

## 2015 Statistical Update on Religions and Churches in the Peoples' Republic of China

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

Recording the number of adherents of the religions in the PR China remains a challenge. Chinese state universities, academies and government authorities all endeavor to do so, as do researchers and opinion research institutes outside Mainland China. Our annual statistical update compiles figures from available recent sources of various kinds. This time we present among other things two large statistical projects from official sources: In 2015 the “China Religion Survey” carried out by Renmin University published the first results of its survey of local religious affairs departments and heads of religious sites (see para. 1.1). The recording of all registered Buddhist and Daoist sites in the new online database of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) was completed in 2015 and enables new insights into the official religious landscape in China (see para. 2.3). Also presented here is an analysis of the composition of the Muslim population on the basis of data from the last census in 2010 (see para. 3.1). That is followed by data for the Christian churches, and Anthony Lam of the Holy Spirit Study Centre (Hong Kong) clarifies his thesis that the number of Catholics is decreasing after having reached its highest level (see para. 5.1). Although the statistical data for the individual religions remain contradictory, they yield an overall picture of vital religiosity in the People’s Republic of China.

### 1 Religions and Religiosity in General

#### 1.1 The Renmin University “China Religion Survey”

In many surveys, data on the topic of religion are gained from interviewing individuals or households – as with the “China Family Panel Studies” (CFPS), the results of which concerning religion were first published in 2014.<sup>1</sup> By contrast, religious institutions are the point of departure for the “China Religion Survey” (CRS, *Zhongguo zongjiao diaocha* 中

---

This article was first published under the title “Statistisches Update 2015 zu Religionen und Kirchen in der Volksrepublik China” in *China heute* 2016, No. 1, pp. 24-37.

1 China Family Panel Studies is an annual longitudinal survey. It has been carried out since 2010 by the Institute of Social Science Survey of Peking University and concentrates on the economic and non-economic wellbeing of the population. Since 2012 data on religiosity has also been gathered. The survey covers a fixed panel of 16,000 families/households in 25 of the 31 provinces, direct-controlled municipalities and autonomous regions of the PR China – excluded are Xinjiang, Tibet, Qinghai, Inner Mongolia, Ningxia and Hainan. For a presentation of the religion-related results published in CFPS/SZW 2014 see Wenzel-Teuber 2015, pp. 21-28.

国宗教调查), carried out by the National Survey Research Center (NSRC) and the School of Philosophy of the Renmin University of China, with the first results published in 2015.

According to its own description, the CRS is “the first nationally representative survey on religious institutions, which collects data systematically on individual, institutional and regional levels.” From 2013–2015 the emphasis of the CRS research was on the sites for religious activities and the religious landscape at the county level. For that a sample of 4,383 sites for religious activities in 243 administrative units at the county level in 31 provinces of China was selected. The sample covered 8.5% of all counties of China. The interviews concentrated on the topics of organization, religious life, social interaction and relations between religions and State. Those surveyed (by means of two different questionnaires) were leading officials of the local religious affairs departments as well as heads<sup>2</sup> of the religious sites. Thus the focus of the survey is on the area of official religiosity. The data gathered – according to the description of the project – are meant “to provide high quality data for academic research and policy-making.”<sup>3</sup>

On 7 July 2015, the first CRS results were published on the blog of Wei Dedong 魏德东, Buddhism researcher and vice dean of the School of Philosophy of Renmin University, who directs the project together with Wang Weidong 王卫东, executive director of the NSRC.<sup>4</sup> State media as well as religious media in China quoted extensively from this report which comes up with the following data and remarks:

**The religions are basically adjusted to socialism**, which the author concludes from the following data: Religious sites are visited annually on average 3.8 times by the (local) religious affairs department and 1.8 times by the United Front department and make a return visit to these offices 3.5 or 1.3 times annually. 90% of the religious sites have a “modern management system” with “democratic management committees”; religious personnel of 30% of the sites hold positions in (local) state organizations such as the People’s Congress, the Political Consultative Conference or the Youth Federation. 60% of the heads of religious sites consider the degree of strictness of the religious policy appropriate. 40% of the religious sites are actively involved in social welfare.

That the religions in China “are willing to accept the guidance of the State” can be seen, according to the author’s view, from the fact that over 50% of the heads of religious sites surveyed object to the principle of separation of State and religion, while they predominantly favor administration of religion through judicial ways and state financial aid for

2 The Chinese term used by the CRS is *fuzeren* 负责人, literally “responsible person,” “person in charge.” Since the report presented below names both religious personnel and “responsible persons” for the religious sites in one breath with regard to age and education, presumably the “responsible persons” usually are senior clergy of the respective religion. The legal provision “Measures for Reporting for the Record the Holding of Chief Posts at Sites for Religious Activities” uses a different term for this, *zhuyao jiaozhi* 主要教职.

3 Cf. CRS 2015, as well as the Chinese and the English presentation of the CRS on the project website at <http://crs.ruc.edu.cn/index.php?r=info/introduce> and the questionnaire structure at <http://crs.ruc.edu.cn/index.php?r=info/document&cid=7>.

4 CRS 2015. The same text is to be found undated on the project website. Presumably Wei is the author of the text. An English summary that keeps close to the text with the title “A Closer Look at the China Religion Survey” can be found at ChinaSource, [www.chinasource.org/resource-library/chinese-church-voices/a-closer-look-at-the-china-religion-survey](http://www.chinasource.org/resource-library/chinese-church-voices/a-closer-look-at-the-china-religion-survey).

the construction of religious sites and the living costs of religious personnel, as well as a greater participation of religious personnel in political organs.

**Of the religious believers** more than half are under 60 years of age. 43% have completed elementary school or even less, and less than 5% have a university degree.

**The religious personnel** (*jiaozhi renyuan* 教职人员) are predominantly between 30 and 60 years of age. 11% have completed university studies or higher. The heads of religious sites surveyed are on average 55 years old, 21% are women, 15% have a university or higher education.

The average income of religious personnel is well under the average income of the surrounding local population. The monthly average income of religious personnel of the five major religions is around 506 yuan, that of the Buddhists even less at 397 yuan, while the Protestants receive around 656.8 yuan.<sup>5</sup> That means, the author writes, that the prevalent cliché of the “rich monk” is not valid and that religious personnel in fact lead a hard life. 41% of religious sites have no old age insurance for their religious personnel and 26% have no health insurance.

**Religious Sites.** Whereas – according to the author – the media criticize especially Buddhism due to the “admission ticket problem,” according to CRS only 6% of Buddhist and 7% of Daoist sites actually require admission fees. The sites of the other religions can generally be accessed without payment.

56% of the religious sites studied have an Organization Code Certificate [*zuzhi jigou daima zheng* 组织机构代码证; this code is an unchangeable nationwide number for firms, social and other organizations registered with the State], 47% have a bank account, 10% propagate their doctrine via a website, 10% make use of multi-media during religious activities.



Something of a rarity: Catholic St. Francis Church in the Diocese of Fengxiang (Shaanxi) built in Chinese style. The CRS view that 51% of Catholic churches are built in Chinese style (see below) would appear to be an overestimation.  
Photo: Mario Bard.

5 The information regarding the income of the Protestant religious personnel does not come from CRS 2015 but from the following article on the CRS: “Renda Zhongguo zongjiao diaocha baogao xianshi: Tianzhujiao zai shenzhi renyuan wenhua chengdu he shehui fuwu shang zou zai qianli” 人大中国宗教调查报告显示: 天主教在神职人员文化程度和社会服务上走在前列 (CRS-Report of Renmin University shows: Catholic religious personnel way ahead with regard to education and social services), *xdb* Aug. 20, 2015.

