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中国宗教评论

Religions & Christianity in Today's China

Vol. V 2015 No. 2

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Editorial

Today we can present to our readers the second 2015 issue of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* (中国宗教评论). As in previous issues, it includes the regular series of News Updates which give an insight into recent events and general trends with regard to religions and especially Christianity in today's China.

The "2014 Statistical Update on Religions and Churches in the People's Republic of China" by Katharina Wenzel-Teuber with many details and trends describes the various numerically measurable developments in the religions of China during the last year.

And finally Jac Kuepers SVD remembers the late SVD Father Arnold Sprenger (1929–2015) who had worked for 23 years as a pioneer of language teaching in Taiwan and another 23 years as a professor and specialist in cultural exchange in Mainland China.

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 in a voluntary contribution.

Sankt Augustin, June 2015 *The Editors*

News Update on Religion and Church in China November 28, 2014 – February 24, 2015

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 2015, No. 1, pp. 3-24) covered the period September 13 – December 9, 2014.

November 28, 2014:

Newly adopted revision of the "Regulations on Religious Affairs of the Xinjiang Autonomous Region" includes clauses against extremism

According to a report issued by the Xinjiang Bureau of Religious Affairs, the revised version of the regulations adopted by the People's Congress of Xinjiang on November 28 contains 18 new paragraphs, including the following passage: "No organization or individual may disseminate extremist religious ideas or participate in extremist religious activities. Religious activities or the name of religion may not be used to interfere in normal production operations, in marriages, burials, or in other ethnic customs and lifestyle habits, in cultural, literary, artistic or sport activities. Marriages that have not yet been registered according to the law, may not be entered into in a religious ceremony. Clothing, jewelry, symbols, and emblems may not be used to make a public display of religious fanaticism or to express extremist thinking." According to *Radio Free Asia* (*RFA*), the revised administrative regulations include provisions concerning the use of the Internet and mobile communications and also prohibit the practice of religion in government agencies, public schools, companies and institutions.
In an interview with *RFA*, Uyghur representatives in exile said that the new provisions constituted a definite curtailing of free speech and of the freedom of religion. Henryk Szadziewski, of the Uyghur Human Rights Project in Washington, D.C., told *RFA* that "the stated aim is to curb Islamic extremism and the threat of terrorism; however, the regulations also restrict customary aspects of Uighur religious practice."
The revised administrative regulations went into effect on January 1 of this year (*RFA* Jan. 10, 2015; www.sara.gov.cn Dec. 31, 2014).

November 28 – December 1, 2014:

"First top level forum for the study of popular belief" in Beijing

The forum was organized by the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) and the Chinese Society for Religious Studies. Lecture titles such as "From feudal superstition to intangible cultural heritage – the process of the legalization of popular belief today" (Wu Zhen, Renmin University) show clearly how much the position of popular belief in China has changed in recent times. A series of lectures dealt with the official management of popular religion, for which there are already a few local models. A further group of lectures dealt with popular belief in minority areas (including the Bon religion in Tibet). In his lecture on Shamanism in today's China, Se Yin (CASS) spoke of a phenomenon to be looked at in a differentiated way, whose essential parts are to be protected as part of China's intangible cultural heritage. Two presentations dealt with elements of popular religious beliefs found in two separate Protestant groups in Beijing and in rural North-Jiangsu. A variety of individual studies on various local cults made it clear just how much popular religion is now being researched in the People's Republic. Lectures on the popular religious veneration of Mao Zedong and of the People's Liberation Army cast a spotlight on interesting recent developments. Forty scientists attended the conference, including representatives from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, from universities across China and from two Taiwanese universities, as well as representatives of the State Administration (Bureau) for Religious Affairs. It was agreed that the forum will be repeated every two years (see the conference report at www.iwr.cass.cn/xw/201412/t20141223_18035.htm).

December 4, 2014:

State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) publishes data package on Buddhist and Daoist sites on its new online database

The first batch of data was already placed online on April 17, 2014. With this most recent addition, the database now contains information on 16,145 Buddhist and Daoist sites for religious activities registered with the government's religious authorities in 14 provinces and municipalities. It is planned that the database will be further enlarged in the future. Citing SARA Director Wang Zuo'an, the Chinese news agency *Xinhua* wrote that the publication of the data is meant to help "root out illegal religious activities" in China. Wang Zuo'an had already announced in January of 2012 that China was in the process of building up a national databank of information for religious work, which would include data on religious personnel, sites for religious activities, religious organizations and institutes for religious education of the various religions (*Xinhua* Dec. 26, 2014; www.sara.gov.cn Jan. 9, 2012; April 17, 2014; the database can be found at www.sara.gov.cn/csjbxx/).
For further details, see the "2014 Update on Religions and Churches in the People's Republic of China" in this issue.

December 4, 2014:

Xinhua: Huge new Confucius Museum in Qufu scheduled to open in 2015

According to a report by the official news agency *Xinhua*, in 2015 a huge new museum complex is to be opened in Qufu (Shandong Province), birthplace of the philosopher Confucius (551–479 B.C.). The 90,000 square meter complex will include a major exhibition center and six other halls. Construc-

tion began in February of 2013, and eventually will involve a total projected investment of 1.6 billion Yuan (260 million US dollars). Equipped with modern technology, the museum will feature more than 100,000 relics and exhibits. *UCAN* sees this as a further sign of attempts by China to return to its own traditions as a way of counterbalancing the influence of Western religions. Confucianism has once more gained renewed importance in China after President Xi Jinping visited Qufu a year ago with the intention of "sending a message to the nation: to carry forward our traditional culture and to spread Confucian thought." Following his visit, investors have pumped huge sums into Confucius schools and other related tourist attractions in Qufu. In a report in the *Agence-France Presse* (*AFP*), Jyrki Kallio, a researcher at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, has criticized the Confucian concept being propagated under Xi as a romanticized ideal crafted by the Communist Party which is not open to discussion or further interpretations (*AFP* Jan. 14, 2015; *UCAN* Dec. 5, 2014; *Xinhua* Dec. 4, 2014).

December 5, 2014:

China Daily: As of January 1, 2015, China plans to use only voluntarily donated organs for transplants

"China's long-term dependence on executed prisoners as organ donors" will end in 2015, according to the government newspaper *China Daily*, citing Huang Jiefu, Director of China's Organ Donation Committee and former Vice-Minister of Health. As of January 1, 2015, only organs coming from volunteer donors would be used for transplants, he said. The National Commission for Health and Family Planning and the Red Cross Society of China launched a nation-wide system of voluntary post-mortem organ donation in 2010, and yet, by the beginning of December 2014, only 7,822 organs had been donated. According to data provided by *China Daily* about 10,000 organs are transplanted annually in China, but each year approximately 300,000 patients are in need of a transplant.

Xie Jiaye, Chairman of the California-based America-China Association for Science & Technology Exchange, welcomed the new rules in an interview with *Radio Free Asia*. He expressed concern, however, that in the face of widespread corruption, manipulation in the allocation of organs and the existence of a black market in organs were unavoidable. The Falun Dafa Information Center described the announcement by the Chinese government as a propaganda ploy to pacify growing international criticism. According to the Center, in recent years tens of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners have been killed in Chinese prisons in order to "harvest" their organs (*China Daily* Dec. 5, 2014; Falun Dafa Information Center Dec. 6, 2014; *Radio Free Asia* Dec. 7, 2014).

December 10, 11 and 15, 2014:

Pope Francis is not scheduled to meet the Dalai Lama – Positive reaction from China

The Dalai Lama, traveling to a meeting of Nobel Peace Prize winners in Rome, confirmed on December 11, that he would not be meeting the Pope on this trip. "This time I will not meet Pope Francis. The Vatican administration says it is not possible because there could be problems," the Dalai Lama was quoted as saying by the Italian news agency *ANSA*. Nonetheless, he said that he admires the simplicity of the Pope. According to media reports, Vatican spokesman Fr. Federico Lombardi on December 10 emphasized that the Pope would not be meeting any of the Nobel Prize winners. A spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Qin Gang, said on December 15 that the ministry had "taken note" that Pope Francis had not met recently with the Dalai Lama, and he expressed the hope that both sides will

increase their joint efforts at improving their relations (*ANSA* Dec. 11, 2014; *Deutsche Welle* Dec. 12, 2014; www.rthk.hk Dec. 15, 2014). – See also the entry of January 19, 2015.

December 15, 2014:

End of the protests in Hong Kong – Voices from the Churches

On December 15, without major incident, police forces cleared out the last area in Causeway Bay still being held by the protesters of the Occupy Movement and by the students. This marked the end of the protests which had dragged on since September. The previous day, Sunday, PIME missionary Fr. Franco Mella was the main celebrant at an open-air Mass for the protesters. Following the eviction, Alek Chow, Secretary General of the Hong Kong Federation of Students, said that they would continue their civil disobedience in other ways, fighting for true democracy while sticking to the principle of non-violence.

Cardinal John Tong, Bishop of Hong Kong, in "An Urgent Appeal from the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong Regarding the Clearance at Admiralty and Causeway Bay Tomorrow," called on both the police and the protesters to duly respect the rule of law and to avoid conflicts and violence. He urged the Hong Kong government and all other concerned parties, "to resume as soon as possible dialogue on the Electoral Reform" in order to resolve the conflict and polarization between different groups and sectors. He called on the faithful of the diocese to pray for the well-being of Hong Kong society.

The protests had their echo in the traditional Christmas messages of Hong Kong's religious leaders. In his 2014 Christmas Message, Cardinal Tong said that Hong Kong has always been an accommodating society in which different opinions, voices and expressions were accepted. "Recently, due to various social issues, our Hong Kong, our home, has been torn apart to a certain extent. We can see conflicts and disagreements in the family, in schools, in the office, in various institutions and among friends. For the future of Hong Kong, all those issues have to be resolved, one way or another." The faithful are obliged to do everything in their power to create a better Hong Kong for the younger generation, wrote the Cardinal.

The Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Hong Kong, Most Rev. Paul Kwong, also began his Christmas message by referring to the recent political events. The city has been "deeply wounded and traumatized," the Archbishop said, with damage extending beyond the economy, people's livelihood and the rule of law. He called on everyone to restore broken relationships and to re-establish mutual trust and understanding between individuals and between the government and the public (*AsiaNews* Dec. 11, 15, 2014; *South China Morning Post* Dec. 23, 2014; www.catholic.org.hk/v2/en/pressrelease/urgentappeal10122014.pdf; www.catholic.org.hk/v2/en/pressrelease/xmasmessage2014.pdf).

December 20, 2014:

Xinhua: State subsidies for senior religious personnel in Ningxia

According to the official *Xinhua* news agency, beginning in January 2015, financial support will be provided to senior religious leaders in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Quoting the regional Ethnic Affairs Commission, the news agency said that those who benefit will be the registered imams in mosques, abbots in Buddhist and Daoist temples and "bishops in Christian and Catholic churches" (*sic*!). The support will be in the amount of 400 Yuan per month. Those who hold a leading role in their respective religious organizations at the county, city, regional or national level, are scheduled to receive an additional allowance of 100, 200, 300 or 400 Yuan a month. This plan will first run for one year on a trial basis. The Commission said, however, that any religious leader who breaks the law or who leads il-

legal religious activities would automatically forfeit this government support. Approximately one third of Ningxia's population of 6.5 million people are Muslims (*Xinhua* Dec. 20, 2014).

December 21, 2014 / January 2015:

The Holy See's Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, sees Sino-Vatican relations "in a positive phase"

Cardinal Parolin, head of the Vatican Secretariat of State, which is responsible for the Holy See's relations with other states, made his comments on December 2 in an interview with the magazine *Rivista San Francesco*, published in January. The content of his interview, however, had already been made known by the magazine *Vatican Insider* on December 21. In his interview, Cardinal Parolin referred to the state of the dialogue with China and said that "the journey is still long, marked by alternate phases and has not yet come to an end. It will end when God wishes it. I believe that with regard to China we need to adopt a theological vision. We are currently in a positive phase. There have been signs on both sides of the will to continue discussions and to work together to find solutions to the problems that are associated with the presence of the Catholic Church in this vast country. Personally," he added, "I would go as far as to say that prospects look promising" (*Vatican Insider* Dec. 21, 2014; www.sanfrancescopatronoditalia.it).

December 24, 2014:

Wang Zuo'an calls on Christians to resist infiltration by Christianity – Christmas celebrations prohibited in some educational institutions

On the morning of Christmas Eve, Wang Zuo'an, Director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA), visited Beijing's Protestant Chaoyang Church as well as the city's Catholic Cathedral to convey Christmas greetings and to inspect the preparations and security precautions for the Christmas services. In both places, there were meetings with clergy and faithful at which Wang, according to the report on the website of the SARA, expressed among other things the following expectations: Protestants should adhere unswervingly to the Three-Self principle and resolutely resist the foreign infiltration of China by means of Christianity. In the development of theological thought they should "discover the contents of Christian teaching that are in harmony with socialist core values." Catholics, for their part, should continue to hold high the banner of patriotism and love for the Church and should hold on to the principle of autonomy and self-government, Wang said.

