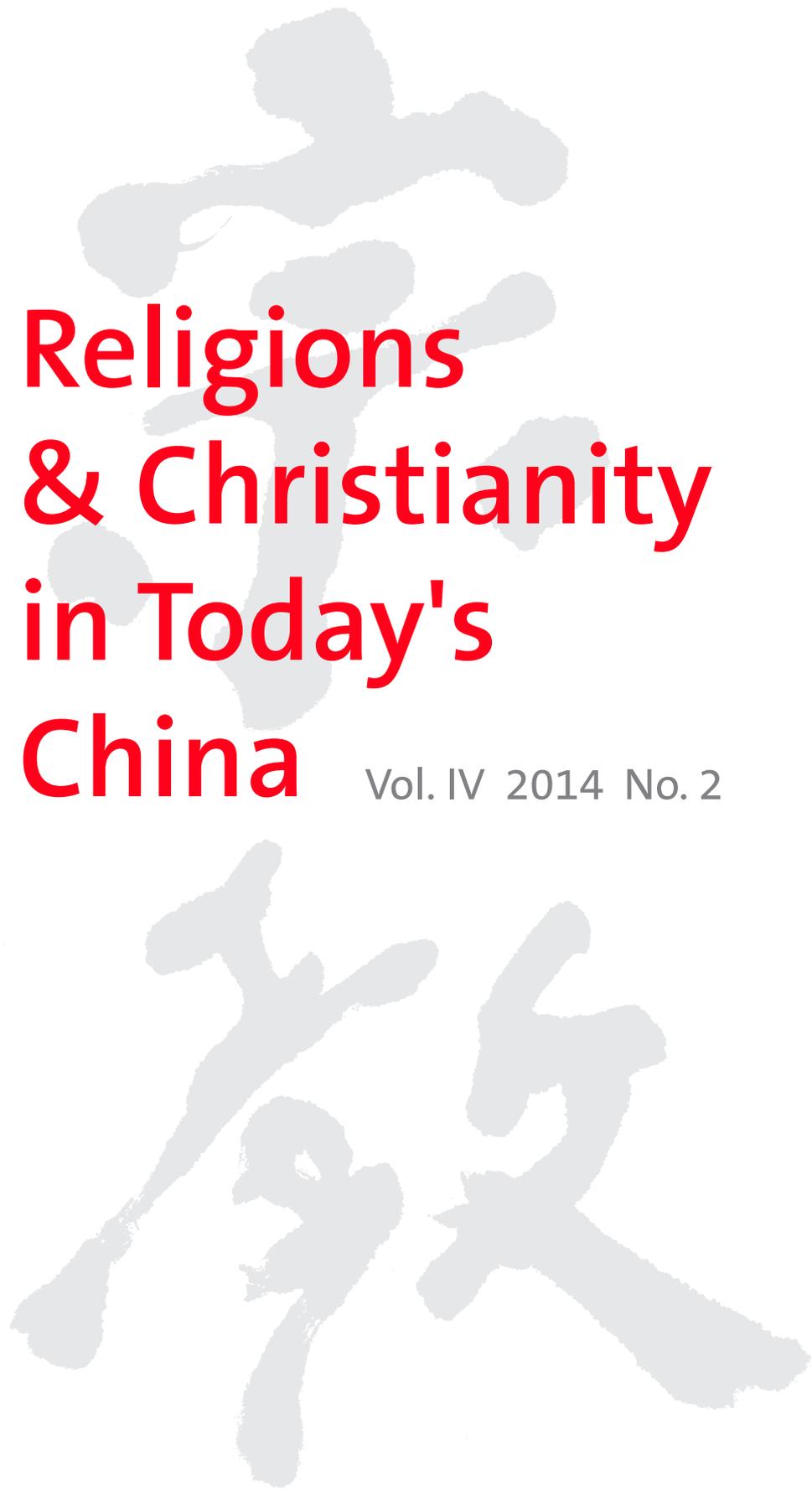


Religions  
& Christianity  
in Today's  
China

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中國宗教評論



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## Editorial

Today we can present to our readers the second 2014 issue of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* (中國宗教評論). As in previous issues, it includes the regular series of News Updates which give an insight into recent events and general trends with regard to religions and especially Christianity in today's China.

The “2013 Statistical Update on Religions and Churches in the People's Republic of China” by Katharina Wenzel-Teuber with many details and trends describes the various numerically measurable developments in the religions of China during the last year.

And finally Bianca Horlemann in her article “Xixiang, a Historic Catholic Mission Station in Northwest China” gives a very interesting historical overview about this important centre for the training of Chinese priests and for spreading Christianity in China's far northwest (today's Lanzhou Diocese / Gansu Province), formerly run by the Belgian Congregation of Scheut CICM as well as the Societas Verbi Divini SVD.

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

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

*Sankt Augustin, May 2014*

*The Editors*

## News Update on Religion and Church in China December 1, 2013 – March 19, 2014

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

*The “News Update on Religion and Church in China” appears regularly in each issue of Religions & Christianity in Today’s China (RCTC). Since the editorial staff learns of some items only later, it can happen that there are chronological overlaps between “News Updates” of two consecutive issues of RCTC. In these cases stories referred to in earlier “News Updates” will not be repeated. All “News Updates” can be found online at the website of the China-Zentrum ([www.china-zentrum.de](http://www.china-zentrum.de)). – The last “News Update” (RCTC 2014, No. 1, pp. 3-15) covered the period September 1 – November 24, 2013.*

December 1, 2013 and February 4, 2014:

### Media report on construction boom of giant outdoor Buddhas as tourist attractions



The Buddha statue of Lushan is placed on top of a Buddhist monastery and including the pedestals it has a total height of 208 meters.  
Foto: Zgpdszz 2011, Wikimedia Commons.

According to a story in the *South China Morning Post* (SCMP), tourism bureaus and real estate developers have been engaged in a race to build ever-higher Buddha statues following the success of the Lingshan Grand Buddha, completed in 1996. The colossal Buddha (88 meter high) attracted 3.8 million visitors in 2013 and brought in more than 1.2 billion yuan in revenue from tourists. Competition in the Buddha construction business is tough. According to the *Guangzhou Xin Zhoukan* (New Weekly), the Nanjing firm Aerosun (Hangtian chenguang 航天晨光) is the leader in the field. The firm plans 10 such projects throughout all of China for 2014, and it has already built giant Buddhas in many Asian countries and in the U.S.A. The firm’s largest Buddha to date is the 108 meter high Guanyin Buddha of Sanya (Hainan). A representative of the firm said that while in countries such as Japan, Thailand or Bhutan the faithful contribute to the building of Buddha statues out of a genuine sense of religious piety, in China the building of such statues is motivated much more by touristic aspects and competition for the tourist dollar. According to the SCMP, there are often tensions between the Bud-

dha attraction developers and monks or residents who differ over ownership of a site. In one such incident, the paper says, Buddhist monks attempted to take charge of the Great Buddha of Lushan (Henan Province) in order to admit people free of charge. The statue, which measures 208 meter high (including its pedestals) was completed by a developer in 2008 at a cost of 1.2 billion yuan. The newspaper also reported on local complaints that the 71-meter-high Giant Buddha of Leshan, built in the 8th century, suffered greatly from competition from a theme park with 3,000 replicas of famous Buddha statues from around the world (*SCMP* Feb. 4, 2014; *Xin zhoukan* 新周刊 Dec. 1, 2013, No. 408).

**December 4, 2013 – March 16, 2014:**

## **Six Tibetans immolate themselves in acts of protest**

Tibet.net – the website of the Tibetan government in exile, has reported that all six men died from their burns. Three were monks, one a former monk and two others were fathers of families. The self-immolations took place in the Tibetan districts of Sichuan (3), Qinghai (2) and Gansu (1). With these deaths, the total number of Tibetans who have burned themselves to death within the People's Republic of China since 2011 has now risen to 127 or 128 (the variation is due to conflicting reports by [www.tibet.net](http://www.tibet.net) and [www.savetibet.org](http://www.savetibet.org)).

**December 4, 2013:**

## **Center for Religion and Chinese Society (CRCS) announces “Spatial Study of Chinese Religions and Society (2014–2016)”**

The project is an extension of the spatial study of Chinese Christianity to the study of Buddhism, Islam and Daoism in mainland China. Among other things, the project will complete, validate and enter spatial data on the sites of these religions into a public online system, it said in a notice. In general, the project aims to promote empirical research on Chinese religions and to develop global cooperation in this area. The study is being carried on jointly by the CRCS at Purdue University (West Lafayette, Indiana) and the China Data Center at the University of Michigan. Accurate knowledge of the religious landscape in China is very limited since in the past it has been entirely dependent on the data made available by the government, said Yang Fenggang from CRCS in an interview granted to the *Imperial Valley News* (Jan. 14, 2014; [www.chinadatacenter.org/Announcement/AnnouncementContent.aspx?id=475](http://www.chinadatacenter.org/Announcement/AnnouncementContent.aspx?id=475)).

**December 11, 2013:**

## **Death of Bishop Paul Liu Jinghe of Tangshan – Dispute with the government over his place of burial**

Bishop Paul Liu Jinghe, retired Bishop of Tangshan, Hebei Province, died on December 11 at the age of nearly 93. He was one of only three priests who had survived the devastating Tangshan earthquake of July 1976, in which 240,000 people lost their lives.

Bishop Liu was born on December 26, 1920. He completed his theological studies in Beijing. In 1945 he was ordained a priest, taking up pastoral service in his home diocese. Between 1940 and 1960 he was imprisoned three times, and was later detained in a re-education camp from 1970–1979. On December 21, 1981, he was ordained a bishop without a Papal mandate, although he was later recognized by Pope

Benedict XVI on May 8, 2008. In 2010 he retired for reasons of health, and that same year he refused to take part in an illicit episcopal ordination.

Following his death, a bitter dispute broke out between the government authorities and the local Church concerning his place of burial. Bishop Liu had stipulated that he wished to be buried at the Lulong Cemetery – in which the first Bishop of the diocese, the Dutch Lazarist missionary Msgr. Ernst Geurts, had been buried in 1940. However, the Lulong Cemetery had been destroyed in the 1950s and has since been used as farmland. In 1993, with the permission of the government, Bishop Liu reburied the bones of Bishop Geurts and the other clergy in one corner of the field. Several times he demanded that the government return the site.

On December 17, the Diocese of Tangshan announced that Bishop Liu would only be buried once the government had finally returned the old cemetery property to the Church. A day later, the priests of the diocese were forced to attend a session in the offices of the local Religious Affairs Bureau. The website of the diocese was temporarily blocked and the mobile phones of all the priests and sisters were placed under close surveillance. After days of struggle, the government finally bought a piece of land in the village of Beigang in Qianxi County as a replacement for the former Lulong Cemetery. The clergy expressed their willingness to accept that solution, and Bishop Liu was buried in the new cemetery on Christmas Eve. – The Diocese of Tangshan is currently led by Bishop Fang Jianping (*AsiaNews* Dec. 19, 2013; *Fides* Dec. 19, 2013; *UCAN* Dec. 18, 26, 2013; [www.chinacath.org/news/china/2013-12-19/25202.html](http://www.chinacath.org/news/china/2013-12-19/25202.html)).

#### December 15, 2013 to February 14, 2014:

### According to official Chinese figures, 47 people have died in four clashes in Xinjiang

The violent clashes occurred in the counties Shufu (December 15: 16 deaths) and Shache / Yarkant (December 30: 8 dead), both in the administrative district of Kashgar, and in the counties Xinhe / Toksu (January 24: 12 dead) and Wushi / Uqturpan (February 14: 11 dead), both in the government district of Aksu. According to the reports, of the 47 dead, 45 were identified as attackers and two were from among the police. The existing reports of the official government news agency *Xinhua* for the latter three incidents, spoke of “religious extremism” and “terrorism” (*Los Angeles Times* Dec. 16, 2013; *South China Morning Post* Dec. 30, 2013; *Xinhua* Dec. 30, 2013; Jan. 26, Feb. 16, 2014).

#### December 15, 2013:

### Pope Francis among the ten “Key Figures of the year 2013”

During the 15th China International Press Forum in Hainan, an anonymous poll of 50 media representatives from all over China placed Pope Francis number three in a list of the “Top Ten” most important people of 2013. The list also included President Rohani of Iran, President Putin, the former Egyptian President Mursi and Nelson Mandela. This marks the first time that a religious personality was included in the list (*Fides* Jan. 7, 2014; [www.news.gmw.cn/2013-12/26/content\\_9928264.htm](http://www.news.gmw.cn/2013-12/26/content_9928264.htm) – Website of the official daily newspaper *Guangming ribao*, one of the co-organizers).

December 17, 2013; February 13, 2014:

## Reports on new forms of extra-judicial detention

According to reports by Amnesty International, authorities in China are making increasing use of unofficial so-called “black jails,” i.e., enforced drug rehabilitation centers and “brainwashing centers,” to replace the system of “Re-education Through Labor” camps. Since these detention centers have no legal basis whatsoever and the authorities deny their existence, the risk of human rights violations is even greater than in the labor camps, thus Amnesty International.

On February 13, the *Xin jing bao* (*Beijing News*) revealed the existence of so-called “reprimand centers for abnormal petitioners” (fei zhengchang shangfang xunjie zhongxin 非正常上访训诫中心) in Henan Province, in which the methods of “24 hour non-stop reprimand, warning and education” are used. The paper indicated that, among other sources, it was relying on reports gleaned from the online social networks. The following day, the official news agency *Xinhua* reported that the province government of Henan had sent teams to examine the allegations. Should such centers be discovered, they will be closed and any illegal acts will be punished according to the law, it said (Amnesty International Dec. 17, 2013; *South China Morning Post* Feb. 13, 2014; *Xinhua* Feb. 14, 2014; [www.bjnews.com.cn](http://www.bjnews.com.cn) Feb. 13, 2014).

