

Promoting the Indigenization of Catholicism in Republican China: The Role of Propaganda Fide in Canton

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[Abstract] In 1919, the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud* marked the call of the Vatican to promote the local church in the mission territories outside Europe and North America. Its reception and implementation in China proved particularly difficult, but Propaganda Fide greatly supported the efforts of Antoine Fourquet, MEP, Apostolic Vicar of Canton (1923-1947). Based on original documents of the Archives of the Propaganda Fide (APF, Rome), of the Diocese of Canton (Ricci Institute, Boston) and of the MEP (IRFA, Paris), we shall examine the general context of the church in China at that time, and more specifically how the new policies made by Propaganda Fide were actively promoted in Canton by Fourquet, and how Propaganda Fide supported him in his conflict with the MEP. Despite many achievements in inserting better the Catholic church within the Chinese society, the personality of Fourquet and his methods alienated the MEP, and finally Propaganda Fide asked him to resign. Through this case study we shall reflect on the historical significance of the promotion of the local church and the role of the universal church as represented then by Propaganda Fide.

The Political Context of the Vicariate of Canton

In 1848, Propaganda Fide officially created the apostolic prefecture of Canton, comprising Guangdong, Hainan, and Guangxi, entrusting this large mission territory to the Missions Étrangères de Paris (MEP). Zéphirin Guillemin 明稽章 (1814-1886) was the first apostolic prefect (1853-1886). He claimed a historical continuity with the Catholic communities that had existed in the Guangdong province in Late Ming and Early Qing, but compared to North China and the Jiangnan area, the communities there had always been very small, and in fact, they did not survive the persecution of Yongzheng in 1724. Even more problematic, Guillemin claimed that France had assumed the role of protecting the Catholic missions in China since Kangxi. With the pretext of the murder of Auguste Chapdelaine MEP (1814-1856) by a corrupt official in Guangxi, France participated with the British in the Second Opium War. Canton was attacked at the end on December 1857 and captured on January 1, 1858. Starting with the Treaty of Tianjin in June 1858, France put progressively in place a protectorate of the Catholic missions in China.¹

The rebirth of Catholicism in South China in the second half of the 19th century was very much linked to the colonialism of France in a large region which included Vietnam, Yunnan, Sichuan, Guangdong and Guangxi. As a symbol of the victory of France and Catholicism in China, Guillemin built his cathedral on the land of the *yamen* of the governor of Guangdong and Guangxi that the French and British troops had destroyed in 1857.

Canton was one of the most progressive cities in China, playing a leading role in the revolutionary movement which finally overthrew the Qing dynasty in 1911, but the decade following the revolution was politically very unstable. After he failed to get control of Peking, Sun Yat-sen established in 1920 a revolutionary government in Canton under the KMT (Kuomintang or the Nationalist Party of China). Thanks to Mikhail Borodin (1884-1951), special envoy of Lenin, the KMT was reorganized as a modern party with political program, internal procedures, and discipline. The KMT was represented at all levels of the government, including the army. Thanks to the Soviet model, the KMT broke away from the traditional elitism of Chinese politics by building a political basis in the people through the engagement with the masses (students, workers,

¹ See Matthieu Masson, “La Mort d’Auguste Chapdelaine : Prétexte d’une Guerre, Occasion du Protectorat Religieux de la France en Chine Matthieu Masson,” in Li Ji, editor, *Missions Étrangères de Paris (MEP) and China from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 96-164.

and peasants) by ways of propaganda, mass movements, protests, and strikes. The program promoted national consciousness and the abrogation of unequal treaties with foreign powers (like regaining control of the customs). In terms of religion, the KMT made efforts to abolish the prerogatives granted to Christianity under the unequal treaties, so that all the missionaries and Chinese Christians should be submitted to national law. The Anti-Christian movement (*Feijidujiao yundong*, 1922-1927) was particularly strong in Canton.

Despite the strong influence of the radical left (the Bolsheviks), it existed also within the KMT a significant liberal faction linked to the business community. After the death of Sun Yat-sen in 1925, the right wing of the KMT made a coup on March 20, 1926 to purge the communist elements. In 1927, Chiang Kai-shek decided to cut all ties with the communists. Borodin and the Soviets were forced to flee China. In reaction, some 20,000 communist soldiers attempted to take over Canton on December 11-13, 1927, but the insurrection failed, with thousand killed, including the Russian vice-consul.

In the 1910s and 1920s, public safety was a big concern, especially in the countryside where armed groups operated, kidnapping Chinese and foreigners for ransom. In 1928, the KMT gained control over most of the country, but Guangdong was autonomous and under the control of General Chen Jitang 陳濟棠 (1890-1954) from 1929 to 1936. In this period, the political and social order was restored in Canton which enjoyed a strong economic and social development, despite the Great Depression which made many emigrants to return China and come to Canton. The situation deteriorated greatly in 1937 with the Japanese invasion. In August, Japanese aviation started their attack against Canton.² At the beginning there were two alerts a day, and later five. From August 1937 to October 1938, casualties in the city were estimated at 6,000 killed and 8,000 injured. Half of the population had left, with many migrating to Hong Kong and Macao. On October 21, 1938, Canton was finally captured by the Japanese army, and some areas of the city were destroyed by fire. On December 25, 1938, Hong Kong surrendered to the Japanese, cutting an important way of communication between Canton and the outside world.

