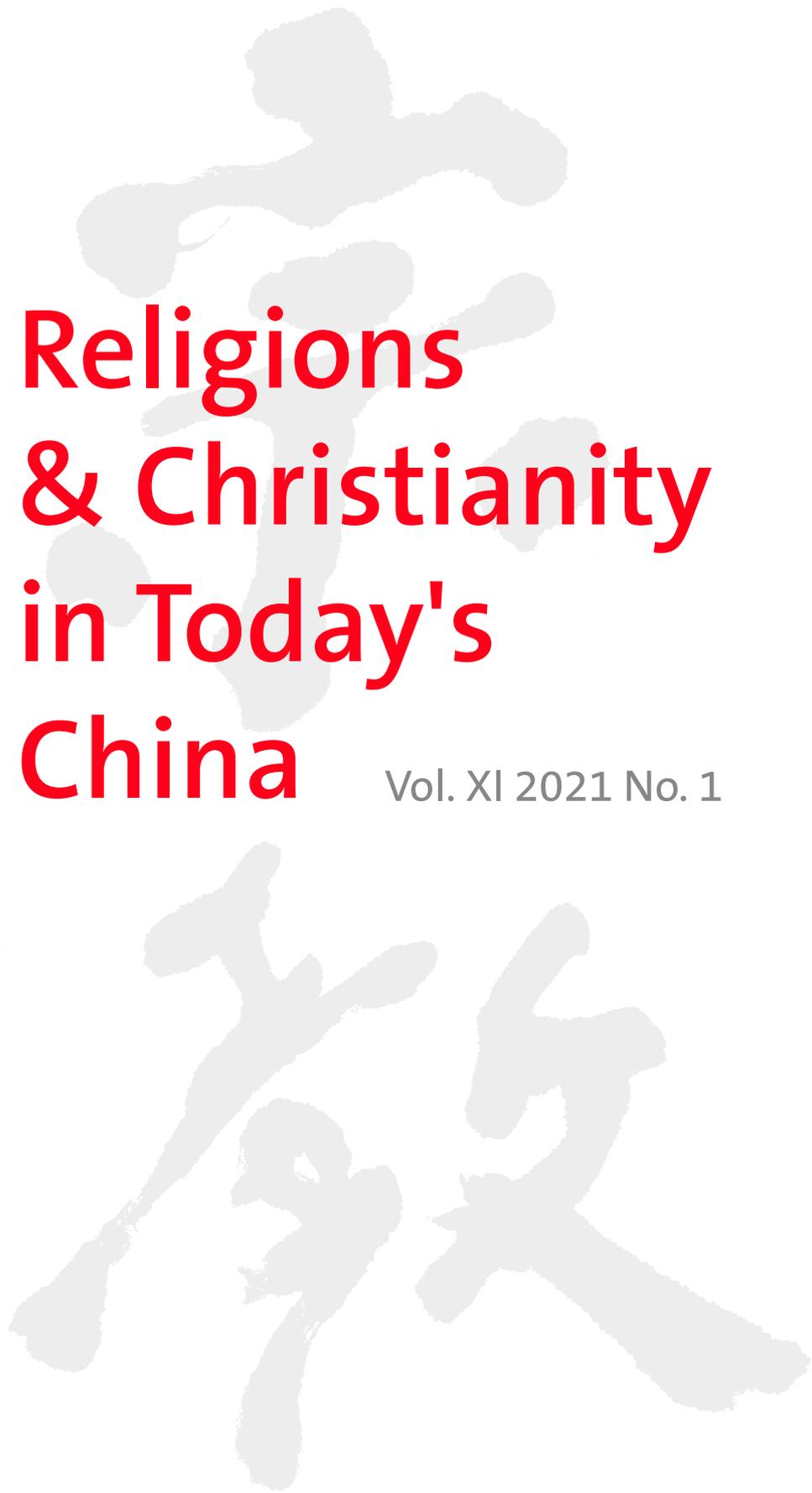


Religions
& Christianity
in Today's
China

Vol. XI 2021 No. 1

中國宗教評論



Contents

Editorial | 2

News Update on Religion and Church in China

October 1 – December 2, 2020 | 3

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

A Perpetual Migrant Church?

125 Years of Orthodox Mission in Taiwan | 17

Piotr Adamek

When Ancestors Are a Problem | 29

Paulin Batairwa Kubuya

Answers Questions about His Book

Meaning and Controversy within Chinese Ancestor Religion

Imprint – Legal Notice | 36

Editorial

Dear Readers,

Today we can present you the first issue 2021 of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* (中國宗教評論). As in other issues you can, first of all, find the News Update on recent events and general trends with regard to religions and especially Christianity in today's China.

In his article “A Perpetual Migrant Church? 125 Years of Orthodox Mission in Taiwan,” Fr. Dr. Piotr Adamek SVD, Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei, describes how due to the lack of missionaries, the Orthodox Church has remained a migrant church throughout Taiwan's turbulent history. The 125th anniversary of the Orthodox mission in Taiwan is an opportunity to look back at its history and its present situation.

The Xaverian father Dr. Paulin Batairwa Kubuya, formerly Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei and now undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, speaks about his book *Meaning and Controversy within Chinese Ancestor Religion*. In the book he looks at how ancestor related practices in the Chinese context were interpreted over the centuries. As an African observer in Taiwan, he argues that ancestor related practices should be regarded as a religion.

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

Sankt Augustin, February 2021

The Editors

News Update on Religion and Church in China October 1 – December 2, 2020

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

Translated by David Streit SVD

The “News Update on Religion and Church in China” appears regularly in each issue of Religions & Christianity in Today’s China (RCTC). Since the editorial staff learns of some items only later, it can happen that there are chronological overlaps between “News Updates” of two consecutive issues of RCTC. In these cases stories referred to in earlier “News Updates” will not be repeated. All “News Updates” can be found online at the website of the China-Zentrum (www.china-zentrum.de). – The last “News Update” (RCTC 2020, No. 4, pp. 3-24) covered the period May 3 – October 4, 2020.

Politics and Society

November 4, 2020:

Global Times: China Facing the End of Birth Control?

“Chinese demographers believe lifting family planning will be a trend in the country’s population policy, and minority groups, including unmarried women and same-sex couples, are expected to be granted the same rights to raise children,” the pro-government *Global Times* wrote on November 4, 2020. The new five-year plan (2021–2025) has effectively brought to an end the rhetoric of “family planning” and for the first time speaks of “inclusiveness” with regard to birth policy, the *Global Times* continues. The new policy is primarily geared to measures to counteract the effects of a massively aging society. Since 2017, the number of annual births has continued to decrease, despite the abolition of the one-child policy and the introduction of the two-child policy which took effect in 2016. The *Global Times*, however, is also allowing other opinions to be expressed, thus Lu Jiehua, a sociology professor at Peking University, who said that adjusting and improving fertility policies is an important part of national strategy in the face of an aging population, but it remains unclear “how the policy can be adjusted during the next five years, and whether to implement the third-child policy, or even to completely lift the restriction” (*Global Times* Nov. 4; bpb.de Oct. 28).

Religious Studies

October 18, 2020:

Second forum on “Internet + Religious Public Opinion” deals with the topic of “Religion and Cyber Security”

In view of the significantly increased cyber activity of people during the corona pandemic, it is necessary and important to deal with the topics of the forum – said Zheng Xiaoguan 郑筱筠, the director of the Institute of World Religions (IWR) of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), at the beginning of the conference. Zheng’s tenure as IWR director is fairly recent, she has been in this position since April 2019. She is a specialist in Theravada Buddhism and ethnic minority religions among other things. Zheng announced that the forum, led by Xi Jinping’s key thoughts on cybersecurity, would focus on religion and cybersecurity, research on religion on the Internet, Internet and artificial intelligence, and building a cyber community of common destiny.

The main lectures of the forum dealt with the topics “Cyberspace Security in the Age of Big Data and Governance [zhili 治理] of Religions,” “New Religions in the Age of Artificial Intelligence,” “Types and Characteristics of Religious Public Opinion and their Social Governance” and “Report on the Level of Use of the Internet + by Sites for Religious Activities across the Country – Using the Example of Buddhism.” The subsequent sub-forums covered topics such as “The Internet and the Building of Individual Religious Identities,” “Concepts and Methods of Global Internet Governance,” “An Investigation of the Influence of the WeChat Space on Relationships within Religious Interest Groups,” “New Internet Media and the Development of Christianity in Taiwan” or “Mediatization and Mediation: An Anthropological Study of the Relationship Between the Internet and the Sacred.”

The forum was organized by the Chinese Association for Religious Studies, the IWR, the CASS Research Center for Evil Cults and the Institute for Minority and Religious Studies of Fujian Province; it was carried out by the Research Office for Digital Humanistic Religion and Religious Public Opinion of the IWR (zytzb.gov.cn Oct. 21).

The Chinese concept “Internet + [Plus]” originally referred to the application of the Internet to industry and other economic areas. On the subject of religion and the Internet, see also the entry of November 30 / December 1, 2020 in the section “Catholic Church.”

Religious Policy

November 18, 2020:

Draft “Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel” published for solicitation of comments

Up to now, nationwide state legal norms for religious professionals of all religions only included the “Measures for Reporting Religious Personnel for the Record” and the “Measures for Reporting for the Record the Holding of Chief Posts at Sites for Religious Activities” (both in force since March 1, 2007; cf. German translation and comments in *China heute* 2007, No. 1-2, pp. 23-25, 31-33). The contents of these two 2007 documents, with various innovations, are incorporated in Chapters 3 and 4 of the new draft “Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel.”

The new draft legal norm upholds the principle that religious personnel, in order to be able to operate legally, have to be recognized as such by the [state-sanctioned] religious organizations according to

rules that these organizations determine [under the guidance of the authorities] and which have to be reported to the authorities for the record. However, the new document published by the National Religious Affairs Administration is of a much broader nature than the previous two documents. Chapter 1 contains the principle that religious personnel must be patriotic and law-abiding, support the leadership of the CPC and adhere to the principle of independence. Chapter 2 lists the rights and duties of religious personnel. The duties include resistance to illegal religious activities, extremist religious ideology and infiltration by foreign forces through religion. A long list of prohibited acts ranges from carrying out terrorist activities, interfering with the exercise of government functions (including education), arbitrarily accepting appointment to religious office by a foreign institution, carrying out religious activities outside of registered sites, to “dissemination of religion through charity, in schools [...] or other educational institutions, and other illegal missionary acts.” Chapter 5 “Supervision and Management” stipulates, among other things, that religious organizations must develop systems for the management, evaluation, reward and punishment of their religious personnel, archive information on the personnel and report it to the authorities, who create the corresponding digital databases. Inter-provincial activities of religious professionals require special approval. For sanctions in the event of violations, the document refers to §§ 65 and 73 of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs.” The deadline for submitting comments is December 17 (text of 宗教教职人员管理办法 [征求意见稿] available at www.moj.gov.cn/news/content/2020-11/18/zlk_3260133.html, English translation at www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/religious-professionals-draft).

