

News Update on Religion and Church in China March 2 – June 15, 2013

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The “News Update on Religion and Church in China” appears regularly in each issue of Religions & Christianity in Today’s China (RCTC). Since the editorial staff learns of some items only later, it can happen that there are chronological overlaps between “News Updates” of two consecutive issues of RCTC. In these cases stories referred to in earlier “News Updates” will not be repeated. All “News Updates” can be found online at the website of the China-Zentrum (www.china-zentrum.de). – The last “News Update” (2013, No. 2, pp. 3-17) covered the period November 22, 2012 – February 28, 2013.

March 2, 2013:

Chairman of the Chinese Buddhist Association: “Buddhist sites need ‘legal person’ status in order to protect their rights”

Amid preparations for the meeting of the Political Consultative Conference, Buddhist Master Chuanyin told journalists that without appropriate legal status Buddhist sites are not able to defend themselves against commercialization and sub-contracting [by third parties]. He said that most of the 33,000 Buddhist sites in China have no registered ownership rights to their property because they do not have status as a legal person and therefore cannot independently exercise their civil rights and obligations. This means for instance that they are not able to hold business accounts and are only able to purchase cars for the monastery under the name of a private individual, Master Chuanyin explained (www.sara.gov.cn April 14).

The State Administration [Bureau] of Religious Affairs has announced in its work plan for 2013 that it intends to investigate the question of the status of sites for religious activities as legal persons (see: *RCTC* 2013, No. 2, p. 12).

March 5, 2013:

A new list of additions to China’s State Administration of Cultural Heritage gives “national monument” status to many places of worship, including 17 Catholic churches

According to an article on the website *Zhongguo sannong zixun*, in Guangdong Province, for example, eight of the 32 newly recognized national monuments are religious structures, of which six are of a popular religious nature. *UCAN* indicates that 17 Catholic sites have been included in the latest batch of structures registered as national monuments, more than ever before. Among them are the East Church



The ruins of the church in Jiaxing are now a national monument. The church was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Photo: *UCAN*.

former Vincentian Seminary with the [ruins of] the church in Jiaxing (Zhejiang, 1903, 1930) as well as the former Catholic Major Seminary of Henan (Kaifeng City, Shunhe District, Henan, 1932). Two Protestant churches have also been included in the list: the former Anglican Cathedral in Beijing (Qing era) and the church in Nuofu (Langcang, Yunnan, 1921).

On the one hand, inclusion in the register of national monuments means public recognition of the historical significance of the building. On the other hand, it is often difficult for the churches to fulfill the conditions laid down for the preservation of the sites, especially since some buildings are in very poor condition. Tang Guohua of the Guangzhou University, who oversaw the renovation of the Cathedral of Guangzhou, told *UCAN* that the renovation of old churches in China is difficult because of the absence of original plans and photos, traditional building materials and construction techniques. In addition, some priests, unaware of the legal requirements, tend to restore their churches according to their own ideas and to alter the external appearance of the buildings in order to respond to the present needs of the congregations, Tang said (*UCAN* June 17; www.zgsnzx.cn May 20; list of churches included in the 7th batch of structures listed as national monuments, together with their year of construction, as published on May 3, 2013 on the website of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage: www.sach.gov.cn/Portals/0/download/dqpqgzdwwbhdw.pdf).

March 13 – June 11, 2013:

10 (or 11) Tibetans burn themselves to death in protest

Among the dead were four monks and one nun. According to reports, the 31 year old nun Wangchen Dolma burned herself to death on June 11 in front of the Nyatso Monastery (Ganzi/Kardze Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province) as 3,000 monks from all over Tibet were assembled at the monastery for a religious debate. Seven of the self-immolations occurred in Tibetan areas of Sichuan Province (five in the Aba/Ngaba Autonomous Prefecture), the others in Gansu and Qinghai. With these deaths, the total number of Tibetans in the People's Republic of China who have set themselves on fire in protest against Chinese rule since March 16, 2011, has now climbed to either 118 or 119 (lists on www.savetibet.org and www.tibet.net differ in the totals they report).

March 13 and 19, 2013:

Election and installation of Pope Francis



A joyful rally the night Pope Francis was elected: a group of Catholics formed a cross on a public square in the City of Yibin, Sichuan. Photo: www.xinde.org.

