

Religions & Christianity in Today's China

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Editorial

Dear Readers,

Today we can present to you the December issue of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* (中国宗教评论) – the last issue this year.

We continue with the regular series of News Updates on recent events and general trends with regard to religions and especially Christianity in today's China.

In his article “John Wu’s (Wu Jingxiong 吳經熊, 1899–1986) Understanding of Mysticism – Beyond East and West” Prof. Dr. Zbigniew Wesołowski SVD, Monumenta Serica Institute IMS, Sankt Augustin/Germany, gives a fascinating insight into the prominent juristic philosopher and Chinese Catholic convert’s understanding of Christian (supernatural) mysticism and Chinese (natural) mysticism.

This issue furthermore contains two interesting book reviews: “Wu Kin Pan, *Thy Kingdom Come: Rev. Dr. Ernst Faber’s (Hua Zhi’an, 1839–1899) Intercultural-Missionary Vision of Chinese Spirituality*” by Dr. Dirk Kuhlmann, IMS, Sankt Augustin; and “Yao Peng 姚鵬, *Bai nian liuze. Cong Tushanwan dao Zhuxiang hui* 百年流泽: 从土山湾到诸巷会 (Flowing a Hundred Years. From Tushanwan to Zhuxianghui)” by Prof. Leo Leeb, Renmin University in Beijing.

Religions & Christianity in Today's China is freely available on the website of the China-Zentrum, www.china-zentrum.de. Additionally, readers who subscribe to *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* will regularly receive e-mail updates providing web links to the contents of each newly published issue. – The China-Zentrum is a non-profit organization. For the publication of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* we are dependent on the generosity of our friends and readers. In order to help us cover inevitable costs, we would be very grateful if you could consider sending a voluntary contribution.

Sankt Augustin, December 2023

The Editors

News Update on Religion and Church in China June 29 – October 29, 2023

Compiled by Katharina Feith, Isabel Friemann (China InfoStelle) and Katharina Wenzel-Teuber

Translated by David Streit SVD

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 2023, No. 3, pp. 3-19) covered the period March 25 – July 15, 2023.

General

August 9, 2023:

Sixth Tone reports: Parents hiring their children as “full-time children”

Due to the high unemployment rate among young people, according to *Sixth Tone* on August 9, there is a growing trend in China whereby parents “hire” their adult children to do household chores and care for younger siblings as well as older family members and provide them with a monthly salary in return pay. Among such “full-time children” (全职儿女) there are many university graduates who have not yet found a suitable job or are preparing for further exams. According to *Sixth Tone*, the topic has been intensively discussed on social media since last year. Sometimes they are simply young people who want to look after their parents and grandparents. Reactions on social media range from support to accusations of *kenlao* 啃老, i.e., continuing to sponge off their parents (*Sixth Tone* Aug. 9). *kf*

August 16, 2023:

China.Table: Government conceals figures on unemployed young people

As *China.Table* reported on August 16, Chinese statistics no longer include youth unemployment figures. Only the overall unemployment rate will be published. Unemployment among 16- to 24-year-olds has recently risen sharply – reaching a high of 21.3%, according to *AsiaNews*. *China.Table* writes that observers see the change in statistics as an attempt to downplay the major problems faced by young people in the labor market. The overall urban unemployment rate was 5.3% in July (*AsiaNews* Aug. 16; *Caixin Global Daily Chart* Aug. 15; *China.Table* Aug. 16). *kf*

September 10, 2023:

Hangzhou: Parents receive bonuses when a third child is born

In order to counteract the low birth rates, parents will receive a one-time payment of 25,000 RMB for the birth of a third child from September 10, and 7,000 RMB for a second child. Similar bonuses exist in other cities such as Shenzhen, where parents receive RMB 19,000 over three years for a third and subsequent children. According to the Hangzhou Municipal Health Commission, the birth rate for second-born children falls every year. Local media reported that in 2022, second-borns accounted for 35.94% of all births. In 2015, before the one-child policy was relaxed, the proportion was 38.77%. Hangzhou has also sought to increase its population in recent years through property purchasing benefits for families with three or more children and relaxations on household registration. Like many places in China, the high cost of raising a child is cited as the main reason for the low birth rate. Hangzhou ranks third among Chinese cities after Shanghai and Beijing with RMB 720,000 to raise a child, according to a 2022 report by YuWa Population Research in Zhejiang Province (*Sixth Tone* Aug. 8; <https://www.sixthtone.com/news/1013483>). *kf*

Human Rights

September 21, 2023:

Dui Hua Foundation confirms the sentence of Uyghur ethnologist Rahile Dawut to life imprisonment

A source in the Chinese government has confirmed that Professor Rahile Dawut is currently serving a life sentence for endangering state security, the San Francisco-based Dui Hua Foundation reported on September 21. She was also deprived of political rights for life. Dui Hua said it had previously learned that Rahile Dawut had been charged and convicted by an Intermediate People's Court in Xinjiang in December 2018, one year after her detention, for the crime of "splittism" – a crime of endangering state security – and that she had lodged an appeal. According to the most recent information her appeal was subsequently rejected by Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region High People's Court, thus Dui Hua. The length of the prison sentence has only now been confirmed by a reliable source in the Chinese government as, according to Dui Hua, trials in cases of splittism are held in secret.

Rahile Dawut was a professor at Xinjiang University College of Humanities at the time of her detention in December 2017, according to Dui Hua. She founded the Ethnic Minorities Research Center at the university in 2007 and has conducted field work throughout Xinjiang. She has published widely on Uyghur folklore. The 57-year-old well-known ethnologist is a long-time member of the Chinese Communist Party and has received awards and grants from China's Ministry of Culture, Dui further reported. "Professor Rahile Dawut joins the long and growing list of Uyghur intellectuals — by one count more than 300 — who have been detained, arrested, and imprisoned since 2016," according to the Dui Hua Foundation (<https://duihua.org/life-sentence-for-professor-rahile-dawut-confirmed>). *kwt*

Religious Policy

August 11 and September 7, 2023:

***Bitter Winter* reports on mass arrests of followers of the “Church of Almighty God”**

Bitter Winter said it received the relevant information from representatives of the Church of Almighty God (全能神教会). According to this information, in Zhejiang Province at least 1,043 followers of the Church of Almighty God were placed under arrest on a single day, July 15, 2023; 408 of them were still in custody on August 8, and one person had died while in custody. In Jiangsu and Anhui Provinces, at least 2,100 church members were reported to have been arrested between January and July 2023. Members of the church were subjected to forced deprogramming and psychological and physical torture, and two of them died as a result of the measures, *Bitter Winter* said. According to an Anhui Province government employee’s confidential statement quoted by *Bitter Winter*, in 2023 the CCP issued a new secret document aimed at completely wiping out the Church of Almighty God (www.bitterwinter.org Aug. 11; Sept. 7).

The Church of Almighty God (formerly known as the “Doctrine of the Eastern Lightning”), founded in the 1990s, proclaims the Second Christ, a reincarnation of Christ in the form of a Chinese woman. It is banned in China as an “heretical doctrine” (邪教) and has been massively persecuted by the authorities since around the last ten years. *kwt*

September 1, 2023:

New administrative regulations for sites for religious activities come into force

The National Religious Affairs Administration issued the “Measures for the Administration of Sites for Religious Activities” (宗教活动场所管理办法, hereinafter referred to as “Measures”) with its Decree No. 19 of July 9, 2023. They contain official requirements for the establishment, administration and state supervision of sites for religious activities, i.e., temples, monasteries, mosques and churches. They thus affect the core of the collective religious practice of the five state-recognized religions. A draft of the “Measures” for soliciting opinions was already published on March 24, 2023. (A description of the draft can be found in *China heute* 2023, No. 1, pp. 4-5, in German). The final version contains only a few small changes compared to the draft.

On July 31, a text introducing the new legal norm in interview form appeared on the WeChat account of the CCP’s United Front Department. The key innovation stated in the text is that the new “Measures” – unlike the previous document, which only regulated the approval of the construction and registration of religious sites – include comprehensive regulation of all aspects: They also regulate the administration of religious personnel, religious activities, buildings and security, they contain regulations for the establishment of internal management mechanisms and supervision mechanisms. In doing so, according to the text, they support “the religious circles in the comprehensive and strict governance of religion” (text of the “Measures”: www.gov.cn/gongbao/2023/issue_10666/202308/content_6900867.html; English translation of *Bitter Winter*: <https://bitterwinter.org/the-new-chinese-measures-for-religious-activity-venues-come-into-force-on-september-1-the-full-text>; *Tongzhan xinyu* according to www.chinacatholic.cn July 31). *kwt*

Daoism

July 25–26, 2023:

First forum on Sinicization of Daoism meets in Shanghai

The Chinese Daoist Association (CDA), in cooperation with the Shanghai Daoist Association, the Shanghai City God Temple and the Mingdao Daoist Culture Research Institute of East China Normal University, co-organized the conference in Shanghai “Talking about the Dao by the Sea: The First Forum on the Theory and Practice of Sinicization of Daoism.” Chen Chang 陈昶, director of the Shanghai Municipal Bureau of Ethnic and Religious Affairs, called for correcting the Daoist style, improving quality, training talents and standardizing administration as Daoism Sinicizes. Daoism must advance its modern transformation to keep up with the times, Chen said, according to a report on the Shanghai City God Temple’s WeChat account. According to *Bitter Winter*, representatives of dozens of leading Daoist temples from all over China attended the conference. The portal reported that participants were trained in workshops to conduct patriotic education in their temples. “Best practices” were also presented in which temples were “Sinicized” by eliminating divination and limiting the practices of incense offerings and the burning of paper. Temples were also instructed to curb the activities of independent vendors of religious items, *Bitter Winter* said; these items should be sold in only one single temple-managed shop in each venue.

According to Chen Chang, “Talking about the Dao by the Sea” (海上论道 – a pun on the place name “Shanghai”) is a “brand” of religious work in the city of Shanghai. On the Internet you can also find events from other religions in Shanghai under this motto, for example a forum on “humanistic Buddhism” organized by the Jade Buddha Temple on October 9/10, 2023 (bitterwinter.org Aug. 8; www.chinabuddhism.com.cn Oct. 10; Shanghai City God Temple WeChat account according to www.daoisms.com.cn/article/sort028/info-49242.html). *kwt*

September 24–25, 2023:

5th International Daoism Forum meets on Maoshan and founds World Federation of Daoism

The 5th International Daoism Forum (第五届国际道教论坛) was held on Maoshan in Jurong City, Jiangsu Province, from September 24 to 25, 2023. Over 500 people from 39 countries and territories took part in this big event. The forum was organized by the Chinese Daoist Association (CDA), the official umbrella organization of Daoism in China, and the China Religious Culture Communication Association. Co-organizers were the Hong Kong Daoist Association, the Macao Daoist Association and the Daoist Association Headquarters (Taiwan). At the final meeting, a “Maoshan Declaration” was adopted (text at www.taoist.org.cn/showInfoContent.do?id=9339&p='p').

During the 5th International Daoism Forum, the World Federation of Daoism (世界道教联合会) was founded. Its founding members include 52 Daoist organizations from 20 states and territories. According to a report by state-run *Xinhua News Agency*, the World Federation of Daoism is “an international, professional, non-profit social organization voluntarily formed by Daoist organizations, Daoist temples, Daoism-related institutions and well-known personalities who believe in Daoism or love Daoist culture” with the purpose “to carry forward and develop the excellent traditional culture of Daoism, strengthen the cooperation of Daoist followers and organizations worldwide, promote the adaptation to the era and internationalization of Daoism, promote exchanges between civilizations of humanity and the peaceful development of the world.”

The new chairman of the board of the World Federation of Daoism is Li Guangfu 李光富, the president of the CDA. According to *Le Monde*, two of the six vice-chairs are foreigners: the Italian Vincenzo di Ieso (Li Xuanzong 李玄宗), president of the Chiesa Taoista d'Italia, and the Frenchman Hervé Louchouart Trestard (Jing Wei 景威), president of the Asociación Mexicana para el Desarrollo del Daoísmo A.C, both Daoist priests. The Daoist priest José Barreno, chairman of the Associação Daoista de Portugal, was elected Secretary General of the World Federation (subpage for the 5th International Daoism Forum: <http://121.42.248.217:8081/home>; *Le Monde* Oct. 8; www.facebook.com/daoismo [Associação Daoista de Portugal] Sept. 26). *kwt*

October 8, 2023:

Chinese Daoist Association CDA and Daoist Association of Russia (DAR) hold joint online course on Daoist culture

Almost 150 people interested in Daoism from various Russian cities took part in the 6-hour course. CDA Chairman Li Guangfu 李光富, Vice Chairmen Meng Zhiling 孟至岭 and Zhang Gaodeng 张高澄, and General Secretary Li Hanying 李寒颖 introduced various aspects of Daoist teachings and practices. The Chairman of the DAR, Aleksei Alekseevich Khokhlov, also spoke. According to the report on the CDA website, the two associations have maintained friendly relations for almost ten years. The DAR was founded in 2014 (www.taoist.org.cn Oct. 11; www.daoisms.com.cn July 15; Daoist Association of Russia website: www.daorussia.org/en). *kwt*

Buddhism

June 29, 2023:

Press briefing in Beijing: Tibetan Buddhism reincarnation system continues, approvals by central government, successors must be sought within China

The Beijing-based China Tibetology Research Center and the All-China Journalists Association held a press briefing on “New Xizang in the New Era with New Vitality” (The Chinese leadership has introduced the use of the Pinyin transcription of the Chinese name “Xizang” instead of “Tibet” in English texts). When asked by a journalist whether the “Living Buddha Reincarnation System” would continue, Zhang Yun of the China Tibetology Research Center said: In the course of the development of the reincarnation system of Tibetan Buddhism, the political influence of the [Chinese] central government has never been interrupted. The central government of the Qing basically determined the procedure for the reincarnation of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism, including Dalai and Panchen, namely that all of them should be approved by the central government, searched for within the country [*jingnei* 境内 – in today’s Chinese legal norms this means the PRC without Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan] and [confirmed] by drawing lots from the Golden Urn. He said that the reincarnation of Living Buddhas as a system for the healthy transmission of Tibetan Buddhism is a serious matter that the 14th Dalai Lama must also respect and cannot use or not use as he pleases.

