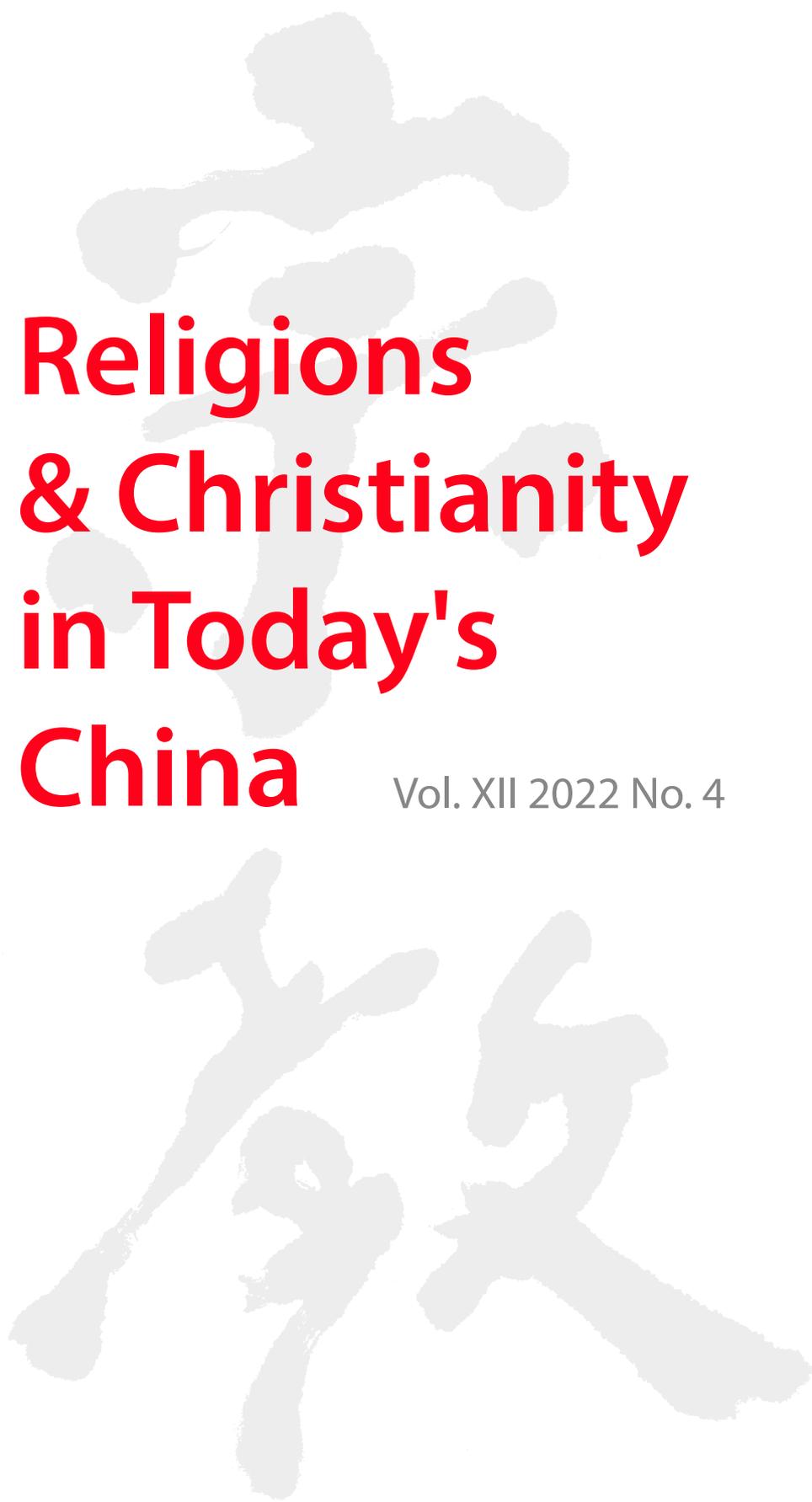


# Religions & Christianity in Today's China

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中國宗教評論



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## Editorial

Dear Readers,

Today we can present to you the forth issue in 2022 of *Religions & Christianity in Today's China* (中国宗教评论).

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

“*Truly Chinese, Truly Christian: An Exploration of the ronghe yu huitong* – The Inculturation Model of Archbishop Stanislaus Lo Kuang” is the contribution Fr. Paulin Batairwa Kubuya SX, undersecretary of the Vatican's Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue, presented at a conference on “Inculturation of the Christian Faith and Today's Chinese Society” which was held in Macerata, Italy from October 19-23, 2022. The conference was jointly organized by Li Madou Study Centre in Macerata and China-Zentrum in Sankt Augustin. Around 50 scholars from various European countries attended. Archbishop Lo Kuang 羅光 (1911–2004) of Taipei, born in Hunan, developed a method of introducing Chinese philosophy and religions to Europeans during his time in Rome. He continued to develop his approach of encounter and fusion between East and West after being assigned to serve the Church in Taiwan as Bishop of Tainan in 1961. – In the coming issues of *RCTC* we will publish a conference report as well as further contributions of the conference.

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

*Sankt Augustin, November/December 2022*

*The Editors*

## News Update on Religion and Church in China June 21 – September 29, 2022

Compiled by Katharina Feith, Isabel Friemann (China InfoStelle) and Katharina Wenzel-Teuber, with contributions by Willi Boehi  
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](http://www.china-zentrum.de)). – The last “News Update” (RCTC 2022, No. 3, pp. 3-19) covered the period March 30 – July 5, 2022.*

### Politics

July 29–30, 2022:

#### Central conference on United Front work with a keynote speech by Xi Jinping

In his speech, Xi Jinping described the United Front as an “important magic weapon [*fabao* 法宝] to victoriously overcome the enemy, wield power, strengthen the country, and unite all Chinese sons and daughters at home and abroad, thus achieving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.” Whether people’s hearts can be won will determine success or failure of the party and the cause of the people, Xi said. He further said that with the unprecedented changes in the world, the role of the United Front in safeguarding the nation’s sovereignty, security and development interests is more important than ever. He emphasized the necessity of establishing “consensus” (*gongshi* 共识). Referring to the religions that, according to the party doctrine, belong to the social groups to be united by the United Front, Xi repeated that it is necessary to “persist in the orientation of religions towards Sinicization.” He had first put forward this sentence in his speech at the Central Conference on United Front Work in May 2015. Since the constitutional reform of March 2018, the religions have been directly overseen by the Chinese Communist Party’s United Front Department ([www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-07/30/content\\_5703635.htm](http://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-07/30/content_5703635.htm)). *kwt*

### Religious Policy

July 26, 2022:

#### The new official list of *xiejiao* (heretical teachings) contains a UFO-related group for the first time

23 groups are identified as *xiejiao* 邪教 in the list that appeared on the portal of the state-run China Anti-Cult Network. They are classified according to their religious background as follows: Two are

listed as practicing “under the *qigong* banner” – Falungong 法轮功 and Riyue qigong 日月气功. Four use the name of Buddhism – Guanyin famen 观音法门, Lingxian zhen fozong 灵仙真佛宗 (True Buddha School), Yuandun famen 圆顿法门 and Huazang zongmen 华藏宗门. 16 practice in the name of Christianity, the most active of them according to the list are Quanneng shen 全能神 (Church of Almighty God), Mentuhui 门徒会 (Association of Disciples), Huhapai 呼喊派 (Shouters), Sanban puren 三班仆人 (Three Grades of Servants) and Xueshui shengling 血水圣灵 (Bloody Holy Spirit). One group practices under the extraterrestrial banner, namely Yinhe lianbang 银河联邦 (Galactic Federation). According to *Bitter Winter*, the spread of UFO theories in China has increased significantly since the outbreak of the pandemic. According to *Bitter Winter*, the extraterrestrial category did not exist in the last *xiejiao* list from 2017 which contained 22 groups. The new list titled 警惕! 警惕! 警惕! 这些都是邪教 (Warning! Warning! Warning! These are all *xiejiao*) can be found at [www.chinafxj.cn/n47/c805824/content.html](http://www.chinafxj.cn/n47/c805824/content.html); *Bitter Winter* explanations are at <https://bitterwinter.org/xiejiao-china-updates-the-list-some-new-entries>).

Article 300 of the Criminal Code deals with the criminal offense of the “organization and use of a secret society or a heretical cult organization or use of superstition to undermine the implementation of the law.” According to a 2017 interpretation by the Supreme People’s Court and the Supreme People’s Prosecutor’s Office, certain activities aimed at spreading a *xiejiao* carry prison terms ranging from three to seven years. *kwt*

September 1, 2022:

## End of the transition period for the mandatory acquisition of the new “Internet Religious Information Service License”

The websites of the official associations of the five state-recognized religions now all have the mandatory license, which must be displayed in the imprint at the bottom of the website. For example, the Chinese Daoist Association’s website, [www.taoist.org.cn](http://www.taoist.org.cn), has the license number 国 (2022) 0000002, meaning it has the second license issued by the religious affairs authority at the national level. It has not yet been possible to obtain an overview of the extent to which other religious Internet services have been able to acquire a license or to continue their service; what is certain is that the range of services has become significantly smaller. Since March 1, 2022, according to the new “Measures on the Administration of Internet Religious Information Services,” anyone who wants to publicly offer information about religion through an online medium must first obtain an “Internet Religious Information Service License” (互联网宗教信息服务许可证). Applicant organizations must demonstrate that they have qualified information reviewers. – See also the entry of September 1, 2022 in the section “Catholic Church.” *kwt*

## Religious Studies

September 5, 2022:

## Online conference on Canon Law and Chinese Law with experts from Chinese, Italian and Pontifical Institutes, organized by the Pu Shi Institute of Social Science and the Università di Camerino

The Beijing-based Pu Shi Institute reported on its website: “Experts and scholars from the Peking University, the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, the China University of Political Science and Law, the University of Camerino, the University of Naples Federico II, the Pontifical University of Santa Croce

and the pontifical Dicastery on Legislative Texts discussed, among other things, ‘Religions and the Rule of Law in China,’ ‘The Power [*quanli* 权力] of the [papal] Curia and the Global Catholic Church,’ ‘The Curia’s Jurisdiction and its Relationship to the State,’ ‘The Autonomy of Local Churches in the Reorganization of the Roman Curia,’ ‘The Confrontation of Curial Power with the Article on Religion of the Chinese Constitution.’” According to the Pu Shi Institute, this was the first exchange of Chinese and Italian scholars on canon law ([www.pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=12670](http://www.pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=12670)).

The Pu Shi Institute was founded in 1999 by Professor Liu Peng as a non-governmental think tank dealing with the relationship between religion and state, in particular with legislation on religion. *kwt*

## Daoism

July 20-21, 2022:

### Online exchange between Daoists in China and in the West

The virtual meeting was organized by the Chinese Daoist Association (CDA). According to a report on CDA’s website, the aim of the event was to “enhance exchange, deepen cooperation and promote the spread of Daoist culture outside of China.” In addition to Daoists from the CDA, representatives of Daoist organizations from 13 countries in Europe, America and Oceania took part in the exchange. One or more relevant comrades from the CCP’s Central United Front Department also attended. In his speech, CDA President Li Guangfu commended the Daoist organizations for their efforts in promoting the spread of Daoism in their respective countries. Daoism should contribute wisdom and strength to build a community of common destiny for mankind, he said. Li Guangfu suggested working together to train internationalized Daoist talents. The representatives of the overseas organizations presented their work, shared difficulties, and made suggestions for future exchanges ([www.taoist.org.cn/show-InfoContent.do?id=8182&p=p](http://www.taoist.org.cn/show-InfoContent.do?id=8182&p=p)). *kwt*

## Buddhism

July 2022:

### Buddhist Association of Yunfu City in Guangdong calls on temples to oppose “illegal proselytization” by Tibetan Buddhist monks

In recent years, illegal missionary activities by Tibetan Buddhist monks in the interior [of Mainland China] have been a growing problem, the statement issued in July said. According to the text, this is a serious attack on the transmission of the teachings of Mayahana and Chan Buddhism. Some “lawless fellows” posing as Living Buddhas courted followers, swindled money and sex, or even supported separatist activities, the statement said. It claimed that according to government regulations, it is illegal for Tibetan Buddhist monks to leave Tibet without permission to spread the Dharma and accept disciples. “In order to safeguard the interests of believers and protect the pure transmission of the Buddha’s teachings and the true lineage of Chan Buddhism,” the Yunfu City Buddhist Association instructs local Buddhist associations and temples in their area to engage in opposing this proselytization. First, everyone should mainly devote themselves to Chan Buddhism, which the statement said is a historical mission since the great Chan master Huineng (638–713) came from Yunfu. Second, according to the statement, no monastery may accept monks of Tibetan Buddhism without permission or let them recruit followers secretly; the sangha of the monasteries is not allowed to spread the Dharma together with monks of Tibetan Buddhism or to study Tibetan Buddhism without permission, contrary

to religious policy and religious teachings and precepts. Third, infiltration by Tibetan Buddhist monks from abroad must also be resisted, the statement said. The text of the notice was made public by the Weiquanwang (Rights Protection Network) blog on July 22 ([https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2022/07/blog-post\\_22.html](https://wqw2010.blogspot.com/2022/07/blog-post_22.html)).

There have been reports for some time that the Chinese authorities are trying to stop the spread of Tibetan Buddhism among the Han people (see e.g. *RCTC* 2022, No. 2, p. 8, for a report by the International Campaign for Tibet). Also, according to Article 34 of the “Measures for the Administration of Religious Personnel” of 2021, it is mandatory for religious clergy of all religions to obtain approval from the religious affairs authorities for cross-provincial religious activities. *kwt*

July 21, 2022:

## Photos of memorial tablets for Japanese war criminals erected in the Xuanzang Temple in Nanjing went viral – “public outrage” and a call for increased surveillance of religious sites

According to Chinese media, a temple visitor discovered the tablets and took photos of them in February 2022. She informed the temple authorities, who immediately removed them. It wasn't until July 21 that someone posted photos of those tablets on Sina Weibo, where the hashtag “Nanjing Xuanzang Temple” received over 880 million clicks by the next day, according to the party-affiliated *Global Times*, and netizens called for severe punishment. On July 22, the monastery's abbot was removed for not having reported the incident to the authorities immediately in February. The temple was closed for “rectification,” and the head of the municipality's religious bureau was also fired. On July 24, according to a report in the *Global Times*, the Nanjing municipal government announced the arrest of a woman named Wu Aping. The announcement said that in December 2017, Wu Aping brought memorial tablets with the names of five Japanese war criminals to the temple and told the monks that these were her friends; she paid for the installation of the tablets for five years in advance. All five, including Lieutenant General Tani Hisao and General Matsui Iwane, had been sentenced to death in war crimes trials in Nanjing or Tōkyō for their involvement in the Nanjing massacre. The Japanese troops had murdered 200,000 to 300,000 civilians and prisoners of war after their capture of the city of Nanjing in December 1937. Wu also had a plaque erected for the American missionary Minnie Vautrin, who at the time gave shelter to up to 10,000 Chinese refugees, especially women and children, in the Protestant Jinling Women's College in Nanjing, which she ran. At home in the USA, in 1941, Vautrin took her own life as a result of the trauma she had suffered during the war. According to the *Global Times*, Wu Aping confessed that she suffered mentally from the history of the massacre, turned to Buddhism, and thought of “solving resentment” and “getting rid of suffering” through the memorial tablets in the temple. Acting “out of a selfish and wrong initiative and understanding,” she seriously violated “Buddhist teachings of promoting good and punishing evil,” damaging public order and hurting people's feelings, the Nanjing government said on July 24, adding that Wu was suspected of the crime of “picking quarrels and making trouble.”