On August 8, 1938, Japanese aviation dropped bombs which exploded at the gate of the Cathedral, killing 38 people who had taken refuge in the garden, also destroying the glassworks of the Cathedral and the buildings of the Catholic Action and

² Fourquet mentions that the first attack was on August 31, 1937; Fourquet, *Riferisce sul suo Vicariato nel momento dell'attuale conflitto cino-giapponese*; APF, *Indice generale 1937*, Vol. 1279, 3775/1937, ff. 807-813, 809.

Catholic Youth.³ During the great fire of October 21, 1938, the Cathedral and the adjacent buildings could only be saved thanks to the Chinese Catholics.

Propaganda Fide and the Ambivalent Role of Guébriant

During the redaction of *Maximum Illud* (1919), Cardinal Willem Van Rossum (1854-1932) sent a questionnaire to six Apostolic Vicars, one of them being Jean de Guébriant MEP (1860-1935), Apostolic Vicar of Canton (1916-1921). Guébriant's response retained the attention of Propaganda Fide since he was later appointed Apostolic Visitor for all China for a fact-finding mission. In 1920, Guébriant went to Rome to present his conclusions to Van Rossum, especially recommending the nomination of an Apostolic Delegate to China to establish an official channel between the Holy See and the Chinese government, but Guébriant was opposed to ending the French protectorate. Concerning the issue of promoting Chinese clergy to the episcopate, Guébriant was very cautious and saw it as a long-term objective.

In 1921, Guébriant was elected Superior General of the MEP. This was an important indication that the MEP was embracing the spirit of *Maximum Illud*, but an active minority of the MEP fought against the Apostolic Letter, as we shall see. In 1923, at a conference at the Institut Catholique de Paris, Guébriant expressed the need for the nomination of Chinese bishops and a progressive transfer of power to the local clergy:

The Chinese clergy will quickly outnumber the missionary clergy, and there is no doubt that, always better trained in establishments always better organized, they shall realize their importance and see clearly that the whole future depends on them. Under these conditions, will they accept European leadership indefinitely? It is not possible, and it would not be human. And here comes the question of the Chinese episcopate. Surely, they have too much common sense to prematurely demand what must be done sooner or later, and the Chinese Catholics, the first, would protest a precipitous and abruptly generalized transition from the traditional administration of missionary bishops to that of Chinese bishops. But it is up to the missionaries themselves to foresee the unavoidable with its advantages and dangers, to assure the maximum of the former and to minimize the latter, and to proceed, under the direction of the Holy See, to trials well distributed and well graduated. And even then, the time is not yet ready for them to withdraw. Because

³ Fourquet estimated the material loss to more than 300,000 HKD; see Ricci F8.1.017; APF, Fourquet, Bombardamento aereo giapponese (8 Agosto 1938), Indice generale 1938, Vol. 1408, 3295/1938, ff. 662-667.

they will have to play a role of sublime selflessness, the very one that expresses the touching word of Scripture: “Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that flutters over its young, spreading out its wings, catching them, bearing them on its pinions.” There will be no lack of means to play their maternal role for a long time, a long time to come; and the best way will be the centers of education and teaching, especially the seminaries, where, keeping the upper hand on the training of the young clergy, they will keep the strongest and the sweetest of authorities, that of affection and trust.⁴

This passage is quite remarkable by laying out the necessary transition of leadership from the foreign missionaries to the Chinese clergy. However, Guébriant envisions here a long transition process at the end of which the missionaries would have relinquished all authorities, enjoying only moral authority. Among the missionaries who recognized the need for power transfer, the debate was between a swift transfer as advocated by the Lazarist Vincent Lebbe (1877-1940), or a cautious and slow transfer, as advocated by Guébriant. As we shall see, the pace of the transition was not to be decided internally by the Church alone, but mostly by the political and societal changes happening in China, forcing the Church to adapt.

In view of the cautionary attitude of Guébriant, the American historian Ernest Young considers the role of Guébriant “at best ambivalent,” though François de Sesmaisons recently wrote a biography that attempts to defend his policy.

