

News Update on Religion and Church in China September 13 – December 9, 2014

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The “News Update on Religion and Church in China” appears regularly in each issue of Religions & Christianity in Today’s China (RCTC). Since the editorial staff learns of some items only later, it can happen that there are chronological overlaps between “News Updates” of two consecutive issues of RCTC. In these cases stories referred to in earlier “News Updates” will not be repeated. All “News Updates” can be found online at the website of the China-Zentrum (www.china-zentrum.de). – The last “News Update” (RCTC 2014, No. 4, pp. 3-23) covered the period June 29 – October 15, 2014.

September 13, 2014:

First two-year advanced course for Catholic lay leaders ends with celebration in Beijing’s South Church

Every Saturday for two years, the 73 graduates, aged 25–55, had taken part in all-day classes in 18 subjects such as: philosophy, sacred scripture, Church doctrine, theology, Church history, spirituality, Church music and comparative religion. The goals of the course are to educate lay persons as teachers to prepare catechumens for baptism, to train them for evangelization as well as to improve the general “quality of faith” of China’s Catholic laity. According to reports published in the Shijiazhuang Catholic newspaper *Xinde* (*Faith*, Sept. 25), following the closing ceremony, the next advanced course began with 57 participants.

September 15, 2014:

Catholic Major Seminary of Sichuan admits male lay students for the first time

As one consequence of the diminishing number of priestly vocations, the Major Seminary of Sichuan has decided to open its doors for male lay students to study theology beginning with the new academic year starting on September 15. The rector of the seminary, Bishop Chen Gong’ao, reported this decision in an interview with the Catholic news agency UCAN. The young men attend the theology courses together with the seminarians. They also take additional classes, such as administrative sciences, public relations and financial accounting at universities with which the seminary has made agreements. After two years of study on full scholarship, the lay students will have to decide whether they wish to continue studies for the priesthood, end their studies to take up a role in the Church or look for work in some other field. No matter which they eventually choose, they would be qualified for different kinds of service in the Church, said Fr. Qiu Guoqing, dean of the seminary. Currently, 12 young men, 18 to 23 years of age, have begun the study program in the seminary (www.china.ucanews.com Oct. 13).

September 27, 2014:

The first Chinese since the Cultural Revolution has been ordained a deacon in the Orthodox Church

The diaconate ordination of Aleksander Yu Shi took place on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross in the University Church of St. John the Apostle in St. Petersburg, Russia.

A few days later the new deacon already travelled to Harbin (Heilongjiang Province), where on October 14, Feast of the Protection and Intercession of Mary (Pokrov), he conducted devotions to the Mother of God. Aleksander Yu Shi completed his theology studies in St. Petersburg. During a visit to St. Petersburg on July 13, 2014, Wang Zuo'an, director of the Chinese State Administration [Bureau] for Religious Affairs, thanked the Russian Orthodox Church and the City government for their support of this Chinese seminarian (orthodox.cn Sept. 27; Oct. 7; pravostok.ru Oct. 7; Dec. 4 and 9; spbda.ru Sept. 27; mitropolia.spb.ru July 13; www.patriarchia.ru July 14; mospat.ru July 15; Oct. 14). For more information, see the article in this issue of *RCTC*. See also the entry of Dec. 9, 2014.

Piotr Adamek

Around October 1, 2014:

Tibetan monk sentenced to 12 years in prison for inciting anti-Chinese protests

According to reports by *Radio Free Asia (RFA)*, citing a source in India, Tsangyang Gyatso, chant leader at the Drilda Monastery in Sog (Suo) County, Nagchu Prefecture in the Tibet Autonomous Region, was sentenced to prison on charges of inciting protests against China and of communicating with contacts outside Tibet. *RFA* reported that the monk, together with three other monks from the Drilda Monastery, had been arrested on unknown charges on March 17, 2014. Earlier in March at least 9 other monks and residents of the area had been arrested on suspicion of involvement in protests against Chinese rule in Tibet, including the painting of independence slogans on rocks near a bridge.

Citing a Tibetan source, *RFA* also reported on October 17 that already two or three months ago, the popular Tibetan religious teacher Khenpo Kartse, also known as Karma Tsewang, had been sentenced in a secret trial to two and a half years in prison. According to *RFA*, he was arrested on December 6, 2013, in Chengdu and initially accused of "harming the security of the state." He was later additionally accused of hiding a fugitive monk from another monastery in his Japa Monastery in the Nangchen (Nangqian) County of the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. That monk was suspected of having been associated with a bombing incident, for which he had been convicted, although his lawyer denied the accusation. At the beginning of 2014, according to *Radio Free Asia (RFA)* thousands of Tibetans gathered at Japa Monastery to try and persuade the authorities to release Kartse. The *RFA* report said that Kartse had promoted the Tibetan language, culture and religion and had engaged in social work, including in the relief efforts following the devastating earthquake in Yushu in 2010 (*Radio Free Asia* Oct. 17 and 28).

October 2, 2014:

The Dalai Lama hints at informal discussions on a pilgrimage to Wutai Mountain

"It's not finalized, not yet, but the idea is there," the Dalai Lama said in Dharamsala according to a report in the *South China Morning Post*. He said that he had made his wish clear to contacts in China,

among whom were some retired Communist officials. “Recently, some Chinese officials, for example the deputy party secretary in the Autonomous Region of Tibet, he also mentioned the possibility of my visit as a pilgrimage to that sacred place,” said the Dalai Lama. Wutai Mountain (Wutaishan) in Shanxi Province is one of Buddhism’s four holy mountains in China and also plays an important role for Tibetan Buddhism.

The Dalai Lama has repeatedly made positive comments about President Xi Jinping. In an interview with *Die Welt*, he praised Xi for having said in Paris in March 2014 that Buddhism is an important part of Chinese culture, adding that this is something quite new for a leader of the Communist Party to say. According to the *South China Morning Post*, before escaping from Tibet in 1959, the Dalai Lama maintained close relations with Xi’s father, Xi Zhongxun, who belonged to the first generation of leaders in the People’s Republic of China. But the newspaper also quoted Lian Xiangmin, a researcher at the National China Tibetology Research Center, as saying that he could see no signs that Beijing might be inclined to change its policy towards Tibet and the Dalai Lama, adding that the Dalai Lama only wants to draw attention to himself and to exert pressure on President Xi using foreign media (*South China Morning Post* Oct. 3.; *Die Welt* Sept. 9). – See also the entry of November 5, 2014.

October 3, 2014:

First Catholic international Chinese hymn composition contest held in Macau

After announcing a competition for newly composed Chinese-language hymns, the Catholic radio transmitter *Radio Veritas Asia* received 182 submissions from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Macau, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Canada, the US, the Philippines and Europe. On October 3, the three best compositions selected by a jury were performed in the Cinetatro Macau – two from Hong Kong, and a third hymn in the indigenous tradition from Taiwan. The jury also gave honorable mentions to ten other hymns judged outstanding in quality which were performed on the same occasion. One competitor from mainland China told *UCAN* that he had taken part in the competition because most of the hymns currently sung in Catholic Churches in China are either of Protestant or western origin. The organizers of the competition plan to distribute the best hymns from the contest on CD in the hope that they will serve as an inspiration for still more compositions (*Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Oct. 28; *china.ucanews.com* Oct. 11).