On the evening of March 13 (in China it was already March 14), Chinese Catholics on the Mainland joyfully greeted the election as pope of the Argentinian Cardinal and Jesuit, Jorge Mario Bergoglio. This joy was expressed in calls for thanksgiving prayer services (for example, by Bishop Li Liangui for the Diocese of Xianxian) or by spontaneous eruptions of joy among the faithful (for example, in Yibin) as well as in comments and congratulations on Mainland Catholic websites (www.chinacath.org, www.xinde.org with its own page on the new pope, diocesan pages). The secular media on the Mainland also reported on the election of the pope. The official governing bodies of the Chinese Church, the Patriotic Association and the Bishops' Conference, congratulated Pope Francis on their website on March 14 in the name of the clergy and faithful of China and spoke of a common beginning of a new path for the Church. On March 14 a spokeswoman for the Chinese Foreign Ministry congratulated the new pope and expressed the hope that under his leadership the Roman Curia would be able to create favorable conditions for the improvement of mutual relations.

On March 19, Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou (Ma Yingjiu), accompanied by a five member delegation, was the first president of the Republic of China to take part in a papal installation. He was received by Pope Francis after the ceremony together with the other heads of state. The Holy See is the only state of Europe with which Taiwan has diplomatic relations. According to the *Taipei Times*, upon his return to Taiwan, President Ma hailed his trip as a diplomatic achievement (*AFP* March 19; *Taipei Times* March 21; *UCAN* March 15; *Xinhua* March 14; news.xinhuanet.com March 14; www.chinacatholic.cn March 14; www.xianxiancc.org March 14; www.xinde.org March 14).

March 14, 2013:

National People's Congress elects Party Secretary Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China

Other public offices at the highest level went to politicians who had been elected to senior party posts during the 18th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in November of 2012.

March 19, 2013:

Bishop Ma Yinglin who is not recognized by Rome ordains two members of ethnic minorities to the priesthood in Yunnan

According to *UCAN*, due to the fact that the canonically unauthorized ordination took place on the same date as the inauguration of the new pope, some of the Catholic faithful saw the event as a deliber-

ate provocation. But a priest of the Diocese of Kunming said that the date for the ordination had been fixed long before the pope's election. The two men who were ordained are from the Yi and Jingpo peoples. Eight Kachin priests from three dioceses in neighboring Myanmar, where the Jingpo are known as the Kachin, took part in the ordination. One of those priests, Lum Dao, from the Diocese of Myitkyina, in an interview with the *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner*, later defended the ordination because of the enormous importance of this second Jingpo priest for the Catholic Jingpo people in China (*Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* April 13; *UCAN* March 19).

March 21 and 25, 2013:

Opening of the “Year of Turkish Culture” in China

The opening festivities took place in Beijing and Shanghai. During the course of the year numerous cultural events are planned for various cities of China. Among them there is to be an “Exhibition and Performance of Turkish Islamic Culture” in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. On March 11, in preparation for this cultural year, Mehmet Paçacı, Director General for External Relations of the Turkish Department of Religious Affairs, visited the Chinese State Administration of Religious Affairs in Beijing. – 2012 had been celebrated in Turkey as a “Year of Chinese Culture,” in which Islam also played a certain role (*Xinhua* March 12; www.sara.gov.cn March 12; see: *RCTC* 2012, No. 4, p. 15).

March 22, 2013:

Bishop Thomas Qian Yurong (Xuzhou) dies at the age of 99

Thomas Qian was born in 1914 and was ordained a priest in 1945. In 1959 he was ordained a bishop without papal mandate. Thus, he was the second last living bishop from the first group of “self-elected and self-ordained bishops,” whose ordinations took place between 1958 and 1963 in a time of intense conflict between the Chinese Communist Party and the Vatican. It was only in 2007 that he was recognized by the Holy Father, and in 2011 he resigned his office as bishop. The Vatican news agency, *Fides*, described him as a man of simple faith, who dedicated himself to the formation of priests and sisters as well as to the recovery of Church property. His successor is Bishop Wang Renlei, who was also ordained a bishop without papal mandate in 2006, but who has since been recognized by Rome. The Diocese of Xuzhou in Jiangsu Province has about 25,000 faithful, a dozen priests and about 20 religious sisters (*Fides* April 9; *UCAN* March 25).

March 25, 2013:

Hong Kong: Court of Final Appeal rules against Filipina domestic worker's bid for permanent residency

Although the Hong Kong immigration law stipulates that foreigners who have worked uninterruptedly in Hong Kong for seven years have the right to apply for permanent residence, the law explicitly excludes maids and other domestic workers. A Filipina domestic worker who had been employed in Hong Kong since 1986 considered this discriminatory and sued the government in an attempt to have the provision thrown out. In September of 2011, a lower court decided that she did have the right to apply for permanent residency. However, Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal has now overturned that decision and declared that foreign domestic workers must return to their country of origin at the end of their work contract. This means that domestic workers must leave Hong Kong as soon as they lose their

jobs, provided that they do not find employment in a new household within two weeks. According to figures from *UCAN*, approximately one third of the 300,000 foreign domestic workers have been living in Hong Kong for more than seven years (*South China Morning Post* March 25; *UCAN* March 25; see: *RCTC* 2012, No. 1, p. 5).