For the individual religions the author believes the CRS data lead to the following conclusions:

**Protestantism** is “the religion best adjusted to the Chinese social context.” More than half the Protestant churches were built after 1977; that, as the author observes, is unique among the five major religions and clearly points to rapid growth. 82% of the Protestant churches, according to CRS, are built “in Chinese style” in contrast to only 51% of the Catholic churches and 40% of the mosques. The Protestant church is the religion that has built the most religious sites within the past 3 years (12%), that offers the most small groups for the faithful (52%) and that most often makes use of projectors (40%).



Makes the most use of projectors: At a Sunday service in the technically well-equipped Protestant Haidian Church in Beijing hymn texts are projected on to a giant screen. Beneath it the choir can be seen, on the right is a luminous red cross and under the cross are the pastors. Photo: Martin Welling.

**Buddhist Temples** contribute on average per temple and per year 41,000 yuan for welfare, whereas the average for the sites of all religions is around 18,000 yuan.

**Although Daoism** is the “most indigenous” religion, 11% of all Daoist temples and monasteries practice “international exchange” and in this aspect they lead all five religions.

**The Catholic Church** takes first place when it comes to the educational level of its religious personnel: 43% of the Catholic personnel have a university qualification or higher; that is a far higher percentage of graduates than the average of all religions (18%).<sup>6</sup> Protestant religious personnel come in second place with a 13.2 percentage of graduates.<sup>7</sup>

**Islam** has the highest proportion among the five religions of young believers: 22.4% of Muslims are below 30 years old. The Catholic Church comes in second place with a 22%

6 It is not clear whether these figures include degrees conferred by institutes for religious education (e.g. theological seminaries). According to the “Measures for the Accreditation of Religious Personnel of the Chinese Catholic Church” of 2009, religious Sisters are also counted among them.

7 This number does not come from CRS 2015 but from *xdb* Aug. 20, 2015 (cf. footnote 5).

proportion of believers below the age of 30. Buddhism and Daoism both have the highest number of believers over the age of 60, namely 54.6% and 53.8% respectively.<sup>8</sup>

95% of the mosques have fully established the system of rules and regulations [prescribed by the State] and thus Islam leads in that area.

According to CRS, the religious circles wish above all for more religious sites and religious personnel to meet the growing demand. The foremost wishes addressed to the religious policy are for approval to build new religious sites (50%), for registration of religious sites (32%) and for accreditation of religious personnel (23%).

Since the results of the CRS until now are not available in the form of a more academic, systematically elaborated essay, it is difficult to evaluate. It remains to be noted that the study brings numerical data in a field that surveys among the general population naturally cannot cover – the officially organized religiosity and religious policy.

## 1.2 China as Most Atheistic Nation of the World in the WIN/Gallup-Poll on Religiosity and Atheism

If one shares the view of a survey published on 13 March 2015 by WIN/Gallup, 61% of China's population are convinced atheists and thus China is the least religious country in the world. The opinion poll institute asked 63,898 persons in 65 countries (among them 1,150 persons in China) the following question:

*Irrespective whether you attend a place of worship or not, would you say you are:*

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| – A religious person  | – Not a religious person |
| – A convinced atheist | – Do not know            |

In China 7% described themselves as a religious person, 29% as not a religious person and 61% as a convinced atheist. With that China had by far the highest percentage of atheists worldwide, followed by Hong Kong (26% religious persons, 36% not religious persons, 34% atheists), Japan (31% atheists), Czech Republic (30% atheists) and Spain (20% atheists). Taiwan was missing from the list of countries studied. At the other end of the scale Thailand had worldwide the highest percentage of religious persons (94%), followed by Armenia (93%), Bangladesh (93%), Georgia (93%) and Morocco (93%). In the world average, 63% of those surveyed by the WIN/Gallup poll described themselves as religious, 22% as not religious and 11% as atheist.

It was not possible to find out how the questions of the WIN/Gallup poll were formulated in Chinese. As Chinese academics have pointed out, for many in the Chinese context the term *zongjiao* 宗教 (religion) – a term that only entered the Chinese language from Japanese in the 19th century – is difficult to understand. These difficulties of understanding lead to many responding in surveys that they have no religious faith, although, however, they are not “atheists in the strict sense of the word,” but often adhere to some religious beliefs or practices.<sup>9</sup> For instance, during the Chinese Spiritual Life Survey (CSLS)

8 The figures of the age structure of Muslims, Catholics, Buddhists and Daoists are not from CRS 2015 but from the following article on the CRS: Yuen Yeuk-laam, “Islam has most number of young believers followed by Catholicism. Religious Chinese are younger: report,” *Global Times* July 8, 2015.

9 As for example in CFPS/SZW 2014, pp. 12-14; cf. Wenzel-Teuber 2015, p. 22.



carried out in 2007, 58% of those surveyed stated that they did not believe in a religion; a large number of them, however, answered additional questions concerning religious practices or religious beliefs in the broadest sense positively, so that only a remaining 15% appeared as “real atheists.”<sup>10</sup>

## 2 Buddhism, Daoism and Popular Beliefs

Older surveys still give a certain orientation for this large sector of religious life in China, such as the Chinese Spiritual Life Survey (CSLS) of 2007 mentioned above. Among others, the CSLS produced the following results:

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

### 2.1 Buddhism

33,652 registered sites for religious activities (according to the online database of the SARA, see Table 1 below), of which:

- 28,087 Han-Chinese Buddhism
- 3,860 Tibetan Buddhism
- 1,705 Theravada-Buddhism

222,000 Buddhist monks and nuns (according to SARA 2014),<sup>11</sup> of which:

- 72,000 Han-Chinese Buddhism
- 148,000 Tibetan Buddhism
- 2,000 Theravada-Buddhism

38 Buddhist academies (SARA 2014)

The number of monks and nuns of Tibetan Buddhism solely for the Autonomous Region of Tibet is given in official Chinese sources as 46,000 persons<sup>12</sup> – that is 31% of the 148,000 monks and nuns of Tibetan Buddhism that the SARA 2014 gives for the entire PR China.

For the “Living Buddhas” of Tibetan Buddhism (Chinese: *huofo* 活佛, Tibetan: *tulku*, i.e. Buddhist masters identified as reincarnations of their predecessors) recognized by the Chinese State, a separate online reference system (<http://hf.tibet.cn>) was set up on the state website *China Tibet Online* (*Zhongguo Xizang wang* 中国西藏网). It went online on

10 For the CSLS, from May to July 2007, a sample of 7,021 individuals aged 16 to 75 years was interviewed in 56 selected localities of different size as to their religious self-identification. In July 2010, Yang Fenggang from the Center on Religion and Chinese Society at Purdue University (West Lafayette, USA) presented the results of the study in Beijing. For CSLS see also Wenzel-Teuber 2012, pp. 30-36.

11 This source contains extracts from a reader for the study of the socialist theory of religion with Chinese characteristics compiled by the SARA.

12 For example in State Council Information Office 2015; cf. *RCTC* 2015, Nos. 3-4, p. 8.

January 18, 2016 with a first data packet of 870 “Living Buddhas.” Access is only possible after registration with a mobile phone number and for a limited time. – According to official Chinese information there are 1,700 state recognized “Living Buddhas” in the PR China, 358 of them in the Autonomous Region of Tibet.<sup>13</sup>

## 2.2 Daoism

8,269 registered sites for religious activities (according to the online database of the SARA, see Table 1 below), of which:

3,945 Quanzhen-Tradition  
4,324 Zhengyi-Tradition

48,000 Daoist monks/nuns and priests (*daoshi* 道士) (SARA 2014)

5 Daoist academies (SARA 2014)

## 2.3 Registered Buddhist and Daoist Sites in the New Online Database of the SARA

All state registered Buddhist and Daoist sites for religious activities in the 31 provinces or autonomous regions (AR) as well as direct-controlled municipalities (DCM) of the PR China can now be retrieved from a database. This was set up on the SARA website and has been online since April 17, 2014. At the time the SARA pointed out in an accompanying statement that only legally registered religious sites are allowed to carry out religious activities. In other words, the database serves in first place to enable better control of the religious sites by the authorities. The inclusion of Buddhist and Daoist data was concluded on 15 December 2015. According to the website the data were made available by the religious affairs bureaus of the provinces as well as by the Chinese Buddhist Association and the Chinese Daoist Association. They will be regularly updated.