October 3–5, 2014:

Bishop Chen Gong’ao completes 130 km pilgrimage on foot as a way to reflect on the two years of his episcopate and to pray for the World Synod of Bishops in Rome

Accompanied by two seminarians, the 50-year-old, who had been consecrated Bishop of Nanchong (Sichuan Province) on April 19, 2012, journeyed on foot along the National Highway 212, passing through four districts along the way. In an interview with the Catholic newspaper *Xinde*, he mentioned three motives for his pilgrimage: 1) to reflect on the two years of his episcopate and to atone for his failings as bishop, and 2) to give voice to the reality that the Chinese bishops belong to the bishops of the world-wide Church, gathered in Rome from October 5–19 for the World Synod of Bishops on the Family [which the bishops of mainland China were not permitted to attend], and that the subject of families is close to their hearts, too. In line with Pope Francis’ call to go out of the churches and into the streets where the people are, Bishop Chen and his companions prayed a rosary for the neighborhood people

in each locality through which they passed. The bishop said that the third reason for his pilgrimage was to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the People's Republic and to see firsthand the results of 30 years of reform and opening in the parish communities (*Xinde* Oct. 16).

October 10–11, 2014:

First “Faith Seminar” for Catholic entrepreneurs in Wuxi (Jiangsu Province)

According to reports published in the Shijiazhuang Catholic newspaper *Xinde*, 90 Catholic business-people and leading lay people from various eastern Chinese cities met together in the Sanliqiao Church in Wuxi. The bishop, together with some priests and sisters of the Diocese of Nanjing, to which Wuxi belongs, took part in the seminar organized by the church's pastor, Fr. Guo Mandong. The seminar's talks, however, were all delivered by lay Catholic men and women entrepreneurs from Wenzhou, Wuhan, Beijing and Shanghai, all of whom are engaged in church groups in their respective places of residence. They spoke on topics such as trust, building communities of faith, and the search for God in the workplace as well as on the relationship between entrepreneurial activities and the faith. The contribution of businesswoman Li Wenxiang drew particular attention; she is engaged at the Evangelization Center at the North Church in Beijing and has already given training courses in management and service to more than 500 enterprises across China. She spoke on the theme: “Learning leadership wisdom from the Bible – how to be a simple, joyfully working, highly efficient A+ leader” (*Xinde* Oct. 23).

October 13, 2014:

President Xi Jinping cites Confucian maxims on governance and calls for more respect for the “5000 continuous years of Chinese culture”

In an address to the Politburo, Xi Jinping said: “We in the Communist Party are firm Marxists [...] At the same time, we are not historical nihilists and are not cultural nihilists. We cannot be ignorant of the history of our own country, and we cannot belittle ourselves.” In governance, the Chinese should draw from their history. He quoted examples from various classical texts. Particular attention was paid to Xi citing the phrases: “Combine ‘li’ – rituals that express ethics – and the law in order to rule” (礼法合治), and: “Virtues are central, punishment supplements them” (德主刑辅). Chinese media pointed to their importance for the “rule of law” (quotes according to the *New York Times Sinosphere Blogs* Oct. 14; further: *Xinhua* Oct. 15). – See also the entry of October 20–23, 28, 2014.

October 13, 2014:

Court in Kashgar (Xinjiang) sentences 56 in connection with the bloody incident in Shache – 12 death sentences handed down

Twelve defendants have been sentenced to death for, among other things, organizing, leading and participating in a terrorist organization, intentional homicide, kidnapping and endangering public safety. Fifteen others were given death sentences with a two-year reprieve. Nine defendants were sentenced to life imprisonment, and another 20 to 20 years in prison, according to the state news agency *Xinhua*. All those in the list of persons sentenced appear to have Uyghur names. According to reports in the

Chinese media, 37 civilians were killed and 94 injured, with 59 terrorists shot dead by police and 215 persons arrested in an attack in Shache (Yarkant) County in the Prefecture of Kashgar, Xinjiang, on July 28, 2014. Uyghur groups in exile have given a different account of events (*Xinhua* Aug. 2 and 23; Oct. 13). – See also *RCTC* 2014, No. 4, pp. 7-8, and the entries of Oct. 20 and Nov. 28, 2014.

October 14, 2014:

Office for Poverty Alleviation: In 2013 China helped almost 40 million people out of poverty

That information was in the report delivered by Zheng Wenkai, deputy director of the State Council Leading Group Office for Poverty Alleviation and Development. The number 40 million was based on China's own poverty standard of an income of RMB 2,300 per person per year, the equivalent of US \$ 1 per day. According to the poverty level set by the Chinese, 82 million people still live in poverty in China, Zheng said. However, according to the World Bank's higher standard of US \$ 1.25 per day, China still has, according to Zheng, 200 million poor, or about 15% of the total population (www.chinadaily.com.cn Oct. 14).

October 15, 2014:

In a document the Party reaffirms its leadership role in the universities

The General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China has published a policy directive entitled: "System of Responsibility of Rectors under the Leadership of the Party Committees at Regular Institutes of Higher Education." According to the directive, the role of the Party committees should be strengthened as the leadership cores of the universities. The university president and other members of the university administration are to accept and implement the decisions of the Party committee, at the same time separating the areas of responsibility of the Party and the university administration. The document also calls for a strengthening of ideological work in higher education (*Xinhua* Oct. 16; full text of the document with the title: 关于坚持和完善普通高等学校党委领导下的校长负责制的实施意见 can be found at: www.news.xinhuanet.com/politics/2014-10/15/c_1112840901.htm).

Already at the end of August 2014, Communist Party committees of three prestigious mainland universities made suggestions on how to strengthen ideological control over students and teachers. The statements by Communist Party committees of Peking University, Shanghai's Fudan University and Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou appeared in the article "How to carry out ideological work at universities under new historical conditions" in *Qiushi*, a Communist Party journal. Their proposals focused on appropriate use of the internet at universities and the ideological education of teachers under 45 years of age. The teachers should be instructed, among other things, in the Party's and the country's history, "that they may know why the Western path of development is not suitable for China" (*South China Morning Post* Sept. 1; www.qstheory.cn Aug. 31).

In this context, see also the internal Party document: "Views on Doing a Good Job of Resisting Foreign Use of Religion to Infiltrate Institutes of Higher Education and Preventing Campus Proselytizing" in *China heute* 2014, No. 2, pp. 84-90 [German translation of the full text].

October 16–18, 2014:

General Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists (WFB) meets for the first time in China

In Baoji (Shaanxi Province), participants from 40 countries exchanged ideas on the theme of “Buddhism and Public Benefit Charity.” In his opening speech at the famous Famen Temple, Du Qinglin, vice chairman of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, stressed that Buddhism had rooted itself deeply in Chinese culture during the course of its history in China and that a Buddhist theory and culture with Chinese characteristics had emerged that has spread to Korea, Japan and to other countries of Southeast Asia. At the opening of the Conference, the governor of Shaanxi was among the speakers, as was the chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA), Master Chuan-yin, and the official Panchen Lama, one of the CBA’s vice-chairs. The CBA was hosting the event. The King of Thailand, the president of Sri Lanka and other heads of state sent telegrams of greetings.

On October 18, the conference adopted the “Baoji Declaration.” In it, the leaders of the WFB expressed their joy at the development of Buddhism in Mainland China and their delight that the General Conference has been hosted in the country for the very first time. They spoke of strengthening their long-standing relationship with the Buddhist Association of China, which was one of the founding countries of the WFB in 1950. In ten points they called for a world-wide, reinforced commitment to the reduction of social inequality, for a peaceful society, for sustainable protection of the environment through reduction of greed and other concerns.

