

Response to Geoffrey King's Article¹

by Stephen Lee

I. Canonical Discipline in the Mystery of the Church

A few year ago I heard a Chinese bishop tell his audience that *potestas* or Church law was not important. What was of the utmost importance was the mutual love and communion of the Christian community. This, of course, is nothing new.

"Within the Church, there emerges again and again erroneous concepts which exalt the spiritual and mystical aspects of the Church to such a degree that they exclude the proper juridical, structural and normative dimension seeing it only as human invention and an obstacle to the full development of the Christian life and to genuine fidelity to the spirit of the Gospel"²



What China lacks is an efficient and functional legal system. Applications of the law are very often arbitrary and inconsistent, dependent on the whim of national and local leaders. Church authority cannot help but be influenced by this ambivalent atmosphere. And while I do not intend to make an *apologia* for the Code of Canon Law, I do hope to pin-point some important aspects which are often overlooked when Church issues are discussed.

The juridical dimension is intrinsic to the Church's nature. The faithful through baptism are initiated into the People of God, and are called to participate in the work of salvation which Christ has entrusted to His Church. They are united through the profession of a common faith, the sacraments, the governance and *communio* of the *congregatio fidelium*. This *communio* finds visible and external expression in an organized hierarchical society which, of necessity, has a juridical dimension: *ubi societas, ibi ius*.

In the promulgation of the new Code, Pope John Paul II affirmed,

As a matter of fact, the Code of Canon Law is extremely necessary for the Church. Since the Church is organized as a social and visible structure, it must also have norms: in order that the hierarchical and organic structure be visible; in order that the exercise of the functions divinely entrusted to it, especially that of sacred power and of the administration of the sacraments, may be adequately organized; in order that the mutual relations of the faithful may be regulated according to justice based upon charity, with the rights of individuals guaranteed and well-defined; in order finally, that common initiatives undertaken to live a Christian life ever more perfectly may be sustained, strengthened and fostered by canonical norms."³

The universal Church in carrying out its divine mission and insuring its continuity until the end of time, has a law which is universal within the Church's ambit and order proper to it. So, if the Chinese Catholic leaders reject the universal validity of the Code of Canon Law, seeing it only as a combination of human laws, as norms formulated by the Holy See applicable only in some places and lacking binding force for the Chinese Church, they lack knowledge of the nature of the canonical order. To adapt the universal laws to the diverse circumstances of place, time and persons, there is a particular law defined by different Councils or Bishops' Conferences. Except for those laws which are of a divine nature or touch the crux of ecclesiastical discipline, canonical norms are extremely flexible especially in terms of the salvation of souls which is, in fact, the aim of the law of the Church.⁴

If Chinese Catholic leaders fail to recognize and acknowledge the nature and function of Church law, there is a danger they might exercise Church governance arbitrarily, thus spread confusion and lead many faithful, including themselves, into heresy and schism.

Since King, in his article, considers only "schism and consecration of bishops without pontifical mandate," as elements which could constitute offenses and which, for their gravity and the universality of their effects, are classified in the common penal law, a more fitting title for his work would be "Evaluation of the Situation of the Chinese Church from the Perspective of the Canonical Penal Law"

Penal law, which supports the fulfillment of justice in the Church, cannot be isolated from the rest of the law. It has a

pastoral meaning while it protects coercively ⁵ the spiritual and moral integrity of the entire Church, it is concerned for the good of the offender. ⁶

II. Evaluating the Chinese Church from the Perspective of the Canonical Penal Law

Schism?

Schism is defined as "the withdrawal of submission to the Supreme Pontiff or from communion with the members of the Church subject to him" (c. 751).⁷ Schism, when classified as an offense against religion and unity of the Church, incurs a "*latae sententiae*" excommunication (c.1364 §1); that is, automatic excommunication.

Let us analyze the content of canon 751.⁸

1) The offense is the *detrectatio*, or rejection, not just the absence of communion.