According to the *Global Times*, the incident revealed “loopholes” in the city's management of religious sites. On July 26, the National Religious Affairs Administration (NRAA) issued a circular calling on all sites for religious activities in the country to learn a lesson from the “bad incident at Xuanzang Temple” and engage in self-examination and rectification; it also called for more surveillance and inspection of religious sites, schools and organizations (*bitterwinter.org* July 29; *globaltimes.cn* July 22,25; *scmp.com* July 22; *sixthtone.com* July 27; [www.chinacatholic.cn/html/report/22070554-1.htm](http://www.chinacatholic.cn/html/report/22070554-1.htm) [NRAA circular]).

*kwt*

September 29, 2022:

## Kashag releases position paper on reincarnation of 14th Dalai Lama – he will “reach the ripe age of 113”

The paper of the Kashag (the cabinet of the Tibetan government-in-exile) recalls that with the enactment of the “Measures for the Administration of Reincarnations of Living Buddhas of Tibetan Buddhism” in 2007, the government of the People’s Republic of China placed the recognition of reincarnations under its control, and that it also “uses various means to promote a false narrative on the issue of reincarnation in general; and on the reincarnation of the present Dalai Lama in particular” among the ordained and lay faithful in Tibet. The Kashag further says that “it is also a fact that the issue of reincarnation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama continues to be discussed within our community and without as well.” Therefore, the Kashag feels it necessary to present a position paper for everyone’s information. “The Kashag has firm belief that His Holiness will live to the ripe age of 113 as per propitious prescient and the repeated assurances of His Holiness the Dalai Lama,” the paper states. It goes on to say that the statements made by the Dalai Lama since 1969 on the question of his reincarnation, and all future instructions are entirely at his discretion. “No government nor any individual has the right to interfere in this matter. [...] This religious activity has to be conducted as per the responsibilities that His Holiness the Dalai Lama enshrines and entrusts” (<https://tibet.net/kashags-position-on-the-issue-of-reincarnation-of-his-holiness-the-14th-dalai-lama/>). The paper also mentions the statement made by the Dalai Lama on September 24, 2011, on the issue of his reincarnation. At the time, he explained that the person who reincarnates has the sole authority to decide where or how their reincarnation occurs. The Dalai Lama turned 87 on July 6. *kwt*

## Islam

September 14, 2022:

## Radio Free Asia: Doudian Mosque in Beijing is being remodeled to remove Arabic stylistic elements – “Sinicizing” other Hui mosques

According to *Radio Free Asia* (RFA), the mosque in Doudiancun 窦店村 in Beijing’s Fangshan district, which was only completed in 2013, is the largest in northern China, offering space for 1,500 worshippers. Photos on the Internet show it in oriental style with domes and minarets. According to the RFA, the conversions began in August and are expected to be completed by May 1, 2023. The broadcaster reports that Xi Wuyi recently posted photos and descriptions of the renovation of the Doudian Mosque, commenting that it “shows the orderly progress of ... Sinicization of religion in China.” Xi Wuyi is a Marxism researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and has frequently criticized religious phenomena.

An article from the time of the construction of the Doudian Mosque illustrates the change in the attitude of political planners over the past 11 years. An author named Li Hong wrote in the September 2013 issue of *Zhongguo minzu* (China’s Nationalities) magazine that a quarter of Doudiancun’s population is of Muslim Hui nationality; there had been a mosque there since 1713. In 2010, according to Li Hong, a development plan was drawn up in which Doudiancun was intended as a “village with ethnic characteristics.” The “majestic” new mosque with its “strong Islamic characteristics,” complemented by a 1,550-meter-long “commercial street with ethnic-Muslim characteristics,” should also attract Muslims from the surrounding area, promote trade and tourism and publicize the “Doudiancun brand,” Li Hong wrote back in 2013.

According to *RFA*, in July 2021, the authorities also announced the reconstruction of the Dongguan Mosque 东关清真大寺 in Xining, Qinghai Province, another large oriental-style structure with a dome and minarets. *Bitter Winter* pointed out that in a CCTV television report on a visit by Wang Yang, Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, to Xining in late June this year, a board with pictures of Dongguan Mosque before and after the “rectification” (*zhenggai* 整改) could be seen – in the “after” image, the dome is replaced with a curved Chinese roof and the minaret is turned into a pagoda ([http://nrra.gov.cn/art/2022/7/1/art\\_624\\_195728.html](http://nrra.gov.cn/art/2022/7/1/art_624_195728.html), scene at the end of the film).

According to information from *Bitter Winter*, the golden dome of the Shanghai Hui Cemetery in Weijiajiao has also been removed during the lockdown in Shanghai. It further reported that on August 24, 2022, the “Sinicization” of the Zhaotong East Mosque 昭通东大寺 in Yunnan Province has started ([bitterwinter.org](http://bitterwinter.org) Sept. 23; [rfa.org](http://rfa.org) Sept. 13; [www.56-china.com.cn/show-case-1027.html](http://www.56-china.com.cn/show-case-1027.html)). *kwt*

## Protestant Churches

July 13, 2022:

### Pastor Geng Zejun sentenced to one year and three months in prison

On July 13, 2022, the Huinong District Court of Shizuishan City, Ningxia Autonomous Region heard the case of Pastor Geng Zejun 耿则军 and community workers Luo Shiping and Wang Sufang of the local Church of the Rock 石教会. They were charged with organizing illegal gatherings. Bibles, hymnals and RMB 250,000 (about 36,000 Euros) were confiscated by the authorities during a raid in January. Pastor Geng Zejun insisted during the trial that he did not want to cooperate with the official church, saying that gatherings of Christians is not a crime. He was sentenced to one year and three months in prison. The two community sisters were each sentenced to six months in prison ([bitterwinter.org](http://bitterwinter.org) Aug. 22; [chinaaid.net](http://chinaaid.net) Aug. 19).

*Isabel Friemann, China Infostelle*

August 17, 2022:

### Arrest of Nu Minority Pastor in Yunnan

Although he has a degree from Yunnan Provincial Theological Seminary, an institution of the Chinese Christian Council, Pastor Wang Shunping 王顺平 was arrested on August 17. The charge is “suspicion of organizing and financing illegal gatherings.” Pastor Wang belongs to the Nu ethnic group. He is currently being held in the Fugong County Detention Center ([bitterwinter.org](http://bitterwinter.org) Sept. 19; [chinaaid.net](http://chinaaid.net) Sept. 19).

*Isabel Friemann, China Infostelle*

August 21, 2022:

### Ban on the Fengsheng House Church in Xi'an

In an open letter on August 10, 2022, Lian Changnian 廉长年, senior pastor of the Fengsheng Church 丰盛教堂, founded more than 30 years ago, denounced the actions of the Shilipu District police against members of his congregation. He describes arrests, house searches, questioning at the door and threats

that the children will lose their jobs and educational opportunities. In addition, Pastor Lian rejects allegations of corruption against him. He calls for prayer and intercession in solidarity with the police authority. On August 21, Xi'an City issued a written ban on Fengsheng Church as an illegal organization that is unregistered and holding events and using social media without permission (bitterwinter.org Aug. 11; <https://msguancha.com/a/lanmu13/2022/0823/22187.html>; Twitter: Paul@cngovdefraud Aug. 21).

*Isabel Friemann, China Infostelle*

**August 31 – September 8, 2022:**

## Chinese representation at the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe

Various delegations from China took part in the 11th assembly of the WCC, which took place in Karlsruhe/Germany from 31 August to 8 September. In addition to the seven-member delegation from the China Christian Council (CCC) led by President Rev. Wu Wei from Shanghai, the Lutheran Church Association from Hong Kong and the Presbyterian Church from Taiwan were also represented at the international assembly. The issue of the national unity of the country was controversially discussed in several workshops.

*Isabel Friemann, China Infostelle*

**August 31 – September 8, 2022:**

## Chinese Christian Council in the Central Committee of the WCC

For the second time, Rev. Dr. Lin Manhong was elected as a deputy of the China Christian Council. Ms. Lin is the Chair of the Theological Education Department at the CCC and a Lecturer in Chinese Church History at the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. One of her particular concerns is to include a greater focus on global ecumenism in theological education. Rev. Kan Baoping, who represented the CCC at a WCC assembly for the third time, did not stand for re-election to the body. Ms. Gu Jingqin, head of the International Relations Department of the Christian Council and the Three-Self Movement, took his place.

*Isabel Friemann, China Infostelle*

**September 9, 2022:**

## Sunshine Reformed Church banned as an illegal organization

On September 9, the Civil Affairs Bureau of Changchun City, Jilin Province classified Sunshine Reformed Church 阳光之家归正教会 as an unregistered, illegal civil and social organization. All other community activities are prohibited. A church service on August 21 was interrupted by police forces and Pastor Guo Muyun 郭幕云 and eight other church members were arrested (bitterwinter.org Sept. 20; [http://mzj.changchun.gov.cn/zwdt/tzgg/202209/t20220907\\_3060330.html](http://mzj.changchun.gov.cn/zwdt/tzgg/202209/t20220907_3060330.html); [www.rfa.org/mandarin/Xinwen/2-09162022093205.html](http://www.rfa.org/mandarin/Xinwen/2-09162022093205.html)).

*Isabel Friemann, China Infostelle*

## Catholic Church

July 10, 2022:

### James Su Zhimin: 90th birthday of a missing underground bishop

July 10 marked the 90th birthday of underground Bishop Su Zhimin of Baoding Diocese in Hebei. At least, according to a report by *Bitter Winter*, his birthday was usually celebrated on this day, although some official documents give July 1, 1932 as his date of birth. However, the bishop has been in prison since 1997 and was last seen accidentally by relatives in a hospital in 2003; it has never been confirmed whether he is still alive. The authorities had strictly forbidden celebrations, but according to *Bitter Winter*, Catholics still gathered for Mass and prayer in private rooms. The situation in one of the previous strongholds of the underground Church in China is difficult. The second bishop in Baoding, An Shuxin, was also imprisoned until 2006. After his release, he joined the Patriotic Association and was appointed diocesan administrator by the Vatican. With his entry into the official Church, the situation in Baoding became complicated as many priests and believers did not want to follow Bishop An. In a June 15, 2022, “Pastoral Letter on the civil registration of the clergy in the Diocese of Baoding,” Bishop An referred to himself as “head of the diocese,” and said that over the past few months, more than 30 priests have joined him, the “diocesan bishop,” and had celebrated Church services together with him, that is, had registered. Those who do not follow him would be denied the sacraments. Since the publication of the “Pastoral guidelines of the Holy See concerning the civil registration of clergy in China” on June 28, 2019, the government everywhere has been putting strong pressure on underground priests to register. This is having an effect in many places, although the resistance in Baoding is still high and many believers do not accept the registered priests. At least ten priests from the diocese have been arrested since January 2022.

Bishop Su Zhimin was arrested three times between 1956 and 1975. After his release in 1979 he studied in the underground and was ordained a priest in 1981 at the age of 49. A year later he was arrested again and released in 1986. He was ordained a bishop in the underground in 1993 and appointed diocesan bishop of Baoding by the Holy See in 1995. This was followed by further arrests and house arrest. In 2015, *Bitter Winter* said, his family was told that the bishop was alive and would be released if the Vatican “improved” its relations with China. Catholics in Baoding had hoped this would happen after the signing of the 2018 Sino-Vatican agreement on the appointment of bishops, but it has not happened. It is possible that the bishop is no longer alive (*AsiaNews* July 15; [www.bitterwinter.org](http://www.bitterwinter.org) July 12). *kf*

July 16/17, 2022:

### Beijing Cathedral reopens after six months of pandemic-related closure with baptism of 101 catechumens – “first Holy Mass of the year” in Hohhot

“Before dawn on July 16, the day of reopening, the faithful, both young and old, were waiting outside the gate [of the Beijing Cathedral], rejoicing at being able to resume their spiritual, liturgical and pastoral activities in the presence of their beloved community,” writes the *Fides* news agency. In the afternoon, the participants of the baptismal course were baptized, received Holy Communion for the first time and were confirmed by Bishop Li Shan of Beijing.

On July 17, according to a report by *Xinde*, the Eastern Church in the city of Hohhot in Inner Mongolia was allowed to reopen and “the first Holy Mass of the year” was celebrated there by Bishop Meng Qinglu. In the diocese of Xi’an, too, churches were able to reopen in July after being closed as a preventive measure (*Agenzia Fides* July 18; [xinde.org](http://xinde.org) July 18).