The 14th Dalai Lama turned 88 on July 6. The Kashag (the cabinet of the Tibetan government-in-exile) stated in a position paper on September 29, 2022 that the 14th Dalai Lama would reach the age of 113 and that instructions on the question of his reincarnation would be entirely at his discretion. No government or person had the right to interfere. In 2011, the Dalai Lama said that when he was around 90

years old, he would discuss whether the institution of the Dalai Lama should continue to exist or not. In 1995, the Chinese government kidnapped the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama, recognized by the Dalai Lama, and installed its own 11th Panchen. The Panchen Lamas are considered the second highest spiritual authority of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism after the Dalai Lama and play an important role in identifying his reincarnation. However, on February 22, 2023, China's *Global Times* stated that the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama "hold equal positions in Tibetan Buddhism." For the positioning of the "official" Panchen Lama, see the following entry (globaltimes.cn Feb. 22; June 29; www.tibetology.ac.cn/2023-07/13/content_42445624.htm; *China heute* 2012, No. 1, pp. 15-20 [2011 Dalai Lama Statement (in German)]; *RCTC* 2022, No. 4, p. 7 [regarding Kashag paper]). *kwt*

July 11/12, 2023:

Panchen Lama on Sinicization: Tibetan Buddhism must transform from "religion in China" to "Chinese religion"

The Chinese government-appointed 11th Panchen Lama spoke at the annual board meeting of the Tibet branch of the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA). As the state news agency *China News Service* reported, he said: "Pushing forward the Sinicization of Tibetan Buddhism means that it must implement a profound transformation from a 'religion in China' to a 'Chinese religion.' It must gradually develop clear Chinese characteristics in religious doctrine and rules, administrative system, rites and customs, behavioral norms, etc., and become a religion that merges with the excellent traditional culture of China and is adapted to the socialist society." The Tibetan Buddhism will only have "the beautiful future of healthy development" if it adapts to the needs of the fatherland and people and follows the call of the times and civilization. Specifically, he suggested that efforts should be made to establish a "service center for the interpretation of the religious teachings of Tibetan Buddhism" in the Tibet branch of the CBA, where experts, scholars and a hundred senior monks would be concentrated to implement the project of the interpretation of the religious teachings (<https://chinanews.com.cn/gn/2023/07-12/10041810.shtml>). *kwt*

August 15–19, 2023:

Chinese delegation takes part in the International Buddhist Forum "Traditional Buddhism and Challenges of Modernity" in Ulan-Ude in the Republic of Buryatia

According to reports, 600 people from 13 countries attended the forum, including 80 foreign delegates. In addition to China and Russia, the report on the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA) website speaks of delegates from Cambodia, Bhutan, Laos, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam. But participants also came from India, for example the abbot of the Tibetan exile monastery Drepung Gomang. According to the organizers, the conference was aimed at participants from Buddhist-influenced countries. The Buryats are a Mongolian ethnic group, the majority of whom are followers of Buddhism in the Tibetan tradition. The forum was organized by the Buddhist Traditional Sangha of Russia, the Government of the Republic of Buryatia of the Russian Federation and the Russian Foundation for the Promotion of Buddhist Education and Research. Russian President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov, among others, sent greetings. The six-member Chinese delegation was led by the abbot of the Lama Temple in Beijing, ethnic Mongolian Hu Xuefeng 胡雪峰, who is one of the vice-chairmen of the CBA. According to the CBA report, Buryat President Alexei Tsydenov expressed the hope to the Chinese delegation that exchanges and relations between Russia and China would be

further strengthened through “Buddhism as a bridge” (https://vk.com/wall-1142099_41688?lang=en; bitterwinter.org Sept. 12; www.chinabuddhism.com.cn Aug. 30; www.drepunggomang.org/news-events). *kwt*

August 16, 2023:

Meeting on the training and education of Tibetan Buddhist monks in Lhasa – new information about the Tibetan Buddhist Academy

During the meeting, which was also attended by the official 11th Panchen Lama, Vice Rector Wang Daocong 王道聰 spoke about the 12-year-old Tibetan Buddhist Academy (西藏佛學院) in Lhasa. According to Wang, 906 people who come from more than 400 monasteries of “the five major schools of Tibetan Buddhism” [i.e., including the Bön religion] are currently studying at the academy. There are 40 lecturers in Buddhism and 35 lecturers in general education, politics and law. An integrative concept is being pursued that does not unilaterally favor the direction of any one school, Wang said. Monks and nuns have been studying together since 2014, a pioneering achievement in the history of Tibetan Buddhist monastic learning, which meets the need of the majority of nuns to study the sutras. Lobsang, vice-general secretary of the Tibet branch of the CBA, reported that since the issuance of the “Preliminary Administrative Measures of the Tibet Autonomous Region for the Acquisition of Geshe Lharampa Degree by Tibetan Buddhist Monks” in 2003, to date 177 senior monks have received this degree [the highest scholarly degree in Tibetan Buddhism]. According to Lobsang, these monks now largely hold important positions in the monasteries, and some are also members of people’s congresses or political consultative conferences or boards of Buddhist associations at various levels. In recent years, it has been decided that 7 to 13 monks should take part in the Geshe Lharampa exam every year, including one monk from each of the Tashi Lhunpo, Galden Jampaling, Drepung, Sera and Ganden monasteries and two to six monks from other monasteries, said Lobsang. The *China News Service* report on the meeting also included the speech of the 11th Panchen, who, among others, held up the Chinese philosopher Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472–1529) as a role model for Living Buddhas and high-ranking monks (www.chinanews.com.cn/gn/2023/08-16/10061916.shtml; see also *RCTC* 2022, No. 1, pp. 7-8 [10 years of the Tibetan Buddhist Academy]). *kwt*

September 10, 2023:

Authorities are trying to restrict huge influxes to 7th Gungthang Rinpoche’s Kalachakra teachings

Gungthang Rinpoche’s Kalachakra teaching took place from September 15 to 17, 2023 in the Zuogaimanma Township (Tibetan: Dzoghe Mema) in the City of Hezuo (Tibetan: Tsoe) in the Gannan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province. The authorities had approved the event. As *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) and other media reported, thousands of Tibetan believers who wanted to attend the teaching camped near the site days before the Kalachakra began. A satellite image from September 13 analyzed by *RFA* showed an area of about 340 hectares covered with tents, according to the broadcaster, and an *RFA* source estimated the number of worshippers who had traveled to the area to receive a Kalachakra teaching at over 100,000. On September 10, according to *RFA*, the Zuogaimanma Township government issued a proclamation stating that the ritual was intended only for clergy and believers of Zuogaiduoma, the hometown of the 7th Gungthang Rinpoche. Worshipers from other places should go home to avoid traffic jams, people congestion and

chaos. According to ICT, thousands of Tibetan believers appear to have ignored the government order. Gungthang's Kalachakra teaching was originally supposed to take place in July, but was canceled at short notice by the authorities.

The Gungthang Rinpoche is the second highest reincarnation of Labrang Tashikhyil Monastery in Gansu Province. The 7th Gungthang Lobsang Geleg Tenpe Khenchen was born in 2002, so he is only 21 years old. His identification as a reincarnation of the 6th Gungthang took place in 2004 with the approval of the Chinese central government. As Tibetologist Martin Slobodník wrote on the occasion of the young Gungthang's enthronement in 2006, the 6th Gungthang Rinpoche Jogme Tenpe Wangchug (1926–2000) was a very influential lama. His Kalachakra teachings in the 1990s attracted huge crowds of over 100,000 Tibetans and contributed to the resurgence of Buddhism after the Cultural Revolution, Slobodník said. The popularity of his predecessor has apparently been transferred to the young 7th Gungthang (*RFA* July 17; Sept. 14; savetibet.org July 26; Sept. 19; M. Slobodník, "Enthronement of the 7th Gungthang Rinpoche," in: *China heute* 2006, No. 4-5, pp. 131-132 [in German]). *kwf*

October 25, 2023:

Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA) celebrates 70th anniversary

The commemoration ceremony to mark the occasion took place in Beijing. On the same day, Wang Huning, chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, received CBA leaders. He urged the Buddhist leaders to study more deeply Xi Jinping's "Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics in the New Era" and Xi's important remarks on religious work, and to unite Buddhist followers to contribute to the realization of the Chinese Dream.

According to a text distributed through the WeChat account of the CCP's United Front Department to mark the anniversary, the founding meeting of the CBA was held at the Guangji Temple in Beijing from May 30 to June 3, 1953. The article quotes Zhao Puchu 赵朴初 (1907–2000), who led the CBA from the 1950s until his death, as saying: "A national Buddhist body like this, initiated by Buddhists from all regions, nationalities and schools of thought in the country, supported and organized, had never happened before in the history of our country." The founding of the CBA shows the unity of the Buddhists of New China, their zeal for the spread of the Dharma and their common desire to contribute to the state and world peace – so the Zhao quote (*Xinhua* Oct. 25; *Tongzhan xinyu* according to chinabuddhism.com.cn Oct. 25). *kwf*

Islam

August 18, 2023:

Conference in Urumqi on the topic "Persisting in the orientation of Islam in Xinjiang towards Sinicization"

A *China News Service* report on the conference summarized statements from the 20 Islamic representatives and scholars who took part. Topics included in particular the development of a system for Koran studies with Chinese characteristics and the formula 伊儒会通 ("Integration of Islam and Confucianism") (*Zhongxinwang* July 30 according to www.zysy.org.cn/article/4E7PpduZgQl). For details see *China heute* 2023, No. 3, pp. 140-141 (in German). *kwf*

August 26, 2023:

Xi Jinping gives a key speech on Xinjiang policy in Urumqi and calls for a deeper Sinicization of Islam

According to the *Xinhua News Agency*, Xi said, among other things, that maintaining social stability is the top priority. “It is necessary to improve the mechanism for preventing and resolving major risks and hidden dangers, link the fight against terrorism and separatism with promoting legalization and normalization of stability work, and insist on combating both the symptoms and the root causes [...]. The Sinicization of Islam must be deepened and all types of illegal religious activities must be combated effectively. It is necessary to raise awareness of dangers [...] to consolidate the hard-won social stability,” Xi said (*Xinhua* Aug 26). *kwt*

Judaism

Mid-July to the end of August 2023:

Exhibit on the former Jewish presence in Tianjin

According to reports from the official *China Daily*, a photo exhibit entitled “Jews in Modern Tientsin” on the Jewish presence in Tianjin in the first half of the 20th century was held from mid-July to the end of August 2023. The maximum number of Jews in Tianjin – primarily Jewish refugees in the 1930s and 1940s – was around 3,500 people. The photo exhibition was curated by 70-year-old Anna Song, a retired journalist from *Tianjin Daily* who has been collecting photos and interviewing Jewish people around the world since 2001, according to the July 26 article in *China Daily*. Irit Ben-Abba, Israel’s ambassador to China, visited the exhibition. It is part of a larger exhibition that was shown in Jerusalem in 2010 and in Tel Aviv in 2011. All exhibits and photos are gifts to Israel from Jews formerly living in Tianjin and are part of the collection of the Diaspora Museum at Tel Aviv University, according to *China Daily*. Anna Song has published several articles on the subject in the past, including *The Jews in Tianjin* (犹太人在天津, Beijing 2004) (*China Daily* July 26). *kf*

Protestant Churches

September 11–23, 2023:

Visit to China by EKD and EMW

From September 15 to 23, OKR Ute Hedrich (Evangelical Church in Germany, EKD), Pastor Dr. Eckhard Zemmrich (Association of Protestant Churches and Missions in Germany, EMW) and Isabel Friemann (China InfoStelle; already from September 11) visited various religious organizations in the People’s Republic of China at the invitation of the China Christian Council. A detailed travel report can be found in *China heute* 2023, No. 3, pp. 146-147 (in German).

Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle

September 11–23, 2023:

Conversations during EKD/EMW visit to China: Fewer theology students in China

Prof. Chen Yilu, director of studies at the National Theological Seminary in Nanjing, has recorded an increase in the number of doctoral students at the seminary, but at the same time describes a significant decline in the number of first-year students. Over half of the almost 20 doctoral students are aiming for a so-called “Doctor of Ministry” degree, the core of which is research work related to practical community work. Unlike ten years ago, many of the students have already completed another course of study and worked in another profession, or they have gained experience as ordained church employees and are continuing their studies to obtain a higher academic degree.

According to Pastor Dr. Wu Weiqing, president of the Beijing Christian Council and Seminary, the Theological Seminary in Beijing has lost many potential students to the National Seminary in Nanjing in recent years. The capacities there were systematically built up, thus Dr. Wu.

Pastor Dr. Wang Conglian, president of the Christian Council of Guangxi Province and director of the Bible school in Nanning, was able to keep the number of new enrollments for the basic theology course at the Bible school constant. This is thanks to the fact, he said, that the previous maximum age for starting studies has been raised. There are also offerings for people with a lower level of education who could live as predicates at the Bible school for a year and complete basic training.

Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle

September 11–23, 2023:

Conversations during EKD/EMW visit to China: Political training for church staff is increasing

Visiting the national China Christian Council in Shanghai, Pastor Kan Baoping, vice chairman of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, and President Wu Wei said they travel extensively around the country attending conferences and conducting training sessions. Reports on training courses for a correct understanding of the church order of Chinese Protestantism and Sinicization can also be found on the website of the China Christian Council. For example, Pastor Kan led a training course for church leadership in Changchun from June 27 to 30, see: <https://ccctspm.org/newsinfo/16481>.

Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle

September 17, 2023:

Conversation during the EKD/EMW visit to China: “Back to worship” campaign by the Chongwenmen Church in Beijing

During a conversation with the leadership team of the Chongwenmen Church in downtown Beijing and subsequent attendance at the evening service on September 17, Pastor Liu Cuimin and Pastor Li Peiying reported that the number of worshipers in their church was approximately half of the number before Corona. The main reason the female pastors cited was the departure of many small business owners and employees who moved to smaller cities or the countryside because they lost their jobs during Covid. A shift to online-formats and changing spiritual practices at home have also played a role. The congregation is running a campaign to encourage more people to take an active part in church life. Large banners hung in the church asking all believers to invite their friends and relatives to

attend the service. When looking after small groups and making home visits, full-time and volunteer staff emphasize the importance of communal worship and Sunday community. This means that new people will gradually come to the church again and will be particularly warmly welcomed there, they said. In July, Grace Zhi describes the sharp decline in church attendance after the Corona pandemic in *China Christian Daily* with examples from the provinces of Heilongjiang and Guangdong. Pastor Wu Wei, President of the China Christian Council, confirmed to the German EKD and EMW tour group on September 22 that the number of people attending church services in Protestant churches across the country had fallen by between 30 and 50 percent (www.chinachristiandaily.com/article/12982).

Isabel Friemann, *China InfoStelle*



Banner on the church promotes return to church attendance.
Photo: Isabel Friemann.

Catholic Church

July 19, 2023:

Chinese-born priest becomes new bishop of La Réunion

Bishop Pascal Chane-Teng, appointed by the Vatican on July 19, was born on July 4, 1971 in the city of Saint-Pierre, the third largest city on the French island of Réunion in the Indian Ocean east of Madagascar, and belongs to the diocesan clergy of the diocese of Saint-Denis-de-La Réunion. His Chinese name is Zeng Qinghui 曾慶輝. His ancestors, ethnic Hakka Chinese, hail from Meizhou Prefecture in eastern Guangdong in Mainland China and came to the Indian Ocean region in the late 19th century. In 1923 they settled on La Réunion. The family continues to maintain contact with their home village. The previous Vicar General Chane-Teng has close ties to the local Chinese Catholic community, which consists of descendants of migrant workers primarily from Guangdong and Fujian. An estimated 25,000 residents of Réunion Island are of Chinese descent (they are called Sinwa in Creole). The first Chinese immigrants arrived on the island in the 1840s to work on the sugar cane plantations. Further waves of immigration followed into the 20th century. Chane-Teng was ordained in 2004 and studied in Rome before beginning his pastoral work at home. He succeeds 81-year-old Bishop Gilbert Aubry, who led the diocese for 47 years. He is also a member of the Theological and Pastoral Commission of the Episcopal Conference of the Indian Ocean (CEDOI), which includes the Comoros, Mauritius, Réunion, Mayotte and the Seychelles. In Réunion, he also coordinates the services for the Chinese New Year and for the deceased of Chinese origin. He also teaches Chinese folk religion at the university level (*AsiaNews* July 21; <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2023/07/19/0516/01149.html> July 19). kf

September 7–15, 2023:

Chinese bishops' delegation visits Belgium, the Netherlands and France

The five-member delegation was sent to Europe by the Chinese Bishops' Conference and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association at the invitation of Cardinal Jozef De Kesel, chairman of the Verbiest Foundation in Leuven, Belgium. Members of the delegation included Guo Jincai 郭金才, Bishop of Chengde, Pei Junmin 裴军民, Bishop of Shenyang, and Cui Qingqi 崔庆琪, Bishop of Wuhan, all three vice-chairmen of the Bishops' Conference, Liu Xinhong 刘新红, Bishop of Anhui and vice-chairman of the Patriotic Association, as well the priest Fr. Ding Yang 丁杨 from the Diocese of Chongqing, deputy general secretary of the Bishops' Conference (he later took part in the World Synod of Bishops in Rome). Shortly before the start of the trip, Bishop Guo had been appointed rector of the National Seminary in Beijing. In Belgium, the bishops and the Verbiest Foundation discussed ways to reactivate their cultural exchange activities, particularly the Chinese-language training courses in Leuven for priests, religious and lay people from China. This was followed by a meeting with Cardinal De Kesel, Archbishop Emeritus of Mechelen-Brussels. In the diocese of Tournai, the bishops concelebrated at the solemn High Mass and took part in the Great Procession that has been taking place for 900 years. On the 10/11 of September they were in the Netherlands. There they first visited the mother house of the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) and Sisters (SSpS and SSpSAP) in Steyl, where they also exchanged ideas with representatives of the China-Zentrum e.V. and Monumenta Serica Institute. They then had meetings with the Schraven Stichting in Broekhuizen and with Jan Hendriks, the Bishop of Haarlem-Amsterdam. From September 12 to 15, the delegation stayed in France, including with the Paris Missionaries (MEP) (*Agenzia Fides* Sept. 18; www.chinacatholic.cn Sept. 28; information from the China-Zentrum e.V.). *kwt*

