

Bishops Officially Consecrated in China Since Mid-1988

by Anthony Lam

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Several times in the past, *Tripod* has printed articles regarding the selection of bishops within the Catholic Church in China¹. Issue 48 carried an article entitled, "List of Bishops Consecrated by the CPA Since 1979," which documented the election and consecration of bishops through mid-1988. The present article documents the election and consecration of bishops from October 1988 to February 1992.



Election and Consecration of Bishops: 1988-1992

From late 1988 through February 1992, the official church in China celebrated the Rite for Consecration of bishops 19 times, consecrating 23 bishops. Bp. Zong Huaide, acting chairman of the Chinese Bishops' Conference, was the principle consecrator for 11 of these ceremonies. For the other 8, Bp. Duan Yinming of Wanxian, Sichuan, and Bp. Zhang Xin of Taiyuan, Shanxi, each presided twice; and Bp. Jin Luxian of Shanghai, Bp. Chen Bolu of Handan, Hebei, Bp. Han Tingbi of Hongdong, Shanxi, and Bp. Li Du'an of Xian, Shaanxi, each officiated once.

Four of the 19 consecration liturgies were held in Beijing; two took place in Chengdu, Sichuan, and the remainder were celebrated mainly in the diocese of the bishop being ordained.

Some Differences in Customary Practices

Few Multiple Consecrations

There were notable differences in recent consecrations from those which took place between 1958 and 1964; and from 1979 through the first half of 1988. Although in 4 of the recent

ceremonies, 2 bishops were consecrated in a single liturgy, no ceremony ordained 4-5 bishops simultaneously as was done on previous occasions.²

Use of Chinese in Ceremony

October 28, 1989, provided another departure from customary practice. During the consecration of Hou Jinde in the cathedral parish in Zhaojiahuang, Weixian, Hebei, Chinese was used for the first time for a bishop's consecration.³

Consecration outside Sichuan

Another first was the consecration of Bp. Xie Chaogang of Xichang, Sichuan, May 5, 1991, in Beijing. In the history of independent elections and consecrations of bishops, which began in 1958, this marked the first time a candidate from Sichuan had been consecrated outside his home province.⁴

Difference in Age

Recent consecrations were marked by another significant difference: the average age of the new bishops at the time of their consecration was 73. This is 4.9 years older than the 68.1 average age of the 36 bishops consecrated between 1979 and mid-1988.⁵ This could indicate that the Catholic Church in China lacks younger priests qualified to become bishops or, as the Chinese adage says, "the old grain is used up before the new harvest is in."

Of the 23 new bishops, Xu Zhixuan, Liu Huanpo and Sun Yuanmu were named auxiliaries; the other 20 were named the ordinaries of their respective dioceses. Of the three auxiliaries, Sun Yuanmu, in June 1991, accepted an appointment from his bishop, Han Tingbi of Hongdong, Shanxi, to succeed him as the bishop of that diocese.⁶ The first of the group of new bishops to be consecrated, Bp. Zhang Hualiang of the Diocese of Shenyang, Liaoning, died six months after his consecration. Jin Peixian, the present bishop, accepted the responsibility for the Liaoning diocese after the See had been vacant for one month.

Selection of Bishops Indicate Possible New Trends

Another noticeable difference is that most of the new bishops do not yet hold offices in Catholic organizations at the national level. This is due, no doubt, to the fact that the Catholic Patriotic Association and the Church Affairs Committee have not held a conference since November 1986. Therefore, other than replacements due to the death of some elderly office

holders, there have been no major shifts in church organization or administration. So quite understandably, the new bishops have not yet assumed posts such as Chairman or Deputy Director of church government structures. Only six new bishops have been appointed to the general committee of the Fourth Plenary Session of the CPA: Bps. Wang Chongyi, Zhu Fengqing, Guo Yingong, Jiang Taoran, Huo Juan, and Pan Deshi, and only Wang Chongyi and Guo Yingong have been appointed to the standing committees.⁷ Only five new bishops have been appointed to the general committee of the Second Plenary Session of the Church Affairs Committee: Bps. Wang Chongyi, Wang Zhenye, Zhu Fengqing, Guo Yingong and Jiang Taoran (except for Wang Zhenye, all serve on many committees).⁸ Of the 23 bishops, 16 have yet to be appointed to a committee on either of the two Catholic organizations at the national level. By contrast, most of the bishops appointed from November 1986 through mid-1988; that is, from the close of the joint meeting of the Fourth Plenum of the CPA and the Second Plenum of the Church Affairs Committee, had been serving on a committee in some national organization before their consecration.⁹ This present selection of new bishops may indicate a trend toward more openness on the part of the Chinese Church to nominate and select bishops from among clergy, who have not actively participated in the open church.

Another change in attitude, perhaps only a pragmatic one, is that the Chinese government, now seems willing to accept clergy from different backgrounds.

List of Bishops Consecrated: Mid-1988-1992

The list of Catholic bishops consecrated in the official church from the second half of 1988 through February 1992 follows. Many of the new bishops have responsibilities in the seminaries, as noted in the listing. Unless otherwise indicated, all reside in their dioceses.

