THE EARLY CHURCH OF SICHUAN PROVINCE

A Study of Conditions Leading to the Synod of 1803

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INTRODUCTION

The People's Press, Chengdu, Sichuan has recently re-printed The Holy Religion Enters Sichuan by Father Francois Gourdon,[1] a history of the early Church in that province. Originally published in 1918, the book has long been out of print. In the introduction to the new edition, the editor underlines the growing interest among Chinese scholars in the history of Sichuan and hopes that it will serve as a source book for historians. The book itself is a model of patient and precise research, but it does have serious limitations. It is principally a catalogue of names, places and dates. It makes no effort to provide the reader with a general background which might illuminate other important aspects of the growth of the Sichuan Church. This article attempts to fill in some of those gaps by drawing on other available historical sources to supplement Gourdon's original work. Its main focus will be on the conditions that led up to the Synod of Sichuan which took place at Chongqinzhou (崇慶州), Wangjiakan (黃家坎), the residence of the bishop, in September of 1803.

I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

After the death of Qianlong (乾隆) in 1795, Jiaqing became Emperor. The population of China was estimated to be around two hundred and seventy five million.[2] The country was entering a new and difficult phase of its long history. At a time when Western nations were being transformed by science and technology, China was pursuing an international policy of isolation. As she turned in upon herself, she found herself also beset by serious internal problems. A chronic economic recession and sporadic peasant uprisings along with armed rebellions organized by the secret societies further weakened the firm hold central authority traditionally had over the provinces. The deterioration of Manchu rule resulted in a growing dissatisfaction on the local level. The huge amounts of public spending, rampant corruption, and galloping

inflation bred among the local Chinese officials a distrust of the decisions handed down by central government administrators, and continued to undermine government credibility. It was, however, the common people who had to bear the increasing burdens of these difficult times.

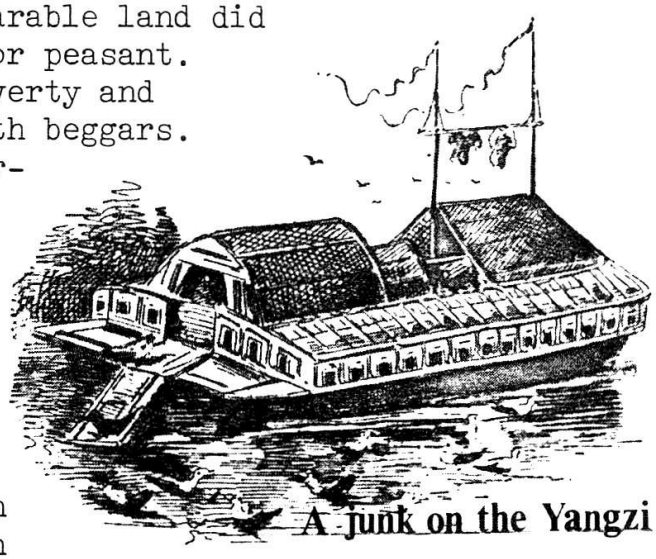
AN OVERVIEW OF SICHUAN: The Province of the Four Rivers

The gigantic peak Gong Ga (貢嘎) reaching an altitude of 7590 metres dominates not only the four rivers - Min (岷) Wu (烏) Tuo (沱) and Jialin (嘉陵) - from which Sichuan gets its name - but also the whole region and its people to whom it transmits some of its spirit of independence and dignity. The Sitting Buddha of Jiading, over 120 metres tall, has sat for 12 centuries contemplating with silent and impassive regard the luxuriant vegetation, the ancient temples, and the teeming market-cities of the region.[3] Sichuan was then the largest and most densely populated province in the entire country. Father Huc, the renowned traveler, described it as the most beautiful, but also the most isolated, a province withdrawn from the others, jealously guarding its autonomy.[4] It might also be said of its isolation that Sichuan was somewhat reluctant to share its riches with the rest of the country.