The headquarters of the World Fellowship of Buddhists are in Bangkok. At the last General Conference in Yeosu (South Korea) from June 11–16, 2012, the Chinese delegation walked out of the conference to protest the participation of Tibetans in exile – including former Prime Minister Samdhong Rinpoche and another minister of the Tibetan government in exile (see: *RCTC* 2012, No. 3, p. 20) (www.china-buddhism.com.cn/WFB27th/; the English text of the “Baoji Declaration” can be found at: www.sara.gov.cn/xwzx/xjj/171300.htm).

October 19, 22, 29, 2014:

Taiwan’s foreign minister at the beatification of Pope Paul VI – “cooperative programs” and sharing of “universal values”

Taiwan’s Foreign Minister David Lin attended the beatification ceremony of Pope Paul VI at the Vatican on October 19 as President Ma Ying-jeou’s envoy. Following the ceremony, in a meeting with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, he handed over a donation of EUR 100,000 for refugees in Syria and Iraq.

At a press conference on October 22, Lin gave a report on his trip to the Vatican. On that occasion, Lin talked about the theological studies for priests and Sisters from Mainland China at the Fu Jen Faculty of Theology of St Robert Bellarmine in New Taipei City. This project is “one of several cooperative programs” between Taiwan and the Holy See, Vice Foreign Minister Vanessa Shih said. According to data supplied by Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a total of 146 students from Mainland China have taken part in these courses, with 51 having already returned to China upon completion of their studies. For some months now, the Faculty of Theology has also been recognized by the state as an independent academic institution and, as such, it is the only one in the whole Catholic world of Taiwan and China. According to Lin, there is hope in Taiwan for more exchanges between Taiwanese and Vatican universities. Relations between Taiwan and the Holy See are cordial and stable because both share universal values, Lin said.

On October 29, a memorandum was signed at the Vatican between the Vatican Library and the National Library of Taiwan on a common cataloging of ancient Chinese texts.

The Vatican is the only country in Europe with which Taiwan has diplomatic relations (*Central News Agency* Oct. 22 and 25; *Taipei Times* Oct. 23; www.china.ucanews.com Nov. 4).

October 20, 2014:

Dui Hua Foundation estimates 2,400 executions in China in 2013 – Trend in decline, but in 2014 increase in executions in Xinjiang and in the anti-corruption campaign

Although China executes more people every year than the rest of the world combined, still the number of executions in recent years has declined significantly. The US-based Dui Hua Foundation published this information in a report. In 1983 – the first year of the “Strike Hard” campaign – 24,000 people were sentenced to death, the report said. According to estimates of the Dui Hua Foundation, there were 12,000 executions in 2002, 6,500 in 2007 and 2,400 in 2013. The decline in executions since 2007 is mainly explained by the fact that since that year all death sentences must first be reviewed by the Supreme People’s Court.

The foundation estimates, however, that the annual decline in executions will likely be counterbalanced in 2014 by the wider application of the death penalty in the anti-terrorism campaign in Xinjiang and the nationwide anti-corruption campaign. At least 2,400 executions are to be expected again in 2014.

The actual number of capital executions is considered a state secret in China. Dui Hua bases its estimates on some details gleaned from the Chinese newspaper *Nanfang zhoumo* (*Southern Weekly*), on information from Chinese officials with access to the relevant data and on other sources.

UCAN reported on October 22 that, within the five months since the beginning of the “Strike Hard” campaign against terrorism in Xinjiang in May 2014, the state media have reported that almost 40 Uyghurs were sentenced to death, and of those at least 20 were executed. Civil rights lawyer Li Fangping said that, as far as known, the Uyghurs who were given death sentences were denied representation by independent lawyers and the independent media were not allowed to report the cases.

There are currently 55 crimes punishable by death in the PRC. On October 31, 2014, a Criminal Law amendment draft providing the abolition of the death penalty for nine non-violent offenses was submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress for the first round of deliberation (*Caixin Online* Nov. 7; *UCAN* Oct. 22; www.duihua.org/wp Oct. 20). – See also the entry of October 13, 2014.

October 20–23, 28, 2014:

Plenary assembly of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China adopts a “path of socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics”

The plenary session was dedicated to the theme “The Rule of Law.” The results were published in a communiqué on October 23 and in a detailed resolution on October 28. According to the communiqué, which was quoted by *Xinhua*, China will build a law-abiding government, ensure the leadership of the Party in a “socialist rule of law with Chinese characteristics” [中国特色社会主义法治] and will rule the country in accordance with the Constitution. On October 24, the State Council discussed the implementation of the “legal reform blueprint” which had been approved by the Central Committee.

Various commentators pointed out that for the first time the Party has insisted that Party cadres stop interfering in the judicial process. However, this is no impartial judicial system as understood in the West if at the same time they say that judges and lawyers are to be formed by ideological considerations and that the recognition of the leadership of the Communist Party is to be a prerequisite for a career in this field, Markus Ackeret commented in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. Therefore Western legal scholars argued as to whether we are dealing here with a form of “rule of law” or rather with “rule by law,” Ackeret wrote (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung* Nov. 4; *Die Welt* Oct. 23; *Xinhua* Oct. 23, 24, 28). – See also the entry of Oct. 13, 2014.

October 23, 2014:

Director of State Administration for Religious Affairs promoted to Standing Committee of the Communist Party’s Central Committee

Wang Zu’àn was one of three new members, whose appointment was made necessary by the expulsion of three former Central Committee members from the Party. The announcement of the changes was made by the Central Committee following its plenary session held from October 20–23 (*Xinhua* Oct. 23). Regardless of his new position in the Party hierarchy, Wang will continue in office as director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs.

October 24, 2014:

Third release of an underground priest from the Diocese of Baoding – after 10 years in prison

As reported by *UCAN*, Fr. Ma Wuyong had been arrested in 2004 at Sujiazhuang Village in Quyi County while taking part in a retreat with other priests; the police action was carried out by 20 police cars and numerous police officers. Bishop An Shuxin, who heads the official part of the Diocese of Baoding (Hebei Province), now told *UCAN* that Fr. Ma had returned home, but that he had not yet been able to get in touch with him. He added that he still has no news of Bishop Su Zhimin of Baoding and Bishop Shi Enxiang of Yixian, both of whom were arrested and disappeared in 1997 and in 2001 respectively.

Already in August of 2014, Fr. Lu Genjun and Fr. Liu Honggeng, both of whom are also from the Diocese of Baoding, were released after eight years in prison. All three priests were imprisoned because they had refused to join the Patriotic Association. According to a Church source, Fr. Ma Wuyong was released “without conditions.”

In the light of rumors about a possible resumption of dialogue between China and the Vatican, several Chinese priests interviewed by *UCAN* commented on the release with skepticism. A priest from the official Church said that those on the Chinese side initiate many such maneuvers “so that the dreamers will rejoice, but in the end the government claims that the Vatican is not sincere, and they allow [the negotiations] to break down.” In fact, the Catholic Church in the country is being even more strictly controlled [than before], the priest said. *UCAN* wrote that in connection with the reports about possible dialogue, Catholics in China are asking themselves about the real intentions behind the ceremony staged by the State Administration for Religious Affairs on October 28 to honor six bishops of the Patriotic Association (www.china.ucanews.com Nov. 7). – See also the entries of Oct. 28 and Nov. 13 and 20/21 as well as *RCTC* 2014, No. 4, pp. 12-13; 21. For the background, see the article in *China heute* 2014, No. 4, pp. 210-212 [in German]).

