

Statistics on Religions and Churches in the People's Republic of China – Update for the Year 2017

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The annual compilation of figures and dates concerning the life of the religions in the People's Republic of China begins this time with surveys made by Chinese academics on the phenomenon of “cyber religion.” They attempt a review of this comparatively young form of dissemination of religion and analyze the interest of the general public in this topic on the Internet. The question of popular beliefs continues to occupy Chinese researchers; we bring an example from the Province of Guangdong. In addition we present the official educational institutes of the Protestant Church and figures for the growth of Protestant Christianity among ethnic minorities in the People's Republic. In the Catholic Church of China the numbers of baptisms were compiled for the entire year for the first time. There was an unusually high number of priestly ordinations in 2017 but not a single bishop was consecrated, although nine bishops died during the year and many dioceses are vacant.

The statistical update on China's religions is supplemented by data from older surveys, official information and estimations. Depending on the source, the details often vary widely. Unless otherwise stated, the figures refer to Mainland China.

1. Religions on the Internet

For the religions in China which otherwise have very limited access to the general Chinese public, the Internet and later the social media, due to their broad prevalence among the Chinese population, have opened up new possibilities for internal networking and reaching the secular society. The religious policy of the state has recently been searching for appropriate ways to regulate and control the development of “religion on the Internet” (*wangluo zongjiao* 网络宗教 or also “cyber religion”). The revised “Regulations on Religious Affairs,” which came into effect on February 1, 2018, include for the first time provisions for online religious information services.² On this basis the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) plans to set up, together with other authorities, detailed

1 The section on the Protestant Theological Seminaries and Bible Schools on pp. 38-39.

2 In §§ 47 and 48 of the revised “Regulations on Religious Affairs;” an unofficial English translation of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” can be found at www.chinalawtranslate.com/宗教事务条例-2017/?lang=en.

regulations for these information services,³ most probably with a restrictive character. Not least in this context of religious policy, there has for some time been intensive research in China on the subject. Shortly before publication of the draft revision of the “Regulations on Religious Affairs” in September 2016, a series of studies on religions on the Internet appeared in *Shijie zongjiao wenhua*, a journal on religious studies which is published by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). Although the figures contained therein are in part already outdated by the rapid developments in this area, they nevertheless show clear tendencies and will, together with other studies, certainly influence the development of the legal norms for religion on the Internet. They are therefore presented below.

1.1 Commissioned by the SARA: Trying to Take Stock of Religions on the Internet

The article of researchers Zhang Hua (Center for Ethnic and Religious Studies of Jiangsu Province) and Zhang Zhipeng (Anhui University of Technology) on new forms of religion in the age of Internet Plus is the intermediate result of a research project of the SARA.⁴ Using various methods they searched the prevalence of religion on websites and in online communities; the data acquisition finished on September 30, 2015. The authors discovered that part of the websites connected to religion underwent constant change, i.e. accessible today, closed tomorrow.⁵ The main focus of the study was the domestic Internet (statistical data on China without Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan), the physical location of the server being decisive for the assignment. After completing their data acquisition, the researchers organized their findings and came to the following assessment:

1.1.1 Presence of the Five Religions on the Domestic Internet and on WeChat

Websites that are significant from the point of view of the propagation and dissemination of religions (the authors speak literally of “mainstream dissemination websites” [*zhuliu xuanchuan wangzhan* 主流宣传网站]): In China there are at present around 4,000 websites of this kind – that is the result of the study according to Zhang Hua and Zhang Zhipeng. This number includes both the web presence of official religious bodies as well as unofficial pages and websites of groups considered illegal. Almost all real religious activities are reflected on the Internet, the authors conclude. In their view “religious activities on the Internet” contribute strongly to the growth of real religions.⁶ For the five state recognized religions the authors describe the situation as follows:⁷

3 Wang Zuo'an, Director of the SARA, stated this at the beginning of January 2018; cf. “China to Draft Online Religious Information Regulation,” *Global Times* Jan. 9, 2018.

4 Theme of the project carried out in 2015 was “Research on the Problem of Religion on the Internet,” Project Authorization No. GK1504B; cf. Zhang Hua – Zhang Zhipeng 2016, p. 21, note.

5 Zhang Hua – Zhang Zhipeng 2016, pp. 22-23. – This was also seen in March 2018 in the partially unsuccessful attempts to access the websites named by Zhang Hua and Zhang Zhipeng.

6 Zhang Hua – Zhang Zhipeng 2016, p. 23.

7 The following information is reproduced from Zhang Hua – Zhang Zhipeng 2016, pp. 23-24. Websites are only cited here by name if they were still accessible in March 2018. URLs have been added by the author (K. Wenzel-Teuber).

Protestantism: Of the 4,000 religious “mainstream dissemination websites” investigated, the authors ascribe 1,300 (32.5%) to Protestantism. Among others they name the websites *Jidujiao Zhongwen wang* 基督教中文網 (www.jidujiao.com) and *Fuyin shibao* 福音時報 (www.gospeltimes.cn). In addition the authors found that almost 6,000 pastors disseminate Christian ideas in their own microblogs (Weibo 微博).⁸

Islam: 900 (22.5%) of the “mainstream dissemination websites” are associated by the authors with Islam. Among these they count *inter alia* the website *Yisilan wangzhan zhi jia* 伊斯兰网站之家 (www.yisilan.net) – a kind of home page with links to numerous other Islamic websites.⁹ According to the authors’ observation, Muslim websites use audio and video posts especially often; these are easy to use and thus contribute much to a rapid dissemination of the Islamic culture.

Buddhism: 700 (17.5%) of the “mainstream dissemination websites” are Buddhist; the authors instance among others *Fojiao zaixian* 佛教在线 (www.fjnet.com) and *Zhongguo fojiao wang* 中国佛教网 (www.zgjf.cn). The large online portals such as Tencent, Sina, NetEase and the satellite TV broadcaster Phoenix also have channels on Buddhism; in addition Phoenix has an official Buddhist Weibo with 100,000 followers. There are blogs of famous Buddhist masters.

Daoism: The authors ascribe 600 (15%) of the identified websites to this religion. Among others they name *Daojiao zhi yin* 道教之音 (www.daoisms.org) and *Longhushan daojiao* 龙虎山道教 (<http://lhdsj.org>). Large web portals such as Phoenix have a Daoist channel. Almost 4,500 adherents of Daoism run a Sina Weibo microblog.

Catholicism: 500 (12.5%) of the “mainstream dissemination websites” are ascribed by the authors to Catholicism. In first place they name the website *Zhongguo tianzhujiao* 中国天主教 (www.chinacatholic.cn),¹⁰ in second place *Tianzhujiao zaixian* 天主教在线 (www.cccn.org).¹¹ As “main page for the dissemination of Catholicism with 50,000 members” they name the website *Tianzhujiao changqing jiayuan* 天主教长青家园 [which in the meantime, following various problems, has apparently changed its name]. The dioceses often have their own sites with local news.

Religions in the Instant Messaging Groups: Here the authors concentrate on WeChat, the popular, multi-functional chat service of Tencent. In the search for public WeChat accounts (微信公众号) with a connection to religion, they found 197 relating to Buddhism,

8 In January 2014, the researcher Zhao Bing calculated the following figures after accessing the Weibo Platforms of the Chinese firms Sina and Tencent: On Sina Weibo he found 45,773 Buddhist, 11,536 Protestant, 3,648 Daoist, 505 Muslim and 5,405 Catholic users, on Tencent Weibo 12,823 Buddhist, 5,484 Protestant, 2,509 Daoist, 9,693 Muslim and 1,038 Catholic users; Weibo users were counted in whose profile the term “religion” or the name of a specific religion turned up. Zhao Bing 2015, p. 102, reported according to Wenzel-Teuber 2017, pp. 32-33.