December 25, 2013:

## Packed Christmas services throughout China

Once again, this year’s Christmas services have drawn thousands of people into Christian churches throughout the country. In Beijing’s Cathedral, the “South Church,” the Christmas Masses were also projected on large screens outside the church. Christmas also provided the opportunity to help those in need. Thus, many parishes organized visits to poor families, to the elderly and to the sick, in nursing homes and orphanages. At their 9th annual Christmas Party for Charity in Shijiazhuang on December 14, Jinde Charities raised 500,000 yuan (about 59,000 euros). The money goes to children of poor families, children with disabilities and children with AIDS, in order to help integrate them back into the classroom.

According to a report by the *Global Times*, in the midst of the Christmas commercialization, which is ubiquitous in all major Chinese cities, there are more and more Christian house churches whose members are out on the streets inviting passers-by to come in and join them for worship. Thus, in the major cities many church services, to which non-Christians are invited, are being held in houses and office buildings as well as commercial spaces. However, once again such open proselytizing on the streets is inevitably drawing the attention of the police, as the report indicates (*Fides* Dec. 20, 2013; *Global Times* Dec. 19, 2013; *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Jan. 4, 2014; [English.news.cn](http://English.news.cn) Dec. 26, 2013).

December 28, 2013:

## Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) decides to abolish labor camps

The Committee voted to repeal the 1957 legal document and its amendments of 1979, on which the whole system of labor camps was based. Their decision took effect the same day on which the measure was passed. According to the decision, all sentences handed down before the abolition of “re-education through labor” remain valid, although those currently serving “re-education through labor”

sentences will be released and will not need to make up the rest of their sentences ([www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2013-12/30/content\\_1821974.htm](http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc/xinwen/2013-12/30/content_1821974.htm)).

The actual political decision to abolish the system of “re-education through labor” camps (*laodong jiao-yang* 劳动教养) had already been taken by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China at its last Party Congress in November 2013. The system allowed sentences of up to four years to be imposed at police discretion – without trial. Among those especially affected by such sentences were those persecuted on religious grounds (see: *RCTC* 2013, No. 2, p. 11; 2014, No. 1, p. 14).

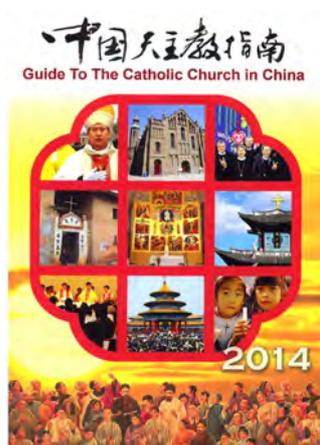
December 28, 2013:

## Standing Committee of the NPC passes resolution to amend Family Policy

According to this decision, a couple in the future may have two children if one of the parents is an only child. According to the family planning policy introduced in 1979, couples in the cities were allowed only one child, and those in rural areas a further child if their firstborn had been a girl. Exceptions were also allowed, among others, if both husband and wife were themselves only children. According to government controlled media, the one child policy has prevented some 400 million births since the law was adopted in 1979. The *South China Morning Post* reported that despite the welcome relaxation, which is expected to affect around ten million couples, there is also criticism of the fact that the state continues to hold on to the principle of deciding itself how many children families may have. The Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC) has asked provincial governments to bring their regulations on family planning into line with this newest decision, while continuing to pay attention to local demographics. As of February 25, 2014, the governments of Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Jiangxi and Anhui had already implemented this change in directives. The change in the family planning policy was adopted by the CPC Central Committee at its most recent party congress on November 12, 2013. On December 30, the Central Committee and the State Council jointly published a political guideline under the title: “Opinions on the re-adjustment and improvement of the family planning policy” 关于调整完善生育政策的意见 (*South China Morning Post* Dec. 28, 2013; *Xinhua* Dec. 28,30, 2013; Jan. 17; Feb. 21, 25, 2014). See also: *RCTC* 2014, No. 1, p. 14.

December 28, 2013:

## New “Guide to the Catholic Church in China”



The 8th edition of the *Guide to the Catholic Church in China* has been published in Singapore. The 642-page bilingual Guide (English-Chinese) is a useful reference work for people who travel or visit the Catholic Church in Mainland China.

The China Catholic Communication Centre in Singapore is publishing the *Guide to the Catholic Church in China 2014*, which was written by Fr. Jean Charbonnier. This is the first new update of the Guide since the last edition came out in 2008. The book contains a lot of new information and maps as well as photos of new churches and links to Church related websites ([www.zhonglian.org](http://www.zhonglian.org)).

January 2, 2014:

## State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) publishes its work report for 2013 and the key activities planned for 2014

One of the Bureau's major focuses for 2014 is the continued legalization process of religious activities. After ten years, the "Regulations on Religious Affairs" – the basic state legal document for this sector, which was issued by the Council of State in 2004, are to be evaluated and recommendations are to be prepared for the future. Among new documents planned for the future, one will affect, for example, the relations of the religions with individuals and groups outside of China: all national bodies of the various religions, with the support of the SARA, are required to draw up suitable guidelines for their members traveling abroad. In the 2014 list of the SARA's key activities, the focuses for the various religions remain essentially the same ([www.sara.gov.cn](http://www.sara.gov.cn) Jan. 2, 2014).

January 4, 2014:

## 14 dead during a stampede at a mosque in Ningxia

According to reports by *Xinhua*, the stampede at the Beida Mosque in Xiji County occurred during the distribution of traditional religious food at a memorial service for a deceased Muslim leader. According to the regional party committee, the accident was the result of poor organization and management. The director of the mosque's administration committee was arrested, the head of the county government was suspended from office, and the director of the county Bureau of Religious Affairs as well as a deputy director of the county's public security bureau were removed from their posts (*Xinhua* Jan. 5, 9, 2014).

January 8, 2014:

## House church members from Eastern China involved in a crash while visiting Gansu – Reports in Catholic media

Three people died in the accident and three were injured, as a vehicle with members of two house churches plunged into a chasm. The victims were from two house churches which were involved in an exchange program. They came from Sushan in Hangzhou in the Eastern Chinese province of Zhejiang and from the Tibetan village of Tielou, County Wen, City of Nanlong in the Northwestern province of Gansu. The report was carried by *UCAN* on its Chinese language website. The group was on its way to Tielou when the accident occurred. The website of the newspaper *Xinde (Faith)*, which belongs to the official Catholic Church in mainland China, picked up the report and published a call to its readers to pray for the dead and injured ([www.chinacatholic.org](http://www.chinacatholic.org) Jan. 12, 2014; [www.china.ucanews.com](http://www.china.ucanews.com) Jan. 10, 2014).

January 9, 2014:

## Discovery of "Nestorian" grave niche in Longmen Grottoes confirmed by experts – Thought to be earliest Christian graves ever found in China

Already back in 2009, the archeologist Jiao Jianhui discovered a group of 16 small burial niches carved into the rock wall and clustered together off to one side of the Buddhist Longmen Grottoes in Luoyang,

Henan Province. One of the niches was decorated with a Cross. Many similar niches in the Longmen Grottoes have been identified as graves from the Tang Dynasty (618–907) used for the remains or ashes of deceased Buddhists. They are decorated with comparable Buddhist symbols. Since the cross found in 2009 is similar to other known “Nestorians” crosses, which have been dated to the Tang Dynasty, Jiao Jianhui has concluded that he had discovered a new group of Tang Dynasty Nestorian burials. Jiao Jianhui’s conclusions have now been confirmed and they have also been announced in the government media. The East Syrian Church, also known as the Assyrian Church of the East (“Nestorians,” Chinese *jingjiao* 景教 or “Doctrine of the Light”) was the first Christian Church to arrive in China as early as the 7th century (UCAN Jan. 17, 2014; www.china.ucanews.com Jan. 22, 23, 2014; www.news.xinhuanet.com Jan. 12, 2014).

January 9 and February 4, 2014:

## **Dalai Lama: Continuance of Tibet as part of the People’s Republic of China is of “mutual benefit” – provided that real autonomy is granted**

In a January 9th address to Indian Buddhists in Nagpur, the Dalai Lama said that since Tibet is a backward (state), it is in its own economic interest to remain part of China, provided that China grants Tibet “meaningful autonomy” in areas such as culture, religion and environment. He repeated that statement in a February 4th address at the Martin Luther Christian University in the northeastern Indian state of Meghalaya (ANI Jan. 9, 2014; *India Today Online* Feb. 4, 2014).

January 9, 2014:

## **Chinese Catholic newspaper reports on protests by Japanese religious communities against Prime Minister’s visit to the Yasukuni Shrine**

In a controversial December 26, 2013 visit, Japan’s Prime Minister Abe Shinzō went to the Yasukuni Shrine, in which the fallen from several wars as well as a number of convicted war criminals from the time of World War II are remembered. Especially China and Korea both protested against his visit. *Xinde (Faith)* reported that Japanese religious communities also protested against the visit. According to *Xinde*, between December 26 and 28 the following religious groups representatives released statements condemning the visit: Auxiliary Bishop Michael Matsuura Goro, Chairman of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Japanese Bishops’ Conference and representing Japanese Catholics; the Japanese Baptist Federation; the Japanese Christian Council and the umbrella organization representing the coalition of the Shinshu (that is Amida)-Buddhists, also joined by the Nishi Honganji and Higashi Honganji temples in Kyoto. The Catholic statement said that by his visit Abe was whitewashing Japan’s war against China, in Asia and the Pacific, and was trampling underfoot the 20 million victims of that war as well as those who to this day still suffer from the bitter memories of those days. The Baptists expressed concern that repeated visits to the shrine by Japanese Prime Ministers were actually contributing to Japan’s sense of denial of responsibility for the war – something which could lead to new wars. According to *Xinde*, all of the statements spoke of the visits to the shrine by the Prime Minister as a violation of the clear-cut separation of church and state laid out in the Japanese Constitution. *Xinde* also pointed out that in 2006 the Commission for Social Affairs of the Japanese Bishops’ Conference had called upon all Japanese Catholics not to visit the shrine (*Xinde* Jan. 9, 2014; see also UCAN Nov. 22, 2006).

January 9, 2014:

## Film director Zhang Yimou hit with record fine for violation of the 'one child' policy

According to *Xinhua*, the local Family Planning Bureau of Binhu, Wuxi City, ordered the internationally renowned film director and his wife to pay a “social maintenance fee” of 7.48 million yuan (about 875,000 euros), after they had admitted last December to having two sons and a daughter. A second article later reported that the couple had paid the fine. The *South China Morning Post* noted that this was the largest fine ever imposed on a Chinese couple for having violated the one-child policy (*South China Morning Post* Jan. 9, 2014; *Xinhua* Jan. 9; Feb. 7, 2014).

January 12–17, 2014:

## Diocese of Fenyang (Shanxi) organizes first formation course for divorced and older unmarried Catholics

According to the article in the Catholic newspaper *Xinde*, the aim of the course is to help people discover the reasons why they have failed in their past emotional relationships in order to help them avoid failure in the future. Course participants are helped towards personal growth through self-reflection, prayer, sharing and group therapy. In addition, course leaders provided information about the canonical situation of the divorced. They hope to prevent divorced Catholics from leaving the Church due to disappointment at not being able to fully participate in the sacraments. They stressed that God's love is always with us. The leadership team included Fr. Liu Huwei, who had studied ethics of family and marriage in Rome, and Sister Yu Jie, who is a psychological consultant (*Xinde* Feb. 13, 2014).

In China, the number of divorces has increased significantly, even among Catholics. In August of 2013, the Diocese of Fenyang opened its first family outreach clinic to help people deal with family related problems (see *RCTC* 2013, No. 4, p. 10).

January 22, 2014:

## Dedication of the Catholic Theological Institute of Singapore

According to Archbishop William Goh of Singapore, the goal of the Catholic Theological Institute of Singapore (CTIS) is the theological formation of the laity in a “systematic” manner. The reasons for the Church's doctrine need to be explained in ways that will help the laity understand the Catholic faith as “credible and reasonable.” The Institute was inaugurated on January 22 in the presence of the Apostolic Nuncio, Archbishop Leopoldo Girelli, among others, and courses began on January 27 with a total of more than 100 students. According to *AsiaNews*, the Institute constitutes an important contribution to the development of the Church in Singapore, which with its 200,000 Catholics accounts for about 5% of the population (Buddhists represent about 43%, Christians 18%, Muslims 15%, Hindus and Daoists 11.5%). Archbishop Goh said that it is a strange “anomaly” that, despite the generally high level of education among the population, including Catholics, in matters of theology and Church doctrine a widespread attitude of “distrust” prevails. For this reason – thus the Archbishop – it is important that those who occupy public offices and positions of responsibility or are involved in education, “are directed by the Church teaching” and will be formed to hand on the Catholic faith and Christian doctrine in an “orthodox” manner. The Institute's Rector, Fr. James Yeo, stressed that the theological course is intended primarily for Catholics in Singapore, but that it is hoped that it will later be able to welcome students from “surrounding nations” as well (*AsiaNews* Feb. 8, 2014).

January 26, 2014:

## Pope Francis sends Lunar New Year greetings to people throughout the Far East

After the Angelus prayer in St. Peter's Square, Pope Francis said: "In the coming days, millions of people who live in the Far East or who are scattered in various parts of the world, among them Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese, celebrate the Lunar New Year. I wish all of them a life full of joy and hope. May the irrepressible yearning for fraternity, which dwells in their hearts, find in the intimacy of the family a privileged place to be discovered, educated and realized. This will be a valuable contribution to the building of a more humane world, where peace reigns" (*Fides* Jan. 27, 2014)

January 28, 2014:

## Lunar New Year greetings from Hong Kong's religious leaders

In their traditional Lunar New Year message, the Colloquium of Leaders of Six Religions in Hong Kong conveyed their best wishes for the new year. The topics of their message were many and varied, ranging from efforts to improve the global climate to the importance of purity of the heart and the soul, the dangers of the Internet and the importance of family and education. Their message also included a call for peace and stability in Hong Kong (*Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Feb. 1, 2014).