October 27, 2014:

Committee of the Political Consultative Conference discusses revision of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” and proposes a “Law on Religion”

The meeting of the Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs of the Political Consultative Conference (PCC), headed by Zhu Weiqun, its chairman and deputy director of the United Front Work Department of the CPC, was attended by more than 20 religious leaders. According to a report in the official PCC newspaper, at that meeting commission members proposed a revision of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” so as to apply the resolution on the “rule of law” adopted by the Plenary Assembly of the CPC Central Committee on October 20–23 to the religions. Bishop Ma Yinglin, vice-chairman of the PCC’s Committee for Ethnic and Religious Affairs and chairman (not recognized by Rome) of the official Chinese Bishops’ Conference, told *UCAN* that the committee members had not singled out any specific paragraphs of the document for revision, but they had generally expressed their opinion that the rules must correspond even more closely to the current situation of religious work and of the religions in order to better protect the legitimate rights of the religions. Ma said that committee members had also proposed the adoption of a law on religion.

The “Regulations on Religious Affairs,” which were enacted in 2004 and which entered into effect in 2005, were the first comprehensive legislation of the People’s Republic of China on religious matters. As further stated in the *UCAN* report, already back in 1989 some individuals from religious circles had proposed a “law on religion” to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress but some controversial basic points could not be resolved (www.china.ucanews.com Nov. 6).

A newer, more concrete proposal for a law on religion has been proposed by the researcher Liu Peng, who presented his first draft of such a law as a “citizen proposal” on June 20, 2013 (see *China heute* 2013, No. 3, pp. 140-141 [in German]). On July 17, 2014, at a conference at Renmin University, he proposed an abridged version of his draft of the law, which he had revised following feedback on his earlier proposal. Liu Peng is a researcher at the Institute for American Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. With his Pu Shi Institute, which he founded in 1999, he has been campaigning for years for a law on religion (www.christiantimes.cn Nov. 1; www.pacilution.com).

October 27, 2014:

China Daily: China strengthens controls in border areas to prevent departure of extremists

According to the official state newspaper *China Daily*, in recent years young extremists have traveled from Xinjiang via Southeast Asia to Turkey or Syria, where they have been given military training by local extremist organizations so that they could then take part in attacks being carried out in Syria and Iraq. According to the report, in March 2014 the border police in Yunnan prevented eight individuals who planned to join the jihad from leaving the country. The eight then perpetrated the attack at the train station of Kunming on March 1, 2014, in which 31 people were killed, the paper said.

The Singapore *Straits Times* reported that on September 13, on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, four Uyghurs from Xinjiang carrying fake Turkish passports were picked up by the police. They had traveled there via Cambodia, Thailand and Malaysia in order to ally themselves with an Indonesian Mujahedeen leader who has connections to the Islamic State (IS). In the same report it was stated that China estimates at about 100 the number of its citizens fighting with IS in Syria and Iraq.

The *South China Morning Post* reported on October 21 that in recent years various jihadist organizations have been expressing increased interest in Xinjiang. According to the *Post*, in one newly pub-

lished Al-Qaeda English-language publication, Xinjiang is described as “occupied Muslim land” that must be “recovered [into] the shade of the Islamic Caliphate.” And in July, in an appeal to Muslims around the world, Abu Bakr al Baghdadi, the leader of IS, declared that Muslims in China were having their rights taken away from them by force (*China Daily* Oct. 27; *South China Morning Post* Oct. 21; *The Straits Times* Sept. 15; *UCAN* Oct. 27).

October 27 / November 7, 2014:

Kashgar (Xinjiang): Heads of more than 2,000 schools vow to “defend schools against the infiltration of religion” – 24 teams propagate “secular, modern lifestyle”



Women leave a “training center for the elimination of religious radicalization” in the Town of Naize’erbage, Kashgar. The training in Naize’erbage is described in the *Xinhua* report of November 7 presented below, from which also the photo was taken. The session lasted 40 days. 76 women participated. A photo caption in a series of photos from the course says: “After the training, women who previously wore face veils are now dressed in ethnic costumes.” Photo: www.xj.xinhuanet.com.

On October 27, heads of more than 2,000 kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in Kashgar signed a banner with that message, according to a report in the state-run *Global Times*. A representative of the Education Bureau of Kashgar told the newspaper that they had explained to the students the state policy that Party members, teachers and underage students should not practice any religion, whether in school or at home. *Associated Free Press* wrote in this connection that it is not permitted for any child under 18 years throughout the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang to enter a mosque (*AFP / UCAN* Oct. 29; *Global Times* Oct. 29).

On November 7, the official press agency *Xinhua* reported in Xinjiang on the measures carried out in Kashgar to “eliminate religious radicalization” (*qu [zongjiao] jiduanhua* 去[宗教]极端化). In this campaign, cadres as well as personalities from the religious sphere will be “held in a firm grip” so that they guide the faithful masses to return to a “secular, modern lifestyle,” the report said. According to *Xinhua*, the measures being carried out to this end include “training seminars for modern and civilized manners,” which are being held throughout the townships, towns and sub-districts of Kashgar,

with the result that the “previously quite common” phenomena of wearing jilbabs (a garment covering the whole body except the head and hands) and face veils for women together with long beards for younger men “can scarcely be seen” any more. In one village 45 religious figures under the age of 50 shaved off their long beards and so offered themselves to believers as role models to encourage them to shave off their beards too. Twenty four propaganda teams against radicalization were formed with 120 team members in all, who will visit all of the villages, households, neighborhoods, schools, businesses, markets and mosques in Kashgar, the *Xinhua* report said. During the last year, the police in Kashgar arrested 13 “wild imams,” religious personnel and former religious personnel for various violations [see entry of Nov. 10, 2014]. Fifteen cadres were punished for disciplinary violations [including religious activity, see *RCTC* 2014, No. 4, p. 15] (www.xj.xinhuanet.com Nov. 7).

October 28, 2014:

State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) celebrates Silver Jubilee of priestly ordination of six bishops of the official Catholic “leadership team”

The bishops honored were Fang Xingyao, chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (PA), Li Shan and Fang Jianping, deputy chairmen of the official Episcopal Conference, the PA Vice Chairman Meng Qinglu as well as two bishops not recognized by the Pope, Ma Yinglin and Zhan Silu, chairman and vice chairman respectively of the official Episcopal Conference. SARA director Wang Zuo’an praised the new [as of the end of 2010] leadership team of the “One Association and One Conference” as dedicated and promising, and as having achieved considerable success. Addressing the six bishops, Wang expressed the hope that they would: 1) hold unswervingly to the principle of independent self-government and self-management and continue to instruct the faithful to go the way of the steadfast love of country and Church; 2) stick to the way of the old generation of patriotic religious leaders and continue to shoulder their responsibility for the further development of the Chinese Catholic Church; 3) exercise well their own office, actively develop pastoral care and evangelization and unite the faithful; and finally, 4) set an example for the believers by using their strength for the building up of the “moderately prosperous society” (www.china.ucaanews.com Nov. 7; www.sara.gov.cn Oct. 31). – See also the entry of Oct. 24, 2014.

