

FROM THE EDITOR

In this and the following issue, Tripod discusses some important aspects of the current situation of major religious faiths in China. The focus of this issue will be on the Catholic Church and Buddhism.

The first article, "Theological-Pastoral Reflections on the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China", is written by Aloysius Chang, one of Taiwan's leading theologians and a professor at Fujen University. Fr. Chang not only highlights positive elements in the Catholic Church in China, but also addresses himself to some of the shadow areas that call for more illumination as the CCPRC seeks a new identity.

The formation of priests who will take the place of its ageing Chinese clergy is a top priority of the Church in China. Recently China has reopened seven major national or regional seminaries which are recognized by the government and have already enrolled more than 600 students. Among these, Shanghai's Sheshan was the first to reopen in 1982. It also has the largest number of seminarians. Dr. Donald MacInnis, coordinator for China Research and Liaison for Maryknoll in New York, took advantage of his sabbatical year of research at Holy Spirit Study Centre to travel to Sheshan where he interviewed five of the seminarians. Their answers offer insights into their backgrounds and motivation for entering the seminary to prepare themselves for the priesthood.

Perhaps some of our readers are already familiar with Mr. Zhao Puchu's important address to the National Congress of People's Political Consultative Committee, in which he points out how the policy on religious freedom is being implemented, and the need for new laws and changes in the present policy. Tripod here reprints the full text of this highly critical and forthright address, which calls for basic changes in the government's approach to China's religions.

Recently a study was made by the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences entitled "A Preliminary Analysis of Why Young People Believe in Buddhism". The results reflect the attitudes and motivations of a growing number of China's youth about religion, and more specifically Buddhism. The study underlines how timely and crucial are the questions Professor Zhao has raised in the previous article.