting was arranged.⁷ External cleanliness such as shaving the head, putting the hair in order, clean and better clothing served the purpose of a reverent reception of the sacraments. During the mission the priest examined the leaders in the theory and practice of baptism which they often administered during the absence of the pastor, in fact for all newborn children of the Christians, including the healthy babies. Due to the theological importance of the sacrament of baptism as the integration into the faith



Chinese Catholics attending Church services.

⁷ On this see: Xaver Bürkler, „Die Fasten- und Abstinenzpraxis in der chinesischen Mission“, in: *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* 1 (1945), pp. 258-271.

community of the Church, the proper administration had to be certified. This was done by calling on two witnesses, men or women, so that there was no doubt with regard to the validity. Admittedly, in some areas pastoral efforts to animate the Christians to deeper religiosity after their baptism and to form them as persons strong in the faith were more difficult than gaining new Christians.

3. Structural and Spiritual Foundation of the Apostolic Vicariate of South Shandong

3.1. Convocation of the First Diocesan Synod and Its Preparation

After Anzer's return from Europe in July 1886, where among other things he had participated in the first General Chapter of the Society of the Divine Word in Steyl, 1884–1886,



Newly consecrated Bishop John Baptist Anzer.

and was consecrated there on 24 January 1886 by Archbishop Philipp Krementz of Cologne as their first Vicar Apostolic, he set out some basic principles for the mission work and directives for the missionaries, the so-called *Monita*, “which were meant to serve the pastoral practice”.⁸ He noted:

*At present I am working out some norms according to which the individual Christian communities are to be formed, as well as, if God wills, to provide sound Constitutions for congregations of young men and young women that are to be developed. I will thoroughly study the rules for the seminary, for the Catechists' school and for the orphanages and I hope to have made a good foundation for the mission, one on which we can continue to work safely and well.*⁹

In a circular letter to his missionaries dated 15 January 1892, the Bishop announced an important event for the vicariate: In August the first diocesan synod was to take place. Daily prayer to the Holy Spirit and special prayers of intercession at the Sunday Eucharistic celebrations were to implore a fruitful outcome. As members of the preparatory

8 John Baptist Anzer, New Year's greeting of 1893, p. 4. As can be understood from what the Bishop wrote, it mainly comprised excerpts from doctrinal publications, regulations of the Propaganda Congregation and from decrees of various synods held in China.

9 Anzer to the Directors of the Ludwig-Missionsverein in Munich. Puoli, 10 January 1887, in: *Annalen der Verbreitung des Glaubens*, Vol. 55 (Munich 1887), pp. 152-157, here pp. 152f.

commission chaired by Pro-Vicar Freinademetz¹⁰ he appointed Fathers Theodor Bucker, Augustin Henninghaus, Eberhard Limbrock, Wilhelm Schumachers and John Weig.

Freinademetz, a missionary with fourteen years of broad practical experience, had been commissioned by Anzer to write down his opinion on the various points that were to be discussed at the coming diocesan synod. In his comprehensive document, which was divided into two main points,¹¹ there were questions of matters of principle, then suggestions, concerns, reservations, critical comments, as well as constructive proposals regarding issues that directly affected the situation in the South Shandong mission and required more clarification. In addition, in this position paper there are a number of items for discussion that represented fundamental problems in the Chinese missionary Church or were of especial relevance and explosive nature, which different synods in China had already taken up.

The following issues were dealt with by Freinademetz primarily: winter schools for boys and girls, elementary schools, orphans and orphanages, the missionary and his keep, methods of evangelization, community leadership, male and female catechists, the Rule for catechists, baptism and its administration, morning and evening prayer of the Christian communities, the opium question, introduction of fraternities, scapulars, prayer apostolates, and the printing of forms for marriage dispensations, requests, and so on. Two heartfelt wishes of the author were formulated as a request: to postpone feast days that fell during the week to the following Sunday. In that way the poor country folk who made up the majority of their Christians and baptismal candidates would have one more working day to secure their living. Furthermore, permission for these latter to continue their work on Sunday afternoons which was already allowed in some Chinese provinces.¹²

The second part of the text dealt with the recruitment, education, lifeform and vocational duties of the clerics.¹³ Pro-Vicar Freinademetz appears to have set out these extensive statements later at the request of Anzer, because the first part merely states regarding

10 On his person and work: Fritz Bornemann, *Der selige P. J. Freinademetz (1852–1908). Ein Steyler China-Missionar. Ein Lebensbild nach zeitgenössischen Quellen* (Blessed J. Freinademetz [1852–1908]. A Missionary from Steyl in China. A Biography according to Contemporary Sources), Rome 1976.

11 AG/SVD 52 484–523. A presentation of the content in: Bornemann, *Der selige P. J. Freinademetz*, pp. 184–192 and 559f.