However, lockdowns and church closures continue to occur at the local level in different parts of China.  
*kwt*

**August 18–20, 2022:**

## **10th National Assembly of Representatives of Chinese Catholicism meets in Wuhan**

The highest body of official Catholicism elected a new leadership of the official Catholic governing bodies, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) and the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference. Bishop Li Shan of Beijing became the new chairman of the CPA. Bishop Shen Bin of Haimen was elected president of the Bishops' Conference. A report on the work of the past six years was presented and approved, and the statutes of the two governing bodies were revised. According to official figures, 345 clergy, religious sisters and lay Catholics took part in the congress. On August 23, the newly elected leadership was received by Wang Yang, chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Also present was You Quan, head of the Chinese Communist Party's United Front Department (see subpage of the 10th National Assembly on the CPA and the Bishops' Conference website: [www.chinacatholic.cn/html/folder/22070577-1.htm](http://www.chinacatholic.cn/html/folder/22070577-1.htm); *Xinhua* Aug. 23). – For details and background see the article and the partial translation of the work report in *China heute* 2022, No. 3, pp. 140-143; 167-171 (in German). *kwt*

**August 26, 2022:**

## **Beihan Church in Taiyuan demolished**

In the diocese of Taiyuan, the Catholic church in Beihan Village, Wanbailin District, was partly demolished and partly blown up by the authorities. This is shown by photos in a post on the web portal [www.163.com](http://www.163.com). The demolition of the imposing, two-towered Gothic church is obviously related to urban development. The entire village of Beihan had been demolished earlier, and numerous new blocks of high-rise buildings can be seen in the photos. The bell tower of the church, which was modeled on Notre Dame in Paris, measured 40 meters. The church was rebuilt in 1990 on the site of an earlier church and only completed in 2012. The village is to be transformed into a new shopping, theatre, cultural, leisure and tourism center, the report says. The villagers have been resettled ([www.163.com/dy/article/HFRQID090553Q2Y8.html](http://www.163.com/dy/article/HFRQID090553Q2Y8.html)). *kf*

**August 28, 2022:**

## **Bishop Ye Ronghua of Ankang has passed away**

The bishop of Ankang Catholic Diocese in Shaanxi has died at the age of 91 after a long illness. John Baptist Ye Ronghua was born on June 20, 1931 into a Catholic family in a village near Hanzhong, Shaanxi Province. From 1945 he attended the Hanzhong Diocese Minor Seminary and later the Kai-feng Regional Seminary in Henan, where he studied until 1958. He spent ten years in labor camps during the Cultural Revolution. It was not until December 10, 1981, that Ye Ronghua was ordained a priest and worked as a pastor in various parishes. In 1987 Bishop Li Du'an of Xi'an sent him to the Diocese of Ankang to rebuild the small Catholic community in a poor region of Shaanxi. On December 10, 2000, Bishop Li Du'an ordained him fifth Bishop of the Diocese of Ankang. On November 30, 2016,

with the permission of the Holy See and the authorities, Wang Xiaoxun was ordained coadjutor bishop of Ankang (*AsiaNews* Aug. 29; [www.xinde.org](http://www.xinde.org) Aug. 28). *kf*

September 1, 2022:

## Situation of the Catholic online media *Xinde* and *Xiao zhushou* following the end of the transition period for license acquisition

The Catholic newspaper *Xinde* 信德 (*Faith*) based in Shijiazhuang, which has not been allowed to appear in print since autumn 2020, was able to obtain the new mandatory “Internet Religious Information Services License” for its website [www.xinde.org](http://www.xinde.org) and its public WeChat account in August. In a September 1 editorial, author Ye Sheng (“Voice in the Desert”) wrote that the new regulations have forced some services on the *Xinde* website to be discontinued and related content to be removed. “We only hope that we can continue to provide services to the best of our ability by figuring out how to adapt and transform our development within the scope that politics allows,” Ye Sheng wrote. For some time now, *Xinde* has been publishing significantly less news from Church life in local dioceses and parishes than before, but continues to post reports about the universal Church from *Vatican News* almost every day. The popular Beijing-based Catholic app *Tianzhujiao xiao zhushou* 天主教小助手 (CathAssist), which had offered many materials related to spiritual life such as daily readings, Liturgy of the Hours, Bible and catechism, announced on August 23 that despite best efforts it had not been able to acquire the necessary license and therefore had to discontinue its service. The app was no longer accessible, causing great regret. Apparently, however, a solution could be found, involving a new start with a direct connection to the Diocese of Beijing. With the new name *Wanyou zhenyuan* 万有真原 (True Origin of All Things) and the address [www.wanyouzhenyuan.cn](http://www.wanyouzhenyuan.cn), the work of the app will continue. The announcement of its re-launch on September 21 reads: “Thank God, we have good news for everyone: Beijing Diocese’s Xishiku Church *Wanyou zhenyuan* app (developed with *Tianzhujiao xiao zhushou*’s team) is now accessible to all.” The new app, which has many similarities to the old one (details could not be checked), has obtained an “Internet Religious Information Services License”. *kwt*

September 9, 2022:

## Death of Shen Baozhi, General Secretary of the Diocese of Shanghai

According to official death notices from the Shanghai Catholic Patriotic Association, the Church Affairs Commission, the Shanghai Diocese and the Catholic Intelligentsia Association of Shanghai, Fr. Berchmans Shen Baozhi died on September 9 at the age of 96 after a long illness. The obituary lists his positions in the Patriotic Association and in the Diocese of Shanghai. From the 1960s he was vice chairman of the Shanghai Patriotic Association and General Secretary of the diocese. Among other things, he was also a member of the Standing Committee of the People’s Congress of Shanghai for five legislative periods.

Shen Baozhi was an influential but problematic figure in the diocese. He lived in a civil marriage. The obituary states that the funeral service will be kept simple at Shen Baozhi’s request ([www.shtzjlh.org/news\\_detail.aspx?newsid=2023&newscateid=1&cateid=1](http://www.shtzjlh.org/news_detail.aspx?newsid=2023&newscateid=1&cateid=1)). *kf*

## Sino-Vatican Relations

July 19, 2022:

### Archbishop Gallagher, Vatican “Foreign Minister,” in an interview on relations with China and the Agreement

Commenting on the results after four years of the agreement, the archbishop said: “The balance sheet, I suppose, is not terribly impressive. We’ve had six episcopal appointments, and there are some others in the pipeline. So it’s not without results. I suppose we would have liked to see more results, and there’s much work to be done. But the agreement is delivering to a certain extent. The agreement could deliver more, but we have had Covid, and the delegations have not been able to meet in recent years. So, we’re working on that now, and we’re trying to move forward and make the agreement work and work better.” In the interview conducted by *America* magazine’s Gerard O’Connell, Gallagher reconfirmed that the agreement dealt only with the appointment of bishops and that delegations would only speak on that subject. In his view, the agreement has the function of being a sort of confidence-building measure, “if we can work successfully with the Chinese authorities on the appointment of bishops, then that obviously helps both parties to begin to examine other questions as well.” The archbishop confirmed that beforehand there had been discussion such as on the opening of an office of the Holy See in Beijing. When asked why the text of the agreement had never been published, he said: “The text of the agreement was drawn up before I came into office [in November 2014], and it was never substantially changed since I came into this job. I’m led to believe that right from the beginning, it was decided by common consent that the text would not be published, at least not until it’s signed definitively. Furthermore, there is an undertaking to try and improve the text. When we see that maybe certain things don’t work as well as they should, then that may be the moment when the text could be modified and improved.” The archbishop also said that he thinks it would be premature to sign the agreement definitively. He also confirmed that there is a desire to gradually have face-to-face meetings at a higher level [than that of the foreign ministers who met on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference back in 2020], saying: “There’s a desire, yes. This is the desire to see the bar raised progressively so that Cardinal Pietro Parolin would meet somebody higher than [Foreign Minister] Wang Yi, but not the president, and thus eventually, possibly, preparing the way for a meeting between Xi Jinping and the Holy Father.”

With regard to the arrest of Cardinal Joseph Zen in Hong Kong on May 12, Archbishop Gallagher said that the Holy See was very concerned by the arrest of Cardinal Zen. “I think his arrest was something that for us was very surprising, and we hope that the matter can be resolved satisfactorily in the near future.” Concerning the restriction of freedoms in Hong Kong, Gallagher said: “I think we will be encouraging our people to make the best of the freedom that they have, of the space that they have, as we would do in many countries of the world ([www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2022/07/19/vatican-china-hong-kong-pope-francis-243379](http://www.americamagazine.org/politics-society/2022/07/19/vatican-china-hong-kong-pope-francis-243379)).

Archbishop Gallagher also spoke about the renewal of the Vatican missions in Taipei and Hong Kong, which were announced on the same day; see the entries of July 19, 2022 in the “Hong Kong” and “Taiwan” sections. *kf*

Late August to early September:

### Vatican delegation travels to China for negotiations – Meeting with underground Bishop Shi Hongzhen of Tianjin

Cardinal Secretary of State Parolin mentioned the delegation visit to China in an interview on September 2 (see entry below). *Catholic News Agency* gave the date of the China visit as August 28 to Sep-

tember 2, 2022. It was the first meeting of delegations from both sides in over two years. This time the meeting took place in Tianjin and not in Beijing, probably because of concerns about possible COVID infections on the Chinese side (according to Lucia Cheung on her blog). As reported by Giorgio Bernardelli in *AsiaNews* and by Cheung, the Vatican delegation led by Archbishop Claudio Maria Celli was also able to meet the 92-year-old Bishop of Tianjin, Melchior Shi Hongzhen, who is not recognized by the government. According to Bernardelli, he is under house arrest. In Tianjin Diocese, which has around 100,000 believers, there has been no official bishop recognized by the authorities since 2005. According to Cheung, the Vatican long ago appointed Fr. Yang Wanyuan as Bishop Shi's successor. She wondered if the delegation's visit to the old bishop meant that the Chinese side had agreed; however, according to Cheung, Father Yang's name was not on the list of delegates to the 10th National Assembly, which in turn speaks against his imminent ordination as bishop (*AsiaNews* Sept. 11; *luciacheungoffice.medium.com* Sept. 4; *Vatican News* Sept. 3). *kwt*

**September 2, 2022:**

## **Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin is convinced in an interview that the agreement on the appointment of bishops will be renewed**

Cardinal Parolin gave the interview to the Italian news channel *Tg2* on September 2, here we quote the summary of the interview that appeared in *Vatican News* the next day. Parolin mentioned that a delegation from the Holy See had just returned from talks in China. "When you negotiate with someone, you must always start from recognizing their good faith. Otherwise, the negotiation makes no sense," said Parolin. He acknowledged that there have been many difficulties and that there is a long way to go. From the conviction expressed by Cardinal Parolin immediately after the delegation's return that the agreement should be renewed, Lucia Cheung and Giorgio Bernardelli concluded that the agreement had actually already been renewed at the delegations' meeting, even though an official announcement would probably be made on a day closer to its formal expiry date (October 22). However, both suspected that under these circumstances – contrary to hopes Cardinal Parolin and Archbishop Gallagher had expressed in interviews – there was probably no adjustment to the agreement, since the Chinese negotiators would have needed more time for consultations with higher authorities in the event of major changes, especially since the new Chinese official responsible for religious affairs, Cui Maohu, has only been in office since June and is not very familiar with the subject. But, according to Cheung, if the talks in late August had failed because of the Vatican's wishes to fine-tune the agreement, it could have taken a long time before they could be resumed because of the upcoming party congress and the new formation of the Chinese leadership (*AsiaNews* Sept. 11; *luciacheungoffice.medium.com* Sept. 4; *Vatican News* Sept. 3). – For more on developments (up to Mid-September 2022) concerning the question of renewal of the Provisional Agreement between the Holy See and the People's Republic of China on the Appointment of Bishops see also *China heute* 2022, No. 3, pp. 143-145 (in German). *kwt*

**September 13–15, 2022:**

## **Pope Francis visits Kazakhstan, expresses willingness to visit China – and does not meet President Xi, but receives an appreciative reaction from the Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman**

The Pope attended the Seventh Congress of the Leaders of World and Traditional Religions in the Kazakh capital of Nur-Sultan, and Xi Jinping paid a state visit to Nur-Sultan on September 14. On

the outbound flight on September 13, according to *Reuters*, when asked if he would meet Xi there, Pope Francis said: “I don’t have any news about that,” and further: “I am always ready to go to China.” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning at her press conference the following day said: “[I] appreciate the friendship and goodwill conveyed by Pope Francis. China and the Vatican maintain good communication. We are also ready to keep our dialogue and cooperation with the Vatican going and actively advance the process of improving relations.” *Reuters* correspondent Philipp Pullella, citing a Vatican source, reported that the Vatican had informed China that the Pope was willing to meet President Xi in Nur-Sultan but China had said there was not enough time. Cardinal Parolin, on the other hand, told the newspaper *Il Messaggero* on September 14 that there had been no contacts prior to the trip and that none were planned (fmprc.gov.cn Sept. 14; *ilmessaggero.it* Sept. 14; *Reuters* Sept. 13, 15). *kwt*

September 14, 2022:

### Cardinal Secretary of State Parolin in an interview on the possible relocation of the Vatican China Office from Hong Kong to Beijing and on the future of the Nunciature in Taiwan

When asked: “Would you be willing to move the office from Hong Kong to Beijing?” the cardinal, who at that time was in Kazakhstan, told the newspaper *Il Messaggero*: “It doesn’t seem like a new idea to me, we’ve put it up again and again. We are waiting for a signal from Beijing, which has not yet arrived.” The newspaper also asked about the Vatican nunciature in Taiwan: “Are you ready to close it or reduce its importance as China demands?” Parolin replied: “For now, everything will remain as it is” (*ilmessaggero.it* September 14).

In Hong Kong, the Holy See has an unofficial representation, the Study Mission, which deals with issues of the Mainland Church (not the Hong Kong Church). The Holy See maintains full diplomatic relations with Taiwan (Republic of China). The heads of the representations in Hong Kong and Taipei were replaced in July after a vacancy of more than five months; see the entries of July 19, 2022 in the sections “Hong Kong” and “Taiwan”. *kwt*

September 15, 2022:

### Pope Francis on his return flight from Kazakhstan on the dialogue with China and the trial of Cardinal Zen in Hong Kong

At the press conference on the plane, when asked by a journalist about religious freedom in China and the trial of Cardinal Zen, Pope Francis said: “To understand China takes a century, and we do not live for a century. The Chinese mentality is a rich mentality, and when it gets a little sick, it loses its richness; it is capable of making mistakes. In order to understand, we have chosen the path of dialogue, open to dialogue. There is a bilateral Vatican-Chinese commission that is going well, slowly, because the Chinese pace is slow, they have an eternity to go forward: they are a people of endless patience.” Then the Pope said: “It is not easy to understand the Chinese mentality, but it should be respected, I always respect this. And here in the Vatican, there is a dialogue commission that is going well, chaired by Cardinal Parolin, and he is the person right now who knows the most about China and dialogue with the Chinese. It is a slow process, but steps forward are always being made.” He continued: “Qualifying China as undemocratic, I don’t wish to, because it’s such a complex country ... Yes, it is true that there are things that seem undemocratic to us, that is true. Cardinal Zen, an elderly man, is going to

trial these days, I think. He says what he feels, and it is evident that there are limitations there. More than qualifying, because it is difficult, and I do not wish to qualify, they are impressions; more than to qualify, I try to support the path of dialogue. Then, in dialogue many things become clear, and not only about the Church, but also about other areas; for example the extent of China, the governors of the provinces are all diverse. There are different cultures within China, it is a giant, and understanding China is an enormous thing. But one should not have to lose patience [...]" ([www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2022/september/documents/2022915-kazakhstan-voloritorno.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2022/september/documents/2022915-kazakhstan-voloritorno.html)). *kwt*

**Event preview outside the reporting period of this News Update:  
October 22, 2022:**

## **Holy See announces second extension of the Provisional Agreement on the Appointment of Bishops for another two years**

The Communiqué published by the Press Office of the Holy See reads: "After appropriate consultation and assessment, the Holy See and the People's Republic of China have agreed to extend for another two years the Provisional Agreement regarding the appointment of Bishops, which was signed on 22 September 2018 and previously extended on 22 October 2020. The Vatican Party is committed to continuing a respectful and constructive dialogue with the Chinese Party for a productive implementation of the Accord and further development of bilateral relations, with a view to fostering the mission of the Catholic Church and the good of the Chinese people."