On the SARA website the tab “Zongjiao huodong changsuo jiben xinxi” 宗教活动场所基本信息 (basic data on the sites for religious activities, URL [www.sara.gov.cn/csjbxx/](http://www.sara.gov.cn/csjbxx/)) links to a search engine in which one can select the province, city and county, as well as the religion and the school of thought or sect within the religion. One obtains lists of the religious sites containing the name of the religion and the school, the name and full address of the respective religious site, as well as the name of the person responsible for the site. A search query of the data uploaded to date produced the figures compiled in Table 1.<sup>14</sup>

A glance at Table 1 shows a few peculiarities:

The number of registered Buddhist and Daoist sites in relation to population size is strikingly different from province to province. Thus highly populated Shandong with its

13 State Council Information Office 2015 and Huang Jingjing. “Monks rebuff allegations that religion is under tighter control,” *Global Times* Feb. 13, 2016. – On the discussion regarding “false Living Buddhas” see *China heute* 2016, No. 1, pp. 4-6 (in German).

14 The database was first introduced in Wenzel-Teuber 2015, pp. 29-31 and the numbers for the Buddhist and Daoist sites in 14 provinces (= the first 14 provinces in Table 1) uploaded until the end of 2014 were listed. A new search on March 17, 2016 showed that the numbers for these provinces have remained unchanged since the first search on February 13, 2015 – with the exception of slightly higher numbers for Jiangxi.

Table 1: SARA's "Basic Data on the Sites for Religious Activities," Numbers of All Previously Registered Buddhist and Daoist Sites according to Province (in Brackets the Total Population of the Province in Millions), Religion and School (Retrieval of Data by Search Queries Run on March 17, 2016)

Sites Province (AR, DCM)	Buddhist total	Of which: Han- Chinese Buddhism	Tibetan Buddhism	Therevada- Buddhism	Daoist total	Of which: Quan- zhen- Tradition	Zhengyi- Tradition	Total
Beijing (19.6)	26	25	1	0	13	9	4	39
Tianjin (12.9)	19	19	0	0	0	0	0	19
Shanxi (35.7)	439	430	9	0	43	29	14	482
Liaoning (43.7)	735	709	26	0	100	98	2	835
Heilongjiang (38.3)	88	87	1	0	9	9	0	97
Shanghai (23)	108	108	0	0	32	1	31	140
Zhejiang (54.4)	4,057	4,056	1	0	1,659	562	1,097	5,716
Anhui (59.5)	1,335	1,335	0	0	60	32	28	1,395
Jiangxi (44.6)	3,260	3,259	1	0	1,010	135	875	4,270
Shandong (95.8)	214	214	0	0	87	87	0	301
Henan (94)	715	715	0	0	474	333	141	1,189
Hainan (8.8)	20	20	0	0	1	0	1	21
Chongqing (28.8)	277	277	0	0	32	25	7	309
Gansu (25.6)	756	530	226	0	615	609	6	1,371
Jilin (27.5)	204	203	1	0	36	35	1	240
Fujian (36.9)	3,396	3,396	0	0	918	57	861	4,314
Guangdong (104.3)	1,554	1,554	0	0	218	129	89	1,772
Guangxi (46)	221	221	0	0	8	2	6	229
Hubei (57.2)	1,995	1,990	5	0	642	549	93	2,637
Jiangsu (78.7)	1,016	1,016	0	0	140	4	136	1,156
Guizhou (34.7)	475	475	0	0	28	8	20	503
Hebei (71.9)	756	754	2	0	213	184	29	969
Hunan (65.7)	3,231	3,229	2	0	955	241	714	4,186
Inner Mongolia (24.7)	301	131	170	0	7	6	1	308
Ningxia (6.3)	411	411	0	0	151	81	70	562
Qinghai (5.6)	801	26	775	0	15	15	0	816
Shaanxi (37.3)	595	594	1	0	417	417	0	1,012
Sichuan (80.4)	2,195	1,412	783	0	225	190	35	2,420
Tibet (3)	1,786	6	1,780	0	0	0	0	1,786
Xinjiang (21.8)	57	17	40	0	1	0	1	58
Yunnan (46)	2,609	868	36	1,705	160	98	62	2,769
Total	33,652	28,087	3,860	1,705	8,269	3,945	4,324	41,921

Source: [www.sara.gov.cn/csjsx/](http://www.sara.gov.cn/csjsx/). Population numbers according to the 2010 census, [www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/pccj/rkpc/6rp/indexch.htm](http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/pccj/rkpc/6rp/indexch.htm).

95.8 million inhabitants has only 30 registered Buddhist and Daoist sites – giving one site for more than 300,000 inhabitants. In Fujian, on the other hand, there are only just over 8,500 inhabitants per site, in neighboring Zhejiang there are around 9,500 inhabitants per site. In Tianjin Municipality the ratio is especially unfavorable (one Buddhist or Daoist site per 680,000 inhabitants) as also in Beijing (one site per 500,000 inhabitants). The Autonomous Region of Tibet has the most sites (all Buddhist, there are no Daoist sites there) in relation to population with one site per 1,680 inhabitants.

The numerical ratio of the 33,652 Buddhist to the 8,269 Daoist registered sites in China is on average 4:1, but it varies considerably from one region to another.





Map: [d-maps.com/carte.php?num\\_car=27749&lang=de](http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=27749&lang=de)

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

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

The majority of registered Buddhist sites belong to the Han Chinese Buddhism (28,087 sites). Of the 3,860 registered sites of Tibetan Buddhism, the majority are in the Autonomous Region of Tibet (1,780 sites), as well as in the Tibetan areas in Sichuan (783 sites), Qinghai (775 sites) and Gansu (226 sites). Tibetan Buddhism also has many adherents among the Mongols (Inner Mongolia: 170 sites). All 1,705 sites of Theravada-Buddhism are in Yunnan Province, which borders on Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.

A slight majority of the registered Daoist sites belong to the Zhengyi-Tradition, but the ratio of sites of the Quanzhen- and Zhengyi-Traditions varies greatly from province to province.

The numbers in the SARA database clearly reflect some regional characteristics of the religious map of multi-ethnic PR China. Altogether, however, it seems likely that the figures of the SARA database mirror not only the religious reality but above all the differing ways of handling religious affairs and the official registration of religious sites by the authorities in the various provinces. In any case only a part of the religious activities take place within the officially registered sites and there are numerous non-registered religious sites.

Presumably in coming years the data on the religious sites of the other religions will be gradually filled in.



A young woman offering incense sticks in the Yonghegong Lama temple, one of the 26 registered Buddhist temples in Beijing. Photo: Katharina Feith.