12 The introduction of regular Sunday celebrations was something new for the Chinese that brought a number of problems. The Sabbath rest meant dropping a working day and sometimes represented a heavy economic loss for the impoverished country population in their struggle for a livelihood. Freinademetz' suggestion determined by the situation did not find undivided approval among the missionaries. Those adhering to a moralistic rigorism wanted no weakening of the Sunday commandment, because keeping it was a special characteristic, distinguishing the Christians from the rest of the population. The adherents of all other religions did not recognize a regular free day that could be compared to the Sunday and which they were obliged to observe. Observance of the Sunday and holy day commandment remained a pressing, permanent problem. The Revolution of 1911 did in fact bring in a legal Sunday rest for workers, soldiers and students, but not for shopkeepers, merchants and farmers. In 1924 the National Council of Shanghai ordered that the Chinese Christians were to observe all Sundays and the following feast days: Christmas, Epiphany, St. Joseph, Ascension, Assumption of Mary, All Saints and the Immaculate Conception. As it was there were a number of reasons excusing the keeping of this positive law. On the entire complex: Xaver Bürkner, *Die Sonn- und Festtagsfeier in der katholischen Chinamission. Eine geschichtlich-pastorale Untersuchung*, Rome 1942.

13 AG/SVD 52 512–523.

clerics, “I consider the regulations of the Synod of Szechuan on this point so comprehensive and excellent that I have nothing to add to them.”¹⁴

3.2 Revised Formulation of the Guidelines and Methods for Missionary Work

The diocesan synod began in Poli at the end of July 1892. All twenty priests participated under the chairmanship of Bishop Anzer; only the new priest Ludwig Klapheck was prevented by illness. Anzer, as Bishop, was responsible for the legal and structural division of the vicariate and the care for pastoral ministry lay primarily with him, therefore he wished to hear the views of his missionaries concerning the manifold problems and challenges, in order to develop with them perspectives of a new pastoral order and categories of action that would serve to guarantee a sustained evangelization in the apostolic vicariate of South Shandong within his framework. This aim was to be achieved through the revision of the statutes for the missionaries and for the proclamation of the faith, as well as also the revision of the Rules for Catechists and their training and accompaniment.

In meantime, a great deal had changed in the Apostolic Vicariate. Numerous problems remained unsolved; new questions had come up and needed clarification. In addition there were alarming scenarios to be thought through and processed. All that made it appear urgently necessary to reflect critically on the experiences and work to date and to do justice to current demands according to the development that had come about in the meantime. Taking into consideration the relevant decrees, directives and recommendations of the Propaganda Congregation, as well as proven statutes of other missions, and on the basis of important decrees, regulations and rules of conduct from synods held in China, the *Monita*, the current set of rules for evangelization, were to undergo a comprehensive and careful revision and be replaced by a coherent and efficient new set. In this, according to Anzer, the catechists, men and women (mainly “Virgins”), and leaders of the Christian communities were to be given special attention, “since the efficiency of these factors determines the growth of the mission to a great degree.”¹⁵

14 AG/SVD 52 510. Whether and in how far the individual points were taken into consideration in the formation of opinion in the preparatory commission and then in the deliberations in the plenum and whether the thoughts appeared in the respective final agreements, cannot be clearly proven from the available archives. Even so we have to presume that they were appropriately taken up.

15 As Note 8, pp. 4f. “The question of gaining catechumens is very difficult and can hardly be solved by mission theorists. Theory will fail there utterly. And yet the resolution of this question is the natural presupposition for all religious instruction. But in practice? [...] Every beginning is difficult, that is especially the case when the pioneer of faith endeavours to found a station in a completely pagan area. The population has every possible prejudice regarding the religion that is totally new to it and that in addition is coming from abroad” (Anton Volpert, “Die Gewinnung von Katechumenen,” in: *Blätter für die Missionskatechese und katechetische Zusammenarbeit der Länder* 3 [1938], pp. 43-48, here p. 43). They had to bear in mind, as Mgr. Anzer used to say: “We did not come to China in order to convert China but to witness to the truth.” According to the veteran missionary Fr. Volpert, these words of the Bishop were in fact very correct, because conversion is not the task of the missionary but the work of grace. One should not wish to gather immediately where one has hardly sown. The grace of God had to move the hearts of the pagans to take the decisive step. “That grace has to be implored, has to be earned. Without special grace our efforts are in vain. With external means one can win pagans as friends but not make them Christians [...]. To me it looks like a bad thing to want to make Christians in holy impetuosity, as if by force. This impatience will be paid for dearly. There will be no genuine conversions, no permanent fruit” (*ibid.*, p. 45). In most mission areas there was a preparation time of at least one year from the request to the reception of baptism which, as the theologically and biographically most important sacrament, as conferring membership of the



Catechists, the so-called Virgins.