Van Rossum, Costantini and Fourquet, a Common Mind for a Chinese Church

Celso Costantini (1876-1958) was named by the pope as the Apostolic Delegate to China (1922-1933), with the rank of Archbishop. He received two missions from Rome: to promote Chinese priests as bishops of existing vicariates and to create new territorial entities entrusted entirely to Chinese bishops and clergy. Those two missions were met with fierce resistance from many foreign missionaries, especially the French.⁵

⁴ Guébriant, “L’Apostolat missionnaire de la France,” in *Bulletin de l’Institut catholique de Paris* (November 1923), 210. Digital file:

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k6497449f/f1.image#> (April 23, 2023)

⁵ About the role of Costantini, see Jean Charbonnier, “Du protectorat français au rôle joué par Mgr Costantini, 1840-1926 : une étape importante dans l’implantation de l’Église en Chine,” *L’Année canonique* LIII.1 (2011) : 25-33.

Costantini needed obviously to keep close contact with Van Rossum since the vicariates and prefectures depended on Propaganda Fide. Costantini needed also to find in China some vicars and prefects who would not only pay lip service to *Maximum Illud* but would implement it.

When Costantini arrived in China in late 1922, Fourquet as pro-vicar welcomed him in Canton. The two shared basic understandings on the mission, and they could help each other. Facing the staunch opposition of the French missionaries in implementing *Maximum Illud*, Costantini could effectively rely on Fourquet to enforce the new directives and to serve as a model for the whole Church in China.

In 1922, Costantini had no direct experience of China, while Fourquet had been there since 1896. Many analyses of the political and social situation of China were, in fact, first expressed by Fourquet in his letters to Costantini, who transmitted them to the Holy See, Propaganda Fide, or other vicariates in China. It was the beginning of a strong collaboration which that during the time of Costantini in China (1922-1933). Also, Fourquet directly expressed his views to Propaganda Fide, where he could find understanding and support, while his correspondence with the MEP headquarters expressed along the time more and more disagreements and conflicts, especially after the death of Guébriant in 1935.

In a letter of 1925, Fourquet mentioned the growing tension between Chinese and foreigners in the country. The rejection of foreign interference in China was nurturing the Anti-Christian movement, and in front of this, Fourquet advocated patience, charity, civility, and gentleness. For him, it was important not to stir up more conflicts but to show that Christianity was not bound to foreign powers. However, Fourquet lamented that some fellow missionaries, unfortunately, are sick with the virus of “Sinophobia,” who vituperate “against the institutions, the morality, the people of this region, the Chinese clergy and the sisters, the Apostolic Letter *Maximum Illud*, the cardinals who know nothing about China, the Apostolic Vicars who are too lenient to the Chinese clergy, sisters and lay.”⁶ Fourquet viewed the Anti-Christian movement as negative, since it increased the hostility of the Chinese towards the Church, but also as an opportunity for foreign missionaries, “like a visit of Our Lord, a warning from Him.”⁷ He called upon a deep conversion of the heart, concluding that if there was any hint of Sinophobia in the

⁶ Fourquet, Riferisce sulla cinofobia di qualche missionario, 9 December 1925; Indice generale 1926, *Rubrica 33 Kuang-tong e Kuam-Si*, vol. 912, 91/807v.

⁷ Fourquet, Riferisce sulla cinofobia di qualche missionario, 9 December 1925; Indice generale 1926, *Rubrica 33 Kuang-tong e Kuam-Si*, vol. 912, 91/807v-808r.

heart of the missionary, then he was not fit; he was in fact harmful, and he should leave China.⁸

A few months later, in March 1926, Costantini wrote a letter to Propaganda Fide, mentioning the opposition faced by Fourquet from his fellow MEP, and he made echo to the thoughts of Fourquet on the Sinophobia among missionaries. Costantini examined different remedies to the situation. One was to recall some missionaries back home, and Costantini assured that he would do it when necessary.⁹ Indeed, starting from 1927, Costantini and Lebbe were facing a campaign against them, especially with the publication that year of *Le Christ en Chine* by the Lazarist Henri Garnier (1883-1965). In 1928, Costantini asked Garnier to leave China for good. Concerning the old missionaries who felt ousted by the new regime and fearful of the reprisals of the nationalists, Costantini considered that the best remedy consisted in publishing the documents of the Plenary Council of Shanghai of 1924, in establishing Chinese missions and a Chinese Institute in Rome:

Those things are destined to change the missionary psychology in China. When we have five to ten beautiful native missions, the way will be brightly traced. Then it will be no longer a matter of theories and precepts, but all will see *Maximum Illud* put into practice and bear fruit.¹⁰

It is remarkable to see how much Costantini and Fourquet shared similar views. Both realized that, more than taking coercive actions against the entitlements of the foreign missionaries, they needed to invite them to change their inner attitude. Fourquet who had experienced the Bolshevik revolution of 1925 in Canton felt more strongly the urgency. China was changing quickly and could not accept anymore the colonial system imposed on her since the opium wars. Radical changes on the part of the Church were needed. In a report to Propaganda Fide about the political and religious situation in South China in 1926, Costantini supported the positive engagement of Fourquet with the republican government, despite the presence of the Bolshevik faction, and Costantini analyses the future of China with lucidity:

I believe that Mgr. Fourquet is right because whatever the solution to the crisis that China is now going through, it will undoubtedly result in a decrease of the foreign

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ Costantini, Circa i missionari di sentimenti anticinesi, Pekin, 4 March 1926; Indice generale 1926, Vol. 912, 1231/836v.