9 The authors also name *Lüse Zhonghua* 绿色中华 (Green China, www.xaislam.com), a website founded in 2002 by a native missionary movement whose aim is the spread of Islam across ethnic boundaries among the whole population of China (cfl. *China heute* 2013, No. 3, pp. 143-144). That site, however, could not be accessed in March 2018.

10 *Zhongguo tianzhujiao* is the official website of the state supported Catholic governing bodies, i.e. the Patriotic Association and official Bishops’ Conference; due to this political role it is probably not the first choice of information website for many Chinese Catholics.

11 *Tianzhujiao zaixian*, originally founded by persons from the Catholic Underground and reckoned to be accepted by the faithful, frequently changes the URL; about this website cf. *China heute* 2015, No. 4, p. 208.

193 relating to Protestantism, 180 relating to Daoism, 129 relating to Islam and 28 relating to Catholicism.¹²

The authors realize that instant messaging groups increase the influence of the religions by spreading their doctrine via multimedia and interactively, answering questions of the faithful and dispersing doubts. Online instruction and sermons strengthen the feeling of belonging, according to the authors. Online prayers of blessing are carried out – according to Zhang Hua and Zhang Zhipeng all religions do that during major natural catastrophes, also with the result of spreading the religions. In the Buddhist arena traditional offline rituals such as Sutra recitation, releasing living beings or the offering of lamps are offered online, religious donations are requested and transferred online.¹³ Instant messaging groups also offer various services, e.g. in connection with religious articles, Buddhist vegetarian or Islamic food, *fengshui*, weddings or health care – the latter, according to the authors is a topic with which especially Daoism and Buddhism court attention.¹⁴

1.1.2 Categorizing the Websites relating to Religions according to Aspects of the Government Administration of Religions

Here the authors distinguish four categories of websites which they describe as follows:

a) Websites of the government departments for religious affairs: The authors found almost 200 websites of government departments for religious affairs, of which 25 were of departments at the provincial level, 148 at the city level, 17 at the county level and 7 at the district level. Only 67.5% of these governmental websites had an ICP (Internet Content Provider License, that is, a permit for China-based websites to operate in China). According to the authors' opinion, many of these websites are updated only infrequently and lack in-depth content with regard to theory and research.¹⁵

b) Websites of religious organizations, sites for religious activities and institutes for religious education within the country: These websites (and the bodies running them) are legally registered and represent a large basis of believers, but do not necessarily possess a correspondingly great power of attraction, according to the authors. They found a total of 347 websites of the "religious circles," of these, 113 websites were of religious

12 Zhang Hua – Zhang Zhipeng 2016, p. 24.

13 For Buddhism and Daoism, this meanwhile has been very much limited to the official area, through the document signed by the SARA and other authorities on November 3, 2017: "Some Views on the Further Regulation of the Problem of Commercialization of Buddhism and Daoism" (*Guanyu chuli sheji fojiao simiao, daojiao gongguan guanli youguan wenti de yijian* 关于处理涉及佛教寺庙、道教宫观管理有关问题的意见); Point 5 states: "Platforms for religious information on the Internet that are not set up by religious organizations, institutes for religious education or religious individuals may not organize any religious activities, may not carry out activities such as 'offering incense on the Internet,' 'worshipping Buddha on the Internet,' raising money through Internet offering boxes or selling products relating to Buddhism or Daoism [on the Internet], nor accept any religious donations. When accepting religious donations, platforms for religious information on the Internet set up by religious organizations, institutes for religious education or religious individuals must keep to the relevant regulations [...]." A German translation of this document will appear in *China heute*.

14 Zhang Hua – Zhang Zhipeng 2016, pp. 24-25.

15 *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

organizations (*zongjiao tuanti* 宗教团体), 211 websites of sites for religious activities and 23 websites of institutes for religious education. 60.23% of these websites of religious organizations, sites for religious activities and institutes for religious education were Buddhist, 17% Protestant, 12.68% Daoist, 6.3% Catholic and 3.4% Islamic. The authors remark that the Catholic websites, although few, are regionally systematically distributed. 73.77% of the websites have an ICP. Mainly – according to the authors – only information and no further services are offered; only 34.58% of the websites are interactive, only 29.1% are regularly updated. Some of the websites of sites for religious activities and institutes for religious education carry out online religious acts and activities. The authors esteem a clear explanation by these websites of religious doctrine and the instructions for legal and sensible religious activity as a positive contribution to society.¹⁶

c) Unofficial (*minjian* 民间) religious Internet media: By these the authors understand Internet services whose founders and operators are not [registered] religious organizations, sites for religious activities or institutes for religious education but also not “illegal religious organizations”; rather they are unofficial, non-governmental (*minjian*) entities of information and research, experts or academics. Pages of this type, according to the authors, are not there to spread religion but to give news, comments and analyses.¹⁷ They distinguish 3 types:¹⁸

- Religion Boards of large web portals such as Phoenix – these have especially large numbers of visitors, they are the main originators of reports on religious events that cause headlines in the Internet.
- Some specific websites of unofficial religious Internet media, mainly founded and operated by a group of adherents of a religion. Websites of this kind enjoy great influence in the respective religion, according to the authors. Among others they mention here the Buddhist *Fojiao zaixian*, the Protestant websites *Fuyin shibao* and *Jidu shibao* 基督时报 (www.christiantimes.cn) as well as the Catholic website *Xinde wang* 信德网 (Faith, www.chinacatholic.org).
- Websites concentrating on religious studies such as *Zhongguo zongjiao xueshu wang* 中国宗教学术网 (<http://iwr.cass.cn>)¹⁹ and the website of the Pu Shi Institute for Social Science (www.pacilution.com).

According to the authors the unofficial religious Internet media tend to attract a more educated readership, they also receive international attention. They advance the nonprofit function of a bridge between society, government and religions.

16 Zhang Hua – Zhang Zhipeng 2016, pp. 26-28.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 28. – For the categories c) and d) the authors give no figures. But websites of these two categories apparently form the overwhelming majority of the 4,000 religious “mainstream dissemination websites.”

18 The following description of the unofficial religious websites is reproduced from *ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

19 A website that is rather more official since it belongs to the Institute of World Religions of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

d) **“Illegal” religious Websites:** According to the authors, “illegal websites in the name of religion” are often operated from abroad. They distinguish three kinds:²⁰

- Dissemination of religion on the Internet by foreign religious organizations, house churches, privately established (not registered) Protestant gathering places and privately established temples. These last two, according to the authors, are fairly active on the Internet, but less often with websites, rather with QQ-groups, via WeChat or microblogs.
- Dissemination of religion on the Internet by religious individual religious believers.
- Websites of groups that the government has defined as “heretical cults” and forbidden, as e.g. the “Church of Almighty God.” In the opinion of the authors, the Internet makes it possible for such groups to continue to exist, even if the authorities repeatedly take action against them.

In their summary Zhang Hua and Zhang Zhipeng come to the conclusion that an effective governmental regulation of religion on the Internet will only be possible after a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of these four very different categories of online religious presence.²¹

1.2 Interest of the Internet Public in Protestantism and Catholicism

To find out which aspects of Protestantism and Catholicism interest the Internet public in China, the researcher Wang Shu (King’s College, London) used “big data” from search questions of the Internet users. Via the Chinese search engine Baidu he analyzed the Internet users use of long-tail keywords, i.e. search questions composed of several terms, that contained either the term *jidujiao* 基督教 (Protestantism) or the term *tianzhujiao* 天主教 (Catholicism). The date of the data retrieval was June 15, 2016.²²

Wang found that in Baidu the number of searches for the term *jidujiao* was three times higher than searches for the term *tianzhujiao*.

