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# China Exchange

Columban Mission Institute  
Centre for Promoting Communion with  
the Church in China

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September 2006, Number 24

## EDITORIAL

Entrepreneurs, middle management or brokers are very influential. They have great power. They are committed to retaining that power - persuading and convincing consumers that they really need to have whatever it is that they are promoting.

Closely related to middle management are the spin doctors - like their cricketing relatives they can be both accurate and devastating. With five levels of government - national, provincial, county, town and village - China has many levels of middle management - not to mention party members, cadres etc.

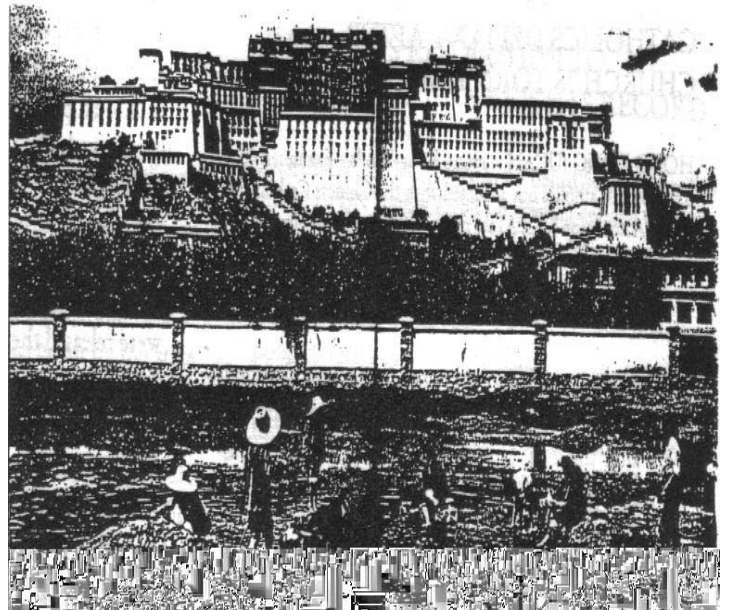
Although its national constitution guarantees freedom of religion, China controls the choice of where and how its citizens may congregate and worship. This is the case whether believers be Tibetan Buddhist, Muslim, Protestant or Catholic. All are controlled by a specific *Patriotic Association* - also a government body.

Since the elevation of Bishop Joseph Zen, SDB to the Cardinalate, the *Catholic Patriotic Association* has shown its disapproval by illicitly ordaining two young bishops in China. It has threatened to proceed with more illicit episcopal ordinations. Meanwhile, the contact between the Vatican and the Chinese Government continues - discussing the conditions for restoring diplomatic relations, thus hopefully ensuring the freedom of belief, association and worship of the Catholic people of China. One of the thorny issues at stake is the nomination, and ordination of bishops. China - and the *Catholic Patriotic Association* regards this as an internal affair of China which is not negotiable. Nothing much is being said by either side as to the progress or otherwise in these delicate negotiations. Speculation is not helpful. The Church in China will eventually resolve the impasse in its own way. There is a certain parallel in the situations of the Catholic people of China, and the people of Tibet in the way the government of China has tried to come

between the Catholic Church, Tibet and their respective peoples. Recently a railway linking China and Tibet was completed. Prominent people have expressed their concern about this as being a further strengthening of China's control of Tibet and the Tibetan people. One of the articles highlights these concerns in this issue of *China Exchange*. A small Catholic community lives in the eastern side of Tibet. They now have two Tibetan Catholic priests and a few elderly Tibetan Catholic nuns.

Recently an article in the *South China Morning Post* featured a young writer from Sichuan. Yu Jie is a keen observer and critic of the social system and culture of China. Well aware of the glacial progress of change he nevertheless perseveres in holding up the mirror drawing attention to the blemishes on the public face of his country. ♦

*Rev Paul McGee ssc*



*Potala Palace  
Lhasa, Tibet*

**CHURCH OFFICIAL CALLS FOR REVIEW OF  
TIANANMEN KILLINGS**

by Keith Bradsher - *New York Times* –  
[china.infodoc@online.be](mailto:china.infodoc@online.be)

Hong Kong June 4th, 2006. The highest official of the Roman Catholic Church in China marked the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Tiananmen killings today by strongly criticizing the Chinese government and calling on it to hold a full and open review of the killings

Thousands of people took part in a candlelight vigil at Hong Kong's Victoria Park to mark the 17<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the military crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

The criticism by Cardinal Joseph Zen is the latest sign that the Vatican may not be willing to compromise on human rights in order to establish diplomatic relations with mainland China.