¹⁰ Costantini, Circa i missionari di sentimenti anticinesi, Pekin, 4 March 1926; APF, Indice generale 1926, Vol. 912, 1231/837r.

influence, and the missions will have to come to terms with the spirit of new China.¹¹

As we can see, Fourquet, Costantini, and Van Rossum clearly saw the end of a colonial model of the Church, and the need to transition to a Church that embraces the “spirit of new China.”

Ending the French Protectorate

Costantini was often criticized by French diplomats and missionaries for undermining the French protectorate. He found in Fourquet someone who was able to disentangle himself from the narrow interests of the French community. The most obvious function of the protectorate was to place the missionaries, the Chinese Catholics, and the properties of the Church under the protection of the French army and police. But Fourquet was adamant not to make recourse to the French army unless ultimate necessity. For example, in September 1925, the cathedral of Canton was surrounded for a few days by the mob, and some advised him to call the French army, which was stationed not far on Shamian island, to lift the blockade. For three days, Fourquet resisted this solution, and instead let the Chinese priests negotiate with the mob leaders and with the government. Finally, the government sent its police to disperse the mob.¹² In his report to Guébriant, Fourquet copied what he had written to the French Consul:

I thank God for having placed beside us an imposing force, capable of enforcing our rights, but I am also resolved to have recourse to it only when all other means have been exhausted. This is the theory which I have always maintained about the functioning of the Protectorate.¹³

¹¹ APF, Indice generale 1926, Rubrica 33/2 Kuang-tong e Kuam-Si, vol. 912: Costantini, Rapporto circa le condizioni politiche religiose nel Sud della China, Hong Kong, 16 June 1926, 2735/1926, 761-771; 764-765.

¹² See Letter of Fourquet to Guébriant, dated 19 Octobre 1925, Canton ; Rimette un rapporto del Vicario Apostolico di Canton circa la rivolta del Settembre 1925; 80/1926, ff. 795-804, 798.

¹³ Letter of Fourquet to Guébriant, dated 19 Octobre 1925, Canton ; Rimette un rapporto del Vicario Apostolico di Canton circa la rivolta del Settembre 1925 80/1926, ff. 795-804, 799 : “Je remercie Dieu d’avoir placé à côté de nous une force imposante, capable de faire respecter nos droits, mais je suis également résolu à n’y recourir que lorsque tous les autres moyens auront été épuisés. C’est relativement au fonctionnement du Protectorat la théorie que j’ai toujours soutenue.”

Fourquet finished his account with this reminder: “Let us not forget that the Protectorate, a precious weapon, is also dangerous. It can hurt those who use it.”¹⁴ In this report, Fourquet did not dismiss altogether the protectorate, since he still called it a precious weapon. But in a letter to Propaganda Fide in 1927, Fourquet made explicit his wish to abandon the protectorate altogether, saying “Personally, I think that we should spontaneously renounce to all the privileges to which we pretend as foreigners; we should be citizen of this country.”¹⁵ Fourquet’s efforts to remove the Church from the French Protectorate was not welcomed nicely among the French community. He was said to share “socialist ideas,” and was even called the “Bolshevik bishop.”¹⁶

Inviting Non-French Congregations and Religious Groups

What was the territorial situation of Vicariate at the beginning of the Republican era in 1911? It included all the province of Guangdong, including Hainan, but excluding Zhaoqing which was under the Diocese of Macao. During the Republican era, the Prefecture/Vicariate was divided four times, with the east, north, west, and south of the Guangdong province being detached from Canton.

1. In 1914, Propaganda Fide detached Chaozhou/Shantou, at the east of the province, and erected the Apostolic Vicariate of Chaozhou 潮州 (Swatow), still entrusted to the MEP. Adolphe Rayssac 實茂芳 (1866-1941) was Apostolic Vicar from 1914 to 1935, and he was succeeded by Charles Vogel 荷敬謙 (1878-1958) from 1935 to 1949.

2. In 1920, Propaganda Fide detached the north of the province and erected the Apostolic Vicariate of Shaozhou 韶州 (Shiuchow), but for the first time, the Propaganda entrusted this former MEP territory to a different missionary group, the Italian Salesians. Luigi Versiglia 雷鳴道 (1873-1930) was the first Vicar Apostolic until his assassination (1920-1930), succeeded by Ignazio Canazei 耿其光 (1883-1946).

