

Editorial

While pursuing Deng Xiaoping's adage, "To get rich is glorious," and encouraging a frenzied pace for economic development and modernization, China's leaders are obviously concerned about the state of morality among its citizens. Fostering ethical and moral conduct among all classes of people has become one of the government's highest priorities. And rightly so since the aftermath of years of atheism and ten years of the Cultural Revolution have left China with a generation lost in a spiritual void seeking for the meaning of life. Fortunately, China is now trying to rise from the ashes of the lost years and owning once again the treasures of its rich historical heritage. Confucianism, the ethical system, for centuries the bedrock of China's stability and moral character as a nation, was, only a few years ago, relegated to the dustbin of history as part of the "four olds." Today it is once more finding its rightful place in China's culture, and economic development and enjoying new life.

The opening of China to the world has brought China many blessings but it has also exposed the nature of human frailty. Competition, the seduction of wealth, the urge to make quick money and the lure for worldly success has often resulted in widespread corruption and proved a strong deterrent to clean, honest living. This pursuit of wealth in China, as everywhere else, has made it increasingly easy for people to forget to put the overall interests of the people above that of the individual, a basic rule of Socialism.

China, worried about this creeping trend has been responding with a zeal that takes on the quality of a religion. Just as Pope Paul VI urged the Christian world to work to build a civilization of love, China's leaders keep urging their people to build a spiritual civilization. This particular civilization, with its so-called socialistic characteristics, is meant to act as a counterbalance to the excessive drive for quick modernization and the desire for instant wealth.

At the beginning of the campaign for building up the ethical and moral character of its citizens, a Central Committee resolution in 1986 stated that the purpose of a spiritual civilization is to develop ideals, ethics, culture and discipline and to raise the moral and ideological quality, as well as the scientific knowledge of the Chinese people.

Dr. David Lutz, in the lead article in this issue of *Tripod*, explores the subject of ethics and morality in China today. He posits that by all indications, China is slated to become an economic and military superpower in the next century. In this event, the moral practices of its large population at home, in society at large and in the international world of business, are of vital importance to the lives of people not only in China but throughout the world.

Along different lines, this issue features an update on Hong Kong. It did not seem quite right to let the first anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong to the Motherland, pass without some comment on how the former British Territory has fared since the moving ceremony on that historic night of June 30, 1997. Father Charlie Dittmeier provides us with a detailed description of Hong Kong's political, economic and religious situation today and sets it within the larger reality of Mainland China.

In this issue also, we conclude Manuel Rivero's analysis of "The Impact of Confucianism on Technologies and Development." In this section, Father Rivero studies the impact of Confucianism on the technologies and development of five Asian locations: Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and South Korea. Despite the present economic downturn in Asia, there is reason to believe that Confucian values, that have exerted considerable influence on the business enterprises of these places, will continue to play a significant role in the success and failure of any future business or societal enterprise.

Peter Barry provides us with an interesting piece of Chinese history with his article on the Hakka people.

Our documentation section is of considerable importance since the first segment is the speech of the highest official of the Religious Affairs Bureau, Ye Xiaowen. This address was presented at the Sixth National Congress of Catholic Representatives, the most important meeting for Catholic leaders of the open church, held every five years.

The second segment is the report of a meeting of young priests who have studied abroad. Rene Gilbert, who is well acquainted with the lives of many of these young men, provides an short but insightful commentary on the nature of this report.

The two last features are a book review of Zhu Xiao Di's memoirs his childhood and youth in Communist China, and the usual digest of news on the Church in China. (BAM)