The Modern College of Northwest University in Xi'an also weighed in, hanging up banners calling on students to "oppose kitsch Western holidays." The college even made it mandatory for students to watch a three-hour documentary about Confucius on Christmas Eve or students would be deemed absent from class and face punishment, reported the *South China Morning Post*. Even in the Chinese media, such actions were judged to be not very practical as a method for making traditional Chinese festivals more palatable to young people. In the city of Wenzhou, the heads of all schools and kindergartens were asked by the department of education not to allow any Christmas activities on their campuses (*South China Morning Post* Dec. 28, 30, 2014; www.news.sina.com.cn Dec. 25, 2014; www.sara.gov.cn Dec. 25, 2014; www.sn.xinhuanet.com Dec. 25, 2014).

December 24, 2014:

Claiming the prerogative of interpretation: China launches online database on the definition and correct translation of key terms of Chinese culture

Eighty-one key concepts of Chinese culture, including *dao*, *tian* and *ren*, can already be found on the website www.chinesethought.cn in easily understandable Chinese and English. The website is the fruit of the "Project for the Dissemination of Concepts of Chinese Thought and Culture" (中华思想文化术语传播工程, official English title: "Project to Share Key Concepts in Chinese Thought and Culture"). On the objectives of the project the website explains that: "Accurately defining China's core concepts and better sharing Chinese thought and cultural concepts with the world are [an] important mean[s] to safeguard[] China's cultural sovereignty, [to] fortify[] the Chinese people's confidence in their culture, and [to] promot[e] China's cultural exchanges with other countries." The website says further that government authorities, social organizations and the media in China should be encouraged to use these terms in their international communications in order to "effectively communicate what China has to say."

The project was approved by the State Council and coordinated by an inter-ministerial conference, made up of, among others, the Education and Foreign Ministries, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Civil Affairs, the State Administration of Press, Publications, Radio, Film and Television, the Information Office of the State Council, *Xinhua* news agency and the two Chinese Academies of Sciences and of the Social Sciences. Among the 70 advisory or assisting experts there are also some foreigners, including the German sinologist Wolfgang Kubin (Bonn). According to one report, the initiative for the project was put forward in 2013 and the real beginning of the work dates to the beginning of 2014. This makes the project a child of the era of President Xi Jinping. The ceremony to mark the public launching of the website was held at the Beijing Foreign Languages University on December 24 (*Xinhua* Dec. 24, 2014; www.chinesethought.cn; www.fltrp.com Dec. 25, 2014; March 9, 2015).

> "Tian (Heaven): Tian (天) is a sacred and fundamental concept in ancient Chinese philosophy. It has three different meanings. The first is the physical sky or the entirety of nature (not including human society), the operations of which manifest certain laws and order. The second refers to a spiritual being, which possesses an anthropomorphic will and governs everything in the universe. The third denotes the universal law, which is observed by all things and beings, and which is also the basis of human nature, morality, and social and political orders."
>
> (From the database www.chinesethought.cn)

December 24 and 25, 2014:

Full churches and many baptisms at Christmas services in Catholic churches

From the many reports on Chinese Catholic websites, here are just a few examples:

In the Cathedral of Guangzhou on Christmas Eve (December 24), 10 Masses were celebrated back to back between 1:00 p.m. in the afternoon and 1:00 a.m. of the following morning, Christmas Day. This was done in order to provide the opportunity for a total of nearly 10,000 people – Catholics as well as "brothers and sisters from outside the Church" – to take part in Christmas services. Two hundred volunteers kept order throughout the day and also distributed material to the churchgoers.

In some communities catechumens were also baptized on that occasion, some on Christmas itself (32 in the Diocese of Guangxi, 33 at the Cathedral of Xi'an, 120 in the three churches of the city of Wanzhou), others before or after Christmas (64 at the Cathedral of Shanghai, 80 in Guancun Parish in Jining Diocese, Inner Mongolia, 190 at the Cathedral of Tianjin and 32 at the Cathedral of Taiyuan). In the mountainous region of the Diocese of Zhaotong (Yunnan), where there are only two churches, some Christmas Masses were celebrated either in makeshift rooms or out of doors in the biting cold. There, a total of 30 people were baptized.

Many parishes also invited to an evening of music and entertainment. At one such event in Zhengzhou, as a "special Christmas gift" for Catholic Christians, the Buddhist Abbot Kuanyan, from the Dao'an Temple in Xi'an, led his students in singing a Marian hymn. The Abbot, who had been deeply impressed by Mother Teresa of Calcutta, encouraged the faithful to love their fellow men, the Church, the Mother of God and God Himself (www.chinacath.com Dec. 23, 26, 28 and 30, 2014; Jan. 18, 2015). (Bilder vorhanden)

December 25, 2014:

Authorities announce further regulations on bank accounts of sites for religious activities and institutes for religious education – No use of private accounts

The People's Bank of China and the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) have made the following announcement: All sites for religious activities and institutes for religious education must have entity settlement accounts (in China a distinction is made between bank accounts for organizational entities/units and accounts for private persons); the funds of religious entities may not be placed in private accounts. Within 30 days of its being opened, each account must be reported to the government authority responsible for the registration of the site or institute [generally the religious affairs department]. Banks and religious affairs departments must work together to ensure that each of the sites and institutes participates in a timely manner in an annual audit of its accounts (see text of the "Notice of the People's Bank of China and the State Administration for Religious Affairs for Further Clarification Regarding the Opening of Entity Settlement Accounts by Sites for Religious Activities and Institutes for Religious Education" at www.sara.gov.cn/xwzx/xwjj/203311.htm).

The matter of the bank accounts of religious sites was already dealt with in the "Measures for the Supervision and Administration of Financial Affairs of Sites for Religious Activities (For Trial Implementation)" of January 11, 2010 (English translation in *Tripod* XXXI [2011] 161, pp. 67-75; German translation in *China heute* 2012, No. 4, pp. 222-226). In addition, a circular of the People's Bank and the SARA of May 11, 2011, also treated this issue (see *RCTC* 2011, No. 1, p. 24). The government now obviously felt that further clarification was needed.

Asked by *UCAN* for their reaction to the announcement, Catholic bishops and laity alike generally welcomed such a scheme of controls for Church accounts, since such financial oversight would be an added help in preventing corruption within the Church. At the same time, however, some also expressed concern that the scheme could result in further interference in Church finances on the part of the government. Catholic "Yisha" pointed out in *UCAN* that the opening of entity accounts for religious groups have failed in the past in most cases simply because the government would not grant these groups legal registration, preferring instead to register only those groups affiliated with the official religious bodies. Since it is generally not possible for religious communities in Mainland China to acquire the juridical status of a legal person, it has always been difficult to ensure that control over Church finances remains within the Church's hierarchical structures, said Anthony Lam of the Holy

Spirit Study Centre of the Diocese of Hong Kong in an interview with *UCAN* (www.china.ucanews.com Jan. 30; Feb. 3, 2015).

December 25, 2014:

New mayor of Taipei calls on police chief to prevent harassment of Falun Gong practitioners

On the day he took office Mayor Kuo Wen-je asked the Police Precinct Chief of Taipei's Xinyi District to better protect the Falun Gong practitioners who regularly demonstrate in front of skyscraper Taipei 101. The mayor threatened the chief with dismissal if one of the practitioners should be beaten up again. Kuo had promised that he would do this as part of his election campaign. As reported in the *Taipei Times*, members of the Concentric Patriotism Association (Aiguo tongxin hui 愛國同心會) – according to the newspaper an extreme nationalist pro-reunification organization – had often attacked Falun Gong supporters verbally and physically (*Taipei Times* Dec. 26, 2014).

December 26, 2014 / March 12, 2015:

Forum "Ten Years 'Regulations on Religious Affairs'" – Wang Zuo'an: A Revision is in preparation

Since the adoption of the "Regulations on Religious Affairs" (*Zongjiao shiwu tiaoli* 宗教事务条例), the government's religious work has moved from "treatment in accordance with policies" on to "administration according to the law," Liu Yandong, Vice-Chairwoman of the State Council, said at the Forum on December 26. On November 30, 2004, the State Council had issued the "Regulations on Religious Affairs," the first comprehensive legislation of the People's Republic of China on religious matters to be valid nationwide.

In an interview published on March 12 with the Hong Kong newspaper *Wen Wei Po*, Wang Zuo'an said that certain changes to the "Regulations on Religious Affairs" had been made necessary with the passage of time and were in preparation. According to Wang, the proposed changes concern, for example, religion and the Internet as well as the unresolved problems of the real estate holdings of sites for religious activities and their status as legal persons (*Xinhua* Dec. 26, 2014; *Wen Wei Po* March 12, 2015).

For further information on the "Regulations," see: *China heute* 2005, No. 1-2, pp. 25-31 (in German) and *RCTC* 2015, No. 1, p. 11.

December 31, 2014:

Sun Chunlan appointed Head of the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China

Sun Chunlan succeeds Ling Jihua, who held the post since September 2012. Ling is one of the highest-ranking politicians to have lost his post in the anti-corruption campaign of President Xi Jinping; disciplinary proceedings against him were officially opened on December 22, 2014. A native of Hebei, Sun Chunlan was previously Party secretary of Fujian (2009–2012) and of Tianjin (2012–2014). The United Front Work Department of the Party has the task of uniting the different social forces. It is also responsible for China's guidelines on religious policy (*South China Morning Post* Dec. 26, 2014; Jan. 5, 2015; *Xinhua* Dec. 22 and 31, 2014).

January 7, 2015:

Hong Kong government announces new proposals for the election of the region's Chief Executive

At the same time, the government made it clear that the candidates would continue to be screened by Beijing. Beijing had promised in August of last year that Hong Kong citizens would be allowed to elect their Chief Executive, but had also decreed that only two or three candidates, after being vetted by a nominating committee, would be permitted to campaign for the office. The document – posted online, so that Hong Kong citizens could express their views – sets forth options for the nomination of candidates and for the composition of the nominating committee. The latter provision triggered fears that the nominating committee could be dominated by supporters of Beijing. The consultation is to be the last stage in forming public opinion before a finalized proposal on electoral reform goes before the Legislative Council. Pro-democracy lawmakers have vowed to vote against the plan unless it revokes the vetting of candidates. Should the final framework fail to pass in Parliament with a two thirds majority, it would mean a delay in the introduction of a public vote to Hong Kong (*AFP* Jan. 7, 2015).

January 8, 2015:

Xinhua condemns attack on *Charlie Hebdo* and calls for the dismantling of cultural misunderstandings

An article of the official Chinese news agency *Xinhua* has sharply condemned the murders of the staff members of the Parisian satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* on 7 January. The deadly attack is yet another stark demonstration of the grave threat of terrorism haunting the world, says the article. Nothing justifies violence, on the other hand – the agency continues – there is "a reality that demands basic respect and prudence be exercised in mass communication so as to reduce inter-culture and inter-religion misunderstanding and distrust, which can easily be exploited by terrorists" (*Xinhua* Jan. 8, 2015).

January 9, 2015:

Imam of Hong Kong condemns murders at *Charlie Hebdo*

According to an article in the *South China Morning Post*, Muhammad Arshad, the leading Imam of Hong Kong, said that terrorist acts in the name of religion defame Islam. Muslims would consider the drawings published in the magazine as blasphemy, but believers should respond to insults against the Prophet not with killings, but only with words, thus the Imam. The Muslim community is united in opposing violence, he continued. This meant that no "real Muslim" could support the actions of either the Taliban or of the Islamic State. According to the Imam, "this is not the real teaching of Islam. We condemn all extremism, terrorism and the killing of innocent people." There are about 250,000 Muslims living in Hong Kong and for years now there has been unusually close cooperation between the Muslim and Jewish communities. The leaders of both communities, Imam Muhammad Arshad and Rabbi Asher Oser, of Hong Kong's Ohel Leah Synagogue, are in close contact with one another, a relationship which began following the events of September 11, 2001. Both of them also take part in Hong Kong's monthly rounds of interfaith dialogues (*South China Morning Post* Jan. 11; Feb. 8, 2015).

January 10, 2015:

People's Congress of Xinjiang bans the wearing of burqas in public places in Urumqi

In the report from *Xinhua*, it is stated that burqas have never been part of the traditional dress of Uyghur women and that wearing them in public is also forbidden in countries such as Belgium or France (*Xinhua* Jan. 10, 2015).

January 15, 2015:

State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) publishes its list of work priorities for 2015

As has become the custom over the past few years, in January the SARA published its work plans for the current year.

First on schedule among the plans for 2015 – as was the case last year – is strengthening the legislation and the enforcement of the law in religious work. This includes a reform of the 2004 "Regulations on Religious Affairs" and the development of new directives for strengthening the management of sites for religious activities. Another focal point is the implementation of provisions already adopted in 2012 for the qualifications of teachers and for the conferment of academic degrees at institutes for religious education. The Protestant Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and the National Catholic Seminary in Beijing are to begin on a trial basis with the formation of M.A. and Ph.D. students [however, all degrees will continue to have validity only within the respective religion].