Pope Benedict XVI has pursued the normalization of ties with Beijing for the past year. But those efforts have been on hold lately after the government approved (section of the) church on the mainland installed two priests as bishops a month ago without the Vatican's approval.

Wearing the red and white robes he was given after Pope Benedict XVI had made him a cardinal in March, Cardinal Zen walked straight from celebrating Mass at the cathedral here to a prayer meeting on a cement-floored, indoor basketball court next door. He defended the students who died in and around Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989, whom Beijing has labelled as counter-revolutionaries seeking to overthrow the state.

"All they asked for was a clean government – is that a sin?" he said. "And what they wished for was a strong nation – is that a sin? All we're doing is pursuing their aspirations."

The Chinese Communist party now bases its legitimacy to a considerable extent on the material prosperity it has brought to many of China's 1.3 billion people. But Cardinal Zen questioned whether this was enough. He cited coal mine disasters and consumer safety scandals that have embarrassed Beijing repeatedly in recent years.

"Yes, the economy has improved and some people have earned lots of money, but corruption abounds, the gap in wealth is huge, mines keep swallowing workers and fake milk powder and fake medicines are flooding the market – is this considered an improvement?" he asked. "If they had listened to the

kind advice of the students and workers, would today's country be a better country?"

Liu Bainian, the secretary general of the government-approved Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association in Beijing, voiced surprise that Cardinal Zen had spoken out on Tiananmen Square. "According to God's holy teachings, what belongs to Caesar should be left with Caesar, and what belongs to God should be left with God," he said in a telephone interview.

Cardinal Zen has said in the past that democratic forms of government are very much in line with Catholic teachings.

Pope Benedict's decision to elevate Cardinal Zen this spring has antagonized Beijing and raised his visibility considerably. As late as Saturday afternoon, diocesan officials here did not know if the Vatican would allow Cardinal Zen to return here and attend the prayer meeting. Cardinal Zen ended up coming back this morning, as previously scheduled. Mainland officials have occasionally suggested that Cardinal Zen makes intemperate remarks on the spur of the moment. But the Cardinal read from a prepared text at the prayer meeting today, and his aides distributed copies of the text to prevent any confusion; Cardinal Zen later left the meeting without taking any questions.

Mr. Liu, a longtime rival of Cardinal Zen, questioned whether the cardinal's remarks would disrupt contacts between the Vatican and Beijing. "One cannot associate every act with Sino-Vatican relations," he said, adding that, "I believe the Vatican will not support him."

The Vatican has long kept silent regarding Cardinal Zen's statements about China. But his elevation to cardinal has been widely viewed a sign of Pope Benedict's support for his positions.

The Roman Catholic Church in Hong Kong has marked each anniversary of the Tiananmen killings since 1990. Cardinal Zen, who became the bishop of Hong Kong in 1996 and took over full governance of the diocese in 2002, has been especially vocal at the anniversaries since 2003. That was when Hong Kong's own democracy movement enjoyed a brief moment of influence by holding huge street demonstrations that forced the local government to withdraw plans for stringent internal security legislation.

Hong Kong has been an autonomous region of China ever since Britain returned it to China in 1997. ♦

**SELF-ELECTED & SELF-ORDAINED PRINCIPLE  
TO CONTINUE –  
Hong Kong Sunday Examiner –  
4<sup>th</sup> June, 2006.**

**HONG KONG (UCAN):** Chinese bishops attending a meeting in Beijing (SE May 28) say that the Church in China will continue the practice of “self-elected and self-ordained” bishops until it establishes ties with the Holy See.

State officials met with 18 of the 66 bishops in the official Church and one priest at the Great Hall of the People on the afternoon of May 19.

Bishop Francis Lu Xinpin of Nanjing, 42, said on May 22 that the meeting was chaired by Liu Yandong, director of the United Front Work Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, and Wang Zuonan, a vice director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs who deals with Catholic affairs. The two government departments organized the meeting.

All participants were ordained or involved in ordaining others this year.

Bishop Lu said the state officials explained the background and reasons why Catholics in mainland China uphold the principle of “an independent, autonomous and self-managed Church.” The bishop reported the officials as saying that, the Church in China will continue to have “self-elected and self-ordained” bishops, adding that while China and the Vatican have different views, mutual concerns can be easily resolved once diplomatic ties are established.”