Date	Place/ Consecrator	Co-consecrators	Bishop	Diocese
88.10.16	Beijing Zong Huaide	Li Xuesong Liu Jinghe	Zhang Hualiang	Liaoning
N.B.	Bp. Zhang died in April 1989.			
88.11.27	Shanghai Jin Luxian	Ma Longlin Yu Chengcai	Zhu Fengqing	Hangzhou, Zhejiang
88.12.4	Beijing Zong Huaide	Duan Yinming Dong Guangqing	Wang Chongyi	Guiyang Guizhou
89.5.7	Meixian, Guangdong Zong Huaide	Ye Yinyun Cai Tiyan	Zhong Quanzhang	Meixian
89.5.21	Shijiazhuang, Hebei Zong Huaide	Liu Jinghe Zhang Shizhi	Jin Peixian Jiang Taoran	Liaoning Shijiazhuang
N.B.	Bp. Jin is also on Board of Directors, Shenyang Seminary.			
89.7.31	Chengdu, Sichuan Duan Yinming	Chen Shizhong Liu Zongyu	Huang Woze Xu Zhixuan	Nanchong, Wanxian,
N.B.	Bp. Xu is also rector of Sichuan seminary, residing in Chengdu.			
89.10.28	Weixian, Hebei Chen Bolu	Fan Wenxing Jiang Taoran	Hou Jinde	Xingtai
90.5.6	Guangzhou, Guangdong Zong Huaide	Cai Tiyan Zhong Quanzhang	Lin Bingliang	Guangzhou

90.5.27	Beijing Zong Huaide	Tu Shihua Zhu Huayu	Zhang Fengzao	Wuhu, Anhui
90.7.8	Taiyuan, Shanxi Zhang Xin	Li Du'an Zhang Wenbin	Guo Yingong Luo Juan	Datong, Shuozhou
N.B.	Bp. Guo is also rector of Taiyuan, residing in Taiyuan.			
90.8.26	Harbin, Heilongjiang Zong Huaide	Liu Jinghe Jin Peixian	Liu Huanpo	Harbin
90.10.28	Hohhot, Nei Mongolia Zong Huaide	Wang Xueming Guo Yingong	Guo Zhengji Zhu Wenyu	Shaanba, Chifeng,
91.2.22	Hongdong, Shanxi Han Tingbi	Luo Juan Guo Yingong	Sun Yuanmu	Hongdong,
N.B.	Bp. Sun is also rector of Hongdong minor seminary.			
91.2.24	Fuzhou, Fujian Zong Huaide	Cai Tiyuan Li Du'an	Zheng Changcheng	Fuzhou,
N.B.	Bp. Zheng is also rector of Fuzhou seminary.			
91.5.5	Beijing Zong Huaide	Duan Yinming Chen Shizhong	Xie Chaogang	Xichang,
91.9.4	Fenyang, Shanxi Zhang Xin	Guo Yingong Luo Juan	Huo Cheng	Fenyang,
91.11.17	Xi'an, Shaanxi Li Du'an	Xu Runchen Zhang Wenbin	Wang Zhenye	Yan'an,
N.B.	Bp. Wang teaches at Xian seminary, and resides in Xian.			

91.12.8	Tangshan, Hebei	Zong Huaide	Liu Jinghe	Pan Deshi	Baoding,
			Jiang Taoran		
92.2.24	Chengdu, Sichuan	Duan Yinming	Huang Woze	Liu Xianru	Chengdu,
			Chen Shizhong		

Notes

1. For articles about the election and consecration of bishops independently of the Vatican, see *Tripod* "List of Bishops Consecrated by the CPA in China Since 1979," Issue 48, 71-73; (1988, 6) Anthony Lam; "The 1980 Chinese Catholic Bishops' Conference: Where Are They Now?", Issue 52 (1989, 4), 67-69; Anthony Lam; "Bishops of the Chinese Patriotic Association: 1959-1963," Issue 54 (1989, 6), 67-70; Anthony Lam, "The Chinese Bishops' Conference in Beijing," Issue 56 (1990, 2), 51-56; and Anthony Lam: "Chinese Catholic Bishops Appointed in China by Pope Pius XII from 1949-1955," Issue 59 (1990, 10), 72-77.
2. On July 24, 1981, five priests from different dioceses were jointly consecrated bishops; on November 30, 1986, four from four different dioceses were consecrated at the same time, in Beijing; on April 24, 1988, five priests attached to four dioceses in Shandong were jointly consecrated in Jinan. From 1958 through 1963, there were seven multiple consecrations. cf. articles listed above.
3. *UCANEWS*, dispatch 534, November 27, 1989.
4. From 1958 on, a total of 10 bishops were consecrated for Sichuan, including the recently consecrated Bp. Liu Xianru of Chengdu. All except Xie were ordained within the province by natives of Sichuan.
5. From 1958 through the first half of 1988, the median age of bishops at their consecration was 69 years; for those ordained after mid-1988, it was 74. When their ages are grouped into five-year spans, the bulk of those ordained before mid-1988 fell between the ages of 66 to 70 years, while most of those ordained more recently range from 71 to 75 years. Even with a possible margin of error in data, these numbers still reflect the phenomenon of more aged bishops.
6. Bp. Han Tingbi died of illness five months after retiring. See "The Life of Bp. Han Tingbi: Great Labor, Suffering, and Accomplishments," in the Taiwan *Shantao Catholic Weekly*, January 26, 1992, and "Bishop Han Tingbi of Hongdong Diocese, 1908-91," by Anthony Lam, *Tripod*, Issue 67 (Jan.-Feb. 1992), 69-70. In other parts of the world, there is an important distinction between "auxiliary bishop" and "coadjutor bishop," but in China, the term "auxiliary bishop" (zhuli jujiao) is commonly used.
7. *Catholic Church in China*, no. 18 (1987,1), 48-49.
8. *ibid.*, no. 18 (1987,1), 50-51.
9. *ibid.* Of the 17 bishops consecrated from Nov. 30, 1986 through the first half of 1988, only Bp. Li Du'an of Xi'an had not yet been involved in an organization of the open church on the national level.