## 2.4 Popular Belief in the City of Wenzhou (Zhejiang Province)

Until now, the traditional popular belief in the PR China is not officially recognized as a religion. There are increasing attempts at regulating the administration and registration of sites for popular belief activities on the local level but few statistics. Therefore, here we present some – surprisingly high – local data:

The City of Wenzhou has 8,579 registered sites of over 20 m<sup>2</sup> in size for activities of popular belief, far more than registered sites of the “five major religions,” which together number 3,961. These numbers are given by the Bureau for Religious and Ethnic Affairs of Wenzhou in a report about the adoption of the city’s 2013–2020 plan for sites for religious and popular belief activities that appeared on the SARA website on February 4, 2015.<sup>15</sup>

## 3 Islam

Approx. 23 million	population of the 10 predominantly Muslim ethnic minorities according to the census of 2010, that is 1.74% of the total population (Liu Xiaochun 2014, see below)
35,000	large and smaller mosques (SARA 2014)
40,000	mosques, of which 24,000 in Xinjiang, as well as around one hundred mosques for women (Guo-Xinhua 2016)
50,000	ahongs (imams) and mullahs (SARA 2014)
10	Qur’an institutes (SARA 2014)

15 “Wenzhou shi ‘Zongjiao ji minjian xinyang huodong changsuo zhuanxiang gui Hua’ huo shi zhengfu pizhun” 温州市《宗教及民间信仰活动场所专项规划》获市政府批准 (“Plan for religious and popular belief sites” of Wenzhou City approved by the City government), [www.sara.gov.cn//dfgz/203712.htm](http://www.sara.gov.cn//dfgz/203712.htm); cf. *RCTC* 2015, No. 2, p. 17.

### 3.1 Analysis of the Data of Muslim Ethnic Groups from the Chinese Census of 2010

Ten ethnic groups in the multi-ethnic People's Republic of China are considered Muslim. In the statistics presented by Chinese authorities or academics the number of their population is generally equated with the population of the Muslims in China. Consequently these numbers take into consideration neither the members of these ten ethnic groups who do not practice Islam or who adhere to a different religion, nor converts to Islam from traditionally non-Muslim ethnic groups. Nor do they differentiate between the many different Muslim schools and Sufi orders. Since ethnicity is officially recorded (whereas religious affiliation is not), the population structure of these ethnically defined Muslims can be more precisely analyzed than among the adherents of other religions. Liu Xiaochun of the Department for Resource Management of Tangshan Normal University – a member of the Hui ethnic group himself – published in 2014 just such an analysis in the periodical *Huizu yanjiu* on the basis of data from the last, Sixth National Population Census of 2010. It is presented in the following.

#### Muslim Population according to Ethnicity

According to the census of 2010, the Muslim population of the People's Republic of China comprises 23,142 million people. Their percentage of the total population has risen from 1.37% in 1953 to 1.74%. Two ethnic groups account together for almost 90% of all Muslims. They are the (mainly) Chinese-speaking Hui, with 10,586 million (45.74% of all Muslims – in 1982 the Hui were still 49.5% of all Muslims) and the Turkic people of the Uyghurs, who on account of a higher growth rate are almost as numerous with 10,069 million (43.51% – 1982: 40.8%).<sup>16</sup> Together with eight smaller Muslim ethnic groups they make up the following total picture:

Table 2: Muslim Population according to Ethnicity

Ethnic group	Population 2010 (persons)	Percentage of the total Muslim population (%)
Hui	10,586,000	45.74
Uyghur	10,069,000	43.51
Kazakh	1,462,600	6.32
Dongxiang	621,500	2.69
Kirghiz	186,700	Less than 1
Salar	130,600	Less than 1
Tadzhik	51,100	Less than 1
Uzbek	10,600	Less than 1
Bao'an	20,000	Less than 1
Tatar	3,556	Less than 1

Data: 2010 census. Table compiled according to Liu Xiaochun 2014, p. 71.

<sup>16</sup> Liu Xiaochun 2014, pp. 70-71.

### Regional Distribution, Mobility and Degree of Urbanization

Muslims live everywhere in China but in differing concentrations. The census data of 2010 show the following picture according to Liu Xiaochun:

At the provincial level, Xinjiang is the only region in which more than half the population (58.26%) is Muslim, followed by Ningxia (34.5%) and Qinghai (16.9%). Traditionally the Hui are dispersed all over China with local concentrations. 99.3% of the Uyghur, on the other hand, live in Xinjiang, only just about 70,000 Uyghurs live outside of Xinjiang, with the greatest group being in Beijing (6,975 persons). The other eight Muslim ethnic groups also live predominantly in the Northwest of the People's Republic of China:<sup>17</sup>

Table 3: Distribution of the Different Muslim Ethnic Groups according to Main Provinces of Settlement

Ethnic group	Main province of settlement with percentage of the respective ethnic group living in the corresponding province (%)
Hui	Ningxia 20, Gansu 11.9, Xinjiang 9.3, Henan 9.0, Qinghai 7.9, Yunnan 6.6, Hebei 5.4, Shandong 5.1
Uyghur	Xinjiang 99.3
Kazakh	Xinjiang 97
Dongxiang	Gansu 87.9, Xinjiang 9.9
Kirghiz	Xinjiang 96.7, Tibet 1.4
Salar	Qinghai 82.0, Gansu 10.3
Tadzhik	Xinjiang 92.5, Zhejiang 6.6
Uzbek	Xinjiang 95.7
Bao'an	Gansu 90.5, Qinghai 4.5
Tatar	Xinjiang 91.1

Data: 2010 census, according to Liu Xiaochun 2014, p. 72, Table 1.

Since – as Liu writes – “Muslims are good business people,” many Muslims have moved to other regions since the beginning of the policy of opening, especially to the east of China, where the Muslim population has increased. In some provinces (Northeast China, Shanxi, Anhui, Hubei, Hunan, Chongqing, Sichuan) on the other hand the number of Muslims has decreased since the census in the year 2000. That is due mainly to the decrease in the Hui population in these provinces, for which Liu states two reasons: the lower birthrate of the Hui and their migration to coastal areas or other economically developed regions. Thus in 2010, in the three provinces of Northeast China there were 47,900 Muslims (47,700 Hui) less than in the year 2000.<sup>18</sup>

According to the census of 2010, 21.5% of all Muslims lived in cities (*chengshi* 城市), 15% in towns (*zhen* 镇), and 63.5% in villages in the countryside (*xiangcun* 乡村). Thus the Muslims showed a far lesser degree of urbanization than the average population of the PR China (30.3% city, 20% town, 49.7% village). There were, however, clear differences between the ethnic groups. 46.41% of the Uzbeks, 39.82% of the Tatars and 34.07% of the Hui lived in cities compared to only 13.22% of the Salars and 11.53 of the Uyghurs. Among the remaining Muslim ethnic groups urbanization was less than 10%. The degree

<sup>17</sup> Liu Xiaochun 2014, pp. 71-72.

<sup>18</sup> Liu Xiaochun 2014, p. 72.

of urbanization of Muslim ethnic groups in the areas where they live in greater concentration is much lower than in the other provinces. For instance the degree of urbanization of the Hui in Ningxia is only 16.7%, in Shanghai however 91.92%, in Jiangsu 72.99% and in Guangdong 89.20%.<sup>19</sup>

### Educational Level

According to Liu Xiaochun a comparison of the data of the census of 2000 with that of 2010 shows that the educational level of the Muslim ethnic groups has risen considerably; yet in the majority of cases it is still below the average of the population as a whole. Only the Uzbeks and Tatars are educated to an above average level, the Hui are above the country average with *benke* 本科 (Bachelor) qualifications. On average Muslim men have higher educational qualifications than Muslim women.<sup>20</sup>

Table 4: Educational Qualifications in the Muslim Population (%)

Ethnic Group	No schooling	Elementary school	Junior middle school	Senior middle school	Technical college	Bachelor	Master
Population as a whole	5.00	28.75	41.70	15.03	5.52	3.67	0.33
Muslims	6.21	39.21	36.99	9.78	4.77	2.87	0.17
Hui	8.56	35.64	33.63	12.81	5.21	3.84	0.31
Uyghur	3.50	41.58	41.99	6.58	4.30	2.00	0.05
Kazakh	1.59	36.31	41.02	12.26	6.09	2.66	0.07
Dongxiang	17.65	64.83	12.42	3.09	1.28	0.71	0.02
Kirghiz	3.15	45.71	33.19	9.75	6.06	2.08	0.06
Salar	21.18	51.53	16.88	5.31	3.01	2.01	0.08
Tadzhik	3.50	49.78	29.98	9.05	6.52	1.14	0.03
Uzbek	2.04	29.27	29.77	17.64	11.24	9.58	0.46
Bao'an	11.02	59.61	17.36	6.86	3.43	1.66	0.06
Tatar	1.41	21.89	29.81	19.82	13.13	13.35	0.59

Data: 2010 census, according to Liu Xiaochun 2014, p. 73, Table 2.