With the exception of Chengdu, a vast fertile plain bubbling with life, Sichuan was, and still is, a tangle of mountains and hills in which nestled numberless villages and hamlets. The verdant landscape of the ancient feudal state of Shu (蜀) tells us much about its traditional prosperity. Devastated by the Tartars[5] during the preceding century, Sichuan quickly managed to regain its former prosperity due largely to the richness of its soil and the dogged courage of its inhabitants. Traditional industries such as silk and hemp, paper and printing prospered. Livestock grazed in the mountains while new farmlands developed in the Red Basin.[6] Commerce flourished because Sichuan produced more rice, tea, vegetables and silk than it could consume locally. Fleets of junks and sampans sailed through the deep gorges which border the Yangzi (the Yang Tse or Blue River) heavily laden with exports for other provinces.

The rivers and their tributaries which provided irrigation for farmlands reaching as far as most remote areas, were essential to the life and prosperity of the region. Like giant snakes, they uncoil from the high places eventually slipping into the gigantic Yangzi. The rivers are also symbolic representations of the universal law of economics: the small enrich the large. Thus, in spite of the general prosperity of Sichuan, the greater part of the population was poor. The new fields

under cultivation, the extention of arable land did little to enhance the life of the poor peasant. The majority continued to live in poverty and ignorance. The province abounded with beggars. Natural calamities were regular occurrances that lashed the backs of the populace like strokes from a whip. The drought of 1778 was followed by an outbreak of the plague. In 1784, half the city of Chengdu was gutted by fire. This was followed by the great famine of 1785-86. Again the plague attacked an already decimated population. During the same year, an earthquake leveled much of the region making thousands homeless. All this came at a time when the province was already experiencing the effects of the Sino-Tibetan War.



A junk on the Yangzi

Through all these trials, traditional Chinese family solidarity was somehow maintained. Mutual aid protected people from falling into the hands of the usurers, whose power had been proverbial in Sichuan for centuries. (It was here that pawn-shops first made an appearance, printing 'flying money' (飛錢) which is ancestor to modern bank-notes.)

Local Chinese administration maintained an ambiguous attitude towards Manchu rule. The Emperor Jiaqing, considered to be one of the worst the country had known, exercised absolute authority. Publically, the mandarins continued to show signs of deference and submission, but privately, they sought opportunities to depose a regime which they had always resented for being foreign. Moreover, the province's isolation and traditional tendency towards autonomy moved the governor and his associates to bend the political line that came from Beijing in an effort to demonstrate to the local people that they were not mere vassals of the Emperor.

The inhabitants of Sichuan had a reputation for being energetic, strong-minded, even pugnacious.[7] Their isolation encouraged their natural conservatism and their resistance to changes from outside. Particularism abounded throughout the province. The popular religion was Buddhism, a Buddhism that had been transformed by centuries of existence in China. The local variety was a mixture of Daoism, ancestor worship, animism and elements of traditional Indian Buddhism. Buddhist bonzes, living within the milieu of this popular piety, looked unfavorably on the competition represented by Christian missionaries.

In Sichuan society, as in China itself, paternal authority was very powerful. The patriarch ruled over the affairs of the clan, arbitrated conflicts, and decided the future of its younger members from their earliest years. He arranged marriages with suitable clans, often after long negotiations.

In the previous century, the revolutionary Zhang Xianzhong (張献忠) the former king of Chengdu, had organized a regiment of women soldiers known as the Pozijun (娘子軍).[8] Despite this departure from tradition, one hundred years later the position of women in Sichuan society had not improved. The birth of a son was greeted with general rejoicing. It assured continuity in the worship of ancestors and held out a promise for future family prosperity. The birth of a daughter, however, was met with indifference. Often she was considered to be an extra burden on the family, an extra mouth to feed in a family already strapped for food. It frequently happened that female babies were left abandoned on the roadsides.

A daughter remained in the parental home until a suitable match could be made for her. She then passed from a state of guardianship in her father's house to a state of servitude in the home of her in-law.[9] In no case did she have the right to participate in decision making and was expected to obey without question. Husbands of childless women often took a second wife. But the practice of polygamy was not reserved to such situations alone. To take several wives was also a sign of wealth. Separation of the sexes was strictly enforced. In public, a man never stood side-by-side with a woman, nor did he speak to her, let alone touch her.[10]

Social inequality, corruption, the low status of women, usury, gambling, premature marriages, abandonment of babies and superstition were some of the more serious social ills effecting the people at that time.