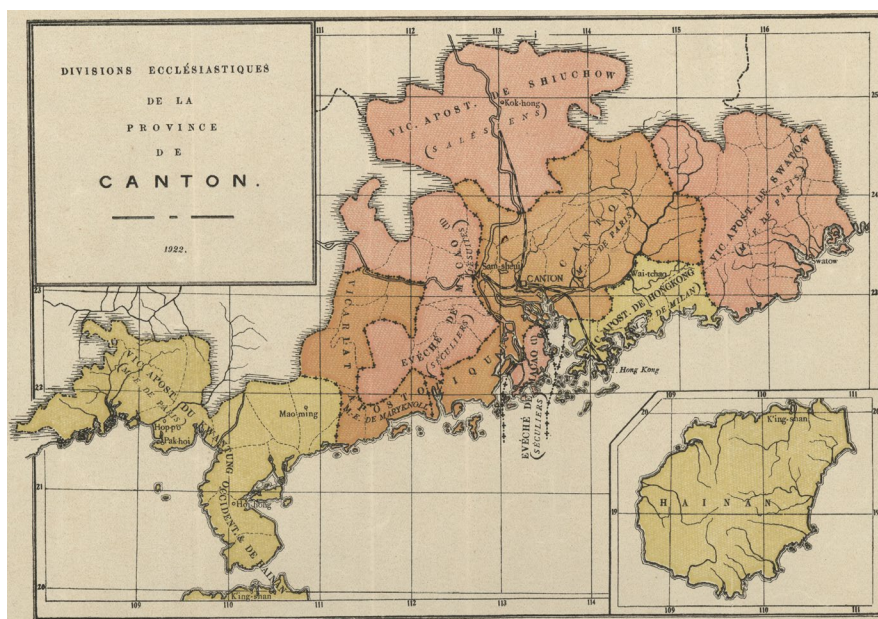
3. In 1921, Propaganda Fide detached the south of the province, Beihai, Maoming, and Hainan, which was created an independent vicariate, still entrusted to the MEP. Auguste Gauthier 俄大法 (1868-1927) was Apostolic Vicar from 1921 to 1927, Louis

¹⁴ Letter of Fourquet to Guébriant, dated 19 Octobre 1925, Canton ; Rimette un rapporto del Vicario Apostolico di Canton circa la rivolta del Settembre 1925 80/1926, ff. 795-804, 800.

¹⁵ Fourquet, Letter to the Propaganda, 20 January 1927; APF, Indice generale 1927, 1654/928.

¹⁶ Léon Robert, Letter to Guébriant, dated 24 February 1926; AMEP, Q 555-137.

4. In 1924, Propaganda Fide detached the west of the province, Jiangmen 江門 (Kongmoon), and for the second time, Propaganda Fide entrusted this former MEP territory to a different missionary group, the American Maryknoll. The first Apostolic Vicar was James Walsh 華理柱 (1891-1981) from 1924 to 1937, succeeded by Adolph Paschang 柏增 (1895-1968) from 1937 to 1946.



When a new apostolic vicariate was created with MEP still in charge, the project was initiated by the Canton Vicariate, discussed with MEP headquarters, and then presented to Propaganda Fide. Once approved, the MEP missionaries within the territory to be erected as apostolic vicariate proposed names for the future apostolic vicar, and then the MEP headquarters submitted the names to Propaganda Fide, but the local Chinese priests did not vote. A recurrent issue was how to separate the assets of the new vicariate from Canton because the regional office of the MEP in Hong Kong used to

invest in land and commercial buildings in the city of Canton for the whole, and then arguments were often raised on how to split fairly capital and interests. For example, when Chaozhou was separated from Canton, a conflict arose that needed the intervention of the headquarters in Paris and even Propaganda Fide in Rome. Another recurrent issue was how to allocate the subsidies sent by Paris among the vicariates. For example, the newly erected Vicariate of Beihai complained that it did not receive its just share.

When a new apostolic vicariate was created and entrusted to another congregation, it was somehow much easier. The project was started with Propaganda Fide and then discussed with the MEP. When the Salesians or the Maryknoll took control of their mission in Guangdong, they assured full leadership. With this model, the Chinese clergy was even less engaged in the process.

The territorial changes of the Vicariate of Canton had important implications in terms of the number of Catholics, priests, and sisters, as can be seen in the chart on page 211.

Compared to North China, the Jiangnan or Fujian, the Catholic population in Guangdong was small and scattered, except in the areas of Chaozhou and Meizhou, which were first detached in 1914. With this separation, the Canton Vicariate lost half of its Christians. With the further separations of Shaozhou, Beihai and Jiangmen from 1921 to 1924, the Canton Vicariate was reduced to 12,000, only a fifth of the number before 1914.

The comparison with Peking illustrates well the situation of Canton. In 1931, Peking had the same population as Canton, but Catholics in Peking represented 6% of the population, compared to 0.3% in Canton.¹⁷ Peking was served by 126 priests (30 of whom Chinese), while Canton had only 29 priests (19 of whom Chinese). In 1928, each priest of the Vicariate of Canton baptized in average only six adults and eight children.¹⁸ Fourquet explained the very low percentage of Catholics in Canton: (1) materialist and atheistic propaganda; (2) social disorder affecting the running of the Church; (3) emigration with many Catholics moving to Southeast Asia, the Pacific, North and South Americas; however, if the migrants from Canton were counted, the total number would be 80,000, since 65,000 Cantonese Catholics were living then overseas.¹⁹

¹⁷ See Jean-Marie Planchet, *Les missions de Chine et du Japon*, Pékin: Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1931.