The prominent problems mentioned in the document for each particular religion have remained the same for years: Action against "chaos" in the administration of Buddhist and Daoist monasteries (including the erection of unauthorized giant statues, religious ceremonies conducted illegally by "fake" monks, etc.) should be continued as before. The campaigns for "civilized incense offerings" and for "the reasonable release of living beings" will be continued. With regard to Islam, especially in Xinjiang, the SARA is convinced that Muslim believers urgently need more reading material about their religion and about religious policy as well as material to counter religious extremism. In addition, Xinjiang should take action according to the law to combat illegal religious activities as well as illegal Koran and Arabic schools.

The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and the [official] Chinese Bishops' Conference shall be supported in reliably advancing the self-election and self-consecration of bishops. [This point in the SARA document had been heavily criticized in Catholic media as a setback in the ongoing efforts at furthering better Sino-Vatican understanding; in fact, the sentence repeats verbatim the line from the SARA plans of the previous year.] The Catholic, Buddhist and Daoist official governing bodies are to be "instructed" to hold the national assemblies of representatives of their respective religions which are due to take place every five years. [The Vatican rejects the National Assembly of Chinese Catholic Representatives as the highest Catholic body in China as well as the Patriotic Association.]

As far as the Protestants are concerned, private meeting points will continue to be "regulated" according to the law and "unification work" should be carried out towards a minority of fundamentalist groups. One topic recurring once again in the document is the "construction of theological thinking" and its propagation. Interestingly, in 2015 the "construction of Buddhist thought" is also to be promoted with a conference. According to the SARA plans, the list of key research topics on religious policy includes the handling of folk religion; religion on the Internet; and the important question of the planning and allocation of religious sites in the process of urban planning.

The SARA text on its key activities in 2015 can be found at: www.sara.gov.cn/xxgk/ndgzyd/203405.htm; the Catholic discussion on this topic can be found at: *AsiaNews* Jan. 24, 26, 2015; *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Jan. 31, 2015; UCAN Jan. 23, 2015; www.china.ucanews.com Jan. 16, 2015. On the SARA agenda for the previous years, see: *China heute* 2014, No. 1, p. 5 (in German).

January 19, 21 and 22, 2015:

Pope greets President Xi and mentions "a date at a certain point" for a meeting with the Dalai Lama – Chinese reactions

On January 19, during the flight back to Rome from his trip to Sri Lanka and the Philippines (January 12 to 19), Pope Francis once again passed through the airspace of the People's Republic of China and, following Vatican custom, used the occasion as he did on his Korea trip in August last year, to send a telegram of greeting to the head of State, President Xi Jinping. At the press conference during the flight, when asked why he had not received the Dalai Lama in December and how relations stood with China, the Pope said:

"It is the practice, following the protocol of the Secretariat of State, not to receive heads of state or personages of that level when they are in Rome for an international meeting. [...] That is why he [the Dalai Lama] wasn't received. I saw that some newspapers stated I didn't receive him for fear of China. That is not true. At the time, this was the reason. He requested an audience and he was given a date at a certain point. He had requested it before, but not for that moment, and we are in contact. The reason was not to refuse him personally or fear of China. Yes, we are open, we want peace with everyone. Where do relations stand? The Chinese government is respectful and we are respectful, and we do things one step at a time, as historically things have been done. We don't know yet, but they know I am ready both to receive and to go."

In response to a question about the Pope's telegram, Hua Chunying, spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, according to *Xinhua* said at a press conference on January 21: "We are willing to have constructive dialogue with the Vatican based on relevant principles." In its report *Xinhua* listed these principles or pre-conditions: abandonment of the "so-called 'diplomatic ties'" with Taiwan, and an end to interfering in China's internal affairs in the name of religion. Although the spokeswoman did not refer directly to the Dalai Lama, the State-controlled *Global Times* ran as its headline on January 22, "Potential Pope, Dalai Lama meeting could harm Sino-Vatican ties." It quoted Xu Yuhua (Fudan University) as saying that the Pope's two different statements in the same day showed his "ambivalence" toward China (*Global Times* Jan. 22, 2015; *Xinhua* Jan. 21, 2015; www.w2.vatican.va/content/ francesco/de/speeches/2015/january/documents/papa-francesco_20150119_srilanka-filippine-conferenza-stampa.html).

See also the article of December 10, 11 and 15, 2014.

January 19, 2015:

Directive of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and State Council calls for more Marxist education at universities

The directive entitled "Views on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological Work in Universities under the New Situation" demands that socialism with Chinese characteristics should find access in the textbooks, the teaching and the heads of students. The document sees raising the "ideological quality" of the teaching staff as an important foundation for this process. In the field of ethical education both the "socialist core values" and the virtues of traditional Chinese culture should be taught. The document also speaks of the "infiltration of hostile forces" which must be resisted. According to the

directive, philosophy and the social sciences need to be further reformed and their resources for ideological and political education must be discovered. Special mention is also made of the science of religion, the teaching and research of which needs to be more tightly "managed" (*Xinhua* Jan. 19, 2015).

circa January 19, 2015:

Shanxi Province launches two-month campaign to eradicate "feudal superstition"

The campaign is explicitly directed against *shenpo*s 神婆 ("witches," female mediums/shamans) and Fengshui masters. Around January 19, the Commission for Guiding Cultural and Ethical Progress of Shanxi Province announced the launch of the campaign. According to the announcement, specialized teams are to compile a statistical register of all Fengshui masters, *shenpo*s and other persons involved in superstitious activities in the villages, and in particular they are to determine whether any illegal commercial activities are involved. These people should be reported and the competent authorities must then administer corrective punishment. Parallel to that action, "science" is to be propagated among the population in the country with the help of volunteers, as well as through assemblies and lectures.
Catholics in Shanxi told *UCAN* that they have the suspicion that the campaign was designed to target government workers, among whom use of fortune-tellers remains widespread, with officials increasingly going to pray at temples for forgiveness amid the current crackdown on corruption (*Shanxi ribao*, according to www.fjnet.com Jan. 19, 2015; *UCAN* Jan. 22, 2015; *Xinhua* Jan. 20, 21, 2015).

January 22, 2015:

Religious leaders in Hong Kong issue Joint Declaration on Climate Change

In a joint statement, the leaders of the "Colloquium of Six Religious Leaders of Hong Kong" – Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Buddhists, Daoists and Confucians – issued a warning to governments around the world about climate change and its consequences for mankind and for nature. They are calling for a worldwide consensus on reducing emissions at the upcoming UN climate talks in Paris at the end of this year (*Sunday Examiner* Feb. 7, 2015; *UCAN* Jan. 23, 2015).

January 23 – March 5, 2015:

Debate surrounding interviews with Chinese "underground" bishops on the Holy See's dialogue with China

Gianni Valente, a journalist with the Vatican news agency *Fides*, published a series of interviews in the magazine *Vatican Insider* with three Chinese bishops who had been appointed by the Pope but who remain unacknowledged by the Chinese government. They are: Wei Jingyi, Bishop of Qiqihar (interview published on 23 January), Han Zhihai, Bishop of Lanzhou (interview published on February 4) and Xie Tingzhe, Bishop of Urumqi (interview published on 24 February). Valente asked all three bishops whether they feel that the negotiations between the Vatican and China run the risk of too many concessions on the part of the Holy See. He also wanted their opinion on how the faithful would react to talks between the Holy See and Beijing and how they felt that the current problems might be resolved. The three bishops responded in very different ways, but all three unanimously agreed in expressing the view that dialogue with the government is essential. Bishop Wei and Bishop Han were convinced that most believers, including most of those in the underground, would ultimately favor rapprochement with the government. All three were able to imagine various kinds of solutions to the problems of the

National Assembly of Chinese Catholic Representatives, the Patriotic Association and the appointment of bishops. In their responses, all three emphasized the need for the unity of all the bishops with the Pope.

Following the publication of the first two interviews, Joseph Cardinal Zen, Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, entered the discussion on February 17 with an article published in *AsiaNews*. In his article he wrote that it was naive to assume that the underground bishops could speak freely. Moreover, he said, Valente had as much as put words into the mouths of the bishops just by the way in which he had formulated his questions to them. With regard to talks with Beijing, the cardinal warned once again against "the temptation to reach a conclusion at any cost."

Two days later, the Chinese priest Fr. Paul Han Qingping responded to the cardinal's criticism with a sharply worded retort in *Vatican Insider*. The priest, who welcomed the positions taken by Bishop Wei and Bishop Han, protested against what he considered the false impression caused by statements such as those of Cardinal Zen that the clergy and laity in China are immature and still need people from outside to speak up for them. He wrote that Cardinal Zen seems to think he is in charge of managing the affairs of the Church in China and with his voice he drowns out the voices of the bishops and laity in Mainland China.

Finally, Bishop Wei Jingyi wrote in an opinion dated February 20 and published in *Vatican Insider* on March 5: "I have the duty to speak as a bishop and I must speak according to my conscience."

Quoting a Church observer in China, *UCAN* wrote on February 27: "It is apparent that two different lines have appeared within Rome and the Church outside of China over China-Vatican relations" (*AsiaNews* Feb. 17, 19, 2015; *UCAN* Feb. 27, 2015; *Vatican Insider* Jan. 23; Feb. 4, 19 and 24; March 5, 2015. The interviews with the three Bishops can be found online at the website www.vaticaninsider.lastampa.it).

January 27 / February 2, 2015:

Media reports of disciplinary proceedings against cadres in Tibet and Xinjiang, including allegations in connection with the Dalai Lama and the pilgrimage to Mecca

According to the government controlled *Global Times*, 15 officials in the Tibet Autonomous Region were prosecuted during 2014 for violations of party discipline and political discipline. An investigation was initiated against "several" officials involved in the illegal underground organization for Tibetan independence, who were accused of passing secret information to the "Dalai Lama clique" or of supporting activities that were a threat to national security, the newspaper said.

Citing the state run newspaper the *Legal Daily*, the *South China Morning Post* reported that during the year 2014, in Xinjiang Province, 355 party members were investigated for violations of party discipline and that further unspecified penalties were handed down to 333 of them. Among those punished were 32 officials who were accused of bribery in connection with the annual Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, including the former director of the Office of Pilgrims' Affairs (*Global Times* Jan. 27, 2015; *South China Morning Post* Feb. 2, 2015).

January 29, 2015:

Education Minister warns against "Western values" in textbooks

According to *Xinhua*, at a forum for the improvement of ideological work in institutes of higher education, Education Minister Yuan Guiren challenged the universities to "never let textbooks promoting Western values appear in our classes." The universities must strengthen management of the use of text-

books and materials adopted directly from abroad, he added. In addition, care must be taken that no remarks ever be allowed during classes that slander the leadership of the Communist Party of China, smear socialism or violate the country's Constitution, the minister said.
Johnny Erling wrote in *Die Welt* that certain professors already have been denounced on websites known to be close to the Party as representatives of Western values. Erling also reported that a revised edition of senior middle school textbooks which appeared in 2014 once again teaches "Catchword Marxism," such as "the downfall of the bourgeoisie and the victory of the proletariat are inevitable." Even the old idea of class struggle which had been written off politically after Mao's death has been reintroduced into the textbooks, Erling noted (*South China Morning Post* Jan. 20, 2015; *Die Welt* Feb. 5, 2015; *Xinhua* Jan. 19, 29 and 30.; Feb. 12, 2015).
According to earlier reports, since March of 2013, Chinese universities may no longer teach "universal values" such as freedom of the press and civil rights (see *RCTC* 2013, No. 4, p. 4).

January 29 – 31, 2015:

During a visit to Baoding, Yu Zhengsheng, Chairman of the Political Consultative Conference, urges Baoding Catholics to resist foreign infiltration

According to *Xinhua*, the high-level inspection tour had one focus on "religious work." Yu visited churches and temples in the City of Baoding (Hebei Province). During his visit, he exhorted "Catholic circles" to adhere to the principle of independence and to "withstand the infiltration of overseas-based forces to ensure that the leadership of religious organizations is firmly in the hands of people who love the country as well as their religion." The *Xinhua* report did not make mention of any other religions.
The Bishop of Baoding, Su Zhimin, has been missing since 1997. Relatives of the bishop who tried to meet Yu Zhengsheng during his visit in Baoding in order to ask for the bishop's release were detained for three days in a guesthouse. Already on September 23, 2014, senior officials from the Communist Party's United Front Work Department had paid a visit to the Cathedral of Baoding. Also during 2014, three underground priests of the Diocese of Baoding were released after years of imprisonment (*Xinhua* Jan. 31, 2015; www.china.ucanews.com Jan. 31, 2015; see also: *RCTC* 2014, No. 4, pp. 12-13 and 21; 2015, No. 1, p. 10).

January 30, 2015:

Officials inform relatives of the death of detained Bishop Cosmas Shi Enxiang of Yixian (Hebei) – Official confirmation still lacking



Bischof Cosmas Shi Enxiang, Oct. 10, 1990. Photo: DR – *EDA*.

The bishop's relatives were informed of his death, but were not told exactly when he died or the cause of his death, the bishop's great-niece told *UCAN* on January 31. Later, authorities in Baoding denied knowing anything about the bishop's death. The 94 year old bishop, who was not recognized by the government and had been imprisoned before, was arrested for the last time in Beijing on April 13, 2001. Since then, he has been held for 14 years without charge at an unknown location (*UCAN* Feb. 2, 2015; www.china.ucanews.com Jan. 31, 2015). For more information, see the article in *China heute* 2015, No. 1, pp. 4-5 (in German).