January 28, 2014:

## First "baby hatch" installed in Guangzhou – Closed after only six weeks due to overwhelming numbers

In the brief span of only six weeks, 262 children were placed anonymously in the first "baby hatch" in Guangzhou, which had been opened to receive babies on January 28. There were 148 boys and 114 girls. More than 90% of them survived. Two thirds of the babies were younger than one year, but there were also a number of five and six year old children – all of them with serious illnesses or handicaps. Due to the unexpected overload, the device has been closed for the time being.

The first baby drop – called in Chinese "baby safety island" – was set up as a pilot project in July 2011 in Shijiazhuang (where so far 181 children have been deposited). Shortly thereafter, the Ministry of Civil Affairs authorized the establishment of such facilities in all of China's major cities and 25 cities have thus far made use of that authorization. The Chinese version of the baby hatches are miniature cottages into which a person can walk. They are equipped with a baby cot, an incubator and an oxygen supply. Parents can simply place their child on the cot or incubator in the little room, trigger an alarm to alert the staff and then leave. Within minutes, the child will be collected and taken care of by professional personnel. There are no cameras in the room and the police will not conduct any investigation. A striking number of the anonymously deposited babies suffer from disabilities or illnesses. One reason prompting parents to give up their babies is the current expense of medical care which many cannot afford. Abandoning children continues to be illegal in China. The strikingly high number of 100,000 babies given up annually – mostly newborns – is, among other things a direct result of the government's one-child policy, since parents prioritize healthy boys. Also, according to a report from Shenzhen in the *South China Morning Post*, it is young, unmarried female migrant workers who are most likely to have unplanned pregnancies and be tempted to give up or expose their babies. Baby hatches are a subject of lively discussion on the social networks all over China. Some see them as life savers. Others

argue that their very existence contributes significantly to the number of parents who are led to give up their children more quickly than they would otherwise. At the same time there is an increasing number of people voicing demands for a really good social security system, which would be capable of ensuring better care for children with disabilities and special needs (*Shanghaiist* Feb. 12, 2014; *South China Morning Post* Dec. 10, 20, 2013; *Spiegel online* March 17, 2014; *The Guardian* March 17, 2014; UCAN Feb. 10, 2014; [www.stimmen-aus-china.de](http://www.stimmen-aus-china.de) Aug. 17, 2013).

January 31, 2014:

## Chinese New Year: Campaign in the temples to battle against air pollution

According to the lunar calendar, following the Year of the Snake, January 31 ushered in the Year of the Horse. For this year's Lunar New Year celebration, due to ever growing, and ever more threatening air pollution, the number of businesses that were allowed to sell fireworks in Beijing was once again reduced by 12 percent. An initial reduction in the number of shops had already been put into effect last year. At the same time, the fireworks that were advertised were more environmentally friendly and were also more expensive. Representatives of the Chinese Buddhist Association and of the Chinese Daoist Association have also added their voices to the campaign. At a press conference on January 22 they called for the use of environmentally friendly incense sticks. Thus, for example, since the beginning of last December, the Lama Temple in Beijing has been distributing to temple visitors incense sticks made from pinewood and cedar wood flours, as well as of other natural materials – all free of charge. “The air quality in the temple has improved significantly, and so has visitors' environmental awareness,” declared the Abbot, Hu Xuefeng (*Xinhua* Jan. 22, 24, 2014).

February 13, 2014:

## China Aid Association releases its “2013 Persecution Report” and sees once again an increase in the religious persecution of Christians in China

The US-based organization China Aid, which campaigns for the rights of the Chinese house churches, mentioned in its annual report 143 cases of persecution of Christians by government agencies in 2013, with a total of 1,470 people (54 of whom were clergy) detained and twelve sentenced. There were 16 cases of mental or verbal abuse, 50 people were abused. China Aid notes that there has been a continuous deterioration of the situation and an increase in the number of cases for the last eight years. According to China Aid, in 2013 house churches as well as Three-Self-churches were objects of persecution, both in the cities and in the countryside. Those affected have been individual Christians, including clergy, lay people, students, dissidents, Christian booksellers and Christian members of ethnic minorities. The organization reported that in 2013 the Catholic Church had enjoyed “relative peace,” but that it was too early to draw the conclusion that the Xi administration made intentional efforts to avoid conflicts with the Vatican. China Aid characterized the strategy of the authorities in 2013 as the destruction of “Christianity's Accumulated Social-cultural Assets in China.” China Aid has pointed the spotlight at various types of cases on which they report: the expropriation of church property; actions taken against large house churches in cities with a view to limiting their development; “Warfare on the cultural battlefield,” as in a campaign against Christian publications or college campus ministry. There has, however, been a reduction in the number of moves by the government against Christian lawyers and civil rights activists ([www.chinaaid.org/2014/02/china-aid-association-2013-persecution.html](http://www.chinaaid.org/2014/02/china-aid-association-2013-persecution.html)).

February 28, 2014:

## **China Daily reports on academics in the Buddhist Longquan Monastery**



Young people praying in Longquan monastery.  
Foto: M. Welling.

monastery also attracts some 200 lay Buddhists who are studying Dharma (*China Daily* Feb. 28, 2014). – The Abbot of the monastery, Master Xuecheng, is Vice Chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA).

The state run newspaper *China Daily* reports that the Longquan Monastery, located in Beijing's university district of Haidian, has among its monks or aspiring monks a number of academics, professors and IT specialists. According to the abbot, the average level of education of the monks in the monastery is probably higher than that in the general population. According to a popular "urban myth," *China Daily* says, the developer of the mobile phone software "WeChat" is supposed to have found crucial inspiration in Longquan Monastery. The monastery, which attracts many volunteers, has, among other things, a group of 30 volunteers from IT companies who take care of the monastery's network and software services. The paper mentioned in its article that mainly via the volunteer service individuals come to enter the monastery as a novice and later as a monk. The

March 1, 2014:

## **Assault in Kunming – reactions from religious organizations**

On March 1, six men and two women attacked passengers at the train station of the city of Kunming (Yunnan Province) with long knives, killing 29 people and injuring more than 140. The government identified the attackers as Uyghur separatists. The attack sent waves of shock throughout China and many believers prayed for the victims, expressing their dismay also via the online social network platforms. On March 5, the representatives of the official province-level organizations of Buddhists, Daoists, Muslims, Catholics and Protestants held a special assembly, in which they sharply condemned the terrorist attack. Their actions deviate totally from the teachings of any genuine religion and trample human rights underfoot they said. The religious leaders called on the religious communities in Yunnan to recognize the cruelty of the terrorists and, under the leadership of the party and the government, to promote unity, economic development and social harmony. The *South China Morning Post*, among others, spoke about the impact of the attack on the Uyghur population in China, for example in Beijing, where Uyghurs spoke of stricter identity checks and a fear of growing resentment against the Uyghur population (*South China Morning Post* March 11, 2014; *Xinhua* March 3, 5, 2014; [www.sara.gov.cn](http://www.sara.gov.cn) March 6, 2014).

March 5, 2014:

## Pope Francis reports on his exchange of letters with Chinese President Xi Jinping

In an interview with the *Corriere della Sera* published on March 5, Pope Francis said on the question of relationships between the Vatican and China: “We are close to China. I sent a letter to President Xi Jinping when he was elected, three days after me. And he answered me. There are relations. It’s a great people which I love” (*Radio Vatican* March 5, 2014).

March 16, 2014:

## Pope Francis calls for prayers for passengers of missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370

Following the Angelus prayers in St. Peter’s Square, the Pope asked the faithful gathered in the square to pray for the passengers and crew and their families of flight MH370, which disappeared on March 8 on its way to Beijing. There were 239 people on board, including 154 Chinese nationals (*Vatican Insider* March 16, 2014).

March 16, 2014:

## Shanghai’s Bishop Fan Zhongliang, SJ, dies “underground” at age 96



Bishop Fan 2010 in the apartment where he was under house arrest. Foto: UCAN.

Bishop Fan was recognized by the Pope but not by the government and was therefore the “underground” Ordinary of the Diocese of Shanghai. He was born in 1918. In 1938 he entered the Jesuit novitiate in Shanghai – together with Jin Luxian, who later became the official Bishop of Shanghai – and was ordained a priest in 1951. In 1955, he was arrested together with Shanghai Bishop (later Cardinal) Ignatius Gong Pinmei and other priests, including Jin Luxian. He was only released from prison in 1979. On February 27, 1985, he was secretly ordained as Coadjutor Bishop of Shanghai. This occurred shortly after Jin Luxian was ordained Auxiliary Bishop on January 27 – with-

out a Papal mandate. Following the death of Cardinal Gong in 2000, Bishop Fan succeeded him as the Ordinary of the diocese. According to UCAN, Bishop Fan was also the President of the underground Chinese Bishops’ Conference. Until the day of his death, Bishop Fan lived under strict surveillance imposed by the government. Anthony Lam of the Holy Spirit Study Centre reports that, nonetheless, almost all of the young priests belonging to the official church went to Bishop Fan before their ordinations to ask for his blessing, a sign of the respect the bishop was enjoying. According to *AsiaNews*, Bishop Fan and Bishop Jin were reconciled several years ago.

March 18, 2014:

## Obituary of Bishop Fan by the Secretary of the Pontifical Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples indicates Bishop Ma as his successor

For many Catholics Bishop Fan was a symbol of fidelity to his vocation and of allegiance to the Pope, wrote Archbishop Savio Hon in his obituary of Bishop Fan. “In his clarity and truth he also knew how to be gentle and merciful,” which is the reason why he was later able to reconcile with Bishop Jin Luxian, the Archbishop said. Now that both of them have died, the Church in Shanghai does not remain “without a guide.” “The presence of Msgr. Thaddeus Ma Daqin ensures continuity.” The majority of Shanghai’s Catholics follow him and love him as the pastor of Shanghai, the Archbishop continued. “And it is a wonderful thing that he is the successor to both Msgr. Jin and Msgr. Fan. Through him the Church of Shanghai can really live a new era of reconciliation.” The obituary was published by *AsiaNews* on March 18, 2014.

March 19, 2014:

## State-run *Global Times* publishes article entitled “Catholic Patriotic Association warns Vatican not to interfere”

The Vatican should respect China’s sovereignty and not interfere with China’s bishop appointments, said Liu Yuanlong, vice-president of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, according to an article in the *Global Times*, “in response to Pope Francis disclosing that he exchanged letters with Chinese President Xi Jinping.” Pope Francis is the first Pope to disclose that he received a reply from a Chinese leader, wrote the *Global Times* (citing *Phoenix TV*) and reproduced a few sentences from the text of the Pope’s interview. The article also quoted Catholicism researcher Wang Meixiu’s statement that the Chinese Church has always had contact with the Vatican, but not in the name of its Church groups. “The Pope is willing to consolidate relations with China,” Wang continued. Hong Kong Cardinal John Tong is quoted as having referred to a lack of communication and understanding between the two sides. According to the article, Pope Francis, who used to be provincial superior of the Society of Jesus, could possibly be favorable to normalizing bilateral relations, “as Matteo Ricci, a missionary to China whose friendship was widely acknowledged by Chinese people, was also from this organization” (*Global Times* March 1, 2014).

March 22, 2014:

## Requiem in Shanghai for Bishop Fan Zhongliang – with both underground and official Church participation

Shortly after Bishop Fan’s death, the officials removed his biretta, a sign that they did not recognize him as a bishop, *UCAN* reported, citing Church sources. They did, however, allow a Requiem Mass to be celebrated for him – not in a church, but in a funeral home – and without any use of the title “Bishop.” According to reports from *AsiaNews* and *UCAN*, about 5,000 Catholics attended the funeral Mass on March 22. The police re-routed traffic in front of the funeral home, and the funeral liturgy was projected on a giant screen in the outer courtyard. Even foreigners were present, including the Canadian Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Chris Alexander (the Canadian Ambassador for Religious Freedom, Andrew Bennett, had released a condolence statement on March 20). Sixty-one or seventy priests (de-

pending on the source) from both the underground and the official parts of the diocese as well as from other dioceses concelebrated at the Requiem Mass, which was presided over by Fr. Zhu Yude, head of the underground community of Shanghai. According to *UCAN*, a number of priests from Shanghai's open community were banned from attending the funeral. Bishop Thaddeus Ma Daqin, who is under house arrest since he announced his resignation from the Patriotic Association following his episcopal ordination on July 7, 2012, did not make an appearance at the funeral. *UCAN* reports that since March 16, surveillance on Bishop Ma had stepped up. A Mass of suffrage was also celebrated for Bishop Fan in the Cathedral of St. Ignatius. The body of the Bishop was cremated, and his ashes are to be interred in a cemetery in an area of Sheshan, where Catholics had bought a burial plot for him (*AsiaNews* March 17, 18, 22, 2014; *UCAN* March 17, 24, 2014; [www.cic.gc.ca](http://www.cic.gc.ca) March 24, 2014; [www.international.gc.ca/media/orf-blr/news-communiques/2014/03/20.aspx](http://www.international.gc.ca/media/orf-blr/news-communiques/2014/03/20.aspx)).

## 2013 Statistical Update on Religions and Churches in the People's Republic of China

*Katharina Wenzel-Teuber*  
*Translated by Jacqueline Mulberge*

Numerically measurable developments in the religions of China found their reflection in religious and secular media as well as in academic publications also in the year 2012, both in and outside the People's Republic of China. For various reasons numerical data on religious affiliation in the People's Republic of China tend to show great differences. The following brings data that relates to 2013 or was published anew and made known in 2013, occasionally supplemented with older data.



### Provinces of China – Map and List of Abbreviations

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

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This time, at the end of the statistics, we take a look at the Province of Henan in central China. A “special report” was dedicated to the province in the Blue Book of Religions 2013 (in the following: BB) of the state-run Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. The report is interesting because the authors endeavor to show the role of religious policy and the interplay between the religions in the development of recent decades.

Unless otherwise stated, the numbers given in the following refer to Mainland China (People’s Republic of China without Hong Kong and Macau).