March 30/31, 2013:

Mainland China reported more than 16,000 baptisms at Easter – 3,560 in Hong Kong



Easter Vigil 2013: Newly baptized Catholics in the Cathedral of Guangzhou. Photo: www.xinde.org.

Easter is traditionally the most important time for baptism in many Chinese communities. Since May 6, 2007, the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (FICS, Shijiazhuang) has been conducting an annual survey regarding the numbers of Easter baptisms in 101 dioceses of Mainland China. Of the 16,748 baptisms at Easter 2013 reported by FICS, more than 70% were adults (that means, in most cases, first generation Christians). The Province of Hebei, a region with many Catholics, led the way with 3,647 baptisms. Since there was strict insistence this year on counting only the baptisms performed during the Easter

Vigil and on Easter Sunday, the total number was somewhat lower than it had been in the previous year of 2012, when 22,104 baptisms had been reported, with some parishes giving the number of baptisms between the beginning of January and Easter. For several reasons, the figures given by the FICS are incomplete and should probably be even higher than those reported. Meanwhile, and especially in the larger cities, courses are continually being offered for those interested in baptism. Baptismal preparation generally lasts between three and six months.

In the Diocese of Hong Kong, 3,560 adult catechumens were baptized during the Easter Vigil following an 18 month catechumenate. In his Easter pastoral letter the Bishop of Hong Kong, Cardinal John Tong, stressed the need for all Christians, and especially the newly baptized, to continue deepening their faith. In 2012 the diocese had established a commission for the ongoing formation of the laity (*Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* March 23; *UCAN* April 24; *Xinde* April 11).

April 2013:

Buddhists oppose government plans to partially demolish the historical Xingjiao Temple

Ostensibly in an attempt to support the application for UNESCO World Heritage status, the local government had decided that newer parts of the Xingjiao Temple in Xi'an, built in a style that does not fit the historical buildings, were to be demolished by June 30, *Xinhua* reported. The report came on April 12, shortly after the plan had become known from postings on the social network Weibo. The Xingjiao Temple, dating from the 7th century, with its pagoda containing the earthly remains of the famous Buddhist pilgrim monk Xuanzang, is included in the application for World Heritage Site status for the Chinese portion of the Silk Road.

According to *Xinhua*, on April 11 the temple decided to withdraw from the application since the demolition would have a negative influence on the religious activities and on the life of the monastery. On April 11 the State Administration of Religious Affairs called on the Religious Affairs Bureau of Shaanxi Province to investigate the facts and, after consultation with the competent authorities and the Buddhist circles, to decide the matter according to the provisions of the law. In a statement of April 12, the Chinese Buddhist Association expressed dismay and concern in the face of the threatened “forced demolition.” Any demolition of temple buildings carried out without the consent of the temple’s monastic community would be a serious breach of the government’s religious policy and would be contrary to existing statutory regulations, the statement said.

In an April 13 article on the website of the station Phoenix (fo.ifeng.com), Li Li’an, Professor of Buddhism at the Xibei University in Xi’an, wrote that two thirds of the temple buildings were involved in the demolition plans, among them the dormitory, the refectory, the sanitary facilities and the kitchen. Their demolition would make it impossible for the monks to continue living in the temple. The surviving historical portion of the temple would thus be a “cultural heritage without a soul.” Numerous postings and articles on the internet (including, for example, the entry on the Xingjiao Temple in the Chinese Wikipedia), make the claim that shared commercial interests of government agencies and companies are actually behind the whole scheme. The case is being compared to the forced inclusion of the Famen Temple as part of a developed “tourist zone” (see: *China heute* 2012, No. 4, p. 209 [in German]) (*Xinhua* April 12; fo.ifeng.com April 13; www.sara.gov.cn April 11, 12; zh.wikipedia.org, article: 兴教寺).

April 4, 2013:

South China Morning Post reports on two cases of government action against Protestants in Taiyuan

Already in December of 2012, according to the Hong Kong newspaper, the Beijing bookshop worker Li Wenxi was detained by police on charges of “illegal business” after he had brought hundreds of books to Christians in Taiyuan, who wanted to open a new bookshop there. The police searched the shop and confiscated the books which Li had brought. The *South China Morning Post* reported that the matter only became known after Li’s wife, who had heard nothing more from her husband following his arrest, turned for help three months later to the social network Weibo.