II. THE EARLY CHURCH OF SICHUAN [11]

The oldest documents attesting to the presence of Christians in Sichuan are the writings of the Jesuits Ludovic Buglio and Gabriel Magallaens who lived in the province during the reign of Zhang Xianzhong from 1642 to 1646.[12] But it was only with the appointment of Father Arthus de Lionne of the Paris Foreign Mission Society as Apostolic Vicar in 1696 that an attempt was made to organize an apostolate there. He assigned two Lazarist priests, Fathers Jean Mullener and Louis-Antoine

Appiani, along with two of his own confreres, Jean Basset and Jean-François de la Balluère, to take up permanent residence in Sichuan. With the arrival of these four missionaries, the local Church began to develop.

Eventually, the Paris Foreign Mission Society took complete charge of the Vicariate. A key document in understanding the work of these early pioneers is the Monita Ad Missionarios. This manual was compiled by Msgr. Pallu, Msgr. Lamotte Lambert and other missionaries working in Siam and Vietnam. It grew out of a meeting held in Ayuthia in 1664 and offered a detailed rule of conduct for missioners in Asia. The handbook, which became a vade mecum for priests in Sichuan, established the following priorities for missionary evangelization: Personal sanctification of the missioner, conversion of pagans, establishment of the local Church.

Reading the reports of the Sichuan mission of that time, one is constantly reminded of another history of the early Church, that which St. Luke recounts in the Acts of the Apostles. Growth in the Church in Sichuan did not follow any straight, harmonious path but rather progressed in a series of crooked lines. Proclamation of the Gospel encountered innumerable obstacles and the missionaries groped their way along making the mistakes and digressions common to pioneers. The young Christian communities they formed were also inexperienced and confronted with enormous challenges. In 1756, in the vast territory that included not only Sichuan but also Yunnan and Guizhou (one million square kilometers with forty million inhabitants), there were only four thousand Christians and two Chinese priests.

The early Sichuan mission suffered from a scarcity of foreign missioners. While the Seminary of the Foreign Missions, founded in 1663 in Paris, trained French missionaries for Asia, it sent few to Sichuan. For the span of one decade, the province received none at all. When Father François Pottier arrived in 1756, he was the only foreign priest in the region. French priests reached a maximum of eight in 1783. Among them, four were arrested shortly after arrival and sent to stand trial in Beijing. Father Jean-François Gleyo died in 1786. In 1782, the revolutionary government in France suppressed the Paris Seminary. By the year 1811, there were only three foreign missioners left in the whole vicariate. As their presence had been declared illegal by the government of China and they had to go into hiding.

The Christians of Sichuan sprang from the poorer classes of

society. Most of them had received little formal education, many were illiterate. Small peasant farmers, some skilled workers, a few small business men, they lived a marginal existence. And yet they managed to support both their priests and their catechists. Because of a lack of finances the local seminary at Luoranggou could accept only ten seminarians. When François Pottier made his journey to be ordained bishop in Xi'an (西安), Shaanxi Province (陕西), a distance of 1,000 kilometers, he went by foot.[13] Despite such limited resources, the local Christian communities took in abandoned children and educated them. Father Jean-Didier de Saint Martin opened a home to shelter lepers, and the Christian communities continued to grow.

Msgr. Pottier by a Chinese artist

THE EARLY CHURCH UNDER PERSECUTION

The early Christians suffered from outbreaks of persecution not only on the local level but on the national as well. From the time of the Rites Controversy, the position of foreign missionaries in China was very difficult. In 1707 the Emperor Kangxi (康熙) ordered them to take an oath to uphold the Chinese Rites as outlined in an Imperial

decree as a condition for remaining in the country. This was forbidden by the Papal Delegate, Msgr. Maillard de Tournon, under pain of excommunication.[14] In 1720 and 1724, the Emperors Kangxi and Yong Zheng (雍正) prohibited the propagation of Christianity throughout the Empire by imperial edict. In 1785 another persecution broke out occasioned by the arrest of a foreign priest attempting to enter China secretly.