November 18, 2020:

Draft of revised “Rules for the Implementation of the Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Foreigners Within the Territory of the People’s Republic of China” published for solicitation of comments

The draft “Rules for the Implementation of the Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Foreigners Within the Territory of the People’s Republic of China” (hereafter “Implementation Rules”) presented by the National Religious Affairs Administration (NRAA) appear to be a new version of the document of the same name from 2000 (revised 2011). They are based on the still valid “Provisions on the Administration of Religious Activities of Foreigners Within the Territory of the People’s Republic of China” from 1994 (official English translation at www.sara.gov.cn/flfg/316649.jhtml). On May 7, 2018, the NRAA had already published a draft for “Measures for the Administration of Collective Religious Activities of Foreigners Within the Territory of the People’s Republic of China” (see *RCTC* 2018, No. 3, pp. 6-7); this document, however, has not been enacted but appears to have been incorporated into Chapter 2 “Collective Religious Activities” of the new “Implementation Rules.” Foreigners who carry out religious activities in China must comply with the laws of China and, among other things, respect the principle of the independence of the religions (§ 5). Foreigners are allowed to participate in religious activities in Chinese temples, mosques and churches (§ 6). Should they wish to carry out collective religious activities of their own, they will have to choose three “organizers” who have neither “anti-China words or deeds” nor “negative entries” and must not enjoy any kind of immunity in China (§ 8). These organizers apply with the religious organization of the respective religion on the city level for the use of a temple, mosque or church and sign a detailed usage contract with the respective temple, mosque or church (§ 9-10). Where this is not possible [for example because the religion in question (e.g. Judaism, Mormons, Baha’i) has no official counterpart in China], it is possible to apply with the authorities for the use of a temporary religious site; very detailed documents must be submitted for this, e.g. the personal details and

visas of all persons who will take part in the planned activities (§ 12-16). The religious activities of the foreigners should be presided over by the local Chinese clergy of the host site; if it is really necessary that religious activities be presided over by foreign clergy, this must be reported to the authorities (Section 11). Chinese people (excluding the Chinese clergy presiding over the religious activities) are not allowed to participate in collective religious activities of foreigners (Section 17). Foreigners are not allowed to appoint any religious personnel among Chinese citizens, nor are they allowed to do missionary work or conduct religious training among Chinese citizens (Section 21). Chapter 3 stipulates that “religious exchange” (including at the cultural and academic level) must be organized through the religious organizations at the national or provincial level (§ 22). It stipulates the conditions under which foreign religious clergy may preach at Chinese religious sites (§§ 23-24), or under which foreigners may bring religious literature into China, etc. Chapter 4 (Sections 30-36) provides impressive penalties for foreigners who violate the provisions, which are imposed either by the religious affairs departments or other competent authorities, for example by the state security authorities, for violations of the anti-espionage law. Penalties are also provided for Chinese religious groups or sites which violate the Implementation Rules, and for providing conditions for illegal religious activities by foreigners.

The deadline for the submission of comments is December 17. According to the party-affiliated *Global Times*, the new regulations are aimed at “preventing the infiltration of religious extremists” (text of the 中华人民共和国境内外国人宗教活动管理规定实施细则 [修订征求意见稿] at www.moj.gov.cn/news/content/2020-11/18/zlk_3260126.html, English translation at www.chinalawtranslate.com/en/foreign-religion-in-china; *AsiaNews* Nov. 25; *Global Times* Nov. 23).

Buddhism

November 17, 2020:

Radio Free Asia (RFA) reports the closure of the incense burners in front of the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa and the dismantling of prayer flags in many parts of Tibet

The US broadcaster reported that two incense burners in front of the Jokhang Temple used for Sang-Sol rituals – the burning of juniper branches and other smoke offerings – had been completely closed for the faithful. The authorities are said to have claimed that the indiscriminate burning of these offerings is harmful to the environment and pollutes the air, and have carried out a corresponding education campaign since the beginning of November. Earlier, an area had been fenced off in front of the Jokhang Temple in the course of renovation work to prevent believers from praying there publicly and performing their prostrations.

RFA also reports that the authorities in many parts of Tibet have ordered the destruction of prayer flags, something which – according to *RFA* – represents one of the “most direct assaults to date on visible symbols of Tibetan culture and religious belief.” According to one source, all prayer flags with mantras printed on them, old or new, have been removed in the name of “environmental clean-up” and “behavioral reform,” and even the poles from which they were hung have been torn down. According to a report by the Free Tibet organization, the removal of prayer flags began in March in the Golog (Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Qinghai Province. In an April 11, 2020 report by the United Front Department (UFD) of Golog which can be found online, it is said that since March all 66 temples in the prefecture have participated in the “Green Temples and Monasteries” campaign. Among other things, the campaign was directed against the “chaotic hanging of prayer flags.” More than 5,900 monks and nuns removed tons of rubbish and “34 tons of broken, old prayer flags” in the vicinity of

the monasteries, the UFD report said. The “Green Temples and Monasteries” campaign also included “reducing the [financial] religious burdens” of the population as a means of fighting poverty. According to the report, the monasteries cooperated with the authorities in this campaign by “reducing 31 Dharma meetings in size, canceling 8 Dharma meetings, demolishing four ‘chaotic’ religious sites [i.e., sites without official approval] and assisting cadres at all levels to hold 117 meetings on policies and legal norms” (UFD Golog according to fjnet.com April 11; freetibet.org June 26; rfa.org June 17; Nov. 17).

December 1–2, 2020:

10th National Assembly of Representatives of Buddhism in China meets in Ningbo

The regular meeting of the highest body of official Buddhism was attended by 570 Buddhist delegates and 81 specially invited people from all over China. Master Yanjue on behalf of the 9th Board of the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA) presented the report on the work of the past 5 years. Yanjue, who was born in 1955 and was one of the vice-presidents in the previous term of office of the CBA’s governing board, has provisionally headed the board since the then president, Abbot Xuecheng, had been removed from office in August of 2018 following charges accusing him of sexual harassment of nuns (see *RCTC* 2018, No. 4, pp. 11-12). The 10th National Assembly elected Yanjue as president of the CBA. 33 vice-presidents and a secretary general, Liu Wei, were also elected. The statutes of the CBA were revised and a resolution passed. In his closing speech, Yanjue called for, among other things, the strengthening of the “self-cleansing powers” of the Buddhist circles and the development of a “humanistic Buddhist thinking” (*renjian fojiao sixiang* 人间佛教思想) (https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/2L0_4sEOZpPMgDfXKO_G4g).

Islam

November 19, 2020:

Uyghur Human Rights Project online seminar: Hundreds of imams in detention centers

Abduweli Ayup, a Norway-based employee of the International Cities of Refuge Network, said in the seminar that in May 2018, based on interviews with Uyghurs from Xinjiang, they had begun to compile a list of imams who had been arrested and interned in extra-legal camps in Xinjiang since 2017. In the last update in June 2020, this list contained 613 imprisoned imams. He also said that Uyghurs in Xinjiang are now afraid of dying because there is no one left to conduct a funeral service for them. Rachel Harris, an ethno-musicologist at the University of London’s School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), pointed out in the seminar that female religious leaders have also been affected. Female religious leaders are extremely important in Uighur society because they work in families with the women, lead the funerals of women, teach children to recite the Koran, etc., Harris said. She called for female religious leaders to be included in the investigations into the mass detentions and other rights violations in Xinjiang. The online seminar “Where are the Imams?” by the Washington-based Uyghur Human Rights Project is available online as a video (<https://uhrp.org/press-release/video-where-are-imams-evidence-mass-detention-uyghur-religious-figures.html>; *Radio Free Asia* Nov. 20).

December 1, 2020:

New state regulations for Chinese Muslims regarding the Hajj come into force

The “Measures for the Administration of Islamic Hajj Affairs” (伊斯兰教朝觐事务管理办法, hereinafter referred to as “Measures”) were promulgated by the National Religious Affairs Administration (NRAA) and seven other authorities on August 27, 2020 and made public on October 12. They came into force on December 1. This is the most comprehensive piece of legislation to date regarding the pilgrimage of Muslims from the People’s Republic of China to Islam’s holy sites in Saudi Arabia.

Beginning in 1985, pilgrimages to Mecca were once again allowed for individuals paying their own way. Since the first version of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” came into force in 2005, only the Hajj organized by the Chinese Islamic Association (CIA) has been legal. Since the summer of 2006, Saudi Arabia has only been issuing group pilgrimage visas for pilgrimages centrally organized by the CIA.

The new “Measures” of 2020 once again stipulate that no organization other than the CIA may organize the Hajj for Chinese citizens (§ 2) and that the NRAA is responsible for the “administration of Hajj affairs” (§ 3). The NRAA sets an annual quota of pilgrims for the whole country, which is then distributed among Muslims at lower levels. Muslim citizens wishing to go on the annual pilgrimage, who are patriotic, law-abiding, healthy and have sufficient financial means, can apply for participation in the Hajj. The CIA takes over the specific travel organization. Before leaving, pilgrims must attend training courses on political, religious and other subjects. During the trip outside of China (Chapter 5) the organizers have, among other duties, the task of preventing “infiltration by religious extremist thinking” (§ 35.2). Penalties are provided for “unauthorized organization of the Hajj of citizens or creating the conditions for illegal Hajj activities” (§ 40) (text of the new measures is available at www.sara.gov.cn/ywdt/344208.jhtml; aa.com.tr Oct.16; scmp.com Oct. 15; globaltimes.cn Oct.12).

According to the *Global Times*, more than 11,000 Muslims from the PRC took part in the centrally organized Hajj in 2018 and in 2019. Saudi Arabia canceled the 2020 Hajj for foreign pilgrims due to the corona pandemic. For background information on the new provisions, see the article in *China heute* 2020, No. 4, pp. 186-188 (in German).

Protestantism

October 12, 2020:

Online seminar “One Health – One World” by the Hamburg Mission Academy, Asia House Cologne and the China InfoDesk

The Mission Academy Hamburg, Asia House Cologne and China InfoDesk collaborated in producing the online event “One Health – One World,” at which people from Chinese civil society had their say in a discourse on the ethical implications of the corona pandemic. The keynote speech was given by Dr. Dietrich Werner, theological advisor at Bread for the World. He emphasized the deterioration in the global human rights and environmental situation and the urgent need for active cooperation. Prof. He Guanghu, of Beijing’s Renmin University, a philosopher, religious scholar and Christian, argued in favor of *agape* – all-embracing love, as the embodiment of divine law within human nature and transcending all of creation as the key to solving the dilemma between safeguarding rights of freedom and protection of life in the face of the pandemic. The third speaker was the environmental activist Wen Bo, who has made a name for himself with studies on marine pollution, on the problems of wildlife markets, incentives by the Chinese government to overcome poverty by breeding rare animals and the

negative consequences for the world of exploitation of nature. Yan Zihui, Program Director of YMCA Shanghai, reported on initiatives to promote environmental awareness and openness to interreligious community projects among young people, for example, in camps in Inner Mongolia, where trees are being planted to prevent desertification. The young people are intentionally recruited by Buddhist, Muslim and Christian organizations to participate together in these events. In the discussions that followed, everyone agreed that the health of people, animals and nature cannot be thought of separately, but rather forms a unit. A continuation of the dialogue is planned with a follow-up event on March 26, 2021. All speeches from the first dialogue can be found on the Mission Academies website: missionsakademie.de. A more complete version of He Guanghu's contribution can be found in *China heute* 2020, No. 4, pp. 201-205 (in German).

Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle

October 13, 2020:

Legal proceedings begun against Pastor Zhao Huaiguo

Pastor Zhao Huaiguo, founder of the Bethel Church in Cili, a town near Zhangjiajie, Hunan Province, was taken into police custody on March 15, 2020 and officially arrested on April 2. The first trial began on October 13, when Zhao was charged with “inciting rebellion against the state.” Zhao is accused of disseminating information about the spread of COVID-19 inside and outside of China, using software to bypass national internet controls and recommending it to others. The government believes that these acts represent a serious threat to national security. Pastor Zhao is said to have pleaded guilty as charged. He faces 18 months in prison.

Since the Bethel Church was founded in 2007, the congregation has been asked several times to join the official Protestant umbrella organizations, which they have consistently refused to do. A large-scale raid of the church took place in March 2019, during which furniture and sacred objects were destroyed and Bibles and other printed matter were confiscated (asianews.it Nov. 9; chinaaid.org Nov. 5).

Isabel Friemann, China InfoStelle

Catholic Church

November 2, 2020:

Priests, Sisters and seminarians detained in Baoding

AsiaNews reported on November 6, citing Catholic sources in Hebei, that on the morning of November 2, two priests and more than a dozen seminarians and Sisters from the Baoding unofficial community were forcibly taken away by government officials. On the same day, Father Lu Genjun, former vicar general of the Baoding diocese, was also taken away. No one knows where any of them are being held, the report said.

Most of the Catholics in the Diocese of Baoding belong to the underground. Baoding underground Bishop Su Zhimin has been missing in police custody since 1997. His coadjutor Bishop An Shuxin joined the Patriotic Association in 2009 after being released from a long prison term and was officially installed as Ordinary (local bishop) in 2010 (*AsiaNews* Nov. 6).

November 2, 2020:

“Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed:” Remembrance of the dead in Catholic communities throughout China

All over China, Catholics remembered the deceased in the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, also known as “All Souls Day” (reports and photos: chinacatholic.org Nov. 2 and 3, 2020).



Women praying in a hillside cemetery in the Diocese of Wanzhou (Chongqing).



Mass in Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed in the cemetery of Ershisiqingdi, Diocese of Baotou (Inner Mongolia). There the faithful also mourned one of their priests who had died of COVID-19.