The authorities themselves announced the second case via the public information service of the city government of Taiyuan (www3.taiyuan.gov.cn/?xx=41717 – *South China Morning Post* published a screenshot of the report, which has since been removed from the site). The police, according to their own report, broke up a gathering of 38 Christians, who were attending a biblical presentation by a man whom the report described as a leader in the “underground church,” and who had already been prosecuted a number of times. The preacher was “strongly criticized” and the faithful received “critical lessons” until a leading Christian agreed to terminate the group’s rental agreement and “contact the official church to apply for a legal house meeting point” (*South China Morning Post* April 4).

April 10, 2013:

The Colloquium of Six Religious Leaders of Hong Kong signs a cooperation agreement with the Chinese University of Hong Kong for the archival preservation of documents relating to interreligious dialogue

The religious leaders presented the university with 3,400 documents and pictures on the history of inter-religious dialogue in Hong Kong. The university will administer the collection and has agreed to make it accessible to the public in electronic format. Among the documents is the record of the first meeting of the preparatory commission for the founding of the Colloquium of Six Religious Leaders of Hong Kong in 1978. The group is composed of the leaders of the Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, Muslim, Protestant and Catholic communities in Hong Kong. Its aim is to foster friendship and social harmony through regular dialogue. Each year, the six religious leaders address a common message to the population of Hong Kong on the occasion of the Chinese New Year celebrations (*UCAN* April 11).

April 19, 2013:

Six more executions are carried out in Taiwan

The chairperson of the human rights committee of the European Parliament, Barbara Lochbihler, together with Amnesty International, has called on Taiwan to totally abolish the death penalty, and in particular, to call an immediate halt to carrying out those death sentences already handed down by the courts. Taiwan's Premier Jiang Yi-huah said, though, that the executions were in line with the expectations of the public. All six of those executed had been convicted of multiple murders. A further 50 condemned men are on "death row" in Taiwan's prisons. After a four year interval without executions, Taiwan once again began carrying out executions in 2010 (*Central News Agency* April 19; www.chinapost.com.tw April 21; see: *China heute* 2010, No. 2, pp. 85-86 [in German]; 2013, No. 1, p. 9 [in German]).

April 20, 2013:

Earthquake in Ya'an, Sichuan Province – Religions are affected, commit themselves to help – The Holy Father contributes to relief efforts

The earthquake in the Lushan County of Ya'an in Sichuan Province measured 7.0 on the Richter scale. Official reports put the casualties at 196 dead, 13,000 wounded with more than 126,000 homes and buildings destroyed. Religious communities were also hit hard. In four of the cities affected by the earthquake, 95 places of worship suffered damage in differing degrees. The State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) reported on April 23 that throughout the entire province the damage to religious buildings had been estimated at more than 100 million Yuan. In an appeal on April 23, the Chinese Islamic Association spoke of 1,000 Muslims affected by the quake and of two mosques which had been destroyed in the earthquake zone. Fr. Chen Yong, who is active in pastoral work in the region, reported in an interview on April 24 that the dwellings of 6,000 of the approximately 10,000 Catholics in the area of Ya'an as well as a number of church buildings, including the church of Lushan, were either completely destroyed or heavily damaged. In the days following the earthquake, the official governing

bodies of the various religions called on their faithful to pray and to give generously towards the relief efforts. The SARA said that it was encouraging religious communities throughout the whole country to take part in the earthquake relief. It asked the faithful outside Sichuan Province not to attempt to come to the region as volunteers, but to concentrate on contributing to the relief efforts through fundraising.



Prayers for earthquake victims in the Parish of Lingxi, Wenzhou. Photo: www.xinde.org.

Catholics throughout China prayed for the victims and collected relief funds. The Catholic organization Jinde Charities (Shijiazhuang), in collaboration with the Chinese Foundation for Poverty Alleviation, distributed relief supplies among the earthquake's victims. The local Church (Ya'an belongs to the Diocese of Leshan) also took part in aiding the victims. Following the Regina Caeli prayer in St. Peter's square on April 21, Pope Francis called for prayers for the earthquake victims in China – the first public statement of the new pope on the subject of China. Cardinal Robert Sarah, head of the

Pontifical Council Cor Unum, announced in Hong Kong on May 16 that the Holy Father was going to contribute US\$ 30,000 through Cor Unum to disaster relief in the area. He said that the money would go to smaller Church agencies and parishes in China.