On October 24, during Regular Press Conference, China Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Wang Wenbin confirmed the renewal of the agreement, he said: "On October 22, after friendly consultations, China and the Vatican agreed to a two-year extension of the provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops. The two sides will continue to maintain close communication and consultation, work for the sound implementation of the provisional agreement and continuously advance the process of improving relations" (<https://press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/it/bollettino/pubblico/2022/10/22/0788/01620.html>; [http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/fyrth/202210/t20221024\\_10791171.htm](http://us.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/fyrth/202210/t20221024_10791171.htm)). *kwt*

## **Hong Kong**

**July 19, 2022:**

### **New representative of the Holy See in Hong Kong**

The new head of the Holy See Study Mission in Hong Kong, the unofficial representation of the Holy See to Mainland China, is Monsignor José Luis Diaz Mariblanca Sanchez, *Avvenire* reports. The Spaniard from the Archdiocese of Toledo most recently worked in the Vatican Secretariat of State. The Study Mission belongs to the nunciature in the Philippines. Since 2007, two clerics have been working in Hong Kong in the diplomatic service. Monsignor Diaz has been active in the nunciatures in Indonesia and Algeria. Monsignor Alvaro Ernesto Izurieta y Sea from the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, who has been in Hong Kong since 2020, works with him in the Hong Kong Study Mission (*Avvenire* July 19). *kf*

**September 26, 2022:**

### **Trial of Cardinal Joseph Zen begins in Hong Kong**

The trial of Cardinal Zen and four democracy activists should have started in the West Kowloon Court on September 19, but was postponed by the chief judge, Ada Yim, because of her COVID infection.

Zen, the 90-year-old Bishop Emeritus of Hong Kong, was arrested by Hong Kong security police on May 11 along with three other activists, but was released on bail a few hours later. Initially, the accusation was “collusion with foreign forces,” i.e. violation of the national security law. However, they were later accused of failing to properly register a humanitarian fund they managed. That’s what the process is about now. The “612 Humanitarian Relief Fund” supported pro-democracy protesters of 2019 in paying for the legal and medical expenses they faced. The fund was dissolved in October 2021. In addition to Cardinal Zen, the co-defendants of the trial are lawyer Margaret Ng, pop singer Denise Ho, former Legislative Council member Cyd Ho and cultural scholar Hui Po-Keung. *AsiaNews* reported on September 28 that the hearing unexpectedly lasted only two days. Judge Ada Yim said there was enough evidence to bring charges. The trial is scheduled to resume on October 26. However, *Domradio* quoted the *South China Morning Post* as saying that the police, on the basis of the security law, are conducting a parallel investigation to the trial of Zen and the others on charges of “collusion with foreign forces.” Cardinal colleagues such as Cardinal Fernando Filoni and Cardinal Gerhard Müller spoke out in support of Cardinal Zen. In a joint motion for a resolution on July 6, the European Parliament condemned Zen’s arrest and called for the charges against Zen and the other four trustees to be dropped (*AFP* Sept. 26; *AsiaNews* Sept. 28; *Avvenire* Sept. 23; *CNN* Sept. 26; *Domradio* Sept. 26; *Il Messaggero* Sept. 1; *Vatican News* Sept. 15; [www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2022-0358\\_DE.html](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/RC-9-2022-0358_DE.html)). See also the report in the information section. *kf*

## Macau

June 26, 2022:

### Catholic weekly newspaper *Macau Observer* is closed

The four-page newsletter, edited by lay Catholics, ceased publication on June 26 with the 1,138th issue. The Chinese-language newspaper first appeared on January 1, 1995. The *Observatório de Macau* 澳門觀察報 was initially published every two weeks and sold at newsstands. The publisher was the Catholic Lay Council of Macau. When the newspaper was first launched, according to a January 15, 1995 article by *UCAN*, the newspaper intended to publish reports on social issues, news analysis, commentary on political events, religion and belief and reader comments. It was meant to be a window for religious freedom. An editorial in the last issue said that the aim of the publication was to look at the local community from a different perspective and to provide an additional channel for the people of Macau to communicate and [express their views]. The newspaper was mainly created by volunteers. *kf*

## Taiwan

June 21, 2022 – February 5, 2023:

### The Museum of World Religions presents an exhibition on death

Entitled “Bright as Night, Dark as Day. A Walk with Death” (生死晝夜: 於死亡中前行), the Museum of World Religions in Yonghe, south of Taipei, opened an exhibition on death on June 21, 2022.

Why do we fear death? This is one of the many questions that inspire reflection in the museum’s corridor. There is no correct answer, the museum’s director Ma Yu-chuan 馬幼娟 admitted in a June 21 interview with the *Taipei Times*. But she learned it the hard way, since she couldn’t reconcile with her father, who died suddenly in an accident. At least she makes sure she is affectionate to her mother, who suffered a stroke in January. Death is still one of the major taboos, Director Ma added and said that the museum’s founder, Buddhist master Hsin Dao 心道, was concerned that guests might feel uncomfort-

able visiting the exhibition. But Ma personally disagrees, as the exhibition gives guests plenty of room to think and contemplate what death is and why they fear it.

First, the exhibition depicts death, judgment and life after death in the various religions. Then, in an empty space for reflection, visitors are invited to write down their reflections on life and death, which then are displayed on a screen. After this interactive experience of rebirth, they are released into daily life. The museum's long-term goal is "to enable people to reflect on their inner selves by drawing from the perspectives of life and death of different religions."

So far, the museum has presented different phases of life such as old age, childhood and marriage. The impressive exhibition about death runs until February 5, 2023.

*Willi Boehi*

**July 11, 2022:**

## **Conference at the Embassy of Taiwan at the Vatican: "Beautiful Taiwan, the Field of God"**

The meeting marked the 80th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Holy See. The event was organized by the Embassy. "Missionaries not only established hospitals, schools, orphanages, and retired homes, but also helped sustain the local language and culture," said Ambassador Matthew S. M. Lee, recalling the importance of the Catholic Church's presence in Taiwan.

Ambassador Lee and the Secretary of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Msgr. Protase Rugambwa, gave the introductory addresses. The lectures were given by three priests who have lived and worked in Taiwan: Fr. Gianni Criveller PIME, Camillian Missionary Fr. Felice Chech and the Under-secretary of the Dicastery for Interreligious Dialogue Fr. Paulin Batairwa Kubuya SX. Prof. Peter Kuo Hsiuoung Chiang moderated. Among the more than 80 participants were members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, religious from various congregations, journalists and friends of the Embassy. Members of various religious congregations briefly shared their missionary experiences in Taiwan.

Also on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations, on July 1 the Embassy opened the exhibition "Friendly Taiwan meets Fratelli Tutti. Calligraphy and Painting Exhibition." – The embassy's website states: "All these events wish to emphasize how much the Church's century-long presence has been vital for the development of Taiwan, as stated in the past by President Tsai Ing-wen" (*Vatican News* July 13; [www.taiwanembassy.org/va\\_en/post/4420.html](http://www.taiwanembassy.org/va_en/post/4420.html)). *kf*

**July 19, 2022:**

## **New representative of the Holy See in Taiwan**

The Holy See's new Chargé d'Affaires ad interim in Taiwan is Msgr. Stefano Mazzotti, according to a July 19 report in *Avvenire*. Msgr. Mazzotti was ordained in 2001 for the Diocese of Terni-Narni-Amelia in Italy and has served in the Holy See's diplomatic service in the Philippines, Portugal, France, Egypt and in the Secretariat of State in the Italian office. The Holy See maintains diplomatic relations with the Republic of China in Taiwan, although no nuncio has resided there since 1972, but a Chargé d'Affaires (*Avvenire* July 19). *kf*

September 2, 2022:

## Archbishop Emeritus Joseph Cheng of Taipei has passed away

Archbishop Emeritus Joseph Cheng Tsai-fa has died at the age of 90. From 2004 to 2007 he presided over the Archdiocese of Taipei. Previously, Cheng was bishop of Tainan and Apostolic Administrator of Kinmen and Matsu (*AsiaNews* Sept. 9). *kf*

September 4, 2022:

## Chen Chien-jen at the beatification of Pope John Paul I in the Vatican

Former Vice President of the Republic of China in Taiwan (2016-2020), Chen Chien-jen, represented President Tsai Ing-wen when he attended the beatification of Pope John Paul I at the Vatican on September 4. At a reception prior to the celebrations, the Catholic epidemiologist met Pope Francis, brought President Tsai's greetings and asked for prayers for Taiwan. The Pope replied that they should pray together for peace in the world. Chen gave the Pope a documentary about the work of the Catholic missionaries in Taiwan. Chen and his delegation of six visited the Taiwan Embassy to the Holy See and praised the efforts of Vatican diplomats. The Vatican is the only country in Europe that maintains diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

A visit to the exhibition "Friendly Taiwan meets Fratelli Tutti. Calligraphy and Painting Exhibition," a meeting at the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and with the Sovereign Order of Malta to promote international relations with the Island in terms of humanitarian relations were also on the programme. Chen Chien-jen has also been a member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences since 2021. He has already visited the Vatican in 2016, 2018 and 2019, where he also attended the canonization of Mother Teresa (*Taipei Times* Sept. 4, 5).

*Willi Boehi*

September 12, 2022:

## Poll in Taiwan: Strong support for the death penalty

A vast majority of Taiwan's population opposes abolition of the death penalty, a Foundation for the People poll released September 12, 2022 has found. 86.9 percent of respondents were against its abolition, while only 12.4 percent were in favor of ending these violent deaths. However, 79.9 percent believed the current administration of President Tsai Ing-wen has essentially ceased this controversial practice. 88.8 percent of those surveyed were dissatisfied with Tsai's government because there had only been two executions in the past six years. 90.3 percent believed that the 38 people sentenced to death across the island should be executed soon. Only 10.4 percent of respondents agreed with President Tsai that abolishing the death penalty is a universal goal. On the other hand, 88.1 percent still believe that this brutal punishment helps to prevent serious crimes. Johnny Chiang 江啟臣, member of the Legislative Council for the KMT and chairman of the Foundation, told the *Taipei Times* on September 13 that opposition to abolition of the death penalty spanned age groups and party affiliations among the 1,050 respondents to the poll. 73.6 percent of those surveyed were dissatisfied with public safety, while 25.5 percent were satisfied.

The survey came at a critical time, as two police officers had just been shot dead in cold blood in southern Tainan. The shadows of the state of emergency (1949–1987) are probably still having an effect here.

Some, especially in the older generation, like to remember the time of martial law, because it was said that the streets were still safe and life was easy.

*Willi Boehi*

## Singapore

August 30, 2022:

### Newly created Cardinal William Goh wants to found interfaith research center

William Cardinal Goh, Archbishop of Singapore, who was elevated to the status of cardinal on August 27, announced in an interview with *Fides* on August 30, 2022 that he would set up a research institute to study the relationship between religions. He wants to promote religious harmony in Asia by strengthening dialogue between the different religions. Religious leaders understand each other well, respect each other and support each other, he said. For the country's Catholics, this meant first and foremost getting to know other religions. But interfaith dialogue was for people who are passionate and mature in their faith. It was very important to know your own faith, the Cardinal continued. In this sense, every believer could be an authentic witness of Christ with people of other religions. Of Singapore's 5.6 million population, 360,000 are Catholics in 32 parishes. Cardinal Go, 64, has led the Archdiocese of Singapore since 2013. He is the first cardinal of Singapore. With a total of six new cardinals from Asia, the number of possible Pope electors among the Asian cardinals increases to 21 out of a total of 132. Cardinal Goh is currently the only ethnic Chinese among the possible electors. Born in Singapore in 1957 to a Chinese family, he was ordained a priest in 1985 after studies in Singapore and Rome and became Archbishop of Singapore in 2013.

On September 8, more than 3,500 people celebrated Mass with the new cardinal in Singapore, including Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong with his wife. The cardinal said in his homily that Singapore is a model for interfaith harmony in the world. Religious leaders and the government worked hand in hand for the good of society instead of working against each other. – At the consistory in Rome, one of the few cardinals not present was Joseph Cardinal Zen of Hong Kong. He may still not have been in possession of his passport, which was taken from him after his brief arrest on May 11 (*Domradio* Aug. 27; *Eglises d'Asie* Sept. 10; *Licas* Aug. 29, Sept. 12; *Vatican News* Aug. 30; see also *RCTC* 2022, No. 2, p. 19f.). *kf*

### Authors' Abbreviations:

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## *Truly Chinese, Truly Christian: An Exploration of the ronghe yu huitong – The Inculturation Model of Archbishop Stanislaus Lo Kuang*

Paulin Batairwa Kubuya

### Introduction

Regarding inculturation, or the process enhancing the interaction between the gospel and the culture, Archbishop Stanislaus Lo Kuang spoke of fostering an identity that is “truly Christian and truly Chinese” in the person of the one receiving Christianity in the Chinese context. He considered that the convert could be the receptacle and the meeting point of both the culture and the gospel and their respective worldviews, called to coexist and interact in a harmonious way. Given its contextual background, Christianity was associated with the West, in the same way as the Chinese culture was associated with the East. Consequently, the conversion of a Chinese to Christianity occasioned questions and challenges that arose from the meeting and interactions of those diverse religious and cultural worldviews. Lo Kuang was convinced that the arrangement was possible, primarily because the worldviews involved could be bridged and could communicate with each other – *ronghe yu huitong* 融合與會通 – and enhance an integrated identity – truly Christian, truly Chinese. Lo Kuang was convinced that this approach might effectively respond to

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From October 19 to 23, 2022, a conference on “Inculturation of the Christian Faith and Today’s Chinese Society” was held in Macerata, Italy, the birth place of Jesuit China missionary Matteo Ricci (Li Madou 利瑪竇, 1552–1610). One of the main purposes of the conference was to provide an exchange platform for young Chinese Catholic scholars, especially theologians and philosophers, who are currently doing research in Europe. The conference was jointly organized by Li Madou Study Centre in Macerata and China-Zentrum in Sankt Augustin. 50 scholars from various European countries attended. Most of them were Chinese, but there were also a number of Europeans and one priest from the Kongo: Father Prof. Dr. Paulin Batairwa Kubuya SX. In this issue of *RCTC* we present to you his contribution to the conference in Macerata, titled “*Truly Chinese, Truly Christian: An Exploration of the ronghe yu huitong – The Inculturation Model of Archbishop Stanislaus Lo Kuang.*” Archbishop Lo Kuang 羅光 (1911–2004) of Taipei, born in Hunan, developed a method of introducing Chinese philosophy and religions to Europeans during his time in Rome. He continued to develop his approach of encounter and fusion between East and West after being assigned to serve the Church in Taiwan as Bishop of Tainan in 1961.