November 23, 2020:

Thomas Chen Tianhao ordained bishop of Qingdao (Shandong) with the approval of the government and the Pope – Bishops' elections in Pingliang and Wuhan

The principal consecrator was Bishop Fang Xingyao of Linyi (Shandong), who is also chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. Shandong Bishops Yang Yongqiang from Zhoucun and Zhang Xianwang from Jinan were the co-consecrators. 21 priests and 210 Sisters and members of the faithful took part in the ordination liturgy. According to the report posted on the website of the official Catholic governing bodies, Bishop Chen Tianhao was born in December 1962. He graduated from Shandong Holy Spirit Seminary in 1989 and was ordained a priest the same year; afterwards he worked in the Diocese of Qingdao in pastoral care. In 1998 he was appointed chairman of the Qingdao Patriotic Association (PA), and in 2010 a member of the Standing Committee of the PA at the national level. On November 19, 2019, he was elected candidate for the bishopric of Qingdao [according to the official Chinese procedure].



Consecration of Bishop Chen Tianhao in Qingdao. Photo taken from chinacatholic.org.

The official report does not mention details of the ordination liturgy, such as the reading of the appointment and the formula of the oath. At the first two episcopal ordinations after the conclusion of the provisional agreement – of the Bishops Yao Shun of Jining and Xu Hongwei of Hanzhong on August 26 and 28, 2019 – the appointment of the Chinese Bishops' Conference was read out with the new addition, “The Pope has already consented to this candidate” (see *RCTC* 2019, No. 4, pp. 15-16).

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said, according to a November 25 report on *Vatican News*, that he could confirm that Chen is “the third bishop appointed and ordained within the framework of the Provisional Agreement between the Holy See and the People’s Republic of China.” However, *AsiaNews* wrote that, according to some experts, this was the first episcopal ordination under the terms of the

provisional agreement. *AsiaNews* does not actually count Bishops Yao Shun and Xu Hongwei as “fruits” of the agreement, since the Holy Father appointed them years ago.

Hong Kong journalist Lucia Cheung reported on her blog on November 16 that there were two more bishops’ elections conducted locally according to the official Chinese procedure. In the Diocese of Pingliang (Gansu), Father Li Hui was elected around July 2020 and in the Diocese of Wuhan (Hubei) before the national holiday on October 1, 2020, Father Cui Qingqi was elected as a candidate for a bishopric, Cheung said. According to her, these two candidates were neither wanted by the Holy See nor appointed in advance by the Pope, which is why they were the first real test cases for the agreement. She thinks it likely that the Vatican finally accepted the candidates so as not to jeopardize the extension of the agreement. There are no other media reports on these elections, only blogger Shan Ren Shen Fu mentions them in a comment in *AsiaNews* (asianews.it Oct. 26; chinacatholic.cn Nov. 23; vaticannews.va Nov. 25; <https://medium.com/@luciacheungoffice/>口頭照會方式延續的中梵協議告訴我們甚麼-55b31d824ade).

November 30 / December 1, 2020:

Catholic governing bodies commemorate the “Guangyuan Manifesto” of 70 years ago, discuss plans for 2021 and Internet work

On November 30, 1950, Father Wang Liangzuo in Guangyuan (Sichuan Province) published a statement calling for a break with all imperialist powers and a self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating Church. The Chinese government promoted the dissemination of the manifesto and used it as a vehicle to promote the separation of the Chinese Church from the universal Church. Seventy years later, around 120 people attended the memorial event in Guangyuan organized by the Catholic national governing bodies “One Association and One Conference,” i.e. Patriotic Association (PA) and Bishops’ Conference. In addition to Church representatives, representatives of the United Front Department of the CPC, of the religious affairs department of the province and other party representatives were also present. Bishop Fang Xingyao, chairman of the Patriotic Association, said in his speech that the current period is the best in the history of Chinese Catholicism. Catholic circles of the country should, full of gratitude, lead the clergy and the faithful to continue to follow the footsteps of their patriotic predecessors, to study the spirit of the 5th Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the CPC and to adhere “unshakably to the principle of independence, autonomy and self-administration.” In Xiaosishan, Guangyuan, those attending the memorial event laid flowers for Wang Liangzuo and visited the “National Religious Patriotism Education Base” and the “Catholic Patriotic Deeds Exhibition Hall.”

According to the official reports, the principle of independence also ran through the following day’s meetings. At the 5th meeting of the 9th Standing Committee of “One Association and One Conference” on the morning of December 1, the work report of the Catholic governing bodies for 2020 and the plans for 2021 were presented. Bishop Ma Yinglin mentioned in the work report that the election and ordination and the “transformation” [from underground to the official Church] of bishops had been promoted, among other things. The report of the meeting on the website of the official Catholic governing bodies consists mainly of party and religious policy slogans and phrases. In the afternoon, there was a “Conference on Chinese Catholic Information Network Work.” A work report with the title “Grasp the information network work to tell the Chinese Catholic story well” was presented (chinacatholic.cn Dec. 1 [3 reports]).

Sino-Vatican Relations

October 22, 2020:

The provisional agreement between the Holy See and the PRC extended for a two-year trial period

In a communiqué from its Press Office on October 22, the Holy See announced that the two sides had “agreed to extend the experimental implementation phase of the Provisional Agreement for another two years.” The Holy See “considers the initial application of the Agreement – which is of great ecclesiastical and pastoral value – to have been positive, thanks to the good communication and cooperation between the Parties on the matters agreed upon, and intends to pursue an open and constructive dialogue for the benefit of the life of the Catholic Church and the good of Chinese people.”

On the Chinese side, an extremely low key announcement was made on the same day by a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Zhao Lijian, who, when asked at the Foreign Ministry’s regular press conference, said: “After friendly negotiations with the Vatican, China on October 22, 2020 decided to extend the interim agreement regarding the appointment of bishops for two years.” He also announced a continuation of the close communication and consultation between the two sides.

The Vatican newspaper *L’Osservatore Romano* published a lengthy explanation of the aim of the agreement on October 22. It states that, through the exchange of verbal notes, the agreement was extended until October 22, 2022 (*Bollettino Sala Stampa della Santa Sede* Oct. 22: <https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2020/10/22/0542/01260.html>; www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/xwfw_665399/s2510_665401/2511_665403/t1825951.shtml; www.osservatoreromano.va/it/news/2020-10/proroga-dell-accordo-provvisorio-tra-la-santa-sede-e-la-repubb.html). For more details see the article in *China heute* 2020, No. 4, pp. 184-186 (in German).

Nov. 23/24, 2020:

In his new book, Pope Francis for the first time mentions the Uyghurs as a “persecuted people” – a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman rejects this claim

In his new book *Let Us Dream: The Path to A Better Future* the Pope wrote: “I think often of persecuted peoples: the Rohingya, the poor Uyghurs, the Yazidi – what ISIS did to them was truly cruel – or Christians in Egypt and Pakistan killed by bombs that went off while they prayed in church.” Previously, Pope Francis had already spoken out on the persecution of the Rohingya and Yazidis, but not on the situation of the Uyghurs and the re-education camps in Xinjiang. Commentators have often seen the reason for this in the Vatican’s negotiations with China, according to *Reuters* on November 23.

According to *Reuters*, Zhao Lijian, spokesman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry, denied the Pope’s statement at a press conference on November 24: “The Chinese government has always protected the legal rights of all ethnic minorities equally,” said Zhao. “People of all ethnicities in Xinjiang enjoy full protection of their subsistence rights, development rights and freedom of religion,” Zhao said. “The remarks by Pope Francis are unfounded.”

The English edition of the Holy Father’s book appeared on December 1. Journalists received advance copies (*AsiaNews* Nov. 24; *LICAS* Nov. 25; *Reuters* Nov. 23, 24; *UCAN / CNS* Nov. 24).

Hong Kong

October 1, 2020:

40th Anniversary of the Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong

October 1, 2020 marked the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Holy Spirit Study Centre, which was established by Cardinal John Baptist Wu and the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong as a bridge between the then revived Catholic Church in China and the Universal Church. The Catholics of Hong Kong were also to be made more aware of the situation of the Church on the Chinese mainland. Right from the start, the centre has collected and published documentation material – including the Chinese-English language magazine *Tripod* and many book publications – as well as conducted research and active dialogue with Catholics in mainland China. In 1980, Bishop Wu handed over the leadership to Father John Tong (the current Apostolic Administrator of the diocese, Bishop of Hong Kong from 2009–2017 and Cardinal since 2012), who is still the director of the centre today. In addition to lay people, many members of religious orders have worked in the Holy Spirit Study Centre over the years, above all Maryknoll Missionaries from the USA, PIME (Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions) Fathers from Milan, Missions Etrangères de Paris and Scheutfield Missionaries from Belgium.

The centre has brokered many aid projects, organized and accompanied visits to the Church in China, received countless visitors from the mainland and held conferences and training courses for Chinese Catholics from the mainland in Hong Kong. In the future, according to Fr. Sergio Ticozzi PIME, who has been working there for many years, the centre wants to focus more on academic activities, in close cooperation with the Holy Spirit Seminary College, and hopes to later become its own research institute, specific to the Catholic Church in China. The cooperation with academics from the mainland is to be intensified (*AsiaNews* Dec. 3; *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Nov. 27; Roman Malek [ed.], *Hongkong: Kirche und Gesellschaft im Übergang*, Sankt Augustin – Nettetal 1997, pp. 225-232).

October 3, 2020:

Hong Kong Theological Seminary and College celebrate anniversaries

October 3, 2020, signaled the beginning of a full year of celebrations marking the 90th anniversary of the Holy Spirit Seminary and the 50th anniversary of the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy in Aberdeen. The anniversaries will include Masses, prayer meetings, experience reports on Facebook and an “Open House Day.” They will end on the weekend of October 2-3, 2021. They opened on October 3 with a prayer service presided over by Cardinal John Tong, Apostolic Administrator of the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing OFM, Rector of the Holy Spirit Seminary, and Fr. Robert Ng Chi-fun SJ, Director of the Seminary College. They planted a “*Delonix Regia*” or “Flame Tree” (“*Royal Poinsettia*,” “*Flamboyant*”), which symbolizes the generations-deep roots of the faith in Hong Kong and will bloom in May when the annual final exams take place.

The beginnings of the Holy Spirit Seminary date back to 1924, when Archbishop Celso Costantini, the first nuncio of the Holy See to China, convened the first Chinese National Synod (episcopal conference) in Shanghai and established 14 regional seminaries in the country, including in Hong Kong. The then South China Regional Seminary was founded in Aberdeen in 1930 and began operations a year later. It was directly under the Holy See’s Propaganda Fide (now the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples) and was initially run by Irish Jesuits. The seminary played an important role in the development of the Chinese Catholic Church, especially in the second half of the 20th century. Accord-

ing to the *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner*, due to political turmoil in China, the Regional Seminary in Hong Kong accepted large numbers of seminarians from mainland China, some of whom later became bishops. In 1964 the seminary passed into the hands of the Hong Kong Diocese and was renamed the Holy Spirit Seminary. In 1970 the Holy Spirit Seminary College of Theology and Philosophy was established with the collaboration of the dioceses of Hong Kong and Macau, the Jesuits and the Salesians of Don Bosco. In 1985 the Franciscan Friars also joined the team. In 1973 lay people were also admitted to study at the College and today make up the majority of the students. Between 1974 and 1976 the theological and philosophical departments were affiliated with the Pontifical Urban University in Rome (the Urbaniana), so that recognized degrees can now be acquired. In 1989, an additional religious studies institute was created, the Higher Institute of Religious Sciences, at which papal degrees can also be obtained (*AsiaNews* Oct. 12; *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* Oct. 7).

October 18, 2020:

Anglicans in Hong Kong elect new Archbishop

In a special session of the 8th General Synod of the Anglican Church in Hong Kong (Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui), Rev. Andrew Chan Au-ming, Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of West Kowloon since 2012, was elected as the successor to the retiring Archbishop Paul Kwong. Other candidates were Timothy Kwok Chi-pei, Bishop of East Kowloon Diocese, and Rev. Matthias Derr, Episcopal Adviser to Hong Kong Island Diocese. Bishop Chan is considered a mild-mannered churchman without demonstrative political positions. He completed his theological training in Great Britain. In 1991 he was ordained a deacon and a year later a priest. In 2004 he received his Master's Degree in Theology from the University of London. In 2005 he was appointed Dean of St. John's Cathedral in Hong Kong. Chan is married and has one son.

