

Little Sister, Big Sister – Cooperation between the China Center and the Monumenta Serica Institute

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the China Center we look back here at the varied and fruitful cooperation of two institutions that complement one another in an ideal manner: Both are concerned with China and are located right next door to each other on the campus of the Divine Word Missionaries in Sankt Augustin.

Traditional and Modern China

The “big sister,” the Monumenta Serica Institute, grew from the editorial work on the periodical *Monumenta Serica* first published at the Catholic Fu Jen University in Beijing in 1935; the Institute is concerned with Sinological publications on traditional Chinese culture. The China Center was born as the “little sister” in 1988 to take over the compilation of the periodical *China heute*, which the Monumenta Serica Institute had founded six years previously, and to intensify the contact of the German Catholic Church with China. The different focus of the two “sisters,” on “traditional China” on the one hand and the “modern” on the other, enabled close cooperation in many areas to mediate as broad an image of China as possible for the general public. Cooperation was further stimulated by the fact that the founder-director of the China Center, the Sinologist Prof. Dr. Roman Malek SVD, was at the same time a member of the Monumenta Serica Institute and from 1992 to 2012 was also its director.

The reading room.



Both Institutes worked and still work closely in the following areas: library, magazine data bank, conferences, exhibitions and publications.

Library

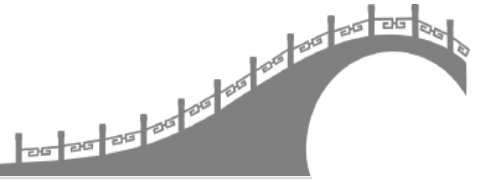
The extensive specialized library (approx. 89,000 volumes and 340 current magazines) and the Institute’s reading room are available to visitors of the China Center for research. Books and periodicals acquired by the China Center are integrated into the library and complement the classical Sinological stock by their relation to the present. The data bank based on current magazines is used equally by both Institutes for their research and publications.

Conferences

Several jointly arranged conferences in Sankt Augustin served to promote research on China, two of which merit special mention: the International Symposium on Adam Schall von Bell and the International Colloquium on Jews in China.

1992: Group photo of participants and organizers of the Schall symposium, including Count Schall-Riauour with a portrait of Schall.





A China Missionary from Cologne

In May 1992, 70 scholars from 14 countries took part in the international Symposium on the China Missionary born in the vicinity of Cologne, Johann Adam Schall von Bell, on the 400th anniversary of his birth. The composition of the participants – Sinologists, historians, missiologists, scientists and theologians – underlined the interdisciplinary approach of the event and the complexity of the research into that significant missionary, who was appointed Director of the Astronomical Office in China and played a key role in the early European-Chinese cultural exchange.

The conference input totaling 54 articles in English, German and Chinese was published in two volumes jointly by the Monumenta Serica Institute and the China Center in the Monumenta Serica Monograph Series.



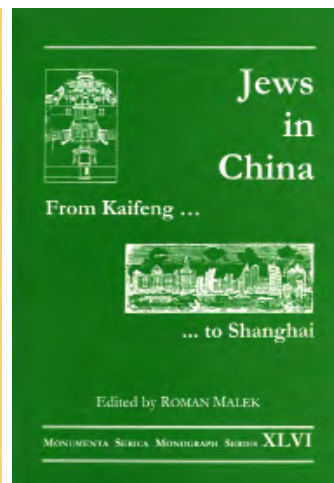
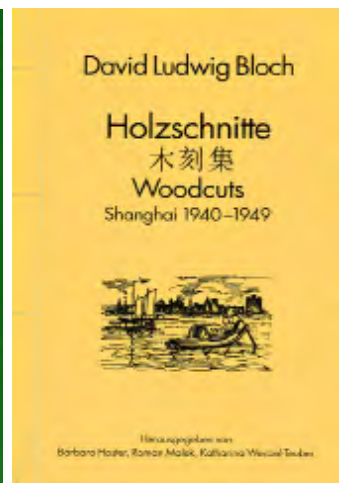
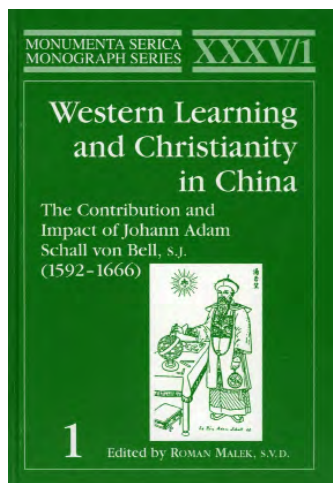
1997: The artist David Ludwig Bloch (right) signing his book for Ignatz Bubis, President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