Along with imperial persecutions, the early Christian communities of Sichuan had to contend with formidable local opposition as well. Buddhism was a powerful force in the province, nourished by ancient custom and practice. Mount Emei was a pilgrimage centre of immense popularity. The friction existing between Christians and Buddhists was increased by the lack of communication between the two religions. Conflict and confrontation were inevitable. In general, the ordinary inhabitants of Sichuan had little toleration for this new religion that came from the outside. Christians were harassed by officials and people alike. They were accused of being non-conformists, going against time-honoured traditions (the sexes prayed together in Church). Some officials sought to better their position in the eyes of the common people by actively seeking opportunities to humiliate them. Local authorities sometimes accused the Christians of being members of a secret society having political goals. Christians were subjected to injustices in the courts, often losing their cases, having their properties confiscated, their churches destroyed. Some Christian families of means were thus reduced to poverty and had to beg for food in the streets. In 1814 the seminary at Luoranggou (落瀼溝) was burned down and the cemetery land belonging to the mission in Fenghuangshan (鳳凰山) was seized by the government.

Both priests and people underwent severe trials as a result of the persecutions. Several priests were forced to wear the cangue. Father Benoît Sun was subjected to this form of punishment for three months, after which he was beaten and tortured. Nearly all the priests at one time or another were imprisoned. Gleyo spent eight years there. His confreres Delpon, Devaut, Sun, and Zhao all died in jail. In 1786, thirty Christians, accused of harbouring missionaries, were imprisoned and then sent into exile. The Zhang brothers (張萬鍾、張萬效), both priests, were tried in Beijing, their sentences tattooed to their foreheads, and they were forbiden under pain of death to enter Sichuan again. In 1815, Msgr Dufresse was beheaded. A few years later, Fathers Joseph Yuan (袁在德), Thaddhée Liu (劉瑞廷) and Paul Liu (劉翰佐) were sentenced to death by strangulation.

During the times of persecution, the local Christian communities

continued to harbour and support the priests. Not only did they provide them with food and lodging but also collected considerable amounts of money to ransom them when they were imprisoned.[15] Reading the accounts of persecution one is moved by the heroic endurance of these early Christians in Sichuan and one again is reminded of the struggles of Christians as found in the Acts of the Apostles. An examination of first hand accounts, however, also reveals the complexity of the actual existing situation. A critical analysis of Msgr. Dufresse's letters shows the great reluctance with which the provincial governor and other officials under him moved against the Christians. They delayed as long as possible implementing the Edict against Christianity. They hesitated, at risk of incurring the wrath of the Manchu government, because they considered the Christians to be innocent victims. When finally forced to act, they were satisfied with exacting promises of reform from the Christians through equivocally worded formulas. Other officials drew up lists with false signatures to offer evidence that Christians had renounced their faith. Complaints brought to court regarding such matters were often dismissed without a hearing. The root cause of the great persecutions of 1785 and 1805, in fact, did not originate in Beijing. They were the result of incidents that were poorly handled on the local level and then referred to the Emperor. The Emperor, in turn, would then demand provincial authorities to deal severely with such cases.

Paradoxically, the persecutions far from hindering the growth of the Church stimulated it. Such confrontation required of believers clear commitment to Christ. Persecutions reinforced Christian cohesiveness. Moreover, the public trials undergone by Christians aroused the curiosity of their neighbours and helped to spread knowledge of their religion everywhere.

THE SPREAD OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

As in the Jerusalem Church, the Christian community of Sichuan became a powerful sign, an instrument of God, within society. Christians were set apart by their way of life. Their adherence to Gospel values, their strong community sense, their spiritual dynamism singled them out from the rest of society. A Mandarin of the Court of Qianlong observed this about them: "They are neither licentious nor gamblers or robbers. They are satisfied with one woman and never touch another man's wife."[16] While at times they were asked by non-believers to give an account of their faith, most often the Christians themselves took the initiative to explain the reasons for their conversion to their families and friends. The dilemna they faced as Christians was to bear witness to their beliefs

without, at the same time, needlessly provoking their non-Christian neighbours.