In June of last year, at the beginning of the demonstrations against the security law, he signed a pastoral letter together with the Anglican Archbishop Kwong and his colleague Kwok, in which the city administration was denounced for its stubbornness in not listening to the voice of the people and thus fueling the riots. When there were violent attacks by protesters later, the three churchmen expressed their disapproval.

Bishop Chan is expected to be inducted into his new office on January 3, 2021 (*South China Morning Post* Oct. 18).

Isabel Friemann, China InfoDesk

November 11 / December 2, 2020:

Hong Kong: Prison sentences for young opposition activists and other restrictions under the Security Law

Three of the – also internationally – best known young democracy activists in Hong Kong, Joshua Wong, Agnes Chow and Ivan Lam, were sentenced to thirteen and a half, ten and seven months in prison at the beginning of December. All three on the first day of their trial pleaded guilty to having been part of the organization of a non-authorized rally in front of the Hong Kong Police Headquarters in June last year. However, as they said, they did not take part in violent riots, but demonstrated peacefully. This is Wong's third prison sentence. The now 24-year-old began organizing protests while he was still a schoolboy.

Since the Security Law came into force, action against opposition members has become increasingly tough. After four Democratic MPs were expelled from the Hong Kong Legislative Council on instruc-

tions from Beijing – they were accused of undermining Hong Kong’s security and not recognizing China’s sovereignty over Hong Kong – the remaining 15 pro-democracy LegCo Members resigned on November 11. Thus, there is no longer any opposition party in parliament. Ruth Kirchner reports on *Deutschlandfunk*: “Pro-democratic local politicians who celebrated a landslide election victory a year ago are now afraid that they will be the next to be overthrown. At the same time, many independent media are under massive pressure; in schools, textbooks are being changed, content critical of China is being removed, school subjects are being redesigned – in order to force a more ‘China-friendly way of thinking.’” As the *South China Morning Post* reported, the Hong Kong police have also activated a hotline about possible dangers so that the residents can report what they see as threats to national security (*AsiaNews* Nov. 11; *Deutschlandfunk* Dec. 2; *Die Rheinpfalz* Nov. 11; *South China Morning Post* Oct. 28; *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Dec. 2).

Taiwan

October 7–8, 2020:

Embassy of Taiwan to the Holy See supports people in need in Rome

Instead of holding its usual reception on October 10 to mark Taiwan’s national holiday, this year the Taiwanese embassy dedicated itself to the service of people in need in Rome in response to the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. In collaboration with His Holiness’ Alms Giver, Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, Caritas Rome and the charitable Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, homeless and socially neglected people were treated to a Taiwanese-style lunch. In addition, Taiwanese-made sleeping bags were distributed to the homeless and Caritas, and the Tzu Chi Foundation distributed tins of tuna and blankets made of recycled plastic. Ambassador Matthew S.M. Lee personally participated in distributing the food. Since the outbreak of the Corona pandemic in Italy, the Taiwanese embassy has supplied various Vatican institutions, religious orders and Catholic hospitals with face masks and protective clothing made in Taiwan (*AsiaNews* Oct. 9).

November 14, 2020:

Taiwan: Fr. John Lee Juo-wang appointed Bishop of Tainan

Pope Francis appointed the previous Vicar General of the Diocese of Tainan, John Lee Juo-Wang, as the new bishop. He will succeed Bishop Bosco Lin Chi-nan, who submitted his resignation for reasons of age. Lee Juo-Wang was born on November 2, 1966, the ninth child in a large family that put him up for adoption into a Catholic family. There he came into contact with the faith. After training with the Salesians and the Tainan Seminary, he was ordained a priest in 1993. He graduated from the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome with a licentiate in dogmatic theology. Since 2019 he has held the office of Vicar General. Lee Juo-Wang has made a great contribution to youth and vocational work. The Diocese of Tainan, one of the seven dioceses of Taiwan, has 7,500 Catholics out of a population of 2 million (*AsiaNews* Nov. 16).

This “News Update” was first published in *China heute* 2020, No. 4, pp. 191-197 (in German). Unless otherwise indicated, all source references in the “News Update” refer to the year 2020.

A Perpetual Migrant Church? 125 Years of Orthodox Mission in Taiwan

Piotr Adamek

Translated by Jacqueline Mulberge SSPS

“You are sent by the Council to Formosa not so much for the Christians, of whom there are very few, but precisely for the evangelisation of the pagans”¹ – this programmatic instruction of the great Orthodox missionary, St. Nikolaj of Japan (Ivan Dmitrievič Kasatkin, 1836–1912),² to the first permanent priest in Taiwan, Tit Kosiyama, could hardly be realised in the last more than 100 years. Due to the lack of missionaries, the Orthodox Church has remained a migrant church throughout Taiwan’s turbulent history. The 125th anniversary of the Orthodox mission in Taiwan is an opportunity to look back at its history and its present situation.

Research and Prehistory

The history of the Orthodox Church in Taiwan is still poorly researched. No detailed publications on this subject could be found.³ Brief accounts of Taiwanese Orthodox mission history have been published on only a few websites in Chinese, English or Russian.⁴ Some information on the beginnings of the mission can be found in the diaries of the holy Bishop Nikolaj of Japan⁵ and in the bulletin of the Orthodox Church in Japan, *Seikyō jihō* 政教時報.⁶ The life of the Orthodox faithful in Taiwan in the post-war period was briefly

This article was first published in *China heute. Informationen über Religion und Christentum im chinesischen Raum* 2020, No. 4, pp. 218-225 (in German).

1 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 5, p. 814 (Dec. 6, 1911).

2 Nikolaj Kasatkin was born in 1836 near Smolensk in western Russia. In 1860 he became a monk and also received priestly ordination in the same year. He was appointed priest of the church at the Russian consulate in Hakodate (Japan), where he came in 1861 and learned the Japanese language and culture. At his request, the Russian spiritual mission in Japan was opened in 1870 and he himself was ordained bishop in 1880. Through his active missionary work, over 200 Orthodox parishes with over 18,000 believers were established in Japan by 1890 (cf. www.pravoslavie.ru/orthodoxchurches/39675.htm).

3 In an unpublished master’s thesis of 2005, Semen Eryšev (Семён Ерышев) ventured the only presentation to date of the Japanese and Russian periods of the Orthodox mission in Taiwan (Eryšev 2005). A Japanese article about the beginnings of the mission in Taiwan could unfortunately not be consulted by the author (Tsukamoto 2005). After the publication in German the author received a newly issued interesting contribution on the topic, the material of which could, however, no longer be processed in the article (Chiang 2020).

4 www.orthodoxchurch.tw; www.orthodoxwiki.org/Orthodoxy_in_Taiwan; www.zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/台灣東正教; www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Orthodoxy_in_Taiwan; und Maksimov 2014.

5 Nakamura 2004, Vols. 1-5.

6 The issues Nos. 1-107 (1899–1903) of the bulletin can be accessed at www.chikazumi.cc.osaka-kyoiku.ac.jp/01/.

outlined in the notes of the journalist Gleb Rar (1922–2006), who lived in Taiwan for three years.⁷ For information on the development in the last two decades and the current situation of the parishes of the Orthodox Church in Taiwan, among others, research can be done and followed up on their own websites.⁸

There is no evidence of a possible presence of the Eastern Church in Taiwan before the 19th century. The Orthodox Church points to the legendary missionary work of St. Thomas the Apostle in China⁹ and to the documented “Nestorian” presence in Quanzhou in the neighbouring province of Fujian.¹⁰ Its possible impact on Taiwan, however, is highly questionable.

Even if “Ilha Formosa” had been known to the Portuguese since 1517 at the latest, this knowledge of distant Taiwan was for a long time very limited in Orthodox countries.¹¹ The first brief mention of Taiwan in Russian literature is attributed to the Moldovan diplomat Nikolaus Milescu Spatharius (1636–1708), who went to Peking in 1675 as envoy of the Russian Tsar.¹² The Russian Orthodox Peking Mission, established in 1715, showed little interest in Taiwan. The well-known Orthodox missionary in Peking, Hyacinth Bitschurin (1777–1853), makes only three brief remarks about Taiwan in his *Statistical Description of the Chinese Empire*.¹³ The first documented encounter of Orthodox Russians (including the son of a priest)¹⁴ with the Taiwanese population took place on August 16, 1771, when a ship with Siberian rebel exiles under the command of Moritz Benjowski, fleeing from Kamchatka, anchored near Hualian in eastern Taiwan.¹⁵ However, this rather unfortunate encounter, which also claimed lives on both sides, had no significance for the Orthodox mission in Taiwan.

Japanese Mission

The actual Orthodox mission began in 1895, when China had to cede Taiwan to Japan after the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and the Treaty of Shimonoseki. Many Japanese soldiers, engineers and civil servants were sent to Taiwan, which was declared a “model colony,” among them several Orthodox believers who remained in contact with St. Nikolaj of Japan – the founder and bishop of the Japanese Orthodox Church. Nikolaj participated from the beginning in the life of the community that was being established in Taiwan and their families who remained in Japan. He noted in his diaries meetings with soldiers fighting in Taiwan and their Orthodox parents,¹⁶ and prayed and celebrated liturgies for those

7 Rar 2011.

8 www.orthodox.cn; www.theological.asia; www.orthodoxchurch.com.tw; www.orthodoxchurch.tw.

9 Cf. www.orthodoxchurch.tw/台灣教會/台灣基督正教會簡史.

10 On this see Lieu 2006, pp. 277–291.

11 For more on the history of Russian knowledge of Taiwan see: Golovačov 2018, pp. 16–60.

12 Spafarij 1882, p. 154.

13 Bičurin 2002, pp. 73, 177, 355.

14 www.orthodoxchurch.tw/台灣教會/台灣基督正教會簡史.

15 Benyowsky 1790, pp. 23–65.

16 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 3, p. 209 (Nov. 24, 1895), p. 213 (Dec. 3, 1895).

who had died there.¹⁷ Already in the first year, a festive Orthodox Christmas was celebrated in Taiwan, prepared and publicly proclaimed by Jakov Komabara and Mark Oogava, among others. Taiwanese non-Christians were also invited. About forty people took part in the prayer and the banquet that followed. When the news reached Bishop Nikolaj, he wrote in his diary: “We should send missionaries to Korea and Formosa. But whom? They will be found [...]”¹⁸

The Orthodox faithful in Taiwan gathered for prayer,¹⁹ were sent icons and Orthodox books by Bishop Nikolaj²⁰ and asked for a missionary, but one could not be found at first.²¹ Also “many of the locals became zealous Christians.”²² In 1898, a catechist, Jakov Adaci, declared himself willing to go to Taiwan as a missionary, but was not sent as he was considered unsuitable.²³ In his letter in 1900, the former catechist Jakov Macudaira Niva, who was in charge of a hospital in Taiwan, asked on behalf of the approx. 15 believers for a catechist to preach the faith and a priest for the sacraments. He repeated his request several times and also sent a petition to the Council of the Orthodox Church in Japan.²⁴ In accordance with the decision of the Council in Tokyo, a Christ the Redeemer parish was established on September 4, 1901 and Fr. Simeon Yukawa Kintarō 湯川金太郎 (1851–1934) was sent as the first Orthodox priest to visit Taiwan for one month.²⁵ After his return, he told of an Orthodox parish of 29 believers in Taihoku (Taipei) who participated in the liturgy he celebrated. Fr. Yukawa helped to solve some practical issues of the parish, such as e.g. the place of prayer, the custodian of the church books and the appointment of a contact person. He also went to other cities in Taiwan to meet the believers there, such as Moisej Asano, who served as a soldier in Unrin (Yunlin 雲林). According to Fr. Yukawa, there was no need to send a catechist to Taiwan for the time being, as the Japanese there often moved to different places and learning the local language was indispensable for preaching to the locals. Since there was at first no such “permanent catechist who would sacrifice his whole life for evangelisation on Formosa,” Bishop Nikolaj decided for the time being to send a priest to Taiwan once a year.²⁶

In the following ten years, everything probably went according to that pattern, even if one can read in St. Nikolaj’s diaries of only one visit by Fr. Yukawa to Taiwan in October 1903, where he once again held a liturgy with 44 faithful and which was also reported in

17 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 3, p. 220 (Dec. 15, 1895), p. 274 (March 14, 1896).

18 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 3, p. 242 (Jan. 24, 1896).

19 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 3, p. 292 (April 19, 1896).

20 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 3, p. 377 (Sept. 29, 1896).

21 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 3, p. 406 (Nov. 20, 1896).