He drew up a list of the 100 most frequently searched long-tail keywords, that contained the term *jidujiao*. Top of the list is *jidujiao gequ* 基督教歌曲 (Protestant songs) with on average 4,854 searches per day, even ahead of the plain *jidujiao* (4,069 searches per day) and *jidujiao jiangdao shipin* 基督教讲道视频 (Protestant sermon videos, 2,515 searches per day). Wang comes to the conclusion that in 40% of these 100 most frequently searched long-tail keywords it has to do with dissemination of religion (*chuanjiao* 传教), and in this category he placed among others sermons and Christian literature. 34% of the searches concerned songs, 10% dance (*wudao* 舞蹈), 16% “other.” From that he concludes that with regard to Protestantism the interest of the Internet user is more for the religious

20 The following description of religious websites categorized by the authors as “illegal” is reproduced from Zhang Hua – Zhang Zhipeng 2016, p. 29. From the point of view of non-registered sites and groups, the assignment by the authors of these to the same category as the “heretical cults” forbidden and persecuted by the state would be disturbing.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 29.

22 That is the day on which Wang gathered the data from the search engine optimization tool, not the period in which the Internet users entered the search questions. In one place in the text it states that the number of searches given refers to the daily average of the last 30 days (Wang Shu 2016, p. 48).

culture (i.e. music and dance, with a total of 44% of the searches) than for the doctrine or writings. For a non-believer the religious culture is especially attractive and is therefore an effective means of arousing interest in Christianity, Wang argues.²³

The result for Catholicism is clearly different. Wang's list of the 36 most frequently searched long-tail keywords that contained the term *tianzhujiao* is headed by the plain *tianzhujiao* (1,520 searches per day). 9 of the 36 long-tail keywords listed with the main term *tianzhujiao* are variations of the question regarding the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism. Wang concludes that this is because the term *jidujiao* is unclear [it can mean both Protestantism or Christianity as religion in a general sense]. In connection with *tianzhujiao* there are frequent searches for historical church buildings in China that are of interest for tourism.²⁴

Secondly Wang wanted to find out what role the religious websites play in the spread of Protestantism and Catholicism. Wang writes that according to general Internet behavior, the website which appears at the top on the first page that opens after a search is the one on which is most often clicked. Wang now found out that the search engine Baidu gave a religious website in only 29% of the searches for *jidujiao*; 52% of the top matches landed on websites of Baidu itself (like the online encyclopedia Baidu Baike) and 19% on various other websites. For searches on *tianzhujiao* only 11% of the top matches came to religious websites. Wang concluded from this that the public is more likely to become informed about religions through non-religious websites.²⁵ An effective dissemination of religion on the Internet occurs in Wang's opinion more readily via the freer social media to which, therefore, the authorities should pay more attention.²⁶

1.3 Shamanism on the Internet

Shamanism in China comes under the category of popular belief and is not recognized as a religion. Wang Wei (CASS) addressed this rather special topic. His article deals with Shamanism (*samanjiao* 萨满教) in a broad sense, especially with the *saman*-belief (*saman xinyang* 萨满信仰) and the *chumaxian*-belief (*chumaxian xinyang* 出马仙信仰). According to Wang *saman* is the term originally used in the Manchu-Tungus languages, while Han Chinese in Northeast China describe persons who communicate with the gods as *chuma* 出马, *chuma dizi* 出马弟子 or *chumaxian* 出马仙.²⁷

To find the level of attention for Shamanism on the Internet, Wang Wei analyzed the results of searches with the Microsoft search engine Bing for the search terms *saman* and

23 Wang Shu 2016, pp. 46-49.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 49. – Here one can suspect that users who wished information about Christianity in general rather than about one Christian confession would more probably use the term *jidujiao*. – The third most often searched Catholic long-tail keyword in Wang's list is *Tianzhujiao zaixian*, which is also the name of the popular Catholic website already mentioned above in the study of Zhang Hua and Zhang Zhipeng. Wang, however, does not point to this.

25 Wang did admit to the limiting factor that the SEO technology he used only included the first two matches on the first page of the search results; he said that in fact, however, the entire first page with its ten matches would influence the users.

26 Wang Shu 2016, pp. 49-50.

27 *Ibid.*, pp. 38 and 40.

chumaxian. A large number of the matches for *saman* had to do with popular online games, films or music – which, according to Wang, shows that the shaman as a figure has in the meantime found entry into secular society [for instance in pop culture]. The matches for *chumaxian*, on the other hand, were clearly more often actually concerned with the *chumaxian* belief.²⁸

Wang found Internet forums on Shamanism with up to 30,000 participants on Baidu Tieba, the Baidu communication platform. Also in the social media, writes Wang, the Shaman culture is widespread.²⁹

On the Internet auction portal Taobao (similar to Ebay) belonging to Alibaba, Wang's search for *saman* and *chumaxian* brought up 80 Taobao shops. 49 of them offered shamanist services (*kan shi* 看事) with regard to marriage, assets, health and children, as well as fortune telling, for prices from several tens to several hundred Yuan. According to Wang, clients wishing to make use of these services usually had to give their birthdate according to the moon calendar, a photo and name and address.³⁰

Wang Wei came to the conclusion that on the Internet the traditional *saman* belief, which is at home among ethnic minorities, is less represented than the *chumaxian* belief, and that the latter is popular not only in Northeast China but also in other parts of China. Among the *chumaxian* in the virtual space the traditional shamanist practices such as possession no longer play a role; they take care of their services via WeChat or telephone and, unlike the traditional clan-based shamans, ask fixed prices. Their credibility is difficult to estimate. According to Wang the Internet has extended the outward forms of shamanism and he sees this as a challenge for the policies on religion.³¹

2. Buddhism, Daoism and Popular Belief

For this largest sector of religious life in China, older surveys, such as the Chinese Spiritual Life Survey (CSLS) of 2007, still give a certain orientation.³² It came among other things to the following results:

- 185 million consider themselves Buddhists, i.e. 18% of the population above the age of 16.
- 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 taken part in such, but these are difficult to distinguish from popular belief.

28 Wang Wei 2016, pp. 38-40.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 40-42.

30 *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

32 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.



Incense offerings at the Buddhist Lama Temple in Beijing. Photo: Sim Chi Yin.

2.1 Buddhism

34,100 registered Buddhist sites for religious activities (SARA database 2018),³³ of which:

- 28,538 Han-Chinese Buddhism (+ 268)
- 3,857 Tibetan Buddhism (- 5)
- 1,705 Theravada Buddhism (+ 0)

222,000 Buddhist religious personnel who are officially recognized and reported for the records (monks and nuns) (SARA 2017), of whom:

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

36 Buddhist academies (SARA database 2018)³⁴

2.2 Daoism

8,349 registered Daoist sites for religious activities (SARA database 2018), of which:

- 4,011 Quanzhen Tradition (+ 56)
- 4,338 Zhengyi Tradition (+ 15)

ca. 40,000 Daoist religious personnel (monks / nuns and priests *daoshi* 道士) (SARA 2017)

10 Daoist Academies, of which 4 are in preparation (SARA database 2018)

33 SARA database “Basic Data on the Sites for Religious Activities” at www.sara.gov.cn/old/csjsx/index.htm, accessed on Feb. 27, 2018. The figures in parenthesis show the difference from the last search on March 28, 2017 (Wenzel-Teuber 2017, pp. 34-35). The results of a detailed search conducted on March 17, 2016 which also takes into consideration the distribution according to province is found in Wenzel-Teuber 2016, p. 27, Table 1.

