

News In Brief

THE NEW CONSTITUTION OF THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY

The new constitution of the Chinese Communist Party approved by the 12th Congress is a great improvement over the one of 1977. Not only is its wording clearer, but also its content offers a broader vision. It stipulates that Party service should not be limited to the proletariat alone, but also extended to all of the people of the country. It seems to promote greater stability within the country by playing down the concept of class struggle. The new constitution also rejects the notion that the Party should be placed above the State as well as abrogating the policy that the Party assume the role and function of the administrative government. (Ming Pao Daily, editorial of 10th September, 1982)

CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH LEADERS VISIT EUROPE

A Chinese Christian delegation headed by Bishop Ding Guangxun left Beijing in September on a visit to five European countries. The visit was in response to a formal invitation by the National Council of Churches and other Church leaders from the United Kingdom, Ireland, West Germany, Finland, and Switzerland.

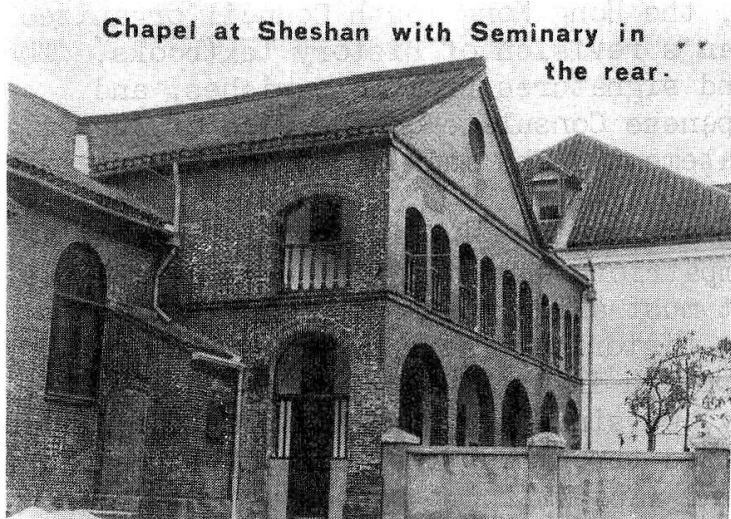


The purpose of the trip was to deepen mutual respect and understanding. The delegation included Han Wenzao, Zhao Fusan, Zheng Jianye, Shi Ruzhang, Zheng Yugui, and Zhao Zhilian. After their European tour, some of the delegates will go on to Nairobi, Kenya. Bishop Ding, Professor Han *and Miss Shi* will stop off in Hong Kong for a few days before returning to China. Their expected date of arrival here is November 10th.

◀ Archbishop Runcie (right), and Bishop Ding chatting at the Lambeth Place garden in London

CATHOLIC SEMINARIES IN CHINA

In September 1982, the vice-chairman of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, the rector designate of the Beijing Major Seminary, Bishop Tu Shihua, stated that the Beijing Major Seminary would have to delay its opening until next year because the proposed site, the priests' residence on the campus of the former Fujen University, is still occupied, Bishop Tu hopes that Beijing Major Seminary will become an institute for



theological students chosen from various provincial seminaries. He emphasized that Scripture study would be the most important subject in the curriculum, and that the theological disciplines would be studied in their historical context. Although courses will be taught in Chinese, students are expected to learn Latin and another foreign language as well.

However, many dioceses in China have already established plans for training their own seminarians. Sheshan Seminary

which is located near the Middle Hill chapel at Sheshan, Shanghai, has already accepted thirty six (36) seminarians. On October 11, 1982, Bishop Zhang Jiashu, chairman of the Chinese Bishops Conference, led the opening of the school year ceremonies. It is a joint project of the city of Shanghai, and Jiangsu, Anhui, and Zhejiang provinces.

THE CHINESE PROTESTANTS HOLDING NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN BEIJING

On the 20th of September, 1982, the second session of the Second Committee of the Chinese Protestant Three Self Movement and the second plenary session of the First Committee of the Chinese Christian Council were held at the same time in Beijing. Bishop Ding Guangxun delivered the opening address. During the meeting, Shen Derong reported on the re-opening of more churches in various places, the work of the Three Self Associations and Christian Councils in setting up formation courses and Bible study schools in cooperation with Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. At present, several hundred thousand copies of the Bible have already been published. It was estimated that a million copies of three publications, The Complete Bible, The New Testament and Psalms, and The New Testament would be available by the end of this year. During the meeting Qiao Liansheng, the director of the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council, pointed out that there were still many problems yet to be solved

in the area of religion.. It was necessary to correct the "leftist" mistakes of the past and to overcome erroneous laissez-faire tendencies in order to implement the proper religious policy. (Ta Kung Pao, 20th September 1982; Wen Wei Bao, 23th September 1982)

THE CHURCH OF HONG KONG PROTESTS AGAINST JAPAN'S REVISION OF HISTORY TEXTBOOKS

During August of this year, the Hong Kong Youth Council organized a movement to protest against Japan's revision of history textbooks. The Council collected over ten thousand signatures from 28 parishes, and presented them formally to the Japanese Consulate on the 28th of August. The Council also made a public statement. The main points of the statement are the following:

- (a) The attempt to cover up and whitewash historical facts is a great insult to our compatriots who died in the Sino-Japanese War.
- (b) The Japanese Government must allow the younger generation to be informed of the true historical facts in order that past mistakes may not be repeated in the future.
- (c) As a Catholic community, we sincerely hope and pray for justice and peace to be actualized throughout the world, that militarism will never be revived and wars will not happen again..

In conjunction with the Public Policy Commission of the Hong Kong Christian Council, the Hong Kong Youth Council organized a liturgical service in memory of deceased compatriots who fought against the Japanese military occupation of China. The service was held at the Catholic Cathedral at 4:30 p.m. on the 18th of September. Father Thomas Kwan, the rector of the Holy Spirit Seminary, presided at the service and was assisted by Mr. Jian Daihui, a lecturer of Chung Chi College, Chinese University of Hong Kong. It was reported that more than five hundred people participated in the liturgy.

At a meeting of the Hong Kong Diocesan Chinese Priests Association on 15th September, it was decided to send a letter to the Japanese Bishops' Conference. In the letter the Association declared that historical facts should not be hidden from the younger generation. Under the direction of the Japanese Government, the young people should learn a lesson from the mistakes committed by their predecessors, and that such historical facts would make them aware of the negative effects of Japanese militarism and would lead them to walk in the path of Christian Charity. (Kung Kao Pao, 24th, 10th September 1982)