The spread of the faith in Sichuan can be seen from the following chart:

Number of baptized people in Sichuan		Chinese priests[17]	
1756	4,000	1756	2
1792	25,000	1778	9
1801	40,000	1789	14
1804	45,000	1800	16
1815	60,000	1804	20

During the last years of the reign of the Emperor Qianlong, a parallel can be drawn between the growth of Christianity and that of the secret societies, especially that of the White Lotus (白蓮教). While both groups developed at the same time in the same province, there was little similarity between the two. Secret societies were, in fact, very hostile towards Christians. What seems to be a more plausible an explanation was the general dissatisfaction in Sichuan with official ideology and the existing political system. In each case, however, the Emperor reacted violently, systematically annihilating members of the secret societies and then, beginning in 1805, turning against the Christians.

The rapid spread of Christianity from its center in Jerusalem to other towns and cities as described in the Acts of the Apostles was the same pattern of expansion that we find in Sichuan. In the beginning Christians from Shunqing (順慶) and Baoning (保寧) formed a small community around Fathers Buglio and Magelleans in the provincial capital of Chengdu. (In their journeys through the province these two priests had baptized about 400 people but most of them died in the persecutions.) By 1663, Chengdu had about 300 Christians meeting in two oratories... From this centre the faith spread to other cities and towns. In 1700, a dozen converts formed a small community in Chongqing. In 1723, there were over 200 Christians in Taoba (桃垻), many of whom had already experienced persecution. Communities formed in Jiading (嘉定), Anyue (安岳) Hezhou (合州) and Tongliang (銅梁).

As in the early Church of the Apostles, primary importance was given to the formation of Christian leaders. An elite quickly emerged as local communities selected members for responsible positions. Most of them were married men with families, but a few were not married. It was

from the latter group that the priests selected itinerant catechists. These catechists also served as guides for the missionaries on their journeys. It was from among the itinerant catechists that a local clegy emerged. Benoit Sun and Augustin Zhao, who had for several years served as guides to Father Jean-Martin Moÿe on his pastoral visitations, were subsequently ordained priests.[18] Later this method of formation was abandonned in favour of sending all candidates for the priesthood to the General College of Ayuthia in Siam.[19] In 1764, the local seminary was established at Luoranggou

The historical accounts of the early Church in Sichuan bear continual witness to the high motivation of the Christians under enormous difficulties. Father Jean-Martin Moÿe had inscribed over their meeting hall: 'The faint-hearted will never have a share in the kingdom of God.' Accounts of their behaviour in the face of poverty, persecution and even death, seem to indicate that the challenge was taken quite literally. Nor was their zeal tempered by arrest and imprisonment. While the Christians outside did everything possible to obtain their release, those in prison continued to proclaim the Gospel. During their detention in Beijing, the Zhang brothers baptized two condemned prisoners on the eve of their execution. They were drawn to the faith by the unwavering courage of the two priests. Jean-Martin Moÿe while a prisoner baptized one of the guards, a man named Zhu Yong. Zhu had been one of the arresting officers of Jean Baptiste Jiang during an earlier persecution. Taking the name Augustin Zhao at his baptism, he later entered the seminary and was ordained a priest in 1781 at the same ceremony as his former prisoner Jean Baptiste Jiang. Continuing in the footsteps of another persecutor of the Church, St. Paul, he, too, eventually laid down his life bearing witness to Christ. He died in prison in 1815.[20]


Zhu Yong guarding Jean-Martin Moÿe

The decision to enter the Church during those days was a serious one that brought with it many social consequences. Candidates for baptism risked being

ostracised from their families, becoming objects of community hostility, employment as well as marriage prospects were put in jeopardy. They had to undergo a long period of probation before being accepted into the catechumenate, and priests laid down demanding conditions for eventual baptism. These measures were taken to insure a solid foundation for the community to build on. The decision to become a Christian was not only crucial for the individual but for the life of the community as well. This determination to safeguard community unity and spirit on the part of the Sichuan Christians was an essential element in the growth of the local Church.