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the allegations made regarding Chinese who embraced Christianity as being lost to the Chinese culture. *Duo le yi ge jidutu, shao le yi ge Zhongguoren* 多一個基督徒, 少了一個中國人。

Gospel and culture form the poles around which rotate the fundamental questions of fidelity dealt with within inculturation. “Truly Chinese, truly Christian” and *ronghe yu huitong* require a double fidelity: first, the fidelity of the Christian faith to the local culture that enables it to feel at home in that context: and second, the fidelity to the faith, transmitted and received, which allows it to maintain all the aspects of its catholicity. Lo Kuang strove to highlight elements of that double fidelity, arguing and showing how their worldviews could communicate and how better knowledge of both universes reconcile the Chinese Christian believer and foster an authentic catholicity among the Chinese.

Given our understanding of inculturation as defined above, this essay will look at Lo Kuang in his striving to be a Christian at home with his Chinese cultural background, and at the same time a Chinese scholar predisposed to set his cultural knowledge and competence at hand, to facilitate the reception of Christianity in the Chinese context. First of all, who was Lo Kuang?

## Who Was Lo Kuang?

Lo Kuang (Luo Guang 羅光), born to a Catholic family in Hengyang (China, Hunan Province) on January 1, 1911, was baptized as Stanislaus and raised in the Catholic faith. He later attended the Franciscan minor seminary of the Sacred Heart of Huangshangwan in the province of Hunan. It was as a Chinese Christian that Stanislaus Lo Kuang left China in 1929 for Rome.<sup>1</sup> Rome welcomed him as a seminarian, a candidate for the priesthood.<sup>2</sup> He was ordained priest in 1936.

After ordination he specialized in philosophy, theology and canon law and respectively obtained doctoral degrees in philosophy and theology from the Pontifical Urban University and a doctorate in canon law from the Lateranum. With such qualifications, he taught at the Urbaniana and served as an adviser to the Ambassador of the Republic of China to the Holy See, dealing with the retreat of the Republican government to Taiwan in 1949.

In 1961, Pope John XXIII consecrated him Bishop of Tainan, a position that enabled him to participate in all four sessions of the Second Vatican Council. In 1966, Lo Kuang left Tainan to serve as metropolitan bishop of the archdiocese of Taipei, a position he left in 1978, to succeed Cardinal Paul Yü Pin as the president of Fu Jen Catholic University. In 1983, Lo Kuang became the president of the Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference – the highest organ of the Roman Catholic Church in the Chinese context. In 1992, he retired as President of Fu Jen Catholic University but remained influential and active in the Church, as well as in the academic environment.

1 For more biographical details on Stanislaus Lo Kuang, see Chen Fang-Chung, “Remembering a Pilgrim on His Centennial: Archbishop Stanislas Lo Kuang,” in: *Tripod 3* (Autumn 2011) 162, pp. 60-75.

2 The coincidence that brought Lo Kuang to Rome, according to Chen Fang-Chung, was a telegram from Archbishop Constantini to Archbishop Palazzi asking him to send another seminarian to continue his studies in Rome. Lo Kuang was chosen and left Hankou three days after his arrival. See: Chen Fang-Chung, *ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

Questions relative to inculturation have been central to his engagement. To better grasp the importance of his engagement, as a methodological procedure, it might be helpful to recall the reflection of David Tracy regarding the public character of theology. For Tracy, theology is public discourse and holds public status (Tracy 1981, p. 3) and each theologian “addresses three distinct and related social realities: the wider society, the academy, and the Church” (Tracy 1981, p. 5). With this frame in mind, it will be the task of this essay to illustrate the public status of the efforts of Lo Kuang, the realities and audiences he addressed.

## An “Inculturated” Way of Thinking

The teaching and writing of Lo Kuang promoted his views on inculturation, even though, in the early stages he might not have used this expression. Due to his background, the formation, the training received abroad – and his initial work as a Chinese cleric and philosopher in a Western country –, Lo Kuang was brought to ponder on the questions of inculturation in a rather philosophical manner. The context he lived in made him realize the complexities of his own identity – a Chinese and a Christian. His teaching position was compelling him not only to understand himself but also to encourage others to comprehend that complexity. The initial efforts of Lo Kuang to make of inculturation a public discourse were academic and philosophical. The context defined his audience and impacted the articulation of his thought. Thus, he expressed his ideas of bridging East and West, of promoting the cross-fertilization of Eastern and Western thoughts and worldviews with the expression *ronghe yu huitong*. It was through that terminology that he sought to express the complexities inherent in the identity of a Chinese who professes to be a Christian.

## A Lifelong Concern

The reconciliation between East and West, *dong-xifang ronghe yu huitong* 東西方融合與會通, was the ultimate goal of Lo Kuang’s intellectual and pastoral efforts. “I have spent my whole life writing for one purpose: to make Catholicism penetrate Chinese culture ... I pray for Catholicism to penetrate Chinese culture.”<sup>3</sup> And on other occasions, speaking of the contribution and integration of Confucianism – one of the religious and philosophical treasures of the Chinese tradition – for his spiritual life, he stipulates, “as a Catholic believer and observer of Confucian teaching, it is often through ‘union with Heaven’ (*tian-ren he yi* 天人合一) that I achieve my goal of being united with God.”<sup>4</sup>

In the course of his life, *ronghe yu huitong* became a strategy and even the guiding thread of his thinking and acting. The expression refers to a practice of reconciling different epistemological universes by borrowing the categories of the other (the host) in order

3 “我一生寫作的目標只有一個：使天主教進入中國文化 [...] 我求天主教進入中國文化。” Lo Kuang 羅光, *Luo Guang quanshu* 羅光全書, “Xu” 序, pp. II-III.

4 “我這個有天主教的信仰，又遵守儒家遺訓的人，常以‘天人合一’同天主相結合為目標。” Lo Kuang 羅光, “Bashi zongjie kai xin sheng” 八十總結開新生, Taipei shi: Lo Kuang 1991.

to understand oneself and to be understood. Lo Kuang attached great importance to this practice because he was convinced of the uniqueness of each culture and each rationality, but also of their communicability. *Ronghe yu huitong* puts into concrete terms the parameters of the encounter and interactions between different others. How can we ensure that encounters and interactions between cultures and rationalities do not end in the absorption of the other, in its negation in the form of assimilation, or in a syncretic amalgam?

*Ronghe yu huitong* is so central to Lo Kuang that it serves as the outline of his biography. In fact, the important stages of Lo Kuang's life correspond with the moments or passages required in the model of interaction or mediation that he proposed. Schematically speaking, the journey can be summarized in three stages proposed later as paradigmatic moments of the encounter. The three stages in question are: First, leaving home and becoming a guest. Lo Kuang did this when he left China for further studies in Rome. Second, becoming a host. While living abroad and receiving much from that world, he put this into practice because, mostly through his teaching, he welcomed the West to the East by introducing specific aspects of Eastern-Chinese culture. Third, making the most of all the opportunities and challenges that emerge from the encounter of different cultures. Lo Kuang lived this when, back in Taiwan, he advocated his concept of East–West mediation by implementing it in his pastoral work and promoting life education in Catholic educational institutions.

## The Three Moments of the Encounter: Three-Stage Mediation

### 1. The West Welcomes Stanislaus Lo Kuang

Born in Hunan, it was as a Chinese Christian that Stanislaus Lo Kuang left China in 1929 for Rome.<sup>5</sup> He was leaving behind a China searching for new intellectual orientations. The declaration of the Republic in 1911 put an end to over two thousand years of imperial system. The May Fourth Movement emerged as an inspirational renewal movement critical of the traditional values – associated with the rejected imperial system – and striving hence for new frameworks fostering the prosperity of the nation.

By the time Lo Kuang left China, he might not have been much aware of that transition, protected by the Catholic environment of his family and the Franciscan seminary of his educational upbringing. It would hence be in Europe, once confronted with the educational system and values of a European seminary that he would have to think thoroughly of his own background. Rome welcomed him as a seminarian, a candidate for the priesthood<sup>6</sup> and provided him with the elite formation program following the reform introduced by Pope Pius XI. The new learning in the new context must have aroused a curiosity and a thirst about his own background. It could be considered that at a certain point in the journey of conversion, the convert must face a stage where he or she is called to consider seriously his/her background, to value and validate it in the face of the Chris-

5 For more biographical details on Stanislaus Lo Kuang, see Chen Fang-Chung, "Remembering a Pilgrim on His Centennial."

6 See footnote 2.

tian worldview to be embraced. One must at that time define the way of dealing with the past and its values vis-à-vis the new that is pending ahead.

In two important documents,<sup>7</sup> Pope Pius XI had defined the contours of the formation Lo Kuang received at the Urbaniana, the Pontifical University that welcomed him. In *Officiorum Omnium* (1922), the Pope praised Latin and scholastic philosophy and their importance, recommending that they be among the pillars of the intellectual formation of the seminary. An effective knowledge of Latin would enable future clerics to engage in a dialogue with other disciplines. Knowledge of Latin will open the door to the sources of Christian thought, especially to the wisdom of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church whose writings are mostly in Latin. And above all, as a language, Latin represented the universality of the Church and it was therefore normal and necessary that the elite of the Church had an outstanding knowledge of it.<sup>8</sup> The rules were still in force during Lo Kuang's study period. Talking offhand about the memories of his studies in Rome, Lo Kuang once testified that the teachers taught in Latin and that it was not difficult to follow the course.<sup>9</sup>

As for the intellectual content, it was undoubtedly philosophy and Christian theology. Philosophy referred to scholasticism, once defined as “the bulwark of the Faith and the strong entrenchment of Religion” (Encyclical Letter *Aeterni Patris*).<sup>10</sup> In the words of Pius XI, it was the philosophy “energetically refined by the holy Fathers and by the Doctors of the School with a certain continuity of efforts, and as it was at length brought to the highest level of perfection by the exertion and genius of Thomas Aquinas.”<sup>11</sup> As for theology, it was the exercise of knowledge of things related to salvation, a knowledge coming from divine sources, from the *magisterium*, from the fathers of the Church and from the councils, and which had to serve to present, to explain and to comment on the word of God, to consolidate the dogmas and the teaching of the Church and above all to refute the heresies.<sup>12</sup> For Pope Pius XI, following in the tradition of his predecessor Benedict XV,<sup>13</sup> no other system could promise the expected results, except the Scholastic tradition crafted by St Thomas of Aquinas.

[He said: ...] “there should be as full an explanation and as invincible a defense of the truth divinely handed down as is permitted by human reasoning” – what

7 The Apostolic letter *Officiorum Omnium* of 1922 and the Decree *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii* of 1935.

8 “Since Latin is such a language, it was divinely foreseen that it should be something marvelously useful for the Church as teacher, and that it should also serve as a great bond of unity for Christ's more learned faithful; that is to say, by giving them not only something with which, whether they are separated in different locations or gathered into one place, they might easily compare the respective thoughts and insights of their minds, but also – and this is even more important – something with which they might understand more profoundly the things of mother Church, and might be united more closely with the head of the Church. It is clear that the clergy should, in advance of the rest, be very studious of the Latin language for both these reasons, not to mention others; ...” See: Pius XI, *Officiorum Omnium*, <https://lms.org.uk/officiorum-omnium>.

9 Chen Fang-Chung, “Remembering a Pilgrim on His Centennial,” p. 63.

10 Pius XI, *Officiorum Omnium*, <https://lms.org.uk/officiorum-omnium>.

11 *Ibid.*

12 *Ibid.*

13 Benedict XV, *Motu Proprio, De Romana Sancti Thomae Academia*, 1914.

*brings this about is nothing other than Scholastic Philosophy, with Aquinas as leader and master [...].*<sup>14</sup>

Pius XI reiterates the same justifications in *De Scientiarum Dominus*, an apostolic constitution on culture, teaching and the training of priests, published on May 24, 1931.<sup>15</sup> The Europe that welcomed Lo Kuang and shaped his impressions and understandings was largely dependent on the values contained in this document. After his ordination to the priesthood, Lo Kuang pursued three doctorates, two in philosophy and theology at the Urbaniana and the third in law/jurisprudence at the Lateran University. As we shall see later, these specializations were not only a response to his thirst for knowledge, but also served to transmit what, in his eyes, constituted the foundation of Chinese thought and culture. The immersion in Thomism will have awakened his latent interest in his Chinese roots.

## 2. The Host Who Offers: Course on China at the Urbaniana

After his being welcomed, we discover Lo Kuang using his own genius to introduce his land to the European public. The process involved a self-affirmation and the recognition of a unique dimension that is reconstructed in the encounter with European otherness. The process begins and coincides with Lo Kuang's professorial career at the Urbaniana.

About this career, Chen Fang-Chung says that it began abruptly. After his ordination to the priesthood in 1936, Lo Kuang planned to major in canon law. At the same time, his *alma mater*, Urbaniana, faced a problem: the Chinese priest expected to teach Chinese language did not arrive. To solve the problem, Propaganda Fide appointed Lo Kuang in his place.<sup>16</sup> Thus began Lo Kuang's teaching career at the Urbaniana.