In Hong Kong the willingness to contribute to disaster relief was noticeably less than in previous years, something that commentators believe has its roots in the bad experience with corruption in government agencies and in the Chinese Red Cross in dealing with the aid raised for the victims of the earthquake in 2008. Many would now prefer to make their contributions through private NGOs. The Hong Kong territorial government supported the relief efforts of the Protestant Amity Foundation (Nanjing/Hong Kong) with 5.3 million HK\$ (*AsiaNews* April 29; *China Daily* April 27; *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* May 25; *South China Morning Post* May 6; *UCAN* April 25; May 22; www.amityfoundation.org May 9; www.ccctspm.org April 20; www.chinabuddhism.com.cn April 22; www.chinacatholic.cn April 20, 23; www.chinacatholic.org April 24 und other sources; www.chinainislam.net.cn April 23; eng.jinde.org; www.sara.gov.cn April 23; scio.gov.cn April 25; www.taoist.org.cn April 23; www.vatican.va April 21).

April 20, 2013:

Master Jinghui, founder of “Life Chan” and an important personage in official Chinese Buddhism, dies at the age of 80

Master Jinghui was born in Xinzhou (Hunan Province) in 1933. After the Cultural Revolution he took part in the rebuilding of the Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA). He was the editor-in-chief of *Fayin* (The Voice of Dharma), the official periodical of the CBA, from 1981 to 2002. He served as Chairman of the Buddhist Association of Hebei Province from 1988 and as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the national CBA from 1993. As abbot, from 1988 to 2003 he directed the reconstruction of the Bailin Monastery in the County of Zhaoxian in Hebei Province. One of his greatest achievements is thought to be the popularization of Chan (Japanese pronunciation: Zen) Buddhism. In 1991 he initiated the concept of “Life Chan” (shenghuo chan 生活禪) and in 1993 began the annual “Life Chan” summer camps which are held in the Bailin Monastery, and in which several hundred young people from all over China take part (www.bailinsi.net/03shc/01csrjqln/11yj/04spsj/04spsj.htm).

April 22, 2013:

Wang Zuo'an: Interview on growth of religions in China and on questions of religious policy

Despite rising levels of affluence and an increase in the general level of education, the number of religious adherents in China is growing rather quickly, according to the Director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs in an interview with the periodical *Xuexi shibao* (Study Times), which is published by the Central Party School of the Communist Party of China. He said that factors in this increase are the recovery growth after the Cultural Revolution and foreign influences entering the country due to China's policy of greater openness. Above all, the profound social changes and the pluralization of values have created new spaces for the development of religions, and China's intense competitive pressure is producing a feeling of insecurity among the poor as well as among the rich, Wang said. He called the separation of state power and religious organizations an important precondition of the policy of religious freedom. The state should not interfere in the internal affairs of the religious communities, Wang said, and the religions in turn should conduct their activities within the framework allowed by state law and should not interfere with state functions such as administration, law and education. According to Wang, the foremost bottom line of religious freedom lies in the principle that state law must come first and that no one can place religious rights above state rights since China is a secular state. The second bottom line consists in the rights of others, which should not be encroached upon [by religious practice]. The third bottom line is made up of the public order and good morals (www.studytimes.com.cn:9999/epaper/xxsb/html/2013/04/22/01/01_47.htm; see also: *Radio Australia* April 23; *Reuters* April 21).

April 23, 2013:

21 dead as a result of clashes in Bachu, Xinjiang

According to Chinese authorities, on April 23, fifteen local officials and police officers (10 Uyghur, 3 Han Chinese and 2 Mongols) were killed in a fight after government officials found a group of suspected terrorists during the course of a "routine visit" to a house in Serikbuya (Chinese Selibuya) Town, Bachu County, Kashgar Prefecture. Six attackers were killed in the clash and eight were taken into custody, the report said. On May 2, the official *China Daily* reported that the group involved was formed in 2012 and had planned a major terrorist attack in Kashgar. According to the newspaper, police found explosive devices, materials for the construction of bombs, extremist religious pamphlets and three Jihad banners. However, a spokesman for the Munich based World Uyghur Congress accused Chinese authorities of using terrorism as a pretext to allow for the repression of the Uyghur ethnic minority. He called for an independent investigation into the whole affair (*AFP* April 29; *China Daily* [usa.chinadaily.com.cn] April 27, May 2; *Xinhua* April 24).

April 24, 2013:

Revised version of the "Regulations of the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference for the Election and Consecration of Bishops" is being released, "blocks normalization of Church life"

The document was already approved in December of 2012, but was only published months later. It is a greatly expanded version of the "Regulations of the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference for the

Election and Consecration of Bishops” of the year 1993. It provides for many more details than the old document, details such as the preparation for the election and the composition of the electoral college. At the same time, it strengthens the position of the Chinese Bishops’ Conference (and therefore also of the national Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, since important decisions are generally taken by the governing committees of both bodies) through participation in all important phases of the election and consecration process, beginning with the approval for the opening of the election process up to the “arrangement” of the consecrating bishops. As a result, this new directive greatly diminishes the scope available to a diocese of Mainland China which wishes to carry out a public ordination of a bishop in conformity with Church law. In addition, candidates for the office of bishop will now be expected to publicly declare their “support for the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system.” Anthony Lam of the Holy Spirit Study Centre of the Diocese of Hong Kong told *UCAN* that the document represents “a regression as it blocks the normalization of Church life in China” (*UCAN* May 22, 2013).