October 30, 2014:

Last of a total of 14,500 Chinese participants in this year’s Hajj return from Mecca – Cases of bribery in the waiting lists



Nearly 14,500 Muslims from the People’s Republic of China took part in this year’s Hajj to Mecca, which was coordinated by the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) with the participation of various government agencies and organized by the Chinese Islamic Association. The 94 charter flights originated

On October 27, Zhang Lebin, deputy director of the SARA, welcomed the Hajjis from Inner Mongolia at the airport in Beijing.
Photo: www.sara.gov.cn.

from Beijing, Urumqi, Lanzhou, Yinchuan and Kunming. Only the official pilgrimage, coordinated by the SARA, is allowed. Since 2006, Saudi Arabia no longer issues visas to individual pilgrims coming from the People's Republic of China. There is a country quota for the Hajj, which Saudi Arabia applies worldwide to countries with a numerically strong Muslim population. According to official figures, in 2013 11,800 pilgrims from the PRC took part in the Hajj. In 2012 there were 13,800; in 2011 13,700 and in 2010 there were 13,000.

China Daily reported on October 31 that at least 13 Chinese officials were under investigation for corruption. They are suspected of having taken bribes to move people's names closer to the top of the long waiting list for the Hajj, or of having done the same as a favor for one of their own relatives. The cases were being investigated by the Xinjiang investigative unit for political discipline, the report said (*UCAN* on Oct. 31 quoting *China Daily*; www.sara.gov.cn Oct. 27).

October 30, 2014:

Chinese Scholarship Council announces that in 2015 more students will be sent abroad

The Chinese Scholarship Council (CSC), which is under the Ministry of Education, is planning to send 25,000 Chinese students (including Ph.D. students) abroad in 2015. There were 20,400 sent in 2014 when a total of 46,000 Chinese students were studying in 85 countries, with scholarship assistance from the CSC. The report notes that since 1996 the CSC has sent 160,000 Chinese students abroad, of whom 98% have now returned to China (*Xinhua* Oct. 30).

In Germany alone, there are 23,000 students from China currently studying in German universities, constituting the largest group of foreign students in the country (www.auswaertiges-amt.de, status as of March 2014). Only part of them have state scholarships.

November 4, 2014:

An inspection unit of China's Communist Party criticizes some Party members in Zhejiang Province for participating in religious activities

On behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, from July 29 until September 28, 2014, an inspection team carried out a two-month long inspection of the Party in the Province of Zhejiang. The state news agency *Zhongguo xinwenwang* reported on the results of the inspection visit on November 4. Ji Lin, head of the inspection team, said of one of the problems encountered: "With regard to compliance with the political discipline, [we discovered that] in some places a minority of Party members are participating in religious activities and believe in a religion. Individual Party members take part in mass incidents and by doing so exercise a bad influence." As a countermeasure, he recommended strengthening the ideological education of Party members and actively countering their religious participation, "in order to preserve the progressiveness and purity of the Party." The nature of the "mass incidents" referred to was not further specified. – Inspections of local governments are taking place in different provinces in connection with the five-year battle against corruption initiated by President Xi Jinping.

Since the beginning of the year 2014, there has been a large number of forced demolitions of church tower crosses and of churches in Zhejiang, many of which have resulted in clashes between the police forces and the faithful. Catholic sources from Zhejiang interviewed by *UCAN* have confirmed that there are many religious believers among the Party cadres, and that especially good relations exist

between cadres and Buddhists (*South China Morning Post* Nov. 28, 2013; www.chinanews.com Nov. 4; www.china.ucanews.com Nov. 11). – See also the entry of November 14, 2014.

November 5, 2014:

Party secretary of Tibet warns Party cadres not to “harbor fantasies” about the Dalai Lama

Chen Quanguo, Party secretary of Tibet Autonomous Region, was quoted in the *Tibet Daily* as having said: “As for cadres who harbor fantasies about the 14th Dalai Group, follow the Dalai Group, or participate in supporting separatist infiltration sabotage activities, (they will be) strictly and severely punished according to the law and Party disciplinary measures.” *AsiaNews* and *Reuters* made the obvious connection between these warnings and the announcement of the Dalai Lama on October 2, in which he said that he had informally talked to some Chinese officials, including the deputy Party secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region about the possibility of his traveling as a pilgrim to visit the holy Wutai Mountain in Shanxi Province (*AsiaNews* Nov. 5; *Reuters* Nov. 5; *South China Morning Post* Oct. 3). – See also the entry of Oct. 2, 2014.

November 5, 2014:

Deputy Minister of Justice: More than 730,000 people serving sentences to “community correction”

More than 730,000 people in China are currently serving sentences in “community-based correction systems” (*community correction, shequ jiaozheng* 社区矫正), said Deputy Justice Minister Zhang Sujun. This means that the convicted person serves his/her sentence outside of prison, in the neighborhood community (*shequ*) in which he/she resides. This relatively new system of “community correction” was launched in 2003 as a pilot project. A total of 2.1 million people have since served their sentences in the community, with a recidivism rate of less than 0.2%, Zhang said. The community-based recovery system helps those sentenced to maintain a normal life, so the Deputy Justice Minister. According to Zhang, the adoption of a “Law on Community Correction” is in the process of being prepared. Some foreign observers had predicted that, after the abolition of “re-education through labor” system in December of 2013, the use of other alternative forms of detention would increase. Unlike the administrative penalty of re-education through labor, however, the sentence to community correction apparently must be imposed by a regular court (*Xinhua* Nov. 5; www.people.com.cn Nov. 5; see: Eva Pils, “Schafft China die Arbeitslager ab oder doch nicht? Artikel zum System der Umerziehung durch Arbeit,” March 2014, www.boell.de).

November 6, 2014:

Tibet Autonomous Region is second last provincial level administrative unit to implement new birth planning policy

This was announced by the regional government on November 6. The measure will allow couples, of which at least one partner is an only child, to have two children in future. As *Xinhua* reported, this loosening of the family planning policy will effect primarily the Han Chinese population of Tibet, since members of ethnic minorities were already allowed to have two children under the previous family

planning policy. At the provincial level, the Autonomous Region of Xinjiang is the only one which has not yet implemented the changes adopted by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in December of 2013.

Xinhua reported that, according to the latest statistics of the National Commission for Health and Family Planning, nationwide only 700,000 couples have applied for permission to have a second child, although under the new measure 11 million couples would be entitled to the exemption. A representative of the commission was quoted by *Xinhua* as saying that the number of those who have applied for a second child remains far behind expectations. In this connection, the state news agency referred to the growing labor shortages in China, the general aging of society and the unequal ratio in new births of 118 boys to 100 girls (as of 2010) due to selective abortion (*Xinhua* Nov. 5 and 6).

November 7, 2014:

UCAN: Amity Foundation in Nanjing has just published its 125 millionth Bible

According to *UCAN*, of these 125 million Bibles, 65.7 million copies have been “sold in Chinese languages” and 59.3 million others have been exported to 70 different countries. The Amity Printing Company Ltd, the only authorized Bible printing press in the country and now the largest printer of Bibles in the world, was founded in 1988 as a joint venture between the Amity Foundation and the United Bible Societies. It was only two years ago, in November of 2012, that Amity celebrated the printing of its 100 millionth Bible, with 60 million of these Bibles being distributed in China itself (*UCAN* Nov. 7; see: *RCTC* 2013, No. 1, p. 11).

November 7, 2014:

Statues of Xu Guangqi and Matteo Ricci unveiled in Shanghai's Guangqi Park



Sino-Italian cooperation at the unveiling of the statues in Shanghai's Guangqi Park. Photo: www.wsb.sh.gov.cn.

1633) had close ties of friendship and collaboration with the Jesuit missionary Father Matteo Ricci (1552–1610), by whom he was baptized in 1603. The beginnings of the Catholic Church in Shanghai can be traced back to Xu.