Curiously, Lo Kuang did not stop at teaching the Chinese language. He spared no effort to introduce the philosophical and religious thought of the Chinese to the public that the platform of the Urbaniana offered him. During this period, he developed courses on Confucianism, which he presented as the wisdom of the Chinese, another on Daoism, dedicated to Chinese philosophical conceptions, and a third on the history of religions in China. This trio was taught in Italian. He later published them in a series of books for students, under the titles *La Sapienza dei Cinesi*,<sup>17</sup> *Una Concezione Filosofica Cinese*<sup>18</sup> and *La Storia delle Religioni in Cina*. These three books are important because they offer a general vision of the systematic way in which Lo Kuang introduced the Chinese cultural and religious worldview to the outside world, at a time when the world of literati in the West was trying to create a systematic approach to Chinese thought.

Lo Kuang's work, therefore, requires a little more attention. Firstly, the presentation was in three points: wisdom, philosophy and history of religions. Secondly, if one looks deeply, one realizes that the content is presented in a logic accessible to the Western mentality,

14 Pius XI, *Officiorum Omnium*, <https://lms.org.uk/officiorum-omnium>.

15 Pius XI, *Ad Catholici Sacerdotii*, #5.

16 Chen Fang-Chung, "Remembering a Pilgrim on His Centennial," p. 63.

17 Stanislao Lokuang, *La Sapienza dei Cinesi (Il Confucianesimo)*, Roma: Officium Libri Cattolici 1944.

18 Stanislao Lokuang, *Una Concezione Filosofica Cinese (Il Taoismo)*, Roma: Scientia Catholica 1946.

or following the rational tracks of the readers. This is visible in the titles of the chapters. For example, the eleven themes or chapters of Chinese wisdom (Confucianism) are in the following order: religion, metaphysics, norm of morality, virtue, the individual, family, marriage, paternal authority, filial piety, civil society and political doctrine. Regarding the philosophical conception, by which he means Daoism, he discusses it in three chapters. The terminology is perhaps closer to his European audience than to the Chinese. He speaks of metaphysical philosophy in the first chapter, of the philosophical conception of human life in the second and of religion in the last. His concern to be understood led Lo Kuang to borrow concepts with a fairly solid foundation in the West, without perhaps thinking too much about whether these terms have correspondences in the Chinese world. He speaks of Epicureanism,<sup>19</sup> agnosticism,<sup>20</sup> fatalism,<sup>21</sup> anarchy and sociology,<sup>22</sup> all in relation to Daoism.

In the last book, Lo Kuang develops the history of Chinese religions in ten chapters, grouped in three sections. The section on the Confucian tradition is the longest and deals with such titles as: the historical events of the Chinese people, the Supreme God, the lower spirits, sacrifice and magic. The second section is made up of two chapters: one on Daoism and the other on Buddhism. Finally, the third section entitled “The Religious Life of the Chinese People” has two chapters, one on mythology (cosmic, Daoist, Buddhist, protective deities, heroes) and the other on the religious practices of the Chinese people – namely, ancestor worship, family festivities, social religiosity and popular morality.<sup>23</sup>

The content and information contained in these three books are overlapping and at times may seem repetitive. This should not surprise the reader who is informed about the history of these books. These are textbooks written to include as much information as possible. They aim at “inculturating” the Chinese worldviews within a western-Christian context. From a scholarly point of view, Lo Kuang succeeds in this challenge by giving the West a Chinese knowledge wrapped in or presented according to the categories of scholastic philosophy with which they are familiar. This manner of treating the Chinese religious and philosophical thought was also expanding his audience to include not only intellectuals trained in Western schemas but also some Chinese thinkers. In fact, as will be seen later, after the fall of the imperial system, sympathizers of the renewal movement in China had defined a *modus operandi* referred to as *Zhong-ti xi-yong* 中體西用, consisting in adopting Western *savoir faire* – or *technique* in the scientific and epistemological fields while keeping Chinese values at the heart of the action.<sup>24</sup> It could be argued whether the

19 Lo Kuang, *Una Concezione Filosofica Cinese (Il Taoismo)*, vol. 40-2, in: *Complete Works of Lokuang*, vol. 40-1, 40-2, 40-3, pp. 244-245.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 258.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 306-310.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 339-340.

23 Lo Kuang, *La Storia delle Religioni in Cina*, vol. 40-3, in: *Complete Works of Lokuang*, vol. 40-1, 40-2, 40-3.

24 The *Zhong-ti xi-yong* 中體西用 as a way of doing things means adopting Western *savoir faire* – or *technique* in the scientific and epistemological fields while keeping Chinese values at the heart of the action. In the late nineteenth century, the *ti-yong* 體用 (essence–utilization) debate prompted government officials to embrace modernization by preserving Chinese learning as the essence (*Zhongxue wei ti* 中學為體) and appropriating Western learning for application (*xixue wei yong* 西學為用). The approach came from Zhang Zhidong, who towards the end of the Qing dynasty, proposed it as a way out for a China humiliated by the European and American invasion. Subse-

methodology of Lo Kuang was or was not an application of the same *modus operandi* to his own Christian context.

### 3. Fructifying the Encounter: East–West Mutual Enrichment

Compared to the first two stages, this is the most complex of Lo Kuang's intellectual journey. It presupposes a return to the fold, not empty-handed, but rather with a full bag and invincible determination. This stage coincides with Lo Kuang's physical return to the Chinese world, starting from Tainan, where he served as bishop, to Taipei as the metropolitan bishop and mostly in Fu Jen Catholic University, as Rector and professor of philosophy. He recognizes himself as the depositary of an unequalled wealth, namely, the content of his assumed Chinese-Christian identity and the method already tested in Rome, but only shared thus far with foreigners. The return to the fold allows him to reedit the experience of Rome but in a cultural context supposed to be his own. This effort will make it possible to externalize the objective assigned to his life of research: to serve as a bridge between the East and the West, to create an atmosphere that serves as a good office between the cultural, religious and philosophical universes of the East and those of the West. To achieve this, Lo Kuang set up several strategies: the comparison between the two philosophical and cultural universes,<sup>25</sup> the evocation of emblematic personalities of the meeting between the West and the East (Matteo Ricci,<sup>26</sup> Xu Quangqi,<sup>27</sup> Wu Jinxiong<sup>28</sup>) for instance, and the criticism of sympathizers of other philosophical currents in China,<sup>29</sup> especially the one that emerged during the republican period (*Minguo pian* 民國篇), namely, the new Confucianism (Tang Junyi, Mou Zhongsan, Fang Dongmei).<sup>30</sup>

However, with careful observation, one might realize that all these strategies revolved around the proposal of scholasticism as a method of research and interpretation of Chinese philosophy and culture. This is most evident in a volume published in Chinese (a way of defining the intended audience) and dealing exclusively with the issue of East–West comparison.<sup>31</sup> The subtitles of the volume are suggestive of the prelate's areas of specialization in Rome. In the foreword, Lo Kuang explains in concise terms the motivations and

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quently, several other thinkers adopted it as an adequate response to opening up and adapting to modernity. See Chinese Encyclopedia on line, [http://ap6.pccu.edu.tw/Encyclopeia\\_media/main-philosophy.asp?id=6060](http://ap6.pccu.edu.tw/Encyclopeia_media/main-philosophy.asp?id=6060).

25 Cfr. the three parts *Zhong-xi zongjiao zhexue bijiao yanjiu* 中西宗教哲學比較研究, *Zhong-wai lishi zhexue zhi bijiao yanjiu* 中外歷史哲學之比較研究 and *Zhong-xi falü zhexue zhi bijiao yanjiu* 中西法律哲學之比較研究 of vol. 19, in: *Luo Guang quan shu*.

26 Lo Kuang 羅光, *Li Madou zhuan* 利瑪竇傳, Taipei: Guanqi she 1960.

27 Lo Kuang 羅光, *Xu Guangqi zhuan* 徐光啟傳, Taipei: Zhuanji wenxue chubanshe 1982.

28 Lo Kuang 羅光, *Rensheng zhexue* 人生哲學, xiudingben 修訂本, Taipei: Furen daxue 1989.

29 Lo Kuang's unparalleled contribution to Chinese philosophy is his collection on the history of Chinese philosophical thought published in six volumes in Chinese, *Zhongguo zhexue sixiang shi* 中國哲學思想史. The title in English is: *History of the Chinese Philosophical Thought*.

30 Lo Kuang, *Zhongguo zhexue sixiang shi*, vol. 6.

31 Vol. 19: *Zhong-xi zongjiao zhexue bijiao yanjiu* 中西宗教哲學比較研究 (part 1), *Zhong-wai lishi zhexue zhi bijiao yanjiu* 中外歷史哲學之比較研究 (part 2) and *Zhong-xi falü zhexue zhi bijiao yanjiu* 中西法律哲學之比較研究 (part 3), in: *Luo Guang quan shu*.

criteria that guided his work. First, he notes that Chinese philosophy is not systematic<sup>32</sup> and suggests that it could find advantages in systematization following the model of the Western thought. He says: “This book is designed according to the model of the philosophy of religion of scholastic philosophy with the addition of some theological concepts related to philosophy.”<sup>33</sup> Secondly, he explains that his choice of reference points for comparison is in scholastic philosophy and Catholic theology. According to Lo Kuang, this is self-evident because the roots of European philosophy are to be found in Catholicism, Protestantism being only a later development. Thirdly and finally, Lo Kuang points out some similarities and differences in certain landmarks (belief in God, religious meaning). He also establishes similarities between the attitudes of Chinese and European philosophers on the central points of the philosophy of religion.<sup>34</sup>

By comparative philosophy of religion, Lo Kuang means “a rational study of the act of faith.” And as in the West, the discourse focuses on the place of religion in Chinese philosophy vis-à-vis the place of religion in Western and American philosophy, on the problematic of the existence of God, on the attributes or characteristics of God, and finally on religion in everyday life. Although at a first glance the work compares the two worlds in a paralleled and conciliatory fashion, a closer look reveals that there are also differences which can contribute to mutual enrichment. The general history of Chinese thought aligns two streams of interpretation based in the two central concepts of Chinese philosophy: the *you* 有 and the *wu* 無. Generally speaking, *you* refers to existence, to what is, and *wu* on the other hand to what is not. Regardless of the subtlety that Chinese interpreters give to these concepts, there is unanimity that *you/wu* should not be unilaterally regarded as the equivalents of Western philosophy’s being and nothingness. On the other hand, it is worth pointing out the repercussions of the different interpretations of these concepts on the worldview and ethics, as well as on the conception of Chinese philosophy.

Similarly, Lo Kuang protested against certain interpretations which, in the name of inculturation or the creation of a local exegesis, created inadequate correspondences between Christian thought and the Confucian tradition. For him, it was necessary first of all to fit into the general logic of these two thoughts, otherwise one might lose sight of the specificities of each of these systems.<sup>35</sup>

32 “中國的宗教哲學，不是系統的哲學篇章，而零亂的宗教信仰。從各種古籍裡按照西洋宗教哲學的觀念，予以結集，稍加系統化，讀者可以對中國的宗教信仰取得一個系統的概念。” Cfr. *Luo Guang quan shu*, vol. 19, p. i.

33 *Luo Guang quan shu*, vol. 19, p. ii.

34 “《中西宗教哲學比較研究》，首先是宗教信仰在哲學上的地位不相同，其次是研究的方法更有差別。相同之點，則是對於尊神皇上帝和天主的信仰，內容很相似，而且有許多點相同。在祭祀和祈禱意義上，也有相同之點。[...] 我們中國哲學家也都信上天，但在他們的哲學觀點裡，則都不提到宗教信仰。[...] 中國哲學家沒有人倡無神論而背棄上天，王充的無神，祇是無鬼神。西洋哲學家則有人公開提倡無神論，不信有上天。馬克思的辯證無神論就是很顯明的例子。” *Luo Guang quan shu*, vol. 19, p. ii.

35 “One should not indiscriminately draw comparisons or interpretations between certain philosophical concepts of the Song dynasty (Song dai lixue 宋代理學) with certain ideas of Catholic scholasticism. For example, between Taiji and God. ‘It is true that Chinese philosophy talks about Taiji, but it has never said that Taiji is God, nor has it ever established that Taiji is [exists]. Besides, Taiji has an origin.’  
“不能用宋代理學的範疇與天主教的士林哲學的一些觀念隨便做比較或者解釋。例如：太極上帝：‘中國哲學講太極，從來沒說太極是上帝，也沒有說太極是自有。太極更有根源。’ Lo Kuang, “Zhongguo zhexue de jieshu lun” 中國哲學的結果論, in: *Rujia zhexue de tixi* 儒家哲學的體系, vol. 17, part 1, in: *Luo Guang quan shu*, Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju 1996, p. 28.

Concerning emblematic personalities, Lo Kuang had a deep consideration for the other (the foreigner in his effort to get closer to the Chinese). In his study of the evangelization of China, apart from the portraits of missionary congregations and their exploits,<sup>36</sup> he was particularly interested in certain people: the missionaries, bearers of the gospel and of European thought and culture in the Chinese context. For this reason, he devoted time to the historical study of Matteo Ricci. He credited him with the introduction of *zhuanji* 傳記, biography, as a literary style in the history of Chinese literature.<sup>37</sup> As for the greatness of his personality, Lo Kuang believes that it did not lie in the teaching of Western doctrine, nor in his mastery of the Chinese language, but came from his self-sacrifice, his firm courage and constant willingness to take risks, his unparalleled love for the Lord, and the fact that instead of seeking his own glory, he sought only to glorify God.<sup>38</sup> Speaking of *Tianzhu shi yi – The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven* and also of his understanding of the role of scholasticism, Lo Kuang considers Matteo Ricci a precursor of inculturated theology. He alludes to the way Ricci used the Chinese classics to draw from them the terminology necessary for the explanation and defense of Christian doctrine; a double task also attributed to scholasticism.

To illustrate the Chinese reception of the gospel and European culture, Lo Kuang speaks of Xu Guangqi<sup>39</sup> and pays tribute to the first Chinese who not only integrated the knowledge learned from Matteo Ricci but also, in a time when European science was still unknown, devoted himself to it with such dedication that he became the first Chinese to introduce scientific knowledge to the Chinese public.<sup>40</sup> He has similar respect for Wu Jinxiong (John Wu Ching Hsiung), whom he knew closely while serving as the Chinese ambassador to the Vatican in 1947–1949.<sup>41</sup> They not only shared the same ideal of a mediation and reconciliation between East and West,<sup>42</sup> but somehow agreed on the methodology to achieve that mediation.<sup>43</sup>

36 Lo Kuang, *Tianzhu jiao zai Hua chuanjiaoshi ji* 天主教在華傳教史集, Taipei: Guangqi 1967.

37 Lo Kuang comments that in order to write history, the Chinese only had the *xingzhuàn* 行傳 and the *nianpu* 年譜. According to Lo Kuang, the former style is too short, too concise and the latter is otherwise too simple to bring out the specifics of the person one wants to present.