As already mentioned, the (lay) mission personnel was extraordinarily important for the work of spreading the faith and the development of the Church. Catechists, men and women, were a fundamental prerequisite for lasting missionary fruitfulness. Without their cooperation only very few people could be reached, because the missionaries were few in number and their activity remained necessarily limited to a small circle. In addition the catechist was closer to his people than the foreign priests; he spoke their language, lived among them and shared the same joys, sorrows and sufferings. For that reason he reached the people more easily, quickly and better, and could lead them to the faith with his own emotionality. He made the first contacts and opened up new areas for the Church. If interest in Christianity was expressed in a locality, a catechist was sent there to conduct exploratory talks. He instructed the people in the rudiments of Christian doctrine, familiarized them with prayer and preached to the non-Christians, as long as these latter did not make any objection. He introduced them to religious and moral thought, life and action, to the new manner of community, to the Christian community, to the being with and for one another of the Christians, to their cult, their religious services, their feasts; he led the community, and many other things. Fr. Volpert, for example, considered care for efficient catechists to be more urgent than, according to his opinion, premature efforts towards a local clergy.¹⁶ He considered female catechists for women more useful than uncultured, local religious sisters.¹⁷

faith community, was generally celebrated very solemnly. For this, as well as the administration and reception of the other sacraments, as a witness to faith and to personal union with Jesus Christ should appeal to the senses and sentiment, as should also the other liturgical celebrations and religious rituals. The Propaganda Congregation had left it to the Vicars Apostolic to determine the length of time of the catechumenate. Relevant general information on this in: Louis Kervyn, *Méthode de l'apostolat moderne en Chine*, Hongkong 1911, pp. 598-613; Johannes Beckmann, *Die katholische Missionsmethode in China*, Immensee 1931, pp. 169-196; Thomas Ohm, *Das Katechumenat in den katholischen Missionen*, Münster 1959; about the SVD in China in particular: Richard Hartwich, "Die Katechumenate in der Steyler Südshantung-Mission," in: *Verbum SVD* 21 (1980), pp. 229-246.

16 Anton Volpert, "Lebensdaten eines vielgeprüften Chinamissionars, Gansu 1935–1936" (Manuscript), in: AG/SVD 93 520, fols. 301f.

17 *Ibid.*, fols. 156, 161, 275, here there are more detailed reasons for his opinion.

The visits of the missionary, which due to the great number of scattered communities, as well as to topography, climate and personal situations, only took place sporadically, served to supervise the pastoral activity of the catechists, to test the attitude of the catechumens and new Christians and to deepen the truths of the faith. Even if the administration of the sacraments¹⁸ and conducting the annual parish mission, generally held once a year, belonged to the actual functions of the priest, the catechist was essential for the community for a specific time for the introduction to the Christian way of life, deepening of the prayer life, making known the laws and discipline of the Church and for the instruction of the children. He administered baptism in danger of death. Male catechists were responsible for the men, female catechists, Christian women and especially the so-called Virgins took care of the women.¹⁹

Whereas men and women catechists only carried out their task temporarily in the communities, although sometimes for years, the leaders remained in the locality. They came from the communities and were chosen by the election of the Christians or appointment by the missionary as their leader. They were responsible for arranging community affairs. They took care of keeping the priest during his stay in the community, took care of the prayer rooms, represented common interests of the Christians before civil and Church authorities, mediated between quarrelling parties, and much more. “A good leader is a genuine treasure, a basic pillar of the community.”²⁰

In order to do justice to the responsible and fruitful evangelizing activity of this group of persons, the Rule for Catechists was “examined again and significantly extended;” for the community leaders “what had up till now proved practical through practice was laid

18 Official ecclesiastical acts, first and foremost the administration of sacraments, but also deaths, or burials, as well as listing the members of the community had, according to the instruction of the Propaganda Congregation of 18 October 1883, to be entered into so-called Church registers of the individual Christian communities. Especially the registers of baptisms and marriages were to be kept circumspectly and carefully: the deans had to pay particular attention to that. This regulation found its way into the *Manuale missionariorum* (chapter 24, No. 3).

19 On the significance of the latter: “Women in pagan countries subject to Oriental customs live in seclusion and are not easily to be approached by missionary priests. It is difficult, and often utterly impossible, for men missionaries to gain an opportunity to instruct them personally in the principles of the Christian religion [...]. Therefore the need for women catechists (“virgins”), unencumbered either by family ties or religious vows and restriction (as a rule, they take a private vow of chastity), becomes quite obvious. Such women catechists may move among the women folk without restraint; and they thus gain many opportunities for dispelling all prejudices against the missionaries and the Catholic religion. They also help mightily in showing the groundlessness of numberless superstitions which prevail with women of the pagan world with regard to many special events of life, such as betrothals, weddings, deaths, and burials. Moreover, the good example of the catechist, her spirit of sacrifice, and her unselfish love and kindness toward the children of the house, will invariably prepare a mother to receive her words and counsels with confidence and gratitude. Thus the women catechists are able in time to instruct the mothers and make them ready for reception into the Church” (Hagspiel, *Along the Mission Trail*, pp. 191f.). In chapter 45 the *Manuale missionariorum* is concerned with the “virgins” (female catechists).

In its Instruction of 29 April 1784, the Propaganda Congregation had issued special rules “pro societate virginum christianorum” (*Collectanea S. Congregationis de Propaganda Fide seu decreta, instructiones, rescripta pro Apostolicis Missionibus*, Vol. 1, Rome 1907, p. 351). On the topic of “virgin” (pagan and Christian virgin; pagan nun and Christian religious virgin) see: Jakob Marquart, *Die Frau in Shantung*, Tsingtau 1932, pp. 47-66; also: Karl Suso Frank, „Chinesische Jungfrauen“, in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, 3rd Edition, Freiburg 2006, vol. 2, col. 1076; Huaqing Zhao, *Die Missionsgeschichte Chinas unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bedeutung der Laien bei der Missionierungsarbeit (ca. 16.-19. Jh.)*, Sankt Augustin 2012, esp. pp. 191-269.