## Buddhism, Daoism and Popular Religion

No new statistics are available for 2013 for this large sector of religious life in China. Older surveys give a certain amount of orientation, such as the Chinese Spiritual Life Survey (CSLS) carried out in 2007.<sup>1</sup> Among other things it came to the following results:

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

The BB has no national numerical data for Buddhism or Daoism (data for Henan Province see below). As in past years, in the up-to-date volume there is a chapter dealing with the traditional folk religion which apart from some exceptions is not officially recognized by the State as a religion.

## Islam

- 23 million      is the number of Muslims in Mainland China according to the official Chinese Islamic Association (CIA).<sup>2</sup>

## Religious Formation

The article on Islam by Pan Shije in the BB deals among other things with the question of religious formation in Chinese Islam. As Pan explains, at the present time it rests on three main pillars:

- 
- 1 For the CSLS, from May to July 2007, a sample of 7,021 individuals aged 16 to 75 years was interviewed in 56 selected sites of different size as to their religious self-identification. In July 2010, Yang Fenggang from the Center on Religion and Chinese Society at Purdue University (West Lafayette, USA) presented the results of the study in Beijing. The CSLS study was referred to several times in the Blue Book of Religions of 2011 and 2012. For CSLS see also Wenzel-Teuber 2012, pp. 30-36.
  - 2 See, among others, “Chen Guangyuan dangxuan xin yi jie Zhongguo yisilanjiao xiehui huizhang” 陈广元当选新一届中国伊斯兰教协会会长 (Chen Guangyuan Elected Chairman of the Chinese Islamic Association for the New Term), *Xinhua* Sept. 15, 2011.

Firstly that of the traditional “scripture hall education” (*jingtang jiaoyu* 经堂教育) that has been practiced since the 17th century in the communities of Chinese-speaking Hui Muslims. In the 21st century, however, as Pan writes, it has largely lost its importance due to the process of social transformation. In the Islamic Hui communities in the Northwest of China, it is still the basic form of training of ahongs (imams), according to Pan, however it is quantitatively and qualitatively no longer on the same level as formerly, among other things because the ahongs of the old generation have retired from teaching. In central China this form of formation has almost disappeared altogether.



Koran Institute in Zhengzhou – View of the main building and of a classroom.  
Photos: [www.chinaislam.net.cn](http://www.chinaislam.net.cn).



The second pillar are the government-initiated “Islamic Koran institutes” (*yisilanjiao jingxueyuan* 伊斯兰教经学院) mainly founded in the 1980s. Pan criticizes the fact that the Koran institutes go no higher than training to “Bachelor level” and do not train any highly qualified specialists in religion or scholars of Islam. In addition less and less graduates take up the profession of ahong. There are 10 Koran institutes in the entire country which are run by the Chinese Islamic Association or its regional branches with govern-

ment authorization and support. At the end of 2012 they had the following numbers of students:

Table 1: Students at the 10 Islamic Koran Institutes in China at the End of 2012

Institute	Number of students
Chinese Koran Institute, Beijing	80
Kunming Koran Institute (YN)	128
Lanzhou Koran Institute (GS)	420
Ningxia Koran Institute (Yinchuan)	415
Qinghai Koran Institute	60
Xinjiang Koran Institute (Urumqi)	200
Zhengzhou Koran Institute (Hen)	80
Beijing Koran Institute	Further training courses for ahongs
Hebei Koran Institute (Shijiazhuang)	Further training courses for ahongs
Shenyang Koran Institute (LN)	Further training courses for ahongs

Table compiled from numerical data in Pan Shijie 2013, p. 104.

The third pillar, the private Arabic schools (*minban Alaboyu xuexiao* 民办阿拉伯语学校), has developed strongly since the 1980s. Pan speaks of an “Arabic school fever.” The Chinese Muslims have a tradition of learning Arabic, Pan states, the interest has grown strongly, however, due to the increase of economic ties with Arab countries. Most of the private Arabic schools are found in Gansu, Ningxia, Yunnan and Henan. According to Pan in some provinces the schools are promoted by the government, in others, on the other hand, they are not permitted which sometimes leads to children being sent to school in a distant province. Only a small number of graduates from these Arabic schools become ahongs.<sup>3</sup>

## Confucianism

### Revival of the Traditional Academies (*shuyuan* 书院)

In Mainland China (unlike in Hong Kong) Confucianism does not count officially as a religion. Nevertheless the BB has an article about Confucianism, as in previous years. Among other things, the author Zhao Fasheng addresses the revival of the traditional *shuyuan* in the 21st century.<sup>4</sup> These academies have existed in China since the Tang era (618–907), their main focus lay on teaching and researching the Confucian classics. Zhao writes that during the Qing era (1644–1911) there were around 5,000 *shuyuan* in the country; they were suppressed or turned into modern schools by the Qing government in 1902. At the end of 2011, according to Zhao, there were again 591 *shuyuan* which were mainly founded in the years following 2005 – thus the phenomenon is still fairly young. 142 of these 591,

3 Pan Shijie 2013, pp. 104 and 110. – On the different forms and problems of Islamic education in China see also Elisabeth Allès, “Muslimisches religiöses Schulwesen in China” [Muslim Religious Education in China], in: *China heute* 2005, Nos. 1-2, pp. 32-40.

4 Zhao Fasheng 2013, pp. 194-200.

that is 24%, are run by the government. The rest are the foundations of private individuals, not only Confucian intellectuals but also business people, attorneys, retired civil servants and teachers, etc.

Table 2: Regional Distribution of the Modern *shuyuan*

Province / Autonomous Region / Municipality	Number of <i>shuyuan</i> per province
Beijing	82
Shandong, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Shaanxi, Hongkong	30–45
Zhejiang, Guangdong, Henan, Hebei, Shanxi, Sichuan	20 and more
Fujian, Yunnan, Jilin, Liaoning, Tianjin, Hubei, Anhui, Guangxi	10
Inner Mongolia, Qinghai, Ningxia, Xinjiang, Heilongjiang, Gansu, Jiangxi, Hunan, Hainan, Guizhou, Chongqing, Macau, Taiwan, Tibet	under 10

Table compiled from numerical data in Zhao Fasheng 2013, p. 195.<sup>5</sup>

Zhao distinguishes four different types of newly founded *shuyuan*:

- *shuyuan* with main focus on research and exchange in the academic field. This type corresponds most to the *shuyuan* of ancient China. There are 45 of such *shuyuan*. Example: Shichahai *shuyuan* 什刹海书院 in Beijing, founded in 2011.
- *shuyuan* with main focus on teaching in *guoxue* 国学 (“national studies” [on traditional Chinese culture, especially Confucianism]) for children and youth from kindergarten to middle school. 190 (32.15%) of the 591 *shuyuan* belong to this group. Some have all-day classes and combine modern obligatory subjects with traditional teaching. Examples: Qibaoge *shuyuan* 七宝阁书院 and Sihai Kongzu *shuyuan* 四海孔子书院 in Beijing. Others provide supplementary classes at weekends or in vacation time. There are also mixed forms.
- *shuyuan* which offers *guoxue* teaching for adults. Some of these *shuyuan* are aimed at the elite of politics and business, working mainly in conjunction with universities. Their expensive courses serve self-cultivation, offering tuition not only in the Confucian classics, but also in traditional and modern leadership and management methods. Example: Huashang *shuyuan* 华商书院 [Shenzen, with branches in other cities] founded in 2006.
- *shuyuan* for children and adults which work free of charge and have as their goal the dissemination of traditional culture. Example: Yunshen *shuyuan* 云深书院 in Xinzhou (HB). This academy, founded and financed by a business man, offers *guoxue* tuition at weekends and in addition is dedicated to popularizing ancient rituals, such as on reaching adolescence or for weddings.<sup>6</sup>

5 For the numerical data Zhao refers to the following study: Zhao Yaojie 赵瑶杰, “2011 nian Zhongguo xiandai shuyuan fazhan baogao” 2011年中国现代书院发展报告 (Report on the Development of the Modern *shuyuan* in China 2011) in: *Beijing di er jie shuyuan chuantong yu weilai fazhan luntan lunwenji* 北京第二届书院传统与未来发展论坛论文集 (Proceedings of the Second Beijing Forum on Tradition and Future Development of the *shuyuan*).

6 Zhao Fasheng 2013, pp. 196-197.

Zhao comments that since the *guoxue* tradition was interrupted for several generations and most of the founders and promoters of the modern *shuyuan* prefer the traditional culture but are not intellectuals in the subject matter, some of these schools experience problems such as a fundamentalist, narrow view of Confucianism or a complete disregard of western classical texts in their tuition. One additional problem for *shuyuan* which have all-day instruction for children and youth is that they are outside the regular school system and their students usually do not receive a school leaving certificate. Whereas in some places they are combined with regular primary and high schools, *shuyuan* in other places are repressed by the local educational authorities.<sup>7</sup>

### Emergence of “Community Confucianism” (*shequ ruxue* 社区儒学)

Zhao Fasheng describes this new phenomenon as a “highlight of popular Confucianism in 2012” and for that reason it is briefly mentioned here, even though he does not give any statistical data. Communities (*shequ* 社区) are administrative areas in cities in which community committees directed by the local government offer community services. Some communities in cities such as Qingdao, Beijing or Shenyang have, according to Zhao, started arranging *guoxue* summer camps for the local youth or for families. Others offer *guoxue* courses all year round. Other measures reported by Zhao include putting up banners with maxims of Confucius’ *Analects*, a theme board on Confucius’ “six arts,” street parties or an edition of the *Analects* especially compiled for all households in the community.

There are also drives at the city level and beyond. According to Zhao special interest was achieved by the project “Fotile Bamboo Slips” (*Fangtai qingzhu jian* 方太青竹简), an initiative of the kitchen appliance manufacturer Fotile of Ningbo and the newspaper *Nanfang zhoumo* of Guangzhou which in collaboration with various universities was intended to make the “national studies” popular especially among the youth. Zhao reports further that in 2012 *guoxue* instruction was even given in the prisons in Beijing and on Hainan Island.<sup>8</sup>

The examples cited by Zhao show that the drive to propagate Confucian ideas (understood in whatever way) was promoted at least in part by the authorities and that the bodies responsible for the propagation, unlike organizations of other religions, were allowed to collaborate in these actions with newspapers, schools, etc.

## Christianity in General

For some time now, also official state media have been pointing out the large number of Christians who exercise their faith outside the officially registered communities. One example for this is Liu Dong writing on 20 November 2013 in the *Global Times*: “According to official figures, China had more than 25 million Protestants and 6 million Catholics

7 *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

8 Zhao Fasheng 2013, pp. 184-186.

by 2012, and this doesn't even include the large number of believers who prefer to attend unofficial, underground churches rather than those sanctioned by the government.”

### Protestantism

20 million Protestant Christians, of whom 70% are in rural areas, and 53,000 Protestant churches and meeting places – according to the official Protestant governing bodies (China Christian Council and Three-Self Patriotic Movement).<sup>9</sup>

23.05 million Chinese, of whom 67.5% are baptized, consider themselves Protestant Christians (regardless of membership in formal or informal groups) – according to a 2008/2009 household survey conducted by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS 2010). This number has since been repeated in many Chinese publications.<sup>10</sup>

58.04 million Protestant Christians was the estimate of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (Washington, DC) in a study published in December 2011 (PFRPL 2011).

Some international estimates of various sources are even higher. One example is the evangelical mission organization Asia Harvest which comes up with 83.5 million Protestant Christians.<sup>11</sup>

Between 2008 and 2012 in the (official) Protestant church of China there were

2.4 million people baptized as new members of the church;

5,195 churches and meeting places newly built or rebuilt;

3 new theological seminaries were established;

1,057 pastors, 482 teachers (second pastors) and 1,443 presbyters / elders ordained or installed in office;

17,5 million Bibles published by the two Protestant bodies, raising the number of Bibles published since the end of the Cultural Revolution to over 62 million.<sup>12</sup>

9 For some years these figures have been on the website of the official Protestant bodies at [www.ccctspm.org/quanguolianghui/lianghuijianjie.html](http://www.ccctspm.org/quanguolianghui/lianghuijianjie.html) (last viewed March 18, 2014).

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

11 <http://asiaharvest.org/wp-content/themes/asia/docs/christians-in-china/China.htm>. Asia Harvest reports 84 million Protestant Christians for China, incl. Hong Kong and Macau; after subtracting the numbers given by Asia Harvest for Hong Kong and Macau 83.5 million remain for Mainland China. In the same table the number of Catholics in China is given as 21.3 million (Mainland China 20.8 million).

12 CCC-TSPM 2013. This source gives the numbers from the work report of the two official Protestant bodies presented at the 9th National Assembly of Chinese Protestants (September 8–11, 2013) by Elder Fu Xianwei. – In her report on the 9th National Assembly this author made a mistake (in: *China heute* 2013, No. 3, pp. 141-143, here p. 142): She wrote, according to Fu Xianwei the number of Protestants in China rose to 24 million; in fact he said: the number of Protestants in China rose by 2.4 million.

## Theological Seminaries

- 21 (official) theological seminaries with 300 professors and 3,700 students  
 4,500 students have completed their studies in the last 5 years, 42 were sent during the same period for studies abroad.<sup>13</sup>

## Catholic Church

The following figures for the Catholic Church in Mainland China in 2013 are based on information provided by the Holy Spirit Study Centre (HSSC)<sup>14</sup> of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong and of the governing bodies of China's official Catholic Church (Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association and Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference, PA-BiCo). Other important sources are the reports of the Shijiazhuang based Catholic newspaper *Xinde* 信德 (Faith) (xdb), its website [www.chinacatholic.org](http://www.chinacatholic.org) (xdo) and the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (FICS), working under the same roof, as well as the Catholic news agency *UCAN* (Hong Kong / Bangkok).

- 12 million total number of Catholics, according to estimates of the HSSC, including both the official part of the Church and the Catholics in the underground  
 6 million number of Catholics, according to the official Catholic governing bodies (PA-BiCo)

## Dioceses

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

## Bishops

- 66 bishops in the official Church (HSSC)  
 37 bishops in the underground Church (HSSC)

## Priests

- 2,000 in the official Church (HSSC)  
 1,400 in the underground Church (HSSC)

## Seminaries and Seminarians

- 10 major seminaries (seminaries for philosophy and theology) with 510 seminarians (HSSC) [2 of these 10 seminaries are currently temporarily closed]  
 10-12 minor seminaries with 400 seminarians (HSSC)  
 10 underground seminaries with about 450 seminarians (HSSC)

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> I would like to thank the Holy Spirit Study Centre for making available the figures on the Catholic Church in Mainland China (as of end of 2013).