38 “不在於灌輸西學，不在於精通中文，乃是在於它能克己，能勇進，能適時，另外在他愛主心切，不求榮己，只求榮主。” Lo Kuang 羅光, *Li Madou zhuan* 利瑪竇傳, Taibeishi: Xian zhi 1972, pp. 206-208.

39 Lo Kuang, *Xu Guangqi zhuan*.

40 “文定在科學上雖沒有新的發明但是在全國不重視科學的時代，他研究科學，提倡科學，這種科學精神，則配成一位特殊的科學家。宜乎中國文化史，推崇他介紹西洋科學的第一人。” Lo Kuang, *Xu Guangqi zhuan*, pp. 3-4.

41 Chen Fang-Chung, “Remembering a Pilgrim on His Centennial,” pp. 66-67.

42 “If the East does not find the West in Christ, it will never meet the West and love it. If the West does not find the East in Christ, it will never meet the East and love it. If the East is westernized, it becomes worse than the West. If the West is made eastern, it becomes worse than the East. If the East and the West are married outside of Christ, the union will not last, being the result of momentary infatuation, which will only produce monsters. Only when they are united in the bosom of Christ will they love each other with the love of Christ, and the union give birth to the new man.” John C.H. Wu, “Christianity, the Only Synthesis Really Possible between East and West,” in: *Chinese Humanism and Christian Spirituality (CHCS)*, St. John’s University Press 1965, p.170.

43 To get an idea of this, one need only compare the content and methodology of Wu Jinxiong’s *Chinese Humanism and Christian Spirituality* and Lo Kuang’s *Zhong-xi tian-ren he yi lun* 中西天人合一論 (China and the West: On the Harmonious Unity between Man and Heaven). The harmony in question is posited on an investigation of the relationship between man and heaven in the different Chinese religious traditions (Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism) compared with the author’s perception of the West. The difference is that the central place of scholas-

The third moment in Lo Kuang's mental progression has two other important specificities to consider: on the one hand, there is the encounter with other Chinese thinkers, scholars who like him are concerned with creating a space for Chinese thought in the concert of world philosophies; on the other hand, there is the philosophy of life that Lo Kuang discovers to be fundamentally Chinese and therefore capable of enriching the universal philosophical quest.

## In Dialogue with Chinese Philosophers

Apart from the champions of the encounter mentioned above, the third moment of the East–West encounter in Lo Kuang's thought involves a critique of protagonists of other philosophical currents in China.<sup>44</sup> In his *Minguo pian* (section covering the Republican period), he focuses on the explanations of Tang Junyi, Mou Zhongsan, Fang Dongmei, all members of the new Confucian philosophical movement.<sup>45</sup> Accustomed to scholasticism to organize and think Chinese philosophy, Lo Kuang is for the first time confronted with the syntheses or systematizations of other Chinese thinkers whose thinking has proceeded in a different way than his own. For Lo Kuang, the encounter becomes an opportunity to position his argument vis-à-vis the statements of these thinkers and to defend the existence of a specifically Chinese philosophy close to Catholic Christian thought.

His argument, whose scholastic underpinnings can be well established, is that there is a metaphysics within Chinese philosophy that on a practical level inspires the search for harmonious integration or union with heaven and earth and the practice of filial piety. Moreover, in his presentation and analysis of the works of these Chinese thinkers, Umberto Bresciani notes his predilection for those whose thought is close to his own.<sup>46</sup> Tang Junyi (1909–1978) is an example. He dedicates an important place to him in his *Minguo pian*. The Chinese philosophy of Tang Junyi makes use of many concepts borrowed from the Western philosophy. It speaks in terms of treatise, epistemology, metaphysics, etc. It also highlights an important point that Lo Kuang considered as constitutive of Chinese philosophy: life, the meaning of existence.

## The Philosophy of Life

Lo Kuang's assertion that the philosophy of life is peculiar to Chinese thought was the result of his return to Chinese philosophy through scholasticism and interaction with other Chinese thinkers. Systematic analysis of the Chinese classics<sup>47</sup> revealed the importance that

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ticism in Lo Kuang is given to the mysticism of St. Therese of Lisieux. For more details, see Lo Kuang, *Zhong-xi tian-ren he yi lun* 中西天人合一論, Taipei: Furen daxue chubanshe 2001.

44 See footnote 29.

45 Stanislaus Lokuang, *Zhongguo zhexue sixiang shi*, vol. 6.

46 Umberto Bresciani, "Lo Kuang's Assessment of the Philosophy of Tang Jun-yi," Conference on Scholastic Philosophy and Confucianism: In Memory of Archbishop Stanislaus Lo Kuang (Fu Jen Academia Catholica, March 28–29, 2014).

47 “從詩、書開始，中國生命的哲學，《易經》予以形上的哲學基礎，歷代儒者予以發揮，成為儒家思想的脈絡，上下連貫，從古道今。道家佛家也在生命的哲學上和儒家相通，生命便是中國哲學的精神。中國哲學將來的

the Chinese elders and sages gave to life. The starting point is in the *shengsheng zhi wei yi* 生生之謂易 stipulated in the *Yijing* 易經. A primordial reference of Chinese thought. Life, in its metaphysical sense, emanates from the interaction (continuous change) within the *Ying* and *Yang*. Lo Kuang believes that *shengsheng* 生生 represent two epistemological moments of life: life as power and life as the act of existing. This transformation and its epistemological and moral implications have fascinated Chinese thought, making it a philosophy of life. All the different currents of thought in China – Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism – have had to subscribe to the problematic of human life.<sup>48</sup> The quest for the meaning of life is a common transversal within these different traditions. It is expressed through expressions such as *shengsheng zhi de* 生生之德, or the conception of education as *qiu dao zhi wei jiao* 求道之謂教 or the *qiu rensheng zhi dao* 求人生之道 in the “Zhongyong” 中庸. The preponderance of these expressions leads Lo Kuang to conceive of Chinese philosophy as a quest for the meaning of life. Since philosophizing cannot be separated from this quest, he repeated that the object of philosophy must be human life. “The peculiarity of Chinese philosophy” he said, “consists in the fact that it speaks of life [...]. This way of thinking about life is part of the Chinese philosophical tradition, it is also its peculiarity.”<sup>49</sup>

Lo Kuang verifies or applies his ideal of reconciliation between East and West also in this particular aspect of Chinese thought. He establishes that the *shengsheng zhi wei yi* of the *Yijing* constitutes the metaphysical part. This language allows other correspondences and parallels, which allow us to explain the thought of the sages about “essence and existence,” “form and matter,” “power and act.” The same type of reasoning also allows us to subdivide or organize the words of the sages in cosmology and also in morality.

Lo Kuang strives to present the philosophy of life as a particularly Chinese systemic whole but also capable of engaging other philosophical systems. In developing this system, Lo Kuang assures us that he is not trying to make Chinese thought “scholastic.”<sup>50</sup> He only

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展望, 便在生命之仁的哲學上往前走。” Lo Kuang, “Hou ji” 後記, in: *Zhongguo zhexue sixiang shi. Qing dai pian*, 中國哲學思想史. 清代篇, vol. 13, in: *Luo Guang quan shu*, pp. 523-524.

- 48 “成為一個人意味著什麼, 若人似乎都有成真正自己的強烈願望, 但真正意識到, 生命是一不斷內在變易的本體的有‘能’到‘成’, 並力圖在變易中奏出‘苟日新, 日日新, 又日新’的生命定律, 展現出生命超越的特質, 是中國傳統知識分子的特性, 也是儒家, 道家, 佛家思想的精華。” Lo Kuang, *Shengming zhexue zonggang* 生命哲學總綱, p. 50.
- 49 “中國哲學的特點在於講論生命, [...] 這種生命哲學思想, 為中國的傳統哲學思想, 也是中國哲學的特色。” Lo Kuang, *Zhongguo zhexue de zhanwang* 中國哲學的展望, zai bian 再版 (reprint), Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju 1985, p. 35 and p. 38.
- 50 In the preface to the first edition of the *Philosophy of Life*, he explains that the emphasis in the philosophy of life is not on philosophy but on life. “《生命哲學》不是以哲學講生命, 而是以生命講哲學。” See Lo Kuang, *preface to Shengming zhexue* 生命哲學 (1985). In the second edition he gives more explanation: “During the five years that I have been thinking about the meaning of the philosophy of life, an idea came to my mind. The idea in question is also a reflection that in the first edition I had simply used ‘life’ to reconcile Chinese philosophy and scholasticism. For this reason, I had included the important parts of each of these philosophies (Chinese and Scholastic) in the book. The order of subjects was in accordance with the scholastic tradition. [...] Therefore, the reader’s impression was that it was about scholastic philosophy. In my new intuition, I realized that Western philosophy talks about being ‘有’; but what is being? It believes that it is not worth talking about and that we cannot talk about it. Chinese philosophy on the other hand makes explicit what being is ‘有’. Being is change ‘變易’, change is life ‘有’ 是‘變易’; change is the principle of life. ‘變易是生生, 生生是生.’” Besides, Chinese philosophy has not explained what life is. Thus, Chinese philosophy not only does not talk about life in an exhaustive way, reconciles everything to life, moreover it explains the meaning of life, and starting from the meaning of life, it offers an explanation of all existence.

wants to demonstrate that life is the starting and culminating point of Chinese philosophy, therefore, it is the turning point where other world philosophies can interact with it.

The philosophy of life also allows Lo Kuang to engage with other Chinese thinkers with whom he shares the same ideal. According to Lo Kuang, thinkers of the Confucian revival are unanimous on the existential link between philosophy and the search for the meaning of life.<sup>51</sup> Lo Kuang refers to Tang Junyi (Tang Chun-I) for whom philosophy is the science that studies the relations between the different branches of knowledge and their links with life. For both of them, the task of philosophy consists in a search for the connecting thread of all the typologies of knowledge, a form of epistemology of life, whose primary concern is the meaning of life itself.

## Critical Appreciation of *ronghe yu huitong* as a Mode of East–West Rationality

The formula that Lo Kuang proposed as a reconciler of East–West rationalities deserves several considerations regarding the solution proposed by Lo Kuang as well as his approach.

### Why *ronghe*, why *huitong*?

The Chinese characters of *ronghe yu huitong* 融合與會通 are not easy to translate. Starting from roots, “*rong*” 融 means to thaw and “*he*” 合 means to unite, to assemble. “*Ronghe*” is commonly translated as “fusion.” “*Hui*” 會 expresses potentiality and “*tong*” 通 means “by, through.” Literally, then, “*huitong*” means “may pass through,” “by way of,” or “through.” But what is the proper meaning that Lo Kuang gave to these terms?

According to the usages of Chinese syntax, the character that often goes with *rong* 融 is *hua* 化. *Ronghua* 融化 presupposes a change of state, such as the ice cream which under the effect of heat melts down, or a metal in a furnace that liquefies and in the process liberates and loses some particles. Rather than *ronghua*, Lo Kuang chooses the concept of *ronghe* accompanied by *huitong*, a concept conveying the idea of conciliatory union. In *ronghe*, the modification is still possible but with the “*he*” 合, what is implied is the capacity to connect, to bridge, for “*he*” presupposes that there are two elements, two realities and in this case, two identities that are to relate to one another.

“五年來，我深入研究生命哲學的意義，漸漸有了新的構想。這個構想也是在反省第一版只想用‘生命’貫通中國哲學和士林哲學，注意點在貫通，是唯一一把中哲學和士林哲學的重要部分都列舉在書裡，全書的次序也是傳統士林哲學的次序，[...]。因而給人一個印象是在講士林哲學。‘新的構想’時發現西方哲學論‘有’，但對‘有’是什麼？認為不必講也不能夠講。而中國哲學論‘有’是什麼。‘有’是‘變易’；‘變易’是‘生生’；‘生生’是‘生民’；但沒有講生命是什麼。因此，把‘生命哲學’不僅是完全講生命，不僅以生命貫通一切，更解釋了生命的意義，再有生命的意義解釋萬有。” Lo Kuang in the preface of the second edition of *Shengming zhexue*, published 1994 in Taipei by Taiwan xuesheng.

51 “The Confucian philosophy of life has received the confirmation of contemporary neo-Confucianists such as Thome Fang, Tang Chun-yi, Liang Su-ming and Mou Tsung-san who all emphasized that Confucian philosophy is centered on life. In spite of this, however, nobody continued explaining this issue, much less developed it. I used ideas inherent to Scholastic philosophy in developing the Confucianist philosophy of life. I have established a metaphysical system for philosophy of life, and eventually set a foundation for spiritual life.” See Lo Kuang, *Essays on Chinese Philosophy*, vol. 42, in: *Complete Works of Lokuang*, p. 141.

*Huitong* 會通 literally means “can pass through” and for Lo Kuang it means “passing through ‘epistemological categories,’ through universes of thought and meaning of the other” and vice versa. Christianity, and the Western culture through which it evolved, just as the Chinese culture and its various religious and philosophical traditions, constitute two hermeneutic universes. While they might be thought incompatible, Lo Kuang insists that they can in fact communicate and it is necessary to find the instruments and mechanisms that facilitate the passage from one universe to the other. *Huitong*, in this sense, can also be translated as “thoroughness.” Without “thoroughness” one would be confronted with hermetic universes, which the *huitong* transforms into communicating vessels.

Lo Kuang found this instrument within scholasticism. It allowed him not only to systematically organize the teaching of Chinese sages and scholars, but also to create the atmosphere for a philosophical quest in which East and West could pose as protagonists. This is possible because the dynamism that *huitong* engages is not uniform, and does not exalt a single discourse. It is a serene process, not obsessed with commonalities, and for whom differences within those hermeneutic systems are not walls that cannot be approached and penetrated.