20 Henninghaus, P. J. Freinademetz, p. 293.

down in writing and appropriately complemented.”²¹ In addition new statutes were compiled for female catechists.

At the decisive wish of Bishop Anzer, the members of the synod also dealt with the traditional, communal prayers, namely morning and evening prayer. They were concerned with the obligation to participate in the communal prayer in the church or in a prayer room, with reducing the prayers customary until then and with their linguistic version. According to an old custom, the zealous Christians prayed morning and evening prayer together; in larger communities they gathered for that in a common prayer room. The prayers stemming from older times were prayed aloud, half sung, half recited.²² Not a few new Christians found that difficult for it was a huge amount: half an hour in the mornings and evenings, thus a reduction appeared appropriate. The missionaries considered the communal prayers important, not only so as to learn them better but also because the regular meeting created an identity, giving the feeling of belonging together as a Christian faith community, and also because it led to social cohesion. The missionaries also hoped that these prayer meetings would have a healing influence on the manner of life of individual Christians; in addition they considered them an effective means of influence on the non-Christian surroundings, as well as possibly improving the atmosphere between the Christian and non-Christian population.

Since the customary prayers had been composed by the early missionaries in the literary language, they were mostly incomprehensible to the simple, barely educated peasants. For that reason Bishop Anzer wanted at least a partial revision of prayer texts, some which could barely be understood were to be eliminated and replaced by new ones, especially by those that had been introduced in the South Shandong mission. Freinademetz had proposed including prayers to the Blessed Trinity, to the Sacred Heart, to the Holy Spirit and a formula for the renewal of the baptismal vows in the morning and evening prayer. He found the morning prayer not too long. The evening prayer ought to be prayed by the Christians throughout the year communally in the church, except during the wheat harvest and during the intensive work period in autumn. Instead of that, those having to work could be allowed, “to pray the morning prayer from Easter until the end of the autumn harvest at home, except on Sundays and feast days and they should attend holy Mass as often as the opportunity arose.”²³

21 Anzer, New Year's greeting 1893, pp. 4f.

22 From the 17th century, communal prayer developed in the form of recitation as a characteristic of the Chinese Church. The texts that were recited in this manner in the families, in the churches, Christian associations or other gatherings were mainly litanies, rosaries or other prayers. A collection of sixty prayers of this kind appeared in 1628 in a prayer book that was newly arranged and extended forty years later. On top of that the texts were formulated in highly elegant Chinese. Even after three hundred years the texts from that prayer book were still being sung in common in many regions of China. “This collection of prayers and even more the practice of communally singing the prayers aloud in the form of singsong became a characteristic of Christian identity in China. This aspect is illustrated by the fact that Christians were frequently described by their neighbours as *Nian jing de*. That means ‘Those who read aloud’. It was quite usual for Christians to know the entire prayer book or parts of it by heart. Especially when the community gathered together on Sunday the singsong formed a firm part of the celebration. Community prayer therefore had great significance in the life of the Christians” (Johannes Gehrs, “Die Bedeutung der Sakramente für die Kirche in China”, in: *Verbum SVD* 48 [2007], pp. 411-438; 49 [2008], pp. 71-89, here p. 430).

23 AG/SVD 52 500f.

The results of the common deliberations and intensive exchange of opinions at the diocesan synod were reflected in the new handbook, the *Manuale missionariorum*;²⁴ it was the mandatory framework for the mission work. The Compendium, the first part of which is based mainly on decrees of the Synod of Shanxi, has sixty chapters. The second part has ten chapters concerning sacramental pastoral ministry with individual regulations for preparation and administration of the sacraments. This brings in the decrees of the Synod of Shaanxi in 1891 in which Anzer participated. The third part, with three chapters, has special rules for the Christian community leaders, as well as for the men and women catechists. The *Manuale missionariorum*, which was given to each missionary, was the standard, the *Norma normans*, to which he had to keep in his activity from then on.

Following receipt of the corrections and the approbation, the Bishop had compiled a number of supplementary regulations for the *Manuale missionariorum* for a better administration of his vicariate and had sent them to Rome with a request for approval. The first point concerned the Examina on practical pastoral ministry, moral theology according to the textbook of Clément Marc CSsR, *Institutiones morales Alphonsianae*, facts about pastoral theology and knowledge of Chinese literature which were covered in the four catechisms, as well as in the morning and evening prayers, then on the ability of the local priests to write letters to the mandarins. All priests who were to exercise the office of rector or vicar at an outstation had to take a corresponding examination. The second point dealt with the pastoral conferences and required that every missionary had to give a written solution to case examples. The third point dealt with questions referring to engagement and marriage. The acts and decrees of the synods were presented for examination and approval to the cardinals of the Propaganda Congregation at the general meeting on 16 April 1894. After some corrections and more precise formulation, they were approved and confirmed by Pope Leo XIII in the audience on 6 May 1894. The decree of approbation is dated 25 June 1894.²⁵