September 8, 2023:

AsiaNews: Priest of Wenzhou Diocese convicted of fraud for refusing official registration

As *AsiaNews* reported, citing sources in China, Fr. Joseph Yang Xiaoming, born on November 22, 1989 in Longwan District of Wenzhou City (Zhejiang Province), was ordained a priest on December 18, 2020 by Bishop Peter Shao Zhumin of Wenzhou. Bishop Shao has also refused to join the Patriotic Association and is not officially recognized as a bishop by the government. On May 11, 2021, the Longwan District Religious Affairs Office began taking action against Fr. Yang for failing to register with the Religious Affairs Office and other government-controlled bodies. He was charged and found guilty of “pretending to be a religious professional to carry out religious activities or unlawful activities such as obtaining money by fraud” [under Article 74 of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs”]. The Religious Affairs Office issued an administrative ruling requiring him to stop his activities, confiscate illegal profits amounting to RMB 28,473, and pay a fine of RMB 1,526.67. Fr. Yang appealed, saying that the accusation that he was a false priest violated legal principles and did not respect Canon Law since he was ordained by Bishop Shao. Fr. Yang is in possession of a certificate of ordination issued by Bishop Shao, and both the Religious Affairs Office and the government of Longwan District acknowledged the authenticity of the document in the process and did not dispute that Yang was ordained in accordance with Catholic Canon Law, according to *AsiaNews*. *AsiaNews* did not report how the case developed after Fr. Yang's appeal (*AsiaNews* Sept. 8). – Until now, the carrying out of priestly activities by Catholic underground priests has been prosecuted by the authorities as “illegal” rather than as “fraud.” On the other hand, there have been repeated court cases against unregistered pastors of Protestant house churches in which they were accused of fraud. *kwt*

Sino-Vatican Relations

August 31 to September 4, 2023:

Pope Francis is sending signals to China on his trip to Mongolia

On the outward flight to Mongolia, Pope Francis had already addressed China's head of state in a greeting telegram while flying over Chinese airspace – as is the custom. According to *Vatican News* on September 1, he greeted President Xi Jinping and the Chinese people: “Assuring you of my prayers for the wellbeing of the nation, I invoke upon all of you the divine blessings of unity and peace,” the short telegram continued. At the daily press conference at the Chinese Foreign Ministry, foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said: “China noted the reports,” when asked by *Reuters* how China was responding to the pope's message. “The greetings from the Vatican embody friendship and goodwill. China and the Vatican have maintained communication in recent years. China would like to continue the constructive dialogue with the Vatican, enhance understanding, build up mutual trust and advance the process of improving the relations between the two sides.”

Pope Francis used the trip to send another greeting to the Chinese people. At the end of the Mass at the “Steppe Arena” in Ulaanbaatar on Sunday, September 3, the Pope took the hands of Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong Cardinal John Tong Hon and the current Bishop (now Cardinal) Stephen Chow Sau-yan SJ and, to repeated applause, said in Italian into the microphone: “These two bishop brothers, the Hereditary of Hong Kong and the current Bishop of Hong Kong: I would like to take advantage of their presence to send a warm greeting to the noble Chinese people. To all the people I wish the best, and to move forward, always progress. And I ask the Chinese Catholics to be good Christians and good citizens. To everybody.” On the same day, Pope Francis also met the Argentine ambassador residing in Beijing. The meeting with Gustavo Sabino Vaca Narvaja took place in the Apostolic Prefecture in Ulaanbaatar, where the Pope stayed during his visit to Mongolia. The Pope also had a comparatively long exchange with Bishop Chow at the personal meeting at the end of the meeting with bishops, priests, missionaries and consecrated persons, as well as pastoral workers, in the Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral in Ulaanbaatar. The Bishop of Macau, Stephen Lee Bun-sang, was also on the papal visit.

At the “inflight press conference” on the return flight, as *Vatican News* writes on September 4, the Pope again “clearly courted Beijing's favor”: “The relationship with China is very respectful, very respectful. I personally have great admiration for the Chinese people. The channels are very open – for the appointment of bishops there is a commission that has been working with the Chinese government and the Vatican for a long time. Then there are many, or rather there are some, Catholic priests or Catholic intellectuals who are often invited to Chinese universities to offer courses. I think we need to move forward in the religious aspect to understand each other better and so that Chinese citizens do not think that the Church does not accept their culture and values and that the Church is dependent on another, foreign power. This friendly path is well-followed by the Commission chaired by Cardinal Parolin: they are doing a good job, even on the Chinese side, relations are moving forward. I have great respect for the Chinese people.”

According to *AsiaNews*, about 200 Chinese Catholics from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau and the PRC were present at the Pope's visit to Mongolia. Before the trip, the Chinese bishops and believers were banned from traveling to Mongolia. The order, according to Gerard O'Connell in *America*, came from the United Front Work Department of the Chinese Communist Party. Nevertheless, a number of Catholics managed to be present for the Pope's visit (*America Magazine* Aug. 31; Sept. 3; *AsiaNews* Sept. 4; *Vatican News* Sept. 1, 4; www.vatican.va/content/francesco/de/homilies/2023/documents/20230903-mongolia-omelia.html Sept. 3; www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/202309/t20230901_11137081.html Sept. 1). *kf*

September 13–15, 2023:

Pope's peace representative, Cardinal Matteo Zuppi, in Beijing

From September 13-15, Cardinal Zuppi was in Beijing to “encourage dialogue in the search for peace” on behalf of Pope Francis, according to *Vatican News* on September 14. The mission, which Francis himself has described as a “peace offensive” to reduce tensions in Ukraine, has already taken the Archbishop of Bologna and chairman of the Italian Bishops’ Conference to Kiev, Moscow and Washington between June and July. On September 14, a meeting with the Chinese Foreign Ministry’s Special Representative for Eurasian Affairs, Li Hui, took place in Beijing. The conversation, which took place in an “open and cordial atmosphere,” according to the Vatican’s statement from the previous evening, was dedicated to “the war in Ukraine and its dramatic consequences.” The need to “combine efforts to encourage dialogue and find paths that lead to peace” was emphasized. The issue of food safety was also addressed, “with the hope that the export of grain can soon be guaranteed, especially to the countries most at risk.” The trip of his special envoy Zuppi “represents another step of the mission desired by the Pope to sustain humanitarian initiatives and to seek paths that may lead to a just peace,” the Holy See Press Office announced on the eve of the trip of the cardinal, who had previously promoted the papal peace policy at the international “The YVCX>Audacity of Peace” meeting in Berlin, hosted by the St. Egidio Community.

Li Hui is tasked by the Chinese government with exploring paths to peace in Ukraine. In recent months he has been in Ukraine and Russia, but also at the EU headquarters in Brussels, as well as in Germany, France and Poland for talks about a political solution to the crisis, as the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in the run-up to the trip (*Vatican News* Sept. 14; <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2023/09/12/0622/01360.html>). *kf*

October 4–29, 2023:

World Bishops’ Synod in the Vatican: Chinese bishops leave early

At the World Synod “For a Synodal Church. Communion, Participation, Mission” in the Vatican from October 4-29, 2023 two bishops from mainland China took part, but after 12 days of participation travelled back to Beijing. The Holy See’s Prefect of the Dicastery for Communication, Paolo Ruffini, confirmed on 16 October that the bishops returned to China due to “pastoral needs” in their dioceses. The departure apparently took place one day later. On 21 September, the Vatican had at a press conference on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the signing of the Sino-Vatican agreement on the appointment of bishops of 22 September 2018 surprisingly announced that two bishops from China would participate as official delegates at the upcoming World Synod: Bishop Anthony Yao Shun of Jining, Inner Mongolia, and Bishop Joseph Yang Yongqiang of Zhoucun, Shandong Province. Bishop Yang was, according to CNA, ordained bishop in 2010 with the approval of the Vatican and has been Bishop of Zhoucun since 2013. Bishop Yao Shun was consecrated on August 26, 2019 as the first bishop within the framework of the Sino-Vatican agreement. From the Chinese-speaking area the synod was also attended by the Taiwanese Bishop Norbert Pu of Chiayi and Cardinal Stephen Chow SJ, Bishop of Hong Kong.

An early departure from a synod already took place in 2018: Bishop Joseph Guo Jincai of Chengde and Bishop Yang Xiaoting of Yan’an had taken part during the first half of the Youth Synod 2018 before they also left the synod prematurely. *The Pillar* wrote on 19 October with reference to Chinese Church sources that the Chinese government has granted Bishop Yao and Bishop Yang only for a short period of time permission to leave the country (*Catholic News Agency* Sept. 24, Oct. 16; *Domradio* Oct. 16; *The Pillar* Oct. 19). *kf*

Hong Kong

August 1–6, 2023:

300 young people from Hong Kong at World Youth Day in Lisbon

According to a report by *Fides*, more than 300 young people from the Diocese of Hong Kong wanted to take part in World Youth Day in Lisbon. The young people were organized into 14 groups from parishes, religious orders, schools and Church communities. From March to June they took part in four meetings and various preparation phases in Hong Kong. The program also included meditations on the Gospel, Eucharistic adoration and communal prayers. “Pope Francis has invited you, he has recommended you to go out of yourselves, to respond to the Lord’s call through mutual encounter and encouragement with young people from all over the world,” said Bishop Stephen Chow Sau-yan SJ of Hong Kong, according to the *Fides* report, during a solemn mass for the young people on July 2 at the Hong Kong Cathedral. On the way to World Youth Day in Lisbon, 17 of the young people spent a week in Hong Kong’s partner diocese of Essen. The partner dioceses of Essen and Hong Kong particularly cultivate exchanges between their young people (*Fides* July 12; www.bistum-essen.de/pressemenue/artikel/junger-visit-aus-dem-partnerbistum-hongkong July 21). *kf*

August 10 / 29, 2023:

Hong Kong police arrests Catholic activist, among others

Under the national security law that came into force in 2020, six men and four women were arrested in a raid on August 10, including prominent pro-democracy activist and former chair of the Diocesan Justice and Peace Commission Bobo Yip. A statement from Hong Kong’s national security police confirmed the arrests and said the 10 arrested, aged between 26 and 43, were suspected of “conspiracy to collude with a foreign country or with external elements to endanger national security [...] and inciting riot.” This was in connection with the 612 Humanitarian Relief Fund, the same allegation and organization that led to the short-term arrest of the former Bishop of Hong Kong, Cardinal Joseph Zen, on May 11 last year. Cardinal Zen was fined 4,000 Hong Kong dollars at the end of November 2022 for failing to register the fund which was founded in 2019 to support people injured during demonstrations in Hong Kong, but was dissolved in October 2021. On August 29, 2023, two more people were arrested in connection with the Fund (*AsiaNews* Aug. 11; *Radio Free Asia* according to *LICAS* Aug. 11; *Radio Free Asia* Aug. 30; *The Pillar* according to *Hong Kong Free Press* Aug. 10). *kf*

August 23, 2023:

China.Table reports: Hong Kong confirms length of prison sentences

According to *China.Table*’s report on August 23, the Hong Kong High Court has ruled that prison sentences imposed under the national security law cannot be reduced. When describing the length of the sentence, the law would use binding formulations, the judges said, according to the *AFP* news agency (*China.Table* Aug. 23). *kf*

September 30, 2023:

Bishop Stephen Chow SJ becomes cardinal

At the consistory on September 30 in Rome, Pope Francis admitted Bishop Stephen Chow SJ of Hong Kong, among others, to the College of Cardinals. *Vatican News* already wrote on July 9: “[...] significant is the elevation of the Bishop of Hong Kong (China), Stephen Sau-yan Chow, to the Pope’s Senate. Chow, who like Francis is a member of the Jesuit Order, recently visited Beijing; improving the situation of Catholics in China is very important to the Vatican. [...]” Bishop Chow was ordained Bishop of the Diocese of Hong Kong on December 4, 2021. With Cardinals Chow, Joseph Zen and John Tong, there are now three cardinals in Hong Kong at the same time. However, Cardinal Zen and Cardinal Tong will no longer be able to take part in a papal election due to their age. A good tradition continues, as Zen’s predecessor Cardinal Wu had already received the honor of the cardinalate. In fact, the elevation of Bishop Chow to the status of cardinal is an expression of appreciation for the Diocese of Hong Kong, also in its function as a bridge Church to the Church on the Chinese mainland.

At a press briefing at the Vatican Press Office on September 28, two days before the elevation of the 21 new cardinals, Stephan Chow expressed his surprise at the appointment. He described Pope Francis as the “Pope of surprises.” He stressed the importance of the variety of places from which the new cardinals come (as he also mentioned Cardinal Giorgio Marengo in Mongolia), and the historical role of Hong Kong as a bridge between East and West and the Church as a bridge between the Church in China and the universal Church. At the same time, he expressed his joy at the participation of two bishops from Mainland China in the World Synod of Bishops in October 2023 in Rome, which he also attended in person (*Domradio* July 9; *Vatican News* July 9, Sept. 28). *kf*

October 3, 2023:

AsiaNews reports: Accreditation Council of Hong Kong gives green light to a Catholic University

The Caritas Institute of Higher Education (CIHE) meets the criteria to become a private university, *AsiaNews* reported on October 3. Now the government of Hong Kong must officially approve the new institution, which will be called Saint Francis University. Hong Kong’s Cardinal Stephen Chow has repeatedly publicly supported this project, which is promoted by the Diocese of Hong Kong. According to *Headline Daily*, a Chinese-language newspaper, CIHE, a post-secondary institution with a strong nursing programme, has already received the green light from the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications HKCAAVQ, said *AsiaNews*. For the CIHE, the final political hurdle is formal approval by the government under Chief Executive John Lee. “If this happens, Hong Kong would get a new private university, the third after Hong Kong Shue Yan University (HKSJU or SYU) and Hang Seng University of Hong Kong (HSUHK),” writes *AsiaNews*. According to *AsiaNews*, the then Bishop Francis Hsu had already pushed for such an institution in the 1970s. Today, CIHE, together with the Caritas Bianchi College of Careers, offers post-secondary courses in 35 different disciplines, ranging from social sciences to technology and economics, and includes around 2,500 students. “Cardinal Chow actively promoted the idea of a Catholic university in Hong Kong when he was the local superior of the Jesuits, before he became bishop,” thus *AsiaNews*. Initially, a completely new university complex in Fanling near the border with Mainland China was considered, but the authorities rejected this for urban planning reasons. According to *AsiaNews*, when Cardinal Chow became bishop, he revived the project and suggested that the CIHE be turned into a university (*AsiaNews* Oct. 3). *kf*

October 11, 2023:

Synod fathers should support the release of Hong Kong publisher Jimmy Lai

According to an October 11 report by the Chinese-language *Zhuixinbao* (*Chaser News*), which has been operating as an independent news portal out of London since 2022, Lai Chong En, son of 73-year-old *Apple Daily* founder Jimmy Lai (the newspaper was closed in 2021), together with American Catholic scientists, addressed the Synod of Bishops in the Vatican and asked the bishops to comment on the Jimmy Lai case. Jimmy Lai, a Catholic, has been detained in Hong Kong since 2020 under the national security law. Lai said his father was inspired by God to stay in Hong Kong after the national security law was introduced and was ultimately detained for that reason. He called on the Catholic Church to publicly demand his immediate release. His father is known for many things, Lai Chong En said: “He is a newspaper publisher, an entrepreneur, a defender of democracy, a prisoner of conscience, and in addition to all these things, my father has been a devout Catholic since 1997.” Lai describes his father as the living spirit of Catholicism: “He was willing to give up everything to stand up for his faith and defend his religious freedom” (*Zhuixinbao* Oct. 11). Cardinal Zen, Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, has also repeatedly called for the release of Jimmy Lai. *kf*