February 2, 2015:

Two members of the "Church of the Almighty God" executed for murder

Zhang Fan and her father Zhang Lidong were executed in Shandong, after the Supreme People's Court confirmed their death sentences imposed by a court in Yantai on October 11. Father and daughter were charged with murder and with undermining the implementation of the law by a cult. According to Chinese media reports, the two, together with three other people, had killed a woman on May 28, 2014 in a McDonald's restaurant in Zhaoyuan, after she had refused to give them her phone number.

On December 10, 2014, two other followers of the "Church of the Almighty God," Zhang Shuzhi and Geng Yuqin, were sentenced in Liaoning to prison terms of seven and four years respectively. According to *Xinhua*, they were "core members" of the group. In mid-August of 2014, the Ministry of Public Security reported that nearly 1,000 suspected members of the "illegal cult" of the "Church of the Almighty God" had been taken into custody in June (*AFP* Feb. 2, 2015; *Xinhua* Dec. 10, 2014; Feb. 2, 2015; see: *RCTC* 2014, No. 4, p. 15).

Founded in the 1990s, the "Church of the Almighty God" (also known as the "Doctrine of the Eastern Lightning") proclaims Almighty God or Second Christ, a reincarnation of Christ in the form of a Chinese woman, whose antithesis is the "great red dragon" which the group identifies with the Chinese Communist Party.

February 4, 2015:

Wenzhou City has 8,579 registered sites for the practice of popular belief

This means that in Wenzhou (Zhejiang Province) there are significantly more popular religion sites registered than sites of the "five major religions," of which there are 3,961. These numbers were given in a report by the local Bureau for Religious and Ethnic Affairs about the adoption of the city's 2013–2020 plan for sites for religious and popular belief activities. The report, which appeared on February 2 on the SARA website, referred to Wenzhou as "one of China's great religious cities." It said that the 2013–2020 plan, based on statistical and other research, deals with the distribution of sites for religious and popular belief activities and their inclusion in urban planning by setting aside reserved space in new residential areas and in the remodeling of the old town.

In early January of 2015, the city government of Wenzhou adopted two directives for the registration and allocation of registration numbers to sites used for popular religion. At the provincial level, the government of Zhejiang on September 22, 2014 adopted "Views on strengthening the management of popular belief affairs." The province is in the process of preparing a legal provision for the registration of popular religion sites (www.sara.gov.cn Oct. 4; Dec. 29, 2014; Jan. 7; Feb. 4, 2015).

February 12, 2015:

Christian Solidarity Worldwide: During 2014 more than 400 crosses were dismantled in Zhejiang – The trend seems to be decreasing

The organization Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) published an interactive "timeline" on February 12 illustrating the problem of Protestant and Catholic church-tower crosses and church buildings demolished by the authorities in Zhejiang Province during the year 2014. It contains notices of demo-

lition, demolition actions and other actions by the authorities as well as reactions among Christians such as their petitions and protests, each with a link to the relevant media reports. According to the organization, more than 400 crosses were removed, demolished, modified or covered up in Zhejiang during 2014. 35 churches and church-owned buildings were either partially or wholly destroyed. More than 100 people were arrested, detained or summoned in connection with these incidents and 38 were beaten up and/or injured. As *UCAN* was able to determine, the CSW timeline shows that the highest number of incidents occurred between April and July 2014. One Catholic source told *UCAN* that the campaign seemed to be waning, although the situation is still very sensitive and the government is now regulating the permissible dimensions of crosses on church buildings (www.csw.org.uk/zhejiangtimeline; www.china.ucanews.com March 3, 2015; *UCAN* Feb. 13, 2015).
For more about the problem of cross and church demolitions in Zhejiang, see: *China heute* 2014, No. 2, pp. 72-75, 91-93; No. 3, pp. 143-145, 165-170 (in German).

February 15, 2015:

Pope Francis greets the people of East Asia for Lunar New Year

At the end of the Angelus prayer in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis said: "I address a wish for serenity and peace to all the men and women who, in the Far East and in various parts of the world, are preparing to celebrate the Lunar New Year. This celebration offers them a propitious occasion to rediscover and live fraternity in an intense way. It is a precious bond of family life and the foundation of social life. May this annual return to the roots of the person and of the family help those Peoples to build a society characterized by interpersonal relationships, respect, justice and charity" (www.w2.vatican.va Feb. 15, 2015).

February 19, 2015:

Chinese New Year – In 2015 the start of the "Year of the Goat" also marks the beginning of the Church's annual Lenten season

The eve of the Chinese New Year (February 18) fell on Ash Wednesday this year. In order to allow Catholic Christians in East Asia to celebrate this important family festival, the bishops in the various countries – as is usual in such cases – granted the faithful a dispensation from the usual obligation to fast and to abstain from meat on Ash Wednesday. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Taiwan called on the faithful to substitute the day's usual fast and abstinence with deeds of charity. Throughout Mainland China local parish congregations organized visits to elderly people, to those living alone, to the sick and to the needy in their communities (*Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Feb. 28.; March 7, 2015).

February 24, 2015:

Radio Free Asia: County governments in Qinghai prevent Tibetan monks under the age of 19 from returning to their monasteries

According to a report from *Radio Free Asia* (*RFA*), authorities in two counties of the Haixi (Tsonub) Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in China's northwestern Qinghai Province have blocked young Tibetan monks who were home visiting their families for the Lunar New Year from returning to their monasteries. *RFA* learned that authorities held meetings with parents in the two counties on February 23 and told them that their children, who had been studying in distant monasteries, would not be allowed to return to their monasteries after the Lunar New Year, but would instead have to continue

their education as lay students in ordinary local schools. In particular, young monks under the age of 19 seem to be the ones targeted by the measures.

In a similar move, the authorities in Driru (Biru) County in Nagqu Prefecture, located in the Tibet Autonomous Region, announced in October of 2014 that all monks under the age of 12 were to be sent back from the monasteries to their families – reported *RFA*. Also in Jomga County in the neighboring Prefecture of Chamdo, according to an *RFA* report of October 24, 2014, families were told to bring home any of their family members who were studying in monasteries in Qinghai and Sichuan – especially in the large Buddhist study centers of Larung Gar in Serthar County and Yachen Gar in Palyul County in the Kardze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province. *RFA* believes that these measures are aimed at limiting the size of the monasteries of Tibetan Buddhism (*RFA* Oct. 24, 2014; Feb. 24, 2015).

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中国宗教评论

2014 Statistical Update on Religions and Churches in the People's Republic of China

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Translated by Jacqueline Mulberge

For various reasons, there are no consistent or certain data regarding the number of adherents of religions in China. Our annual statistical summary compiles figures from available recent sources of differing types. This time it presents two larger, statistical projects from the official arena, first results of which were published in 2014: The China Family Panel Studies, a long-term study carried out by the Peking University, endeavors to gain new insights through a combination of information about religion and other socio-economic data (see below, paragraph 1.2). The State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) has published the first parts of its new database on religions, promised for quite some time, which is intended especially to serve better political management of the religions (see paragraph 2.3). In 2014 there were again controversial discussions regarding the number of Protestant Christians in China (see paragraph 4). Although the numbers for the individual religions remain contradictory, they provide an overall picture of vibrant religious life in the PR China.

1. Religions in General

1.1. Official Figures in a "Reader" of the State Administration for Religious Affairs

The Central Group for Theoretical Studies of the Party Group in the SARA published in December 2013 a "Reader for the Study of the Socialist Theory of Religion with Chinese Characteristics" (*Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi zongjiao lilun xuexi duben* 中国特色社会主义宗教理论学习读本, Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe).[1] Extracts were published little by little online in 2014, including the chapter "The Fundamental Situation of the Religions in Our Country" (hereafter indicated as SARA 2014). It contains statistical data on

This article was first published under the title "Statistisches Update 2014 zu Religionen und Kirchen in der Volksrepublik China" in *China heute* 2015, No. 1, pp. 22-34.

1 On the publication of the Reader, cf. "*Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi zongjiao lilun xuexi duben* chuban"《中国特色社会主义宗教理论学习读本》出版, www.sara.gov.cn//xwzx/xwjj/57800.htm, uploaded on Dec. 20, 2013. According to this, the Reader is a key publication of the National Publication Foundation's publication project for the setting up of a system of core socialist values.



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

Provinces of China – Map and List of Abbreviations

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

the religions with a politico-official character. These – unsurprisingly rather conservative[2] – figures are given in the following with the data for the individual religions respectively. The text points out that alongside the "five major religions" (Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism) there are also "some few other religions and many types of popular faith." In addition it speaks – and that is new – of the "three major confessions" (*san da paibie* 三大派别) of Christianity and names the Orthodox Church as the third. The latter has not been generally permitted throughout the country as a whole. The chapter, however, gives no statistical information on the Orthodox Church.

1.2. Socio-Economic Data and Religion in the Longitudinal Survey "China Family Panel Studies"

In early 2014 a "Report on the Religious Situation in Today's China" was published in the periodical *Shijie zongjiao wenhua* (*World Religious Cultures*) based on the data of the China

2 The figures in SARA 2014 are, however, in most cases significantly higher than the data in the 1997 "White Paper – Freedom of Religious Belief in China." This White Paper, whose numeric data were still being cited by the official Chinese side years after its publication, speaks of 4 million Catholics, 10 million Protestants and 18 million adherents of the ten Muslim minorities: cf. text of the 1997 White Paper at www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/zjxy/t36492.htm.

Family Panel Studies. The China Family Panel Studies (CFPS, *Zhongguo jiating zhuizong diaocha* 中国家庭追踪调查) is – as stated on the website of the project – "a nationally representative, annual longitudinal survey." Since 2010, it has been carried out by the Institute of Social Science Survey (ISSS) of Peking University and funded by government grant (via the "Project 985"). The survey has its focus on "the economic, as well as the non-economic, wellbeing of the Chinese population" and "promises to provide to the academic community the most comprehensive and highest-quality survey data on contemporary China." A constant panel of 16,000 families/households in 25 provinces, direct-controlled municipalities and autonomous regions of [Mainland] China (i.e. excepting Xinjiang, Tibet, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia and Hainan) is surveyed annually on themes such as economic activities, education, family situation, migration, health, etc. A large subsample of 1,600 households per province is taken from five regionally representative provinces (Shanghai, Liaoning, Henan, Gansu and Guangdong – in all 8,000 households) so that regional comparisons can be made. The rest of the CFPS sample (8,000 households) is drawn from the remaining 20 provinces.[3]

As stated by the "Report on the Religious Situation in Today's China" (in the following quoted as CFPS/SZW 2014) the Panel Study was supplemented in 2012 by a questionnaire module including the following three questions:

1. To which religion do you belong (您属于什么宗教)? Possible answers: Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, no religion, other (please specify).
2. Is religion important to you – independently of whether you take part in religious activities or not?
3. Approximately how often do you take part in religious activities?[4]

In their analysis, the researchers came to the following results:

Religious Affiliation

Nationwide only 10% of the persons questioned indicated that they had a religious belief, 89.6% described themselves as having no religious belief. Among religious believers, Buddhists were the largest group with around 6.7% of the adults questioned, followed by the Protestants with 1.9%. 0.54% described themselves as Daoists, 0.46% as Muslims and 0.4% as Catholics (data for selected provinces in Table 1). According to the report the numbers of Buddhists and Muslims obtained from the survey are possibly too low, since six autonomous regions and provinces (Xinjiang, Tibet, etc.) in which many Buddhists and Muslims live, were left out of the survey. It also points out that due to difficulty in understanding the concept "religion" in the Chinese context, people often state that they have no religious belief although they are not "atheists in the strict sense" but frequently adhere to some kind of religious concepts or practices. In order to get more precise results, the questionnaire was expanded on that point for the CFPS-survey in 2014.[5]

3 See the CFPS's own introduction on the project's website: www.isss.edu.cn/cfps/EN/About/ (English) and www.isss.edu.cn/cfps (Chinese); CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 12.

4 CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 11.

5 CFPS/SZW 2014, pp. 12-14.

Table 1: Religious Beliefs of Adults in Selected Provinces according to CFPS 2012

	Shanghai	Liaoning	Henan	Gansu	Guangdong
Buddhism	10.4%	5.5%	6.4%	8.2%	6.2%
Daoism	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	1.0%	0.2%
Islam	0.0%	0.8%	1.3%	3.4%	0.0%
Protestantism	1.9%	2.1%	5.6%	0.4%	0.8%
Catholicism	0.7%	0.1%	0.5%	0.1%	0.2%
No religion	86.7%	91.3%	86.0%	87.0%	92.5%
Other	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Number of questionnaires	2,362	2,939	3,874	3,873	2,869

Data: CFPS 2012. Table taken from CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 13.