Missionary methods used in the effort to evangelize Sichuan were also reminiscent of those employed in the early Church of Apostolic times. They were direct and confrontative. The missionaries were convinced of the truth of their message and were impelled by a desire to bring salvation to a non-Christian world. They looked with a critical eye on local religious beliefs and were little inclined to search for their hidden values. Their method of approach contrasted sharply with those of Matteo Ricci and the Jesuits in Beijing. They did not share the same sensitive regard for traditional Chinese culture. Their approach to the local environment was pragmatic and existential, tolerating what could not be changed and seeking to change that which they felt to be incompatible with universal Church teaching. It must also be pointed out that their cultural mediators and interpreters were not the elite intellectual class of the Court but people of the lower classes, many of whom were illiterate.

The general hostile environment did not encourage public proclamation of the Gospel, but evangelization of family and friends was carried out with great zeal and fervour by the individual Christians. Their force and style was considered aggressive even by the general standards of that time. Christians did not hesitate to affirm their identity even under the most dangerous of circumstances. Nor did they seek to pass over differences. Like the people themselves, their methods were straightforward and honest, and what they lacked in tact and diplomacy, they made up for with sincerity and conviction. Such a style had the advantages of simplicity and clarity, and the fruits of their efforts were generations of generous and faithful Christians who were not to be intimidated by threats of imprisonment or death in professing their faith.

III. PRELUDE TO THE SYNOD

The Synod of Sichuan was to be a major event in the history of the

Church in that province. The idea to convene a synod was not arrived at suddenly, but rather, it grew gradually over a long period of time. At an earlier meeting of priests, which was held in 1777 to address the problem of the money-lenders, it was made evident that this was only one of a series of pastorally related problems that needed special attention. In the early Church of the Apostles, the infant Church was also faced with issues arising both from within and without. How to accommodate the message to the existing environment and how to insure the continual spiritual growth of the Christian communities themselves? Such questions in apostolic times led to the Council of Jerusalem. In Sichuan, the very same problems led the Bishop of the Diocese Gabriel-Taurin Dufresse to finally call a synod in 1803. The growing divergence of opinion in the resolution of pastoral problems demanded a broader consensus of opinion achieved in an athmosphere of shared reflection. Only a Synod would be capable of resolving basic conflicts and giving new direction to pastoral work.

The need for a synod arose from the very success of the local Church itself. As communities multiplied and Christianity spread to the farthest reaches of the province, coordination among the growing number of pastoral agents became increasingly more difficult. The number and distances between mission centers isolated leadership. Solutions to common pastoral problems differed and were often in conflict. Communities tended to follow the patterns of the local pastor and his catechists even to the point of adopting their highly individualistic approaches to community spirituality and local customs. The task the Synod of Sichuan set for itself was to review in detail the problems, reach a common resolution and offer guidelines for the future. In this way it was hoped that the success of the past would be consolidated and a strong pastoral impetus would be given to enable continual growth and expansion in the decades ahead.

While the second part of this brief history of the early Church in Sichuan will focus on the Synod itself, some mention here of the kinds of problems the Synod was expected to resolve is not without value in gaining a better understanding of the pre-Synod expectations of the participants.

As mentioned above, there were various opinions about the practical application of pastoral theory to local practices. In some cases, sharp conflicts developed among the priests, all of whom had groups of supporters not only among themselves but also among catechists and the people as

well. The strongest controversies arose around the issue of dispensing the sacraments, especially the sacrament of Baptism. During the famine years, the custom of baptizing pagan children in danger of death became common-place. After the famine, some took it upon themselves to baptize infants who were not in danger of death, and they did so without the permission of the parents. This abuse of pastoral authority forced review of a much broader issue, namely, what were to be the criteria for administering the sacrament of Baptism on all levels of society?