Macau

August 1–6, 2023:

Around 100 young people from Macau at World Youth Day

The young people from the diocesan youth pastoral ministries and from Portuguese-speaking parishes in Macau also visited the Marian shrine of Fatima in the run-up to World Youth Day. In addition to these two main groups, smaller groups from Macau took part in World Youth Day; from the Neocatechumenal Way and Opus Dei, as well as some students from Don Bosco College who participated together with the Hong Kong group (*AsiaNews* July 28). *kf*

October 6, 2023:

Larger number of students at Catholic schools

According to a report by *O'Clarim*, Macau's Catholic diocesan newspaper, Macau's 26 Catholic schools and colleges are attracting more and more students, according to Stephan Chan Teng Fong, Managing Director of the Diocesan Catholic Education Commission. In an in-depth interview, Chan discusses the values and mission of local Catholic schools, as well as the challenges they face. In recent years, the number of students enrolling in Catholic-oriented educational institutions has risen continuously. Only a small part of the student body is Catholic. In the 2022/2023 school year, Catholic schools and kindergartens accounted for 31,004 of the total 87,184 school children in Macau. Many of the teachers themselves graduated from Catholic schools and identify with the core values and beliefs, thus the report. In recent years there has also been an increase in baptisms among teachers. When asked how patriotic education was implemented in Macau's Catholic schools, Chan said that the Catholic schools, like other schools, also make use of the “Moral and Civic Education” textbook. The schools also taught students to raise the national flag and sing the National Anthem. “Catholic schools in Macau are private schools operating in the Macau S.A.R. under the law, so we have a responsibility to promote patriotic

education,” Chan said. The biggest challenge that Catholic schools also have to face are changes in family structures, such as dual-income and single-parent households, which could lead to students lacking parental support and companionship. Schools needed to pay more attention to the emotional side (*O’Clarim* Oct. 6). *kf*

Taiwan

October 5, 2023:

Taiwan’s Vatican ambassador: Better to avoid a war than stop one afterward

At a reception with diplomats accredited to the Vatican, Taiwan’s ambassador to the Holy See, Matthew Lee, said: “Taiwan will do whatever we can to remain on the road to peace.” “It is my firm belief that preventing a war beforehand is much more critical than stopping a war afterwards,” said the ambassador. The Vatican is the only country in Europe that maintains diplomatic relations with Taiwan. Bishop Norbert Pu of Chiayi, Taiwan, who was in Rome as a delegate to the Bishops’ Synod on Synodality, told CNA during the reception that the Holy See’s diplomatic recognition of Taiwan is very important not only to Taiwanese Catholics but also to all of the Taiwanese people.

“Taiwan and the Holy See share warm and friendly relations which have been growing continuously for over 81 years,” said Ambassador Lee at the reception. “We are extremely proud of what we have been able to achieve together to contribute to the staunch promotion of peace, justice, evangelization, and humanitarian efforts around the globe.” The reception at the Taiwan Embassy was an early celebration of Taiwan’s National Day on October 10. On this day, Taiwan traditionally celebrates the start of the Wuchang Uprising in 1911, which led to the overthrow of the Chinese Empire and the establishment of the Republic of China. Only 14 states worldwide maintain full diplomatic relations with Taiwan (*LICAS/Catholic News Agency* Oct. 6). *kf*

Authors’ Abbreviations:

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John Wu's (Wu Jingxiong 吳經熊, 1899–1986) Understanding of Mysticism – Beyond East and West

Zbigniew Wesolowski SVD

Introduction: John Wu as a Christian Mystic

John C.H. Wu (Wu Ching-hsiung [Wu Jingxiong] 吳經熊, 1899–1986) was a lawyer, juristic philosopher, educator, and prominent Chinese Catholic convert in the 20th century. He first became a Methodist Christian, baptized in the winter of 1917 at the Comparative Law School of China in Shanghai, run by the American Methodist Mission, and converted to Catholicism on December 18, 1937 through conditional baptism at the Catholic Aurora University in Shanghai,¹ after reading the autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux (1873–1897). He authored numerous articles and books on various subjects including law, philosophy, and religion.

Wu Jingxiong was equally at home in both Eastern and Western cultures and languages. That is why translation work drew his attention. John Wu first translated the *Daodejing* 道德經 / Laozi 老子. He published it in three parts in the *T'ien Hsia Monthly* (1939–1940),² and then a revised translation was published in book form in 1961. From November 1, 1942 to October 31, 1944, John Wu was translating the Psalms and the New Testament into Classical Chinese. He published the Psalms in 1946 as *Shengyong yiyi* 聖詠譯義 (Hong Kong) and the New Testament in 1949 as *Xinjing quanji* 新經全集 (Hong Kong).³

Prof. Dr. Zbigniew Wesolowski SVD is director of the Monumenta Serica Institute, Sankt Augustin/Germany, and editor-in-chief of the journal *Monumenta Serica. Journal of Oriental Studies* as well as Monumenta Serica Monograph Series and Collectanea Serica. We print here his contribution to the XVI Symposium for Chinese Catholic Young Scholars in Europe (第十六届中国天主教旅欧青年学者研讨会) which took place from November 7-9, 2023 in the Foyer de Charité La Part-Dieu in Poissy (France). The Symposium was organized by the Centro Studi Li Madou (Li Madou Study Centre / 利玛窦研究中心) in Macerata, Italy.

- 1 Wu 1951, p. 243.
- 2 Lao Tzū 1939–1940, "Lao Tzū's *The Tao and Its Virtue*" 老子道德經, translated and annotated by John C.H. Wu 吳經熊, Part One: 1-24, in: *Tien Hsia Monthly* 9 (1939) 4, pp. 401-423; Part Two: 25-48, in: *Tien Hsia Monthly* 9 (1939) 5, pp. 498-521; Part Three: 49-81, in: *Tien Hsia Monthly* 10 (1940) 1, pp. 66-99.
- 3 Wu Jingxiong 吳經熊 1946, Translation of the Psalms: *Shengyong yiyi* 聖詠譯義 (A Free Translation of the Psalms), <http://jesus.tw/Psalms>.
Wu Jingxiong 吳經熊 1949, Translation of the New Testament: *Xinjing quanji* 新經全集 (Complete Translation of the New Testament), http://jesus.tw/New_Testament.
Wu Jingxiong 吳經熊 (trans.) 1961, *Xinjing quanji* 新經全集 (Complete Translation of the New Testament), Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 3rd edition.

Here we begin with John Wu's three important convictions which pertain to his spiritual dimension and Christian mysticism:

- 1) "Our pilgrimage is therefore neither eastwards nor westwards, but inwards; and this is what I call moving beyond East and West" (1951, p. 350); he also reiterated this thought in his *The Interior Carmel* (1953): "We journey neither eastwards nor westwards, but inwards; because in the center of our soul dwells the Divine Essence, which is our true home. We must, by the help of grace, make ourselves fitting homes for God" (1975 [1953], p. 226). "In the ultimate sense, our whole pilgrimage here below is but a prelude to heaven" (1975 [1953], p. 147).
- 2) "[...] the ultimate end of man [...] is union with God" (Wu 1971, p. 245). "Thank God that our life here on earth is but a temporary exile! The fact that we have a true Home to look forward to gives us the necessary courage to face all the vagaries and vicissitudes of life without blinking [...]" (1975 [1953], p. 38). "Our hearts are made for God, and they will know no peace until they rest in Him. This fundamental insight of St. Augustine should form the starting-point for psychiatry" (1975 [1953], p. 183). "We cannot attain peace until our destiny is fully realized; and our destiny will not be fully realized until we are perfectly transformed in Christ by the Holy Spirit into children of God" (1975 [1953], p. 204).
- 3) "It was by incarnation that God became man; so it is by incarnation – that is, incorporation in His Mystical Body – that a man can be deified. As Christ is the Way of God to man, so is He the Way of man to God. The realization of this truth is the beginning of all mystical insights" (1975 [1953], p. 163).

What did this inwardness or inward character of human life as pilgrimage mean to John Wu?

"Our pilgrimage"⁴ – his basic understanding of human life or even better of a human soul⁵ – is also articulated. In many mystical traditions, especially in Christianity, man is compared to a pilgrim. Thus, John Wu understood his life as a journey with a sacred purpose and a holy place to end, that is, with God Himself: "Well, one does not become a saint and go to Heaven by cleverness, while sanctification is my sole ambition now, and the Beatific Vision my sole objective" (Wu 1951, p. 323). In his *Fountain of Justice* (1971), he described this truth in the following way: "[...] the ultimate end of law is identical with the ultimate end of man, which is union with God" (p. 245).

John Wu understood himself as a special kind of mystic:

4 That is a "Homo viator" ("pilgrim man") as man on his way towards finding God; cf. Marcel 1962. Cf. John Wu's sayings: "[...] I am not writing an autobiography but only the story of my spiritual pilgrimage" (Wu 1951, p. 118), "my juristic pilgrimage" (Wu 1951, p. 123), "spiritual wanderings" (Wu 1951, p. 149). Cf. "Was I not a traveller, a lonely wanderer in a desolate world? Did I not write: Travelling has its advantages, the chief among which is that it drives home to you that you are but a *traveller on earth*. Your wife, your children, your friends are really no more than your chance acquaintances. Your own body or even your personality is something you have casually acquired. *You are a guest in a world without a host*, for all the people you meet are as much guests as you are" (Wu 1951, p. 305).

5 Cf. Wu 1951, p. 110 ("belief in God and the immortality of the soul"); Wu 1951, p. 171 ("a keen insight into my soul"); Wu 1951, p. 192 ("the physiognomy of the Chinese soul"); Wu 1951, p. 207 ("a true peace of soul"); Wu 1951, p. 260 ("But our souls are immortal") etc.

As for me, who am a carefree mystic, the currents of time have touched me but slightly. Even in my darkest days, I have felt a secret joy bubbling from the fountain of my heart, so much so that I have often recalled the striking words of St. Paul: "as dying and behold, we live, as chastised but not killed, as sorrowful yet always rejoicing, as poor yet enriching many, as having nothing yet possessing all things" (2 Cor. 6.9-10) (Wu 1951, p. 63).

1. His Understanding of Christian (Supernatural) Mysticism

John Wu was a teacher of Christian mysticism. In June 1949, John Wu became Visiting Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hawai'i, where he wrote his autobiography *Beyond East and West*, publishing it in 1951. In the Spring of 1950, he was invited by the School of Religion, affiliated to the University of Hawai'i, to teach Christian Mysticism for two terms. "The lectures which I gave then have been incorporated into the present book [*The Interior Carmel*] [...] More than half of this book has been written under his [i.e., my present confessor's] wise and patient direction."⁶ Besides this, one term he taught also Thomistic philosophy. It was a happy experience for him to muse over "the things of the spirit."⁷

My whole course on Christian Mysticism, which I have been giving in the School of Religion of the University of Hawaii, is based upon this one Psalm [of the Good Shepherd].⁸

The first stage, which the spiritual writers usually call the purgative way or the age of the beginners, is symbolized by the following verses:

The Lord is my shepherd: I shall want for nothing.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me to waters where I may rest.

He gives refreshment to my soul.

The second stage, which is usually called the illuminative way or the age of the proficients, is symbolized by:

He guides me along right paths for his name's sake.

Although I walk in a darksome valley,

I shall fear no evil, for thou art with me.

Thy rod and thy staff: they comfort me.

6 Wu 1975 [1953], p. 253.

7 *Ibid.*

8 Wu 1951, p. 303.

The third stage, which is the unitive stage or the age of the perfect, is symbolized by:

Thou preparest a table for me before the eyes of my foes;

Thou anointest my head with oil;

My cup brims over.

Goodness and kindness will follow me all the days of my life,

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord days without end (Wu 1951, pp. 303-304).⁹

The teaching of the three stages (or ways, or states, or aspects) of Christian spiritual life has a long history.¹⁰ What is here important is the fact that John Wu discovered and witnessed this spiritual and mystical growth in his own life. These three, i.e., purgative, illuminative, and unitive stages, are also used for the classification of the degrees of Christian perfection, or for measurement of the advancement of souls in the supernatural life of grace during their sojourn in the world. John Wu's deepest insight as his answer to God's overwhelming grace, understood according to his *Beyond East and West*, we can summarize in the following paraphrase: The Christian is born into this world, and dwells herein for a certain time. But he is not of the world. Thus, as Jesus said: "They [i.e., His disciples] are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16). The world is of no avail to him; the Christian is a stranger and a sojourner in it. The true riches of the Christian on earth are grace, close communion with God, and all that fosters the supernatural life within him. Those things only are really evil which weaken his or her spiritual life or deprive him or her of it.

9 John Wu mentioned earlier in *Beyond East and West* (1951, p. 186) a comparative dimension of spiritual life in Chinese traditions: "[...] when I read in a Buddhist Classic: 'Avoid all evil, cherish all good, and keep the mind pure. This is the teaching of all the Buddhas'; I said to myself, 'How similar this is to three ways of the Christian spiritual life: the purgative, illuminative and unitive!' When I read Confucius' program of education of his pupils: 'First arouse their interest in wisdom by means of poetry; then establish their character by making them practice the moral rules; finally, harmonize their personality by means of music'; it reminded me of the Psalm of the Good Shepherd. The spheres are wide apart as heaven and earth, but the stages of progress are quite similar, for the simple reason that even grace has to work upon the natural and psychological apparatus of man. With regard to the wisdom of the East and Christian wisdom, God has given to my mind an organic unity of transparent differences."

10 The earliest occurrence in Christian writing of the terms *purgation*, *illumination*, and *union* seems to have been found in Pseudo-Dionysius (fl. c. 550), who applied them to the mystical experience. According to Dionysius, the three acts are thearchic (i.e., given by God) and hierarchic (i.e., ordered) ways to mystical union. They describe both complementary functions and successive activities; as successive they correspond to the three stages of mystical growth set down by Evagrius Ponticus, also called Evagrius the Solitary (345–399 AD). Cf. Hathaway 1969 and Tsakiridis 2010.

Thus, it is easy to recapitulate John Wu's threefold path of mystical growth,¹¹ i.e., purgative, illuminative, and unitive states,¹² which in his book *The Interior Carmel* he gave the subtitle "The Threefold Way of Love." Love, the love of God to him, seems to be his strongest experience in his life until then:

Yes, as I look back upon these fifty-odd years of my life, it appears all of one piece, the keynote being Love. My whole life has been surrounded by God's Love. All the scattered leaves of my life have been gathered together by His loving hand and bound into an harmonious volume (Wu 1951, p. 345).

After becoming a Methodist in 1917, he was, for the first few years, quite "a zealous Christian, praying constantly and visiting the poor" (Wu 1951, p. 75). However, later he experienced the following:

As my own faith was not firmly rooted, I gradually drifted away from my first love for lack of a congenial religious milieu. Moreover, my juristic and philosophical preoccupations diluted more and more what little faith I had got, with the result that I forgot all about the doctrine of the Trinity, and became a Unitarian without my knowing it. I began to look at Christ as a mere man, a human teacher whose extraordinary personality and lightning-like flashes of moral insight continued to fascinate me. I adored Him in the spirit of hero-worship, which I had imbibed from Thomas Carlyle.¹³ As a freethinker I no longer cared whether He was born of a virgin, or whether He rose again from the dead, or whether He actually worked miracles. If He was not God, He was all the more admirable and worthy of imitation. All questions of dogma were relegated to the background (Wu 1951, p. 77).