Table 2: Degree of Organizations of Believers of the Various Religions [%]

Religious affiliation	Shanghai	Liaoning	Henan	Gansu	Guangdong	Nationwide
Buddhism	1.2	4.3	5.7	2.2	2.2	2.97
Daoism	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.7	0.0	5.36
Islam	0.0	8.3	24.5	9.0	0.0	17.71
Protestantism	20.5	39.3	33.2	35.7	21.7	31.06
Catholicism	0.0	0.0	44.4	0.0	33.3	18.82
No religion	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.02
Other	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.41

Data: CFPS 2012. Table taken from CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 22.

Degree of Religious Organization

Only 1% of those surveyed admitted belonging to a religious organization. According to the report that is only a fraction [10%] of those who identify themselves as religious believers. That means the degree of religious organization is altogether small, the report says, adding that, nevertheless, religious organizations form the fourth largest type of organization after the CP of China (membership 7.42% of those surveyed), the Communist Youth League (7.60%) and the Trade Unions (1.64%), and the largest among the "social organizations." As to the degree of organization according to religion, the "number of those who belong to a religious organization is highest for the Protestants, or at least so many of the faithful were willing explicitly to express their membership of a religious organization during the survey," which, according to the report, seems to indicate an especially strong feeling of belonging.[6]

In the light of the survey's findings on the degree of organization of the various religions (cf. Table 2), one wonders how those asked actually understood the concept "religious organization." Thus, for example, 0.7% of those surveyed in Shanghai described themselves as Catholic. Since 0.0% of them indicated belonging to a religious organization, many of those surveyed obviously did not understand that to mean the normal Church parish structures that are well established in Shanghai.

6 CFPS/SZW 2014, pp. 14-15, 22.

Table 3: Frequency of Participation in Religious Activities by Believers of the Various Religions

Religious affiliation	Frequency of participation in religious activities [%]							Number of questionnaires
	Never	Once a year	Several times a year	Once a month	2-3 times a month	Once a week	Several times a week	
Buddhism	40.2	21.0	23.8	3.1	10.3	0.1	1.5	1,412
Daoism	60.7	11.6	17.9	0.0	8.9	0.9	0.0	112
Islam	21.9	16.7	29.2	1.0	1.0	16.7	13.5	96
Protestantism	16.7	10.4	9.1	3.8	5.8	41.7	12.6	396
Catholicism	24.7	11.8	27.1	3.5	9.4	17.6	5.9	85
Other	79.5	4.8	6.0	1.2	2.4	4.8	1.2	83

Data: CFPS 2012. Table taken from CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 23.

Table 4: Religious Affiliation according to Age [%]

Religious affiliation	Over 60	50–60	40–50	30–40	Under 30	All age levels
Buddhism	6.0	6.0	5.8	7.9	6.6	6.4
Daoism	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3
Islam	0.4	0.8	0.5	0.8	0.3	0.5
Protestantism	2.6	2.0	1.9	1.1	1.2	1.7
Catholicism	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.3	0.4
No religion	89.6	90.2	90.3	89.1	91.0	90.1
Other	0.7	0.4	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of questionnaires	3,972	3,325	4,142	2,646	2,783	16,868

Data: CFPS 2012. Table taken from CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 17.

Frequency of Participation in Religious Activities and the Importance of Religion

93.4% of respondents nationwide stated that they never took part in religious activities, 1.8% said once a year, 2.1% several times a year, 0.3% once a month, 0.9% two or three times a month, 1.0% once a week and 0.4% several times a week.[7] Depending on religious affiliation clear differences were apparent (cf. Table 3).

5.5% in the nationwide survey stated that religion is very important to them. For 12.4% it was somewhat important and for 82.1% it was unimportant. Of the religious believers surveyed, religion was most important to the Protestants (67.3% very important, 6.1% unimportant), followed by the Muslims (53.1% very important, 8.3% unimportant) and the Catholics (47.1% very important, 16.5% unimportant). Lagging greatly behind came Daoists (29.7% very important, 28.8% unimportant) and Buddhists (26.2% very important, 31.5% unimportant).[8]

7 Data: CFPS 2012; CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 15.

8 Data: CFPS 2012; CFPS/SZW 2014, pp. 16 and 23.

Table 5: Religious Affiliation according to Educational Level [%]

Religious affiliation	Illiterate / semi-literate	Elementary school	Junior middle school	Senior middle school / technical middle school / vocational school	Technical college [and higher]	All educational levels
Buddhism	6.6	6.0	6.9	6.6	5.1	6.4
Daoism	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3
Islam	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.7	0.4	0.5
Protestantism	2.4	2.0	1.5	1.1	1.7	1.7
Catholicism	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.4
No religion	89.2	90.2	89.4	90.9	92.2	90.1
Other	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.0	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of questionnaires	4,096	3,478	5,282	2,648	1,359	16,863

Data: CFPS 2012. Table taken from CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 18.

Demographic Characteristics

Sex: 11.5% of women surveyed but only 8.4% of the men reported belonging to a religious faith.[9]

Age: Among the Buddhists surveyed by CFPS, their proportion among people under 40 was higher than their proportion among those older than 40. As to the Protestants surveyed, their percentage among people over 40 exceeded their percentage among younger ones (cf. Table 4). Whether that now means that Buddhism is more attractive for the younger generation than Christianity cannot be concluded from these findings in a nationwide representative way, because the number of Buddhists and Protestants surveyed is too small, the report remarks. However, it adds, another survey on the religious beliefs of university students showed them to have a certain preference for Buddhism, Daoism and other traditional religions, while Christianity also has a "considerable market" among them – more than half the students having also come into contact with Christian mission efforts.[10]

Educational level: The report establishes that among those surveyed, the proportion of religious believers in the various educational level groups corresponded more or less to their percentage in the total population with the exception of the group with the highest academic level (degree from a technical college *dazhuan* 大专 or higher), which showed a lesser percentage of religious believers. Among the Buddhists, the percentage of believers in the group with medium education levels was comparatively high, and among the Protestants that was the case in the groups at the lower and upper ends of the educational scale (cf. Table 5).

9 Data: CFPS 2012; CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 17.

10 The report (CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 17, note 1) refers here to: Sun Shangyang 孙尚扬 – Li Ding 李丁, "Beijing shi daxuesheng dui Jidu zongjiao taidu de diaocha baogao" 北京市大学生对基督宗教态度的调查报告 (Report on a Survey on the Attitudes Towards Christianity among University Students in the City of Beijing), in: *Tongji daxue xuebao* (*shekeban*) 同济大学学报 (社科版) (Journal of Tongji University [Social Science Section]) 2013, No. 1, without page reference.

Table 6: Difference in Religious Affiliation between Urban and Rural Areas [%]

Religious affiliation	City	Town (*zhen* 镇)	Village	Total (urban and rural)
Buddhism	5.6	6.7	6.6	6.4
Daoism	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.3
Islam	1.2	0.3	0.4	0.6
Protestantism	2.1	1.8	1.7	1.7
Catholicism	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.4
No religion	90.7	90.9	89.7	90.1
Other	0.1	0.1	0.7	0.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of questionnaires	2,704	2,582	11,557	16,843

Data: CFPS 2012. Table taken from CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 19.

Table 7: Income Levels according to Religious Affiliation

Religious affiliation	Proportion of persons with no income [%]	Average annual income of persons with an income [RMB]
Buddhism	48.3	24,406
Daoism	47.2	21,712
Islam	68.3	25,946
Protestantism	59.6	21,162
Catholicism	67.9	8,816
No religion	53.2	22,493
Other	71.3	11,213
Total	53.2	22,698

Data: CFPS [no year given]. Table with omissions taken from CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 20.

Urban and rural populations: The percentage of religious believers in the total population is, according to the CFPS study, more or less the same in cities, towns and villages. There are, however, differences between the religions. Thus among the Muslims and Protestants surveyed the percentage of city dwellers was comparatively high (cf. Table 6).

Income: The percentage of those surveyed who stated that they had no religion was, according to CFPS, more or less the same in all income groups. There were differences, however, with regard to the different religions. The report found that among both Muslims and Catholics the percentage of persons with no income was above average high; however, Muslims with an income had a very high average income, whereas the average income of Catholics was very low (cf. Table 7).

Self-assessment of economic and social status according to religious membership: According to CFPS, those surveyed who had a religion assessed their economic and social status subjectively higher than those who did not adhere to any religion (cf. Table 8). The report concludes that having a religion enhances satisfaction with life, which is favorable for social stability. This conclusion is, however, only a hypothesis for now, since the data pool is too small to allow an analysis of the internal structures of the respective religions, the report admits.[11]

11 CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 21.

Table 8: Self-Assessment of Social Status according to Religious Affiliation [%]

	Very low	Rather low	Normal	Rather high	Very high	Total	Number of questionnaires
Buddhism	16.6	22.2	46.5	10.1	4.7	100.0	1,082
Daoism	25.6	27.8	38.9	3.2	4.5	100.0	73
Islam	15.8	12.1	62.3	6.3	3.5	100.0	86
Protestantism	19.1	18.4	45.2	11.5	5.7	100.0	324
Catholicism	12.6	22.0	51.8	10.6	3.0	100.0	61
No religion	14.9	21.3	48.8	10.6	4.4	100.0	14,968
Other	5.1	5.9	39.6	43.6	5.8	100.0	67
Total	15.1	21.2	48.6	10.7	4.4	100.0	16,661

Data: CFPS 2012. Table taken from CFPS/SZW 2014, p. 21.

Development of Protestantism

According to the report, the study shows that Protestantism in China (with the exception of Xinjiang, Tibet, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia and Ningxia) is already the second largest religion after Buddhism; in the Province of Henan Protestant Christians are already more than 5% of the population. If one projects the 1,9% of survey respondents who identified themselves as Protestants to the total population, one can estimate that there are around 26 million Protestant Christians in China, the report states.[12] This number, thus the report, would be far lower than the "at least 70 million Protestant Christians in China," which is constantly quoted. Even so, the report argues, the actual influence of Protestant Christianity is very strong, since its faithful have an especially high level of organization, take part particularly actively in religious activities and attach especially great importance to religion. In these aspects Protestantism is superior to Buddhism. According to the report, the CFPS data show, however, that the percentage of younger believers is greater among the Buddhists. In addition, among the Protestants the numbers of illiterate and semi-literate persons are higher and the percentage of those with a university education (*benke xueli* 本科学历) lower than among the Buddhists. From this the report concludes that Buddhism appears to have the more "hopeful" age and educational structure. This remark seems to be very important to the author of the report in view of what he calls the "endless debates on the number of Chinese Christians in recent years."[13]

Remarks regarding the CFPS

Only 10% of the population states that it believes in a religion – with that figure the CFPS comes to an exceedingly low result. As already mentioned, the report itself points out that the formulation of the questions and the exclusion of the strongly Buddhist and Islamic western provinces could have led to lower numbers. The interesting aspect of the study lies of course in the fact that the data on religion can be related to the many other economic

12 In the report under discussion, total numbers of believers of other religions nationally are not estimated according to their percentage in the survey. If we take the proportion used by the report for Protestants as a point of departure, according to the CFPS data there are around 5.6 million Catholics in China (own computation).

13 CFPS/SZW 2014, pp. 21-25.

Table 9: Buddhist Temples and Monasteries, Monks and Nuns in Mainland China

	Han-Chinese Buddhism	Tibetan Buddhism	Theravada-Buddhism	Buddhism total (all 3 traditions)
Temples and monasteries	*28.000* not given	*3.000* 3.600	*1.600* 1.700	*33.000* 33.000
Monks and nuns	*100.000* 72.000	*130.000* 148.000	*almost 10.000* 2.000	*240.000* 222.000

Table compiled from information on the CBA website for 2012 (in italics) and in SARA 2014 (normal types).

and social data compiled. Nevertheless – as the report itself states – the observations thus obtained regarding the internal structure of the individual religions have too weak a database to be truly useful – the numbers of questionnaires for some individual religions lay by less than 100 copies.[14] Furthermore, we cannot rule out that some participants may not have wished to state which religion they adhere to in such an official survey, since religion remains a politically sensitive issue in China.

2. Buddhism, Daoism and Popular Beliefs

Older surveys still give a certain orientation for this large sector of religious life in China, such as the Chinese Spiritual Life Survey (CSLS) carried out in 2007.[15] Among others, it produced the following results:

185 million consider themselves Buddhists, i.e. 18% of the population over 16 years.
17.3 million have taken the triple refuge (in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha), i.e. have formalized their adherence to Buddhism through ritual.
12 million of the adult population clearly identify with Daoism.
173 million have exercised some Daoist practices or participated in them, but these are difficult to distinguish from popular religion.

2.1. Buddhism

More recent official data are given by the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA) on its official website[16] and by SARA 2014. According to these sources there are "over 100 million" Buddhist believers in Mainland China (CBA), or there are "many" who are "difficult to identify in the statistics" (SARA 2014). Regarding the number of temples, monks and

14 The number of 16,000 households surveyed already appears to be not very high in relation to China's total population. For a comparison of size: In a similar longitudinal study in Germany, the Socio-Economic Panel, around 25,000 persons in almost 15,000 households are surveyed annually (cf. www.diw.de/de/diw_02.c.221178.de/ueber_uns.html, accessed Feb. 23, 2015).