### Professions

According to the data of the 2010 census, 69.52% of the Muslim population worked in agriculture, forestry, pasture farming or fishing – considerably more than the average in the total population, where the percentage lay around 48.36%. Only among the Uzbeks was the number working in farming lower than the nationwide average; among the Tad-

19 Liu Xiaochun 2014, pp. 72-73. – CFPS/SZW 2014 came to quite a different result, namely an above average high degree of urbanization of the Muslims in the comparison of the five major religions. According to this study the Muslim population in cities amounted to 1.2%, definitely more than in towns (0.3%) and in the countryside (0.4%). The survey was, however, actually only carried out in 25 provinces and excluded three provinces or autonomous regions with a high proportion of Muslim ethnic groups in the population (Xinjiang, Qinghai and Ningxia). Cf. Wenzel-Teuber 2015, pp. 21-22 and 26.

20 Liu Xiaochun 2014, pp. 73-74. A table with educational qualifications according to sex on p. 74, which is not reproduced here, shows that also in the total Chinese population men generally have higher educational qualifications than women.



zhiks, Dongxiang and Uyghurs it was over 80%. 6.1% of the Muslim population works in wholesale or retail trading, making that the second highest means of income. Among the Hui and the Uzbeks the numbers in wholesale and retail business were above the nationwide average. The proportion of the Muslim population in professions in the IT branch is lower than the national average (although here the Hui are above the national average), as well as in research and technology. The proportion working in education is higher among the Muslims than in the national average, especially among the Uzbeks, Tatars, Kazakhs, Kirghiz and Uyghurs, which in the opinion of Liu Xiaochun is a basis for further raising the educational level of the Muslim population.<sup>21</sup>

### Birthrate and Life Expectancy

Table 5: Women of Childbearing Age according to the Number of Their Children

	1 child	2 children	3 children	4 children	5 or more children
Muslim women	50.50%	33.72%	12.56%	2.42%	0.8%
All women	62.02%	31.46%	5.27%	0.97%	0.28%

Data: 2010 census. Table compiled from information in Liu Xiaochun 2014, p. 75.

The percentage of women with 3 or more children is considerably higher among the Muslim population than the national average. Liu sees in this a reflection of the state regulation according to which members of ethnic minorities are allowed to have more children. It is interesting to note that the ratio of sex, of boys to girls, is more balanced in the Muslim ethnic groups than among other ethnic groups in China [where there is known to be a problematic surplus of boys]. For this finding, Liu gives as a reason that “in Islam there is no concept of preferring boys to girls.”<sup>22</sup>



High life expectancy due to healthy nutritional habits: *Halal* foodstuffs produced according to Islamic regulations enjoy a good reputation also among the Han Chinese. Muslim restaurants are greatly popular, as here in the Muslim quarter at the Great Mosque of Xi'an. Photo: Barbara Hoster.

21 Liu Xiaochun 2014, pp. 74-75.

22 Liu Xiaochun 2014, p. 75.

The 2010 census showed that the Muslim ethnic groups produced 2.53% of all centenarians and older than centenarian in China. This ratio was considerably higher than the ratio of Muslims to the total population of 1.74%, which according to Liu's opinion is connected "inseparably to the good nutritional and living habits of the Muslims."<sup>23</sup>

## 4 Protestantism

### Believers

- 20 million Protestant Christians, of whom 70% are in rural areas, according to the information of the official Protestant bodies – Three-Self Patriotic Movement and China Christian Council.<sup>24</sup>
- 23.05 million Chinese, of whom 67.5% are baptized, consider themselves Protestant Christians (regardless of membership in formal or informal groups) – according to a household survey conducted in 2008/2009 by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS 2010).<sup>25</sup> The figure of 23 million is also given by SARA 2014.
- 23-40 million Protestant Christians (1.7–2.9% of the population) is the figure given by the state-run *Global Times* as the consensus of academic experts at a symposium held in Shanghai on 5/6 August 2014 for the 60th anniversary of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China.<sup>26</sup>
- 58.04 million Protestant Christians (4.3% of the population) is the estimate of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (PFRPL 2011).

Some international estimates of various sources are even higher. One example is the evangelical mission organization Asia Harvest which arrives at 83.5 million Protestant Christians in Mainland China.<sup>27</sup>

Furthermore the Protestant churches of China have

- 21 (official) theological seminaries with 300 professors and 3,700 students (CCC-TSPM 2013).
- 56,000 churches and meeting places (SARA 2014).
- 48,000 male and female pastors and preachers (SARA 2014).

23 Liu Xiaochun 2014, p. 75.

24 For some years these figures have been on the website of the official Protestant bodies under [www.ccctspm.org/quanguolianghui/lianghuijianjie.html](http://www.ccctspm.org/quanguolianghui/lianghuijianjie.html) (last accessed on Feb. 25, 2015).

25 The results of the CASS study were presented in Malek 2011, pp. 32-33 and 51-53. For the resulting discussion, see Wenzel-Teuber 2012, pp. 30-32.

26 Chang Meng, "Protestants in China estimated at 23–40 million," *Global Times* Aug. 7, 2014, [www.globaltimes.cn/content/874757.shtml](http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/874757.shtml).

27 [Asiaharvest.org/wp-content/themes/asia/docs/christians-in-china/China.htm](http://Asiaharvest.org/wp-content/themes/asia/docs/christians-in-china/China.htm) (last accessed Feb. 25, 2015). Asia Harvest states 84 million Protestants for China incl. Hong Kong and Macau; after subtracting the numbers given by Asia Harvest for Hong Kong and Macau there remain 83.5 million for Mainland China. The same table gives the number of Catholics in China as 21.3 million (Mainland China 20.8 million).

## 5 Catholic Church

The following figures regarding the Catholic Church in Mainland China in 2015 are based – apart from the sources already mentioned – on data provided by the Holy Spirit Study Centre (HSSC)<sup>28</sup> of the Diocese of Hong Kong, which specializes in studies on the Catholic Church in Mainland China. We also give the data presented by the official Catholic governing bodies – this time according to a report by Bishop Fang Xingyao, Chairperson of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (Fang-PA 2014). Further important sources are the reports in the Catholic newspaper *Xinde* 信德 (*Faith*) (*xdb*) based in Shijiazhuang, and its website [www.chinacatholic.org](http://www.chinacatholic.org) (*xdo*), as well as the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (FICS) which works under the same roof, the popular Catholic website *Zhongguo tianzhujiào zaixiàn* 中国天主教在线 [www.chinacath.com](http://www.chinacath.com) and the Catholic news agency UCAN (Hong Kong/Bangkok).

### Number of Catholics

Between 9 and 10.5 million – total number of Catholics according to estimates of the HSSC, including both the official part of the Church and the Catholics in the underground.

5.7 million number of Catholics according to SARA 2014.

6 million number of Catholics according to information of the official Catholic governing bodies (Fang-PA 2014).

9 million Catholics (0.7% of the population) according to estimates of the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (PFRPL 2011).

13 million Catholics (1% of the population) according to data in the “UCAN Directory.”