Another set of problems clustered about the region's most controversial figure, that of Jean-Martin Moÿe.[21] Moÿe was universally recognized as a saintly man. Of austere personal life and given to all the ascetic disciplines common to 18th century French spirituality, which was still under a strong Jansenistic influence, Moÿe was also an autocrat. He expected his Christians to follow him in the severe and strict path to sanctity that he himself had chosen. The imposition of his own personal style of spirituality on the Christian community was considered rash and excessive by other priests in the region. They not only hesitated to follow his lead but rejected his basic pastoral assumptions. Again, only a regional synod would have the authority to define pastoral guidelines regulating the practice of devotions and lay spirituality for the Diocese.

In a Christian community devoid as yet of any established religious orders of women, there developed in Sichuan an association of unmarried women who bound themselves by simple vows of chastity to a life of pastoral service to the Church. It's name was the Institute of Christian Virgins, and it had made valuable contributions to the pastoral work of the Diocese. It had not yet, however, evolved or adopted a rule of common life, nor was it formally erected as an institute under proper ecclesiatical jurisdiction. As a result, abuses set in. On at least one occasion Moÿe, a zealous promotor of the association, received vows of candidates without prior permission from the bishop. He had also received vows from girls who were underage. Acting under the direction of some priests, the Insitute took on tasks that were generally considered not merely imprudent but rash...addressing mixed groups and debating with Confucianists before public gatherings. Such activity in a community where the sexes were severely segregated earned the animosity of the local people, who turned their anger against the Church. That the excellent pastoral work of the Institute should continue was never questioned, but there was a growing demand that the loose confederation should be tightened by an established rule of life properly administrated.

The Synod of Sichuan would also be asked to address the perennial

problem of the money-lenders.[22] In principal, the way the custom was practised was agreed by all to be usurous and contrary to Christian moral principles. However, how were those Christians or catechumens already caught up in the system to be treated? This became a bone of contention. Some were adamant and would have nothing to do with Christians involved in any aspect of the practice. Others felt that a less severe approach was called for in individual circumstances and because of the long tradition the custom had had in the province.

The above examples give some indication of concerns that would be brought before the participants of the Synod. They also illustrate the pastoral and local nature of the issues. This was in keeping with the general policy of the universal Church at the time. Rome reserved the right to decide issues that were of a universal nature, and left to local Synods the resolution of regional problems. How the Synod of Sichuan would go about resolving conflicts, what guidelines it would give to local communities, what general pastoral policies it would adopt, all would have a profound effect on the development and growth of the Church in that province. The Synod would, in fact, lay the groundwork for the next 150 years of evangelization in this the most beautiful of all China's provinces.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. "The Holy Religion Enters Sichuan" by Father François GOURDON. First edition, 1918, Holy Family Publishing House at Chongqing. Latest edition, 1981, People's Press Chengdu, Sichuan.

2. Statistics found in "Economiste français" (French economist) of Fondpertuis, Paris 1880.

3. Only sixty meters tall according to other sources (Bulletin des Missions Etrangères 1925).

4. "L'Empire chinois" (The Chinese Empire) by M. Huc 1879. Paris Gaume et Compagnie, editors.

5. Some obsolete words appear in these writings, such as: Tartars, Viceroy, satellites, infidels etc... These were the very terms used by the missionaries in their reports.

6. The plain of Chengdu is called thus because of the color of its soil.

7. One of the missionaries who worked in Sichuan after World War II describes the situation of the Christians somewhat humorously: "They were tough people, as was the entire environment. Actual highway robbery and not afraid of murder; a certain number of my flock were quite familiar with these matters. In spite of all this, they had undeniable good qualities. There were of course lots of tensions, conflicts, and rivalries among families and clans, but also fidelity, a deep sense of responsibility in promises given, mutual aid and total lack of sophistication. They were true people, with raging passions but strong solid virtues. (Epiphanie No. 39 page 19 Paris)

8. Concerning Zhang Xianzhong and the Pozijun Cf.: "Dictionary of Historical Personalities in China" Chao Yang Publishing Company, Page 514 and: "A Collection of Historical episodes in China" Yuanliu Chubanshe Taipei Volume 20 Page 874-952, Volume 21 Page 81 to 181.