34 That is the same number as in the previous year. Diverging from that SARA 2017 states 41 Buddhist institutes for religious education.



Map: d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=27749&lang=de

Provinces, Direct-Controlled Municipalities and Autonomous Regions of China – Map and List of Abbreviations

AH Anhui, BJ Beijing, CQ Chongqing, FJ Fujian, GD Guangdong, GS Gansu, GX Guangxi, GZ Guizhou, Hain Hainan, 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, SH Shanghai, SN Shaanxi, SX Shanxi, TJ Tianjin, XJ Xinjiang, XZ Tibet, YN Yunnan, ZJ Zhejiang.

2.3 Popular Beliefs in the Province of Guangdong

A report on popular belief in the Province of Guangdong and its administration is found in the “Blue Book of Religions” published in 2017 (Qiu Yonghui 2017). Like earlier reports³⁵ it stresses that traditional folk religiosity – not counted as officially recognized religion – has far more adherents than the 5 recognized religions all together.

From 2009 on, the Commission for Ethnic and Religious Affairs (CERA) of the Guangdong provincial government carried out field researches on popular beliefs in Guangdong, in which the authors of the report, Chen Xiaoyi (CERA Guangdong) and Chen Jinguo (CASS), state they participated. Their report has the following figures:

In Guangdong the 5 major religions together have 2,757 sites for religious activities, while there are in the Province far more – namely over 11,000 – sites for activities of popular beliefs. Of these 11,000 sites for popular belief activities, the majority are in West Guangdong (5,000), followed by East Guangdong (2,300) and the Pearl River Delta (2,300); in North Guangdong there are only a few. The sites for popular belief activities vary greatly

35 Cf. e.g. the study of Chen Jinguo and Lin Minxia 林敏霞 on popular beliefs in Zhejiang Province in the “Blue Book of Religions” of the previous year that is presented in Wenzel-Teuber 2017, pp. 35-37.

in size, the largest having an area of up to 15,000 sq.m., while the smallest are only a few sq.m. in size.³⁶

The number of persons in Guangdong describing themselves as belonging to one of the 5 major religions at the end of 2008, according to statistics of the CERA cited by the authors, was 1,959,388. According to the authors the number of believers of the popular religions is much higher and is, for example, in the City of Jieyang 90% of the population, in the City of Yangjiang 20% of the population, in the City of Zhangjiang 66% of the population and in the City of Maoming 33% of the population; in the City of Zhaoqing there are 1.2 million adherents of popular religions and in the City of Huizhou 500,000.³⁷ The authors do not explain how these figures were obtained.

Folk religiosity in the Province of Guangdong is very varied, according to the authors. It comprises traditions that arose locally, as well as forms brought by migrants from other parts of China historically or recently. Among the deities venerated are deities of nature, saints, ancestor divinities, as well as deities of Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist origins.³⁸

3. Islam

In the multi-ethnic State of the People’s Republic of China, ten ethnic groups are considered Muslim. In the statistics presented by Chinese authorities and academics their population numbers are generally equated with that of the Muslims in China. According to the census of 2010, approximately 23 million people belong to the 10 ethnic groups rated as Muslim, that is 1.74% of the total population,³⁹ distributed as follows:

Table 1: Muslim Population according to Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Population in 2010 (persons)	Percentage of the total Muslim population (%)
Hui	10,586,000	45.74
Uighur	10,069,000	43.51
Kasakh	1,462,600	6.32
Dongxiang	621,500	2.69
Kirghiz	186,700	less than 1
Salar	130,600	less than 1
Tajik	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.

36 Chen Xiaoyi – Chen Jinguo 2017, p. 163.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 163-164.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 163.

39 Liu Xiaochun 2014, pp. 70-71. – In 2014, Liu Xiaochun published an analysis of the population structure of the members of ethnic groups rated as Muslim, based on the data of the last, 6th, national population census in China of 2010. It was presented in Wenzel-Teuber 2016, pp. 30-34.

Furthermore in the People's Republic of China there are
 35,000 larger and smaller mosques (SARA 2014)
 40,000 mosques, of which 24,000 are in Xinjiang, as well as around a hundred
 mosques for women⁴⁰
 50,000 ahongs (imams) and mullahs (SARA 2014)
 10 Qur'an institutes (SARA database 2018)

4. Christianity

4.1 Survey: Attitude of Christians toward Ancestor Veneration⁴¹

This survey used the rather formless and for China unusual method of an ecumenical reader survey. A questionnaire with 10 questions on the veneration of ancestors was drawn up for the survey by the institute for religious studies of Fudan University and the Catholic Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (FICS).⁴² The Catholic newspaper *Xinde* 信德 (*Faith Weekly*) and the Protestant paper *Jidu shibao* 基督时报 (*Christian Times*) published this questionnaire on their WeChat sites. The survey ran from March 21 to April 3, 2017.

The return for *Xinde* amounted to 2,013 questionnaires, 86% of the responders were Catholics; for *Jidu shibao* there were 966 questionnaires, the proportion of Protestants among the responders lay around 82%. From that it could be concluded – as *Jidu shibao* wrote – that the *Xinde* response “predominantly reflected the attitude of Catholic Christians” and the *Jidu shibao* response “predominantly the attitude of Protestant Christians.”⁴³ Both papers published the results of the survey with analyses and reader comments on their websites. Some of the results are found in Table 2. In addition there were questions regarding practiced forms of commemoration of the dead (such as prayers, offerings of flowers, fruit or incense, bowing, etc.). The Christians questioned were also asked if they took part in specific folk customs at the burial of non-Christians and, if so, how they felt about that.

The survey took place in the context of the discussion around sinicization and inculturation of Christianity. Veneration of the ancestors is a basis of Chinese religiosity from time immemorial. As a result of the Chinese Rites Controversy it was forbidden for Chinese Catholics by the Pope in 1704. The ban was lifted in 1939 – although if we look at the questionnaire itself, 73% of the Catholics in China are not aware of that.

40 Figures according to: “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 of the Chinese People Guo Chengzhen: Freedom of Religion of the Chinese Muslims receives full protection). *Xinhua* March 2, 2016, www.xinhuanet.com/politics/2016-03/02/c_1118215655.htm.

41 The following text with Table 2 was slightly revised and adopted with a correction from *China heute* 2017, No. 2, pp. 72-73.

42 Cf. “Li Madou yu Nanchang: Jiaohui Zhongguohua ji bendihua’ yantaohui zai Gan juban” “利玛窦与南昌: 教会中国化暨本地化” 研讨会在赣举办 (Conference “Matteo Ricci and Nanchang: Sinicization and Inculturation of the Church”), in: *xdb* April 9, 2017.

43 Wang Xinyi 2017. *Xinde* with a slight deviation names a *Xinde* return of 2,025 questionnaires, of which 86% Catholics; cf. “Guanyu jidutu jizu wenti de wenjuan diaocha’ de jieguo, liuyan zhaixuan ji fenxi” 2017.