22 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 3, p. 420 (Dec. 16, 1896).

23 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 3, p. 696 (April 13, 1898).

24 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 4, pp. 258-259 (May 29, 1900); p. 449 (May 14, 1901); p. 469 (June 20, 1901). Jakov Macudaira Niva is described as a very controversial person by St. Nicolaj. Later on, in 1903, he fled Taiwan because of debts. Nakamura 2004, Vol. 4, pp. 897-898 (Dec. 5, 1903).

25 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 4, pp. 507-508 (Aug. 25, 1901); p. 512 (Sept. 2, 1901). Fr. Yukawa (sometimes called Okava in St. Nikolaj’s memoirs) was born in Edo (now Tokyo) into a Samurai family. In 1876 he learned about the Orthodox faith and was baptized a year later. He worked as a catechist until 1887, when he was ordained a priest and assigned as a pastor in Tokyo. Cf. his biography: www.drevo-info.ru/articles/13676985.html.

26 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 4, pp. 538-540 (Oct. 16, 1901).

the local press. Among others, the former catechist Grigorij Macuyama and church singer Mark Odadzima, who had found their way back to the church in Taiwan, took part in the liturgy. Seven people were baptised.²⁷ After 1903, no news from Taiwan is noted in the diary for several years, probably due to the difficult situation of the Orthodox mission in Japan during the time of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), when many Orthodox Japanese were suspected of being Russian spies.²⁸ Every year, the Orthodox faithful of Taiwan asked for a priest and a catechist.²⁹ In 1902, a young 20-year-old Japanese catechist, Lin Takahasi, had offered himself several times for the mission to Taiwan, but Bishop Nikolaj had not allowed it.³⁰ In 1903, they considered sending Nikolaj Takagi – a catechist from Ionako – to the Taiwanese mission. But Bishop Nikolaj had to refuse this too, as there was no replacement for him.³¹ It was not until the Council in July 1911, attended by priests, catechists and church representatives, that a missionary for Taiwan was appointed – Tit Kosiyama.³² He was a catechist and led the Orthodox Youth Association in Tokyo. He was ordained priest already on August 13, 1911,³³ received an antimension³⁴ and went to Taiwan as the first permanent priest. However, the choice of Fr. Tit Kosiyama soon proved problematic. He was able to open a second parish (Transfiguration of the Lord) in Taizhong,³⁵ but was very passive in preaching and too concerned about the finances of the mission. Already in December 1911, he went back to Japan against the bishop's request. After a long discussion with Bishop Nikolaj, he was asked to make a decision: either to become more involved in spreading the faith or to stay in Japan.³⁶

The further development of the Japanese Orthodox mission in Taiwan is only sparsely reported. Bishop Nikolaj, who had greatly promoted the Taiwanese mission, died in February 1912. His successor, Metropolitan Sergius (Georgij Alekseevič Tihomirov, 1871–1945), had to solve numerous acute problems of the young Japanese Church after the communist October Revolution of 1917 and the interruption of support from Russia. According to the website of the Orthodox Church in Taiwan, however, the development of the community continued to be stable during the Japanese period.³⁷ In the years 1911–1914, Fr. Tit Kosiyama and Fr. Antonij Takai Makio 高井萬龜尾 (1874–1966) alternately looked after the faithful in Taiwan until the pastoral charge was handed over to Fr. Foma Maki, who came there once a year in the years 1915–1931.³⁸ In 1917, the Orthodox Church in Taipei was officially recognised and registered by the local authorities, and there are said to have been

27 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 4, p. 886 (Nov. 4, 1903); pp. 887-888 (Nov. 8, 1903).

28 Suhanova 2013, p. 24.

29 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 5, p. 443 (Oct. 6, 1908); p. 723 (Jan. 15, 1911).

30 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 4., p. 651 (July 4, 1902).

31 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 4, p. 836 (July 15, 1903).

32 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 5, p. 780 (July 18, 1911).

33 Besstremânnâ 2009, p. 207, fn. 65.

34 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 5, p. 787 (Aug. 19, 1911). Antimension is the altar cloth in which the relic of a saint was sewn. It is essential for the celebration of the Orthodox liturgy.

35 "Sorabotniki Božemu promyslu. Pravoslavie na Tajvane" [2015], p. 6.

36 Nakamura 2004, Vol. 5, pp. 814-815 (Dec. 6, 1911).

37 www.orthodoxchurch.tw/台灣教會/台灣基督正教會簡史.

38 Besstremânnâ 2009, p. 159.

three parishes there. There were also churches or prayer halls in other Taiwanese cities.³⁹ It is reported that the parish priest of Nagasaki, Fr. Antonij Takai Makio, who took over the pastoral care again in 1932–1940, visited the parishes in Taiwan and Korea once a year.⁴⁰ In an article of the Japanese Orthodox journal *Seikyō jihō* from 1933, he reported on the visits of the faithful to various places in Taiwan.⁴¹ In the same year, 177 faithful are reported for the Taipei parish, including 30 Taiwanese.⁴²

Soon, however, the war began and the meetings of the parishes became irregular. The visits of the priests and the celebration of the liturgy were also no longer possible. There is hardly any information from this time. With Japan's capitulation and the transfer of Taiwan to the administration of the Republic of China in 1945, the Japanese period of the Orthodox mission there also ended. In June 1946, there were still reported to be 200 Orthodox faithful in Taiwan who officially belonged to the parish in Nagasaki.⁴³ Soon, however, most of them were repatriated and the parish effectively dissolved. The formal link with the Japanese Orthodox Church was also probably severed when, in July 1946, the council there struck the Japanese faithful in Taiwan, Korea, Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands off the church records.⁴⁴ Even though St. Nikolaj's hope of evangelising the Taiwanese could hardly be fulfilled, the Orthodox community remained alive during the Japanese period of the Taiwan mission. It is certainly no coincidence that a later Japanese Orthodox archbishop, Nikolaj Sayama Peter Dairoku 佐山ペトル大麓 (1914–2008), came precisely from Taihoku (Taipei) in this period, whose father researched the culture and mythology of the Taiwanese natives as a sociologist before finally leaving Taiwan with his family in 1926.⁴⁵

Russian Mission

After the Communist victory in Mainland China in 1949, many foreigners were evacuated to Taiwan along with the supporters of the Kuomintang, including several thousand Russians, many of whom were Orthodox. In the memoirs⁴⁶ of the journalist Gleb Rar, who worked for the radio station “Svobodnaâ Rossiâ” (Free Russia) in Taiwan in the years 1957–1960, Rar reports on the life of the Orthodox community there. An important role was played by Georgij Konstantinovič Elsner (1891–1973) – the co-owner of the famous Cafe Astoria (Mingxing kafeiguan 明星咖啡館) in Taipei, which was often visited by lead-

39 www.orthodoxchurch.tw/台灣教會/台灣基督正教會簡史. According to this website of the Orthodox Church in Taiwan, a few years beforehand a 91 year old Russian Orthodox man related about the participation in the liturgy in Taipei in the years 1927–1932.

40 Besstremânnâ 2009, p. 159; Suhanova 2013, pp. 58 and 163, fn. 244.

41 *Seikyō jihō* 22 (1933) 3, pp. 15–20.

42 www.orthodoxchurch.tw/台灣教會/台灣基督正教會簡史 (another source quotes for 1933 for the communities in Taipei and Taizhong 152 faithful, including 17 native Taiwanese: “Sorabotniki Božemu promyslu. Pravoslavie na Tajvane” [2015], p. 5).

43 Suhanova 2013, p. 132, fn. 143.

44 Kharin 2011, p. 254.

45 Suhanova 2013, p. 210.

46 Rar 2011.

ing state officials⁴⁷ and intellectuals and also represented the centre and meeting place of Russian emigrants in Taiwan. Even though he himself was a Protestant, he was very supportive of the Orthodox community and participated in its life. Another was Ūrij Romanič Larikov, who had worked for the army of the Chinese Republic. There were Russian women from Shanghai in the Orthodox community who were married to American air-men, and a large group of Russian women from Xinjiang – the wives of officers in the Chinese National Army – who came to Taiwan via India. There was also an Orthodox Chinese from Harbin – Petr Cheng, who came to Taipei with his Russian wife and her mother.⁴⁸ It remains unclear whether the few Taiwanese believers left behind by the Japanese mission made contact with the newly formed Orthodox migrant community.

In the first years after the war, no liturgy was apparently celebrated in Taiwan. An anecdote is told about the first priestly visit to the island during the Korean War (1950–1953): It is said that an old Russian migrant lived in southern Taiwan, married to a Japanese woman, who very much wanted an Orthodox burial. When Georgij Elsner was told of his death, he discussed the matter with some believers in the Cafe Astoria. But no solution could be found. Suddenly the door of the café opened and in came a priest who agreed to celebrate a liturgy. It was Bishop Ioann (Dmitrij Aleksevič Šahovskij, 1902–1989) – later Archbishop of San Francisco and West America – who had visited the American army in Korea as an Orthodox army chaplain and was on his way home.⁴⁹ After that episode, there is no more information about the Orthodox community in Taiwan for several years.

A new life began for the believers in 1957, when it was decided to broadcast an anti-communist Russian-language radio program for Siberia from Taiwan and to invite some journalists. The first of these were Roman Nikolaevič Redlih and his wife Lûdmila Glebovna Redlih, who, in addition to their radio work, began to organise the life of the Orthodox community and around 1957 invited Archbishop Irinej (Ivan Dmitrievič Bekiš, 1892–1981) from Tokyo to Taipei for the first time. The archbishop celebrated a liturgy at their house on Jianguo Beilu in Taipei and came a few times over the next few years.⁵⁰ In addition to the liturgies in the house church, that was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the archbishop also went to Taizhong, where he administered baptism to nine catechumens in a hotel room. Gleb Aleksandrovič Rar and his wife Sofiâ Vasil'evna Rar, who took over the work of broadcasting and the care of the Orthodox community in 1958, set up an iconostasis with the help of Tomara Lü (a Russian tailor from Xinjiang), which was set up for liturgies in their house church.⁵¹ Their son Aleksandr was baptised there in 1959 during one of Bishop Irinej's visits. In the reports on the bishops' trips to Taiwan published in the journal of the Japanese Orthodox Church, *Seikyō jihō*, in 1958–1959, one can also find information about the Orthodox community: there were about 100 faithful from Russia,

47 Among others, the President of the Republic of China, Chiang Kai-shek, and his son and successor, Chiang Ching-kuo, who was married to an Orthodox White Russian, Faina Ipat'evna Vahreva (Jiang Fangliang 蔣方良, 1916–2004).

48 Rar 2011.

49 According to an account of Georgij Elsner, cf. Rar 2011.

50 Cf. *Seikyō jihō*, Oct. 5, 1958, No. 827, p. 11; *Seikyō jihō*, May 5, 1959, No. 834, p. 12.

51 Rar 2011.

the USA, China and Greece. Fifteen people were baptised, including twelve Chinese.⁵² In another 1959 article in the journal *Vestnik*, Gleb Rar expressed a well-founded hope that “church life will soon gradually normalize.”⁵³ He also wrote about the many Chinese “cultural Christians,” mostly married to Orthodox Russian women, and saw educational work with them and their children as the main task of the Orthodox mission.⁵⁴

When Archbishop Irinej was appointed Bishop of Boston and New England in 1960 and went back to the USA, a military chaplain from Japan, Nikolaj Kirilûk, came to Taiwan at Christmas and returned again in the following years to celebrate the liturgy for the faithful there. In 1960, the Rar family also left Taiwan. Their services to the Orthodox community were then taken over by the Peruanski family.⁵⁵ In the last “Taiwanese” report of the journal *Seikyō jihō*, which tells of the visit of Bishop Vladimir (Vasilij Pavlovič Nagoskij, 1922–1997) from Japan to Taiwan in 1965, some hopes for the future of the Orthodox community were still tangible. The Bishop went to Taipei, Taizhong and Jiayi, he celebrated a liturgy, administered baptisms and visited the faithful. He reported about 200 believers mainly in the Taipei area asking for a priest and affirmed plans to build a new church there. He also visited an Anglican priest, Fr. Morris, who in emergencies helped the Orthodox community with prayers for the sick and the dead. He was particularly impressed by the testimony of the Russian women who had come from the Mainland with their Chinese husbands, awakened their husbands’ interest in the Orthodox faith in Taiwan and worked together enthusiastically for the Church.⁵⁶ The plan was to have a permanent priest for Taiwan by sending one from the USA or training one from the local Taiwanese community.⁵⁷

These hopes and plans were soon dashed, as in the following years most of the active faithful left Taiwan and the congregation met only rarely for prayer.⁵⁸ The connection with the Church in Japan, which was in fact limited to occasional visits by the bishops or priests of the Orthodox Church in America, was also broken.⁵⁹ For the 1970s–1980s, there is virtually no information about the life of the Orthodox faithful in Taiwan. The Russian period of the Orthodox mission apparently came to a halt in the 1980s at the latest.