9. In our day, the condition of women has greatly improved in China, particularly in Sichuan. Nevertheless, the situation is still far from ideal. Press reports point to continuing abuses.

10. This causes problems for the administration of some sacraments such as Baptism, the anointing of the sick.

11. The greater part of this material is from the works of Father Adrien Launay. "Histoire de Chine; Mission du Sichuan" Book 1 and 2, Tequi, Paris, 1920. Other books published before these two also contain valuable information: "La Mission du Sichuan au XVIII° siècle; vie du Mgr. Pottier" by Léonide Guiot Tequi, Paris 1892; and "Vie de l'abbé Moye" by J. Marchal Retaux, Paris, 1872.

The Chinese names of various places and persons cited in this article are most often taken from the "Biography of Personnages of Chinese Catholicism" by Professor Fang Hao, Catholic Truth Society, Volume 3, Page 122-209; Hong Kong 1973. The others come from the book: "The Holy Religion Enters Sichuan" by François Gourdon.

12. Cf. the first part of "The Holy Religion Enters Sichuan".

13. One of his successors, Pierre Trenchant, writes: "I am truly a very poor bishop, poor in all ways, not just in material wealth. I am never embarrassed to carry the money that I have, and I do not fear that robbers will take it. Luckily, Msgr. Dufresse gave me the episcopal vestments that the late Msgr. de Saint-Martin left. I could never have the means to buy such, even if they are not luxurious at all. I am poor in health and strength, poor in virtue, science, and the other qualities expected to be found in a bishop." (Letter to Denis Chaumont, August 2nd 1802)

14. In 1707, the Emperor Kangxi ordered all foreign missionaries to take an oath (known as "imperial patent") or face expulsion from the country. Significant excerpts read as follows:

1) Since the God of the Chinese is the same as that of the Christians, it is natural to give him the same name.

2) The ceremonies in honour of Confucius are not incompatible with Christianity.

3) Homage paid to ancestors is not irreconciliable with this religion.

These assertions take an opposing view to that of the Holy Office concerning the Chinese Rites.

15. The Christians gave all their money to free those in prison and failing this, provided funds for their food and other necessities. This generosity resolved immediate problems, but created others. It prompted corrupt mandarins to continue persecutions for personal gain. In 1777, the Christian community spent the enormous sum of 1,600 pounds for the release of Father Gleyo, who was eventually freed. (The average income for a priest at that time was 30 tael per year, or about 210 pounds)

16. "Histoire des Missions de Chine; Mission du Sichuan" Tequi, Paris, 1920.

17. One has to keep in mind that the mission lost six Chinese priests through exile or death between 1785 and 1795.

18. Chapter nine of "Monita ad Missionaris" stipulates that in each mission, a leader or a catechist should be chosen. Chapter ten suggests that missionaries choose from among the most responsible of this group men who would later be ordained to the priesthood.

19. Later on the General College moved to Virampatnam, near Pondichery, in India.

20. The life of Augustin Zhao can be found in "Biography of the First Martyrs in China" by Liu Yusheng, Taipei, 1977.

21. The personality and the work of Jean-Martin Moÿe had been the topic of conflicting points of view before his beatification (21-11-1954). He founded several religious orders of women and died of typhus contracted while tending the sick in 1792 during the French Revolution. Launay and Guiot admire him, but are also critical of him, while J. Marchal and G. Goyau support him fully.

22. An example of the type of contract, which seems to have originated in Sichuan: A landlord who wants to borrow money offers his estate, land or house as collateral to a money-lender who is willing to lend him the proportionate sum. During the time of this loan, the creditor enjoys all rights to the property and its fruits, while the owner is responsible for all public expenses such as taxes. ("Vie de l'abbe Moÿe" already cited.) Father Moÿe estimates that the interest was thus 50%. Others consider this statement exaggerated.