Bishop Lu said the officials also urged the bishops to uphold the principle and promised to help in settling local Church property disputes.

Father Cui Qingqi of Hankou represented 89-year-old Bishop Bernardine Dong Guangqing of Hankou, who presided at the illicit ordination of Bishop Joseph Ma Yinglin of Kunming on April 30.

Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan of Beijing, president of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA), joined the session despite reports of ill health and spoke of reactions he had heard from people from outside China concerning the ordinations in Kunming and Anhui.

Bishop Lu added that the four bishops ordained this year each gave a brief oral report. Besides Bishop Ma and Bishop Lu, the other two are Bishop Joseph Xu Honggen of Suzhou and Bishop Paul Pe Junmin of Liaoning who were licitly ordained on April 20 and May 7 respectively.

Bishop John Wu Shizhen of Nanchang said on May 22 that the officials also encouraged the bishops “to do Church work well and to love the country and the Church”. When asked about his participation in the Anhui ordination, Bishop Wu said China’s Church is independent, autonomous and self-managed. ♦

**HONG KONG CARDINAL SPEAKS OUT AGAINST  
CHINESE BISHOPS**

- *The Independent, UK - by Clifford Coonan*
- *in Hong Kong – 28<sup>th</sup> July, 2006.*

Hong Kong’s newly appointed cardinal, Joseph Zen, has criticized a decision by the Chinese Government this year to appoint two bishops without Vatican approval.

China kicked foreign clergy out in the 1950s and severed ties with the Vatican. Since then it has steadfastly refused to allow Catholics to recognize the authority of the Pope; instead, they have to join the state-run Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, which has five million members.

The Vatican estimates eight million Chinese Catholics worship secretly in “underground churches” not recognized by the government, which are closely watched and whose clergy are often arrested.

Relations between the Vatican and Beijing reached a new low in the spring, when Pope Benedict censured China publicly after it had installed two bishops without the Holy See’s approval, calling it “a grave violation of religious freedom.”

But an uncharacteristically mild response by the Chinese authorities to the Vatican statement was a sign of differing approaches between the state-backed Church and the broader plans of China’s government.

Cardinal Zen is the most senior representative of the Roman Catholic Church in China, and an outspoken defender of religious freedom and civil rights. He has close links with both the government-supervised churches and the “underground” churches.

“China is always a land of mysteries, you never know who is doing what,” he said. “It seems to us that many things, such as illegitimate ordinations, are being undertaken at the lower level by the Patriotic Association. Maybe they don’t have the full support of the higher level, where there is a certain support with a watching attitude,” he said.

A thoughtful, energetic cleric, Cardinal Zen has long been a thorn in the side of the State-run Church. When he was elevated to cardinal in February, Liu Bainian, the general secretary of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, described the move as “a hostile act”.

“The Catholic Patriotic Association is really angry with me,” Cardinal Zen said. “They know my position and they know the Holy Father listens to what I

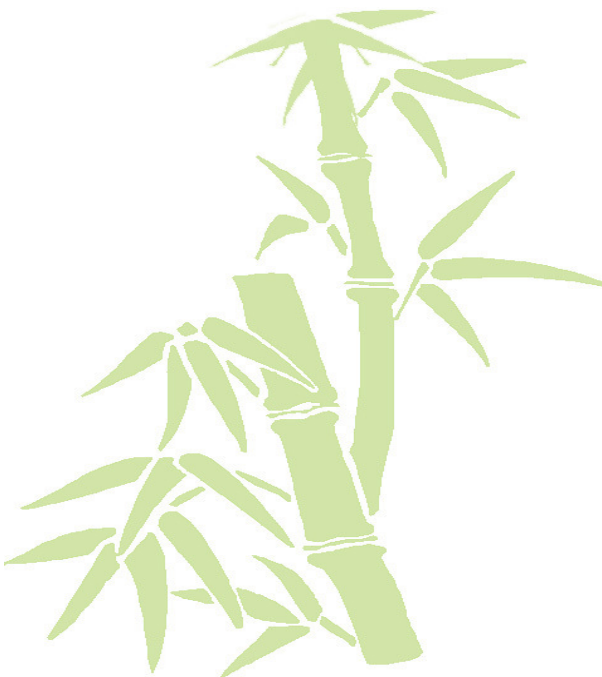
say in this part of the world. But I don't think that's the position of the higher authorities. They have question marks on me but don't think I'm an enemy."