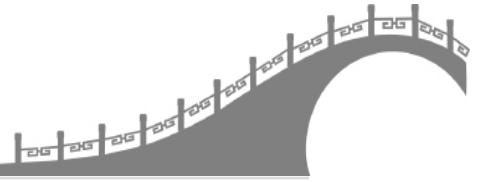
Jews in China

The International Colloquium “From Kaifeng to Shanghai – Jews in China” in September 1997 was concerned with the Jewish presence in China during the imperial times and in the 20th century. A companion exhibition documented Jewish life in the city of Kaifeng from the Song period (around 1000 AD) as well as in Harbin, Tianjin and Shanghai. In the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries Sephardic traders from Bagdad and Russian Jews had settled in these Chinese cities. During the time of National Socialism thousands of persecuted Jews from central Europe took refuge especially in Shanghai. The woodcuts of the German artist David Ludwig Bloch from time of his exile in Shanghai 1940–1949 were a high point of the exhibition and gave a fascinating insight into Chinese daily life of that time.

The collection of these woodcuts in book form, jointly published by the Monumenta Serica Institute and the China Center, came out in time for the exhibition and was presented at the opening of the exhibition in the Ethnological Museum House of Peoples and Cultures in Sankt Augustin by the then President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, Ignatz Bubis. The input of the Colloquium as well as further articles on the topic of Jews in China also appeared as a joint publication of both Institutes in the Monumenta Serica Monograph Series.

Cover pictures of joint publications by Monumenta Serica and China Center.





Exhibitions

Macao

To mark the imminent return of the Portuguese colony of Macao to the People's Republic of China at the end of 1999, the China Center and Monumenta Serica Institute arranged an exhibition in the aula of the Mission House in Sankt Augustin, "Macao '99 – Origin is Future," on the history of the city which formed the starting point of the Catholic mission to China. At the same time the two Institutes jointly published an extensive and richly illustrated volume, documenting especially the history of religion and mission in Macao.

The Faces of Jesus in China

In 2003 a further large exhibition jointly arranged by the China Center and the Monumenta Serica Institute in the Ethnological Museum House of Peoples and Cultures in Sankt Augustin entitled "The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ" showed Chinese Christian art. The exhibits included portrayals of Jesus on paper, silk and china, as well as stone rubbings, papercuts and photographs. They documented the versatile artistic reception of Jesus in China from the beginnings of Christianity there in the 7th century down to the present.

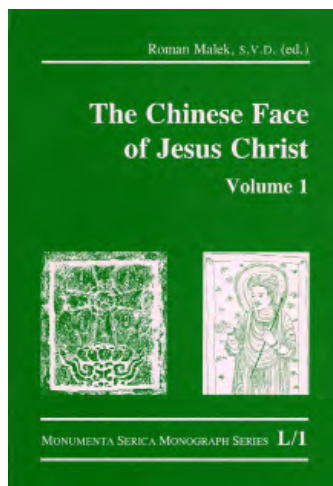
A number of lectures accompanied the exhibition and it was also taken to other locations (such as St. Ottilien, Salzburg and Warsaw). The publication project *The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ*, comprising several volumes, is connected with the theme of the exhibition; famous scholars from home and abroad contributed to it. It is being published jointly by

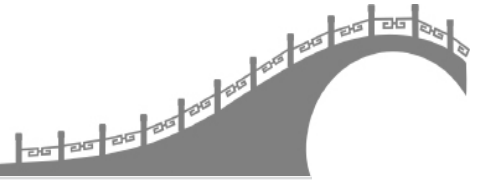
the Monumenta Serica Institute and the China Center in the Monumenta Serica Monograph Series. Four volumes have already appeared and four more are planned.



"The Last Supper" (print) by Wang Suda, representative of the *Ars Sacra Pekinensis*, at the beginning of the 1940s.

Exhibition "The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ": Fr. Malek at the opening in Sankt Augustin; Exhibition at the Missionary Benedictines in Sankt Ottilien.





Cooperation in Daily Life

Alongside major cooperation such as conferences, exhibitions and publications, there are numerous forms of collaboration in the “daily business,” such as, e.g., common meetings, accompaniment of visitors, etc. The regular contributions by members of the Monumenta Serica Institute to *China heute* must also be mentioned. The common activity for China was also expressed in the joint stand of the two Institutes at the Sankt Augustin Mission House Festivals in 2010 and 2013.

The Monumenta Serica Institute, now represented by its new Director Dr. Piotr Adamek SVD and its new editor-in-chief Prof. Dr. Zbigniew Wesolowski SVD, extends sincere congratulations to the China Center on the 25th anniversary of its foundation and hopes for further constructive cooperation in future between the “big sister” and the “little sister”!

Barbara Hoster

Photos: Archives of the China Center and Monumenta Serica



Fr. Adamek with the then President of Fu Jen University, Taipei, Prof. Bernard Li (left) on the occasion of the visit of a delegation in March 2010.



Fr. Wesolowski, Editor-in-Chief of Monumenta Serica, with the 60th volume of the periodical.

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