2) The rejection has to be directed toward the Roman Pontiff, either in an immediate way (rejection of submission to the Pope) or mediate way (rejection of communion with the members of the Church who submit themselves to the Pope). Schism always refers to the Universal Church. There is no such thing as a *particular schism*. A rupture with the local bishop is not a schism unless done in view of breaking with the Pope.⁹

3) The canon deals only with a pure not a mixed schism. A pure schism is the rejection of the "unity of government of the Roman Catholic Church." The schismatic, while breaking communion or not obeying the Roman Pontiff, does not reject any truth of faith, but only the juridical and charismatic bond which unites the faithful to each other and to the Roman Pontiff, the supreme head who is the direct successor of Peter."¹⁰ A pure schism is rare since the rejection of obedience to the supreme authority usually worsens into heresy. A schism is "mixed" when besides insubordination, it rejects some dogma, e.g. if it doubts or rejects that the Church is one and the Pope is the principle and foundation of the unity in the Church.

4) A schism must be direct not indirect. When the direct object of the action is the rejection, it is direct. It is indirect when, although there is a rupture, the rejection of the communion is not the direct object.

5) A schism must be formal and not merely material. If the opposition to the Church is derived from invincible ignorance, without malice or pertinence, and of good faith, and without personal culpability, "the schism is material and not the offense classified in penal law. If it is derived from bad faith, with pertinence, knowing that it is against the legitimate hierarchy and the supernatural community instituted by Christ, it is a formal schism".¹¹

6) A schism must be notorious (public) not secret.

In summary, the offense of schism as classified in cc. 751 and 1364 §1 can be defined as formal, pure, direct, notorious, with immediate or mediate rejection of communion with the Pope and the union with the Universal Church.

Schism in China?

I would like to add the following to King's comments:

1) I think it is incorrect and unjust to speak of the Catholic Church in China as a schismatic Church. Because of China's political and social instability, the information received in the West about the Church in China is both insufficient and unreliable. If the Church were schismatic, the bishops and faithful would have to reject directly any submission to the Pope. However, we know very well that the majority of the bishops, whether legitimately or illegitimately consecrated, are faithful. Although some belong to the CCPA, they are in communion with the Pope. Besides, neither the CCPA (being a non-religious organization as it is written in the constitution of the Association) nor the CCBC and the CCCEA represent the Chinese Catholic Church, because there are many bishops and faithful that do not belong to these patriotic organizations. Furthermore, these organizations have never officially required the rejection of submission to the Pope directly and explicitly. Nor has the Holy See imposed the penalty of excommunication on those who belong to these organizations. Besides, the majority of Catholics who have opted to belong to these organizations have done so for many different and personal motives.

2) I do accept the possibility that at the beginning of the movement of the three autonomies some Catholic leaders may have become schismatic, especially when they sought to reject the juridical bond with the Pope without rejecting the truth of

faith. However, for historical, political and social reasons, their rejection of submission to the Pope would still be indirect, i.e. the direct will of the action was the survival of the Church, accommodation to an atheistic government, more autonomy for the Chinese church, the rejection of foreign interference, etc. I must add that, although the consecration of bishops without pontifical mandate can provoke a schism, it does not necessarily constitute the offense of schism, because it is not a direct rejection of communion.

From 1979 onwards, because Rome was against the 3 autonomies, China often attacked the Vatican, the Roman Curia or the Pope. These hostile statements did not contain a direct rejection of the communion with the Pope; they were rather a negative criticism of Rome's attitude and action towards China.

However, I have observed that there is at least one patriotic bishop and theologian who is developing an ecclesiology, an interpretation of the Bible in view of rejecting the supremacy of the Pope in the universal Church. The danger here is that this doctrinal stand could become heretical, which in turn could lead to schism.

3) I prefer not to make a definitive judgement on the question of schism for the following reasons:

-- the complex context of the history of the Catholic Church in China especially during the missionary era;

-- the hostile political context in which the Chinese Church finds itself; the pressure which the Communist Government exercises on the Catholic leaders; the natural instinct of the Church to look for a way of survival.

-- the doubtful authenticity of some of the information and the declarations and speeches of Church leaders. Is what the leaders say what they think and believe in their hearts?

4) In China, we can talk of schism only in sociological terms, or of an *air* or *suspicion* of schism, but not schism in its technical sense as defined in cc. 751 and 1364 §1.

Episcopal Consecration without Pontifical Mandate

Episcopal consecration without pontifical mandate is an offense classified in c. 1382 under the title "Usurpation of Ecclesiastical Offices and Offenses Committed in their Exercise" which incurs the penalty of excommunication "*latae sententiae*"

reserved to the Holy See. Those who incur the penalty are the bishops who consecrate and the persons who receive the consecration. But, have the patriotic bishops been excommunicated?