15 For the CSLS, from May to July 2007, a sample of 7,021 individuals aged 16 to 75 years was interviewed in 56 selected sites of different size as to their religious self-identification. In July 2010, Yang Fenggang from the Center on Religion and Chinese Society at Purdue University (West Lafayette, USA) presented the results of the study in Beijing. For CSLS see also Wenzel-Teuber 2012, pp. 30-36.

16 "Zhongguo fojiao xiehui jianjie" 中国佛教协会简介 (Brief Introduction to the Chinese Buddhist Association), www.chinabuddhism.com.cn/js/jj/2012-04-20/869.html, accessed Feb. 25, 2015.

nuns of the three main Buddhist traditions, these two sources give differing data (cf. Table 9). According to CBA there are in addition

38	Buddhist academies
over 100	Buddhist periodicals
almost 200	relatively influential Buddhist websites

2.2. Daoism

According to data in SARA 2014 there are "many" Daoist believers in Mainland China but they are "difficult to identify in the statistics." In addition according to the same source there are

9,000	Daoist temples and monasteries
48,000	Daoist monks/nuns and priests (*daoshi* 道士)
5	Daoist academies

2.3. Registered Buddhist and Daoist Sites in the New Online Database of the SARA

Already in January 2012, Wang Zuo'an, Director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) stated that China was building up a database of information for religious work. It would contain basic data on religious personnel, sites for religious activities, religious organizations and institutes for religious education.[17] In 2014 – on April 17 and on December 4 – the first data were uploaded to the website of the SARA. These data give a listing of the registered Buddhist and Daoist sites in 14 provinces or direct-controlled municipalities of China.

As the SARA wrote in an accompanying statement on April 17, only legally registered sites for religious activities are allowed to carry out religious activities. The officially registered Buddhist and Daoist sites would be published in a database to "standardize the administration" of these sites "according to the law" and thus protect the legitimate rights of Buddhist and Daoist circles, the statement said. In addition the online database would "enable the public to identify and monitor legally registered religious sites." Furthermore, according to the SARA statement, the publication of the data is intended "to effectively curtail the irregular carrying out of religious activities and the deception of the faithful masses by false Buddhist and Daoist religious personnel under the pretense of religion and to guarantee a normal religious order." In other words, the database serves in first place to enable better control of the religious sites by the authorities. The data were made available by the bureaus for religious affairs in the provinces, as well as by the Chinese Buddhist Association and the Chinese Daoist Association. Data from other provinces will be gradually complemented and the databank regularly kept up-do-date.[18]

17 "Woguo jiang jianli zongjiao gongzuo shuju tongji zhidu he dingqi gengxin jizhi" 我国将建立宗教工作数据统计制度和定期更新机制 (China Will Set up a System [to Cover] and Regularly Update Data and Statistics for the Work on Religions), *Xinhua*, according to sara.gov.cn/xwzx/xwjj/12035.htm, uploaded Jan. 9, 2012.

18 Guojia zongjiao shiwuju yi si 国家宗教事务局一司 (Department 1 of the SARA), "Guanyu bufen sheng shi yifa dengji de fojiao daojiao huodong changsuo jiben xinxi gonggao" 关于部分省市依法登记的佛教道教活动场所基本信息公告 (On Publication of the Basic Data of the Legally Registered Sites for Buddhist and Daoist Activi-

Table 10: SARA's "Basic Data on the Sites for Religious Activities," Numbers of All Previously Registered Buddhist and Daoist Sites according to Province (in Brackets the Total Population of the Province in Millions), Religion and School (Retrieval of Data by Search Queries Run on February 13, 2015).

Sites / Province	Buddhist total	Of which: Han-Chinese Buddhism	Tibetan Buddhism	Theravada-Buddhism	Daoist total	Of which: Quanzhen-Tradition	Zhengyi-Tradition	Total
Beijing (19.6)	26	25	1	0	13	9	4	39
Tianjin (12.9)	19	19	0	0	0	0	0	19
Shanxi (35.7)	439	430	9	0	43	29	14	482
Liaoning (43.7)	735	709	26	0	100	98	2	835
Heilongjiang (38.3)	88	87	1	0	9	9	0	97
Shanghai (23)	108	108	0	0	32	1	31	140
Zhejiang (54.4)	4,057	4,056	1	0	1,659	562	1,097	5,716
Anhui (59.5)	1,335	1,335	0	0	60	32	28	1,395
Jiangxi (44.6)	3,233	3,232	1	0	998	133	865	4,231
Shandong (95.8)	214	214	0	0	87	87	0	301
Henan (94)	715	715	0	0	474	333	141	1,189
Hainan (8.8)	20	20	0	0	1	1	0	21
Chongqing (28.8)	277	277	0	0	32	25	7	309
Gansu (25.6)	756	530	226	0	615	609	6	1,371
Total	12,022	11,757	265	0	4,123	1,928	2,195	16,145

Source: www.sara.gov.cn/csjbxx/. Population numbers according to the 2010 census, www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/pcsj/rkpc/6rp/indexch.htm.

On the SARA website the tab "Zongjiao huodong changsuo jiben xinxi" 宗教活动场所基本信息 (basic data on the sites for religious activities, URL www.sara.gov.cn/csjbxx/) links to a search engine in which one can select the province, city and county, as well as the religion and the school of thought or sect (*paibie* 派别) within the religion. One obtains lists of the religious sites containing the name of the religion and the school, the name and full address of the respective religious site, as well as the name of the person responsible for the site. A search query of the data uploaded to date produced the figures compiled in Table 10.

The database is still incomplete but nevertheless a few peculiarities are already noticeable: The number of sites for religios activities in relation to population size is strikingly different according to province. Thus, the most populous of the 14 provinces, Shandong, with its 95.8 million inhabitants has only 301 registered Buddhist and Daoist sites – giving one site for more than 300,000 inhabitants. Zhejiang with considerably less, namely 54.4 million inhabitants has, on the other hand, 5,716 Buddhist and Daoist sites. This shows that the province is not only rich in Christian churches (which in the course of last year in connection with the tearing down of crosses and churches in Zhejiang was constantly stressed in western media) but in religious sites in general. The ratio of the 12,022 Buddhist to the 4,123 Daoist sites of the 14 provinces comprises on average 3:1, but it varies

ties in Part of the Provinces and Cities), uploaded April 17, 2014, www.sara.gov.cn/csjbxx/zjhdcsjbxx_zxdt/79383.htm. Cf. also "China to Publish Details of All Registered Religious Venues," *Xinhua* Dec. 26, 2014.

considerably from region to region. In Gansu, for instance, both religions have almost the same number of sites (1.2:1), in Henan the relationship is 1.5:1, in Beijing 2:1, in Shanxi 10:1 and in Anhui 22:1. It is noticeable that the majority of the registered Daoist sites belong to the Zhengyi tradition, with the relationship between sites of the Quanzhen and Zhengyi traditions differing greatly from province to province.

Altogether it seems likely that the figures of the SARA database mirror not only the religious reality but above all the differing ways of handling religious affairs and the official registration of religious sites by the authorities in the various provinces. For instance, it is known that cult sites of non-State recognized popular belief traditions often attempt to register as Buddhist or Daoist sites in order to obtain legal status. The provincial and local governments may also vary in their generosity in granting registration. In any case, only part of the religious activities take place within the officially registered sites and numerous non-registered religious sites also exist.

3. Islam

SARA 2014 gives the following data on Islam in Mainland China:

22 million	population of the 10 predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities
35,000	large and small mosques
50,000	ahongs (imams) and mullahs
10	Koran institutes

In 2012 a number of very detailed statistics were uploaded to the website of the Chinese Islamic Association which, however, were based on the older data of the population census of the year 2000 and are therefore not presented here.[19]

3.1. African Muslims in Guangzhou

African migrants take on an increasing role in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou. Since there is a high level of fluctuation and a broad gray area, there are no precise numeric data and estimates vary greatly. According to official Chinese statistics, 30,000 Africans live in Guangdong Province, 15,570 of them in the provincial capital Guangzhou.[20] A report in *Le Monde diplomatique* in 2010, however, cited the estimate of a Hong Kong researcher at around 100,000 Africans living in the African quarter of Guangzhou.[21] In a study carried out between 2006 and 2010 among Africans in Guangzhou and Foshan, only 2% of those surveyed stated that they had no religion; 21% were Muslims and 77% were Christians.[22]

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19 "Zhongguo yisilanjiao gaikuang" 中国伊斯兰教概况 (Situation of Islam in China), www.chinaislam.net.cn/cms/whyj/yslgk.

20 Catherine Wong Tsoi-lai, "Guangzhou Ramps up Ebola Checks," *Global Times* Oct. 30, 2014, www.globaltimes.cn/content/889074.shtml.

21 Tristan Coloma, "Chocolate City. Afrikanische Existenzgründer in China," *Le Monde diplomatique*, German edition, May 14, 2010, www.monde-diplomatique.de/pm/2010/05/14/a0048.text.name,askzlZ5NF.n,0.

22 Tabea Bork-Hüffer *et al.*, "Mobility and the Transiency of Social Spaces: African Merchant Entrepreneurs in China," in: *Population, Space and Place*, first published online in 2014, www.geographie.unikoeln.de/index.

In April 2014 the government newspaper *China Daily* published an article on African Muslims in Guangzhou. Imam Wang Wenjie, president of the city's Islamic Association, reported in the article that 55,000 foreign Muslims live in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou, one third of them from Africa. According to Imam Wang, their numbers have almost doubled over the past 5 years which makes Guangzhou the Chinese city with the largest African Muslim population. The majority of them are small traders. In the Xiaodongying Mosque, one of the four mosques in Guangzhou, the number of African worshippers now greatly outnumbers the Chinese, according to the report. Bai Lin, the Imam of the Xiaodongying Mosque expressed gratitude for the religious attendance of the African worshippers. One problem for the African Muslims, according to the report, is that their dead may not be buried in the Muslim cemetery of Guangzhou (in which interment is permitted); they have to be flown to their home country at great expense. The religious education of the children is also difficult. One Imam told *China Daily* that there are actually some Islamic schools run by Arab Muslims in Guangzhou but due to the cost and cultural differences they are rarely attended by children of the Muslims from sub-Saharan Africa.[23]

For the religious life of the local population in Guangzhou City in 2007, the city government gives the following, rather conservative figures on its website: 100,000 Buddhists, 90,000 Daoists, 50,000 Muslims, 14,000 Catholics and 50,000 Protestants. In addition it gives the figure of 20,000 "foreign believers."[24]

4. Christianity in General

For years the number of Christians in China has been the subject of debate. An example of that was the verbal exchange of blows between the British newspaper *The Telegraph* and the Chinese newspaper close to the government *Global Times* (English Edition and Chinese Edition *Huanqiu shibao*) in April 2014. On 19 April the *Telegraph* quoted the words of the sociologist of religion Yang Fenggang of the Center on Religion and Chinese Society of Purdue University (USA): "By my calculations China is destined to become the largest Christian country in the world very soon." He estimated that by the year 2025, there would be around 160 million Protestants in China, and by the year 2030 the number of Protestant and Catholic Christians taken together would exceed 247 million.

Yang's prognosis is "unscientific" and is clearly inflated, countered Ye Xiaowen, former director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs, in *Huanqiu shibao*. A day later Yang told the English language *Global Times* that his conclusion merely notes a probable growth trend and is based on annual growth rates calculated from available figures. Yang

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download.44487fbd69c64934d627c5bf5cfd8b3d.pdf. – For more on this topic see Piotr Adamek, "Afrikanische Muslime und Christen und ihr 'Chinesischer Traum'" (African Muslims and Christians and their 'Chinese Dream') in *China heute* 2015 (forthcoming).

23 Zhao Xu, "Answering the Call to Prayer," *China Daily* April 4, 2014, www.chinadaily.com.cn/2014-04/04/content_17405704.htm.

24 guangzhou.gov.cn/node_2090/node_2127/, accessed Feb. 19, 2015. – According to Jean Charbonnier (ed.), *Guide to the Catholic Church in China 2014*, Singapore 2013, p. 344, the Diocese of Guangzhou numbers 42,000 Catholics.

explained to the *Global Times* that according to the report of the Pew Forum on Religions & Public Life [PFRPL 2011], the number of Christians in China in 2010 was around 5% of the total population [67 million], while in 1980 it was widely recognized that there were 3 million Catholics and 3 million Protestants; that, according to Yang, would make an annual growth rate of 10%. Shen Guiping, a religious studies expert at the Central Institute of Socialism, told the *Global Times* that the estimates of Yang and of Pew might not be accurate, as they have a looser definition of who is a practicing Christian. The Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) usually identifies believers as Christians if they attend religious activities weekly, while other estimates may have taken other elements into account, such as attendance at illegal religious activities, Shen stated.[25]

The report "Global Christianity. A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population" of the US-based Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (PFRPL 2011), to which Yang Fenggang was referring in his estimates, appeared in December 2011. This report attempted to create an overall picture from the different data sources published in recent years (including various surveys such as CASS 2010 and CSLS, figures of the official Chinese church bodies and other church groups, of the Chinese government, etc.). It arrived at a total of 67.07 million Christians of all confessions in Mainland China (independent and official Protestant churches, Catholic, Orthodox and others).[26]

4.1. Protestantism

Believers

20 million	Protestant Christians, of whom 70% are in rural areas, and 53,000 Protestant churches and meeting places were accounted for, according to information of the official Protestant bodies – Three Self Patriotic Movement and China Christian Council.[27]
23.05 million	Chinese, of whom 67.5% are baptized, consider themselves Protestant Christians (regardless of membership in formal or informal groups) – according to a 2008/2009 household survey conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS 2010).[28] The figure of 23 million is also given by SARA 2014.