New Mission

New life came to the Orthodox Church in Taiwan in the late 1990s when the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and the Moscow Patriarchate, in addition to their renewed interest in mission in China, simultaneously turned their attention to Taiwan. The first to arrive in Taizhong was apparently an American lay Orthodox missionary, Timothy Beach,

52 *Seikyō jihō*, Oct. 5, 1958, No. 827, p. 11; *Seikyō jihō*, May 5, 1959, No. 834, p. 12.

53 Rar 1959, pp. 22–23.

54 *Ibid.*

55 Rar 2011.

56 *Seikyō jihō*, Jan. 20, 1965, No. 901, p. 7.

57 Kharin 2011, p. 257, fn. 941.

58 www.orthodoxchurch.tw/台灣教會/台灣基督正教會簡史.

59 Kharin 2011, p. 257.

with his wife Anna, where he ran a language school and founded a missionary association (Chinese Orthodox Christian Mission Fellowship). He was visited and encouraged in Taiwan in 1998 by the Bishop of the one year earlier newly established Orthodox Metropolitanate of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, Nikitas Lulias.⁶⁰ Then in 1999 Fr. Dionisij Pozdnaev – later the parish priest in Hong Kong and de facto coordinator of the Moscow Patriarchate's China Mission – came to Taiwan. He met a group of Russian Orthodox believers who had requested a liturgy and accompaniment. However, a corresponding petition of the faithful to the Moscow Patriarchate could not be fulfilled at first because of economic difficulties. As a result, Fr. Pozdnaev still travelled to Taiwan from time to time for pastoral care.⁶¹

In September 2000, Fr. Jonah Mourtos (Li Liang 李亮), a Greek priest from the Holy Mountain of Athos (Grigoriou Monastery), came to Taiwan for the first time in decades as a permanent Orthodox priest. The former missionary to Congo and India founded a Trinity parish with the help of the Kosmas Aitolos Missionary Society,⁶² which was also officially registered by the Taiwanese authorities in 2003. Fr. Mourtos gathered Orthodox migrants, Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Macedonians, and others,⁶³ and began to conduct regular liturgies, first in a Catholic church, then in a building in the Tianmu district of Taipei, and finally for over 15 years in the Xindian district of New Taipei City in an apartment on the fourth floor of a high-rise building.⁶⁴

In the last twenty years Fr. Mourtos tried very actively and in many ways to make the Orthodox faith known in Taiwan. His core task became pastoral care for the Orthodox faithful of various nationalities who gathered mainly in the Taipei and Taizhong parishes. The liturgy (in Taipei every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.) is conducted in English and Chinese, with readings in Russian and Greek, and it is usually attended by 20-30 faithful or people interested in the Orthodox Church. However, at larger celebrations, such as the Easter liturgy, the congregation can be three times larger. After the liturgy, a simple meal is prepared and everyone is invited to a conversation about the Orthodox faith, life issues and personal problems. Study of the Greek Bible is also offered. Upon request, pastoral trips are made to other cities in Taiwan, such as Tainan or Gaoxiong. Baptisms, weddings and funeral services are held.⁶⁵

The Orthodox faith in Taiwan is also spread by the Trinity community through lectures and publications of the parishioners. For example, Fr. Mourtos was invited several times to Academia Sinica, Taiwan National University, Fu Jen Catholic University, or Fo Guang University, where he emphasized, among other things, the need for dialogue between Christianity and Chinese culture. Publications of the congregation include books,⁶⁶

60 Beach 2001.

61 www.orthodoxchurch.tw/台灣教會/台灣基督正教會簡史.

62 www.orthodoxwiki.org/Orthodoxy_in_Taiwan.

63 Beach 2001.

64 Address: New Taipei City, Xindian District, Xiyuan Road, 4th Fl., No. 389-12, B8 (新北市新店區溪園路389-12號B8棟4樓).

65 Cf. www.theological.asia/activities.

66 Among others: Li Liang 李亮, *Shengmingde hualei* 生命的花蕾, Taipei 2005; Li Liang 李亮, *Liyi* 禮儀, Taipei 2007; Yu Juan 于涓, *Hunyin zhi mei zai dongzhengjiao* 婚姻之美在東正教, Taipei 2012.

translations of Orthodox works from Greek and English into Chinese,⁶⁷ and the monthly journal *Zhengjiao xinyu* 正教心語.

The parish of Fr. Mourtos is also present on the Internet. On their website (www.theological.asia) there are many contributions that present the faith, Bible passages, sacraments and parish life in Chinese. The YouTube account of the “Taiwan Orthodox Christian Church” (Taiwan Jidu dongzheng jiaohui 台灣基督東正教會)⁶⁸ offers extensive video material with sermons and spiritual thoughts by Fr. Mourtos, contributions by the Taiwanese icon painter Pelagia (Yu Juan 于涓), catechesis, prayers, and discussions. For years, online teaching courses and theological seminars were also offered, with a final certificate from one of the American theological colleges.⁶⁹ Numerous photos of the life of the community can also be found in the online service Flickr⁷⁰ and on the private website of one of the very active believers, Johanna E. Katchen (Ke Anna 柯安娜).⁷¹

Since 2004, several Orthodox students and seminarians have also been sent to Taiwan by the Moscow Patriarchate to study Chinese at the Language Center of Fu Jen Catholic University. Some of them also graduated in Chinese from the (Catholic) Faculty of Theology of Fu Jen University. The students actively participated in the life of the Orthodox community during their studies and helped out with catechesis.⁷² After Moscow Patriarch Kirill approved the new establishment of a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church in Taiwan on September 16, 2012 “in response to the request of Russians living in Taiwan,” one of the students (a Canadian citizen) – Fr. Kirill Shkarbul (Ai Xili'er 艾西里爾), who had been sent from Canada to study for a doctorate – was appointed parish priest on January 9, 2013. A founding meeting of the new parish, which understood itself as a revitalized Christ the Redeemer parish, dating back to 1901, was held on February 26.⁷³ A few weeks later in March 2013, two churches were established in rented spaces in Taipei⁷⁴ and Taizhong.⁷⁵ For the church in Taipei, the name Exaltation of the Holy Cross was chosen.⁷⁶

67 Among others: Anjianni · Aleiweisuoboluosi 安東尼 · 阿勒維所波洛斯, *Zhengjiao de jingshen yu lingxing* 正教的精神與靈性, Taipei 2002; Heruodi'ao · Fulaqiao 赫若迪奧 · 弗拉喬 (Hierotheos Vlachos), *Shengshan shamo zhi ye: Yinxu daoshi tan Yesu qidaowen* 聖山沙漠之夜: 隱修導師談耶穌祈禱文, Taipei 2004; Sheng Yuehan xiudaoyuan nüxiu nümen 聖約翰修道院女修女們, *Nin dui shengxianghua you he liaojie* 您對聖像畫有何了解, Taipei 2006; Yuehan · Luomanidesi 約翰 · 羅瑪尼德斯 (John Romanides), *Sheng Baolu lilun zhong de yuanzui* 聖保羅理論中的原罪, Taipei 2007; John Zizioulas, *Jidujiao jiaoyi: jiaoyi de xingcheng ji dagonghuiyi zhong de zhengyi* 基督教教義: 教義的形成及大公會議中的爭議, Vols. 1-2, Taipei 2008; Bide · Ji'erkuisi 彼得 · 基爾魁斯 (Peter Gillquist), *Cheng wei dongzhengjiaotu: chonghui shanggu Jidu xinyang zhi lu* 成為東正教徒: 重回上古基督信仰之路, Taipei 2006; Yalisdilisi · Babalachangxi 亞里斯迪黎思 · 巴巴拉敞斯 (Aristeides Papadakis), *Jiaohui lishi* 教會歷史, Taipei 2006; Archimandrite George, *Tian-ren he yi: shengming zhongji mudi* 天人合一: 生命終極目的, Taipei 2007.

68 www.youtube.com/user/asianORTHODOX.

69 Cf. Liu Zhihao 2014, pp. 54-58.

70 www.flickr.com/photos/orthodox_taiwan/albums.

71 www.mx.nthu.edu.tw/~katchen/.

72 www.old.mpda.ru/site_pub/4479848.html.

73 Cf. the corresponding founding documents: www.orthodoxchurch.com.tw/metochion.

74 Original address: Taipei City, Xinyi District, Hulin Street, Lane 88, No. 22 (台北市信義區虎林街88巷22號).

75 Address: Taichung City, West District Boguan 3rd Street, Lane 62, No. 10, Floor 2 (台中市西區博館三街62巷10號2樓).

76 Cf. www.russiaclub.tw/the-news/274-russian-church-in-taiwan-2013-01.html.

Fr. Shkarbul started regular liturgies – in Eastern Slavonic, Russian, Chinese and English – in Taipei (Sundays at 10:30 a.m.) and Taizhong (Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.) and occasionally also in Yilan, Xinzhu, Tainan and Gaoxiong. He gathered around himself mainly the Russian-speaking faithful, but in recent years some Taiwanese also found their way to the community.

Today, about 20 believers attend the service in Taipei, with more joining in on major feasts. After liturgy, the people gather for a small meal, and sometimes for a cultural program. Even though it is relatively small, the “Russian” congregation is very alive: it runs a Sunday school with Russian, painting and faith classes, as well as piano and Bible courses. The church in Taipei, which moved to a beautiful new room on the first floor of a high-rise building in the center of the city in the summer of 2019,⁷⁷ is often visited by groups of Taiwanese students, to whom Fr. Shkarbul enthusiastically explains the Orthodox faith.

The Taipei and Taizhong parishes are also active on the Internet and in social media: they maintain their own Facebook pages⁷⁸ and websites in Russian and Chinese,⁷⁹ where one can find information about the Orthodox faith and the life of the Orthodox Church in Taiwan. There are also numerous YouTube videos with talks by Fr. Shkarbul on various questions of faith⁸⁰ and his interviews on the situation of the Orthodox Church in Taiwan.⁸¹ He announced a new Orthodox Christian Missionary Channel in July 2020.⁸²

Even if the two congregations, the “Greek” Trinity congregation of the Constantinople Patriarchate and the “Russian” Christ the Savior congregation of the Moscow Patriarchate, are very active, they are, however, unfortunately burdened by a division that also affects the spread of the faith. The problem is the unresolved dispute between the Moscow and Constantinople Patriarchates over jurisdiction in the Chinese region, which has been ongoing since 1997.⁸³ With the opening of a second parish in 2013, which was not agreed upon between the patriarchates, and the transfer of some of the faithful to the new parish, the already small Orthodox community in Taiwan was divided and the relationship between the two parishes was severely affected, effectively broken. On June 1, 2013, the new “Greek” Metropolitan of Hong Kong and Southeast Asia, Nektarios, labeled the newly established parish of the Moscow Patriarchate “schismatic,” excommunicated Fr. Shkarbul, and banned all contact between the parishes.⁸⁴ Even today, after seven years, not much has changed in this regard. The ongoing schism continues to cast a shadow over the lives of the two Orthodox communities and their missionary work in Taiwan.

77 Taipei City, Zhongzheng District, Xiamen Street, No. 49 (台北市中正區廈門街49號).

78 www.facebook.com/OrthodoxyInTaiwan; www.facebook.com/orthoxchurchtaichung.

79 <http://orthodoxchurch.com.tw> (in Russian); <http://orthodoxchurch.tw> (in Chinese).

80 www.youtube.com/channel/UCx9benLa7Uc4Xwy_dKHTeCQ.

81 www.youtube.com/watch?v=KANK8xf6QcY; www.youtube.com/watch?v=geDjgGF-eRU.

82 www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xUOTHp2z5Q.

83 See more on this: Piotr Adamek, “Wiederbelebt oder noch am Leben? Die Situation der orthodoxen Kirche in China heute” (Revived or Still Alive? The Situation of the Orthodox Church in China Today), in: *China heute* 2008, Nos. 4-5, pp. 135-136; Piotr Adamek, “Moskau und Konstantinopel. Differenzen und Gemeinsamkeiten der orthodoxen Missionen in China” (Moscow and Constantinople. Differences and Commonalities of the Orthodox Missions in China), in: *China heute* 2010, No. 3, pp. 144-147.