¹⁸ F8.1.007.

¹⁹ Ricci F8.1.005 & F8.1.011.

Year	Chinese priests	Missionaries	Local sisters	Foreign sisters	Seminarians	Orphans	Pupils	Catholics/ population
1911	26	75	12	20	62	410	4,100	60,300/27,000,000
1913	24	72					4,300	61,600
Detachment of Chaozhou								
1918	17	53			67		2,580	31,450
Detachment of Shaozhou, Beihai and Jiangmen								
1927	22	18	49	13	44			13,000/ 4,500,000
1929	22	18	48	20	81	770	1,435	14,400
1931	29	19	58	12	63	330	2,250	14,500
1938	36	19	74	58	71	240	2,700	18,600
1939	36	18	75	36	65	300	1,300	16,000/ 4,600,000
1941	38	17	77	36	48	350	1,950	16,000
1947	43	10	51	42			2,700	21,000

Chart 1: Statistics for the Canton vicariate 1911-1947

Sources: Ricci Institute at Boston College, 1911: F4.7.1.006; 1918: F8.17.014; 1913: F4.7.004 & F8.17.003; 1917: F8.1.005; 1929: F8.1.008; 1931: F4.2.043; 1941: F8.17.005; 1947: F7.81.003. ANEP 3942 (2): Exercice 1937-1938; Exercice 1938-1939; Comptes-rendu de 1946-1947.

When Fourquet started as Apostolic Vicar in 1923, the Catholic population was only 12,000 and he set for himself a very ambitious objective of 100,000. In fact, there was a very slow growth of the Catholic population of the Canton Vicariate, due mostly to emigration. When he left in 1947, there were only around 21,000 Catholics.

Failed Attempts of Erecting Mission Territories Entrusted to Chinese Clergy

The Maryknoll, an American missionary society modeled after the MEP and founded in 1911, decided to go to South China. According to an agreement signed on December 25, 1917, between Guébriant and James Walsh MM (1891-1981), the Maryknoll priests were to be sent to Guangxi province.²⁰ However, sometime later, they asked Propaganda Fide to have Jiangmen 江門 in Eastern Guangdong, including the island of Shangchuan 上川 and the graveyard of Saint Francis Xavier (1506-1552).

Having heard about the proposal, a local Chinese priest Boniface Yang Fujue 楊福爵 (1878-1938) and other local priests wrote in July 1918 a letter to Propaganda Fide to express their disagreement:

I give thanks that through my efforts and pains the predication of the Gospel in the region of Xinning 新寧, despite many difficulties, has developed, so that the number of baptized and of catechumens has increased. I heard that the district including the island of Shangchuan 上川 is to be given to another missionary institute. I submit my will to the people who are in charge to decide but allow me to express myself. As you know, there is a great hope for the diffusion of Christianity in Xinning, and the number of neophytes and catechumens increases day by day, in Chexi 赤溪, Guanghai 廣海, Shangchuan 上川, Xinchang 新昌, Haiyan 海宴, Tan'an 坦安, etc. It seems to me that it is possible to obtain abundant fruits like in the past years. Therefore, I pray that we can still serve those areas. Moved by my love for the Christians here, I take the liberty to write this, and ask you to excuse my audacity.²¹

Yang suggested that the Chinese priests who had already served in the area for some time were more qualified than foreign missionaries to continue the work. Alfred Fabre

²⁰ See APF, Indice generale 1922, Rubrica 130, Cina, Vol. 766, 435/1918, ff. 435-436.

²¹ Bonifacio Yeung e altri Padri – Chiedono che si conservi a loro la regione che si vuole affidare ai missionari dell'Istituto di Maryknoll; APF, Indice generale 1922, Vol. 766, 3785/527-530.

(1878-1967) also expressed disagreement with entrusting this territory to the Maryknoll, and he wrote a letter to Guébriant in Paris, who was Superior General of the MEP since October 1921, saying that the Maryknoll priests wanted to stay close to the Western civilization (that is Hong Kong, Macao or Canton), and were not truly interested in going “field-afar,” as their magazine claimed.²²

Jean Charbonnier recently wrote that “De Guébriant offered the busy Kongmoon (Jiangmen) region west of Guangzhou” to the Maryknoll.²³ In fact, in December 1922, Guébriant sent confidentially the letter of Fabre to Propaganda Fide in Rome, and he added his own letter, expressing strong reserve about giving Jiangmen to the Maryknoll. In his letter, Guébriant pointed out a negative recurrent pattern:

We fall again in the same abuse, always to be feared in the missions: discarding the less central areas for some privileged and more convenient places. My formal advice is that the new American mission should not be allowed to move towards Canton and Macao the borders already agreed upon...The territories of Xinning, Xinhui 新會 and Chexi have around 4,000 Christians and many catechumens. Three missionaries and four Chinese priests live there in different places. The churches and chapels are in total twenty. A few important schools are running. Conversions are not rare...²⁴

Probably Guébriant knew about the letter of Yang Fujue to Rome, and we learn from his own letter there were three MEP (including Fabre) and four Chinese (including Yang) serving this area at that time. Interestingly, the Chinese and the foreigners did not write together a common letter. In fact, the letter of the four Cantonese priests could convey more forcefully the Chinese point of view.

