

The 1980 Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference: Where Are They Now?

by Anthony Lam

In May of 1980, the Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference was established at the Third Plenary Session of the National Catholic Patriotic Association. At the time, 33 bishops were listed as members of the Conference. In the past 9 years, there have been changes in that original list. This article offers a brief summary of what has become of those 33 bishops. We begin with a list of the bishops, their respective dioceses and the provinces in which those dioceses are found. Under remarks, we have included the position these bishops held in 1980 within the Conference (BC), the National Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) and the Church Affairs Council (CAC), as well as the date of death of those who have passed away in subsequent years.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>PROVINCE</u>	<u>DIOCESE</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
Deng Jizhou	Sichuan	Leshan	
Kong Linzhong	Yunnan	Kunming	
Fang Zhigang	Zhejiang	Wenzhou	
Wang Xueming	Nei Mongol	Hohhot	BC Vice-Chairman,
Wang Qiwei	Hebei	Baoding	
Wang Weimin	Jilin	Jilin	Resigned
Wang Ruihuan	Heilongjiang	Harbin	
Ye Yinyun	Guangdong	Huiyang	
Lin Quan	Fujian	Fuzhou	CAC Deputy-Director
Li Shengxue	Shaanxi	Hanzhong	d. 84.1.20
Li Shuren	Hunan	Yueyang	
Li Xiting	Sichuan	Chengdu	d. 89.5.28
Li Depei		Tianjin	CPA Vice-President, CAC Deputy-Director
Wu Guohuan	Zhejiang	Hangzhou	
He Chunming	Henan	Kaifeng	d. 86.11.12
Chen Duqing	Jiangxi	Gangzhou	
Yu Chengcai	Jiangsu	Haimen	
Zong Huaide	Shandong	Jinan	CPA President, BC Vice-Chairman, CAC Deputy-Director
Zhang Mingqian	Hubei	Yichang	
Zhang Jiashu		Shanghai	BC Chairman, CAC Director, CPA Vice-President, d. 88.2.25
Yang Gaojian	Hunan	Changde	BC Vice-Chairman and General Secretary, CAC Deputy-Director and General Secretary, CPA Vice-President
Zhou Yizhou	Anhui	Bengbu	d. 83.10.26
Fan Daojiang	Sichuan	Nanchong	d. 87.12.17

Duan Yinming	Sichuan	Wanxian	CAC Deputy-Director
Zhao Youmin	Liaoning	Fushun	d. 88.3.8
Tu Shihua	Hubei	Hanyang	BC Vice-Chairman, CAC Deputy-Director, CPA Vice-President
Qian Yurong	Jiangsu	Xuzhou	BC Vice-Chairman
Chang Shouyi	Hebei	Xuanhua	CAC Deputy-Director, d. 87.3.27
Han Tingbi	Shanxi	Hongdong	
Shu Qishui	Zhejiang	Ningbo	d. 1983
Fu Tieshan		Beijing	BC Vice-Chairman, CAC Deputy-Director CPA Vice-President
Pan Shaoqing	Hebei	Xiwangzi	d. 83.2.5
Dong Guangqing	Hubei	Hankou	BC Vice-Chairman

Among these 33 bishops, four were appointed by Pope Pius XII: Deng Jizhou, Wang Xueming, Duan Yinming and Han Tingbi. The rest were elected by the government sponsored CPA without Rome's approval. All of the latter, except Fu Tieshan, were elected and consecrated within the time-frame of 1958 to 1964. Deng Jizhou, Wang Xueming and Duan Yinming have been active in the CPA's activities and participants in the Association's episcopal ordination ceremonies. Han Tingbi is the only prelate of the above-mentioned four who has never joined the CPA. Today, all four bishops have the respect of local government authorities.

Ten bishops have died since the founding of the conference, while seven others no longer reside in their own dioceses. Most of the seven, Li Depei, Fang Zhigang, Yang Gaojian, Tu Shihua and Zong Huaide live in Beijing. Tu is now the rector of the National Seminary there. His former diocese of Hanyang is comparatively small and now administered by Bishop Dong Guangqing of Hankou. Zong is the President of the National CPA. After the death of Zhang Jiashu in 1988, Zong also became Acting Chairman of the Bishops' Conference and the Church Affairs Council. The other three bishops have no special reason to remain in Beijing. Wang Qiwei lives now in Shijiazhuang City and seldom returns to his Baoding diocese. Li Shuren moved from Yueyang to Changsha, the capital of Hunan Province, in 1980 when he was elected Chairman of the Provincial CPA. (There are only a handful of Catholics in Yueyang, and the diocese is now administered by a resident priest.)

Wang Weimin of Jilin, who was married during the Cultural Revolution, resigned from the episcopacy in the early 1980s. He is employed by the Provincial CPA in Changchun now. Liu Dianchi and then Li Xuesong subsequently followed him as Bishops of Jilin.

Actually, quite a few bishops married during the Cultural Revolution, some of whom have left their posts and no longer practice their sacramental ministry while the others remain active in their dioceses.

Wu Guohuan of Hangzhou is the only prelate who has formally retired from the episcopacy. Wu is now 94 and living in Linma Village, outside

of Hangzhou. Zhu Fengqing was elected to replace him by the CPA in 1988.

Ye Yinyun had been elected by the CPA in 1962 as bishop of Huiyang, a newly created diocese which had no diocesan seat nor official bishop's residence. In June of 1981, however, when Mgr. Deng Yiming's appointment as archbishop was not acceptable to the government, Ye was selected by the Provincial CPA of Guangdong to be the Bishop of Guangzhou. He took office on October 10, 1981.

Eight other bishops continue to work in their own dioceses up to the present. Kong Linzhong of Kunming had spent some time in Shanghai as a translator, but returned in 1987 to Kunming to open a minor seminary there. Chen Duqing of Gangzhou remains in Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi Province, where people refer to him as the "Bishop of Jiangxi". In 1987, the Provincial CPA elected Wu Shizhen auxiliary bishop as Chen's heir-apparent, but Chen has yet to retire.

Wang Ruihuan of Harbin was called upon to serve as Vice-Chairman of the Bishops' Conference in 1986, despite his age. As for the remaining bishops from the original Bishops' Conference, there have been no major changes in their status.

At the time of the first meeting of the Chinese Bishop's Conference in 1980, there were still in China six other bishops who had been appointed by Pope Pius XII during the years between 1949 and 1951. They did not join the Conference. Among the six, Li Bayu of Zhouzhi was the Vice-President of the National Patriotic Association in 1957 but he had already died before the new Bishops' Conference got underway.

Of the remaining five, Deng Yiming of Guangzhou was still in prison during the Conference. He was released a month later and given government permission to go to Hongkong to receive medical treatment in 1981. Later he was refused permission to return to the Mainland, and he continues to reside in Hongkong.

Zhou Weidao of Fengxiang had already returned to his diocese by 1979, where he reopened a seminary and a convent. Zhou passed away on February 24, 1983 and was succeeded by Li Jingfeng.

Fan Xueyan of Baoding was working in his diocese in 1980, but he continued to refuse to join the Patriotic Association. Re-arrested in 1984 and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, Fan was released on parole in November 1987.

Gong Pinmei of Shanghai was not released from prison until July 1985. After his parole, he was sent to reside at the bishop's residence in Xujiahui, Shanghai. In 1988, his civil rights were restored and he was allowed to go to the United States for medical treatment. He is still there.

Zhang Kexing of Xiwanzi was released from prison in March 1985. He died three years later on November 6, 1988. He had never been a member of the Patriotic Association.

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