The Chinese text of the regulations (Zhongguo tianzhujiao zhujiaotuan guanyu xuan sheng zhujiao de guiding 中国天主教主教团关于选圣主教的规定) can be found at www.catholicchurchinchina.org/index.php/zcfg/834-2013-04-24-01-21-13, an annotated German translation was published in *China heute* 2013, No. 2, pp. 89-91.

April 27, 2013:

Shanghai Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian, SJ, dies at the age of 96



Bishop Jin Luxian 1995, Bonn. Photo: China-Zentrum.

Bishop Jin was born in Shanghai in 1916 and entered the Jesuits in 1938. From 1947–1951 he studied in France and in Rome, where he obtained his doctoral degree from the Pontifical Gregorian University. He returned to China in 1951 and was arrested in 1955. He was to spend the next 27 years in prisons and in labor camps. In 1982 he was allowed to return to the Diocese of Shanghai and took over the leadership of the Sheshan Major Seminary. In 1985 Jin Luxian was ordained Auxiliary Bishop of Shanghai, but without a papal mandate, and in 1988 he took over the leadership of the official part of the diocese. In 2004 the Vatican finally recognized Bishop Jin as the Coadjutor Bishop of Shanghai. Under the leadership of Bishop Aloysius Jin, Shanghai became one of the most important dioceses of China. Bishop Jin also cultivated close ties with Germany. In July of 2012, Bishop Jin ordained Fr. Ma Daqin to be his successor, but Bishop Ma was prevented by the authorities from taking up his office as Auxiliary Bishop.

For more details, see the obituaries in: *China heute* 2013, No. 2, pp. 76-82 (in German), and the review of the book *The Memoirs of Jin Luxian, Volume One: Learning and Re-learning 1916–1982*, Hong Kong University Press 2012, in: *ibid.*, pp. 124-127 (in German). *Katharina Feith*

April 29, 2013:

American study on Chinese development aid for Africa

Between 2000 and 2011, the People's Republic of China supported about 1,673 development finance projects in 50 countries of Africa with a total amount of US\$ 75 billion – almost as much as the U.S.A. donated during that same period (US\$ 90 billion). This is the result of a study and database published on April 29 by the Washington based Center for Global Development and AidData. Given the lack of official statistics from Beijing, the study was based on an analysis of English and Chinese language media reports. Brad Parks, one of the authors of the study, told *Reuters* that contrary to commonly held opinions, China is not concentrating its aid solely on resource extraction and large infrastructure projects, but is actually doing a lot in the areas of health, education, government and civil society. This means that China's development aid work in Africa is surprisingly varied (Report: "China's Development Finance to Africa: A Media-Based Approach to Data Collection," www.cgdev.org/publication/chinas-development-finance-africa-media-based-approach-data-collection; *Reuters* April 29).

May 2013:

Comprehensive study of the situation of the elderly in China appears – 22.9% live beneath the poverty level, almost 5 million elderly in need of assistance live without any help

According to the study, 31.8% of the elderly (60 years and older) who were questioned complain of ill health; 40% (74 million people) display higher levels of depressive symptoms. 23.8% of the elderly are in need of assistance in their daily lives. Of these older persons who need help in daily living, 88.7% are supported by family members, yet 11.3% (almost five million) of them live without any help at all. The percentage of those who need daily help, but do not receive any, is still higher among the poor (14.8%) and among those elderly who live alone (27%). 9.2% of the elderly live alone. 22.9% of the elderly in China (42.4 million) have a per capita consumption lying beneath the national poverty level (the researchers chose a poverty level of RMB 2,433 per year for the rural population and RMB 3,200 per year for those in the cities). Among the elderly, the consumption poverty rate is much higher for the rural population, for those living alone and for women.

For the "China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study (CHARLS)" conducted by the National School of Development at Peking University, 17,708 people were surveyed across China in the years 2011 and 2012. A report can be found at: online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/charls0530.pdf.