84 For more on this cf.: Piotr Adamek, “Die Probleme der orthodoxen Kirche in Taiwan” (The Problems of the Orthodox Church in Taiwan), in: *China heute* 2013, No. 2, p. 75.

In the past 125 years, the Orthodox mission in Taiwan has always been a “migrant church” in which the Japanese, Russian and other Orthodox foreigners could find a spiritual faith community. The mission for the Taiwanese, or the “evangelization of the pagans” called for by St. Nikolaj of Japan, could hardly be realized in the last century. The Orthodox Church, however, is not giving up and sees “great prospects” in Taiwan.⁸⁵ “Missionary activities” are organized on the streets of Taipei, Taizhong or Tainan by setting up a stand with a cross and an icon and inviting people to the liturgy and to talk about faith.⁸⁶ The regions of the indigenous peoples of Taiwan are also visited and the possibility of founding a mission is explored.⁸⁷ In the parishes around Fr. Mourtos and Fr. Shkarbul young Taiwanese gather – “friends of the mission” – who show interest in the Orthodox faith and even if they are still relatively few, they give the Orthodox Church hope of a breakthrough – despite all the problems and despite the division. As Deacon Georgij Maksimov (Георгий Максимов) noted after his visit to Taiwan, “it would be groundless to expect that all of Taiwan will soon become Orthodox, but that a fully-fledged living community of Orthodox Chinese (Taiwanese) will emerge there is quite real and is in fact already in the making.”⁸⁸

Bibliography

- Beach, Timothy 2001, “Letter from Taiwan,” in: *The Censer*, Hongkong, Vol. 5, No. 3 [p. 5].
- Benyowsky, Maurice 1790, *Memoirs and Travels of Mauritius Augustus Count de Benyowsky*, Vol. II, Dublin.
- Besstremânaâ G.E. (Г.Е. Бесстремьянная) 2009, “Kontakty Russkoj duhovnoj missii v Koree i Âronskoj Pravoslavnoj Cerkvii v 1896–1946 gody” (Контакты Русской духовной миссии в Корее и Японской Православной Церкви в 1896–1946 годы), in: *Cerkov i vremâ* (Церковь и время), No. 2 (47), pp. 113-215.
- Bičurin, N.Â. (Н.Я. Бичурин) 2002, *Statističeskoe opisanie Kitajskoj imperii* (Статистическое описание Китайской империи), Moscow.
- Chiang, Min-chin Kay 2020, “‘Reviving’ the Russian Orthodox Church in Taiwan,” in: Gotelind Müller – Nikolay Samoylov (eds.), *Chinese Perceptions of Russia and the West. Changes, Continuities, and Contingencies during the Twentieth Century*, Heidelberg, CrossAsia-eBooks, pp. 389-409, <https://crossasia-books.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/xasia/catalog/book/661>.
- Eryšev, Semen (Семён Ерышев) 2005, “Pravoslavnaâ Missiâ na Tajvane – Istoriâ, sovremennost’, perspektivy” (Православная Миссия на Тайване – История, современность, перспективы; Orthodox Missions in Taiwan: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives). M. Div., Moscow Theological Academy and Seminary, Moscow.

85 *Missiâ na Tajvane imeet bolšie perspektivy* [2014].

86 “Sorabotniki Božemu promyslu. Pravoslavie na Tajvane” [2015], p. 21.

87 *Missiâ na Tajvane imeet bolšie perspektivy* [2014].

88 *Ibid.*

- Golovačov, V. C. (В.Ц. Головачёв) 2018, *Etnologičeskáâ Istorîâ Tajvanâ v mirovoj istoriografii XVII-XXI vv.* (Этнополитическая история Тайваня в мировой историографии XVII–XXI вв.), Moscow.
- Kharin, Ilya Nikolayevich 2011, “Self-Realisation of the Japanese Orthodox Church, 1912–1956,” Dissertation, Princeton University. Also online at: https://dataspace.princeton.edu/bitstream/88435/dsp01r494vk19x/1/Kharin_princeton_0181D_10061.pdf.
- Lieu, Samuel N.C. 2006, “Nestorian Remains from Zaitun (Quanzhou), South China,” in: Roman Malek (ed.) in connection with Peter Hofrichter, *Jingjiao: The Church of the East in China and Central Asia*, Sankt Augustin, pp. 277-291.
- Liu Zhihao 刘智豪 2014, “Dongzhengjiao zai Taiwan de xianzhuang ji qi shiying” 东正教在台湾的现状及其适应, in: *Shijie zongjiao wenhua* 世界宗教文化, No. 3, pp. 54-58.
- Maksimov, Georgij (Георгий Максимов) 2014, *Tajvan'skie zarisovki* (Тайваньские зарисовки): www.pravoslavie.ru/73605.html (19.09.2014).
- Missiâ na Tajvane imeet bol'shie perspektivy* (Миссия на Тайване имеет большие перспективы) [2014]: www.sedmitza.ru/text/4948437.html.
- Nakamura Kënnoskè (Накамура Кэнноскэ, Hrsg.) 2004, *Dnevnikî svâtogo Nikolaâ Âron'skogo* (Дневники святого Николая Японского), Vols. 1-5, Saint Petersburg.
- Rar, Gleb (Пар Г.А.) 1959, “Pravoslavnaâ obšîna sv. Proroka i Krestitelâ Gospodnâ Ioanna na Tajvane (Formoza)” (Православная община св. Пророка и Крестителя Господня Иоанна на Тайване (Формоза), in: *Vestnik Russkogo Studenčeskogo hristianskogo dviženiâ* (Вестник Русского Студенческого Христианского Движения), No. 52, pp. 22-23.
- Rar, Gleb (Пар Г.А.) 2011, “*I budet naše pokolenè davat' istorii otčet*”: *Vospominaniâ* (И будет наше поколение давать истории отчет: Воспоминания), Moscow. The passage on Taiwan can also be accessed online: www.orthodox.cn/localchurch/taiwan/glebrar_ru.htm.
- “Sorabotniki Božemu promyslu. Pravoslavie na Tajvane” (Соработники Божьему промыслу. Православие на Тайване) [Powerpoint-Presentation, 2015]: www.docs.google.com/file/d/0B5MtCS-8TaLfX1ZWQU8xYjdMN2c/edit.
- Spafarij, Nikolaj (Николай Спафарий) 1882, *Putešestvie čerez Sibir' ot Tobol'ska do Nerčinska i granic Kitaâ russkogo poslannika Nikolaâ Spafariâ v 1675 godu* (Путешествие через Сибирь от Тобольска до Нерчинска и границ Китая русского посланника Николая Спафария в 1675 году), Saint Petersburg.
- Suhanova, Natal'â (Суханова Наталья) 2013, *Istorîâ Âron'skoj pravoslavnoj cerkvii v XX veke: put' k avtonomii* (История Японской православной церкви в XX веке: путь к автономии), Saint Petersburg.
- Tsukamoto Zen'ya 塚本善也 2005, “Nihon Haristosu Seikyōkai no Taiwan Dendō” 日本ハリストス正教会の台湾伝道 (Japanese Christian Orthodox Mission in Taiwan), in: Nakamura Yoshikazu 中村喜和 et al. (ed.), *Haruka nari, waga kogō – ikyō ni ikiru III* 遥かなり、わが故郷—異郷に生きるIII (Haruka, My Home Town, Which Lives in a Foreign Country III), Yokohama, pp. 157-169.

When Ancestors Are a Problem

Paulin Batairwa Kubuya

Answers Questions about His Book

Meaning and Controversy within Chinese Ancestor Religion

Preliminary note: Fr. Prof. Dr. Paulin Batairwa Kubuya SX was professor at the Department for Religious Studies at Fu Jen Catholic University in Taipei and executive secretary of the Episcopal Commission for Interreligious and Ecumenical Dialogue of the Regional Episcopal Conference of Taiwan. On November 11, 2019 the Congolese Xaverian Father was nominated undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. Below, he answers questions about his book *Meaning and Controversy Within Chinese Ancestor Religion* (London: Palgrave Macmillan 2018, 232 pages). *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* has already published Fr. Paulin's article "Inculturation of the Church in China: The Case of Taiwan" (see *RCTC X* [2020] 1, pp. 34-43).

Fr. Paulin, from which perspective do you approach the Chinese "ancestor issue"?

The interpretation of phenomena pertaining to contacts between cultures requires a specific awareness and proper methodology. This observation is held by Nicolas Standaert, a sinologist specialized in Sino-Christian exchanges during the 16th–17th centuries. Starting from the early 1990ies, his research has been striving to unveil meanings which remain unnoticed and/or unaccounted for when a culture or a phenomenon is interpreted from one single perspective. Changing the interpretive perspective can enrich and deepen considerations held regarding a phenomenon.

In my book I focus on Chinese ancestor related praxes, specifically on the riddles they pose in the context of a hermeneutic of contacts between cultures and religions. Chinese ancestor related praxes have prompted numerous interpretations by foreign interpreters. In China, they triggered a controversy whose consequences are believed to still affect the reception and grounding of Christianity. Elsewhere, they were part of the package of the "anchored pagan practices" fought by missionaries, who nevertheless failed to eradicate them. These practices resisted in subtle ways until they were looked at in conjunction with so-called "animism" and/or "traditional religion." The aim of my book is not only to list available interpretations of Chinese ancestor practices but to ponder on them in a way that directs to the necessity of other explanations and hence broadens the hermeneutic field of the considered phenomena. This broadening is made possible thanks to a critical method, an "intrusive reading" aware of structural strings of power which condition any effort of

understanding. An “intrusive reader” is not merely content with “what is said, what is apparent,” but also by what “the apparent” is attempting to hide.

In answering the question “what did they – explorers, missionaries, scholars – say,” I try to offer a comprehensive assessment of the perceptions and interpretations foreign interpreters made of Chinese ancestor related praxes. Moreover, the act of reading intrusively enables us to situate each explanation in its original context. In this way, it sheds light on the dynamics that determined the importance of a question and conditioned the solution offered. The process shows the extent to which the act of interpreting is tributary to the context wherein it is carried out. There are no pure and completely disinterested explanations. Moreover, explanations are answers in the measure that they solve the questions of an inquirer. This being the case, the fundamental question regarding the existing hermeneutic of ancestor related praxes is “whose questions do they answer?”

Ancestor related praxes can be investigated for two different motives and with two attitudes. The first is motivated by an effort for a rational and systemic explanation of the behaviors of indigenous vis-à-vis their dead relatives. The second seeks to understand the concern of the practices. Ancestor related practices answer a concern to remain connected and in harmony with the nucleus that nurtures one’s existence. This concern is what makes of ancestor related praxes a religion indeed. The central part and role given to the ancestors in liturgy and other gestures that attracted the curiosity of the interpreters justify the title. One who looks deeply at this second form of hermeneutics will understand the reasons to let go of generic terminologies such as “ancestor worship,” “ancestor veneration,” “ancestor rites,” or even “traditional religions.”

What triggered your interest towards this subject?

As a Catholic priest engaged in interreligious dialogue in a Chinese environment I have often been asked basic and curious questions regarding my Christian faith by believers of other religions. However, the interest to research this topic emerged from a generalized perception I observed among the Taiwanese people, the context I was involved in when I initiated this research. There, it is assumed that Christians have cut ties with their ancestors. Usual questions addressed to those confessing to be Christians show curiosity toward their practice. “Do you ‘*baibai*’ 拜拜?” “Do you hold incense sticks? *Na bu na xiang* 拿不拿香?” “What about your ancestral shrine?” “Where do you keep your ancestral tablets?” These questions are not as simple as they look at first glance. I have seen the complications in which they drew the respondents. If the Protestants were to cut it short by saying no, the follow-up question would be about how could they pretend to be filial, how could they demand respect from their children and progeny, they who had dismissed and forgotten the ancestry that transmitted life to them? As for Catholics, they could hurriedly claim to have a space for their ancestors at home, or a sign in honor of the ancestors in their church, or again on “holding sticks” or “bowing,” etc. But they had immediately to clarify that they were not doing *baibai*. Those kinds of confusions and the nuances implied in the answers intrigued and allured me towards this topic. In fact, in the book, I explain how complex are those terminologies, the implied meanings and confusions surrounding words

such as *baibai* 拜拜 (worship), *shenzupai* 神祖牌 or *zuxianpaiwei* 祖先牌位 (ancestor tablet), *na xiang* 拿香 (holding incense, offering incense). I intend to shed more light on the dynamics of interpretations of those practices surrounding and related to ancestors in the Chinese context. A Catholic acknowledging holding incense sticks, and bowing and insistently explaining that she is not doing *baibai* – she is just expressing that difference which exists between *worshipping* and *respecting/venerating*.