## Sisters

- 3,400 in the official Church in about 80 congregations (HSSC)
- 1,500 in the underground Church in about 80 congregations (HSSC)

## Sister Novitiates

- 40 in the official Church with 50 sisters in formation (HSSC)
- 20 in the underground Church with 100 sisters in formation (HSSC)

## Baptisms

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

In 2013, for the sixth time running, the FICS provided baptismal statistics for Easter, the most significant baptism date in the year. According to this data, 16,748 persons were baptized in the Catholic communities of Mainland China at Easter 2013. The province with the most baptisms (3,647, i.e. about 22% of the Easter baptisms nation wide) was Hebei which also has the most Catholics in China. For the first time only baptisms during Easter Vigil and on Easter Sunday were counted. As stated in the report in *xdb*, in previous years many dioceses counted all baptisms between January 1st and Easter which is why the number of “Easter baptisms” for 2012 was higher, namely 22,104. A difficulty with the statistics of the 101 dioceses polled by the FICS lies according to the authors in the fact that many dioceses and parishes do not register the baptisms. Baptisms in the underground communities are probably only partially covered.

Over 70% of the 16,748 baptized persons were adults, thus first generation Christians. In the opinion of the authors of the report this reflects the fact that awareness and zeal for evangelization are increasing in many places and more is being done for it, for instance through further training and a variety of methods. Admittedly a large number of the dioceses and parishes still carry out “only pastoral ministry and no evangelization,” in fact there are even parishes in which for years no adult catechumens have been baptized, the authors write. In most city parishes evangelization is done systematically in the context of three to six month courses of preparation for baptism; as a result there are baptisms several times a year so that the numbers at Easter say but little about the year as a whole, stated the report (*xdb* April 11).

## Example of Baptisms in a City Parish with Systematic Courses for Catechumens

The Xikai Cathedral parish in the north Chinese metropolis Tianjin conducts four courses of baptismal preparation every year, the catechumen participants of which are baptized in a joint ceremony each time. The 4th course of 2013 covered a total of 30 hours of instruction taking place on Saturday afternoons, spread over more than two months and ending with an examination. 150 catechumens were baptized and confirmed on 14 December by the parish priest and three curates of the parish. In the Sunday Mass the following day

Table 3: Baptisms in Mainland China at Easter 2013

Province / Municipality	Diocese	Number
Anhui		100
Beijing		230
Chongqing	Chongqing	150
	Wanzhou	415
Fujian	Fuzhou	287
	Minbei	6
	Mindong	114
	Xiamen	160
Gansu	Lanzhou	86
	Pingliang	81
	Tianshui	50
Guangdong	Guangzhou	265
	Jiangmen	28
	Meizhou	189
	Shantou	120
	Shenzhen	85
	Zhanjiang	185
Guangxi		311
Guizhou		148
Hainan		19
Hebei	Baoding	77
	Cangzhou (incl. Langfang)	493
	Chengde	85
	Handan	1,160
	Hengshui	130
	Shijiazhuang	172
	Tangshan	138
	Xingtai	1,263
	Zhangjiakou	129
Heilongjiang		230
Henan	Anyang	437
	Kaifeng	50
	Nanyang	78
	Puyang	44
	Shangqiu	95
	Xinxiang	62
	Xinyang	52
	Zhengzhou	32
	Zhumadian	68
	Hubei	Chibi
Jingzhou [Shashi]		20
Wuhan		320
Xiangfan		54
Yichang		15
Hunan		57
Jiangsu	Haimen	37
	Nanjing	97
	Suzhou	29
	Xuzhou	155
Jiangxi		237
Jilin		200
Liaoning		555
Inner Mongolia	Bameng	214
	Baotou	96
	Chifeng	8
	Hohhot	164
Jining		139
Ningxia		55
Qinghai		13
Shaanxi	Ankang	49
	Fengxiang	83
	Hanzhong	73
	Sanyuan	202
	Weinan	158
	Xi'an	173
	Yan'an	361
	Zhouzhi	383
Shandong	Heze	73
	Jinan	201
	Liaocheng	159
	Linyi	60
	Qingdao	129
	Weifang	44
	Yantai	5
	Yanzhou	174
	Zibo [Zhoucun]	225
	Shanghai	
Shanxi	Changzhi	115
	Datong	19
	Fenyang	277
	Linfen	85
	Puzhong	102
	Shuozhou	136
	Taiyuan	626
	Xinzhou	35
Yuncheng	163	
Sichuan	Chengdu	264
	Leshan	72
	Nanchong	432
	Xichang	61
	Yibin	78
Tianjin		96
Tibet Autonomous Region		none
Xinjiang		33
Yunnan	Dali	36
	Kunming	150
	Zhaotong	100
Zhejiang	Hangzhou	120
	Ningbo	230
	Taizhou	10
	Wenzhou	609
Total		16,748

Source: FICS survey published in *xdb* April 11.

they received their first Holy Communion. After baptism they participated in further catechesis and after one month made their first confession.<sup>15</sup>

15 Report on the website of the diocese: “Di si qi zhoumo mudaoban jieguo 150 ming xueyuan lingshou xili” 第四期周末慕道班结课150名学员领受洗礼 (As a Result of the 4th Weekend Catechumen Course 150 Catechumens Were Baptized), [www.tj-church.org/news\\_show.asp?id=6237](http://www.tj-church.org/news_show.asp?id=6237).



Xikai Cathedral, December 14–15, 2013. 150 catechumens were baptized (above), with baptismal candles lit by the godparents (center) and first Holy Communion (below). Photos: [www.tj-church.org](http://www.tj-church.org).

Table 4: Group and Individual Baptisms in the Xikai Cathedral 2013

Date 2013	Number of Persons Baptized
June 1	217
August 10	150
October 26	95
December 14	150
Individual baptism, diverse dates	155
2013 total	767

Numbers according to [www.tj-church.org/news\\_show.asp?id=6237](http://www.tj-church.org/news_show.asp?id=6237).

**In the Diocese of Hong Kong** 3,560 adults were baptized at Easter 2013. The catechumenate lasts considerably longer than in Mainland, namely 18 months (*Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* March 23).

### Deceased Bishops 2013

1. Jin Luxian 金鲁贤 SJ, Aloysius (1916–2013), Shanghai
2. Liu Guandong 刘冠东, Peter (1919–2013), Yixian (Heb)
3. Liu Jinghe 刘景和, Paul (1920–2013), Tangshan (Heb)
4. Liu Jingshan 刘静山, John Baptist (1913–2013), Ningxia
5. Ma Xuesheng 马学圣, Joseph (1923–2013), Zhoucun (SD)
6. Qian Yurong 钱余荣, Thomas (1914–2013), Xuzhou (JS)

### Episcopal Consecrations

No episcopal consecrations are known for 2013.

### Priestly Ordinations



66 deacons were ordained priests in Mainland China in 2013 – 29 of them in Hebei Province. This number came from various sources and is certainly incomplete. There were probably additional ordinations in the underground Church which are not included in these statistics. In 2012 the relatively high number of 78 priestly ordinations was noted. In general, however, the number of priestly ordinations has dropped sharply for years.

Bishop Lucas Ly ordaining to the priesthood Frater Chen Andao who was – as the report remarks – trained in the Franciscan monastery, in Fengxiang on November 24, 2013. Report and photo: *xdo* Nov. 27.

Table 5: Priestly Ordinations in Mainland China in 2013

Diocese	Number of Ordinands	Ordination Date	Names of Ordinands
Anyang (Hen)	1	Aug. 20	Shen Qinghe 申清河
Beijing	1	June 29	Zhao Xiangdong 赵祥东
Dali (YN)	1	March 19	Yue Bangshuang 岳邦双 (Yi Nationality)
Fengxiang (SN)	1 1	Jan. 1 Nov. 24	Wang Liqiang 王利强 Chen Andao 陈安道
Handan (Heb)	6	Sept. 21	Li Shiwei 李士伟 Lu Xiwang 逯希望 Shi Xiaowang 石小望 Wang Jinliang 王金亮 Yuan Xiaowei 袁晓伟 Zhao Xilu 赵喜路
Hanzhong (SN)	1	Jan. 31	Fu Tao 付涛
Jinan (SD)	1	April 9	Yu Shuxian 于树贤
Jingxian (Heb)	4	April 25	Geng Yongqian 耿永前 Wang Xiangbo 王向博 Zhai Linyi 翟林溢 Zhang Xiaopin 张小品
Lanzhou (GS)	3	Sept. 15	Chen Hui 陈辉 Chen Zhong'ai 陈中爱 Chen Zhongcai 陈中才
Minbei (FJ)	1	Oct. 28	Pan Xiaoping 潘小平
Nanchang (JX)	1	Dec. 8	Bai Baoliang 白保亮
Nanjing (JS)	2	May 24	Wang Taiping 王太平 Zong Xuening 宗学宁
Nanning (GX)	6	May 1	Huang Jiande 黄剑德 Huang Lixian 黄立现 Lu Yehua 卢业华 Tao Riquan 陶日权 Wu Jian 吴健 Zhong Muming 钟木明
Not given (NM)	1	July 9	Du Buxing 都不兴 (Urnud Dubuxin Amur, Mongol)
Shanghai	1	Oct. 24	Xie Huimin 谢慧敏
Shijiazhuang (Zhengding, Heb)	3	Aug. 22	Liu Weibin 柳伟彬 Pei Yanning 裴亚宁 Shi Xiaoliang 师晓亮
Shuozhou (SX)	2	Aug. 6	Geng Feixiang 耿飞翔 Niu Lijun 牛立君
Taiyuan (SX)	4	Oct. 3	Liu Jianfeng 刘剑锋 Liu Jinping 刘晋平 Niu Ruigang 牛瑞刚 Wang Huanqing 王欢庆
Wanzhou (CQ)	3	May 14	Cai Mingxing 蔡明星 Lan Niansheng 兰年生 Liu Qiang 刘强
Weinan (SN)	1	May 31	Lin Fengjiang 蔺峰江
Wenzhou (ZJ)	2	May 15	Cao Guangzhun 曹光准 Zhang Yun 张云

Diocese	Number of Ordinands	Ordination Date	Names of Ordinands
Xianxian (Heb)	9	Oct. 1	Chen Wei 陈炜 Jia Yanbin 贾艳宾 Song Tianyun 宋天运 Wang Hongqing 王洪庆 Yang Guangming 杨光明 Yang Jingsi 杨静思 Zhang Changjian 张长见 Zhang Dongliang 张东良 Zhang Hongyan 张红岩
Xingtai (Heb)	3	Oct. 23	Feng Liming 冯黎明 Ren Liruo 任立若 Wang Daohan 王道涵
Yan'an (SN)	1	July 27	Luo Wei 罗伟
Zhaotong (YN)	1	March 19	Bu Shuncai 卜顺才 (Jingpo Nationality)
Zhaoxian (Heb)	5	July 25	Bai Jianmin 白建民 Bai Ziqiang 白自强 Dong Tao 董涛 Liu Mantang 刘满堂 Zhang Jianchao 张建超
Total	66		

Sources: *UCAN* March 19; *xdo* Jan. 5; April 10 and 25; May 8, 15 and 16; June 28; July 3, 12 and 29; Aug. 21 and 27; Sept. 23; Oct. 2, 4 and 30; Nov. 3 and 27; www.catholicgx.org Sept. 17 (= *xdo* Sept. 15); www.chinacath.org Sept. 29; Oct. 2 and 12; [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_500cf6040102ej2f.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_500cf6040102ej2f.html).

### Religious Sisters' Profession of Vows

According to data that *China heute* received from FICS, 46 religious women of various congregations in China took final vows in 2013. The actual number is probably higher. Here, too, data is lacking from congregations in the underground.



An event which has become rare also in Chinese convents: 6 sisters took their first vows after their novitiate – the sister in the middle took final vows. Congregation of the Comfort of the Holy Spirit, Diocese of Handan (Heb), May 19, 2013. Report and photo: *xdo* May 27.

## Study of the BB on Kaifeng and Nanyang in Henan Province

Table 6: Situation of the Religions in Kaifeng and Nanyang (October 2011)<sup>16</sup>

	Number of sites for religious activities		Number of religious personnel		Number of faithful		Percentage of faithful in the population (%)	
	Kaifeng	Nanyang	Kaifeng	Nanyang	Kaifeng	Nanyang	Kaifeng	Nanyang
Buddhism	27	78	146	217	31.490	116.903	0,6	1,1
Daoism	13	115	25	293	4.700	147.817	0,09	1,4
Islam	64	118	64	111	80.583	131.849	1,5	1,3
Catholicism	12	10	16	37	3.999	20.114	0,07	0,2
Protestantism	297	660	587	913	98.577	248.147	1,8	2,4
Total	413	981	850 [sic]	1.571	219.349	664.830	4	6,4

Numbers according to the religious affairs bureaus of Kaifeng and Nanyang.

Henan in central China, south of the Yellow River, is considered the cradle of Chinese civilization and is the province with the third largest population in China.<sup>17</sup> A number of dynasties had their capital city in Henan, among others in Kaifeng. After 1949 Henan played a leading role in almost all political campaigns; the Cultural Revolution was particularly bloody there. The province is known to be conservative; up until the 1990s there was resistance to far-reaching economic reforms.<sup>18</sup> From the following it will become clear that also the religious policy in this province was particularly repressive for a long time, with far-reaching and partially unexpected consequences also for the numerical development of the religions.



Map of Henan Province.

