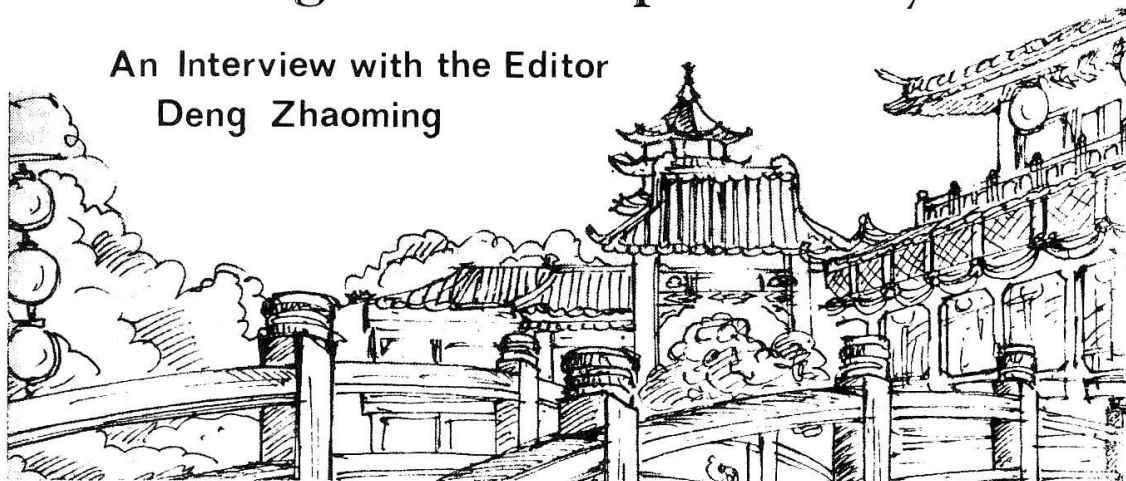


# BRIDGE: A magazine of special style

An Interview with the Editor  
Deng Zhaoming



*(In April, 1983, a new magazine called BRIDGE, reporting on activities of the Church in China, will begin publication for overseas readers. TRIPOD interviewed Deng Zhaoming, the editor of this new publication.)*

**Tripod:** Mr. Deng, in your capacity as chief editor, can you tell our readers the purpose of your new publication?

**Deng:** Due to various reasons there are more and more people concerned about the happenings in China. Not many can have a comparatively complete knowledge of China although many have visited China themselves. This is also true within the circle of the Hong Kong Christian Church. Christians in Hong Kong have become more and more concerned about activities of the Christian Church in China. Like others, they have difficulty in obtaining more complete information about China. It is very natural that their information about China and the Church there would be conditioned by the fragmented news they can obtain.

Moreover, there are some overseas institutions which already have a certain fixed position regarding the Christian Church in China. I'm not sure if this is due at times to the goals of individuals in promoting their own causes or to the experiences of the leaders of these institutions. However, they are not willing to see things happen which are not in agreement with their own stance. Consequently, when they report on the Church in China, their reporting is colored by their own perspective.

Very often they use negative reporting of those events which do not coincide with their fixed position. This type of reporting is very unfair to those who are concerned with church events in China.

And so, the main task of BRIDGE will be to fulfill this desire on the part of many overseas church personnel to obtain the facts. We hope to offer a more complete picture of the news to our readers.

**Tripod:** Which institution will sponsor this creative magazine?

**Deng:** It is sponsored by Tao Fong Shan, but I personally hope that this magazine is not limited in scope to Tao Fong Shan. I hope that it will expand and develop to the point that it will belong to the whole Christian Church in Hong Kong. We are willing and eager to receive all kinds of help from church personnel. We have organized an editorial committee. Rev. Canon Frank Lin is the chairman and Mr. Philip Lam is the secretary. Other members include Rev. Arthur Wu, Rev. Ewing W. Carroll, Jr., Rev. Miss Lee Ching Chee and Dr. Archie Lee etc. Some of Catholic friends are also helping us. Dr. Peter Lee, the director of our Centre, is the publisher. We also hope that with the later development of our work new committee members can be added, with some coming even from the evangelical groups. If there is a varied background and differences of opinion represented among the members of our staff, there will be more balanced and complete reporting on the actual situation in the Christian Church in China.

**Tripod:** What categories of news will be included in BRIDGE?

**Deng:** This magazine is called BRIDGE - CHURCH LIFE IN CHINA TODAY. Its Chinese name is ( 橋——中國教會動態 ). It will be published in both Chinese and English. Obviously, as the name indicates, the magazine hopes to build a bridge between the two shores. On the one hand, we hope to report to the Hong Kong readers on the activities of the China Church; on the other hand, we will review the reaction of the Hong Kong people to the Chinese Church, facilitating communication and understanding on both sides. As far as the content is concerned, we hope to have more complete reporting which will include the development of theological education, e.g. how they conduct their theologates, how seminarians view present church events, and the editing of the curriculum of theology. We also hope to report on church publications, e.g. on short-term training courses, on the publishing of the curriculum of their correspondence courses. We will include information on the publication of hymnals, homily helps and catechisms.