The statues of the “patriotic scientist” Xu Guangqi and of Fr. Matteo Ricci, SJ, were unveiled by Wang Qicai, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Shanghai's Xuhui District, assisted by Dario Grandoni, vice chairman of the Matteo Ricci International Fund and by the Italian Consul General Stefano Beltrame. The Office of Foreign Affairs of the Shanghai Municipal Government published a report of the event on its website (wsb.sh.gov.cn Nov. 14).

The new statues are located in front of the grave of Xu Guangqi. The scholar and senior official Xu Guangqi (1562–

November 8–9, 2014:

Shanghai Conference honoring Jesuit Fr. Jacquinot de Bésange, SJ, founder of first safety zones for refugees in Shanghai during World War II

The French Jesuit priest, Fr. Robert Emile Jacquinot de Bésange (Chinese name: Rao Jiaju 饶家驹, 1878–1946) saved the lives of about 360,000 civilians in Shanghai, including 80,000 children, through the establishment in 1937 of a protection zone – the “Shanghai Safe Zone” – during the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). Jacquinot had come to China as a missionary in 1913. At the beginning of the war he was able to convince the warring parties that the creation of a safety zone and the providing of supplies to the refugees would benefit all sides in the conflict. After his death, his concept of safety zones was formally inserted into the reports and commentaries of the Geneva Convention of 1949.

As a conference report prepared by the Schraven Foundation notes, during the international conference held at the Shanghai Normal University, 33 experts reported on various aspects of the long-forgotten person of Fr. Jacquinot and on the safety zones in Shanghai. Also present at the conference were the French and German Consuls General as well as representatives of the International Red Cross. The Party newspaper *Renmin ribao* reported extensively on the conference and on the appeal of the participating scholars to erect a monument to Fr. Jacquinot in Shanghai.

Already on September 10, 2013, a memorial plaque was dedicated at Fr. Jacquinot’s grave in the Heiligensee Cemetery in Berlin (*Renmin ribao* Nov. 11; Msgr. Schraven Foundation Press Release Nov. 18; www.klauspegler.de/texte/frohnau-frohnau/robert-jacquinot-de-besange; see: *RCTC* 2013, No. 4, pp. 16-17).

See also the report on the international conference held in Shijiazhuang on the theme: “The Massacre of Zhengding Church and Religions’ Humanitarian Rescue Efforts During the War” from Oct. 28–29, 2014 in: *China heute* 2014, No. 4, pp. 212-214 [in German].

November 10, 2014:

Court in Kashgar (Xinjiang) sentences 22 people to prison sentences of between 5 and 16 years for involvement in illegal religious activities

According to the state-run *Global Times*, the “offenders fell into three categories: imams unauthorized to preach sermons, people engaging in illegal religious activities after being removed from religious posts, and religious personnel who committed crimes.” The charges included “inciting ethnic hatred and ethnic discrimination, sabotaging the implementation of laws by utilizing superstition, illegally organizing crowds to disturb social order, picking quarrels and provoking trouble, spreading criminal methods and rape,” the report said. The citizens of Kashgar were invited to attend the “public sentencing” which a deputy secretary of Kashgar’s Party committee, quoted by the *Global Times*, declared to be an “important way of cracking down on violence and terrorism in religion.” *Radio Free Asia* identified the 22 condemned as Uyghurs. The *Reuters* report added that mass public sentencings have become common in Xinjiang and that state television often shows such events staged in packed outdoor auditoriums (*Global Times* Nov. 12; *Radio Free Asia* Nov. 11; *Reuters* Nov. 11; *Xinhua* Nov. 11).

November 13, 2014:

Bishop John Peng Weizhao of Yujiang released after 6 months in custody

Bishop Peng, a member of the underground Catholic community, was arrested by the authorities in the Linchuan District, Fuzhou City (Jiangxi Province) on May 30, 2014, and held in a hostel in Ji'an. At the time of arrest about ten people who said that they were from the Public Security entered the house without identifying themselves and took the bishop away. One Church source quoted by *UCAN* said that he suspected that the arrest was made because the authorities had learned that Peng had been ordained a bishop secretly and with a Papal appointment around Easter in April 2014. The bishop is now relatively free, he may exercise his priestly but not his episcopal ministry and he may not leave the province, said a second source.

In 2012, Bishop Peng was appointed Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Yujiang by the Holy See after the aged Bishop Zeng Jingmu had resigned. In Jiangxi Province, the official Church combined all five dioceses of the province (including Yujiang Diocese) into the Diocese of Jiangxi in 1985, while the underground Church continues to follow the Vatican division of dioceses in the province (*UCAN* Nov. 19; www.china.ucanews.com Nov. 19; See: *RCTC* 2014, No. 3, p. 8).

November 14, 2014:

Zhu Weiqun of the United Front of the Communist Party of China reaffirms the principle that Party members are not allowed to believe in a religion – “Some want to ‘proselytize’ China’s Communist Party”

The principle that Party members are not allowed to believe in a religion has been in force since the Party's founding, Zhu writes in his article that was published in the state-run *Huanqiu shibao*. Zhu complains that in recent years, however, this principle has been repeatedly called into question, and he attempts to refute arguments presented in favor of abandoning it. He counters the argument that through this principle political belief and religious belief are being blended, by saying that the political supremacy of the Party is based precisely on the high level of correspondence between political program and worldview. “Without the foundation of the common worldview, the large edifice of the ideology, theory and organization of the Party stands at the brink of collapse, and then we will no longer be called the ‘Communist Party of China.’” Whoever thinks that this stance is tyrannical and rigid, should leave the Party, Zhu argues. The fact that in the meantime the Communist parties of Vietnam, Cuba and Russia now allow their members to believe in religion, according to Zhu, is no reason to change the policy of the Communist Party of China; the historical role of religions in these countries is altogether different and each party must go its own way. To say that the decline of morals and morality in Chinese society is a result of atheism is absurd, Zhu writes. In the first place, the moral system of the Chinese has always been predominantly secular. Secondly, the number of religious believers in Chinese society has increased abnormally in recent years, and exactly at a time when some people thought they could see signs of a moral decline. Furthermore, Zhu adds, around the world, even in religious organizations such as the Vatican, there are no fewer moral crises than in secular society and in the world there is a lot of violence and war between countries whether of the same or of different religions. All this, Zhu argues, has nothing to do with atheism. Moreover, he writes, “some of the ‘scientists’” who advocate so strongly that Party members be allowed to believe in a religion have, in reality, long ago converted to Christianity; their propagandizing has the character of “proselytization of the Party.” Concluding

his remarks, Zhu Weiqun points out that Xi Jinping has confirmed in September 2014 at the Central Working Conference on Nationalities that Party members are not allowed to believe in a religion and are not be allowed to participate in religious activities. This means that this principle has been applied consistently by all Party leaders from Mao to Xi Jinping, Zhu stresses (www.huanqiu.com Nov. 14).

Zhu Weiqun is deputy director of the United Front Department of China's Communist Party. He has repeatedly stressed that Party members must be atheists, as for example, in December 2011 in the magazine *Qiushi* (see *RCTC* 2012 No. 2, p. 3).

Alex Lo commented in the *South China Morning Post* that a contradiction exists between the edict that Party members must be without any religion, and the simultaneous celebration and promotion of Confucianism by the state as a substitute ideology. Confucianism is also a religion, Lo wrote (*South China Morning Post* Nov. 17.). – See also the entries of Nov. 4 and 5, 2014.