I agree very much with the explanation given in King's article on this point. Obviously, in China there has been an external violation of cc. 1013 and 1382. There is no doubt about the existence of the objective element, but what about the imputability of the offenses, the subjective element? Can imputability which, legally speaking, may be presumed be actually presumed in all cases? "It would appear otherwise" as indicated in c.1321 §3.

In his article King investigates in detail the mitigating circumstances listed in c. 1323, 4°: grave fear, necessity and serious inconvenience. I would like to add 6° of the canon: "lack of the use of reason without prejudice to the provisions of cc. 324 §1, n.2 and 1325", which refers to the absence of the use of reason in a person who habitually has it. We can call to mind the case of Bishop Pi Shushi of Shenyang. According to some authors, by the time he accepted the post of President of the CCPA and was required to consecrate others, his mental resistance had completely broken down.

Canon 1324 lists 10 mitigating circumstances which diminish imputability, the first of which is "one who had only an imperfect use of reason". The long "reeducation" process, the constant pressure of accusations, tortures in prisons, etc. can certainly have affected the use of reason in some Catholic leaders. In such cases, persons do not incur the penalty "latae sententiae".

§5 of this canon lists grave fear as another mitigating circumstance. This is well addressed in King's article.

§8: deals with "one who erroneously but culpably thought that some one of the circumstances existed which are mentioned in can. 1323, nn. 4 or 5: The bishops who judged that the consecration of more bishops was the only way for the Church to survive or to reduce conflict with the Government, etc. is a case in point.

I have no intention of justifying the bishops who consecrated and those who received the consecration, but I do wish to point out probable extenuating circumstances. Besides, with these mitigating circumstances, the penalty is for the most part "ferendae sententiae"; that is, not binding upon the offender

until it has been imposed (c. 1314). It can be recalled that c. 1331 §1,3° establishes that an excommunicated person is forbidden to discharge any ecclesiastical offices, ministries or functions or acts of governance whatsoever. However, the Holy See in the *Anuario Pontificio* still lists the names of the legitimate bishops who carried out the "illegitimate" consecrations. This fact reflects the complexity of the situation and the need for further information before passing judgement.

Adequacy of the Law on Excommunication

King raises the question of the adequacy of the present law on excommunication. A long commentary is beyond the scope of this response, but I do not agree that excommunication "latae sententiae" not declared, does not have any external effect until it is declared because it remains only in the internal forum of conscience. One has to read carefully cc. 1331 and 1352. While it is true c. 1331 §2 only takes effect when the penalty has been imposed or declared; the prohibitions of §1 affect everybody, even those under the penalty "latae sententiae" not declared. Taking into account §2, it is difficult to demand the imposition of the penalty, but that does not mean that it remains only in the internal forum, especially if the offense is notorious.

The case in China cannot be used to refute the adequacy of the general norm. It can be said that, many circumstances are unknown to us and so the general norm may not apply, but the CIC has already taken such exceptions into consideration.

III. Abnormalities in Ecclesiastical Discipline

Abnormalities in ecclesiastical discipline are manifested especially in the appointment and consecration of bishops and in the organization of the Chinese Church.

In the Appointment and Consecration of Bishops

Theological-canonical foundation of the actual discipline

Bishops, insofar as they are set over particular churches, exercise their pastoral power over that portion of the People of God entrusted to them, not over other churches nor the Universal Church.¹² By episcopal ordination and hierarchical commun-

ion with the head and its members, the Bishop becomes a member of the College of Bishops.¹³ The members, with the Head, can exercise a supreme power over the Universal Church.¹⁴ Besides, each bishop, being a member of the College of Bishops, participates in the "solicitududo omnium Ecclesiarum" and contributes to the development of the Universal Church. "...in ruling well their own churches as portions of the Universal Church, they [bishops] contribute efficaciously to the welfare of the whole Mystical Body, which, ... is a corporate body of the Churches" ¹⁵

Belonging to the College of Bishops demands, therefore, an act of a sacramental nature--the episcopal consecration-- it also requires the hierarchical communion with the Head and with the other members of the College. The notion of hierarchical communion "does not mean a vague affection, rather it is an organic reality which demands a juridical form which is, at the same time, animated by charity."¹⁶ Through the episcopal consecration, the bishop receives the three "munera" of sanctifying, teaching and governing. For these functions to be exercised "potestas ad actum expedita", aside from the episcopal consecration, the canonical or juridical determination on the part of the supreme hierarchical authority of the Universal Church is required.