4. Pastoral Case Examples

Given their relevance, some problem areas with which the missionaries were confronted in their activities in South Shandong and that were clarified by the diocesan synod to ensure uniform regulation and thus found their way into the *Manuale missionariorum* are presented in the following:

Regarding observance of Sundays and feasts, a controversial topic among the missionaries, the following regulations were agreed upon: The district leaders – whose tasks and responsibilities were dealt with in chapter 24 – had the authority in their area to give a dispensation to poor members of the faithful who depended greatly on the work of their hands and for whom every stoppage of work meant a heavy loss, allowing them to per-

24 On 4 April 1895 Anzer had sent the third edition of the *Manuale missionariorum* to the Propaganda Congregation for examination and had requested approbation. Just over a year later Cardinal Prefect Ledóchowski returned the book with minor corrections and asked that after the printing of the new edition two copies be sent to the Congregation (Rivinius, *Im Spannungsfeld von Mission und Politik*, p. 365, Note 22).

25 Josef Metzler, *Die Synoden in China, Japan und Korea 1570–1931*, Munich – Vienna – Zurich 1980, pp. 140f.

form “servile” work on Sundays and feast days, although only after attending holy Mass – inasmuch as that was possible – or after reciting prayers as a substitute. Exceptions to this were the feasts of Easter, Pentecost, Christmas and the Assumption. The faithful who did not depend on their work were not to be dispensed, not even for the afternoon hours, unless there were good reasons in an individual case. Traders who had always to be present in their shops could be dispensed for the entire day. They were, however, obliged to attend holy Mass if there was the possibility and if not they were at least to say prayers as a substitute.

*A dispensation may never be given for all time but only for as long as the situation of need subsists and until the time of the following parish mission. On that occasion the one who was dispensed is to be informed that when the reason no longer pertains the dispensation also ceases.*²⁶

In many Chinese provinces, as also in Shandong, the opium question posed a highly complex problem in numerous ways. It came up repeatedly at synods and a number of regulations were accordingly passed. The answers from Rome to the questions of Vicars Apostolic regarding the matter turned out quite differently at different times. Thus, for example in the decree of the Holy Office of 10 March 1852, the negative consequences of opium were in general recognized but they abstained from a general prohibition, because it would have placed not a few Christians and catechumens in existential difficulties. The Instruction of the Propaganda Congregation of 18 October 1883 in connection with baptism spoke in general against the abuse of opium. In the concluding session of the second synod of the second region on 15 November 1885, a concept was passed that was exclusively directed at the smoking of opium. It states: In recent times

*the use of opium has become so prevalent, to the great detriment of the entire people, that we fear that all men and women could succumb to this vice and suffer untold mental and physical damage. Therefore it ought to be a special task of the missionaries to do all they can to eliminate this vice completely. Thus they decreed that the instructions given by the Sacred Congregation to the Vicars Apostolic be followed by all missionaries and priests in the region and that these strive with all their might to see this abuse eliminated and the Christians discouraged from growing, selling and using opium.*²⁷

In the Appendix of the Acts of the Synod of 1891 in Shaanxi, the Vicars Apostolic had also dealt with the opium question in connection with the statement on the reception of the sacraments. There it was recognized that, in spite of all efforts of the mission, cultivation

²⁶ Chapter 23 deals extensively with the dispensation from “servile” work.

In a state ordinance, effective from 1st January 2008, the national holidays in China were newly specified. In addition to the introduction of three new holidays, the Memorial of the Dead on 5 April, the dragon boat festival in June and the mid-autumn festival in September, the so-called “Golden Week” on the occasion of the May festival was shortened to one day. The Spring festival – Chinese New Year – like the national feast day, comprised three legal feast days. The aim of the new regulation was above all a better distribution of the holidays through the year and the avoidance of too great a wave of travelling on the free days. More on this: Barbara Hoster, „Neuregelung der gesetzlichen Feiertage in China – Wiederbelebung traditioneller Feste“, in: *China heute* 27 (2008), p. 15.

²⁷ Quote from Metzler, *Die Synoden in China*, p. 96.

of opium in China had not only not become less, rather it had spread constantly further and even Christians were growing opium. The state authorities tolerated the cultivation indirectly but levied taxes on it. On the other hand, the bishops pointed to the moral and health impairment of opium smoking, while not forgetting to point out the medical use of opium. At the same time they recognized the dilemma posed by this question, because the cultivation of opium was very widespread in China and the revenue greater than from all other agricultural branches. There were regions where the entire agricultural economy was geared to the cultivation of opium. If, according to the bishops, one were to “strictly forbid the Christians and catechumens to take part, it would mean slamming the door against the propagation of the faith.”²⁸

In his position paper, Freinademetz formulated a lengthy passage on opium. He summed up his judgement about it as follows:

*The unnecessary or excessive indulgence in opium is de malo [evil], detrimental and to be condemned, as is the excessive use of alcoholic beverages, brandy, tobacco and even coffee. Thus the habitual smoking of opium by Christians may never be permitted, both because of the good reputation and of the serious consequences. An exception may only be made for very old persons who have been smoking opium for long years and therefore can hardly stop. Concerning the planting of opium, the missionary should constantly seek through instruction and admonition to bring the Christians to desist from it. It seems to me, however, that the priest ought not to reach for the sharpest means of hindering the Christians from planting opium, namely by refusing the holy sacraments (baptism, confession, Eucharist). I believe I may deduce that from the above-mentioned explanation, all the more as the opium planting in two provinces of China has already been permitted by the Sacred Congregation and, on the other hand, it is legally permitted by the government of the Empire, which collects an annual opium tax. The poverty of our South Shandong people is exceedingly great; such that if in the southern districts of our mission the cultivation of opium were completely forbidden, they would no longer be able to cope with the necessary expenses and would thus be forced to shy away from becoming Catholic.*²⁹

Another delicate point that demanded tact and sensitivity of the missionaries and was also a matter for the diocesan synod concerned dealings with the female sex. The ethical norms of Chinese society did not allow a man to approach a woman whom he did not know. That applied especially in situations where both were alone, e.g. during confession. Even if a priest was alone in a room with a group of women, that could be viewed as improper and offensive. From the beginning of the proclamation of the faith, the missionaries strove to take that situation into account. Thus sometimes women were instructed in the truths of the faith by their Christian husbands, or the father acquainted his daughters with the Christian faith. In time they began to train female catechists who specifically took on the catechesis for the women and girls. Women catechists who remained unmarried because

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

²⁹ AG/SVD 52 489.



Baptismal ceremony conducted by Fr. Oskar Ledermann.

they had not found a Catholic husband or did not wish to marry a non-Christian, so-called “virgines martyres,” often took a vow of chastity and usually lived in the family of their parents.

For a long time the Eucharist was celebrated strictly separately for men and women. Either there were separate holy Masses in the same church or the rooms were separated by a wall; a custom that continued in some parts of the South Shandong mission until the 1930s. Churches only for women were also built or in some regions there were special churches in the form of a right angle with one side wing for men and one for women, connected at the point of intersection by the common sanctuary.

With the administration of sacraments, however, immediate contact between priests and women was inevitable, and that was not without problems. Different synods of the 19th century had, therefore, taken the matter up, and in their consultations on that and other relevant topics the members of the synods took their orientation from the decisions of the groundbreaking Synod of Sichuan of 1803, which was of historical influence

for the work of the propagation of the faith in China. It had defied the strict custom of the country regarding proper contact with women and mandated that all Church regulations for the administration of baptism, that is, the anointing, breathing on them, signing with the cross, touching with salt and spittle were to be conscientiously observed. Should “*delicatae mulierculae*” take offence,

then that would be a sign that they were not worthy to be accepted into the Church. The missionaries were to explain to the faithful that the ceremonies did not involve anything dishonourable but on the contrary were holy and sacred.

In serious cases, however, exceptions were permitted. For the administration of the sacrament of the sick, the feet of the women could generally also be anointed. Special cautionary measures were stipulated regarding



Bound feet (above) and crippled feet (below).

the place and hearing of women's confession; for that the women had to wear a veil as they did for the Eucharistic celebration. In general the priest was required to avoid too great a familiarity with the women and never to speak with a woman alone, unless it concerned secrets.

In the ninth chapter of the *Manuale missionariorum* there is a detailed code of conduct regarding the missionary's dealings with women. The regulations were probably due to the fact that all too often the missionaries were accused of having "affairs". Consequently great care was taken to avoid anything that could give rise to such rumours, suspicion, gossip and accusations of immorality. The following gives a selection of the rules on this highly sensitive topic:

1. *In interaction with women the missionary will exercise the greatest caution. In converse with them he will observe the rule of St. Augustine: "With women (one speaks) only seldom, briefly and seriously." He is therefore to conduct himself in such a way that priestly dignity and fatherly earnestness show in all his words and actions.*
2. *Never is he to allow women or girls to come closer to him than is proper or, what is even more abhorrent, to touch him in any way.*
4. *Never may the missionary allow girls or women to make his bed, clean his bedroom in his presence, serve him at table, etc., furthermore he may not dare to accept a cup of tea or an already lighted cigarette from them.*
5. *No priest is permitted to enter the dwelling or room of girls [literally virgins, but probably meaning women and girls], moreover kitchens and other rooms that according to Chinese customs are especially used by women, except to be of service to the sick.*
6. *Missionaries are equally not permitted to visit orphanages for girls without the permission of the superior.*
7. *No priest is permitted to give girls and women small gifts such as handkerchiefs, scarves and other things of that kind. If, on the other hand, he gives women devotional objects or receives gifts from them, such as e.g. clothing, he is to conduct himself when giving or when receiving in such a manner that he avoids any suspicion.*
8. *If a priest is sick, he may on no account allow a woman or a girl to serve him.*
9. *Conversations with women may on no account take place in a room that is not accessible to all and then with the door open.*
10. *Never may the missionary allow a woman on her own to enter his room. If a woman does so [literally: dares to/presumes to] he must immediately send her out again.*
13. *The missionary is not permitted to give lessons in writing or reading books to women or young women, not even to small girls.*
14. *Finally we prohibit women from visiting the missionary in summer dressed only in a Chinese hemp gown (xabu).*

An equally extremely thorny problem from time immemorial in the Chinese missionary Church was, and remained, marriage between Christians and non-Christians. Here there

was a considerable need for clarification, for which frequent requests in Rome became necessary. In particular the traditional manner of contracting marriage in China was the cause of serious difficulty. Generally the partners were already engaged or immediately married by their parents in childhood. Very often, however, this marriage arranged by the parents prevented the express consensus of the two partners required for a lawful Church marriage. Another problem arose from the custom of buying or selling women. If a man fell into financial difficulties, he not seldom sold his wife for a pig or a horse. A further obstacle for the sacrament of marriage was marrying of blood relatives, as well as widespread polygamy or abduction of women, to mention just a few of the problematic states of affairs.