As a practical and conciliatory philosophy, *ronghe yu huitong* is an invitation, a call to overcome prejudices and mistrust, to make an effort to understand and to facilitate the emergence of a rationality that is not dual or antagonistic but conciliatory. The *ronghe yu huitong* does not advocate an exclusive choice between this and that, but the effort to integrate this and that, without denying or misunderstanding the particularities of each of the two systems. The thinker is confronted with the challenge of identifying the connections and holdings through which different universes can intersect and fertilize each other. Because of this conviction, Lo Kuang insisted hence on a formation prompting better understanding of the other, convinced of the benefit that the knowledge of the other might contribute to facilitate the contacts and interactions. This need shaped the choices of his formation and work.

### ***Ronghe yu huitong* Applied to Other Fields**

Lo Kuang, Christian Chinese intellectual and self-taught by his experience, considered *ronghe yu huitong* as the way to integrate the layers of religious and cultural identity. The explanation borrows from philosophy, which is the intellectual training of Lo Kuang. However, *ronghe yu huitong* is not restricted to philosophy. It is a strategy extendable to other fields. Lo Kuang tried to embody it in himself and his Catholic environment. The design and décor of the cathedral of Tainan responded to the logic of *ronghe yu huitong*. The message sent across was the potential of Chinese culture to accommodate the requirements attached to a Christian cultic place. Colors and paintings used in the cathedral were adapted from the models of Chinese religious buildings.

In the 1970s, there were several attempts at liturgical adaptation, with celebratory moments in which passages from the Chinese wisdom and classics were read in the liturgy. At the same time, Lo Kuang moved to Taipei as metropolitan. He would support a theology of inculturation in many ways. From the seventies, the revival of the veneration of ances-

tors (*jingtian jingzu* 敬天敬祖) illustrated the working of an inculturated theology. This was made possible by the resolution of the Chinese rites issued back in 1939 and which allowed the Chinese faithful to perform the rites to their ancestors when the circumstances of social or family life required it, and explicating that they did not constitute a religious nature but rather cultural nature. Lo Kuang was among high ranking prelates to provide elaborate justification for the renewal and proposed instructions regarding the performance of such rituals. Furthermore, he recommended the practice among the specific marks of Fu Jen as Catholic University.

The *ronghe yu huitong* was also extended to his dealing with other religions. First of all, he was among the promoters of the creation of a department of religious studies within Fu Jen Catholic University. He foresaw it as a venue within university wherein Christianity and the Christian worldviews could interact with the Chinese religious worldviews. The idea proposed in 1967 only materialized in 1988. Second, in the encounter with religious and cultural otherness, being a Christian was not an obstacle to nourishing his curiosity about other religions. The preceding pages have mentioned his commitment to the systematic study of Chinese religions. In fact, we can see that his approach to religions was a practice of *ronghe yu huitong*.<sup>52</sup> He had to step out of himself, to step into otherness, to try to understand its intricacies and to form a critical opinion. In this respect, his approach to Buddhism is an eloquent example.

After a systematic study of Buddhist thought, Lo Kuang produced a course on Buddhist philosophy – *fojiao zhexue* 佛教哲學 – which he taught until the end of his life.<sup>53</sup> His students, most of whom were Buddhists, have a positive memory of this course. Apart from the content presented in an uncommon logic, they evoke the respect, the spirit of openness and the determination to see his task through. One would not expect Buddhism to be the course that a Catholic prelate gives on his nearing deathbed. In fact, it was around his bed that the last generations of his students came to attend his lectures on Buddhist philosophy.

As for cultural otherness, Lo Kuang was aware of the challenges inherent in the intercultural encounter. The layers of his identity spoke volumes. Chinese by birth, raised in the Catholic faith and educated in the Roman tradition, he had to find a harmonious way to deal with the different heritages emanating from the different layers of his complex identity. The *ronghe yu huitong*, as a solution to the intercultural encounter, means that the different layers of cultural identity cannot be placed one on top of the other, but must penetrate each other and create a coherent unity with which the person identifies. In concrete terms, instead of *ronghe yu huitong* Lo Kuang spoke of the inculturation of Chinese religious thought. By inculturation, he meant the integration of different religious expres-

52 As in other cases, the presentation and the choice of arguments took advantage of the heritage of scholasticism. The content develops themes that appeared in his presentation of the history of Chinese religions. But in parallel with the framework of other Buddhist philosophies – Fang Litian's philosophy of Buddhism (Fang Litian 方立天, *Fojiao zhexue* 佛教哲學, Zhongguzuo renmin daxue chubanshe 1994) for instance –, the impression is that Lo Kuang's Buddhist philosophy is more adept at a comparison or dialogue with the philosophy of Western religions. It is complementary to his great project of integration and reconciliation of East–West.

53 The abridged version of this *Jian shuo fojiao zhexue* 簡說佛教哲學 course was accomplished during those moments of hospitalization in Rongzhong.

sions justified by the potential of the culture to bring out and transmit the divine and the sacred.<sup>54</sup> He suggested that the inculturation of the liturgy should take into account certain Chinese cultural values. The spirit of *ronghe yu huitong* also permeated religious art and architecture. The cathedral he built in Tainan was designed as an illustration of *tian ren he yi* – the climax of the cultivation of the spirit according to the Confucian model. Other signs of this integration could be in the liturgical ornaments and the decoration of the place of worship. Applied to the liturgy, *ronghe yu huitong* projected the religious place and the liturgy as an esplanade of the integrated expression of the religious meaning and aesthetic character of Chinese culture and the Gospel.

Finally, the *ronghe yu huitong* has elicited reactions – in terms of responses or expectations. In the field of philosophy, in connection with the idea of a Chinese-Catholic philosophy, sympathizers of Lo Kuang's method strove to erect the Fu Jen Philosophical School or Fu Jen Xue Pai 輔仁學派. Following the example of Lo Kuang, this school of thought will encourage philosophical-cultural exchanges between China and the West. They emphasize the great richness of the Confucian tradition, especially the philosophy of life and the new scholasticism. In theology, on the other hand, opinions diverge. Lo Kuang advocated the need for a local theology. He saw it not as passive, receiving everything from the West, but as one capable of contributing to and enriching universal theology. Among the central themes of this theology he cited *wulun*<sup>55</sup> or the five fundamental relationships and *xiaodao* 孝道 / *xiaojing* 孝敬,<sup>56</sup> – filial piety, a fundamental value of Confucianism. Although there is consensus on the need for a local theology,<sup>57</sup> its form and content are not necessarily those proposed by Lo Kuang. Yang Gucheng 楊古城, for instance, notices the plural character of Chinese culture and Chinese Christian theologies today. Therefore, local theologies would have no other purpose than the one stated in *Nostra Aetate* (NA 1): to answer the questions that continuously torment the human heart in its personal and social dimension, to turn the theological discourse to the contemporary man, and to make

54 “For many years, we Catholics have been discussing the Chinese Catholic culture; how to express the Catholic faith in the Chinese people's life. The Chinese Catholic faith should have faith on the one hand and culture on the other hand as a basis. For example, in funeral ceremonies, the Catholic should express his faith in the resurrection, on the other hand, show the great respect of the Chinese towards their ancestors.”

“我們天主教人士，多年來談論中國天主教文化，把天主教的信仰，在中國人的生活方式中表達出來。中國天主教文化，一方面要有天主教的信仰，一方面有中國文化的基礎。例如喪事禮儀，天主教人行喪禮，既表示對復活的信仰，又表現中國人慎終追遠的思想。” See: Lo Kuang 羅光, *Bashi de tiwaiyu* 八十的體外話, Taipei xian, Xinzhuang shi: Yishi pinglun zazhishe 1990, p. 122.

55 *Wulun* 五倫 or *wuchang* 五常 refers to the five fundamental relationships whose respect guarantees the emergence of a harmonious society according to the teaching of Confucius. These are the relationship between father and son, between prince and subject, between husband and wife, between elder and younger, between colleagues and friends. Each of these interpersonal relationships carries specific obligations whose perfect fulfillment defines a particular virtue.

56 “羅光總主教指出西方天主教的孝敬父母，受羅馬帝國重法精神的影響，歐洲孝道中義務與權利味道很濃厚，子女出生以後，父母養育；子女長大，父母予以教育。這是義務。至於權利：子女屬於父母，誰也不能奪去；子女該服從父母，孝敬父母。這是父母的權利。至於中國儒家的孝道，乃是以生命為基礎；子女的生命來自父母，子女的一生，便為孝敬父母而生活。父母去世了，子女也要祭祀，表示祖宗先人的生命繼續存在。” See Zhang Chunshen 張春申, “Zhongguo jiaohui de benweihua shenxue: jinian shenxueyuan chuanglei wushi nian” 中國教會的本位化神學：紀念神學院創立五十年, in: *Shenxue lunji* 神學論集 1980, no. 42, p. 445.

57 Zhang Chunshen, “Zhongguo jiaohui de benweihua shenxue,” pp. 405-453.

religion intelligible to the man of today in his concrete context.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps this consideration of Yang Gucheng remains the great challenge that *ronghe yu huitong* must address. What is the perception that *ronghe yu huitong* has of the torments of men and women in Chinese society today? How can this approach be an effective medicine?

## Corollary Observation

A corollary observation about Lo Kuang's work is that he distinguished himself as an assiduous autodidact. As Felice Beretta points out, Lo Kuang was the first Chinese to undertake work of this magnitude. Lo Kuang was aware of this aspect.<sup>59</sup> He positioned himself as an innovator who, by virtue of his thorough research and method, spoke with authority and made critical judgments about his predecessors. His transmission of knowledge does not subscribe to the master-disciple formula prevalent in ancient Chinese culture, but rather to a scientific (librarian) research consisting of the collection and processing of data. Strictly speaking, he does not belong to any school: he has not been adopted by a single master (*baishi* 拜師) whose successor he would be. Therefore, he can freely criticize and comment on the words of others and impose himself as a master in his argument.<sup>60</sup> And on this point, it can be noted that he was not afraid to take a stand, to polemicize against remarks that he thought untenable. This was the case with questions about the nature of Chinese religion, about Buddhism as the true religion of the Chinese and even the description of the Chinese as an atheistic people.<sup>61</sup>

On the other hand, his self-taught method generates benefits and risks. On the one hand, it allows creativity. Without being beholden to a specific master, one is free to create one's own boundaries and swim within the limits of one's own abilities. For Lo Kuang, the strengths and limitations are his mastery of Chinese culture and the scholasticism he chooses as a tool to transmit and share this knowledge. This approach has allowed Lo Kuang to systematize his knowledge of Chinese culture, and to present it according to the rational categories of scholasticism. On the other hand, self-taught work presents risks in the sense that its fruits must be tested and accepted as representative of a tradition. In Lo Kuang's case, the final product of his efforts must be evaluated and received by both sides.

58 “針對人生與人類社會生活，並回答人心永久的疑問。” See Yang Jicheng 楊古城, “Shenxue benweihua jiuqing shi shenme?” 神學本位化究竟是什麼?, in: *Duo sheng* 鐸聲 12 (1974) 7-8, pp. 14-35.

59 Felice Beretta, “Preface” to Stanislao Lokuang, *La Sapienza dei Cinesi (Il Confucianesimo)*, p. iii.

60 The notes of references certify the mastery that he had made of the field. One can identify a global approach to support the theses discussed. Lo Kuang makes use of classical Chinese texts, commentaries of Chinese scholars such as Cheng'I, Zhu Xi, Wang Yangming, Wu Jingxiong, etc. He does not forget the contribution or the interest that foreign authors have shown in certain themes discussed, Matteo Ricci and other sinologists.

61 “Some modern Chinese authors deny the existence of any religion in its true sense among the Chinese people and conclude that our people are inclined to religious sense. This is false: the assertion can be said to have matured on naturalistic tendencies to have an endorsement of atheism. Our people, since very ancient times have surrounded their private and public life with religious rites, and have not waited for Buddhism and Daoism to teach the relations between the deity and men. After the introduction of these two religions into society, the people always remained faithful to their traditional beliefs and did not receive the Buddhist and Daoist faith except as this faith was adapted to the already pre-existing ideas. The true religion of the Chinese people is not the religion of Buddhism or Daoism, but it is the religious faith preserved in Confucianism in regard to deity, souls of the dead and sacrifices.” Lo Kuang, *Una Concezione Filosofica Cinese (Il Taoismo)*, vol. 40-2, in: *Complete Works of Lokuang*, vol. 40-1, 40-2, 40-3, pp. 17-18.

But what would happen to Lo Kuang's much-vaunted mediation if the Chinese world rejected his reading of Chinese culture and philosophy, or if the ability of scholasticism to mediate were to be doubted? What would happen to the ideal so much praised by Lo Kuang, if the European side ignored the importance of scholasticism as a way of philosophizing today? Is the *ronghe yu huitong* a heritage? It will only be for those who discover it. We must therefore rely on history.

## Conclusion

How can we analyze the encounter between East and West? What can we learn from the interaction of Western and Eastern rationalities? And in terms of religious application, what could be expected from the encounter of Christianity and Chinese Religions? How would a Chinese embrace the Christian faith and still remain faithful to his or her roots? These questions seem to have accompanied Lo Kuang's life and permeated his career as a thinker and pastor. His answer was based on the conviction that the two universes can be reconciled and mutually enriching. *Ronghe yu huitong*, the synthesis that explores this possibility, is an effort to integrate the scholastic method with the core of Chinese Confucian thought that Lo Kuang sees as a life-centered philosophy. *Ronghe yu huitong* is based on the rigor and clarity of scholasticism, a method that from its origin was created for the explanation and defense of truth. Scholasticism was born in a context of pluralism of thought. Its objective was to resolve contradictions, as well as to demonstrate the logic and rationality of the statements of faith. For Lo Kuang, *ronghe yu huitong* is called to fulfill the same task in the context of encounter and interaction between Eastern and Western rationalities.

*Ronghe yu huitong* does not advocate an exclusive choice between A and B, but seeks and identifies the angles of attraction or interconnection. This method promises inclusion and complementarity. It does not deny or minimize the difference but integrates it so that it is the enriching part of the encounter. As a method, it would benefit Chinese Christians and intellectuals, the marginalized and the excluded by the rationality of an exclusive choice.

In the end, the *ronghe yu huitong* method promises a dialogue that allows for several revalorizations. Within the Church, it affirms the genius of the early missionaries in China – their efforts to adapt and valorize the culture as an affirmation of the Catholic nature of the Christian faith. It also values the approach of the early Chinese converts, and especially the kind of (conciliatory) identity they tried to bring out as Chinese Christians. They were living examples of *ronghe yu huitong*. It also raises the question of the timeliness of the quest for a Chinese contextualized philosophical and theological praxis that cannot be done without the inclusion of other Chinese thinkers.

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