### Dioceses

138 of which 116 are active, 22 inactive (HSSC)

97 according to the figures of the official Church

### Bishops

112 99 of whom are in ministry, 13 not in ministry (HSSC)

Of the 99 bishops in ministry there are

70 bishops in the official Church (HSSC)

29 bishops in the underground Church (HSSC)

According to data from various sources 8 of the Chinese bishops are illegitimate, i.e. not recognized by the Pope.<sup>29</sup>

28 We thank the Holy Spirit Study Centre for making available the figures regarding the Catholic Church in Mainland China (draft of February 15, 2016, status as of December 31, 2015) quoted in the following.

29 See Charbonnier 2013, p. 13, as well as Gerard O’Connell: “Progress with China?”, *America Magazine* May 11, 2015.

### Priests

- 2,500 in the official Church (HSSC)<sup>30</sup>
- 1,300 in the underground Church (HSSC)

### Seminaries and Seminarians

- 9 major seminaries (seminaries for philosophy and theology) with 425 seminarians (HSSC)
- 10-12 minor seminaries with 300 seminarians (HSSC)
- 10 underground seminaries with around 200 seminarians (HSSC)

### Sisters

- 3,170 in the official Church in about 87 congregations (HSSC)
- 1,391 in the underground Church in about 37 congregations (HSSC)
- 6,000 in about 70 congregations, with 3,000 in final vows (Fang-PA 2014)

### Sisters' Novitiates

- 87 in the official Church, with 50 Sisters in formation (HSSC)
- 37 in the underground Church, with 100 Sisters in formation (HSSC)

### Churches

- 6,000 churches and oratories (SARA 2014; Fang-PA 2014)

### Baptisms

For years now, the official Catholic governing bodies have given the annual number of baptisms in Mainland China's Catholic Church as 100,000 (Fang-PA 2014).

In 2014, for the eighth time running, FICS together with the Catholic paper *Xinde* provided baptismal statistics for Easter, the most significant baptism date in the year. For the first time the Institute worked on it in collaboration with the Chinese Catholic Research Office (Zhongguo tianzhujiao yanjiushi 中国天主教研究室) which is under the umbrella of the Patriotic Association and the official Bishops' Conference.

According to this data, at Easter 2015, 19,681 persons were baptized in the Catholic parishes of Mainland China (cf. Table 6), almost as many as at Easter 2014 (20,004 baptisms). Baptisms in the underground Church are probably only partially recorded. Since some dioceses have baptisms several times a year, the figures for Easter do not indicate the total number of baptisms.

<sup>30</sup> Data from the official governing bodies of the Chinese Catholic Church on the numbers of priests are partially higher than those given by HSSC for the official Church. According to Fang-PA 2014 the Catholic Church in China has 2,800 "young" priests (i.e. those trained after 1982).

Table 6: Baptisms in the Dioceses of Mainland China at Easter 2015

Province / municipality	Diocese	Number
Anhui		293
Beijing		500
Chongqing	Chongqing	300
	Wanzhou	212
Fujian total 1,577	Fuzhou	1,413
	Minbei	94
	Mindong	10
	Xiamen	60
Gansu total 387	Lanzhou	240
	Pingliang	49
	Tianshui	98
Guangdong total 1,085	Guangzhou	258
	Jiangmen	50
	Meizhou	338
	Shantou	267
	Shenzhen	98
	Zhanjiang	74
Guangxi total 504	Beihai	185
	Guilin	2
	Nanning	307
	Wuzhou	10
Guizhou		217
Hainan		12
Hebei total 3,368	Baoding	89
	Cangzhou (incl. Langfang)	500
	Chengde	45
	Handan	860
	Hengshui	148
	Shijiazhuang	243
	Tangshan	218
	Xingtai	1,141
	Zhangjiakou	124
	Heilongjiang	
Henan total 1,118	Anyang	540
	Kaifeng	52
	Nanyang	96
	Puyang	62
	Shangqiu	107
	Xinxiang	118
	Xinyang	39
	Zhengzhou	53
	Zhumadian	51
Hubei total 339	Chibi	105
	Jingzhou [Shashi]	24
	Wuhan	126
	Xiangfan	56
	Yichang	28
Hunan		112
Jiangsu total 414	Haimen	42
	Nanjing	183
	Suzhou	46
	Xuzhou	143
Jiangxi		110
Jilin		154
Liaoning		635
Inner Mongolia total 604	Bameng	138
	Baotou	97
	Chifeng	96
	Hohhot	143
	Jining	130
Ningxia		50
Qinghai		26
Shaanxi total 1,420	Ankang	27
	Fengxiang	68
	Hanzhong	148
	Sanyuan	300
	Weinan	92
	Xi'an	187
	Yan'an	493
	Zhouzhi	105
Shandong total 1,052	Heze	98
	Jinan	213
	Liaocheng	104
	Linyi	248
	Qingdao	60
	Weifang	56
	Yantai	10
	Yanzhou	90
	Zibo [Zhoucun]	173
Shanghai		260
Shanxi total 1,523	Changzhi	50
	Datong	23
	Fenyang	350
	Jinzhong	115
	Linfen	141
	Shuozhou	132
	Taiyuan	568
	Xinzhou	30
Yuncheng	114	
Sichuan total 835	Chengdu	225
	Leshan	193
	Nanchong	270
	Xichang	48
	Yibin	99
Tianjin		63
Tibet Auton. Region		18
Xinjiang		44
Yunnan total 318	Dali	32
	Kunming	136
	Zhaotong	150
Zhejiang total 1,803	Hangzhou	148
	Ningbo	241
	Taizhou	23
	Wenzhou	1,391
<b>Total</b>		<b>19,681</b>

Source: *xdb* April 23, 2015.

At present far more people are baptized in the cities than in the countryside, states the report in *xdb*, and those are predominantly people who have come to the city for studies or work. The report stresses the importance of courses for catechumens, through which the baptismal candidates are systematically prepared for baptism in many places. In Xi'an for example these courses take about half a year, comprise 100 lesson units and close with an examination.

According to the report, the majority of those baptized were adults, thus first generation Christians. In Beijing, Shenzhen and Guizhou only adults were baptized at Easter (there was a different date for children). In the three provinces of Northeast China, in Yunnan and in Inner Mongolia 90% of those baptized at Easter were adults.

The dioceses of Hebei Province are still in first place with regard to absolute numbers (3,368) although with around 600 newly baptized less than in the previous year. In a few other dioceses the number of Easter baptisms also decreased. On the other hand, from





Alongside the catechumen courses for baptismal candidates (see above) the ongoing formation of the faithful after baptism has an increasingly important role. Here a young priest is giving a Bible course in the parish of Xilin, Tangshan Diocese, in early 2016. Photo: *xdo*.

2014 to 2015 the numbers of baptisms have more than doubled, for instance, in the Dioceses of Wenzhou (from 641 to 1,391) and Lanzhou (from 108 to 240). The increase was even greater in the Dioceses of Fuzhou (from 300 to 1,413), Pingliang (from 4 to 49) or Xinjiang (from 0 to 44) (*xdb* April 23, 2015).

**In the Diocese of Hong Kong** around 3,600 adults were baptized at Easter 2015.<sup>31</sup>

#### Possible Death of a Bishop in 2015

Shi Enxiang 师恩祥, Cosmas (1921–2015?), Yixian (Heb)

Bishop Shi was arrested in 2001 and has been missing ever since. It was reported that he died in custody in January 2015, however, that was later denied by the authorities.

#### Episcopal Consecration in 2015

Zhang Yinlin 张银林, Joseph, Anyang (Hen), August 4

#### Priestly Ordinations



New priest Wang Yueming distributing Holy Communion after his ordination in Tianjin on May 5, 2015. Photo: *xdo*.

31 Easter pastoral letter of John Cardinal Tong, Bishop of Hong Kong. End of March 2015, [www.catholic.org.hk/v2/en/message\\_bishop/y2015\\_easter.html](http://www.catholic.org.hk/v2/en/message_bishop/y2015_easter.html).