Table 2: Excerpt from the Results of the Questionnaire-Survey on the “Problem of Ancestor Veneration by Christians” (基督徒祭祖問題)

Question	Xinde		Jidu shibao	
	yes	no	yes	no
Have you ever venerated the ancestors during Qingming or at the Spring Festival?	62%	38%	44%	56%
Do you plan to visit the graves of deceased relatives and friends this year, to venerate the ancestors and to sweep?	54%	46%	37%	63%
Have you set up ancestor tablets at home?	7%	93%	8%	92%
Do you think that there is a necessity for Christians to honor the ancestors beyond prayer (for Catholics: beyond a Mass donation)?	71%	29%	42%	58%
Did you know that the Holy See announced in 1939 that veneration of ancestors has no religious character and is therefore permitted for the faithful?	27%	73%	10%	90%

Table according to “Guanyu jidutu jizu wenti de wenjuan diaocha’ de jiegou, liuyan zhaixuan ji fenxi” 2017.

4.2 Protestant Church(es)

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.⁴⁴

23.05 million consider themselves Protestant Christians (independently of whether they belong to an official or an unofficial group), of these 67.5% are baptized – according to a household survey conducted in 2008/2009 by the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS 2010).⁴⁵ SARA 2014 also gives the figure of 23 million.

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.⁴⁶

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 differing origin are even higher. One example is the evangelical mission organization Asia Harvest which arrives at 83.5 million Protestant Christians in Mainland China.⁴⁷

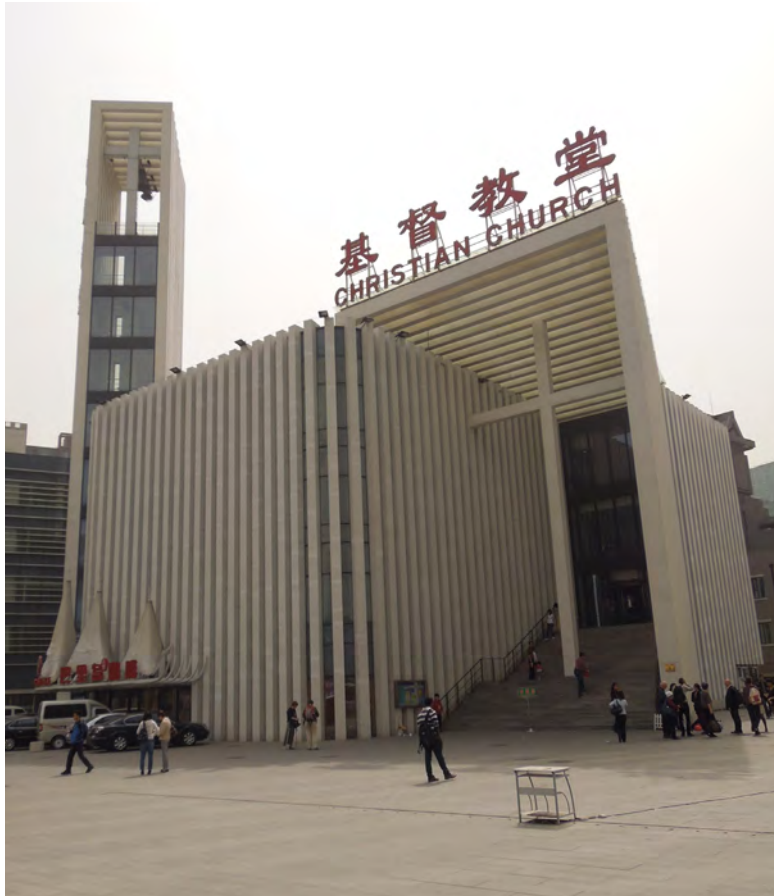
44 These figures have for some years been on the website of the official Protestant bodies; the relevant texts were re-installed on their newly designed website at the end of 2017: www.ccctspm.org/departement (last accessed March 3, 2018).

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

46 Chang Meng, “Protestants in China Estimated at 23–40 Million,” *Global Times* Aug. 7, 2014, www.globaltimes.cn/content/874757.shtml.

47 <https://asiaharvest.org/wp-content/uploads/christians-in-china/China.htm> (last accessed March 9, 2018). Asia Harvest gives 84 Mio. Protestants for China incl. Hong Kong and Macau; after subtracting the numbers given by Asia Harvest for Hong Kong and Macau, 83.5 Mio. remain for Mainland China. In the same table the number of Catholics in China is given as 21.3 Mio. (Mainland China 20.8 Mio.) It was apparently created around 2011.

Furthermore in the Protestant Churches of China there are
 56,000 churches and meeting places (SARA 2014)
 48,000 male and female pastors and preachers (SARA 2014)
 50 hospitals and other health facilities as well as
 180 homes for the aged (SARA 2017)⁴⁸



Haidian Christian Church in Beijing.
 Foto: Archiv China-Zentrum.

Theological Seminaries and Bible Schools⁴⁹

The following Table 3 gives the official educational institutes of the Protestant Church in China. Their respective status is recognized by the State authorities for religious affairs and over the years, under the guidance of good leadership, often progresses from Bible School to Theological Seminary with the entitlement to offer a four-year undergraduate degree in Theology with a Bachelor's degree valid within the Church. Currently great efforts are being made to raise the level of education. To this end at many institutes the men and women lecturers are at the same time engaged in studying for a doctoral degree, which they either acquire at the Jinling Seminary or, more often, in Hong Kong, Singapore or overseas in the west.

48 Among the hospitals and homes for the aged, those of the Amity Foundation were apparently not included. The Foundation is Christian inspired but is not subject to the church governing bodies.

49 The following section on the theological seminaries and Bible schools, together with the summary in Table 3, was compiled by Isabel Hess-Friemann (China InfoStelle, Hamburg).

The majority of the data comes from the official Internet site of the China Christian Council (CCC) and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM). SARA database 2018 lists the same 21 Protestant educational institutes. The Bible School in Hunan was added as it does not appear on either of the two sites, although the commencement of building of the large, new campus in 2010 was reported on the website of the CCC and the TSPM.

Table 3: Students, Graduates and Teaching Body of the Protestant Theological Seminaries and Bible Schools in Mainland China

	Current number of students	Number of graduates since (reference year) ¹	Current teaching staff ² (PhD)
National Theological Seminary			
Jinling (Nanjing)	374	2,700 (1981)	18 (4)
Regional Theological Seminaries			
Yanjing (Beijing)	116	900 (1986)	16 (4)
Huadong (Shanghai)	150	1,185 (1985)	17 (0) ³
Zhongnan (Wuhan)	300	1,929 (1985)	24 (not specified)
Dongbei (Shenyang)	240 ⁴	1,700 (1982)	23 (not specified)
Theological Seminaries at the Provincial Level			
Guangdong (Guangzhou)	180	1,154 (1986)	13 (4)
Anhui (Hefei)	170	2,000 (1986)	12 (2)
Zhejiang (Hangzhou)		(1984)	33 (2)
Shandong (Jinan)	225	1,692 (1987)	31 (2)
Heilongjiang (Harbin)	160	(1996)	33 (2)
Yunnan (Kunming)	169	782 (1989)	24 (not specified)
Sichuan (Chengdu)		700 (1984)	15 (not specified)
Fujian (Fuzhou)	200	1,201 (1983)	14 (1)
Jiangsu (Nanjing)	210	1,300 (1998)	33 (5)
Bible Schools			
Jilin (Changchun)	90	(2005)	
Hebei (Shijiazhuang)		800 (1995)	15 (1)
Guizhou (Guiyang)	132	(1989)	10 (not specified)
Inner Mongolia (Hohhot)		1,103 (1987)	18 (not specified)
Shaanxi (Xi'an)	145	(1988)	11 (1)
Jiangxi (Nanchang)		1,364 ⁵ (1993)	12 (not specified)
Henan (Zhengzhou)	280 ⁶	3,000 (1989)	
Hunan (Changsha)		1,200 (1990)	14 (0)

- 1 The reference year from which the total number of graduates was counted is in brackets. Only those numbers are taken that appear since 1981. For Jinling and Yanjing the numbers of graduates refer to the faculty of Theology. At other teaching institutes one-year advanced courses for male and female pastors in service as well as studies in Church music are included.
- 2 Teaching staff means the number of permanent, own lecturers; in addition often external specialists come, who give individual courses but who otherwise work at other educational institutes.
- 3 More than 40 further lecturers give additional classes, partly professors from the Fudan University.
- 4 Further students are attending a technical high school, training in sacred music or absolving correspondence courses.
- 5 Of these 533 are pastors and 831 other church collaborators.
- 6 People who live in the school.