Despite all those efforts, Propaganda Fide agreed in 1924 upon the request of the Maryknoll to obtain Jiangmen. If we judge only the results on Shangchuan island where Yang was previously assigned, the work of the Maryknoll there met with great difficulties, and Robert Cairns (1884-1941) who replaced Yang Fujue as pastor alienated so much the locals that no one wanted to attend Mass.²⁵

²² Guébriant, *Invia il suo parere circa l'erezione della nuova missione*, carta geografica; APF, *Indice generale 1922*, Vol. 766, 3689/531r-531v.

²³ Jean Charbonnier, “The MEP in China: A Chronology from the 17th Century to the Present,” in *Missions Étrangères de Paris (MEP) and China from the Seventeenth Century to the Present*, edited by Li Ji (Brill: Leiden, 2022), 263.

²⁴ Guébriant, Paris, 13 December 1922; APF, *Indice generale 1922*, 3689/533-536.

²⁵ According to my personal communication with Fr. Matthieu Masson, Cairns had expressed in

Retrospectively, the cession of Jiangmen to the Maryknoll in 1924 was a missed opportunity for creating an apostolic prefecture administered directly by the Chinese clergy. Already in the year 1923, Costantini had negotiated with the Italian Franciscans that the mission of Puqi 蒲圻 (Hubei province) was not to be given to the American Franciscans as initially planned, but established as an apostolic prefecture administered directly by the Chinese clergy. In 1924, Costantini also secured from the Lazarists another territory in Hebei to be entrusted to local Chinese clergy.²⁶ Guébriant himself was not opposed in principle to the creation of a vicariate entrusted to local clergy. In 1922, he had asked three MEP apostolic vicars in Sichuan to discuss plans for creating a Chinese mission, but he met strong opposition from the MEP apostolic vicars and missionaries, and only in 1927 Chinese missions were created in Sichuan, and only in 1930 two Chinese were consecrated as bishops.²⁷

In the case of the Maryknoll territory, the negotiations had started a long time ago, in 1917, and in 1924, the hands of Propaganda Fide were already tied up with the Maryknoll. Probably neither Yang Fujue nor Guébriant had envisioned at that time that Jiangmen could have been fully entrusted to the local clergy. Despite the oppositions of Yang Fujue in 1917 and of Guébriant in 1922, Jiangmen was officially given to the Maryknoll mission in 1924. Perhaps Propaganda Fide considered that the American priests could adapt more easily to Jiangmen, because of the proximity to Hong Kong, but this kind of reasoning leads to consider first the needs of the missionaries over the needs of the Catholic Chinese.



Fig. 2: Mgr Antoine Fourquet bishop of Canton; IRFA; Chine, bt 43

The cession of Jiangmen to the Maryknoll was negotiated mostly with Propaganda Fide and Guébriant, so Fourquet played only a minor role in the affair, though it appeared

a letter to Fourquet his frustrations: "There is no good catholic in Sancian."

²⁶ See R.G. Tiedemann, *Handbook of Christianity in China, 1800-present* (Leuven: Brill, 2009), vol. 2, 581-582.

²⁷ François de Sesmaisons, *Cette Chine que j'aime: Jean de Guébriant, 1860-1935: un missionnaire breton au siècle des missions* (Paris: Publibook, 2016), 453.

that in the beginning he did not welcome the American missionaries.²⁸ Indeed, Fourquet asked the Maryknoll that Shangchuan could remain in the Canton Vicariate so that Boniface Yang could continue there, but this failed as we just said.

After Fourquet became Apostolic Vicar in 1923, fresh efforts were made to separate from the Canton Vicariate an area to be entrusted to Chinese priests. The project was initiated by Guébriant in 1924, and after receiving the approval of Costantini, Fourquet announced in 1926, in the Shanghai-based Catholic newspaper *L'Écho de Chine*, the preparation for the establishment of an apostolic vicariate including Zijin 紫金, Xinfeng 新豐, Boluo 博羅 and Longmen 龍門, with the city of Heyuan 河源 as center of the mission. Fourquet entrusted his pro-vicar Eugène Thomas (1876-1929) to prepare for this project to be realized within five or six years. Especially, Fourquet missioned Thomas to do fund-raising among the Cantonese populations in Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Singapore.²⁹ Costantini reported to the Propagation Fide that Fourquet presented him with a plan for an indigenous mission, and even began the work of preparing what is necessary for its good success, but Costantini had also received a report from another missionary in Canton, raising objections about the appropriateness of the chosen territory. Costantini showed support on the principle, but he expressed the necessity to discuss further the project with Fourquet, before transmitting it to Propaganda Fide.