53 deacons were ordained as priests in Mainland China in 2015 (see Table 7). This was considerably less than in previous years – in 2014 there were 78, in 2013, 66 and in 2012, 78 ordinations. The figures come from different sources and are certainly incomplete; there were most probably additional ordinations in the underground Church which are not included here. According to some reports, there were isolated instances of members of religious congregations among the new priests.

Table 7: Priestly Ordinations in the Catholic Church of Mainland China in 2015

Diocese	Number of ordained	Ordination date	Names of ordained
Anyang (Hen)	2	April 25	Yu Songqiang 于松强, Li Jianhua 李建华
Fengxiang (SN)	3	Jan. 7 May 17	Hou Xinlong 候新龙, Li Pengliang 李鹏亮, Zhao Kai 赵凯
Guangxi	6	May 1	Wang Xianxing 王仙星, Hu Jing 胡景, Liu Wenpu 刘文普, Jiang Xinjian 江信坚, Mo Qingjian 莫庆坚, Ling Xingwang 零兴旺
Guangzhou (GD)	2	June 24	Zhang Junhe 张军和, Liu Yuzhi 刘育智
Guizhou	2	Sept. 6	Huang Dongxue 黄东学, Lei Yuanyao 雷远瑶
Haimen (JS)	1	May 9	Gao Dihua 高弟华
Harbin (HL)	3	Aug. 6	Zhang Xin 张新, Qu Mingwei 曲明伟, Fan Wengang 范文刚
Hengshui (Heb)	3	May 14	Guo Guiquan 郭桂全, Ma Aoding 马奥定, Zhang Shilun 张世伦
Jilin	1	June 11	Xu Feng 徐峰
Jinzhong (SX)	2	May 14	Wu Yuanjie 武渊杰, Qiao Jianqing 乔建青
Leshan (SC)	1	June 29	Wang Yu 王宇
Luoyang (Hen)	1	Sept. 22	Mu Yuanchao 慕愿超
Nanchang (JX)	1	Oct. 17	Sun Yongbin 孙勇彬
Nanchong (SC)	1	May 14	Xu Yongtao 徐永涛
Sanyuan (SN)	4	Oct. 28	Han Zhidu 韩智都, Zhang Lifeng 张立峰, Qin Ta 秦塔, Dou Teng 窦腾
Taiyuan (SX)	5	Nov. 21	Ren Jin 任瑾, Zhang Huijie 张慧杰, Qin Yudong 秦育东, Liu Ruo-qiang 刘若强, Liu Genqiang 刘良强
Tianjin	1	May 9	Wang Yueming 王月明
Tianshui (GS)	1	Aug. 23	Li Maolu 李茂禄
Xianxian (Heb)	4	June 11	Zhang Di 张迪, Liu Chongsheng 刘重生, Zhou Yan 周岩, Zhang Lun 张伦
Xinjiang	1	June 11	Jiang Ruixiang 江瑞祥
Zhaoxian/ Xingtai (Heb)	7	June 1	Wang Jian 王建, Ju Yunpei 巨云沛, Rong Gangyi 戎刚毅, Cheng Shichao 程士超, Cheng Hongfei 成鸿飞, Li Shuangzhi 李双志, Du Jianchao 杜建超
Zhoucun (SD)	1	Nov. 7	Jiang Yiyuan 姜贻元
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>		

Sources (2015): chinacath.com Aug. 9; gzcatholic.org June 27; sctzj.com July 10; xdo May 10, 11, 13, 15, 16 and 20; June 2 and 12; Aug. 26; Sept. 7; Oct. 18 and 30; Nov. 7 and 22; [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_500cf6040102vkph.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_500cf6040102vkph.html) and others.

## 5.1 Decrease in the Number of Catholics and Vocation Crisis

Last year for the first time the Holy Spirit Study Centre (HSSC), which since 2005 has reported the number of Catholics in Mainland China as 12 million, corrected the figures

Table 8: Number of Seminarians in the Catholic Church of Mainland China (1996–2014)

Year	Open Church		Underground Church	Total
	Major seminaries (candidates for the priesthood)	Minor seminaries (pupils)		
1996	1,000	600	700	2,300
1998	1,000	600	800	2,400
2000	900	700	800	2,400
2002	870	800	800	2,470
2004	710	740	800	2,250
2006	650	530	400	1,580
2008	610	550	400	1,560
2010	630	600	550	1,780
2012	533	490	450	1,473
2014	560	400	300	1,260

According to the table in Lam 2015, p. 42.

Table 9: Number of Sisters in Formation in the Catholic Church of Mainland China (1996–2014)

Year	Sisters in formation	Open Church	Underground Church	Total
1996		1,500	1,000	2,500
1998		1,500	1,000	2,500
2000		1,500	1,000	2,500
2002		900	900	1,800
2004		600	600	1,200
2006		320	230	550
2008		200	200	400
2010		100	100	200
2012		50	100	150
2014		50	106	156

According to the table in Lam 2015, p. 43.

down to 10.5 million. In an essay in *Tripod* No. 179 (winter 2015) Anthony Lam of the HSSC gave the reason behind this decision.

Lam first recalls that, with regard to the number of Catholics in Mainland China, there has always been a discrepancy between the figures given from outside Mainland China (including from the HSSC) and the figures given in China itself from the official side. Thus in 1988 Lam estimated 8 million Catholics, whereas the official Chinese number was 3.5 million; in 2005 Lam estimated 12 million Catholics, the official Chinese figure rose to 5.3 million. Lam ascribes the discrepancy between estimates from without and official Chinese data, which remained more or less in the same ratio, to the problem of Church “above ground” and “underground” and to the non-registered population, i.e. to the fact that some distant Catholic villages did not report births that exceeded the number allowed.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Lam 2015, pp. 38-39.

In 1998, or 2000 at the latest, according to Lam, the number of Catholics in Mainland China reached a “plateau,” i.e. a situation where the numbers of new members just balanced out the loss of members and no further growth took place. According to Lam, if we work on the premise of 12 million Catholics and on the general life expectancy in China as 75.6 years and if the average age of those baptized is conservatively set at 18 years, then it would take 210,000 new faithful annually just to balance the natural decrease in population – without counting other losses of Catholics (such as poaching by the “Eastern Lightning” sect). If really – as claimed by the official Church – annually around 100,000 people were baptized in the Church “above ground,” and as many again in the “underground,” one could reach the necessary number, Lam writes. He believes, however, that the number of baptisms in the official Church must be far lower, around 30,000 to 35,000 annually, since according to surveys of FISC, in the open parishes only an average of 21,500 people are baptized each year at Easter. Taking this situation into consideration, as well as all available data, Lam comes to the conclusion that the number of Catholics in Mainland China, taking the official Church and the underground Church together, is currently around 10.5 million.<sup>33</sup>

Anthony Lam cites several factors that are responsible for a decrease in numbers of Catholics in China, including also the inevitable change from rural parishes to modern, urban Church communities caused by globalization. The decrease in the number of faithful, according to Lam, leads to an aging Church which is one of the causes of the serious crisis of priestly and religious vocations.<sup>34</sup> Lam proves this crisis with two lists (see Tables 8 and 9 above).

The number of priestly ordinations is also decreasing correspondingly. Lam suggests that formation capacities released through the decrease in vocations could be used for the ongoing formation of the middle-aged priests. More Catholic lay persons should be trained, so that these can take on part of the work of the clergy later on. Lam additionally recommends promotion of the currently non-existent training of late vocations. In dealing with the challenges of urbanization he is of the opinion that the experiences of the Church in Hong Kong could be helpful.<sup>35</sup>

## List of Sources and Abbreviations

CASS [Chinese Academy of Social Sciences] 2010: Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan shijie zongjiao yanjiusuo ketizu 中国社会科学院世界宗教研究所课题组 (Research Group from the Institute of World Religions, CASS), “Zhongguo jidujiao ruhu wenjuan diaocha baogao” 中国基督教入户问卷调查报告 (An In-House Questionnaire Survey on Christianity in China), in: Jin Ze 金泽 – Qiu Yonghui 邱永辉

33 Lam 2015, pp. 39-40. He writes that a colleague in HSSC reached the number of 9-12 million Catholics in independent calculations, which corresponds to his result.