**Tripod** : Will the emphasis of your magazine be on academic discussions or on the reporting of popular events?

**Deng** : We will focus on the reporting of popular events. We have no intention of publishing long articles on academic works. We will try as much as possible to have a variety of photographs and hope that the pictures and stories will be equally rich.

Because the purpose of our publication is to report church events throughout the whole of China, we will not limit ourselves to the church in big cities and well-known leaders, but will also report on the church in smaller cities, towns and in the countryside, even the church life of the minorities and of Christians who in their ordinary life reveal an extraordinary Christian spirit. All of these are within the scope of our interest. We also hope to establish a network of communication. We will strive to obtain news from all walks of life and report it as it is.

Moreover, we congratulate the Chinese Church on its efforts to develop at its own pace. We respect its stance on patriotism and the Three-selves because we believe that if it doesn't insist on this stance, as time goes on, the Church in China will suffer a split and it will be difficult to have its own future.

**Tripod** : As you gather your materials, will you have any communication with the Patriotic Association of the Chinese Christian Church?

**Deng** : In the initial planning stages, we mentioned our plans to the responsible persons of the Three-Self Patriotic Association. We all agreed that it would be a magazine published by Hong Kong, and that Hong Kong would take the initiative, and that we have an independent editorial policy. Naturally, just as we expect the input and cooperation of all the churches in Hong Kong, so we hope to receive the cooperation of all the churches in China. The experimental issue will appear in April of this year. We call it an "experimental issue" because we want to assess our working capacity in finding a way to satisfy the interests of our readers. We are just at the initial stage of our work. How the future develops will depend on our further endeavors.

**Tripod** : What type of reader will BRIDGE primarily serve? How will you adapt to different tastes?

**Deng** : In principle, our readers will be all those who have a concern for the Church in China. The content of BRIDGE will focus on news. Therefore, our readers will not be principally scholars and experts.

We don't intend to have detailed, analytical reports. We will offer only factual, basic materials. As far as academic analysis is concerned, this is already being done by your Centre through TRIPOD and Tao Fung Shan's CHING FENG.

**Tripod:** In your article of March, 1982, in TIAN FENG, you mentioned the problem of patriotism among Christians. You remarked that Hong Kong Christians could be more active in this matter. For example, they could facilitate the love of both church and country through visits, dialogue and reflection. May I ask if the direction of BRIDGE will echo your viewpoint in that article?

**Deng:** It should be said that the opinion you mention is my personal one. It is hoped that as our work progresses the editorial committee will and more of their opinions, too.

**Tripod:** In that same TIAN FENG article, you suggest that the Christians of Hong Kong should strive with the Christians of China for "a common language." This obviously means that the Hong Kong people have a set of terms which are different from those of their brothers and sisters in China. May I ask how BRIDGE plans to assume responsibility for developing this verbal communication?

**Deng:** As I pointed out in TIAN FENG, the term "language" cannot be taken literally. It alludes to the idea and the desire behind the language. For example, people in China hope to have a prosperous Motherland. Do the people of Hong Kong share this same hope for China? The people in China hope to come out of past unhappy experiences and create a new situation. Are we willing to commit ourselves to joining this great host of awakened people? Are we ready to support their endeavors to reconstruct the Motherland? BRIDGE only hopes to reflect truly the desire of the Chinese people, to point out their difficulties, ideals and desires in order to reflect with our readers on these matters. Our special concern is that this so-called "common language" could be reflected in the content of our evangelization. We must ask ourselves when we face the Church in China as church workers, what is the content of our message? This is a question that the church workers inside and outside China should reflect on together. Very often we find that the events happening inside China are important not only for those inside but for those outside as well. Because we are the children of China, we cannot be separated from our Mother.

**Tripod:** Will the viewpoint of evangelical groups have an impact on the circulation of your magazine?

**Deng** : I personally believe that readers have their own power of judgment. Although we have different points of view, so long as the way of doing things is not too one-sided, we can gain the acceptance of all our readers. Isn't that true?

**Tripod** : Do you have any plans for enlarging your circulation?

**Deng** : BRIDGE is a bi-monthly periodical. We will aim principally at those within church circles. The first issue will be given out free of charge. We hope that Christians and church workers will help us to enlarge our circulation.

### TRIPOD

(Bi-monthly periodical in Chinese and English)

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