16 According to Duan Qi 2013, p. 254, Table 1.

17 In the population census of November 2010 Guangdong (104 mill.) and Shandong (95 mill.) pushed Henan (94 mill.) from its position until then as most populous province; cf. "Communiqué of the National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China on Major Figures of the 2010 Population Census [1] (No. 2)," April 29, 2011, [www.stats.gov.cn/english/NewsEvents/201104/t20110429\\_26450.html](http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/NewsEvents/201104/t20110429_26450.html).

18 For the details concerning the period after 1949, see Thomas Heberer, "Henan," in: Brunhild Staiger *et al.*, *Das große China-Lexikon*, Darmstadt 2003, here p. 301.

In Henan a team from the Institute of World Religions of CASS conducted a comparative field study in May 2012. The study concentrated on the prefecture-level cities of Kaifeng 开封 and Nanyang 南阳 – thus including not only the cities themselves but also the counties and county-level cities under their administration. The results of the study were presented in three essays of the BB and are statistically interesting. Alongside the results of their surveys in the locality, the researchers used mainly official data such as statistical data of the local religious authorities and from local chronicles, results of older studies, etc. In the following, relevant passages from the contribution of CASS researcher Duan Qi are presented, comparing the situation of the religions in the two cities.<sup>19</sup> As a starting point she takes the figures listed in Table 6 above, which the local religious affairs bureaus had given for the five recognized religions.

In her analysis of these figures Duan Qi finds that the percentage of religious believers in the population is low [a general characteristic of government statistics on religion, while e.g. surveys on religiosity often come to different results]. She further notices that the Protestants are clearly the largest of the religious groups, the Catholics the smallest. Then she interprets the statistics and analyses the situation of the individual religious groups against the background of recent history.

### Protestantism in Kaifeng and Nanyang

Protestantism is the largest and, as Duan Qi explains, also the fastest growing religion in both cities: In Kaifeng at the time of the beginning of the People's Republic there were 12 Protestant denominations with only 2,300 faithful; in 2011 there were 98,577 faithful. On the eve of the foundation of the People's Republic, Nanyang had 18,243 Protestant Christians; in 2011 there were 248,147.<sup>20</sup>

Duan gives the following reasons for the rapid growth of Protestantism. Firstly, due to the continuous repression of the traditional religions in both places already from the time of the Republic and especially of folk religion and popular Buddhism and Daoism after 1949, Protestantism became a substitute for folk religion in the countryside.<sup>21</sup>

Secondly, Protestantism was the first religion that could work openly again after the Cultural Revolution; thus – in Duan's opinion – it was *de facto* favored by the religious policy. In Kaifeng the Three-Self-Movement was already revived in 1980. In 1984 the city of Kaifeng already had 3,000 and the counties belonging to it 27,000 Protestant Christians, and in 1985 Kaifeng had 20 churches. In Nanyang the number of Protestants in 1985 had risen to 80,825 and there were 364 Protestant sites for religious assembly. By contrast the most famous of the Buddhist temples in Kaifeng, the Daxiangguosi, re-opened only in 1992, and the first Daoist religious site did not re-open until 1999.<sup>22</sup>

19 Duan specializes in researching Protestantism. The BB also has a report by Tang Xiaofeng on Kaifeng and one by Li Huawei on Nanyang. Li Huawei's article has many additional numerical data which partially differ from those in Duan's report.

20 Duan Qi 2011, p. 258.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 255-258.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259.

Further reasons for the rapid growth of the Protestant communities, according to Duan, are their unique missionary zeal that was not to be stopped by persecution (they alone did missionary work during the Cultural Revolution) and the general Protestant concept of common priesthood that allows the laity to take on independent responsibility. People are also attracted by the mutual helpfulness of the Christians and the diversity of their activities.<sup>23</sup>

The relationship between government supported Three-Self-Churches (*sanzi jiaohui* 三自教会 – Duan uses this term) and unregistered house churches (*jiating jiaohui* 家庭教会) differs greatly in the two cities. As Duan writes, in Kaifeng the Three-Self-Church is stronger, the house churches weak. In Nanyang it is the other way round. In the town of Chengguan in the county of Fangcheng, for example, the Three-Self-Church according to Duan has today only one meeting place with 50 believers, while the house churches, on the other hand, have one to two hundred places with over 10,000 faithful, or according to their own account 20,000 faithful. Since the beginning of the 21st century, two of the four Three-Self-Churches in the actual city area of Nanyang were taken over by house churches. Duan Qi puts this strength of the house churches in Nanyang down to the local, particularly “leftist” religious policy of the 1970s and 1980s. In 1974 the government arrested a number of church leaders, including Zhang Rongliang [in the meantime a nationally and internationally known house church leader], which according to Duan won him great prestige among the faithful. With that – as Duan writes – the foundation for the future house churches was laid. A second wave of repression in the 1980s that was directed above all at the group of the “Shouters” but also included “normal” house church members ultimately led to a further strong growth of house churches. In the 1990s some house churches in Nanyang turned to the charismatic movement, were again opposed and won still more adherents. Duan thinks that because of that some of these house churches of Nanyang spread to the entire Province of Henan and finally to all of China. However, the CASS team also found during its visit that in the rural counties of Nanyang attendance at religious services had decreased recently due to migration to the cities. House church representatives in Fangcheng stated to Duan Qi that they are not against the government but only against the “three-fix” policy (*sanding zhengce* 三定政策 [i.e. all the communities ought to gather in fixed localities, have a specific leader and limit their activities to a specific geographic region<sup>24</sup>]), because that policy is contrary to the mandate to evangelize.<sup>25</sup>

### Catholic Church in Kaifeng and Nanyang

The Catholic Church, according to the statistics of the local religious authorities cited in the BB, is the smallest of the five religious groups, with 3,999 faithful in Kaifeng and 20,114 in Nanyang. – Here it is to be noted that the Catholic news agency *UCAN* gives a much higher number of Catholics for Kaifeng Diocese, namely 30,000.<sup>26</sup>

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 260-262.

24 See e.g. [www.igfm-muenchen.de/china/religion/religion.html](http://www.igfm-muenchen.de/china/religion/religion.html).

25 Duan Qi 2013, pp. 264-268.

26 <http://directory.ucanews.com/country/china/35>. For Nanyang Diocese *UCAN* estimates 20,000 baptized Catholics which more or less corresponds to the data in BB. The diocesan borders, however, are probably not identical with those of the areas administered by the prefecture-level cities of Kaifeng and Nanyang.

Before 1949 there were more Catholics than Protestants in both places, whereas today the number of Protestants is many times greater than that of the Catholics. A major reason for the current weakness of the Catholic Church in Kaifeng and Nanyang, according to Duan, is the fact that in the first years of the People's Republic it was exposed to much greater political aggression than the Protestant church. Duan describes the development using the example of Nanyang Diocese as follows: In 1947 the diocese had 44 parishes, 109 places for prayer, 371 clerics, 26,355 faithful, 7,542 catechumens, one major seminary and 15 convents, the Diocese ran 2 middle schools, 18 primary schools, 2 orphanages, a home for the aged and handicapped, as well as 11 hospitals and clinics and thus had a certain influence in society. It owned 3,000 *mu* of land, including houses in Shanghai and Wuhan. In 1958, after the political campaigns of the 1950s, only 3 churches and 6,600 faithful remained, the fathers (later bishops) Jin Dechen, Zhu Baoyu and other priests who refused to join the Patriotic Association were in labor camps. In 1981 four of these priests were arrested once more and condemned to 10 to 15 years of prison. In 1985 the diocese had 5 re-opened churches, 5 priests and 4,129 faithful. It was only in the 1990s, after the release of the imprisoned priests, that the numbers of faithful increased again.<sup>27</sup>

In Duan's opinion, alongside political factors, inner-church factors also contributed to weaken the Catholic Church: Unlike the Protestants, the Catholic Church according to Duan is not faithful-centered but priest-centered, so that the coherence of the communities is endangered when priests and church buildings disappear. Since it is strongly grounded in the clans and is not so mission-oriented, lost members are not so easily replaced by new members. Added to this are the demanding hurdles for the priesthood represented by strict theological studies and celibacy, as well as the division into official and underground Church.<sup>28</sup>

The relationship between the underground Church and the official Church is described by Duan as follows:<sup>29</sup> In Kaifeng the official Church is stronger. Since the death of the Patriotic Association's Bishop He Chunming in 1986 "Kaifeng still has no bishop today,"<sup>30</sup> only a diocesan leader which, however, is better than a 'self-consecrated' bishop" since – as Duan points out – this way conflicts with the Vatican can be avoided and a stable development of the diocese can be guaranteed. In Nanyang on the other hand, according to Duan, the underground Church is stronger. She attributes that to the fact that people in the diocese under the leadership of Jin Dechen resisted the Patriotic Association from the

27 Duan Qi 2013, pp. 268-270. Duan cites as main source for this paragraph the local chronicle of Nanyang: Nanyang diqu difang zhi bianweihui 南阳地区地方志编委会 (ed.), *Nanyang diqu zhi* 南阳地区志 (xia ce 下册), Henan renmin chubanshe 1994, pp. 450-453. The figures for the year 1947 appear to be partially overestimated. The Catholic *Annuaire de L'Eglise Catholique en Chine 1948* (Shanghai 1948) which gives the statistics for 1947, gives for Nanyang Diocese 22,659 Catholics, 1 bishop, 8 Chinese and 22 foreign priests, 3 foreign lay brothers, 43 Chinese and 11 foreign sisters, as well as 1,130 catechumens. For Kaifeng Diocese, it gives 18,018 Catholics, 1 bishop, 11 Chinese and 17 foreign priests, 2 foreign lay brothers, 60 Chinese and 25 foreign sisters, as well as 970 catechumens (p. 13).

28 Duan Qi 2013, p. 270.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 270-271.

30 Bishop He Chunming (1895–1986) was consecrated in 1962 without papal permission. After his death there were bishops in the underground: Bishop Liang Xisheng (born 1923, consecrated 1989) died 2007; his successor is Bishop Gao Hongxiao OFM, secretly consecrated in 2005 and not recognized by the government. Cf. <http://directory.ucanews.com/bishops/bishop.gao/570>.

beginning and that the imprisonment of the priests only increased their esteem among the faithful. Duan writes that during the field research, underground priests in Nanyang told her that they would gladly register directly with the government but not with the Patriotic Association because that latter, as a mass organization, should not place itself above the Church and the self-election and self-consecration of the bishops contradicts Canon Law. Furthermore Duan mentions that the local government recently sought to come closer to the underground and had won over the underground Bishop Zhu Baoyu and half the priests, although Bishop Zhu resigned after “interference from the Vatican.”<sup>31</sup> At this point Duan gives some of her own reflections on how the problematic of the Catholic Church could be resolved.<sup>32</sup>

### Buddhism and Daoism in Kaifeng and Nanyang

In Kaifeng Buddhism (0.6% of the population) is much stronger than Daoism (0.09%), in Nanyang it is the reverse, with 1.1% Buddhists and 1.4% Daoists. Here, too, Duan brings historical reasons.

The relative strength of Buddhism in Kaifeng is due, according to Duan, to the activity of the monk Jingyan [1891–1991] who already in the 1920s and 1930s was a figurehead of Buddhism in Kaifeng through Buddhist erudition and charitableness in the tradition of “humanistic Buddhism.” After 1949, thanks to good relations with the government, he could at first continue to work. After the Cultural Revolution he took care of the formation of young monks and nuns and led protests against the non-return of the Daxiangguosi. The Daoists in Kaifeng, however, had at the time of the reform and opening up policy no leading personalities who could take care of training a young generation of clergy or fight for the restitution of temples.<sup>33</sup>

Nanyang has a Daoist temple of great importance, the Xuanmiaoguan, which Duan sees as a factor for the strength of Daoism in that region. In 1949 in the area belonging to the prefecture-level City of Nanyang there were 57 Daoist temples, 233 Daoist priests (*daoshi* 道士) and 39 Daoist nuns (*daogu* 道姑). After the Cultural Revolution, thanks to the close connections with Wudangshan-Daoism in neighboring Hubei, Daoism in Nanyang could be revived as early as 1979. According to Duan a leading role in that was played by the director of the health office of Nanyang County, Liu Chengshan, who in 1967 had become a “lay Daoist” of the Wudangshan. In the Nanyang area in 1985 there were 7 newly built Daoist temples, 20 reopened temples, and 48 Daoist priests living in monasteries. By 2001 there were already 65 temples open and 537 Daoist priests. Buddhism in Nanyang, on the other hand, was – according to Duan – subject to attacks already during the time of the Republic and was repressed in the early years of the People’s Republic, due to the

31 According to *UCAN* things went the other way round: Bishop Zhu Baoyu (secretly consecrated in 1995) was officially installed as recognized by the government, after the Pope had already accepted his resignation one year earlier. As *UCAN* reported further, the Bishop Coadjutor in the underground Jin Lugang and half the priests of the diocese were against the official installation of Bishop Zhu; Catholics feared divisions in the diocese (*UCAN* June 30, 2011). – Bishop Jin Dechen (consecrated in 1993) was bishop of Nanyang in the underground until his death in 2002.

32 Duan Qi 2013, pp. 270-271.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 272.

resistance of some of the clerics to the actions of the People's Liberation Army and the Communist Party. Duan describes the Buddhism in Nanyang as rural Buddhism of the mountain forests, in contrast to the "urban" Buddhism of Kaifeng. The Buddhist monks and nuns in Nanyang are on average older and less educated than those in Kaifeng. Nevertheless, the proportion of Buddhist believers among the population is considerably higher in Nanyang than it is in Kaifeng. Duan attributes that to the [political] atmosphere in Nanyang being altogether more favorable for the religions and there being more believers in Buddhism among the rural population.<sup>34</sup>

### Islam in Kaifeng and Nanyang

The Muslims in Kaifeng and Nanyang are predominantly of Islamic Chinese-speaking Hui nationality. They are a relatively high percentage of the population, 1.5% in Kaifeng and 1.3% in Nanyang. As Duan writes, Islam came to Kaifeng and Nanyang very early and is closely knitted to the Chinese culture there; many of the Hui also pay attention to Fengshui, for example.