November 16, 2014:

Buddhist leader dies in Hong Kong



Master Kok Kwong speaking at a 2009 conference on the social responsibility of world religions at Hong Kong University. Photo: www.hku.hk.

The most important Buddhist leader of Hong Kong, Sik Kok Kwong, has died there at the age of 95 years. Last year Kok Kwong received the Grand Bauhinia Medal – Hong Kong's highest award – bestowed on him for his contribution to society as president of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association. For decades he had worked tirelessly to have the Buddha's birthday declared a public holiday. His dream finally became a reality in 1999. Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying sent his relatives his “deepest condolences.”

Kok Kwong was born in 1919 in Liaoning Province and became a monk in Shanghai at the age

of nine. In 1939, fleeing the Japanese, he came to Hong Kong. During his presidency of the Buddhist Association, a position he held until his death, the Association built hospitals and schools, and offered a variety of social services. As the *South China Morning Post* reported, Kok Kwong was repeatedly criticized over the years for aligning himself too closely with the powerful. “His rare public remarks on politics also attracted attention” (*South China Morning Post* Nov. 17). *Katharina Feith*

November 18, 2014:

Cardinal Zen on the protests in Hong Kong: “Things are getting out of hand.”

At a symposium in Rome on the theme of “The mission in Asia: From John Paul II to Pope Francis,” organized by *AsiaNews*, the Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, Joseph Cardinal Zen Ze-Kiun, SDB, said that the Church must speak out in public. “Although we are already a part of China, we still have freedom of speech, so we must speak out,” the Cardinal said. “I am proud to say that, thanks to a competent Commission for Justice and Peace, the Church in Hong Kong is accompanying our people in the struggle for peace democracy, faithfully following the Church's social teaching.” The Cardinal said the citizens of Hong Kong were fighting “for a real democracy.” The coming election of the Chief Executive in 2017 is “not a real election, so we are fighting against that.” Despite the good intentions of the

demonstrators, who have been taking to the streets since the end of September, “things are getting out of hand.” Cardinal Zen said that the students – after everything had begun “rationally” and without any expectation of immediate success – had meanwhile become impatient. “(They) haven’t take the whole thing in their hands, and they are impatient... they go so fast without much planning, and obviously they want to have immediate success, and that’s not possible. So in this way they are making mistakes.” Since the students are young, the Cardinal said, they could draw “the awareness of the whole world” to their cause, but it is none the less dangerous “to waste the sympathy of the people, because now things are dragging on too long.” He also said he would gladly turn himself in to the police because of his act of civil disobedience, since he, too, had “occupied public space” for a day and a night. “I hope they jail me for a few days, so I’ll have time to pray for you all” (*AsiaNews* Nov. 18; *CNA/EWTN News* Nov. 21). For more on this, see also the entry of Dec. 3, 2014. *Katharina Feith*

November 20, 2014:

***Global Times* reports on “faith seen as a shortcut to connections and success” – half the wealthy in China adhere to a religious faith**

“With the increasing number of influential religious people, some people are finding it expedient to pretend to be religious in order to make connections,” wrote the state-controlled *Global Times* newspaper. The paper gave specific examples: A non-Buddhist, part of the marketing team of his company, accompanied an important client to meditation sessions at a temple during New Year holidays, despite the meager diet and the cold. There was also the driver of a Christian American businessman who was rewarded with greater trust and better pay after he had begun to attend religious services in the company of his boss. According to the *Global Times*, the *Chinese Luxury Consumer White Paper 2011* determined that about half of the very wealthy individuals in China are religious believers. The White Paper was based on a survey of 878 people in 29 Chinese cities with assets of more than RMB 6,000,000. This group of people includes Pan Shiyi, chairman of SOHO real estate company in Beijing, who converted to the Baha’i faith, “a religion which has recently been thriving in China,” the newspaper said. It also reported of networks, such as Christian QQ groups that act as agents in drawing up contacts between employers and workers of the same religion. In many cases, however, religious belief is no asset, the *Global Times* wrote – as in the case of a senior employee of a state-owned bank, who joined the Communist Party for the sake of professional advancement and now hides his Buddhist faith, “since Communists are not supposed to have religious belief” (*Global Times* Nov. 20).

November 20/21, 2014:

***Wen Wei Po* and the *Global Times* unveil proposals for Sino-Vatican procedures for the appointment of Chinese Bishops**

An agreement between China and the Vatican regarding the appointment of bishops has almost been reached, according to the Beijing-friendly Hong Kong newspaper *Wen Wei Po* on November 20, citing an unidentified “authoritative personality.” A proposal has been made to the Vatican and the Holy See’s answer is expected by the end of this year or early next year, the personality referred to said. The source identified two possible models for the appointment of bishops: 1) The diocese elects a bishop-candidate, whose election is then reported to the Chinese Catholic Bishops’ Conference, then on to the State Administration for Religious Affairs and on up through diplomatic channels to the Vatican. If neither side has any objection, the consecration can take place. If both parties cannot agree, then neither side

is to make a unilateral appointment nor will either side perform a consecration using coercion. 2) The diocese elects two bishop-candidates. The reporting procedure is the same as in the first option, and the Vatican then will make a selection from among the two candidates. If approval is given, the ordination can follow, however in case of disagreement the situation will be “re-evaluated.” The source saw one possible obstacle to prompt agreement, namely, that the Vatican also wants to resolve the question of the National Assembly of Representatives of the Catholic Church in China and the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association [both of which are rejected by the Vatican]. It will be difficult for the Chinese side to address these issues, the source said. But, according to the source, the problem of the Patriotic Association is “not something about which one cannot speak;” under new historical conditions it could have a new historical mandate.

On November 21, the state-run *Global Times* reported on the announcement made by *Wen Wei Po*. The paper repeated the two models for the procedures on the appointment of bishops. On the question of “cancelling” of the Patriotic Association desired by the Vatican, the paper quoted Shen Guiping of the Central Institute of Socialism as saying that China will not dismiss the Patriotic Association just to please the Vatican; but its role might be changed. Yan Kejia of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences told the *Global Times* that the Patriotic Association is a historical legacy and that its abolition should not be a prerequisite for the establishment of diplomatic ties (*Global Times* Nov. 21; www.paper.wenweipo.com Nov. 20) – For more background information, see the article in *China heute* 2014, No. 4, pp. 210-212 (in German).

November 25, 2014:

In Monrovia a Chinese-built Ebola treatment center is officially opened

In the treatment center which holds 100 beds, 500 medical workers from China will work for six months in three groups to treat people infected with Ebola, to monitor suspected cases and to train healthcare workers in Liberia. At the inauguration of the facility, the treatment center’s purpose was explained by Cui Li, vice minister of China’s National Commission for Health and Family Planning. Liberia’s President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf praised China for its assistance, saying that it had been one of the first countries to send an aircraft with relief supplies, *Xinhua* reported. According to the report, since the outbreak of the epidemic China has sent RMB 7.5 billion and more than 500 medical staff and public health experts to the affected countries in West Africa.

On October 20, the representative of the United Nations World Food Program in China, Brett Rierson, criticized the lack of willingness to donate among Chinese billionaires and Chinese companies, which he said currently are the biggest investors in West Africa. The Chinese government, however, according to Rierson, is among the largest donors to the World Food Program’s fight against Ebola. According to the various sources of information available, there are 10,000 to 20,000 Chinese nationals living in Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia.