The bishops' ordinations called into question a tacit agreement whereby only priests in the state-backed Church with a favourable attitude toward the Vatican can be elevated to bishop. The Vatican is one of the few countries in the world which gives diplomatic recognition to Taiwan, which China considers a renegade province. Beijing also wants a veto over whom the Vatican appoints as bishop.

Cardinal Zen said there could be movement on these two key issues, but he said the Chinese Patriotic Association would have to be reformed.

A delegation from the Vatican arrived in Beijing last month to discuss closer relations, although the Vatican itself kept quiet about the meeting.

Cardinal Zen said: "I hope the leaders come to see that this is simply a religious affair and they are not to be worried about the Catholic religion. I hope it can be normalized to the advantage of everybody. All these things are going in one direction. But it may still take some time. You cannot brush away 50 years of history. Those who have had power for such a long time are not going to relinquish it easily," he said. ♦



**YU JIE: AUTHOR WHO FIGHTS  
FOR THOSE WHO FEAR TO SPEAK OUT –  
Asia News/SCMP  
[china.infodoc@online.be](mailto:china.infodoc@online.be) 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2006.**

The 33-year-old critic and writer said the mausoleum of Mao in Tiananmen is an "abomination" and religious freedom "can only help people"

The Chinese author describes himself as a dangerous Christian who prefers to wage his battles through the printed word. He has set his sights on – among others – the Communist party, religious persecution and even the legacy of Mao Zedong.

So it was hardly expected that the meek, 33-year-old Sichuan native, on a visit to Hong Kong from his home in Beijing, decided to march with the tens of thousands of demonstrators on July 1, to demand the right to choose their government. "I have been skeptical of mass events like that. I usually don't go to live concerts or watch a football match at the stadium because I think people's emotions get hyped up by the crowds. Distance allows me to stay calm and observe," he says. "But the rally on July 1 was rather peaceful and calm .... It shows Hong Kong is a very mature and civilized society and people know it will take some time to realize universal suffrage, not just through one single protest."

Yu is only too aware how long it can take to bring about change. He has pushed for greater religious freedom in his country, winning international recognition for his efforts. He met US President George W. Bush at the White House and his government now harbour more sympathy and show more consideration for the thousands of suppressed Christians in China."

Yu rose to national fame in 1998 when, at the age of 25, he published his debut novel, *Fire and Ice*. It sold millions of copies and was widely considered one of China's 10 books that year. A dozen or so books followed; they were mostly critical of modern Chinese history and society and were banned on the mainland. He earned a master's in contemporary Chinese literature at Beijing University in 2000 and was then hired as a researcher for the China Association of Writers, but his contract was terminated on his first day at work.

He now sits on the board of PEN, an international, independent literary association that defends freedom of expression.

In 2004 Yu and several colleagues sparked controversy when, writing in Hong Kong's *Kai Fang*

magazine, they said the corpse of Mao Zedong should be removed from the mausoleum in Tiananmen Square. "We criticise the Yasukuni Shrine," they wrote, "but right in the centre of China's capital Beijing, there is the Mao Zedong shrine that is as abhorrent as the Yasukuni Shrine. It is like a shrine for the slaughterman who killed his own countrymen."

Yu converted to Christianity three years ago, giving the central government, he says, one more reason to watch out for him. "The authorities didn't like me when I was just a dissident writer. Now that I am a Christian as well, they think I'm more dangerous."

The central government has been tightening up on Christians. The government sanctioned Chinese Protestant Church said in April that there were 16 million Christians in China. But observers said this was an understatement as those attending unregistered or "underground" churches were not taken into account. Some said the number should be three times as much.

Yu says the community is growing rapidly, citing the Ark House Church he founded, which saw membership surge from six in 2003 to 60 now – mostly academics, journalists and artists. "More and more people are interested in religion; they want to pursue something much more in life," he said.

Observers have taken the recent World Buddhist Forum and the government's promotion of Confucius and Guoxue, or Chinese civilization and culture studies, as signs that Beijing has turned to religion to fill the moral vacuum left by an era of single-mindedly pursuing money.

Yu says the government is aware Christianity is deeply at odds with party ideology, but he is confident the spread of Christianity can help solve many problems facing the nation. "If more intellectuals convert to Christianity, they could help change society through forgiveness and peace, which are never

advocated in Chinese culture," he said. "That could reduce the possibility of violent conflicts too. Religion can play the same role in China as it had played during political transition in countries like South Korea, South Africa and Eastern Europe."