25 Tom Phillips, "China on Course to Become 'World's Most Christian Nation' within 15 Years. The Number of Christians in Communist China is Growing so Steadily that [it] by 2030 It Could Have More Churchgoers than America," *The Telegraph* April 19, 2014, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/10776023/China-on-course-to-become-worlds-most-Christian-nation-within-15-years.html; "Mei xuezhe cheng Zhongguo weilai jiang chaoguo Meiguo cheng jidutu zui duo guojia" 美学者称中国未来将超越美国成基督徒最多国家 (American Academic States that China Will Overtake America and Become the Country with the Most Christians), *Huanqiu shibao* April 24, 2014, world.huanqiu.com/exclusive/2014-04/4979226.html; Jiang Jie, "Christian Estimate 'Inflated'," *Global Times* April 25, 2014, www.globaltimes.cn/content/856741.shtml.

26 PFRPL 2011; for details see the presentation of this PFRPL-report in Wenzel-Teuber 2013, p. 21.

27 These numbers have been on the website of the official Protestant bodies for several years at www.ccctspm.org/quanguolianghui/lianghuijianjie.html (last accessed Feb. 25, 2015). – In addition, according to the work report of the two official Protestant bodies presented at the 9th National Assembly of Chinese Protestants (September 8–11, 2013), between 2008 and 2012, 2.4 million people were accepted into the (official) Protestant church of China and 5,195 churches and meeting points were newly built or rebuilt (CCC-TSPM 2013).

28 The results of the CASS study were presented in Malek 2011, pp. 32-33 and 51-53. For the resulting discussion, see Wenzel-Teuber 2012, pp. 30-32.

26 million Protestant Christians (1.9% of the population) is the result of the longitudinal survey of the China Family Panel Studies for the year 2012 (CPFS/SZW 2014).

23–40 million Protestant Christians (1.7–2.9% of the population) is the figure given by the state *Global Times* as the consensus of academic experts at a symposium held in Shanghai on 5/6 August 2014 for the 60th anniversary of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China.[29]

58.04 million Protestant Christians (4.3% of the population) is the estimate of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (PFRPL 2011).

Some international estimates of various sources are even higher. One example is the evangelical mission organization Asia Harvest which arrives at 83.5 million Protestant Christians in Mainland China.[30]

Furthermore the Protestant churches of China have

21 (official) theological seminaries with 300 teachers and 3,700 students (CCC-TSPM 2013).

56,000 churches and meeting points (SARA 2014).

48,000 male and female pastors as well as preachers (SARA 2014).

4.2. Catholic Church

The following figures for the Catholic Church in Mainland China in 2014 are based on information provided by the Holy Spirit Study Centre (HSSC)[31] of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong and of the governing bodies of China's official Catholic Church (Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference, PA-BiCo). Other important sources are the reports of the Shijiazhuang based Catholic newspaper *Xinde* 信德 (*Faith*) (*xdb*), its website www.chinacatholic.org (*xdo*) and the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (FICS), working under the same roof, as well as the popular Catholic website *Zhongguo tianzhujiao zaixian* 中国天主教在线 www.chinacath.com and the Catholic news agency *UCAN* (Hong Kong / Bangkok).

Believers

10.5 million (or between 9 million and 12 million)
total number of Catholics, according to estimates of the HSSC, including both the official part of the Church and the Catholics in the underground.

29 Chang Meng, "Protestants in China Estimated at 23–40 Million," *Global Times* Aug. 7, 2014, www.globaltimes.cn/content/874757.shtml.

30 Asiaharvest.org/wp-content/themes/asia/docs/christians-in-china/China.htm (last accessed Feb. 25, 2015). Asia Harvest states 84 million Protestants for China incl. Hong Kong and Macau; after subtracting the numbers given by Asia Harvest for Hong Kong and Macau there remain 83.5 million for Mainland China. The same table gives the number of Catholics in China as 21.3 million (Mainland China 20.8 million).

31 I would like to thank the Holy Spirit Study Centre for making available the figures on the Catholic Church in Mainland China (update of Feb. 17, 2015, as of Dec. 31, 2014).

6 million	number of Catholics, according to the official Catholic governing bodies (PA-BiCo 2011).[32]
5.7 million	number of Catholics according to SARA 2014.
13 million	Catholics (1% of the population) according to data of the "*UCAN* Directory."[33]
9 million	Catholics (0.7% of the population), according to estimates of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (PFRPL 2011).
0.41%	of the population are Catholic according to the longitudinal survey China Family Panel Studies for the year 2012 (CFPS/SZW 2014).

In recent years the HSSC consistently gave the total figure of 12 million Catholics and has, obviously, now corrected its estimate downwards. In 2014 there also were higher estimates, though. The sociologist of religion Richard Madsen (University of California, San Diego) spoke during an interview of 12–14 million Catholics.[34] A report on the Catholic Church on the website of the Party newspaper *Renmin ribao* put the number of Catholics in China at 15 million.[35] Joseph Cheng Yu-shek, political scientist at the City University of Hong Kong, spoke to *UCAN* of over 20 million Chinese Catholics.[36]

Dioceses

138	of which 116 are active, 22 inactive (HSSC)
97	according to data of the official Church (PA-BiCo 2014)

Bishops

67	bishops in the official Church (HSSC)
37	bishops in the underground Church (HSSC)
Circa 60	bishops and auxiliary bishops; almost 40 dioceses have no bishop (PA-BiCo 2014)

Priests

2,600	in the official Church (HSSC)
1,400	in the underground Church (HSSC)

32 The brief introduction to the Chinese Catholic Church (PA-BiCo 2011) with statistical data that had remained unchanged for several years on the website of the official Catholic governing bodies (last accessed March 12, 2014), disappeared when the website was rearranged in 2014 and has not been replaced. The number of 6 million Catholics is still quoted in various texts, however.

33 "*UCAN* Directory – Database of Catholic Dioceses in Asia," directory.ucanews.com/country/china/35, undated information, last accessed Feb. 26, 2015.

34 Ian Johnson, "China's Way to Happiness" [Interview with Richard Madsen], *The New York Review of Books* Feb. 4, 2014, www.nybooks.com/blogs/nyrblog/2014/feb/04/chinas-way-happiness/?insrc=wbll.

35 Fu Bilian 付碧莲, "Jiaohuang juli Zhongguo jin sheng wan mi" 教皇距离中国仅剩万米 (Pope Only 10,000 Meters Away from China), paper.people.com.cn/gjjrb/html/2014-09/01/content_1471484.htm.

36 "China Shrugs off Vatican Compromise on Bishop Ordinations. Proposal Would See Adoption of Vietnam Model of Joint Approval of Candidates," *UCAN* March 13, 2015.

Seminaries and Seminarians

10 major seminaries (seminaries for philosophy and theology) with 560 seminarians (HSSC) [2 of these 10 seminaries are currently temporarily closed]
9 minor seminaries with 400 seminarians (HSSC)
12 underground seminaries with about 300 seminarians (HSSC)

Sisters

3,250 in the official Church in about 87 congregations (HSSC)
1,530 in the underground Church in about 37 congregations (HSSC)

Sisters' Novitiates

87 in the official Church, with 50 sisters in formation (HSSC)
37 in the underground Church, with 106 sisters in formation (HSSC)

SARA 2014 puts the number of Catholic "religious personnel" (*jiaozhi renyuan* 教职人员 – with reference to the Catholic Church this term means bishops, priests, deacons and sisters) at 3,397 [registered] persons – considerably less than the total number of these groups of persons given by HSSC for the official Church.

Churches

6,000 churches and oratories (SARA 2014)

Baptisms

For many years now, the official Catholic governing bodies have given the annual number of baptisms in the Catholic Church of Mainland China as 100,000 (PA-BiCo 2011).

In 2014, for the seventh time running, FICS together with the Catholic paper *Xinde* provided baptismal statistics for Easter, the most significant baptism date in the year. According to this data, 20,004 persons were baptized in the Catholic communities of Mainland China at Easter 2014 (cf. Table 11). The number of baptisms recorded was greater than at Easter 2013 (16,748 baptisms). One difficulty for the statistics for the 101 dioceses surveyed by FICS was, according to the report, that some of the competent bishops and parish priests could not be reached and there was no other person in a responsible position who could be contacted. Baptisms in the underground communities are probably only partially covered. Since some dioceses have baptisms several times a year, the total number of baptisms cannot be concluded from the numbers at Easter.

As in the previous year, more than 70% of the 20,004 persons baptized were adults, that is, first generation Christians. According to the authors of the report, that mirrors the fact that awareness of and zeal for evangelization are continuing to increase in many places, even though they also believe that this attitude is still not widespread enough among the clergy and the faithful.

Table 11: Baptisms at Easter 2014 in the Dioceses of Mainland China

Province / municipality	Diocese	Number
Anhui		208
Beijing		632
Chongqing	Chongqing	200
	Wanzhou	266
Fujian	Fuzhou	300
	Minbei	23
	Mindong	75
	Xiamen	141
Gansu	Lanzhou	108
	Pingliang	4
	Tianshui	208
Guangdong	Guangzhou	305
	Jiangmen	53
	Meizhou*	53
	Shantou	134
	Shenzhen	110
	Zhanjiang	115
Guangxi		326
Guizhou		237
Hainan		5
Hebei	Baoding	81
	Cangzhou (incl. Langfang)	600
	Chengde	66
	Handan	947
	Hengshui	228
	Shijiazhuang	157
	Tangshan	283
	Xingtai	1,481
	Zhangjiakou	146
Heilongjiang		436
Henan	Anyang	659
	Kaifeng	53
	Nanyang	93
	Puyang	107
	Shangqiu	85
	Xinxiang	60
	Xinyang	90
	Zhengzhou	56
	Zhumadian	230
Hubei	Chibi	100
	Jingzhou [Shashi]	15
	Wuhan	195
	Xiangfan	70
	Yichang	86
Hunan		187
Jiangsu	Haimen	30
	Nanjing	136
	Suzhou	40
	Xuzhou	86
Jiangxi		237
Jilin		238
Liaoning		705
Inner Mongolia	Bameng	113
	Baotou	99
	Chifeng	67
	Hohhot	202
	Jining	178
Ningxia		61
Qinghai		4
Shaanxi	Ankang	40
	Fengxiang	78
	Hanzhong	84
	Sanyuan	200
	Weinan	132
	Xi'an	216
	Yan'an	349
	Zhouzhi	110
Shandong	Heze	123
	Jinan	414
	Liaocheng	163
	Linyi	225
	Qingdao	77
	Weifang	15
	Yantai	12
	Yanzhou	132
	Zibo [Zhoucun]	272
Shanghai		336
Shanxi	Changzhi	125
	Datong	49
	Fenyang	307
	Linfen	120
	Jinzhong	125
	Shuozhou	115
	Taiyuan	615
	Xinzhou	50
	Yuncheng	156
Sichuan	Chengdu	563
	Leshan	216
	Nanchong	350
	Xichang	57
	Yibin	69
Tianjin		267
Tibet Autonomous Region		16
Xinjiang		none
Yunnan	Dali	75
	Kunming	231
	Zhaotong	257
Zhejiang	Hangzhou	120
	Ningbo	251
	Taizhou	41
	Wenzhou	641
Total		20,004

* For the diocese of Meizhou there is information from 5 parishes only.

Source: Survey of FICS, published in *xdb* May 8, 2014.

The province with most baptisms (3,989, which is around 20% of Easter baptisms nationwide in 2014) was again Hebei, which also has the majority of Catholics in China. Within Hebei Province – according to the report – the awareness of evangelization is especially strong in the Dioceses of Xingtai and Handan which have very active evangelization teams,



Young newly baptized in Nanning on December 21, 2014. Photo: Guangxi Church.

while in the "rather more conservative" Diocese of Zhangjiakou, Church numbers increase more frequently through marriage. For South China the report highlights the Diocese of Wenzhou (Zhejiang Province) where the numbers of baptisms have continually risen in recent years due to systematic evangelization methods. In the south western Province of Guizhou, where there are only a few priests and sisters and where parish priests often have to care for parishes in 4–5 counties, many retired faithful help with evangelization on their own initiative; the number of Easter baptisms there increased from 148 in 2013 to 237 in 2014 (*xdb* May 8, 2014.)