On October 28, the authorities in Guangzhou Province announced reinforced precautionary measures against Ebola, including temperature measurements at points of entry and during the first 21 days of stay of persons coming from the countries affected by Ebola. The governor of Guangdong, Zhu Xiaodan, said that the province had nationwide priority in the prevention of Ebola due to the high number of Africans living there. According to official statistics, about 30,000 Africans live in Guangdong, 15,570 of them in the capital Guangzhou. About 1,000 passengers arrive at Guangzhou daily on direct flights from Africa, according to the *Global Times* (Oct. 30; *The Guardian* Nov. 6; *Reuters* Oct. 20; *Xinhua* Nov. 26).

November 26, 2014:

***Corriere della Sera*: Chinese Ambassador to Italy flies to Beijing to inform President Xi on the status of negotiations with the Vatican**

The Italian newspaper reported, without specifying a date, that Ambassador Li Ruiyu is supposed to have taken an Air China flight back to Beijing. High-level negotiations resumed in June, the paper wrote. A delegation from the Vatican Secretariat of State had been prepared to fly to Beijing this November, but due to the “great number of events” taking place in Beijing, the plan had to be revised, according to the *Corriere della Sera* (Nov. 26). – N.B. This report has not been confirmed by either side.

November 28, 2014:

***Xinhua* reports 15 dead in an attack in Shache County in the Kashgar Prefecture of Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region**

Fifteen people were killed in a terrorist attack in Shache (Yarkant), including 11 “mobsters” who were shot dead by the police, reported the *Xinhua* News Agency; 14 people were injured. The rebels were said to have thrown explosive devices in a street lined with food stalls and attacked civilians with knives. No further background information was provided. Already back on July 28 of this year, there had been a bloody incident in Shache in which, according to state media, 37 civilians were killed and 59 terrorists were shot dead by the police. Twelve people were sentenced to death in connection with this attack on October 13. According to government statistics quoted by the *New York Times*, 96% of the 800,000 inhabitants of Shache County are Uyghur. More than 400 people have been killed in unrest throughout Xinjiang during the last year, many of them by members of the security forces, said the *New York Times* (Nov. 29; *Xinhua* Nov. 29). – See the entry of Oct. 13, 2014.

December 3, 2014:

Hong Kong: Occupy movement ends protests



The “Occupy” leaders Chu Yiu-ming, Benny Tai Yiu-ting and Chan Kin-man together with Cardinal Zen (from left) after turning themselves in at the police station. Photo: UCAN.

With an ‘auto-denunciation’ in a Hong Kong police station, the three initiators of “Occupy Central” – the Professors Benny Tai Yiu-ting and Chan Kin-man and Reverend Chu Yiu-ming – wanted to bring an end to the protests in a peaceful manner. They asked to be arrested for illegally occupying public places. With this action, they wanted to assume the legal consequences as representatives of the protests. They were accompanied by Cardinal Zen and other supporters – 24 in all – who also turned themselves in to the police. Before his walk to the police station, Cardinal Zen let

it be known in a telephone conversation with journalist Gerard O'Connell: "We would be happy to be put in prison for some time. We are law-abiding people, but we committed some act against the law just to draw attention to the fact that there's something very wrong with the law. We denounce ourselves and ask to be arrested for breaking the law. We have to do that to conclude our act of civil disobedience." However, after having filled out some papers, the group was allowed to leave the police station after about an hour.

Earlier, Benny Tai had in vain asked the students, who continued to occupy the streets outside the government offices, to give up their protests. The students, however, wanted to continue to fight until the government would make appropriate concessions on their demands for real democratic elections. Benny Tai said at a press conference: "We are not abandoning the (student) occupiers. We are urging them to understand the fight for democracy is a long one and we need energy to fight on." This shows how divided Hong Kong's democracy movement has become in the meantime.

On December 2, Joshua Wong, leader of the student movement Scholarism, went on a hunger strike together with two other protesters. As the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote on December 3, the students "apart from a fighting spirit and idealism don't have much else to show anymore. The total number of protesters is shrinking steadily, while the number of those who are ready to riot is increasing. This now leads to the fact that the image of the student demonstrators for democracy in Hong Kong is losing its glamour in the eyes of the public." 70% of Hong Kong residents wanted an end to the "occupation." But that doesn't mean that people would be giving up their demands for real democracy, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* quoted Jean-Pierre Cabestan of the Hong Kong Baptist University as saying. "But as to how the path to political reforms is to continue, there are no ideas about that yet among the protesters in the movement." Benny Tai – the paper continued – calls for the movement to take root in the community.

As the *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* has also reported, through the protests a deep chasm has opened up between representatives of different political views in Hong Kong.

In recent weeks, over and over again there have been repeated clashes between protesters and police. Initially, after a major center of the protests in Mong Kok had been cleared, with 100 arrested, the Hong Kong Federation of Students and Scholarism urged the remaining protesters to gather at Admiralty in the immediate vicinity of the government offices. There, on November 30, it came to fights with the police, who began to use batons, pepper spray and water cannons. Forty people were arrested, dozens more were injured. Chief Executive Leung warned the next day there would be even harder actions, in the event that the protesters would not withdraw.

On November 9, President Xi Jinping pledged his full support during a meeting with Leung and his government.

During the eviction of the crowds from Mong Kok, a member of the commissions for liturgy and youth of the Diocese of Hong Kong, John Pang, was also among those arrested. In an open letter on Facebook, a friend of Pang's drew the attention of Pope Francis to the case since Pang had made a "Selfie" with Pope Francis during the latter's Korean visit. In an open letter to Chief Executive Leung, published in the Hong Kong newspaper *Ming Pao*, Pang quoted extensively from Pope Francis' talks to young people in South Korea.

The current Ordinary of Hong Kong, John Cardinal Tong, commented in a November 26 statement on the events in Mong Kok: "Regarding the conflict and confrontation now taking place in Mong Kok, I earnestly call upon all sides to respect the rule of law and to adopt attitudes of self-restraint, non-violence and rationality, so that Hong Kong may enjoy a long-lasting peace and continue to devote itself to the electoral reform." The Cardinal also asked for prayer, so that a way out of the impasse could be found.

Moreover, on 15 October, three Student Federation leaders had tried in vain to enter China to meet Premier Li Keqiang and members of the National People's Congress, who had laid down the rules for the election of Hong Kong's Chief Executive. Alek Chow Yong-kang, Secretary General of the Federa-

tion, described it as a “political protest.” Their travel documents had been invalidated prior to their planned departure.

Whether the students ever succeed somehow in winning recognition of their demands remains to be seen (*America Magazine* Dec. 3; *AsiaNews* Nov. 14; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* Dec. 2 and 3; *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Nov. 1; Dec. 6; *South China Morning Post* Nov. 11, 16; Dec. 2; *UCAN* Nov. 26; *Xinhua* Nov. 15). *Katharina Feith*

December 9, 2014:

For the first time, a Chinese living in Hong Kong is ordained an Orthodox priest

Anatolij Kung Cheung Ming (Gong Changming) was ordained a deacon by Metropolitan Bishop Ignatius of Habarovsk on December 5, and four days later he was ordained a priest. The 45 year old businessman was born in Jiangsu Province in 1969, lived in Moscow from 1999–2012 and was baptized in Hong Kong in 2013. He will be assigned to the parish of Sts. Peter and Paul of the Russian Orthodox Church in Hong Kong. His ordination will now make it possible for believers in Hong Kong to hear the Word of God proclaimed in their own native Cantonese and Mandarin. – For background information, see the article in this issue of *RCTC*. See also the entry of Sept. 27, 2014.

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