May 10, 2013:

The Diocese of Macerata, Italy, concludes its phase of the beatification process for pioneer China Missionary Matteo Ricci, SJ (1552–1610)

The documentation has been forwarded to the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints, where it will now be studied. As the postulator of the cause, Fr. Anton Witwer, SJ, said in an interview, it is conceivable that the beatification could be postponed until a more propitious moment due to present tensions between China and the Vatican. He said that it would be better for China if Ricci could be beatified together with his Chinese counterpart Xu Guangqi, but according to Fr. Witwer the latter's be-

atification process in the Diocese of Shanghai has slowed to a standstill (*EWTN News* May 15; *UCAN* May 20).

May 10–15, 2013:

Patriarch Kirill of the Russian Orthodox Church visits China and meets President Xi Jinping

The May 10 meeting was the first such encounter between a president of the People's Republic of China and a Christian Church leader from outside China. Kirill's China visit came in response to an invitation from the Chinese government. The Patriarch visited Beijing, Harbin and Shanghai, celebrating liturgies in each of those cities. Kirill's historic China visit gave rise to hopes for the gradual normalization of the situation of the Orthodox Church in China, which is still not recognized by the state on the national level and therefore cannot ordain any priests (see the report in: *China heute* 2013, No. 2, pp. 73-75 [in German]).

May 15–18, 2013:

Five-day international conference on poverty in relationships marks Caritas Hong Kong's 60th anniversary

Due to the steady erosion of traditional relationships a new form of poverty has entered the world, said Vicar General Yeung Ming-cheung, Director of Caritas Hong Kong, at the opening of the conference entitled "Visioning the Future – Partnership in Building a Relational Society." Cardinal Robert Sarah, President of the Pontifical Council Cor Unum, praised the work of Caritas Hong Kong since its founding in 1953 as a response to the wave of refugees from Mainland China pouring into the then British colony. Hong Kong government Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying characterized Caritas as a leader in addressing social problems during the 60 years of its service in Hong Kong. At the entrance to the conference location, 40 demonstrators from the Hong Kong Federation of Students called on Chief Executive Leung to institute democratic reforms and a retirement pension scheme for all citizens. According to its website, today Caritas Hong Kong offers its services in 275 facilities, especially in the fields of social work, education and medical care. Caritas Hong Kong has 5,300 full time employees and is supported in an ongoing fashion by 10,000 volunteers. In Mainland China, it supports, among others, needy students, disabled children, old people living alone in poor regions as well as victims of natural disasters (*HKSE* May 25; *UCAN* May 16; www.caritas.org.hk).

May 22 and 24, 2013:

World Day of Prayer for the Church in China – Pope Francis renews the appeal of his predecessor

On May 22, during the course of a general audience in St. Peter's square, Pope Francis called on Catholics around the world to join in prayer with their brothers and sisters in China on May 24 for the World Day of Prayer for the Church in China, a day established by his predecessor Pope Benedict XVI (see the full text at: www.vatican.va/holy_father/francesco/audiences/2013/documents/papa-francesco_20130522_udienza-generale_en.html). In his first message to China, Pope Francis quoted passages taken from the prayer to Our Lady of Sheshan, which Pope Benedict XVI had composed in

2008 on the occasion of the first World Day of Prayer for China. On May 23, Pope Francis tweeted that he was joining the Catholics in China who trust in the protection of Our Lady of Sheshan and that he was praying for them. On May 24, he celebrated the morning Mass in the chapel of the guesthouse Domus Sanctae Marthae, where he has been living, together with Chinese priests, sisters, seminarians and lay people. Hong Kong native Archbishop Savio Hon Tai-fai, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and senior Chinese prelate in the Vatican, concelebrated with him.

Meanwhile, on Sheshan Mountain near Shanghai, due to the turmoil in the diocese, the annual diocesan pilgrimage procession to the Marian basilica took place this year for the first time without the presence of a bishop. During the month of May, Marian processions were also taking place all across China. For example, on May 11 in the Diocese of Sanyuan (Shaanxi) there was a procession with almost 10,000 faithful from various dioceses; on that occasion, retired Bishop Zong Huaide called for special prayers for the Chinese Church. *AFP* journalists reported in May 2013 that the roads leading to the village of Donglü (Hebei Province) had been blocked by police checkpoints. The pilgrimage to the Marian sanctuary in Donglü has been prohibited by the authorities since 1996. The underground Church is very strong in the region.

Catholics in many other countries around the world have also taken part in the Day of Prayer for the Chinese Church (*AFP* as quoted by *South China Morning Post* May 26; *AsiaNews* May 24; *UCAN* May 22; *Vatican Information Service* May 22; www.vatican.va; www.xinde.org May 12).