Sources: www.ccctspm.org/church/2; <https://baike.baidu.com/item/湖南圣经学校> (Bible School Hunan); SARA database 2018.

Prevalence of the Protestant Faith among the Ethnic Minorities in China

Alongside the Han, who make up almost 92% of the population, there are 55 further state recognized ethnic groups in the PR China. Since the reform and opening in the 1980s, the number of Protestant Christians⁵⁰ among the ethnic minorities of the PR China is increasing, even among members of those minorities that were formerly never reached by missionary work – write the researchers Zhang Qiaogui (Dali University *inter alia*) and Sun Haoran (Zunnan Minzu University) in an article on new developments with regard to Protestant Christianity among the ethnic minorities, that appeared in the last edition of the “Blue Book of Religions” (Qiu Yonghui 2017). In the meantime there would be practically no ethnic groups that have not come into contact with Protestant Christianity, the authors say. Their essay gives the following examples:

Among the ten ethnic groups of China that are considered Muslim, Christianity began mainly at zero at the beginning of the reform and opening, state the authors. According to their data, there are in China today 200 ethnic Kazakhs, 300 Tajiks, 50 Kirghiz and 40 Yugur who are Protestant Christians. In churches of the Han Chinese in Xining, Qinghai, there are a few Salar Christians, and some Protestant parishes in Yunnan have pastors of Hui nationality.⁵¹

Also among some ethnic groups, which the foreign missionaries formerly considered impossible to evangelize, today, according to the authors, there are Protestant Christians, as among the Oroqen, Dagur and Hezhen in Heilongjiang, as well as among the Pumi, Jino and Mosuo in Yunnan. Before 1949 the Zhuang in Guangxi were also considered by the foreign missionaries difficult for mission work and at the time there were only a few hundred Christian Zhuang. Today, by contrast, among the Zhuang in Guangxi there are already more than 40,000 Protestant Christians.⁵²

Wherever the number of Protestants in an ethnic group reaches a specific size, they found their own ethnic churches (*minzu jiaohui* 民族教会), as Zhang and Sun report. Thus the Buyi and Tujia, among whom the number of Catholics was formerly greater than that of Protestants, today both number almost 1,000 Protestant Christians who have founded their own ethnic churches. Also Tibetans in Diqing (Tibetan Deqen, YN), Lhasa and Lithang (SC) as well as Dai in Xishuangbanna (YN) have their own respective churches.⁵³

In some minority areas Zhang and Sun even find “mature Christian cultural circles.” Thus according to them the number of Christians among the members of some subgroups of the Miao, Lisu, Nu, Lahu, Wa and Hani peoples in Yunnan is around 50%. In many towns in the Nujiang valley, according to Zhang and Sun, the Protestant members of ethnic minorities are even 80% of the total population; here, the authors state, one could speak of “Christianization.” If bringing the Protestant Christianity to indigenization and

50 The text uses the terms *jidutu* 基督徒 and *jidujiaotu* 基督教徒 (literally “Christians” or “followers of Christianity”) which are predominantly but not exclusively used for Protestant Christians. This text is evidently concerned with Protestant Christians.

51 Zhang Qiaogui – Sun Haoran 2017, p. 172.

52 *Ibid.* – According to Wikipedia in Guangxi there are around 14 million Zhuang. 40,000 Zhuang Christians would therefore barely be 0.3% of the entire Zhuang population of Guangxi (own calculation).

53 Zhang Qiaogui – Sun Haoran 2017, p. 172.

ethnicization fails, it will influence and dominate the ethnic society at the basis and form a latent social risk, thus the authors' warning. In fact, they say, the structure of the Party and neighborhoods at the base in some minority areas is already being affected by the rapid growth of Christianity.⁵⁴

4.3 Catholic Church

The following figures regarding the Catholic Church in Mainland China in 2017 are based on the data of the Holy Spirit Study Centre (HSSC)⁵⁵ of the Diocese of Hong Kong, which specializes in studies of the Catholic Church in Mainland China. Also taken into account are the data of the official Catholic governing bodies, specifically their work report presented in 2016 at the 9th National Assembly of Representatives of the Chinese Catholic Church (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016). Other important sources are the Catholic newspaper *Xinde* 信德 (Faith) (*xdb*), based in Shijiazhuang (Hebei Province) and its website www.china-catholic.org (*xdo*) and the Faith Institute for Cultural Studies (FICS) that works under the same roof, as well as the Chinese Catholic Research Office (中国天主教研究室) of the Patriotic Association and official Bishops' Conference, and various Chinese Catholic websites.

Faithful

- ca. 10 million total number of Catholics, including both the official part of the Church and the Catholics in the underground, according to the estimate of the HSSC.
- over 6 million number of Catholics according to the official Catholic governing bodies (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016).
- 5.7 million number of Catholics according to SARA 2014.
- 9 million Catholics (0.7% of the population) according to estimates by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (PFRPL 2011).

Dioceses

- 144 (112 Dioceses and 32 other administrative regions) (according to HSSC, corresponding to the status of the Catholic hierarchy in 1951)
- 96 according to numbers of the official Church (HSSC)

Bishops

- 101 (77 in ministry, 24 not in ministry) (HSSC), of whom
 - 65 bishops in the official Church (58 in ministry, 7 not in ministry) (HSSC)
 - 36 bishops in the underground Church (19 in ministry, 17 not in ministry) (HSSC)

⁵⁴ Zhang Qiaogui – Sun Haoran 2017, pp. 172-173.

⁵⁵ We thank the Holy Spirit Study Centre for making available their figures for the Catholic Church in Mainland China (as of the end of 2017) quoted in the following.

7 of the 101 Chinese bishops are not recognized by the Pope. Around 40 dioceses have no bishop.

Priests

2,550 in the official Church (HSSC)
1,320 in the underground Church (HSSC)

Seminaries and Seminarians

8 major seminaries (theological seminaries) – one less than in the previous year⁵⁶ – with a total of 398 seminarians (HSSC)
10 minor seminaries with a total of 300 seminarians (HSSC)
6 underground seminaries with a total of around 100 seminarians (HSSC)

Sisters

3,170 in the official Church, in 87 congregations (HSSC, figures from 2015)
1,400 in the underground Church, in 37 congregations (HSSC, figures from 2015)

Churches

over 6,000 churches and oratories (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016)

Social Engagement

259 non-profit charity organizations, including 121 homes for the aged, 8 hospitals, 99 outpatient clinics, 10 orphanages, 13 kindergartens, 8 charitable foundations (Ma-PA-BiCo 2016)⁵⁷

Baptisms

For the first time the FICS compiled statistics of baptism for the entire year. For 2017, 48,556 newly baptized were listed there for the Catholic dioceses in Mainland China (see Table 4). The survey was made in collaboration with the dioceses and parishes and with the support of the Chinese Catholic Research Office.