To become a member of the College of Bishops, a candidate must be in hierarchical communion with the Head and with the members. Therefore, acceptance into the College of bishops requires, at least, a mandate from the Head.

Election and appointment of bishops in the Latin Church.

There is a technical process by which candidates are elected to the episcopate, and there is the actual appointment. The Decree "Christus Dominus" (n. 20) asserts that the right reserved to the Roman Pontiff to appoint freely the bishops or to confirm those who have been elected legitimately and to authorize ordinations cannot be rejected. ¹⁷

While there are no precepts derived from the divine law about the particular and juridical process for the election of bishops, the motive and the criteria of the actual discipline are clear: "to elect the persons that seem to be most suitable, 'that are presented as the models of the flock' (I Pt, 5:3)"¹⁸ and to place them in charge of the particular churches. This goal has

been achieved throughout history by different proceedings suited to different historical moments, sometimes through election by the Holy See or through the direct and immediate participation of the People of God. "The only thing, in this field, that is truly transcendental is ...to elect true and authentic pastors. The procedure, whatever it may be, is strictly instrumental."¹⁹

The norms and criteria for the lawful appointment of bishops are specified in c. 377 of the new Code of Canon Law. The canon provides for the possibility of other types of procedure when it says: "Unless it has been lawfully prescribed otherwise...." And although §5 states, "For the future, no rights or privileges of election, appointment or designation of Bishops are conceded to civil authorities," a variety of methods for appointing bishops can still be found in several concordats and conventions. Any system, however, must be established or provided for legitimately and beforehand by the Holy See and the parties involved.

Appointment of bishops and episcopal consecrations without Pontifical Mandate

There are two very serious problems in China affecting both the Chinese Church and the universal Church: the actuality of an illegitimate system for electing bishops, and the reality of more than 50 bishops consecrated without pontifical mandate.

China has unilaterally adopted a distinct system for electing bishops. Although such a system was used legitimately in some period of Church history, it is no longer in force within the canonical discipline of the Latin Church, to which the Chinese church belongs.

If the Chinese Government were to permit negotiations among all the parties concerned, and the Chinese Church were to accept hierarchical communion with the universal Church, "what is illegitimate can be made legitimate"²⁰ The important thing is to establish a system where norms carefully spell out the role of the diocese, the Government and the Holy See. Once an understanding is reached, an agreement or concordat could be signed to regulate the matter.

Given the complexity of the problem, the uncertainties of Chinese politics, the unforeseeable attitude of the government toward religious matters and, in particular, toward the Catholic Church; given the fact that theological, canonical, and pastoral

values must be taken into account and delicately balanced; and considering the diverse personal attitudes and situations of the patriotic bishops, any solution suggested must be carefully analyzed and tested to insure the intended result.

The Ecclesiastical Organization of the Chinese Church

The Patriotic Associations

Given the shortage of clergy and Ordinaries in many dioceses, some Catholic lay leaders conduct all Church affairs and organize the visits of underground priests to their communities. Funds are often used to woo local officials and to ward off danger or conflicts.²¹ However, following the death of a married bishop in a southern city, his widow, an ex-nun, took possession of the directorship of the diocese. She would not permit the Vicar-General, duly-appointed successor by the previous legitimate bishop, to celebrate Mass in the cathedral.²²

In the ecclesiastical organization of the patriotic hierarchy, there are many ambiguities. Let us take, for example, the controversy over the appointment of Bishop Deng. Four months after having been liberated from prison, at a meeting of priests, religious and lay faithful, Deng was voted the Bishop of Guangzhou. When the Pope appointed Deng archbishop, there were protests. Another meeting was called, presided over by a woman, the Vice-president of the provincial CCPA, and Deng was removed from his episcopal office.