34 Lam 2015, pp. 41-42 and 37. – Lam’s theory of the aging of the Church is in contrast to the CRS study cited above, which reports that the Catholic Church has, after Islam, the second highest proportion (22%) of young believers under 30 years of age.

35 Lam 2015, pp. 45 and 42.

- (eds.), *Zhongguo zongjiao baogao (2010)* 中国宗教报告 *Annual Report on Religions in China (2010)* (Zongjiao lanpishu 宗教蓝皮书 Blue Book of Religions), Beijing 2010, pp. 190-212.
- CCC-TSPM [China Christian Council and Three-Self Patriotic Movement] 2013: Wang Dongyun 王冬昀 *et al.*, “Zhongguo jidujiao di jiu ci daibiao huiyi zai Beijing longzhong kaimu” 中国基督教第九次代表会议在北京隆重开幕 (Solemn Opening of the 9th National Assembly of Chinese Protestants in Beijing), Sept. 8, 2013, [www.ccctspm.org/news/ccctspm/2013/98/1398528.html](http://www.ccctspm.org/news/ccctspm/2013/98/1398528.html).
- CFPS/SZW [China Family Panel Studies / *Shijie zongjiao wenhua*] 2014: Beijing daxue zongjiao wenhua yanjiusuo ketizu 北京大学宗教文化研究所课题组 (Research Team for Religious Culture of Peking University), text composed by Lu Yunfeng 卢云峰, “Dangdai Zhongguo zongjiao zhuangkuang baogao – jiyu CFPS (2012) diaocha shuju” 当代中国宗教状况报告—基于 CFPS (2012) 调查数据 (Report on the Religious Situation in Today’s China – Based on Data from CFPS [2012]), in: *Shijie zongjiao wenhua* 世界宗教文化 (The World Religious Cultures) 2014, No. 1, pp. 11-25. A version of this text can be found online at [iwr.cass.cn/ddzjyjs/lw/201403/t20140311\\_16499.html](http://iwr.cass.cn/ddzjyjs/lw/201403/t20140311_16499.html).
- Charbonnier, Jean 2013, *Guide to the Catholic Church in China* 2014, Singapore.
- CRS [China Religion Survey, Zhongguo zongjiao diaocha 中国宗教调查] 2015: “Zhongguo renmin daxue fabu ‘Zhongguo zongjiao diaocha baogao (2015)’” 中国人民大学发布《中国宗教调查报告 (2015)》 (Renmin University of China Publishes “Report on CRS [2015]”), on July 7, 2015, uploaded to the blog of Wei Dedong 魏德东 (Renmin University): [http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog\\_3d25d0c90102vpc2.html](http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_3d25d0c90102vpc2.html). The same text was also published undated on the website of the National Survey Research Center of Renmin University: <http://nsrc.ruc.edu.cn/news/510>.
- CSLS [Chinese Spiritual Life Survey]: Fenggang Yang with Anning Hu – Fan Jiang – R.J. Leamaster – Jun Lu – Zhenyu Tang (Center on Religion and Chinese Society, Purdue University), “Quantifying Religions in China,” 5-page manuscript of a presentation at the 7th Annual Conference for the Social Scientific Study of Religion in China, Beijing, July 26–27, 2010.
- Fang-PA 2014: Fang Xingyao 房兴耀 [Chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association], “Xieshou shenzhang jiaoyou gong yuan Zhongguo meng. Qingzhu Zhonghua renmin gongheguo chengli 65 zhounian” 携手神长教友共圆中国梦. 庆祝中华人民共和国成立65周年 (Clerics and faithful together hand in hand fulfill the Chinese dream. On the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the founding of the PR China), in: *Zhongguo tianzhujiao* 中国天主教 (Catholic Church in China) 2014, No. 5, pp. 4-6.
- Guo-Xinhua 2016: “Quanguo zhengxie weiyuan Guo Chengzhen: Zhongguo musilin zongjiao xinyang ziyou dedao qieshi baozhang” 全国政协委员郭承真: 中国穆斯林宗教信仰自由得到切实保障 (Member of the Political Consultative Conference Guo Chengzhen: Freedom of Religious Belief of the Chinese Muslims fully Protected), *Xinhua* March 2, 2016, according to [www.sara.gov.cn/mtjj/332597.htm](http://www.sara.gov.cn/mtjj/332597.htm).



- HSSC: Holy Spirit Study Centre (Shengshen yanjiu zhongxin 聖神研究中心, Hong Kong).
- Lam 2015: Lin Ruiqi 林瑞琪, “Zhongguo jiaoyou renshu biandong yu shengzhao weiji” 中國教友人數變動與聖召危機 (Changes in the Number of Chinese Catholics and Vocation Crisis), in: *Ding* 鼎 / *Tripod* No. 179, Winter 2015, pp. 37-45.
- Liu Xiaochun 刘晓春 2014, “Jiyu renkou diaocha de Zhongguo musuln renkou tezheng fenxi” 基于人口调查的中国穆斯林人口特征分析 (Traits of the Muslims of China Based on Census Data Analysis), in: *Huizu yanjiu* 回族研究 (Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Studies) 2014, No. 1, pp. 70-76.
- Malek, Roman 2011, “People’s Republic of China: Churches and Religions. Annual Statistical Overview 2010/2011,” translated by David Streit, in: *RCTC*, No. 1, pp. 32-59.
- PFRPL 2011: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (ed.), “Global Christianity. A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World’s Christian Population” (with “Appendix C: Methodology for China”), [www.pewforum.org/Christian/Global-Christianity-worlds-christian-population.aspx](http://www.pewforum.org/Christian/Global-Christianity-worlds-christian-population.aspx), published Dec. 19., 2011.
- SARA [State Administration for Religious Affairs] 2014: Guojia zongjiao shiwuju dangzu lilun xuexi zhongxinzu 国家宗教事务局党组理论学习中心组 (Central Group for Theoretical Studies of the Party Group in the SARA) (ed.), “Woguo zongjiao de jiben qingkuang. Zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi zongjiao lilun xuexi duben jixuan zhi er” 我国宗教的基本情况. 《中国特色社会主义宗教理论学习读本》节选之二 (The Fundamental Situation of the Religions in Our Country. Excerpt No. 2 from the *Reader for the Study of the Socialist Theory of Religion with Chinese Characteristics*), *Zhongguo minzubao* 中国民族报 March 19, 2014, uploaded to the website of the SARA on April 1, 2014 under [www.sara.gov.cn/llyj/63734.htm](http://www.sara.gov.cn/llyj/63734.htm).
- State Council Information Office 2015: “Tibet’s Path of Development Is Driven by an Irresistible Historical Tide,” [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-04-15/c\\_134152612.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2015-04-15/c_134152612.htm).
- Wenzel-Teuber, Katharina 2012, “People’s Republic of China: Religions and Churches. Statistical Overview 2011,” translated by David Streit, in: *RCTC* 2012, No. 3, pp. 29-54.
- Wenzel-Teuber, Katharina 2015, “2014 Statistical Update on Religions and Churches in the People’s Republic of China,” translated by Jacqueline Mulberge, in: *RCTC* 2015, No. 2, pp. 20-41.
- xdb*: *Xinde* 信德 (*Faith*) (Shijiazhuang), print edition.
- xdo*: *Xinde* 信德 (*Faith*) (Shijiazhuang), online edition at [www.chinacatholic.org](http://www.chinacatholic.org).