What do you do in the book concretely?

To put it briefly, I investigate the dynamics of interpretation behind ancestor related practices across cultural boundaries. Given the Chinese context from where the inquiry started, the investigation is fundamentally on the meanings given to Chinese ways of relating to their deceased relatives. I also dwell on the contrasts of interpretations and assessments of those practices by foreign interpreters. I reconstruct the historical, sociological and ideological backgrounds wherein they emerged, and which affected the formulation of the perceptions and inquiries related to those practices. As the research assumes that any interpretation is conditioned by ideological factors of power and worldviews, I analyze in details the discrepancies between indigenous and foreign interpretations, hinting at the string of power and ideologies that might have interfered in the process of giving meaning. Lastly, I provide an additional hermeneutical framework which I expect can closely account for the motivations of practitioners of ancestor religion. What I intend by bringing this aspect is actually a conversation between two different types of hermeneutics, one that is essentially motivated by rationality, the other which is a quest for existential meaning, survival. In a nutshell, in *Meaning and Controversy within Chinese Ancestor Religion*, I ponder on a range of interpretations made of practices related to ancestors in the Chinese context. I look closely at the writings of people who attempted explanations for the ritual behaviors they were confronted with. The outcome is a conversation on the process of giving meaning in which protagonists are Western Christians and academics on the one hand and native Chinese or Taiwanese Christians and academics on the other. Moreover, given the circumstances in which the rituals occurred, I figured that there was a need for another hermeneutical framework, one capable of highlighting the consequences of the central and irreplaceable role of ancestors in those practices. In fact, from this new perspective, it appears that “religious” practices respond to the existential needs of the practitioners. In ancestor religion, well-being, wholeness, communion ... all those vital aspirations need the inclusion of ancestors, an inclusion that can be achieved through simple gestures such as lighting an incense stick, bowing, or complex and enigmatic rituals that have become objects of phenomenological inquiries. For as far as they are centered on “ancestors,” all those simple or complex rituals are the backbone of “ancestor religion” for they would be absurd without their proper reference to ancestors.

Why call it “Chinese ancestor religion” – a religion unknown thus far?

I was led to this qualification of ancestor related practices as religion as I remained unhappy and unconvinced by the long range of theoretical explanations of these practices in the Chinese context. In fact, chapters three and four expand on this question as they deal with interpretations and theories made by foreigners and corresponding answers and clarifications by locals. From the intrusive reading – which is the critical investigative methodology used in this study – I have realized and shown how the interpreters are conditioned, if not trapped within their own framework. The best they have tried to do is to ensure that the object of their observation could fit in a trending and politically “accepted” category of religion. Hence, ancestor related practices were said to be “cults,” a confirmation of “animism,” a major component of “traditional religion,” or essential to “folk religion” or “popular religion,” and other valuable arguments, which yet left me unsatisfied for several reasons. It seems to me that those theories were entangled with ideologies which prevented them from appreciating the central and essential role of ancestors in the rituals they were studying. Inquiring why interpreters were never willing to apply the concept of “religion” to those practices, I realized how restricted was their conception of religion. When religion is equated with the worship of a deity, it is hard to identify the relation between the living and the dead, which is evidenced in ancestor practices as a kind of religion. Moreover, the combination of “religion” and “ancestor” is seen as dangerous, inclined to idolatry as it tends toward making of one’s deceased relative a beneficiary of worship. No wonder one of the preoccupations of the Chinese Rites Controversy was that Chinese Christians divinized and worshipped their ancestors. “Chinese ancestor religion” wants to move away from the constrained definition of religion, by reiterating the central and essential role of the ancestors in the studied ritual practices. “Ancestor religion” is a classification found in a short essay written by religious anthropologist Pierre Diarra, in reference to religion practiced by the ancestors. I expand the idea from that sense of belonging to the part of tradition handed over, to “ancestors as central, essential elements” of that religion – a religion whose practices, rituals and worldviews become absurd if the “ancestral” element is taken away. And because of this reason, ancestor related practices will be belittled if reduced to a mere “traditional” or “popular” categorization. Popular or folk religions have many rituals that will flatten the specificity of ancestor related practices if they are put in the same sack. As for “traditional religion” – is there one religion that does not claim to be traditional? It suffices to read through the claims of New Religious Movements, as they strive to legitimize themselves by appealing to ancient sages, scriptures or memory.

Now, why Chinese? Ancestor worship is ubiquitous and appears in diversified forms throughout the cultural and religious history of China. Those practices transmit and secure values that are foundational elements of Chinese society; they open an eye to the vision of Chinese society as one founded on family encompassing the living and the dead, and whose sense of order and harmony is secured by means of the interaction between the two modalities of existing. Ancestor related practices are specific channels interconnecting

the two realms of existence, helping them overcome the separation caused by death and maintaining among them a healthy balance of mutual dependence. The practices achieve a deep religious meaning as they enable practitioners to connect and interact with a reality beyond their physical confines. Though they are living in this world, the rites connect them to the universe of the ancestors, which is a world in the present and beyond this time. They are rooted in the lived experience of practitioners, and therefore need be considered as embodied expressions of the quest for existential meaning. For practitioners, the achievement of existential meaning requires the inclusion, implication and mediation of the ancestors. When gestures in ancestor rites are analyzed from this perspective it is possible to appreciate their essence as constitutive of “ancestor religion.” This appellation renders better the fact that ancestors are indispensable players in the life of a person, of a family, of a community.

In the introduction you portray yourself as an African observer, an intrusive reader intrigued by the Chinese religious world. Was this introduction necessary or do you believe it has implications for the book?

Revealing one’s identity in the context of the hermeneutic exercise at hand in the book saves the readers from many unnecessary speculations. First of all, I cannot imagine any reason for the interest and attraction to ponder on the riddles of meaning-making surrounding ancestor related practices leaving aside my African background and my immersion in the Chinese context. What I was observing rang a bell and echoed something that needed to be re-visited. In the process, I found myself part of two universes which were about to encounter each other and possibly be of mutual enrichment. The spark leading to this research were some gestures observed during a family meal on a Chinese New Year Eve. On that occasion, I was the guest of the eldest couple of our small Christian community. Prior to the invitation, I had heard and read how Chinese valued that moment, for which all family members would gather around that specific meal. So I was very keen to partake and observe. The moment – especially the beginning of the meal – was solemn and intense. In the prayer, a specific mention was made of the ancestors – they were included not only as people remembered but also as partakers. The simple gestures of incense and toast drove me back home thousands of kilometers to Africa. I am sure my hosts did not realize the impact of their simple gestures. They had unwittingly deported me back to Africa while keeping my body present among them in Taiwan. The intuition of the existence of analogical parameters between the Chinese and African religiosity goes back to that evening. During the investigation that followed, I found many similarities in the basics of these two religious worlds: strong sense of family and kin relationships; family ties with corresponding obligations in this life and beyond, strong affirmation of life after death, the continuity of life with death creating two modalities or realms of existence, and the mutual obligation to nurture and sustain existence across the two realms of existence. The need for communication and interaction between the two modalities of living gives space to a range of diverse ritual gestures ... There is hence a common ground

of understanding and needs, which serves as a basis for the diverse manifestations (rituals, gestures) expressing piety, remembrance, veneration, etc. In my comprehension of the topic, I was persuaded of affinities – similarities and differences – discernible between these two religious worldviews. I explored other ways that would pay due attention to the specificities of the religiosity therein expressed and came to the category of “ancestor religion.” I am now convinced of this as the “most fitting” interpretative framework for Chinese ancestor related practices. Is not this indiscriminately putting an African mantle on Chinese tradition? Perhaps yes, but not exactly. Yes, in that the African background has something to say about this extrapolation – if it has to be considered so. Many explanatory examples of ancestor religion in the last chapter of the book are from Africa. They are however meant to illustrate analogical dynamics occurring in the Chinese context. No, because ancestor religion is something beyond Africa and China. Besides the Chinese part, I also investigated foreign interpretations of African ancestor related practices and their corresponding indigenous responses. The results are analogical to those of the Chinese part. There are similar judgments, appreciations, misunderstandings. The hermeneutic problem was not tied to a particular region – Africa, or China, India ... but to the core of the religiosity itself. Ancestor religion is not a particularity of Africa, or of China – it is an ancient worldwide religious phenomenon, which unfortunately is still yet to be fully and objectively studied.

Thus, once “ancestor religion” is established as a category, it can address the shortcomings in existing interpretive models, such as parameters and questions that are not raised when these practices are not considered part of a religion. For example, with “ancestor religion” one must ask questions about the relationship between ancestors and the Absolute.

What are the findings and the potential contribution of this study?

I have gathered many insights in the process of writing this book. The materials gathered cover 14 centuries and, to be well studied, a linguistic capability in Latin, French, English, Italian and Chinese was required. The greatest contribution of this research is the identification of the two types of hermeneutics surrounding ancestor related practices, the mechanisms through which they operate and how they affect the interpreter/meaning seeker. In one sense, attentiveness to the ritual gestures quenches the thirst for a rational and coherent explanation of what is being done; in the other sense, the ritual gestures reassure practical survival, sustain confidence about what happens after death, and affirm a continuation of life and community after death. And in all these, ancestors are central and essential, therefore, the category of “ancestor religion” fits.

What has remained unsaid and needs to be completed?

Meaning and Controversy is an unfinished project for it focusses on texts, records, accounts, interpretations of facts that are past. While writing the conclusion I was very much

aware that the book might kindle questions regarding the category of “ancestor religion” and an interest in hermeneutics of its presence and manifestation today. I hence projected a research on the modern phenomenon of ancestor religion in Taiwan: an exploration of the socio-cultural transitions that have impacted Taiwanese society in the last 50 years. In the preliminary fieldwork I planned to concentrate on new religious movements and intended to investigate activities through which the deceased are commemorated and kept as living members of the community. If time would allow, adopting the additional anthropological method of fieldwork could bring a comprehensive appraisal of the phenomenon and foster a better understanding of ancestor religion.

Imprint – Legal Notice

ISSN 2192-9289

Publisher:

China-Zentrum e.V.
Arnold-Janssen-Str. 22
53757 Sankt Augustin
Germany

Managing editors:

Katharina Feith, Katharina Wenzel-Teuber

Assistant editor and layout:

Eveline Warode

Web editor:

Jan Kwee

Collaborators of this issue:

Sr. Jacqueline Mulberge SSPS
Fr. David Streit SVD

Calligraphy:

Yang Xusheng

Editorial submission deadline:

February 2, 2021

Contact:

China-Zentrum e.V.
Arnold-Janssen-Str. 22
53757 Sankt Augustin
Germany
Phone: +49 (0) 2241 237 432
Fax: +49 (0) 2241 205 841
www.china-zentrum.de

Bank account:

Name of the bank: Steyler Bank GmbH
Bank address: Arnold-Janssen-Str. 22,
53757 Sankt Augustin, Germany
Account holder: China-Zentrum e.V.
Account number: 17 881
Bank code: 386 215 00
IBAN DE 94 3862 1500 0000 0178 81
BIC GENODED1STB

Religions & Christianity in Today's China is an e-journal published four times a year. It is freely available on the website of the China-Zentrum, www.china-zentrum.de. Part of the contributions of each issue are translated from *China heute. Informationen über Religion und Christentum im chinesischen Raum*, the German language journal of the China-Zentrum.

The articles and news items featured do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the publisher.

The articles of the Journal **Religions & Christianity in Today's China** are copyrighted and must be treated like any other published articles. Users may read, download, copy, distribute, print, search or link to the texts of these articles for personal or academic purposes. Reprints in other media and all commercial uses must receive prior written authorization from the editors.

For the publication of **Religions & Christianity in Today's China** the China-Zentrum is dependent on the generosity of its friends and readers. In order to help us cover inevitable costs, we ask that you consider sending in a voluntary contribution. If you so wish, for tax purposes we can issue you a receipt for your donation that will be recognized by German tax authorities.