Another problem is the ambiguous status of the three patriotic organizations: the CCPA, CCBC and CCCEA. In theory, the CCPA is not an ecclesiastical organization; therefore, it should not exercise power in internal ecclesiastical affairs. The problem, even at the theoretical level, is the CCCEA. According to its constitution, this is a national organization in which Catholic delegates of each province or municipality participate. However, neither the procedure for election nor the requirements for the election of the directors or presidents are spelled out. Anyone can preside over the Committee. A thorny theological-canonical question arose when the CCBC was formed within this Committee. CCBC consists of all the bishops of the dioceses. The CCCEA, which has the power to reorganize and select the members of the CCBC is above the CCBC. This raises a very obvious and grave theological-canonical contradic-

tion in terms of structure, concept and theory. In fact, the same persons occupy the high posts of all three organizations.

The Exercise of Power in the Government of the Chinese Church

The Church, while constituted as People of God ordained as a society in this world, has a hierarchical governing structure. Within this structure some faithful are called to participate in the priesthood of Christ through the Sacrament of Holy Orders. The ordination invests the priest with a "potestas sacra" to exercise "in persona Christi" and in the name of the Church the three offices of the Priesthood of Christ. This power is of an ontological nature, which authorizes the ordained to carry out certain offices for the benefit of the faithful. But this sacrament, by itself alone, does not confer a special juridical capacity to bind formally other faithful. This juridical power is acquired in the Church through an act of jurisdiction, a designated canonical mission in virtue of which the legitimate authority confers a determinate ecclesiastical office on a subject who is ontologically qualified to act thus.²³

Lumen Gentium points out that, with a view to a spiritual end, the "laity have the capacity of being appointed by the hierarchy to some ecclesiastical offices..." by having been appointed to this apostolate by the Lord himself through Baptism and Confirmation.²⁴ The doctrine is contained in c. 129 of the new CIC §2: "lay members of the Christian faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this power in accordance with the law."

In the Church in China, the ecclesiastical problems mentioned above affect the capital offices, the ordinaries of the Catholic communities and/or all who have at least ordinary executive power (cf. c. 368).²⁵ They are called capital because they deal with the spiritual care of people which requires the ministries of the priesthood. For this reason, the leading organ of governance in the Chinese Church should be the CCBC not the CCCEA.

Another problem is the role of the bishop and priests in the exercise of their priestly ministries. Clerical duties and prohibitions are clearly spelled out in cc. 273-289.²⁶

Lack of a rightful ecclesiastical organization

At the national level the Church in China has adopted, fol-

lowing the praxis of the West, the Bishops' Conference as the ecclesiastical organ.

The Conference of Bishops, a permanent institution, is the assembly of bishops of a given nation or territory whereby, according to the norm of law, they jointly exercise certain pastoral offices on behalf of the Christian faithful of their territory in view of promoting that greater good which the Church offers humankind, especially through forms and programs of the apostolate which are fittingly adapted to the circumstances of the time and place.²⁷

It is difficult to understand the existence of three patriotic organizations whose personnel and functions overlap. If it were for reasons of mutual control or countersign among themselves, they would have chosen different persons to fill the important posts of the three organizations. In order to avoid theological-canonical problems brought about by the statutes of the CCPA and the CCCEA, it is recommended that these two organizations be abolished. In fact, the functions of these organizations can be assumed by some commissions established within the CCBC and with the active participation of the faithful.

Actually, these organs are not popular with many bishops, including the patriotic bishops.²⁸ The Chinese bishops do not know each other; many do not trust each other. The Bishops' Conference should be an institutionalized expression of affective collegiality.

Those bishops who are in the same geographic areas should be the first to manifest this sense of unity. Together they should determine what pastoral functions are suitable and which should be undertaken as a common endeavour. They should avoid undertaking any activity whatsoever that might cast the slightest shadow of division.²⁹

In China where there are many dioceses with vacant sees, the CCBC should establish some norms to elect diocesan administrators until suitable candidates for the episcopate can be found. Furthermore, on the diocesan level, to facilitate governance and pastoral work, the CCBC should lay down norms regarding the internal structure of the diocese. All organizations, at supradiocesan or diocesan levels are regulated in the new CIC. If the CCBC judges that there are circumstances in China, making it impossible to follow the general norms, it should establish its own particular norms, while safeguarding the hierarchical institution, and as agreed upon by the Holy See.