Commenting on a rise of rights activism, or *weiquan*, across the mainland in recent years, Yu said defending the rights of the public should be done in compliance with the law in a "mild and progressive" manner. ♦



Detail from grave relief, Han dynasty.

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**INDIAN BISHOP: "LHASA RAILWAY A  
COLONISATION TOOL"**

*AsiaNews – www.asianews.it 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2006.*

The bishop of Bettiah, who works closely with Tibetan refugees in India, has doubts about Beijing's professed desire to modernize Tibet. The Dalai Lama has approved the project as long as there is no hidden political agenda.

The railway, with its 4,000km route, has been described by the Chinese president Hu Jintao as "a miracle, a new wonder of the world."

The bishop said: "Apparently the rail link between China and Tibet could fetch some economic benefits. But history bears witness to the fact that the Chinese have been systematically plundering Tibetan culture and lifestyle since they invaded the region in 1949."

He continued: "So I doubt whether China has a desire to actually modernize Tibet. If it has a different agenda to its stated one, then the railway line would unleash the worst form of cultural tyranny against the helpless native people, which I could never approve of, being a disciple of the Lord Jesus."

There are around 150,000 Tibetan refugees who have lived in dozens of provisional Indian camps for 47 years. Lhakpa Gyaltshen, a young refugee born in a camp near Darjeeling, told AsiaNews:

"With the railway, the hope of defending the culture, economy and natural resources of Tibet is gone forever. We followed the Dalai Lama into exile to escape total annihilation of our tradition, but if China enters Tibet in such a devastating manner, it will destroy everything. The railway project means that we will become completely subject to Chinese hegemony, in the worst possible way. This is deeply shocking for us."

Gsergi Gyang, another Tibetan refugee from the same camp, said all Tibetan refugees – Buddhist monks and lay people – were holding rallies in Tibetan camps in India, including Dharamsala, home to the Dalai Lama and the seat of government in exile. The rallies will aim to "oppose the brutal colonization of Tibet by China's Han tribe. We know our protests won't cut much ice with the Chinese colonialists, but we want to tell the world at large how China is devastating our land under cover of modernization. However, we are optimistic that one day the Chinese Tyranny will end and we will be able to return to our land. Our real fear is that by the time we go back, we will find only the ruins of our culture."

Tenzing Choeden, an activist of Students for a Free Tibet, said the railway will precipitate a massive flow

of Chinese settlers into Tibet. This is cultural genocide because the Han tribe, helped by the government, will become ever more powerful and will marginalize the Tibetan people still further."

The perspective of the supreme Tibetan authority, the Dalai Lama, is different and "painful" for some activists. "If there is no hidden political agenda, the railway will be good for Tibet," said his spokesperson, Thupen Samphel. "This is why the Dalai Lama has declared his support for the project." However, he added: "But if it brings environmental damage to Tibet, if there is further colonization, then it will have a disastrous impact."♦

**CHINA'S MONEY BLINDS MANY TO DANGER**

*Yu Jie –who writing from the Independent Chinese  
PEN Centre, Beijing,-*

*says it is wrong to trust the regime when it says  
it will not use Australian uranium for weapons.  
(SMH – 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2006).*

For the past few years, Western countries have gradually lost their vigilance towards the Chinese Communist Party regime. Western countries investing in China have become the greatest help to the maintenance of the Chinese Communist Party's economic growth.

This is particularly the case with the lopsided development of Shanghai, whose economic bubble is for the most part driven by Western investment. Western government and business circles are like the ostrich, pretending they cannot see the reality of China's political system, pretending they don't know the appalling human rights catastrophe now happening in China, such as the ruthless persecution of the Falun Gong practitioners and the Christians worshipping in household churches – more than 100 million citizens pursuing freedom of belief.

This kind of persecution did not just happen in the Middle Ages; it's happening in China today.

The western policy of appeasement is driven by economic interest. In order to sell China Airbus and high-speed trains, the French President Jacques Chirac, when he visited China, shamelessly said the Tiananmen incident belongs to the past century and we should let bygones be bygones.

In the greatest rebuke to him, not long after Chirac returned to France, the Chinese communist authorities opened fire on villagers in Dongzhou in Guangdong province. The Tiananmen incident remains China's bloody reality.