However, after the conversion to Catholicism he experienced a deep spiritual renaissance:

For me the "transcending spiritual repose" was not to come until the winter of 1937, when I embraced the Catholic Church. In the meantime I remained as restless as ever. I tried to find one substitute for God after another, but found no peace. Without his knowing it, it was partly due to his [that is, Justice Holmes¹⁴]

11 According to Christian understanding of mysticism, Christian mystics have been described as pursuing a threefold path corresponding to body, mind, and soul, that is, purgative, illuminative, and unitive aspects of their spiritual life. The first, purgative aspect or purification focuses on discipline of the human body. It emphasizes prayer at certain times, either alone or with others, and in certain postures, often standing or kneeling. There are other disciplines required like that of fasting and alms-giving, the latter including those activities called "the works of mercy," both spiritual and corporal. The second phase, the path of illumination, has to do with the activity of the Holy Spirit enlightening the mind, giving insights into truths not only explicit in the Bible and the rest of the Christian tradition, but also those implicit in nature and everyday experiences. The third phase, usually called contemplation, refers to the experience of oneself as in some way united with God. The experience of union varies, but it is first and foremost always associated with a reuniting with Divine love. Cf. Healey 1999.

12 In *Beyond East and West* (Wu 1951, pp. 350-351), John Wu deplors the low level of spiritual education of the Christian in the West: "To take just one instance, the average Buddhist in China knows something about the three stages of Abstinence, Concentration and Wisdom; while the average Christian has no idea of the three ways, the purgative, the illuminative and the unitive. The spiritual education of the Christian is sadly neglected."

13 Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) was a British essayist, historian, and philosopher from the Scottish Lowlands. Carlyle took a central position in Victorian culture, in the words of the American scholar and poet Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), he was a "secular prophet."

14 John Wu maintained a correspondence with U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. (1841–1935; U.S. Supreme Court Justice: 1902–1932) and later produced scholarly work examining Holmes' legal thought. In

influence that my faith in Christianity had been diluted. I still retained some faint belief in God and the immortality of the soul” (Wu 1951, p. 110).

Let me quote another testimony of John Wu in which the transforming power of God's grace was at work not only in the life of John Wu,¹⁵ but also the quality of his marriage and his whole family:

Since I became a Catholic, my family has followed me into the Church, and Christ the King has been enthroned in our house. My wife¹⁶ and I have found our rest in the Sacred Heart of Christ. We are bound together by a common Love. As we progress in the love of God, we progress in the love of each other. For the past few years, my wife and I have been receiving Holy Communion practically every day [...]. O Christ, our hearts are united in the Love of You, and how can we ever be separated so long as neither of us is separated from You?¹⁷ In Your Sacred Heart we have found our Home; who says that we are exiles? O God, Your will is our destiny, and to do Your will is our freedom!

God has opened my eyes gradually to the interior qualities of my wife, to such a degree that, whereas I formerly thought she was not worthy of me, now I realize that I am not worthy of her. Christ has become the living bond between us. [...] We only adore the Christ that we have in common, and it is He who binds us together. As each of us comes closer to Christ, we find that we are coming closer to each other (Wu 1951, pp. 140-141).

The whole *Beyond East and West* permeates the atmosphere of John Wu's experience of grace as the love and mercy given to him by God because God desires him to have it,¹⁸ not because of anything he has done to earn it. It was to him the condescension and benevolence shown by God toward him and his family as a generous, free, and totally unexpected and undeserved gift:

this period of his life, we witness John Wu's friendship with Holmes. This friendship permeates the whole *Beyond East and West*. In its chapter 9: "The Story of a Friendship" (pp. 87-106), he writes: "We were two old babies. I was a baby who was an old man. He was an old man who was a baby. And the two old babies corresponded with each other for fourteen years on questions belonging more to eternity than to time. We were asking each other whether life was a dream. Our conclusion was that we could never prove that we were awake, and that it took an act of faith to assert that. He never wearied of stressing the need of faith. He wrote to me, 'If I were dying my last words would be: have faith and pursue the unknown end.' It is ironical that a man who talked so much about faith should be called a sceptic. Concretely his faith was not mine, but his philosophy of faith, vague as it was, did encourage me to embrace what I could not help regarding as the true Faith. I said to him once, 'Beneath your cynicism, Sir, there pulses a warm heart'" (Wu 1951, p. 130).

- 15 Cf. Wu 1951, p. 317: "By nature I am a coward, but by grace I have felt in times of danger like a baby in the arms of its mother. And since Mary is my Mother, how could I help feeling grateful for her ever-watchful care of me, in season and out of season?"
- 16 John Wu's love for his wife whom he married on April 12, 1916, was "at the first sight" (Wu 1951, p. 59). She was Theresa Li Wu 李吳 (1899-1959). They eventually had thirteen children (the sixth child joined the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers).
- 17 The echo of the words of St. Paul in Romans 8:35: "What will separate us from the love Christ has for us? Can trouble, distress, persecution, hunger, nakedness, danger, or violent death separate us from his love?"
- 18 Cf. Wu 1951, pp. 228-229: "To be converted, one must first know himself to be perverted. For the first step down in our own estimation is the first step up towards God. My pride was already crushed, but it was too painful to continue that condemnation of myself. Consequently, I closed the Bible like a child whose finger had been burnt by accident. I wanted to read something lighter to distract my mind."

I don't rely only on my nature, but on His grace. His grace has changed my natural changeableness into a feeling tentacle for discovering every day new beauties of Christ and of His Church, thus ministering unto my constancy. Has St. Paul not said, "For when I am weak, then I am strong"? Shall I not say, "When I am changeable, then I am constant"? The Lord has transmuted my natural fickleness into supernatural fidelity! (Wu 1951, p. 267)

John Wu became "a soldier of Christ" (Wu 1951, p. 254) to whom

God has opened [his] eyes to one fundamental truth: Nothing really good can be accomplished without genuine suffering. The higher the achievement, the higher the price. There is no greater thing than sanctity, and therefore one must be ready to pay the highest price. Even the Son of God had to pay the supreme price for His Christhood, had to swallow the bitter cup, had to be the Man of Sorrow before He could redeem mankind from its sins. If one wants to follow Christ but at the same time shrinks from pain, it is like crying for the moon (Wu 1951, p. 258).

In accepting from God his Christian faith, John Wu was also given the gift of tears.¹⁹ To Christian mystical tradition, tears are a gift of grace from God. Thus, the shedding of tears arises from the heart that reveals an openness and vulnerability. The fruit of tears is always joy.²⁰

Although love (charity) is a basic attitude in Christian life, because "God is love" (1 John 4:8), this attitude, however, transcends Christianity as such, and is to be universally found in all human beings.

[...] Love is all. In dealing with the Orientals, one cannot too much emphasize that God is more motherly than a mother. The Chinese respect the father, but love the mother. One of the things that attracted me so strongly to St. Thérèse of Lisieux is that she knew well the maternal quality of God's love. As she said, "I had long felt that Our Lord is more tender than a mother, and I have sounded the depths of more than one mother's heart ... Fear makes me shrink, whereas under love's sweet rule I not only advance – I fly." When I read it, I said to myself, "How Chinese she is!" (Wu 1951, p. 352).

In John Wu's life, the human face of love is present from the very beginning. It was present in the painful experiences of losing very early his two mothers.²¹

19 For example, Wu 1951 (pp. 235-236): "Hardly had I finished the last paragraph [on the sinning woman at Simon's house (cf. Luke 7:36-50)] when I burst into a violent fit of weeping myself. I said, 'Jesus, I, too, am a prostitute. God has endowed me with beauties of soul and intellect, and I have wasted them on the search for worldly honors and material riches. In the world of politics and in social life, I too have been forced to pretend a pleasure I did not feel, and to show a smiling face to those whom I despised. And all the time I have been neglecting you, my Redeemer and my Spouse. Forgive me, Jesus, and let me anoint you with my tears! And forgive all my dear sisters, those poor sing-song girls, who are much better than I am. Turn them into your saints!'" For other instances, see Wu 1951, pp. 255, 260, 308, 316.

20 Cf. Wu 1951, p. 215: "Joy is perfection, says Spinoza; I may add, joy and pleasure are as wide apart from each other as heaven and earth"; and p. 211: "Only when you have tasted sickness can you realize with all the muscles of your body what a great joy it is just to be in normal health."

21 Here I would like to cite an intriguing passage from *Beyond East and West* concerning John Wu's search "for a Mother": "All my life I had been searching for a Mother, and at last I had her in the Catholic Church, and this in

The above is the context of John Wu's personal and religious life and of his thought on mysticism in which the phenomenon of love has its priority.

As far as John Wu's understanding of love is concerned, it is to be found especially in his *The Science of Love: A Study in the Teachings of Thérèse of Lisieux* (1941). In *Beyond East and West* on pages 267-269, John Wu looks back at how he came to write this booklet. His *Science of Love* is interesting because it displays what I would call "empathetic²² epistemology"²³ as understanding through the discovery of spiritual affinity. An epistemic value of spiritual life is an important way and approach to know oneself, others, and the whole universe. John Wu's *The Science of Love* is a classic example of it, although in his *Beyond East and West* this element of his epistemology is also fruitfully at work. In John Wu's description of his friendship with Holmes, he said: "We were two old babies. I was a baby who was an old man. He was an old man who was a baby" (Wu 1951, p. 130). In view of Thérèse of Lisieux, he writes: "Nor is it for nothing that this time He [the Holy Spirit] has raised 'a baby who is an old man'" (Wu 1941, pp. 34-35). Thus, through his empathetic

a triple sense. God is my Mother, the Church is my Mother, and the Blessed Virgin is my Mother; and these three Mothers have merged into one Motherhood, in which I live, move and have my being. [...] One of the charms of the Catholic Church is that this feminine element in the Character of Jesus is institutionally represented in the person of the Blessed Virgin. It is indeed the True Church, for it embodies the Personality of the Founder in Its fullness" (Wu 1951, p. 244). In Chapter 3: "My little mother" (pp. 26-32) of his *Beyond East and West*, John Wu begins as follows: "God gave me two mothers, one to bear me and another to bring me up. The one who bore me I shall call here my *little* mother; the other who brought me up I shall call my *big* mother." His little mother died when John was only four years old. About his big mother, John Wu wrote as follows: "It is not easy for me to write about my big mother. If I am asked who of all human beings is dearest to me, I would answer without the slightest hesitation that it is my big mother. I have dreamed of her more often than of any other person. I have wept more tears in memory of her than of anyone else" (Wu 1951, p. 33). One has not to be a psychologist to imagine the impact of the death of a parent, especially of a mother, for our life. Psychological research has shown that a person's age affects his or her ability to cope with the death of a parent. The loss affects adult personality development, a sense of security, and relationships with the surviving parent and significant others. Besides, younger children, as it was the case of John Wu, are more at risk for depressive symptoms than older children. His big mother also died when he was an adolescent of 15 years. Thus, we want to conclude that John Wu's "search for a Mother" has its setting in his life which influenced his understanding of his spiritual life and mysticism.

- 22 Empathy is the human capacity to recognize emotions and psychic states that are being experienced by another human or sentient, or even fictional, being. For example: A human being may need to have a certain amount of empathy before he or she can experience compassion. The German word for empathy was originally "Einfühlungsvermögen" (later also re-translated as "Empathie"), a new phenomenon explored at the end of 19th century mainly by Theodor Lipps (1851–1914). Apart from an emotional empathy (affective empathy) as the capacity to respond with an appropriate emotion to another's mental states, there is also a cognitive empathy as the ability to identify another's mental states which for us here is more important. Cf. Shamay-Tsoory – Aharon-Peretz – Perry 2009.
- 23 Cf. Ronald S. Laura – Dan Zhou 2012, "Reconceptualizing the Foundations of Knowledge to Enhance the Pedagogic Goals of Environmental Education with Special Reference to the Three Gorges Dam Project," in: 2012 International Conference on Future Environment and Energy, *International Proceedings of Chemical, Biological & Environmental Engineering*, vol. 28, pp. 224-229 (website: www.ipcbee.com/vol28/41-ICFEE2012-H2009.pdf, retrieved on March 5, 2013, not accessible any more). Here "empathetic epistemology" is contrasted with "power epistemology" as a historically Western dominant epistemological tenet, namely, that "Knowledge is tantamount to Power." The reliance on "power epistemology" as the dominant model for technologization has created a scientific discourse which marginalizes the importance of the ethical issues. "As Professor Laura reminds us in his book *Empathetic Education*, 'moral sensibility requires affective empathy, and empathy is not a value enshrined within the epistemology of power because all values are inevitably subservient to the ultimate value of power, as the medium of control. Given this epistemic paradox, we shall argue that Laura's theory of 'empathetic epistemology' can be deployed to help reconceptualise the ways in which we come to know and thus relate to the world around us as a modality of 'participatory consciousness.' Thus, every act of knowing now enshrines the value of connecting with the world in such a way that the value of empathy defines our decisional outcomes. This in turn relates to defining the ways in which we choose to reconstruct the world to suit man's purposes" (pp. 226-227).

understanding John Wu was able to say for example that Thérèse of Lisieux “seemed to [him] to combine the heart of the Buddha, the virtues of Confucius, and the philosophic detachment of Lao Tse” (Wu 1951, p. 243) or “[o]ne of the things that attracted [him] so strongly to St. Thérèse of Lisieux is that she knew well the maternal quality of God’s love” (Wu 1951, p. 352). What we experience here is simply that John Wu has re-discovered himself in Thérèse of Lisieux!

The very title of John Wu’s pamphlet on Thérèse of Lisieux, that is, *Science of Love*, seems to be provocative. In our present-day and age, this title could be misunderstood as a biology, physiology, or even chemistry of love!²⁴ John Wu’s ideal was the expectation of Pope Pius XI that “[i]t might even be said that a knowledge of Nature will serve as an introduction to what is of far greater value, an understanding of things supernatural” (Wu 1941, p. 2). John Wu’s personal hope was

The more science grows, the nearer we shall be to a living Faith. Material civilization is a welcome fuel to the fire of love. If the fire is weak, it may be smothered by the fuel. But if the fire is strong, the more fuel it has to feed on, the brighter will be its flame (Wu 1941, p. 2).

John Wu wanted to be a prophet of the love he experienced in his own life and which he re-discovered through the grace of God in the life of Thérèse of Lisieux. That is why he seemed to be optimistic about the progress of both human love and civilization:

Love has nothing to lose and everything to gain by the continual progress of civilization. And how can science ever supersede Christianity, which is the religion of Love par excellence? (Wu 1941, p. 3).

However, there was also in him a sense of criticism of our modern scientific civilization when he expresses his judgment:

The whole trouble about modern civilization seems to me to lie just in this: There is too much love of science and too little science of love.

“The science of love!” exclaimed little Thérèse, “Ah! sweet is the echo of that word to the ear of my soul! I desire no other science than that. For the sake of love, having giving [sic!] all my riches, like the spouse in the Canticles, I feel as though I had given nothing. There is nothing except love which could render us agreeable to the good God. This is so plain to me that this love has become the sole treasure upon which I set my heart” (Wu 1941, p. 4).

Thus, this alternative “too much love of science”²⁵ or “too little science of love” is the future fate of humanity envisaged by John Wu.

24 Cf. “Science of love” in www.parade.com/health/2012/02/the-science-of-love.html (retrieved July 4, 2023), “Biological basis of love” in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biological_basis_of_love (retrieved July 4, 2023), “Science of love” in <http://esciencecommons.blogspot.de/2009/10/science-of-love.html> (retrieved July 4, 2023).

25 This attitude could be called scientism as belief in the universal applicability of the scientific method and approach, and the view that empirical science constitutes the most authoritative worldview or most valuable part of human learning to the exclusion of other viewpoints. Cf. Tom Sorell 1994, *Scientism: Philosophy and the Infatuation with Science*, London: Routledge, pp. 1ff.

With the help of Thérèse of Lisieux's art of love, John Wu could systematize his own understanding of Christian spiritual life and mysticism as essentially "the growth of love" or "the threefold way of love." The outcome was his book on mysticism *The Interior Carmel: The Threefold Way of Love*.

According to John L. Mc Nulty (1898–1959), the 13th President of Seton Hall University (South Orange, New Jersey), who wrote the "Foreword" to John Wu's *The Interior Carmel* (October 11, 1952), it says:

Dr. Wu follows the concept of St. John of the Cross, who believed that sanctity was an evolution, a growing, a nurturing. He called it a voyage to Heaven and described the journey in three ways: (1) the Way of Purgation – of cleansing, of mortification, and of meditation; (2) the Illuminative Way – when the gifts of the Holy Ghost inspire us to pure acts of charity and justice; (3) the Unitive Way – the moment of perfect contemplation with God (Wu 1975 [1953], p. X).