Numerous synods had grappled with this series of problems and issued relevant instructions by means of which marriages were to take place according to the ecclesiastical norms. Thus Christian parents were warned not to give their daughters in marriage to non-Christian partners without a dispensation or to enter an engagement for their under-age children. Marriages entered into without the assistance of the priest or without two witnesses were valid according to the regulations of the Synod of Sichuan of 1803 in those places where the Tridentine Marriage Law had not yet been published “aut saltem non fuit observatum tanquam lex Concilii”³⁰ [or at least where it was not observed as a Council law]. The missionaries ought, however, to admonish the faithful to conduct marriage before the priest or at least request the priestly blessing afterwards. Since the intercourse of the engaged persons rendered the marriage canonically valid, the missionary could not allow a new marriage after the separation of such a pair. The missionaries were to be very cautious in the granting of a dispensation “super impedimento disparitatis cultus” and follow the ecclesiastical regulations meticulously.³¹

According to a decision of the Synod of Peking of 1880, unknown, vagrant widows were not allowed to enter into a new, Church marriage until the death of the first husband could be proven with certainty.³² Twelve years later the following synod there took up the sacrament of marriage in three articles and passed guiding measures. Thus to affiancé children before the age of puberty was inadmissible. If serious reasons made an exception necessary, that could only be done with the express addition of the clause that each party should be free, when sexual maturity was reached, to dissolve the engagement. Betrothals contracted by parents in place of the children were regarded as valid as long as the children raised no objection. Missionaries ought not to interfere with betrothal matters, but

30 Up till the Tridentine marriage decree “Tametsi” of 15 November 1563, that had introduced the obligatory marriage form in order to prevent clandestine weddings, informal marriages, although forbidden by the Church, could be regarded as valid because of the sexual intercourse. Where the Decree had not yet been published, this usage could continue to be regarded as valid. The vicars apostolic in China hesitated to publish “Tametsi” for a long time because they were afraid that it would lead to numerous invalid marriages. For a start they found it sufficient to publish the Tridentine law as a decree of the Propaganda Congregation (Metzler, *Die Synoden in China*, p. 84). On the pre-history and scope of the Decree “Tametsi”: G. di Mattia, “Il Decreto Tametsi nasce a Bologna,” in: *Apollinaris commentarius juris canonici* 57 (1984), pp. 627-718; Sabine Demel, *Kirchliche Trauung – unerlässliche Pflicht für die Ehe des katholischen Christen?*, Stuttgart 1993, pp. 48-74.

31 Metzler, *Die Synoden in China*, pp. 50f.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 112.

should ensure that there were no superstitious practices.³³ The Synod of Shaanxi of 1891 had also passed an extensive treatise regarding the sacrament of marriage. Its regulations as well as other synods' regulations, in as much as they were important for the jurisdiction of the South Shandong mission, were partially or entirely included in the *Manuale missionariorum*. Some of the regulations taken from there are listed in the following:

Marriage dispensations³⁴ may only be given with the clause:

In as far as the woman was not abducted, or if she was abducted, in as far as she is not in the power of the abductor.

In the recording of the dispensation, the content of such powers had to be entered with the statement of the time for which it was allowed.³⁵ Included among the reserved cases that could not be decided locally were: incest in the first or second degree of kinship, even if it had not come to complete sexual relations. Sale of the wife or of daughters to non-Christians. A marriage vow without dispensation in the case of disparity of worship (*disparitas cultus*) – unconditional promises of marriage for children who had not yet reached the age of reason, or, if they had reached it, without asking for their opinion.

One task of the leaders of Christian communities was to endeavour to ensure that in the case of a marriage in the absence of a priest, the marriage partners made their vows correctly according to Church law. First they had to investigate whether there were impediments that would make the marriage illicit or invalid. In such a case they were to make sure that the couple first received a valid dispensation. In addition the leaders were obliged to see that the couple invited two or three witnesses and in their presence – and in an appropriate manner in the presence of the parents – clearly expressed their agreement to marry and promised to repeat the prescribed ceremonies later in the presence of a priest. If it could be done without difficulty, the community leaders were to require the couple to provide a letter from the competent parish priest or the vicar apostolic, stating that nothing stood in the way of the marriage.³⁶

It was repeatedly necessary to request dispensations in Rome from numerous marriage impediments, then there were frequent ethical questions and problems concerning the sacrament of marriage that could not be clarified locally beyond doubt. To be on the safe side, therefore, they sought legal information in Rome. Here just one example is cited:

In the rite of Church marriage, the officiating priest calls on the couple, after they have declared their agreement, to join their right hands which he covers with the stole. Among many of the new Christians in the apostolic vicariate of South Shandong this rite ran into massive objections. Not a few could not be brought to hold hands in the presence of such a large number of people. Since the practice of joining hands did not touch on the essence

33 *Ibid.*, pp. 127f. On customs at engagement and marriage celebrations that included many superstitious elements: Georg M. Stenz, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde Süd-Schantungs*, edited and introduced by August Conrady, Leipzig 1907, pp. 76-93; in the region Jiaozhou there were some deviations from customs: *ibid.*, p. 115.