In past years the FICS gave results of baptisms at Easter – the most significant baptismal period of the year. According to that, at Easter 2017, 19,087 persons were baptized in the dioceses of Mainland China (Easter 2016: 19,615 persons). Baptisms at Easter in 2017 were thus barely 40% of the baptisms of the entire year.

The FICS called the year's survey for 2017 "incomplete" – presumably baptisms in underground parishes were at most partially recorded. Should one take it that in the Underground as many people again were baptized, one would almost reach the 100,000 baptisms per year that the official Catholic governing bodies gave for years as the number of yearly baptisms for all of Mainland China. According to the reckoning of Anthony Lam of the HSSC, however, the Catholic Church in China would need 210,000 new faithful every year

56 According to various sources of information, the major seminary for central and south China in Wuhan was closed in 2017. The SARA database of 2018 still includes it.

57 SARA 2017 gives the same numbers, but does not mention the orphanages and kindergartens.

Table 4: Baptisms in the Dioceses of Mainland China in 2017

Province / Metropolis	Diocese	Number	Province / Metropolis	Diocese	Number
Anhui		750	Jiangxi		392
Beijing		1,099	Jilin		900
Chongqing	Chongqing	355	Liaoning		1,488
	Wanzhou	852	Inner Mongolia total 1,349	Bameng	329
Fujian total 1,082	Fuzhou	560		Baotou	190
	Minbei	46		Chifeng	246
	Mindong	115		Hohhot	335
	Xiamen	361		Jining	249
Gansu total 306	Lanzhou	142	Ningxia		128
	Pingliang	14	Qinghai		54
	Tianshui	150	Shaanxi total 3,254	Ankang	66
Guangdong total 2,978	Guangzhou	200		Fengxiang	396
	Jiangmen	140		Hanzhong	74
	Meizhou	578		Sanyuan	265
	Shantou	1,125		Weinan	315
	Shenzhen	424		Xi'an	630
	Zhanjiang	511		Yan'an	748
Guangxi total 516	Beihai	85		Zhouzhi	760
	Guilin	15	Shandong total 2,450	Heze	235
	Nanning	406		Jinan	675
	Wuzhou	10		Liaocheng	127
Guizhou		Linyi		687	
Hainan		1,090		Qingdao	92
Hebei total 11,899	Baoding	317		Weifang	100
	Cangzhou (incl. Langfang)	1,560		Yantai	51
	Chengde	230		Yanzhou	150
	Handan	3,059	Zibo [Zhoucun]	333	
	Hengshui	1,230	Shanghai		1,271
	Shijiazhuang	616	Shanxi total 2,618	Changzhi	180
	Tangshan (incl. Qin-huangdao)	754		Datong	80
	Xingtai	3,645		Fenyang	490
	Zhangjiakou	488		Jinzhong	280
Heilongjiang		602		Linfen	306
Henan total 3,032	Anyang	1,199		Shuozhou	309
	Kaifeng	54		Taiyuan	658
	Nanyang	765	Xinzhou	51	
	Puyang	200	Yuncheng	264	
	Shangqiu	150	Sichuan total 3,432	Chengdu	1,014
	Xinxiang	112		Leshan	883
	Xinyang	146		Nanchong	825
	Zhengzhou	308		Xichang	365
	Hubei total 921	Zhumadian	98	Yibin	345
Chibi		160	Tianjin		477
Jingzhou [Shashi]		45	Tibet Auton. Region		11
Wuhan		328	Xinjiang		66
Hunan	Xiangfan	120	Yunnan total 760	Dali	130
	Yichang	268		Kunming	306
	Zhaotong	324		Hangzhou	307
Hubei total 921	Haimen	450	Zhejiang total 2,143	Ningbo	739
	Nanjing	478		Taizhou	4
	Suzhou	398		Wenzhou	1,093
	Xuzhou	630		Total	

Source: *xdb* Feb. 5, 2018, online at www.xinde.org/News/index/id/41521.html.



Newly baptized in the Shigulu Church in Nanjing at Easter 2017. Photo: *xdo*.

just to offset the natural population decrease.⁵⁸ Therefore it is not surprising that the FICS regarded the numbers of baptisms as too low, in spite of local highlights. It called on the parishes to increase their efforts towards evangelization and in accord with Church tradition to keep appropriate registers for the administration of the sacraments (*xdo* 7.02.).



Pastor Pang Rui with newly baptized in Jiujiang, Province of Jiangxi, April 2017. Photo: *xdo*.

With regard to regional distribution, the Province of Hebei, with its comparatively high proportion of Catholics, has with 11,899 newly baptized almost a quarter (24.5%) of all persons who received baptism in the year 2017. The report gives no details regarding the age of the baptized; in past years the majority of persons baptized at Easter were adults.

In the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong around 3,000 adults received the Sacrament of Baptism at Easter 2017.⁵⁹

58 However, in the same essay Lam estimated the total number of annual baptisms in the official Church as only 30,000–35,000 per year. See Lin Ruiqi 林瑞琪 [A. Lam], “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*, Winter 2015, No. 179, pp. 37-45, here pp. 39-40; cf. also Wenzel-Teuber 2016, pp. 39-41, here p. 41.

59 Cardinal John Tong, “Easter Greetings from Our Bishop,” dated March 20, 2017, here from *Hong Kong Sunday Examiner* April 15, 2017.

Priestly Ordinations

In 2017, 97 deacons were ordained priests in Mainland China (see Table 5) – many more than in the previous years. In 2016 there were 61, in 2015 there were 59, in 2014 there were 78, in 2013 there were 66 and in 2012 there were 78 priestly ordinations. The number was taken from different sources and is certainly incomplete, so ordinations from the Under-ground Church could be added.

Why the number of priestly ordinations is so much higher than in other years is not clear; one reason could be (as appears from the reports) that in 2017 a number of men were ordained who had to interrupt their studies when the major seminary in Shanghai was closed in 2012 and had to finish them elsewhere. Overall the number of priestly vocations is decreasing.



Priestly ordination in the Cathedral of Shenyang, November 2017. Photo: Diocese of Shenyang.

As the Table shows, for the 39 ordinations in 35 dioceses, 13 dioceses had to invite bishops from elsewhere for the ordinations – that means around 37% of the dioceses where priestly ordinations took place in 2017. This number throws a spotlight on the situation where many dioceses in China either have no bishop, or the bishop cannot bestow (public) ordinations, because he is under house arrest (as in Shanghai) or working in the “Under-ground.”