Yes, St. John of the Cross has been very often quoted in John Wu's *The Interior Carmel*. In his book, besides him and Thérèse of Lisieux and, e.g., St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, a multitude of Christian ancient, medieval, and contemporary mystics and spiritual writers is cited, so that one fifth of his book might include relevant quotations from them and from the Bible (especially the four Gospels). As already stressed, John Wu's own contribution to understanding the concept of Christian mysticism is in the first place a profound experience of love in his life, then his understanding of the Psalm 22 [23] – "The Good Shepherd" in accordance with the classical three-stage understanding of mystical growth which we cited above. He also discovered in the Psalm 83 [84], 5-7 "our spiritual progress under the figures of pilgrimage":

(1)

*Blessed is the man whose help is from Thee,
When he has pilgrimages in his heart.*

(2)

*Passing across a parched valley, they shall make
it is a source of wells,
And the first rain shall clothe it with blessings.*

(3)

*They shall go from strength to strength:
They shall see the God of gods in Sion.*

Does this not present beautifully the budding, the flowering, and the ripening of love?²⁶

²⁶ Wu 1975 [1953], pp. 10-11.

Here we have the subtitle of his book on mysticism at hand – “The Threefold Way of Love.” On page 12 of John Wu's *The Interior Carmel*, we find his own re-formulation of the spiritual growth:

The three stages are traditionally known as the purgative way, the illuminative way, and the unitive way. I prefer to call them the budding, the flowering and the ripening of love, because there are not three ways, but only one way, the way of love, although the way may roughly be divided into three successive states. The eight Beatitudes as Christ announced them from the Mount are as follows:

- (1) *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*
- (2) *Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.*
- (3) *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the land.*

[With reference to the second and third Beatitudes, John Wu followed the order of the Greek text, not that of the Vulgate.]

- (4) *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall have their fill.*
- (5) *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall find mercy.*
- (6) *Blessed are pure of heart, for they shall see God.*
- (7) *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.*
- (8) *Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when they shall revile you and persecute you and speak all that is evil against you, untruly, for my sake: be glad and rejoice, for your reward is very great in heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets that were before you (Matt. 5.3-12) (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 12).*

John Wu sees in the first three Beatitudes, i.e., 1 (poverty in spirit), 2 (mourning as sorrowful cleansing of the soul), and 3 (meekness), the purgative way – in his wording: “the budding of love.”

The Beatitudes 4 (justice) and 5 (mercy as charity towards others) are the illuminative way, in his formulation: “the flowering of love.”

The Beatitudes 6 (purity of heart which sees God), 7 (peacemakers who are the children of God), and 8 (all those who suffer persecution for justice as the way to being an heir of the kingdom of heaven) are the unitive way, in John Wu's terminology “the ripening of love.”

It is no wonder that his *The Interior Carmel: The Threefold Way of Love* has accordingly three parts: “Part One: The Budding of Love” (pp. 31-89), “Part Two: The Flowering of Love” (pp. 91-137), and “Part Three: The Ripening of Love” (pp. 139-221).

Thus, *The Interior Carmel: The Threefold Way of Love* depicts the experience of a spiritual journey of John Wu as the way of his mystical growth or as the way of living the spirit of the eight Beatitudes in this very world which clashes with our own human tendencies and even more with those of present-day society, or as the development of his spirituality

as a consequence of his following Jesus, or his being in the world with the spirit of inner cloister,²⁷ or even as a way of living an active life in contemplation, or simply a way of becoming a saint as response to Jesus' call: "Follow me!"

John Wu's spiritual thought was built upon various opposites (areas of tensions), such as East versus West, Christianity (Catholicism) versus Chinese religions (Daoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism), human versus divine, and natural versus supernatural. In this context, there is also his own clear choice and argumentation: Divinity overarches humanity, universality overcomes particularity, and inwardness surpasses the distinction between East (China) and West.

It is not fair to Christianity to call it "Western." Christianity is universal. In fact, the West has something to learn from the East, for, on the whole, the East has gone farther in its natural contemplation than the West has in its supernatural contemplation (Wu 1951, p. 350).

In his *Interior Carmel*, he especially stressed the difference between nature and supernature in human life in which the second meant for him a life upon God's grace through Jesus Christ. His experience of God's grace and his faith in Incarnation were two pillars of his spiritual and mystical life.

It should, of course, be noted that neither Confucius nor Buddha moved in the same sphere as Christ. Theirs is the sphere of nature, while His is the sphere of grace. He comes from heaven and bears witness of what He has seen and heard, while they are of earth, and from the earth they speak. But the point is that even grace is sown upon the earth, that is, human nature; and, therefore, the life of grace has to grow according to the gradual steps followed in the normal development of human nature,²⁸ and is subject to the rhythms of life as symbolized by "night and day" (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 4).²⁹

The true riches of the Christian on earth are grace, close communion with God, and all that fosters the supernatural life within him.

"Grace has transformed me, and God forbid that I should ever return to my vomit!" (Wu 1951, p. 144). That is why John Wu writes:

The great mission of Christ is to lift us from the natural sphere to the supernatural sphere, to free us from our bondage to the dialectical process of time. What is more, by His grace we are enabled to reach the Beyond by riding the chariot

27 "For what is contemplation but a 'science of love' – in the words of St. John of the Cross, 'an infused, loving knowledge of God'? This infused, loving knowledge is open to everybody, whether he lives in the cloister or in the world. In fact, the more one is engaged in exterior activities, the more need there is for him to cultivate the spirit of recollection. Just because he does not enjoy the silence and solitude of the cloister, he should build an interior cloister in his heart to enjoy the Divine friendship" (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 239).

28 Here we have the axiom of Scholastic theology believed by John Wu: "gratia supponit naturam" (Latin: grace presupposes nature), with which the relationship between human nature (creation, sin, redemption [salvation]) and grace is presented; first formulated by Bonaventure, developed by Thomas Aquinas. The axiom tries to show that, on the one hand, grace is given gratuitously (by the power of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection which is appropriated by faith), and on the other hand, the inner transformation of human life occurs through the same grace.

29 Regarding the cycles and rhythms of the spiritual life, see Wu 1975 [1953], pp. 243-250.

of mutability. For, Christ has also declared: "Blessed are ye that weep now: for you shall laugh." Here we are no longer in the natural sphere, but in the sphere of grace. We can sail safely across the ocean of time and reach the shore of Eternity, because we have welcomed Jesus into our boat (Wu 1951, p. 144).

He also witnesses:

I don't rely only on my nature, but on His grace. His grace has changed my natural changeableness into a feeling tentacle for discovering every day new beauties of Christ and of His Church, thus ministering unto my constancy. Has St. Paul not said, "For when I am weak, then I am strong"? Shall I not say, "When I am changeable, then I am constant"? The Lord has transmuted my natural fickleness into supernatural fidelity! (Wu 1951, p. 267).

In his own mystical way, John Wu discovered his mystery of Christian mysteries, i.e., the Incarnation of the Second Divine Person – the Word of God, the Incarnate Word,³⁰ i.e., Jesus Christ:

In dealing with the depth of Christ's love, we have to touch upon the mystery of mysteries: the Incarnation. Time does not allow nor my ability permit a probing into this great mystery. I wish only to say this: the Incarnation of the Word of God is the central event of human history. Without it there would have been no Revelation nor Redemption (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 111).

John Wu saw Christian spiritual life as a way to Christian mysticism according to St. Paul's "Putting off the old man" and "putting on the new man" (Eph. 4:22):

The Old Man must die completely before the New Man can be formed in you. You must be nailed to the cross with Christ, before you can say with St. Paul, "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2.19-20) (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 143).

It is a Christian teaching that human beings have a radical need for redemption and are completely dependent on Christ's love and grace.³¹ The old man is the natural mindset of a human being. In this natural state, we are selfish, each serving oneself,³² living according to our lusts, with no conscious decision to give them up and serve God. We are tempted by our corrupt inclinations, disordered passions to sin in our flesh, my mind agrees with them, and my body carries them out – in thoughts, words, or actions. Putting off the old man is the decision to stop serving my own lusts and to stop serving sin. This is an act of faith. This is the beginning of a spiritual and supernatural life of a Christian which normally begins with baptism. Thus, as a Christian one should leave behind his/her old life of

30 See Wu 1975 [1953], p. 177: "It is only in the Word Incarnate that mercy and truth have embraced each other, and justice and peace have kissed each other. It is only in Him that heaven and earth have united. It is only in the way of His steps that salvation is to be found."

31 Cf. Wu 1975 [1953], pp. 15-16: "This struggle of the inner man against the concupiscence of our body costs tears of anguish and contrition, but it leads to the salutary knowledge that we can do nothing of ourselves, that it is by the grace of God that we can conquer ourselves, and that the grace of God comes only through our abiding in Christ. Our relation with Christ is infinitely closer than any human relation can possibly be."

32 Cf. Wu 1975 [1953], p. 79: The turning from egocentric to Christocentric life with St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

serving his/her cravings, desires, and sin by putting off the old man, and put on the new man, starting a new life in victory over sin, serving God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Christ came that we might have life, and have it more abundantly (John 10.10). But there is no other way to that abundant life than mortification. This sounds like a paradox, but the truth is that to be a Christian is to put on the New Man, and in order that the New Man may live, the old man in us must die. The unfortunate thing is that the old man dies hard; and this is the reason why the life of a Christian is a continual warfare against the evil tendencies and habits of his old self (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 56).

Besides the flesh, John Wu in his understanding of Christian spiritual life draws on traditional doctrine on the other two implacable enemies of the soul, i.e., the world as indifference and opposition to God's will or/and empty, passing values ("I tried to find one substitute for God after another, but found no peace"; Wu 1951, p. 110) and "the temptation of Satan," the devil – "Liar and father of lies,"³³ a real, personal enemy, a fallen angel, who works in relentless malice to twist us away from salvation:

The life of a Christian is a continual warfare against his three enemies: the worldly philosophy of life, the temptation of Satan, and the inborn evil inclinations of the old self. So long as we live, we can never be absolutely immune from these influences. We must always watch and pray, that we may not enter into temptation (Matt. 26.41). In this life, then, only relative peace can be attained; and even this can only be maintained on the condition of our ever-watchfulness (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 175).

Here let us make some main points of John Wu's understanding of Christian mysticism:

1) A Christian spiritual life "must begin by doing violence to ourselves; only through self-conquest can we conquer our three enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. It is submitted that the first three Beatitudes are the best weapons with which to fight the three enemies" (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 234).³⁴

2) For John Wu, Christian spiritual life

does not so much consist in the discovery of new truths as in the sounding of new depths of old truths. One's spiritual life is an organism, of which dogmatic theology constitutes the skeleton and mystical life forms the flesh and blood. Without reason and dogma, mysticism is apt to be a monster. Without mysticism and contemplative, affective life, dogmatic theology and discursive reasoning are apt to be like a sapless tree. We are too prone to forget that St. Thomas himself was one of the greatest mystics of all times (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 164).

33 John 8:44: "You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John%208%3A44&version=NIV; retrieved July 10, 2023).

34 Read it in full length in Wu 1975 [1953], pp. 234-235.

- 3) “There is no question that contemplation constitutes the kernel of spiritual life, but it takes more than the kernel to make the whole fruit” (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 158).
- 4) “The essence of contemplation” is
To realize that the expressed is also the inexpressible, that the known is also the unknown, that the immanent is also the transcendent, is to move beyond image and logic [...] (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 201).
- 5) “The true [Christian] mystic moves beyond silence and speech, the negative and the positive, the east and the west, the south and the north, the old and the new, beyond all the universes and creatures visible and invisible; for he can never rest until he rests in the Triune God” (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 203).
- 6) “[...] one of the highest flights in the firmament of Christian mysticism [is ...] that to be just to God, we must be merciful to men. Our fraternal charity is the fulfillment of our filial piety towards God” (Wu 1975 [1953], pp. 134-135).
- 7) For John Wu, in Christian spiritual life
[...] asceticism and mysticism form a continuous whole. In the first period, asceticism predominates, while mysticism lies dormant; in the second period, the two are combined; in the third, mysticism predominates and asceticism flows from it more or less spontaneously (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 141).
- 8) Our true human and Christian destiny
[...] will not be fully realized until we are perfectly transformed in Christ by the Holy Spirit into children of God. “For ye are gods!”³⁵ These are the words of Christ (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 204).³⁶

2. His Understanding of Chinese (Natural) Mysticism

Let us begin with a clear statement from John Wu: “In fact, the West has something to learn from the East, for, on the whole, the East has gone farther in its *natural* contemplation than the West has in its *supernatural* contemplation” (Wu 1951, p. 350).

At the beginning of part two of his *Beyond East and West*, that is, chapter 12: “The Religions of China,” John Wu writes as follows:

Now that I am approaching the end of my spiritual wanderings, I must speak in some detail of the religions of China. They constitute my moral and religious back-

35 Psalm 82:6-7 reads, “I said, ‘You are “gods”; you are all sons of the Most High.’ But you will die like mere mortals; you will fall like every other ruler.” In John 10:34 Jesus answered the Jews, “Is it not written in your Law, ‘I said, you are gods?’” (www.bible.com/bible/compare/PSA.82.6-7; retrieved July 11, 2023).

36 This is actually what the Eastern Catholic Churches and the Eastern Orthodox Church teach about “theosis” (deification as “apotheosis,” which literally means “making divine”). It is a transformative process, the aim of which is likeness to or union with God. The same concept is also found in the Latin rite of the Catholic Church, where it is termed “divinization.” “Theosis” is achieved by way of “catharsis” (as purification of mind and body) and “theoria” (as illumination with the goal of “visio beatifica” of God). According to Eastern Christian teachings, “theosis” is very much the purpose of human life. Cf. Bartos 1999, p. 253.

ground, and hence they form an integral part of the development of my spiritual life. They are an important portion of the natural dowry with which God had endowed me in preparation for my marriage with Christ. I often think of myself as a Magus from China who lays before the Divine Infant in the arms of the Blessed Virgin the gold of Confucianism, the musk³⁷ of Taoism, and the frankincense of Buddhism. At a single touch by His hands, whatever is false in them is purified, and whatever is genuine is transmuted into supernatural values (Wu 1951, p. 149).

John Wu's conversion to Christianity³⁸ in the form of Catholicism meant to him the ultimate acceptance of the absolute truth given to him by God. The offering of Chinese religions was an act of adoration of God in His son Jesus Christ as God's ultimate personal truth who became man – the Word Incarnate. That is why John Wu can say:

[Christianity] is more native to me than the Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism³⁹ in whose milieu I was born. I am grateful to them, because they have served as pedagogues⁴⁰ to lead me to Christ. Christ constitutes the unity of my life. It is thanks to this unity that I can rejoice in being born yellow and educated white (Wu 1951, p. 12).

Thus, “[...] nothing human can be greater than these [three religions, that is, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism], but Christianity is divine” (Wu 1951, p. 12). Yes, Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism were John Wu's pedagogues, teachers, and educators, however, in respect to his Christian faith as pure gift of God and as an “ultimate concern” (Paul Tillich)⁴¹ of his life which demanded from him total surrender. Thus, after his conversion to Catholicism he had only “one Teacher, the Christ” (Matthew 23:10).

In view of his Chinese compatriots, John Wu has found “the most characteristic quality of the Chinese soul”:

Perhaps, the most characteristic quality of the Chinese soul is a certain playfulness flowing spontaneously from an interior harmony. At his best, a Chinese is in tune with the Universe. The rhythms of his life are in perfect accord with the cosmic rhythms; or, rather, the two blend into one. Whether he is a Confucianist,

37 The musk is a substance secreted in a glandular sac under the skin of the abdomen of the male musk deer, having a strong aromatic odor, and used in perfumery. Cf. Matthew, Chapter 2 where three gifts of magi are explicitly identified, that is, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Many different theories of the meaning and symbolism of the gifts have been brought forward. While gold (king's majesty) is fairly obviously explained, frankincense (worship), and particularly myrrh (Jesus' death) are much more obscure. Interestingly, in his text John Wu exchanged “myrrh” (*moyao* 沒藥) with “musk” (*shexiang* 麝香).