34 To ensure consistent procedures with regard to dispensations from bars to marriage, the Synod of Shanxi I had put together a number of rules that were to be followed by all missionaries. They are included word for word as chapter 22 in the *Manuale missionariorum* (pp. 53f.).

35 *Ibid.*, p. 48.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 104. The regulations in chapter 22 of the *Manuale missionariorum* were also taken in entirety from the Synod of Shanxi I.

of the marriage, on 10 February 1890, Anzer asked the Propaganda Congregation if the marriage could be blessed without the couple joining hands. Whether the Bishop received the answer he wished could not be established.

5. Conclusion: Influence of the Christian Religion on Daily Life and Manner of Living

The majority of the mainly indigent population of South Shandong lived from farming in the countryside. Life was a constant struggle for “the daily bread” and frequently, securing a livelihood was a battle simply to survive. Consequently the religious practice of the Christians was influenced by their existential experience. Because farmers and day labourers felt powerless in the face of the forces of nature, they trustingly implored God’s blessing for the work of their hands and for protection from all harm, to be preserved from drought or flood. The non-Christian population, for whom also religion played no insignificant role, called for their part on their deities for help, offered them sacrifices, burned paper money and incense or organized processions, for example to implore the urgently needed rain. The non-Christian Chinese paid cultic honour to his deities mainly when he found himself in dire need. A proverb states: “The hard pressed one embraces Buddha’s feet. In good times one does not burn incense.”

If the help the Christians prayed for did not materialize, they increased their petitions by calling on specific saints as intercessors, devotion to whom the missionaries had taught them. Sickness and plagues, especially typhus, malaria, smallpox, dysentery, leprosy and at times a kind of cholera were another form of existential threat. Since the missionaries were not always able to help with their medication and medicinal knowledge, nor could the Catholic Chinese doctors and apothecaries, the people in their plight and despair turned to religion for help, that is to prayers, blessings and blessed objects, the holy Mass and invocation of so-called healers of the sick. In so doing they sometimes crossed the borderline between folk piety and superstition.

Adoption of Christianity also gradually changed the daily life of the people. The reasons were not so much the theological truths of the faith, as the clear and understandable religious instruction and the pastoral praxis of the missionaries and their co-workers. These factors increasingly influenced the people’s rhythm of life from then on. Work and free time were no longer determined only by the course of the seasons but equally by the liturgical year. That meant, among other things, that on the first day of the week, Sunday, the memorial of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, work ceased, as it did also on some of the feasts in honour of Christ and the saints. On those days the community celebration of the divine services in a church or prayer hall replaced work about the house and in the fields.

In the beginning it took a certain amount of pressure and persuasion at times to enforce the ecclesiastical obligation of Sunday and feast day rest and attendance at the Church services. Work in the fields, bad weather, arduous journeys, illness, laziness and other things kept some from attending church. As a result of habitual practice in Christian customs and ritual functions and of a deepening understanding of the truths of salvation, a feeling for

religion and the need to participate in the Church and spiritual life of the community developed. The catechetical instruction of the missionaries and men and women catechists, common morning and evening prayer, as well as the annual mission also contributed to that in great measure. Fraternities and prayer associations were formed. The truths of the faith became increasingly rooted in individual faithful and in the Christian communities. In times of difficulty, persecution and oppression they were a source of considerable helpful orientation, encouragement, strength and support. This witness of a strong faith and sustained every day encounters triggered a positive effect and aroused interest in the Good News in “outsiders” who observed the Christians critically to see whether what they spoke about showed in their manner of life. In these biotopes of lived faith, the presence of God was noticeable and perceptible. At the same time the religious conviction and impressively relevant life of the Christians, their new manners and their life oriented to the faith had an effect on the behaviour of some non-Christians and in a certain way on society. Admittedly time and again it also gave rise to vilification, gossip, all kinds of discrimination and malicious harassment.

In addition the liturgical year determined the rhythm of asceticism and the pleasures of life. There were a number of days of abstinence when meat was not eaten, and in Lent from Ash Wednesday till Easter abstention from milk products and sweet dishes, with the addition of days of fasting, and similarly in Advent. But this was offset by a good celebration of baptisms, confirmation, weddings and patron feasts which gave a strong sense of community. The Church accompanied the people especially through the religious and sacramental rituals in its official acts at all significant stages of life. It accepted the new-borns into the community through baptism, blessed the marriage union, supported the people during serious illness and stood by them at the end of their life, and even after death.

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