IV. Conclusion

The canonical problems within the Church in China are closely related to its theological and pastoral problems. However, these are not just problems of intra-ecclesial relationships; they are problems resulting from many complex, confused relationships among the Chinese Church, the Chinese State and the Holy See. Intra-ecclesial problems are the result of a series of conflicts between the Chinese Church and the Chinese State. These conflicts, in turn, are the result of disputes between the Holy See and the Chinese State over country sovereignty, the Church and Chinese citizens.

To understand the present situation, one has to analyze the religious, political and ideological policies of the Chinese State, their ecclesiological implications as well as the reactions of the Chinese Church and the Holy See to all these factors.

Although there are so many ideological, political, cultural, theological-canonical-ecclesiological obstacles, there is always a possibility of dialogue, which is the only way to achieve reconciliation. In order to start to understand each other better, and hopefully to arrive at an adequate and satisfactory solution, dialogue has to be carried out by the three parties: the Government, the Chinese Church and the Holy See. Dialogue demands really bold action on the part of all concerned. It must be initiated and pursued with sincerity, understanding, mutual confidence and hope.

Notes

1. The points raised in this article are mainly extracted from my published work "Relaciones Iglesia-Estado en la Republica Popular China," EUNSA, Pamplona, 1990.
2. J. Calvo, "Iglesia-Derecho", in ET.AL., Manual de Derecho Canonico, EUNSA, Pamolona, 1988, p. 36.
3. John Paul II, Const. Ap. "Sacra disciplina leges".
4. Cf. can. 2327 of CIC 1983.
5. A Marzoa, "Los delitos y las penas canonicas, in ET. AL." *Manual de Derecho Canonico* EUNSA, Pamplona, 1988, p. 678.
6. Cfr. can. 1317 of CIC 1983.
7. can. 751 of CIC 1983.
8. A good analysis of the offense of schism is found in A. Borras, "L'excommunication dans le nouveau code de droit canonique, Essai de definition, dissertatio ad Doctoratum in Facultate Iuris Canonici Pontificae Universitatis Gregoriana", Desclée, Paris, 1987, pp. 45-49.

9. Ibidem, p. 46.
10. J. Arias, "Cisma-derecho canonico" in *Gran Enciclopedia Rialp*, vl. V, pp. 685-686.
11. Cisma, in "Enciclopedia universal Ilustrada: Espasa-Calpe Vol. 13, p. 473.
12. *Lumen Gentium* n. 23.
13. Cf. Ibidem, n. 22.
14. Cf. Explanatory note prior to *Lumen Gentium*, n. 3.
15. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 23.
16. Explanatory note prior to *Lumen Gentium*, n. 2.
17. CIC 1983, cc 377 1§ and 1013.
18. G. Delgado, op.cit., p. 269.
19. Ibidem, p. 271.
20. Quoted in A. Lazzarotto, op. cit., p. 131.
21. Cf. E.O. Hanson *Catholic Politics in China and Korea*, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY, 1980, p. 49.
22. Cf. L. Ladany, *The Catholic Church in China*, Freedom House, New York, 1987, p. 56.
23. J.I. Arrieta, "El Pueblo de Dios", in ET AL *Manual de Derecho Canonica* EUNSA, Pamplona, 1988, p. 131.
24. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 33.
25. CIC 1983, can 134 §1.
26. For further details, cf. my work pp. 458-464.27.
27. CIC 1983, can 447.
28. Cf. The Case of Bishop Ma Ji.
29. J. Gutierrez, "Organizacion jerarquica de la Iglesia" in ET AL *Manual de Derecho Canonico* EUNSA, Pamplona, 1988, p. 357.

China Church Update (continued from page 3)

Two Priests Accept Episcopal Sees in Shanxi

Fr. Zheng Shoudou and Fr. Li Weidao have been recognized as Bishop of Yuncheng and Bishop of Lu'an respectively. According to a Church worker in Beijing, the prelates had been consecrated bishops in the 1980s, but the local government did not recognize their consecration until this year.

Six Young Men Ordained in Shanxi

Six young men who graduated from Taiyuan Seminary, Shanxi Province, in 1990 were ordained priests on May 30, 1992: four at the Taiyuan City Cathedral with Bishop Bonaventure Zhang Xin officiating and two in the Cathedral of Xinjiang City, Shanxi, with Zheng Shoudou of Yuncheng Diocese officiating. Because these young men were not yet 25 when they graduated, the age required for ordination in China, they were sent to Sheshan Seminary for two years of further study.