In the Diocese of Hong Kong 3,350 adults were baptized at Easter 2014.[37]

Bishops Who Died During the Year 2014

Fan Zhongliang 范忠良, Joseph, SJ (1918–2014), Shanghai
Lan Shi 兰石, John Chrysostomus (1925–2014), Sanyuan (SN)
Wang Jin 王荩, John Baptist (1924–2014), Yuci (SX)
Wu Shizhen 吴仕珍, Joseph (1921–2014), Nanchang (JX)

Bishops Consecrated During the Year 2014

Peng Weizhao 彭卫照, John, Yujiang (JX), April 2014

Priestly Ordinations

78 deacons were ordained priests in Mainland China in 2014 (see Table 12). This number came from different sources and is certainly incomplete; there were most probably additional ordinations in the underground Church which are not included in these statistics. According to some reports, there were isolated instances of members of religious congregations among the new priests. In 2013 66 and in 2012 78 priestly ordinations were noted.

37 "Easter Pastoral Letter from our Bishop," www.catholic.org.hk/v2/en/message_bishop/y2014_easter.html.

Table 12: Priestly Ordinations in the Catholic Church in Mainland China in 2014

Diocese	Number of ordained	Ordination date	Names of ordained
Cangzhou/ Xianxian (Heb)	3	May 3	Hao Wanhui 郝万辉, Liu Jianshi 刘建石, Zhao Longqi 赵隆起
Chengdu (SC)	4	July 26	Huang Yiliang 黄益亮,Sun Wei 孙巍, Tian Yonglin 田勇林, Xu Rongjian 徐荣建
Chifeng (NM)	1	Aug. 6	Yuan Songqing 袁松青
Fengxiang (SN)	5	Aug. 25	
Handan (Heb)	10	Nov. 18	Cui Yuanshang 崔愿赏, Guo Zhenbo 郭振波, Guo Zhenqing 郭振清, Han Yongqiang 韩永强, Liu Jianxin 刘建新, Lu Qingfeng 逯庆丰, Lu Yuexin 逯月信, Lu Zhimin 逯志敏, Yao Zhengang 姚振刚, Zhang Yongyue 张永跃
Hanzhong (SN)	1	Feb. 25	Ma Xiaofeng 马小峰
Hengshui/Jingx-ian (Heb)	3	March 25	An Liangyou 安良友, Li Xiaochen 李晓晨, Ma Panxiang 马盼祥
Heze (SD)	1	Feb. 22	Wang Jinglin 王敬林
Jiangxi	1	March 25	Gao Xiang 高翔
Jilin	3	June 13	Bai Guichao 白贵超, Ding Changyong 丁长勇, Zhang Yuebing 张跃兵
Jinan (SD)	2	April 26	Wang Yupeng 王玉鹏, Zhao Xuecheng 赵学成
Jining (NM)	3	Dec. 12	Cui Ji'en 崔继恩, Gao Huipan 高会盼, Li Guibing 李贵冰
Jinzhong (SX)	4	July 9	Duan Jianbin 段建斌, Jia Junbing 贾俊兵, Qin Xichong 秦玺宠, Wang Quanwei 王全伟
Kaifeng (Hen)	3	Jan. 2	Wei Xiaoming 魏小明, Xu Jiashu 徐家树, Zhang Lishen 张力申
Liaocheng (SD)	2	Feb. 22	Li Wenguang 李文光, Song Xingwang 宋兴旺
Minbei (FJ)	1	Oct. 18	Jiang Jian'en 姜建恩
Ningbo (ZJ)	1	Oct. 28	Liu Zhenhui 刘振慧
Puqi (HB)	1	Nov. 23	Li Yuankui 李元奎
Shunde (Heb)	1 4	Jan. 2 May 27	Bai Yujie 白宇杰 Li Jiangtao 李江涛, Li Yan 李岩, Wang Huaxin 王华歆, Wang Yongbin 王泳斌
Shuozhou (SX)	1	Aug. 6	Wang Huabiao 王华彪
Taizhou (ZJ)	1	Oct. 18	Xu Yongliang 许永亮
Tangshan (Heb)	1	May 24	Wu Yongsheng 吴永生
Xiamen (FJ)	1	Oct. 18	Zhou Fei 周飞
Xingtai (Heb)	1	Dec. 2	Yin Zeling 尹泽岭 or 尹泽领
Xinzhou (SX)	1	March 25	Hou Guodong 侯国栋
Yibin (SC)	1	Nov. 30	Bai Yan 白岩
Yulin (SN)	4	Oct. 4	Fang Panshi 方盘石, Huo Wenliang 霍文亮, Li Peng 李鹏, Yang Xiaogu 杨晓固
Zhaoxian (Heb)	8	July 25	Gong Xinwang 宫信望, Hao Dongkai 郝东凯, Li Dexiao 李德晓, Zhang Jianglei 张江雷, Zhang Luyao 张路遥, Zhang Qingjiang 张清江, Zhang Yaliang 张亚亮, Zhang Yongqiang 张永强
Zhengzhou (Hen)	1	March 19	Mi Xuefeng 米雪峰
Zhoucun (SD)	1	July 26	Jiang Xiuguang 姜秀光
Zhouzhi (SN)	1	Sept. 20	Li Hu 李虎
Zhumadian (Hen)	2	Jan. 1	Chen Jianli 陈建立, Li Fuxin 李夫信
Total	**78**		

Sources (2014): *xdo* Jan. 1 and 2; Feb. 22; March 19 and 30; April 27; May 4, 24 and 27; June 13; July 9, 25, 26 and 27; Sept. 1; Oct. 7 and 18; Nov. 18 and 30; Dec. 2; www.chinacath.com April 17; May 27; Dec. 19; www.chinacatholic.cn Dec. 4; www.zzjq.com Sept. 22; blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_500cf6040102em4p.html and others.



Bishop Li Liangui ordained four priests for the Diocese of Shunde/Xingtai on May 27, 2014. Photo: Internet.

In spite of this relatively high number of ordinations in the last three years, the number of priestly vocations in general is decreasing greatly.

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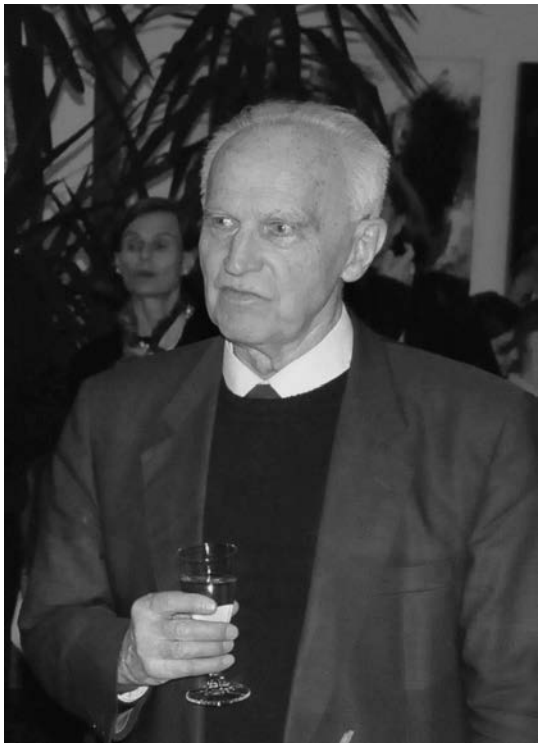
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In memoriam
Father Arnold Heinrich Sprenger, SVD (1929–2015)

Jac Kuepers, SVD

Father Arnold Sprenger was born as the youngest of nine brothers and sisters on December 12, 1929 in Willebadessen in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. The family was a deeply Christian family. He grew up on the family farm where he became accustomed to hard work. But he was also an ardent soccer player on the village soccer team and enjoyed contact with his teammates for the rest of his life.



Father Sprenger at a reception in Beijing in 2009. Photo: Andreas Wistoff.

In 1952, after high school studies, he joined the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD), an international Catholic religious order dedicated to mission work. In the novitiate, when for the first time he read the Gospel of John, he was so impressed that during his whole life this Gospel became the source of his faith. His was a deep childlike faith, which was the foundation of a lifelong dedication to work for Church and society.

Arnold Sprenger pronounced perpetual vows as a member of the Society of the Divine Word, and was ordained a priest in 1958.

He had applied to become a bush missionary in Indonesia, but the Society of the Divine Word had just re-established Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan, and he was instead asked to go for further studies in preparation for university ministry in Taiwan. From 1960–1964 he studied in Washington, acquiring an M.A. Degree in German Literature at Catholic University of America and a Ph.D. Degree in Linguistics at Georgetown University.

After completing his studies, he came to Taiwan and after one year of Chinese he began to teach German language and literature, English language, and later also linguistics at Fu Jen University. He developed his own very successful method of teaching language

through teacher-student class activities that particularly emphasized lively interaction instead of rote learning. As a result, quite extraordinary at the time in Taiwan, first year students could already speak simple, but fluent German.

Father Sprenger was very concerned about the educational system in Taiwan, which was geared toward passing the common entrance examination for the universities through rote learning, instead of helping the students to think and understand. He had written many articles on this subject. Soon he was requested by the Ministry of Education to introduce his method to high school teachers. He was also asked to become a member of the committee for the renewal of English teaching in Taiwan. This involved the preparation of teaching materials for high school students of English.

In the years that followed, besides publishing extensively on language teaching and value education, Father Sprenger addressed many articles on issues of Chinese and Western culture, on mission and religion. He edited Chinese translations of a series of 14 books published by Herder in Germany containing articles and books by well-known German thinkers on present day cultural issues (Sun Zhiwen 孫志文 [ed.], *Dangdai Deguo sichao yicong* 當代德國思潮譯叢, Taipei: Lian Jing Publications 1982).

From 1967 to 1980 he was head of the Graduate Institute of German and Chair of the German Department. In 1980 the Ministry of Education approved Fu Jen's application to officially establish the College of Foreign Languages. Father Sprenger was Dean of the College until 1984.

In 1987, when China was just opening up but still very much off limits for missionaries, Father Sprenger pioneered as one of the first Western missionaries to go to Mainland China. He felt that he had completed his mission in Taiwan: he had introduced his method of teaching, he had set up a College of Foreign Languages, he had shared his ideas about value education, religion and about East-West cultural exchange with people in Taiwan. Now his missionary heart pushed him to go further, to extend his mission to China, which was the first love of the Society of the Divine Word.

The idea was to set up a branch office for Monumenta Serica Institute, of which Father Sprenger had become a member in that year. This branch office would be established at the former Fu Jen University building as a place to contact Chinese scholars who could contribute to Monumenta Serica and for exchanges with Western scholars. This could not be realized. However, he stayed on and had a chance to teach English and Western Civilization at Beijing Normal University and at the Fu Jen Evening School in Beijing till 1991. Several times he was invited to give language workshops for middle school teachers in Beijing. Later he was visiting scholar at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Before 1989 an important way of meeting intellectuals and publishers was to attend the "salon" meetings that were regularly held in Beijing. Soon Father Sprenger was invited to a salon and could contact people interested in Western culture and philosophy. In this way he fostered good relations with many Chinese scholars and students. One of them was Liu Xiaofeng, the famous scholar of Christian thought, who wrote penetrating studies about Christianity and Chinese culture and translated many Western classical books. Father Sprenger wrote an article on one of his most important works, *Zhengjiu yu xiaoyao* 拯救與逍遙 (*Delivering and Dallying*) and so made him known in the West. In Beijing,

too, he could again publish a series of books by German authors on present day cultural issues (San Lian Publishing House 1991).

Later he was professor of German Language and Western Culture for 10 years at the Beijing Second Foreign Language Institute until his retirement in 2000. From 2000–2003 he was visiting scholar at the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and had a chance to discuss religious topics with scholars of religion.

Besides teaching language, from the beginning Father Sprenger did pastoral work as a priest for foreign communities in Beijing, and every week-end he spent much time at different embassies celebrating the Eucharist for different language groups. In his later period he could officially establish a German Catholic parish at the German Embassy, namely the St. Joseph Freinademetz Parish, which still continues to flourish.

He was also very concerned about Chinese Catholics, especially about members of his own Society from before the revolution. He helped them to reestablish their communities and supported the formation of local vocations. Right after his arrival in Beijing in summer 1987, he came in contact with some elderly sisters, also helping them in the different problems which they faced in the process of rebuilding their communities.

One of his important contributions was that he selected some candidates for theological studies and prepared them to go abroad for studies, esp. in the USA and Germany. Some of these young men have already come back and now serve the Church in China.

In 2005 he received an honorary doctorate of Literature at Fu Jen Catholic University. In December 2008 he celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his priestly ordination.

In 2009, due to his health failing, Father Sprenger returned to Taiwan. He had worked for 23 years as a pioneer of language teaching in Taiwan, as well as for 23 years in Mainland China as a professor and specialist in cultural exchange.

Father Sprenger spent his last years in the Fu Jen Catholic University SVD community. His health had deteriorated and he could no longer work, but during this time he was nevertheless very much a part of the SVD community. Many alumni, in particular those from his early years at Fu Jen, continued to show gratitude for all he had taught and given them, not only in academics, but in life. The force of his personality and quality of his dedication remained strong until the end. Visitors and old friends gravitated toward him.

Father Arnold Sprenger died on January 2, 2015 at 5 o'clock a.m. in the palliative care unit of Cardinal Tien Hospital in New Taipei City, Xindian District.

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