38 Cf. Wu 1941, p. 29: “To me as a Chinese, the great thing about Christianity is that it combines the profound mysticism of Lao Tzu with the intense humanism of Confucius,” or p. 30: “Only Christianity can satisfy my mind completely, because its idea of God is at once broad and personal. And it is Thérèse who has confirmed my faith in my Religion, for her mind is as subtle and detached as that of Lao Tzu, while her heart is as affectionate and cordial as that of Confucius.”

39 Cf. Wu 1951, p. 185: “Now that I think of it, I have inherited from Buddhism an intense longing for the ‘Other Shore,’ which is but another name and a faint foreshadowing of the Kingdom of God which is within us.”

40 Cf. Wu 1951, p. 48: “Whenever I think of Confucius and Mencius, Buddha and Lao Tse, I am inclined to call them – as St. Justin Martyr called Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle – ‘Pedagogues to lead men to Christ.’”

41 Cf. Paul Tillich 1957, *Dynamics of Faith*, New York: Harper & Row.

a Buddhist or a Taoist, the feeling of oneness with the Universe forms, as it were, the inarticulate substratum of his soul. This feeling is a direct aesthetical intuition beyond words and images (Wu 1951, p. 355).

[...] what is the most fundamental characteristic of the Chinese spirit? To my mind, it is the union of the abstract with the concrete, of the universal with the particular, of utmost unearthliness with complete earthliness, of transcendental idealism with a matter-of-fact practicalness. This union is not a matter of theoretical synthesis, but a matter of personal experience (Wu 1951, p. 182).

These two convictions of John Wu point out to his understanding of the fountain of natural contemplation of the Chinese, i.e., their “pantheistic inspiration” (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 195):

The soul in peace with God and with itself lives harmoniously with the whole universe and with the spirit of the liturgy, being perfectly attuned to the rhythms of life and to the liturgical cycles of the Church. There is a parallel of this harmony even in the natural sphere, for natural contemplation attunes one's spirit to the Cosmos (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 194).

John Wu quoted two poems, one by the Daoist recluse of ancient China, Lu Yun 陸雲 (262–303),⁴² with the title “Gu feng” 谷風 (The Valley Wind) and the second by the neo-Confucian Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032–1085). He said further: “But there is room in the Christian soul for all that is beautiful, good and true in pantheism” (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 195). One proverb – so John Wu – says:

Love me, love my dog. In this light you come to appreciate St. Francis's Canticle of Brother Sun. It is a marvelous privilege to be a Christian. A Christian can enjoy all the lyrical ecstasies of a pantheist at their very Source, and without the danger of being drowned in the ocean of creatures. The truth is that, as God contains all things in Himself,⁴³ so His lovers carry in their hearts all other creatures” (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 21).

There is still another characteristic of the Chinese soul which is according to John Wu its syncretism. He understands it as a means of leading to the spirit of tolerance:

42 To Lu Yun was attributed the Daoist work *Luzi* 陸子 (Master Lu) which was lost during the Song dynasty. The Qing dynasty scholar Ma Guohan 馬國翰 collected the extant fragments. Cf. www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Daoists/luzi.html (retrieved July 12, 2023).

43 Here John Wu speaks like a panentheistic Christian! Panentheism regards God and the world to be inter-related with the world being in God and God being in the world. Both panentheism and theistic systems affirm divine transcendence and immanence; however, theism prioritizes the difference between God and the world and rejects any influence by the world upon God, while panentheism affirms the world's influence upon God as a part of him. A number of ordained Catholic priests dealing with Christian mysticism, including Richard Rohr, David Steindl-Rast, and Thomas Keating, seem to understand panentheism as the original view of Christianity. Cf. Rohr 2019. See also the criticism of his views by Douglas Groothuis “A Heretic's Christ, a False Salvation: A Review of *The Universal Christ: How a Forgotten Reality Can Change Everything We See, Hope for, and Believe* [by] Richard Rohr” (www.equinox.org/articles/a-heretics-christ-a-false-salvation-a-review-of-the-universal-christ-how-a-forgotten-reality-can-change-everything-we-see-hope-for-and-believe-richard-rohr/; retrieved July 25, 2023): “Richard Rohr is a heretic in the robes of a Franciscan priest.”

The Chinese people are syncretically minded. Men of different religions or denominations have no prejudices against one another at all. In fact, if a Catholic tries to live up to his professions, all people will respect him. President Chiang Kai-shek, a Methodist, co-operated wholeheartedly with me on the translation of the Psalms and the New Testament. In the history of China, many beautiful friendships have existed between men of avowedly different faiths (Wu 1951, p. 354-355).

In view of his own life, John Wu confesses:

The mystical tendencies that I had imbibed from Taoism were reinforced tremendously by the study of the Zen [Chan 禪] masters.

There is something very charming about Zen Buddhism, which has been described as one of the most beautiful flowers of the Chinese mind. Let me begin with an anecdote about the Zen master Hsuan Sha [Xuan Sha 玄沙⁴⁴], which has impressed me as truly Franciscan. Hsuan Sha had ascended to the platform and was ready to preach a sermon, when he heard the twitter of a swallow. Quite abruptly he remarked to his audience, "What a wonderful sermon on Reality!" Thereupon he came down from the platform and retired (Wu 1951, p. 178).

In *The Interior Carmel: The Threefold Way of Love*, John Wu depicted Laozi 老子 as "A Chinese Philosopher of Meekness" (Wu 1975 [1953], pp. 85-89). At the end of this part (p. 89), he turned to Christ as "True God and True Man" with the words of Laozi: "He knows the masculine, but keeps to the feminine. [...] He knows the white, but keeps to the black. [...] He knows the glorious, but keeps to the humiliations. [...]"⁴⁵

Thus, for John Wu, there are many correspondences between the natural and supernatural mysticism and vice versa. So, in the context of two forms of mystical death as experienced by St. Teresa von Avila (Wu 1975 [1953], pp. 201-202), he writes: "This degree of supernatural contemplation corresponds to the degree attained by Hui-neng⁴⁶ in the sphere of natural contemplation. Lao Tse said: 'If Tao could be described in the words, it would not be the eternal Tao.'⁴⁷ The Christian mystics, too, are profoundly impressed with the thought of the transcendence and incomprehensibility of God" (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 202).

This corresponding similarity between the Christian mysticism and Chan mysticism, John Wu formulated a few pages earlier in the following way:

The point I am stressing is that Christian mysticism employs what the Oriental philosophers call the negative method, as well as the positive. In Chinese Zen Bud-

44 Xuansha Shibe 玄沙師備 (835–908) was a Chinese Chan monk in the lineage of Qingyuan Xingsi 青原行思 (660–740) and a predecessor of the Fayuan 法眼 school of Chan Buddhism.

45 "知其雄，守其雌，為天下谿。為天下谿，常德不離，復歸於嬰兒。知其白，守其黑，為天下式。為天下式，常德不忒，復歸於無極。知其榮，守其辱，為天下谷。" (<https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing>; retrieved July 14, 2023).

46 Huineng 惠能 (Dajian Huineng 大鑒惠能, 638–713) was the Sixth Patriarch (Chanzong liuzu 禪宗六祖), regarded as the founder of the "Sudden Enlightenment" in Southern Chan school of Buddhism as an immediate and direct attainment of Buddhist enlightenment.

47 The first sentence in the *Daodejing* is "道可道，非常道。" (<https://ctext.org/dao-de-jing>; retrieved July 18, 2023).

dhism, the positive method is represented by a poem written by Shen Hsiu,⁴⁸ who was the founder of the northern school:

*The body is like a Bodhi-tree,
And the mind to a mirror bright;
Carefully we cleanse them hour by hour
Lest dust should fall on them.⁴⁹*

The negative method is represented by the poem of Hui-neng, the founder of the southern school:

*Originally there was no Bodhi-tree,
Nor was there any mirror;
Since originally there was nothing,
Whereon can the dust fall?⁵⁰*

The two schools have never been reconciled. But both of the methods work harmoniously in Christian mysticism, the positive method being used in the purgative and illuminative stages and the negative in the unitive. As the soul draws nearer and nearer to God, she begins to realize the truth of what St. Thomas Aquinas said: "This is the final knowledge of God: to know that we do not know God" (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 199).

What John Wu called "the positive method" and "the negative method" in Christian mysticism can be associated with the difference of "cataphatic" and "apophatic" theologies. The first one is the use of affirmation ("kataphasis") and the second of negation ("apophasis") in their ways of understanding God. The use of negation and affirmation in relation to God has had a long history, longer than Christianity itself, reaching back into the traditions of the Hebrew scriptures and classical Greek philosophy which Christian theology had early incorporated.

Actually, the tension between "the positive method" and "the negative method" differentiated by John Wu in Chan Buddhism is the opposition of subitism as a sudden awakening of Buddha-nature and gradualism as the original Buddhist approach which consists in following the dharma only step by step, through an arduous ascetical practice. In reality, the gradualism is like the mystical stages of purgation and illumination, and the subitism resembles the unitive stage.

48 Shen Xiu 神秀 (Yuquan Shenxiu 玉泉神秀, 606–706).

49 "身是菩提樹, 心如明鏡臺。時時勤拂拭, 勿使惹塵埃。" (<https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%83%A0%E8%83%BD>; retrieved July 18, 2023).

50 "菩提本無樹, 明鏡亦非臺。本來無一物, 何處惹塵埃。" (<https://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%83%A0%E8%83%BD>; retrieved July 18, 2023).

Conclusion

1) John Wu's understanding of mysticism beyond East and West demonstrated his Chinese way of thinking, though he expressed himself in English. The first characteristic is "ars contextualis" which to me consists in accuracy of choosing a multitude of relevant quotations to support and corroborate his thought on mysticism. The second one is his predilection for correlative thinking which is characterized by analogies, parallels, and correspondences.

The reading of John Wu's English works cited in this article let me discover his Chinese way of thinking, especially its two characteristics: Chinese thinking as "ars contextualis" and "the dominance of correlative thinking."⁵¹ In the following citation from *The Interior Carmel: The Threefold Way of Love*, we will discover this way of thinking where analogies, parallels, and correspondences are predominant:

You will realize that the [Holy] Mass is the perfect embodiment of the threefold way of love. The first part [...] corresponds to the budding of love. [...] The middle part [...] corresponds to the flowering of love, whose keynote is the spirit of sacrifice. [...] The third part [...] corresponds to the ripening of love, whose keynote is peace and joy. [...] Thus, the whole Liturgy of the Church forms a seamless tunic⁵² with her spiritual doctrine. "This is the will of God, your sanctification" (Wu 1975 [1953], pp. 98-99).

And again, with the help of Dr. Paul Sih (1910–1978):⁵³

51 Cf. "Chinese Philosophy" by David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames, in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy Online*: www.rep.routledge.com/articles/overview/chinese-philosophy/v-1/sections/chinese-thinking-as-ars-contextualis ("Perhaps the best designation for the most general 'science' of order in the Chinese tradition would be *ars contextualis*. 'The art of contextualizing' contrasts with both *scientia universalis* and *ontologia generalis*. Chinese thinkers sought the understanding of order through the artful disposition of things, a participatory process which does not presume that there are essential features, or antecedent-determining principles, serving as transcendent sources of order. The art of contextualizing seeks to understand and appreciate the manner in which particular things present-to-hand are, or may be, most harmoniously correlated") and www.rep.routledge.com/articles/overview/chinese-philosophy/v-1/sections/the-dominance-of-correlative-thinking ("Rational or logical thinking, grounded in analytic, dialectical and analogical argumentation, stresses the explanatory power of physical causation. In contrast, Chinese thinking depends upon a species of analogy which may be called 'correlative thinking'. Correlative thinking, as it is found both in classical Chinese 'cosmologies' [the Yijing (Book of Changes), Daoism, the Yin–Yang school] and, less importantly, among the classical Greeks involves the association of image or concept-clusters related by meaningful disposition rather than physical causation. Correlative thinking is a species of spontaneous thinking grounded in informal and ad hoc analogical procedures presupposing both association and differentiation. The regulative element in this modality of thinking is shared patterns of culture and tradition rather than common assumptions about causal necessity") (retrieved July 18, 2023).

52 "Seamless tunic" – these two words have a spiritual echo in John Wu's life: "[...] when I was engaged in the translation of the Psalms and the New Testament I wept over the Bible only once. One night, as I was translating Chapter 19 of St. John's Gospel, I came across this: *Now the tunic was without seam, woven in one piece from the top. They therefore said to one another, Let us not tear it, but let us cast lots for it, to see whose it shall be.* Suddenly I burst out weeping. The whole scene flashed upon my mind like a sudden illumination. This seamless tunic had been woven by the motherly hand of the Blessed Virgin, and had been worn by her grateful Son Who was now hanging on the Cross! [...] But what made me weep was the lightning-like flash of intuition that whatever Our Lady had woven could not be divided, being without seam from the top! Wherever Our Lady is, there is seamless unity" (Wu 1951, pp. 310-311).

53 Xue Guanqian 薛光前: A native of Qingpu 青浦, Jiangsu Province, a political figure and scholar in the Republic of China. In April 1948, he converted to Catholicism in Rome. After 1949, he settled in the United States.

[...] my Friend Dr. Paul Sih has discovered a very interesting analogy. This is what he has written to me:

Recently I painted some woodwork at home and the thought came to my mind that painting quite naturally forms an analogy to the development of the spiritual life. A worthwhile and satisfactory painting job usually calls for three coats of paint, first sealing, then priming and finally finishing. [...]

I wonder whether these three coats of paint may not be likened respectively to the purgative way, the illuminative way and the unitive way of climbing up the mountain in our spiritual journey (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 244).

The answer of John Wu was: “This analogy appeals to me as extremely appropriate” (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 244).

2) For John Wu Christian supernatural mysticism was a “natural” outcome of following Jesus as its way is to be found in the Four Gospels. It is an expected result of living the Gospel, for him especially the Eight Beatitudes, every day in cooperation with God’s grace as the development of the threefold way of love, i.e., the budding of love, the flowering of love, and the ripening of love. Or simply said: A Christian mystic is a person who has “experienced” the redeeming and sanctifying power of God’s grace in Jesus Christ in his or her life, i.e., who has “experimental knowledge of Him” (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 172).

Once Karl Rahner (1904–1984) said the following famous words:

The pious of tomorrow will be a “mystic,” one who has “experienced” something, or he will no longer be, because the piety of tomorrow will no longer be carried along by the unanimous, self-evident public conviction [...] of all in advance regarding a personal experience and decision [...].⁵⁴

John Wu said something similar in his explication of Jesus’ words in John 16:16:

Christ himself has clearly indicated the signification of seeing Him during our life on earth. During the Last Supper, Christ spoke to His disciples some words which mystified them. He said: “A little while and you shall behold me no longer; and again a little while and you shall see me, because I go to the Father.” [...]

In other words, to see Him does not mean to have a vision, either physical or mental, of Him; it means rather to have an experimental knowledge of Him (Wu 1975 [1953], p. 171-172).

3) John Wu was primarily concerned with the inner, spiritual nature of the pilgrimage of the humanity and each of its members. Thus, the center of humanity for him was spirituality, the inner life of man, i.e., the mystical dimension of human existence, which seeks, discovers, and experiences the Ultimate Truth. After his conversion to Christianity, espe-

⁵⁴ Rahner 1966, pp. 22f.: “Der Fromme von morgen wird ein ‚Mystiker‘ sein, einer, der etwas ‚erfahren‘ hat, oder er wird nicht mehr sein, weil die Frömmigkeit von morgen nicht mehr durch die im Voraus zu einer personalen Erfahrung und Entscheidung einstimmige, selbstverständliche öffentliche Überzeugung [...] aller mitgetragen wird [...]” The English translation comes from the author (Z. Wesolowski).

cially to Catholicism, Christian faith was for John Wu a pure gift and an undeserved grace given him by God Himself:

Grace is all. Nobody can come to Christ without first being drawn to Him by the Father (John 6.44), nor can anyone come to the Father except through Christ, nor can anyone be sanctified except through the Sacraments of the Church, which are the regular channels of grace. It is no more than the truth to say that ever since I became a Catholic, my life has been a continual feast, a feast that satisfies without satiating. Adversities and tribulations there are aplenty, but even these are sweet, or rather they serve to bring out the marvelous sweetness of God (Wu 1951, p. 9).