The observations of the CASS researchers regarding the relationship of the Muslims to the other religions are interesting. In Kaifeng they found a good number of Buddhists among the Hui population. This is seen to be due to the aid activities of the Buddhists under Master Jingyan for impoverished Hui during the time of the Republic. According to Duan in Kaifeng the relations between Hui and Catholics are also very good; Hui concealed the Sacred Heart statue of the latter during the Cultural Revolution. In Nanyang there are Hui who are even clerics of other religions, Buddhist or Daoist monks or Protestant pastors. In Nanyang conversions of Hui to Protestant Christianity are relatively frequent. This phenomenon of conversion, that would be quite unusual among Muslims in Northwest China, shows in Duan Qi's estimation that the Hui in both localities are relatively open-minded, but on the other hand it also shows that their religious bond with Islam is comparatively weak.

On that point, however, according to Duan there are differences between Kaifeng and Nanyang. In Kaifeng the traditional faith is preserved more completely because the Hui there live very close together. The Muslims in Kaifeng are concerned about plans to refurbish the Old City for tourism, because it is not clear what will become of the Old City mosques [and the Moslem population living around it]. In Nanyang, on the other hand, the Muslims have always lived scattered among the Han, have taken on Han customs to a great extent and there are more mixed marriages. The rate of conversion among the Hui there is consequently higher than in Kaifeng, especially conversion to the Protestant Christianity that is rapidly spreading in the region. In the meantime, Duan reports, some pious Muslims in Nanyang are trying to stem the "phenomenon of leaving the religion" ("chujiao xianxiang" 出教现象) through mosque education, Islamic marriage mediation, etc. and to win back Muslims who have become estranged from Islam.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 273-275.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 276-277.

With regard to Islamic schools there are also differences. The Muslims in Kaifeng belong in the main to the two traditional schools of Chinese Islam, the Gedimu and the Yihe-wani.<sup>36</sup> According to Duan, both schools reject the Salafiyya who do have some adherents in Kaifeng but no mosque. In Nanyang, on the other hand, the Salafiyya is spreading very rapidly. According to Duan that is due to the fact that in Nanyang the Moslem economy is less developed so that the Muslims depend on funds from outside for the renovation and building of mosques. Since the 1990s some new mosques were built with the help of Salafist Muslims from outside. In Nanyang, writes Duan, the Muslims do not have such a pronounced consciousness of affinity to a specific school of Islam as in Northwest China and for the majority it is all the same to which school their ahong belongs. Thus, in 1999 for example, the Hui in Niuzhuang accepted the fact that the Salafiyya took over their mosque which originally belonged to the Gedimu school.<sup>37</sup>

**The significant Jewish community** that existed in Kaifeng from the Northern Song Era (960–1126) is not mentioned in the BB. This community disappeared later through assimilation into the Chinese environment; the Jews of Kaifeng are not recognized as a religion or ethnic minority by the Chinese government.

In the end Duan Qi – like her colleague Li Huawei, whose supplementary report on Nanyang is also to be found in the BB – comes to the conclusion that the very unequal situation of the religions in Kaifeng and Nanyang they ascertained is due in first place to the repressive religious policy. Religion is a spiritual, human need, writes Duan, and the attempt to repress it leads in the long run to opposite and unintended results. In her opinion, the government also ought to recognize that the leading religious personalities “cannot be replaced in their role towards the faithful by government officials.”<sup>38</sup>

Both authors mention that the local policy towards religion has relaxed in recent times. That has eased the tensions between government, Protestant house churches and Catholic underground Church, in the opinion of Duan.<sup>39</sup> Li Huawei, on the other hand, who had visited Nanyang previously in 2009, found in 2012 that the policy had not basically changed. He gave one example: In 2012 the researchers noticed to their surprise that the local religious affairs bureau had confiscated the seal of the two official Protestant committees. Consequently, the Protestant representatives had to go to the religious affairs bureau each time they needed to stamp a document, sometimes they had to go several times for one stamp. In such a way – as Li ascertained – even the Protestants who originally supported the government were also alienated from it.<sup>40</sup>

36 Gedimu 格地目 (Qadim) is the oldest school of Islam in China and has incorporated many elements of Chinese culture, in contrast to the Yihewani 伊赫瓦尼 (Ikhwani) movement, which originated in China at the end of the 19th century. On the Islamic groups in China, see among others Wang Jianping, “Einheit in Vielfalt. Wiederaufleben des Islam im heutigen China” (Unity in Diversity. Resurgence of Islam in Today’s China), in: *China heute* 2003, No. 6, pp. 227-234.

37 Duan Qi 2013, p. 277.

38 *Ibid.*, pp. 278-279.

39 *Ibid.*, p. 278.

40 Li Huawei 2013, pp. 321-322.

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FICS: Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (Xinde wenhua yanjiusuo 信德文化研究所, Shijiazhuang).

HSSC: Holy Spirit Study Centre (Shengshen yanjiu zhongxin 聖神研究中心, Hong Kong).

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## Xixiang, a Historic Catholic Mission Station in Northwest China

Bianca Horlemann

The history of Christianity in northwest China still remains a neglected topic. Accordingly, few people have ever heard of Xixiang 西乡 (variants: Si-hsiang, Si-hiang), the present seat of the Vicar General of Lanzhou 兰州 Diocese,<sup>1</sup> which is situated about 15 km west of the modern city of Wuwei 武威 (former Liangzhou 凉州) in Gansu Province.



Map of the Vicariate Apostolic of Kansu Occidentale in the 1920s. Photo: Courtesy of the SVD Archives.

On the comparatively large Catholic church compound located in the small dusty hamlet named Xixiang or Songshu 松树 (Pine Tree) you will not only find an impressive, newly built Catholic church with adjoining living quarters for the priests and brothers but also an old Catholic cemetery, an orchard and among several other buildings a small, recently

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1 In 1946, Lanzhou Diocese was officially promoted to “archdiocese” by the Vatican.

established diocesan museum. A visit to the museum and the cemetery will quickly take you back into Xixiang's past as the former central mission station of both the Belgian Congregation of Scheut, i.e. the Congregatio Immaculati Cordis Mariae (CICM), and the German Congregation of Steyl, i.e. the Societas Verbi Divini (SVD). In fact, Xixiang served as the residence of four former bishops of the Vicariate Apostolic of Kansu, namely of Mgrs. Ferdinand Hamer CICM (1840–1900), Hubert Otto CICM (1850–1938), Godfried Frederix CICM (1866–1938) and Theodor Buddenbrock SVD (1878–1959). The first Chinese Catholic priest in Gansu who was also a native of Gansu, Bartholomé Ma (?–1918), was ordained here in 1901, and the grave of the late (Arch)Bishop of Lanzhou Diocese, Philip Yang Libo 楊立柏 (1918–1998), who was a former student of the missionary school in nearby Wuwei, has a prominent place in the small cemetery.<sup>2</sup> How does all this relate to such a small and remote place?



Bishop Frederix (?) CICM in Xixiang, ca. 1920.  
Photo: Courtesy KADOC, Leuven.

Its hidden location is probably the reason why even those who are relatively well informed about the Christian missionary enterprise in China have hardly ever heard of Xixiang or know of its exact location or its former significance as an important centre for the training of Chinese priests and for spreading Christianity in China's far northwest. Gansu itself is a province rarely visited by tourists and those who do, usually follow the traces of the famous Silk Road. Admiring the marvels of old Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian sites in Gansu, the visitors are usually not aware that they also travel along routes of relatively early encounters between China and Christianity. In fact, the first contacts with the Middle Kingdom were already established during the Tang dynasty (618–907) by Nestorian merchants who traded along the Silk Roads. However, these encounters had no long lasting effects with regard to conversions. The same is true for the Christian traders and missionaries

2 See Alois Steyaert CICM (1902), "Le premier prêtre indigène du Vicariat," in: *Missions en Chine et au Congo*, Vol. 14, p. 36; Koen de Ridder (2000), "A Pear-Tree Legacy of Love," PhD Diss. K.U. Leuven, p. 100; [www.catholicclz.org/news/Show.asp?id=554](http://www.catholicclz.org/news/Show.asp?id=554) (accessed April 14, 2014); and <http://paulhanyz.blog.163.com/album/#m=2&aid=236681444&pid=7554694139> (accessed April 14, 2014).

who travelled from Europe to the courts of the Mongol emperors during the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368) such as Marco Polo, John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck. The first seeds for a more sustained Christian missionary enterprise in China's northwest were planted by Jesuit and Franciscan Fathers starting from the mid-17th century.<sup>3</sup> These were then firmly rooted with the arrival of the CICM Fathers in Gansu in 1879 who, in the early 1880s, established their main mission station precisely in this small hamlet of Xixiang.

The CICM missionaries had been active in Inner Mongolia since 1865. When in 1878, the Vatican officially commissioned the newly established Vicariate Apostolic of Kansu to the Scheut Congregation, it was decided to withdraw some missionaries from Mongolia in order to quickly set up the new mission in Gansu. Already in 1879, Bishop Hamer CICM arrived with only three other priests in Gansu to shoulder this enormous task.<sup>4</sup> Since the Vicariate Apostolic of Kansu not only comprised modern Gansu Province but also portions of modern Qinghai and Xinjiang Provinces, the question arose where to establish the main station in this huge new mission area.

Although the CICM missionaries had been presented with land by an affluent Chinese Christian merchant in Lanzhou, the provincial capital of Gansu, Bishop Hamer preferred to move on to Liangzhou (modern Wuwei) where the missionaries were also well received by the still existing Catholic community of so-called “old Christians.”<sup>5</sup> These “old Christians” were the offspring of Christian refugees from Central China whose forefathers had been converted during the 17th and 18th centuries and later resettled in the Liangzhou area as well as in other places along the Gansu Corridor. Some sources claim that the Jesuit Father Etienne Faber (1597–1657, variants: Fèvre, Lefèvre, Fabro) had already founded three mission stations in Gansu by the mid-17th century, namely in Liangzhou, Lanzhou and Qinzhou (modern Tianshui). Thereafter, the two Franciscans Giovanni Battista Maoletti (1669–1725) and Fr. Ottaiano (variant: d’Ottojane, ?–1737) served – obviously more or less secretly due to opposition from the Buddhist clergy – in Lanzhou and Liangzhou.<sup>6</sup> In fact, a report by Maoletti from around 1715 already mentions the existence

3 These early encounters are attested in various sources. For more information see, for example, Paschal M. d’Elia SJ (1941), *The Catholic Missions in China*, Shanghai, pp. 6-32; Hubert Gundolf SVD (1969), *China zwischen Kreuz und Drachen*, Mödling, Chap. 2 and 3; and Roman Malek SVD – Peter Hofrichter (eds.) (2006), *Jingjiao: The Church of the East in China and Central Asia*, Sankt Augustin.

4 For a detailed overview of the early history of the CICM in Gansu see de Ridder, “A Pear-Tree,” and Lieven van Ostade CICM (1915), “Gedeeltelijke Kronijken van Noord-Kan-Sou van 1877 tot 1914,” unpubl. manuscript, KADOC, Leuven, Z.II.b.4.19.

5 On the “old Christians” see *In Noordelijk Kansu. Land en Missie* (1920), Missiën van Scheut-Sparrendaal, pp. 28-29; and Johannes Ternay SVD (1953), “Liber Historiae Districtus Tsinghai – Sining, China [Tsinghai Chronik],” unpubl. manuscript, Archivum Generale, Rome: AG-SVD 632, pp. 11-12.

6 CICM missionaries reported that during the first decade of the 20th century a stone stele still existed right on the southern outskirts of Xining which marked the place of an 18th century Catholic church. This church is supposed to have been erected with the support of two exiled Manchu princes who had converted to Christianity during the early 18th century. This accords with Maoletti’s report who stated that there were even two churches in Xining in about 1715, one for men and one for women. The stele in Xining was apparently secretly removed at the time when Frs. Schram and van Essens opened a new mission station in Xining in 1912. Fr. Ottaiano’s grave was still visited by Catholic missionaries in its original location just south of Liangzhou up to 1941. Thereafter, his grave was moved to a new communal cemetery due to planned road construction. See *In Noordelijk Kansu*, pp. 28-29; letter of Bishop Otto CICM of April 10, 1919 from Liangzhou, KADOC, Leuven, P.I.d.2.3.; Ternay SVD, “Liber Historiae Districtus Tsinghai,” pp. 11 and 31; and B. Szcześniak (1959), “The Description and Map of Kansu by Giovanni Battista Maoletti de Serravalle,” in: *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. 18, p. 312. For a more detailed account of

of some twenty Christian oratories, churches and small Christian communities in Gansu and Qinghai.<sup>7</sup>

During the early 18th century an exiled Manchu prince, i.e. the 14th brother of emperor Kangxi, who had supposedly converted to Christianity, had presented an estate in Liangzhou to these Franciscan fathers. The first residence of Bishop Hamer was actually erected on this formerly donated land in Liangzhou, which was still in the possession of a Chinese Christian family by the name of Li. Unfortunately for the missionaries, the holder of the original documents of landownership of the Catholic Church who was also a member of the Li clan, had later renounced Christianity. Since he and his family were still living on a portion of this land, he neither agreed to hand over the documents nor to leave the occupied plot. After unsuccessful judicial efforts to regain recognition of official landownership, the Scheut missionaries finally, i.e. between 1882 and 1884, moved their main station to nearby Xixiang, a small hamlet inhabited by about 250 “old Christians” – then about three hours travelling time from Liangzhou, now only 15 minutes by car.<sup>8</sup> There, the CICM missionaries had been able to acquire an estate of three hectares, enough space to build a church, the bishop’s residence and proper living quarters for themselves and their Chinese staff. Eventually, they also erected an orphanage of the Holy Childhood as well as a seminary. Later on, a dispensary was added and even a small station for the treatment of opium addicts was established. Xixiang’s role as the main CICM station in Gansu also involved serving as the regular retreat centre for those Scheut fathers stationed in Gansu and as the main location for teaching Chinese language classes to the newly arrived missionaries.<sup>9</sup>

After World War I, the missionaries of Scheut suffered from a lack of priests and funds for their China missions, which resulted in a decision in ca. 1920 to refocus on missionary work in Ningxia and Mongolia and to give up the Vicariate Apostolic of Kansu. At the same time, German missionaries had lost several missions in the former German Colonies and were looking for new mission fields. Thus, in 1922 the Vatican divided the old Vicariate of Kansu into a “Vicariate Apostolic of Kansu Occidentale” which was conferred on the Societas Verbi Divini, and one of “Kansu Orientale” for which the German Capuchins (OFMCap) took responsibility. Following the example of the CICM missionaries, the Steyl missionaries also first used Xixiang as their central mission station. The Liangzhou area

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the early Catholic activities in the Xining area see also Louis Schram CICM (repr. 2006), *The Monguors of the Kansu-Tibetan Frontier, Part I-III*, Xining: Plateau Publications, pp. 608–611; and Ma Mingzhong 马明忠 (2009), “Zaoqi jinru Qinghai de tianzhujiao chuanjiaoshi kaoshu 早期进入青海的天主教传教士考述,” in: *Qinghai shehui kexue* 青海社会科学, No. 6, pp. 153-156.