The French and German governments have for a time energetically campaigned for the European Union to lift the embargo on selling weapons to China, but the regime is one that maintains its political rule by killing people.

I can be regarded only as a nominal citizen. I am 32 this year, but I have never participated in an election – not an election of the head of state nor an election of the mayor. Not even once.

The legitimacy of the Chinese Communist Party rule does not come from elections; it comes from military might. The founder of the party, Mao Zedong, once openly declared: “Political power comes from the barrel of a gun.” There has not been any change in this principle up to today.

One aspect of the party authorities’ foreign policy is to politely propagandise the foreign policy of China’s peaceful rise to the people of the West. Another aspect is to deliberately let Zhu Chenghu, the head of the National Defence University’s Defence Academy and a People’s Liberation Army major-general, issue an aggressive threat to the whole world, in asserting that China can launch a nuclear war on the West, particularly the United States.

Zhu Chenghu is a crown prince of pure lineage, the grandson of the founder of the Chinese Red Army, Zhu De. According to the Chinese Communist party ruling principle that “the party commands the gun”, it is not possible for a mere major-general to issue this kind of individual opinion on his own.

Even in a Western country with freedom of expression, a high-ranking military general cannot indiscreetly make his personal views about a nation’s nuclear policy known in a public forum.

Zhu’s views must therefore have received silent approval from the highest authorities – even from the nation’s president, Hu Jintao. It’s just like a master unleashing a fierce and vengeful dog to threaten the neighbours.

But Australian authorities blithely plan to export uranium ore to this highly dangerous regime, willingly believing a series of agreements, which China signed, that this uranium ore will not be used for military purposes. But when have the Communist Party authorities genuinely respected international agreements?

The European Union should not lift the weapons embargo against China, and Australia should not export uranium ore to China.

This shortsighted behaviour can in the short term bring a definite economic benefit. But in the long term it will inevitably endanger world peace. ♦

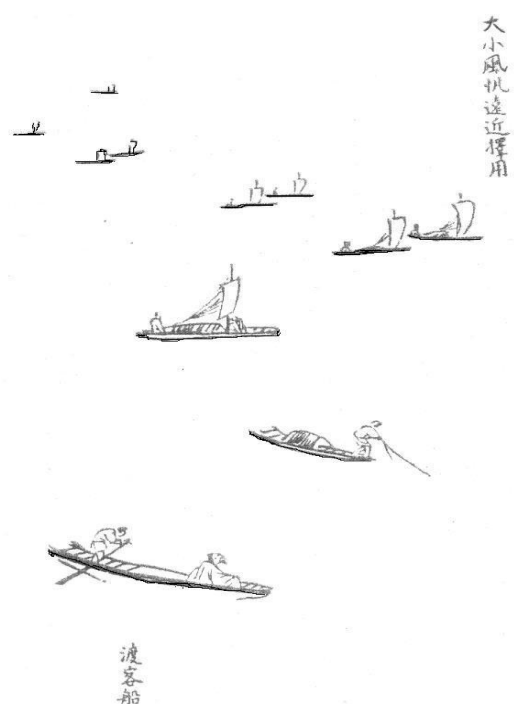
## RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH TO BE SET UP IN BEIJING SHORTLY

AsiaNews – [www.asianews.it](http://www.asianews.it) – 7<sup>th</sup> July, 2006.

The Russian Orthodox Church is about to get permission to build a chapel in Beijing. This was revealed by Ye Xiaowen, head of China’s state administration for religious affairs when he was talking to Patriarch Alexi II of Moscow.

At the global inter-religious summit just held in the Russian capital, Ye Xiaowen assured the Orthodox Patriarch that the matter of a church in Beijing “was about to be resolved”. For the time being, the only news that has leaked out is that the building will be dedicated to the Assumption (Dormition) of Mary and will be situated within the perimeter of the Russian embassy in the Chinese capital.

Alexi II and Ye also discussed a number of problems, including the situation facing Orthodox Christians, especially those who are Chinese. Currently there are around 13,000 Orthodox Christians in China, but they are not recognized among an official religious community, of which there are five. The Orthodox Church, through Putin, is doing its utmost to gain recognition before 2008, the year of the Olympics in Beijing. In anticipation of the hoped-for event, 13 Chinese Orthodox students are undergoing studies at the Stretenskaya Theological Academy in Moscow and the Academy of St. Petersburg, to pave the way for a minimal presence of clergy there. Prayer books in Russian and Chinese are already in circulation. ♦



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