May 27, 2013:

Start of the official interview campaign “Journey to Buddhist Places” to mark the 60th Anniversary of the Chinese Buddhist Association

As part of the project “Journey to Buddhist Places” (*fojiao shengdi xing* 佛教胜地行), interview teams will visit 100 “representative” Buddhist monasteries throughout China, where they will conduct interviews with high ranking monks and nuns in order to highlight life as it is lived today in the Buddhist Sangha. In a report by *Zhongguo zongjiao*, a magazine on Chinese religions published by the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA), it was announced that the project is being carried out with the approval of the SARA under the editorial direction of *Zhongguo zongjiao* and under the guidance of the Chinese Buddhist Association. At the opening ceremony, SARA Deputy Director Zhang Lebin expressed his expectations for the project. Among other things, he called for a basic orientation that will promote the healthy development of Buddhism, and that will serve the work of both Party and State (www.sara.gov.cn May 27).

The Chinese Buddhist Association is the official, state-sanctioned umbrella organization for Buddhism in China. It was founded in 1953. Its official website, which apparently was newly established in 2012, is: www.chinabuddhism.com.cn.

May 27, 2013:

Report of falsely labeled meatballs disconcerts Hong Kong’s Muslims

According to a report by Hong Kong Cable TV 27 on May 27, a number of samples of what were supposed to be beef meatballs obtained from some of Hong Kong’s markets and grocery stores were subjected to laboratory DNA analysis and were found to contain not beef, but pork or a mixture of pork and chicken. An Islamic organization called on all Muslims in Hong Kong to eat only in restau-

rants that had been properly certified as *halal*. The chairperson of the Indonesian Migrant Workers' Union, Sringatini, demanded that producers correctly label their products out of respect for the Muslim community, and added that the government must take action to guarantee stricter controls. She also pointed out that domestic workers often have to rely on the food that their employers make available to them. According to *UCAN*, there are approximately 250,000 Muslims living and working in Hong Kong. At least 150,000 Indonesian domestic workers are employed in Hong Kong households (*The Standard* May 29; *UCAN* May 30).

May 28, 2013:

***South China Morning Post* reports on Freemasons in Hong Kong**

According to a report in the *South China Morning Post*, which cites conversations with insiders, the Masonic lodges in Hong Kong have more than 1,000 members, including senior government officials, lawyers, businessmen, policemen and a priest. Important personages of Hong Kong's history have been Masons, especially in the fields of banking and among the police. The paper added that since the late 19th century, Chinese and Indians from the upper crust of society have also been allowed to join Hong Kong's Masonic lodges. The *South China Morning Post* published the article after Masons themselves had divulged to journalists information about an ongoing case of embezzlement in the Hong Kong Zetland Masonic Hall (*South China Morning Post* April 28).

June 4, 2013:

Candlelight vigil in Hong Kong and Taipei marks the 24th anniversary of the Tian'anmen massacre

According to the organizers, 150,000 people assembled for the annual candlelight vigil in Hong Kong's Victoria Park, though police estimates put the size of the crowd at 54,000. After about an hour, however, the vigil had to be broken off due to torrential rains. In protest against the official motto of this year's candlelight vigil, "Love the country, love the people, the spirit of Hong Kong," some young people organized their own candlelight vigils in other parts of Hong Kong. Ding Zilin, a leading representative of the "Tian'anmen Mothers," speaking on a Hong Kong radio program on May 30, characterized the motto as "stupid" because "love the country" is practically equated in Mainland China with "love of party"; she said that people in the Mainland have stopped using the expression. At least 10 representatives of this organization, which is made up of relatives of the victims, gathered to commemorate the event in Beijing's Wan'an cemetery. In Taipei, almost five hundred persons, including many students, gathered in front of the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall for a commemorative candlelight vigil in memory of the victims of June 4, 1989. They called for the release of Liu Xiaobo and other political prisoners in Mainland China. The organizers handed out masks with Liu Xiaobo's features to demonstrators from Mainland China, who did not want to be identified (*Central News Agency* June 4; *South China Morning Post* June 5; *The Standard* May 31).

June 13–15, 2013:

Delegation of the Chinese Islamic Association visits Romania

The Chinese Muslims were responding to an invitation issued by the Mufti of Romania, Muurat Iusuf. The delegation met representatives of the public authorities in Romania and visited Islamic sites in the Dobruja region in southeastern Romania. According to Mufti Muurat Iusuf, both sides want to deepen religious cooperation, call for international peace and mutual respect in their own country and combat religious extremism. In addition, participants feel that economic contacts between Muslim businessmen from Romania and China should be strengthened.

The exchange began in 2012, when a first delegation of the Democratic Union of Turkish-Muslim Tartars in Romania and the Turkish Democratic Union of Romania, headed by Mufti Muurat Iusuf, visited China (*Agerpres* June 14).

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