7 See B. Szcześniak (1959), “The Description and Map of Kansu,” pp. 294-313. Szcześniak also mentions another Jesuit by the name of Domenge who was apparently proselytizing in the Liangzhou area around 1706, i.e. shortly before Maoletti and Ottaiano arrived in Gansu. In “Noch eine Mission: Westkansu,” in: *Steyler Missionsbote* 1922, Nos. 9-10, p. 78, yet another Jesuit by the name of Mauran is mentioned as having founded a church in Xining. For some more material proof of early Christianity in Gansu see also “Un coup d’œil sur les Missions de Scheut,” in: *Missions en Chine et au Congo et aux Philippines* 1915–1919, Vol. 27, p. 176.

8 See Adolf van Hecke CICM (1882/1883), “Partie Orientale du Vicariat Apostolique du Kan-sou,” unpubl. manuscript, KADOC, Leuven: Z.II.b.4.1., pp. 28-30; Hubert Otto CICM (1893), “Kan-sou, Aperçu sur ce Vicariat,” in: *Missions en Chine et au Congo*, No. 59, p. 362; and de Ridder, “A Pear-Tree,” pp. 67-72.

9 See de Ridder, “A Pear-Tree,” passim; and Theodor Buddenbrock SVD (1954?), “Chronik der SVD Mission in Kansu-China,” unpubl. manuscript, Archivum Generale, Rome, no file no., p. 9.



Farewell to CICM missionaries in Xixiang by newly arrived SVD missionaries, 1923. Photo: SVD Archives.

did not seem a bad choice because it was conveniently situated on the eastern end of the so-called Gansu Corridor at a nodal point of major trading routes which connected the eastern part of Gansu with its western part, as well as with the Kokonor region and the north-eastern parts of Xinjiang which were all part of the vicariate. However, in 1925, Bishop Buddenbrock SVD made plans to move his residence to the provincial capital of Lanzhou because of its greater political and economic importance and its closeness to the provincial government. After the great earthquake of May 23, 1927, which was followed by a huge flood and mud slide that either heavily damaged or totally destroyed most of the mission's buildings in the greater Liangzhou area, Bishop Buddenbrock finally moved to Lanzhou.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, in the aftermath of these terrible natural disasters which had cost tens of thousands of lives in the Liangzhou area, Xixiang – along with most other stations – was rebuilt and continued to play an important role in the vicariate. The orphanage and the dispensary, which had been passed on to the SVD missionaries, were later joined by a home for the aged, a hospital and a polyclinic. These were taken care of by the Missionary Sisters “Servants of the Holy Spirit” (*Servae Spiritus Sancti*, SSpS) who had arrived in Gansu and Xixiang in 1924 at the invitation of the Steyl missionaries. The former Minor Seminary of the CICM, however, had been split into a general elementary school and into separate courses for seminarians. The school was later moved into town to Liangzhou and the Minor Seminary was re-established together with a Major Seminary in Lanzhou. By 1934, Xixiang also offered a school for girl catechists. Furthermore, many girls were trained by the SSpS Sisters in needlework and other household chores in order to provide them with practical abilities to earn a living for themselves or for their future families.

10 See Buddenbrock SVD, “Chronik der SVD Mission in Kansu-China,” pp. 15-17; and Freundeskreis (ed.) (1939), *Kan-su. Zwischen Gletscher und Wüste*, Wien – Mödling, pp. 84-89. For a general account of the history of the SVD in Gansu, Qinghai and Xinjiang see Hao Bo 昊伯 (2006), *Huaxia yizong. Shengyanhui Gansu, Henan fuchuanishi (1922-1953) 华夏遺蹤. 聖言會甘肅, 河南福傳史 (1922-1953)*, Taipei; Johann Bromkamp SVD (1970), *Mission ohne Maske. 26 Jahre in China*, Buxheim; and Bianca Horlemann (2009), “The Divine Word Missionaries in Gansu, Qinghai and Xinjiang, 1922-1953: A Bibliographic Note,” in: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 19, No. 1, pp. 59-82 (for the Chinese translation see: “1922-1953 nian jian Gansu, Qinghai he Xinjiang de ‘Shengyanhui’ chuanjiao shituan: shumu yanjiu 1922-1953 年間甘肅, 青海和新疆的‘聖言會’傳教使團: 書目研究,” in: *Zhongguo bianjiang minzu yanjiu 中國邊疆民族研究* 2010, No. 3, pp. 381-404.)



Xixiang Orphanage,  
ca. 1930. Photo: SVD  
Archives.

The SVD missionaries and SSpS Sisters were supported in the 1930s/1940s by the Chinese Missionary Sisters Oblates of the Holy Family (OHF) who served on about fifteen stations in Gansu including Xixiang.<sup>11</sup> Xixiang also continued to serve as a retreat centre for the SVD missionaries where they would meet in July or August for their annual spiritual exercises or spent some time to relax or to recover from illness. Sometimes, the missionaries would make excursions into the nearby Qilian Mountains where the mission station owned some yaks, which were herded by Tibetan nomads who also produced milk and butter for the missionaries.<sup>12</sup>



Orphaned girls  
doing needle-  
work.  
Photo: SVD  
Archives.

- 11 For some general information on the SSpS and OHF Sisters see Edberte Moroder SSpS (2007a), *Licht im Dunkeln. China 8. Ostgansu*, Stockerau; *ibid.* (2007b), *Licht im Dunkeln. China 9. Westgansu*, Stockerau; R.G. Tiedemann's contribution *Oblates of the Holy Family* at <http://ricci.rt.usfca.edu/institution/view.aspx?institutionID=429> (accessed July 4, 2011); [www.catholiclz.org/news/Show.asp?id=708](http://www.catholiclz.org/news/Show.asp?id=708) (accessed April 10, 2014); and Bianca Horlemann (2013), "Christian Missionaries in Qinghai and Gansu: Sources for Tibetan and Mongol Studies," in: *Xiyu lishi yuyan yanjiu jikan* 西域历史语言研究集刊 (Historical and Philological Studies of China's Western Region), No. 6, p. 174.
- 12 See the report of January 16, 1937 by Hermann Lob SVD, Archivum Generale, Rome: AG-SVD 631.5716, p. 3; "Aus dem Jahresbericht des Apostol. Vikariates Westkansu (China), 1924," in: *Steyler Missionsbote* 1925, No. 6, pp. 87-89; and "Auf hoher Alm' in Kansus Bergen," in: *Missionsgrüße* 1940, Vol. 19, Nos. 5-6, pp. 35-36.

Because of its remoteness, the mission station of Xixiang was rarely touched by political and military turmoil, which regularly shook Gansu Province before 1950. However, several famous foreign explorers of the late 19th / early 20th century found their way to Xixiang as guests of the missionaries. Among them were Sven Hedin in 1896, Clarence D. Bruce in 1905/1906, Carl Mannerheim in 1907 and the French Trans-Asian Citroën Expedition in late 1931.<sup>13</sup> In 1936, the Liangzhou area was also skirted by a division of the Red Army on its Long March. Being frightened by many rumours, most of the missionaries, Sisters and some staff fled from Xixiang over the nearby Qilian 祁連 mountains into Qinghai Province. Although the station was looted by communist soldiers, it remained largely intact and the missionaries were able to return after several weeks.<sup>14</sup>

After 1950, Xixiang shared the fate of most Christian mission stations in China. The foreign priests were expelled and the three hectares of mission grounds eventually communalised. Apart from the numerous graves of CICM and SVD missionaries who had passed away over the years due to illness or old age, the old cemetery of the mission station also bears witness to the local Chinese Catholic priests who had gradually started to replace the foreign missionaries after 1950. Many of them suffered severe persecution under the new communist government and especially during the so-called Cultural Revolution in the 1960s/1970s.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, the memory of Xixiang's long history as an important Christian centre in the Liangzhou area remained alive, and during the reform era of the 1980s, it quickly resumed a new role in the local Christian community after the partial restitution of the former estate. Under the present Vicar General, Father John Baptist Yang Zhongxue, Xixiang / Songshu Parish not only upholds the memory of its past as a focal point for the local Catholic community but it also continues to be an active member of Lanzhou Diocese which presently numbers thirty-eight parishes and ca. 40,000 baptized Catholics. As before 1950, Lanzhou Diocese supports several welfare and educational projects such as village schools and two orphanages. The latter are taken care of by the OHF Sisters whose convent has been re-established by the present (Arch)Bishop Joseph Han Zhihai 韓志海 in 2009.<sup>16</sup> Special Bible study courses, which are offered annually during wintertime in Xixiang, seem to be well attended, as well as programs which engage the local youth.<sup>17</sup> In sum, Catholic life is again vibrant in Xixiang / Songshu Parish.

13 See, for example, Carl G. Mannerheim (1969), *Across Asia from West to East in 1906–1908*, Oosterhout, pp. 430 and 494–496; Sven Hedin (1898), *Through Asia*, London, p. 1227; Clarence D. Bruce (1907), *In the Footsteps of Marco Polo*, Edinburgh, p. 267; Ariane Audouin-Dubreuil (2008), *Expedition Seidenstrasse*, München, pp. 256–259; and “Nachrichten aus der Kansu-Mission,” in: *Missionsgrüße* 1932, Vol. 11, No. 6, pp. 87–88. On foreign travellers as guests of mission stations see also Bianca Horlemann (in print), “The Catholic Missionary Enterprise in Late 19th / Early 20th Century Qinghai, Gansu and Xinjiang as Perceived by Chinese and Western Travellers,” Leuven Chinese Studies Series.

14 See letter of November 28, 1936 by Bishop Buddenbrock SVD, Archivum Generale, Rome: AG-SVD 631.5700–5706; and the report by Hermann Lob SVD, AG-SVD 631.5713–5734.

15 For a detailed report of the sufferings of the SVD missionaries between 1950 and 1953 see Buddenbrock SVD, “Chronik der SVD Mission in Kansu-China,” pp. 44–55. The diocesan museum in Xixiang has devoted considerable space to the memory of the persecuted Chinese priests.

16 See <http://directory.ucanews.com/statistics/china-lanzhou/190> (accessed April 10, 2014); and [www.catholiclz.org/news/Show.asp?id=554](http://www.catholiclz.org/news/Show.asp?id=554) (accessed April 10, 2014).

17 See [www.asianews.it/news-en/In-Lanzhou-diocese,-Bible-studies-warm-the-hearts-of-the-faithful-during-the-cold-winter-months-17551.html](http://www.asianews.it/news-en/In-Lanzhou-diocese,-Bible-studies-warm-the-hearts-of-the-faithful-during-the-cold-winter-months-17551.html) (accessed April 10, 2014); and <http://paulhanyz.blog.163.com/album/#m=1&aid=251431360&p=1> (accessed April 10, 2014).

Xixiang, Church and Chapel



Xixiang Church, Early 20th Century.  
Photo: Courtesy Ferdinand Verbiest Institute.



Xixiang Chapel, ca. 1930s. Photo: SVD  
Archives.

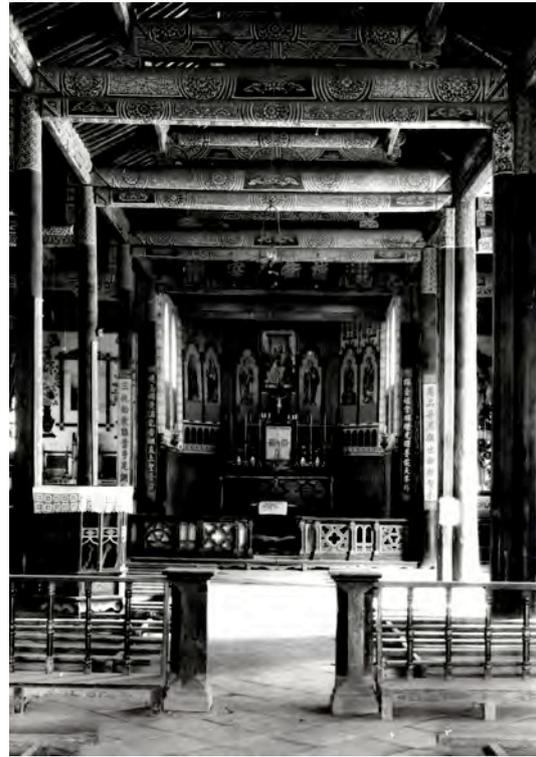


Xixiang Church in 2009. Photo: Bianca Horlemann.

### Interior of Xixiang Church



Interior of Xixiang Church, Early 20th Century.  
Photo: Courtesy KADOC, Leuven.



Interior of Xixiang Church, ca. 1920s.  
Photo: SVD Archives.



Interior of Xixiang Church in 2009.  
Photo: Bianca Horlemann.

Xixiang, Cemetery



Xixiang Cemetery, Early 20th Century.  
Photo: Courtesy KADOC, Leuven.



Father A. Volpert SVD visits the Xixiang Cemetery, late 1940s. Photo: SVD Archives.



Xixiang Cemetery in 2009.  
Photo: Bianca Horlemann.

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