Table 5: Priestly Ordinations in the Catholic Church of Mainland China in 2017

Province / Metropolis	Diocese	Number of ordained	Date of ordination	Ordaining bishop*	Names of those ordained
Anhui	Hefei	2	Nov. 18	Liu Xinhong**	Fan Jianhong 范建红, Zha Luhong 查鲁鸿
Beijing	Beijing	5	June 24	Li Shan	Gao Shuai 高帅, Han Ming 韩明, Niu Ning 牛宁, Ren Panji 任盘基, Shuai Jie 帅杰
Fujian	Xiamen	3	Sept. 8.	Cai Bingrui	Li Jiaofeng 李姣峰, Wu Xinfei 吴新飞, Yang Yibao 杨义宝
Guangdong 10	Guangzhou	1	April 25	Gan Junqiu	Zhang Jie 张杰
		5	Nov. 30	Gan Junqiu	Cheng Zhifei 程智飞, Du Haizhuo 杜海卓, Gao Peng 高鹏, Hu Yongtao 胡永涛, Zhao Pan 赵攀
	Shantou	1	April 30	Huang Bingzhang**	Li Zhechao 李哲抄
	Shaoguan	2	Febr. 2	Gan Junqiu (Guangzhou)	Li Weidao 李伟导, Xian Hailong 羡海龙
		1	Nov. 30	Gan Junqiu (Guangzhou)	Zhou Yongjie 周永杰
Hebei 20	Jingxian (Hengshui)	3	March 25	Feng Xinmao	Hao Jianling 郝建岭, Zhang Weiwei 张卫卫, Zhang Zhengzhou 张郑州
		1	Nov. 30	Feng Xinmao	Zhang Dingding 张丁丁
	Xianxian (Cangzhou)	4	Aug. 24	Li Liangui	Tang Wujie 唐武杰, Xiao Wenquan 肖文泉, Yang Chaonian 杨超见, Yuan Junfeng 苑俊峰
	Zhaoxian	3	Aug. 9	Not specified	Dong Feibo 董飞波, Du Xiaoqiang 杜晓强, Li Weihao 李伟浩
		7	Aug. 10	Not specified	Cui Bingsong 崔丙松, Li Qiufeng 李秋峰, Liu Jichen 刘吉晨, Ren Yuqi 任玉琦, Wu Xiaoke 吴晓科, Zhang Weiduo 张伟铎, Zhang Yulong 张玉龙
Zhengding (Shijiazhuang)	2	July 11	Li Liangui (Xianxian)	Dong Xiaojian 董晓建, Shen Qilong 申奇龙	
Henan 6	Kaifeng	2	Dec. 5	Zhang Yinlin (Anyang, Hen)	Yan Hui 闫辉, Qi Xiaoming 齐晓明
	Shangqiu	1	Dec. 5	Zhang Yinlin (Anyang)	Zeng Liangliang 曾亮亮
	Xinxiang	1	Dec. 5	Zhang Yinlin (Anyang)	Zhang Ying 张应
	Zhengzhou	2	Dec. 5	Zhang Yinlin (Anyang)	Li Gang 李刚, Liu Wendu 刘文都
Jiangsu 3	Haimen	1	May 9	Shen Bin	Zhao Honggang 赵鸿罡
	Xuzhou	2	Dec. 15	Wang Renlei	Chen Shuaishuai 陈帅帅, Li Hao 李浩
Jiangxi	Nanchang	1	May 13	Li Suguang	Wang Keyong 王克勇
Jilin	Jilin	3	May 13	Pei Junmin (Shenyang)	Han Bing 韩冰, Han Muhua 韩牧华, Jiang Tiexin 姜铁新
Liaoning	Shenyang	5	Nov. 15	Pei Junmin	Guo Liang 郭亮, Qiao Lichao 乔立超, Teng Lin 腾林, Xu Wei 徐伟, Zhang Shoujie 张守杰
Neimeng 2	Hohhot	1	April 4	Meng Qinglu	Zhang Zhihai 张志海
	Jining	1	Nov. 30	Meng Qinglu (Hohhot)	Yang Hailong 杨海龙
Ningxia	Ningxia	2	Oct. 13	Li Jing	Li Mou 李谋, Wang Xiang 王翔
Shanghai	Shanghai	4	June 7	Shen Bin (Haimen)	He Xiangxi 何祥喜, Ren Yaning 任亚宁, Wu Yongtao 武永涛, Wu Zhiqiang 武志强
Shaanxi	Yulin	5	Nov. 16	Yang Xiaoting	Han Shuai 韩帅, He Dayuan 何大院, Li Bo 李博, Wang Tianping 王田平, Wu Pengtao 吴朋涛
Shanxi 14	Changzhi	6	Nov. 10	Ding Lingbin	Cui Dawei 崔大伟, Li Chao 李超, Li Wei 李伟, Tian Peng 田鹏, Wu Biao 吴彪, Yang Lujun 杨路军
	Fenyang	2	May 1	Huo Cheng	Gao Jianguo 高建国, Sun Zhibiao 孙志彪
	Hongdong	1	April 26	Huo Cheng (Fenyang)	Shang Xiaowei 商小伟
	Jinzhong (Yuci)	2	Feb. 22.	Wu Junwei (Yuncheng)	Kang Jinjun 康晋君, Yue Chaochao 岳超超
	Yuncheng	3	Nov. 30	Wu Junwei	Li Liang 李亮, Zhang Fan 张凡, Zheng Baolong 郑保龙
Sichuan 5	Nanchong	3	May 16	Chen Gong'ao	Feng Zhipeng 冯志鹏, Liu Xujie 刘许杰, Yao Yuanqiang 姚远强
	Yibin	2	June 29	Luo Xuegang	Chen Zongtao 陈宗涛, Cui Peng 崔鹏
Tianjin	Tianjin	1	Nov. 18	Li Liangui (Xianxian)	Jia Aoding 贾奥定
Zhejiang 6	Hangzhou	1	Nov. 21	Cao Xiangde	Han Biao 韩彪
	Ningbo	3	Aug. 19	Hu Xiande	Wang An 王安, Wang Deguang 王德光, Wang Shengnian 王圣年
	Wenzhou	2	Dec. 10	Han Yingjin (Sanyuan SN, also place of ordination)	Jiang Xianmin 蒋贤敏, Luo Tongfei 罗童飞
Total		97			

* The diocese is named here only if the ordaining bishop is not the competent local ordinary of the diocese where the ordinations took place but was invited from another diocese to administer the ordination.

** Bishop not recognized by Rome

Sources (2017): catholic-bj.org June 24.; chinacatholic.cn Feb. 7; May 8,9,31; gzcatholic.com Dec. 1; jstzj.org Dec. 21; Injq.org March 2; xdb Sept. 3; xdo Jan. 4; April 9; May 15, 18; June 7; July 4, 12; Aug. 24; Sept. 10; Oct. 15; Nov. 11, 16, 18, 22, 30; Dec. 1, 3, 11; xianxiancc.org Nov. 30; www.sohu.com/a/130345367_280071; http://blog.sina.com.cn/s/blog_500cf6040102wnt1.html (list); and private information.

Bishops Who Died in Mainland China in 2017

Hu Xiande 胡贤德, Matthew (1934–2017), Ningbo (ZJ)
 Li Jiantang 李建唐, Silvester (1925–2017), Taiyuan (SX)
 Li Jingfeng 李镜峰, Lucas (1921–2017), Fengxiang (SN)
 Liu Shigong 刘世功, John (1928–2017), Jining (Wumeng) (NM)
 Tu Shihua 涂世华, Anthony (1919–2017), Puqi (HB)
 Wang Chongyi 王充一, Anicetus (1919–2017), Guiyang/Guizhou (GZ)
 Wang Milu 王冕录, Casimir (1943–2017), Tianshui (GS)
 Xie Tingzhe 谢庭哲, Paul (1931–2017), Urumqi (XJ)
 Yu Chengxin 余成信, Matthias (1927–2017), Hanzhong (SN)

Bishops' Consecrations in Mainland China in 2017

As far as is known, no bishops were consecrated in 2017.

Official Installation of Bishops Consecrated Secretly

In 2017, the following bishops consecrated with papal mandate but without government permission were publicly installed as local ordinaries recognized by the government:

Han Zhihai 韩志海, Joseph (b. 1966, episcopal consecration 2003), Lanzhou (GS), November 10

Sun Jigen 孙继根, Joseph (b. 1967, episcopal consecration 2011), Handan (Heb), November 16

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