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Book Review of

Wu Kin Pan, *Thy Kingdom Come: Rev. Dr. Ernst Faber's (Hua Zhi'an, 1839–1899) Intercultural-Missionary Vision of Chinese Spirituality*, Edition Cathay, vol. 79, Bochum: Projektverlag 2022, 349 pp., preface, bibliography, appendix. ISSN 0946-2325 · ISBN 978-3-89733-567-7 (PB).

Dirk Kuhlmann

The book under review is the published version of Wu Kin Pan's dissertation at Bonn University, a study on the Protestant China missionary Ernst Faber (Hua Zhi'an 花之安). Faber initially came to China in 1864 as a representative of the Rheinische Missionsgesellschaft (RMG, Rhenish Missionary Society), but left the RMG in 1880 as the Society wanted to enforce adherence to a restrictive form of Lutheran Protestantism among its missionaries, a move which ran counter to Faber's revivalist theological position (pp. 33-34). After staying in Hong Kong as a freelance missionary for a few years, Faber joined the Allgemeiner evangelisch-protestantischer Missionsverein (AEPM, General Evangelical Protestant Missionary Association, AEPM) in 1885. He worked as an AEPM missionary in China until his death in 1899. Faber's missionary approach comprised genuinely engaging with Chinese elite culture, as well as promoting social reform and implementing social justice as a testimony of the Kingdom of God. In this, Faber perfectly matched with the theologically liberal objectives of the AEPM which focused on converting the influential educated classes, as well as offering education and medical aid through missionary institutions.

Following the introduction to this study (ch. 1) is a short biography of Ernst Faber (ch. 2), which also analyses his role as a missionary Sinologist. In addition to his vocation as a missionary, Faber was a scholar with a wide range of interests – apart from Chinese culture, Faber also studied the flora of China in great detail and published botanical treatises. As Wu Kin Pan attests, Faber was also acknowledged and appreciated as a Sinologist by his contemporaries, including Yoshiro Saeki (1871–1965), the pioneer researcher of Nestorianism in China, and even the dyed-in-the-wool missionary critic and cultural-conservative scholar Ku Hung-ming (1856–1928), who explicitly praised Faber for his deep understanding of Chinese intellectual history (pp. 49-52).

Chapters 3 to 6 make up the core of this study, i.e., Faber's aim to contribute to constructing a "Chinese spirituality" which combined traditional philosophical approaches

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with the faith in the Christian God. Wu characterizes this way of contextualizing Christianity as being guided by science and rational thinking (“*Religio cum scientia*,” p. 15). To this end, Faber reinterpreted central concepts of Chinese moral philosophy based on various commentaries on Confucius, Mencius, Xunzi, but also Mozi. Faber’s reflections were published, e.g., as a series of articles in the *Wanguo Gongbao* 萬國公報 (*A Review of Times*, also: *Globe Magazine*, pp. 346-348). They were also integrated in his posthumously published work *Jingxue buyan jingyi bian* 經學不厭精遺編 (An Evaluation of the [Chinese] Classics) (p. 333). As Wu demonstrates, Faber had extensively perused the authoritative, commentary literature of his time, including the *Mengzi zhengyi* 孟子正義 (The Correct Meaning of the *Mencius*) of Jiao Xun 焦循 (1763–1820). In particular, Wu introduces Faber’s lines of reasoning on the following concepts: *xing* 性 ([human] essence, nature) and *xin* 心 (heart) (ch. 3); *tian* 天 (heaven) and the *sanlun* 三倫 (the three relationships between heaven, earth, and man) (ch. 4); *ren* 仁 (humanity) and *li* 禮 (acting in a ritually appropriate way) (ch. 5); and *li* and *yi* 義 (justice/righteousness) as the foundations of a society truly devoted to social justice (ch. 6).

By way of illustration, some of Faber’s positions shall be presented here: According to Faber, *xing* was God’s individual gift to each person, in order to make him/her capable of salvation. He thus strongly opposed Zhu Xi’s interpretation of *xing* as a non- or supra-personal concept like the ordering principle *li* 理. Similarly, based on the theological concept of original sin, Faber rejected Mencius’ definition of *xing* as being intrinsically good. In this, Faber partially adopts Xunzi’s argument, who viewed *xing* as fundamentally “evil,” i.e., selfish, without fully agreeing with it, though (pp. 98-99, 102-104). Faber interpreted *xin* among others as the seat of feelings or sensations from which concrete human action springs (p. 109). As such, *xin* was also not intrinsically good for Faber, but rather, following the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20), formed a field in which the capacity for redemption (*xing*) could unfold (pp. 115-120).

Faber also actively participated in the 19th century inner-Protestant debate known as the “term question” and shared his views about the most appropriate translations for the Christian concept of God. He made his case for the use of *shangdi* 上帝 (Supreme Lord), a term also found in the Classics which, according to Faber, came closest to expressing a monotheistic understanding of God. He rejected alternatives such as *tian* 天 (heaven) or *shen* 神 (God/Spirit[s]) because they were either too impersonal (*tian*) or too generic (*shen*). In the spirit of an ecumenical Christian missionary effort in China, Faber was even willing to adopt the established Catholic term *tianzhu* 天主 (Lord of Heaven) in Bible translations. However, his proposal did not prevail in the Protestant translation committee to produce a Chinese “Union Version” of the Bible (pp. 127-129, 133-135). In discussing the term *sanlun* Faber addressed the broken relationships of an individual with heaven/God (through the Fall), with one’s country (through an unsustainable use of land resources), and with one’s fellow human beings (through discord and conflict, as well as neglect of those beyond the networks of the Confucian “five relationships” [*wulun* 五倫]). For Faber, these various stages of brokenness resulted from the still unredeemed nature of man; healing these relationships, therefore, entailed returning to the traditional monotheistic faith of China through Christianity (pp. 160-162, 166-168, 169-171).

Faber understood recognizing the virtues of *ren* and *li* primarily as a personal moral maturation process that would gradually lead to a transformation of society (p. 176). According to Faber, an essential part of this much needed social change lay in the support of marginalized groups within Chinese society, including the poor as well as women (pp. 185-189).

Wu's study excels in illustrating Faber's understanding of Chinese philosophy through numerous quotations from this missionary's works. Thus, readers are made aware that Faber moved confidently within a Confucian interpretive framework and was able to re-interpret it in a Christian sense using Confucian terminology. Faber's reference to the Chinese Classics can be seen as part of a strategy of contextualization by building theological bridges via a Christianizing interpretation of Chinese works. According to Wu, like the Jesuit missionaries of the 16th to 18th centuries before him, Faber was convinced that China had a genuine monotheistic tradition. Therefore, he considered his interpretation to be a reconstruction of this original faith, or as referring back to the fundamental values of Confucian philosophy respectively. Faber regarded the pre-Qin tradition (5th to 3rd century B.C.) as orthodox Confucianism and consequently rejected the philosophical approaches of the neo-Confucian turn by Zhu Xi (1130–1200) as being too strongly influenced by Buddhism (p. 102). In this, Faber's approach is also very similar to that of the Jesuits. His reasoning regarding Confucian concepts is noticeably guided by the premise that true moral education is only possible with reference to God. A striking difference with the Jesuits concerns the attitude toward ancestor worship, which Faber, like most Protestant missionaries of his time, rejected as idolatry (pp. 195-196).

In reading Wu's book, this historical parallelism becomes increasingly evident: like the works of the Jesuits, Faber's writings were characterized by an interplay between personal faith, missionary mandate, and cultural interpretation or mediation. As Wu pointed out in his earlier article, "A Discussion of Ernst Faber's Criticism of the Jesuit Missionaries in China," in: *minima sinica* 29 (2017) 1, pp. 27-76, Faber was well aware of this parallelism and sought to distinguish his approach from that of the Jesuits. Occasional references to the article can be found in the footnotes of the present book. An addition of a condensed version of this article to the original dissertation text would have been a great benefit for the readers: It could have given further depth to Wu's argument by reflecting on the specific challenges of Missionary Sinology and would have located Faber's approach even more clearly in the larger context of the Christian China mission. Likewise, a concise discussion and definition of Faber's "*Religio cum scientia*" approach in the "Introduction" would have been helpful to introduce general patterns in Faber's line of reasoning. As it is, there are only cursory references to this concept in the main text, so that its actual meaning and function are only revealed very indirectly during reading.

Wu Kin Pan's work is both inspired and inspiring, a fascinating volume that offers profound insights into the activities and thoughts of Ernst Faber. It is the most comprehensive monographic study of Ernst Faber in a Western language up to now, and Wu's bibliography is the first to list all of Faber's writings in both Western languages as well as Chinese. With this alone, it has already established itself as a reference work for future research. Wu's arguments are well supported with numerous references to primary and second-

ary sources. The above comments are not meant to diminish the very positive reading impression of this publication, but should rather be taken as indicators for the ongoing questions that Wu's work sparks. The book under review is therefore highly recommended for Sinologists focusing on the history of Christianity in China, as well as for theologians and religious studies scholars with similar research interests.

Book Review of

Yao Peng 姚鵬, *Bai nian liuze. Cong Tushanwan dao Zhuxiang hui* 百年流澤: 从土山湾到诸巷会 (Flowing a Hundred Years. From Tushanwan to Zhuxiang-hui), Shanghai: Zhongxi shuju 中西书局 2020, 2 vols., 2, 5, 1349 pp., preface, illustrations, photographs, maps, appendices, indices, bibliography. ISBN 978-7-5475-1740-6 (HB).

Leopold Leeb

Translated by Katharina Feith

The monumental work (2 volumes; 1349 pages, in A-4 format, price 480 RMB) of Mr. Yao Peng is a surprise in many ways. How could such an unknown historian like Yao Peng, in these times when religious literature is very difficult to publish or cannot be published at all, write such a work on Catholicism during the “age of Imperialism” (1840–1949)?

Who is Yao Peng? He studied at the Central Party School from 1997 to 1981 and has been working in the field of the history of Western philosophy since 1982; he has published on Descartes, Voltaire and on thinkers of the Italian Renaissance.

His brief introduction of the book’s contents is rooted in the political (and ideologically colored) attitude with which missions are judged in China: “This is a book that covers one hundred years of the intellectual history of the Catholic Church in China. The main idea is based on the following facts: In 1842, the Catholic Church came to China again, but after the outbreak of the war in the Pacific in 1942, the Catholic Church in China experienced a final decline in the wake of the defeat of the Allied powers (*yi jue bu qi* 一蹶不起). However, I want to make it clear to the reader what the Catholic Church has actually done in these hundred years – this book is an epic (*yi bu shishi* 一部史诗). No one can copy the achievements of this book: Indeed, it presents in great detail the nearly 400-year history of Catholic publications in China. Through the books, historical backgrounds are illuminated, and through the history, biographies become clearer, thus providing a new approach to many” (www.christiantimes.cn, October 11, 2021).

In his preface, the author also vaguely mentions the sources of his publication, namely certain archives of the individual missionary societies: “The Jesuit books are relatively complete in Shanghai, and they enjoyed wide circulation. It was easy to consult them, so they are given more attention in this work. The publications of the Lazarists and the

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Divine Word Missionaries are less completely preserved, and the books of the Scheutveld missionaries were mainly Sinological works in French, which can be consulted abroad. I have only a few books of the MEP missionaries, the Dominicans and Franciscans, therefore they are not well represented here” (p. 1).

The main text of the work (pp. 1-1045) presents hundreds of publications, with many illustrations of the title pages or interesting photos in high-quality color printing and is also quite attractive in terms of layout. However, it is practically impossible to deduce the content from the chapter headings (four characters each with ambiguous connotations). Who would suspect that the chapter “Tiantang yongfu” 天堂永福 (Eternal Joy in Heaven, pp. 787-814) contains 28 books from the printing press in Yanzhou, Shandong, each presented with a cover picture or illustrations from the contents. Yao Peng also allows himself remarks on the writing style of the missionaries but does not seem to be interested in their biographical data, as shown, for example, by the very rudimentary biography of Joseph Hesser on page 791.

The following chapter is named “The Home of Confucius” (Kong zi guli 孔子故里) and shows pictures of travel guides or other studies published by the Divine Word Missionaries in Shandong a hundred years ago (pp. 815-831). Here you also find the book by Fr. Matthias Hermanns (1899-1972) *Vom Urmenschen zur Hochkultur* (From Primitive Man to High Culture, printed in Shandong in 1935) (pp. 830-831).

The following chapter “Cultural Temple” (Wenhua diantang 文化殿堂, pp. 833-844) deals with the Fu Jen University in Beijing, but lists only two books there (a reprint by Wu Yushan and *Das Jahr im Chinesischen Volkslied* (The Year in Chinese Folk Song [1946] by Fr. Matthias Eder SVD), plus 13 paintings of the *Ars Sacra Pekinensis*, i.e., Christian paintings in Chinese style. A longer chapter (pp. 845-877) then presents Sinological works from *Monumenta Serica* in Beijing.

The work gains special value due to the many appendices; first a list of all the books which were printed in Tushanwan (pp. 1048-1088 Chinese, pp. 1089-1105 Western works), then works from the Jesuit press in Xianxian (pp. 1106-1118 Chinese, pp. 1119-1127 Western works); the books of the Lazarists in Beijing (pp. 1128-1137 Chinese, pp. 1138-1145 Western works); the works from the SVD press in Yanzhou (pp. 1146-1155 Chinese, corresponding to about 300 entries; pp. 1156-1158 Western works); books from the MEP Nazareth printing house in Hong Kong (pp. 1159-1166 Chinese, pp. 1167-1174 Western works, pp. 1175-1179 in minority languages); books of the Catholic Truth Society Hong Kong (pp. 1180-1188 Chinese works); the Salesian Press in Macau (pp. 1189-1199); books of the Franciscans in China (pp. 1200-1201 Western, pp. 1201-1207 Chinese works); CICM books (pp. 1208-1211 Western, pp. 1211-1213 Chinese works); books printed by official Catholic institutions (pp. 1214-1220); and books from the Fu Jen press in Beijing (pp. 1221-1225). This is followed by a list of Catholic periodicals (pp. 1226-1230 Chinese, pp. 1231-1236 Western).

After the presentation of publications, the 20th appendix contains a list of Catholic missionary orders in China (pp. 1237-1250, each with the year of arrival in China and the geographical place of activity).

Then follows a list of Catholic schools in China (pp. 1251-1260). The index of foreign persons (almost all missionaries, pp. 1261-1271) is arranged, according to Chinese bad habits, by the pronunciation of the Chinese names and not by the ABC of the original language. This is followed by a Chinese general index (pp. 1272-1289) and an index of the publications (of Chinese works only, pp. 1290-1343). A tremendous treasure of information! Actually, Yao Peng's work is a must for every historian dealing with China.

In the case of the appendices, it must be said that they generally reproduce foreign personal names and names of book titles fairly error-free, including, for example, French or Latin expressions. Small errors, however, are difficult to avoid with this mass of information. For example, the German contemplative Sisters' congregation *Servarum Spiritus Sancti de Adoratione Perpetua* (SSpSAP) was translated as Zhenglinghui 拯灵会 and not Shengshen yongdaohui 圣神永祷会 (p. 1239). And the much larger community of the Steyl Sisters SSpS (*Congregatio Missionalis Servarum Spiritus Sancti*) is not rendered Shengshenhui 圣神会, but Shengyanhui Shengshen binü chuanjiaohui 圣言会圣神婢女传教会 (p. 1246). Unfortunately, this shows that there are only unreliable sources on the sisters' congregations in China, as practically nothing has been published on this topic.

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