However, the project did not go very far. Bandits were active in the area. Also, the relationship between Fourquet and Thomas deteriorated, and the latter died in 1929. In his 1931 annual report to Propaganda Fide, Fourquet still analyzed the necessary steps to take:

It is well attested that the great missionary societies look with a bad eye on the new churches, through the fruits of their labors, and they stop providing counsel and support to vicariates which are entrusted to the management of the local clergy. It is basic prudence to prepare ahead of time counsel and support when we are preparing in the future the establishment of a local management.³⁰

However, this project which needed Chinese clergy and the financial resources of the Cantonese diaspora did not materialize. By 1935, 19 mission territories were already

²⁸ Sesmaisons, *Cette Chine que j'aime*, 314.

²⁹ Fourquet, Letter to Guébriant, dated 23 June 1926; see AMEP Q 555 154.

³⁰ Fourquet, Relazione annua 30 June 1930 - 30 June 1931, 10 October 1931; APF, Indice generale 1931, 4057/647r.

entrusted to Chinese secular priests,³¹ but in the Canton Vicariate, an opportunity was missed with Jiangmen in 1917, and the project of Heyuan in 1926-1929 failed also.

Promoting Chinese Clergy and Laypeople

Fourquet implemented the instructions of *Maximum Illud* and *Rerum Ecclesiae* in promoting the local clergy, sisters, and lay people. One of his most courageous plans was to promote Chinese bishops with rights of succession in the major cities of China so that the Chinese bishops could quickly replace foreign bishops. In 1929, Costantini supported Fourquet's request for a bishop, but since Fourquet was relatively young (57 years old,) Propaganda Fide did not want to appoint a bishop with the right of succession, but instead named Yang Fujue as auxiliary. On July 26, 1931, this one was consecrated auxiliary bishop in the cathedral of Canton, with Mgr. Simon Zhu Kaimin 朱開敏 SJ (1868-1960) as the main consecrator, and the other two consecrators being Walsh and Canazei.



Fig. 3: Seminary of Canton with Mgr. Yang 1933; IRFA, bt 8

After the consecration of Yang at the cathedral of Canton, Fourquet gathered the Bishops Zhu Kaimin, James Walsh, Ignazio Canazei, Enrico Valtorta PIME (1883-1951) and Manuel Prat Pujoldevall OP (1873-1947) to discuss about a project of letter to be

³¹ See R.G. Tiedemann, *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 584.

sent to Propaganda Fide, urging her to proceed further to the nominations of Chinese coadjutor bishops, or at least auxiliary bishops, in the major cities of China.³² Clearly, Fourquet wanted to promote more widely the Canton experiment of appointing Chinese auxiliary bishops as a preparation to replace foreign bishops. We can notice that, besides Fourquet, there was no MEP involved in this meeting. Fourquet also attempted to push for the appointment of a Chinese coadjutor bishop in Peking during a canonical visit he made there in 1928, but the French Lazarists and the French diplomats swiftly blocked the move.³³

In the annual report to Propaganda Fide, written in 1931, Fourquet mentioned this project of nominating Chinese bishops in the major cities of China, and he criticized the MEP mentality of having the Chinese clergy as “precious auxiliary” according to the famous expression of Adrien Launay (1853-1927) in his *Histoire des Missions Étrangères*.³⁴ In this same report, Fourquet noticed that the MEP headquarters are reducing significantly the financial support to the Canton Vicariate, and he suggested that this might be an act of revenge against him about the nomination of Yang, but Fourquet was adamant that he would not change his style of management and that he would continue implementing the policies of the pope.³⁵

Thanks to his connections with the wider society, Fourquet could understand better the rise of the Chinese political conscience in the Republican era, and the need for the Church to embrace it. Though Costantini did not have such a deep knowledge of China, he supported Fourquet and could convince Van Rossum in Rome to support Fourquet. On the contrary, some MEP priests of the Vicariate and even Guébriant were too much enclosed in the structures of the Church and unable to understand the positive evolution of the Chinese society, and thus they resisted any quick transfer of power to the Chinese clergy.

The question of institutional power was looming very large in the question. For almost one hundred years, the MEP as an institution had invested human power and

³² Because Mgr. Prat had to leave earlier, he could not sign the letter and the project of letter altogether was dropped. Fourquet, *Relazione annua* 30 June 1930 - 30 June 1931, 10 October 1931; APF, *Indice generale* 1931, 4057/643r. For the draft of the letter, see Ricci Institute, BC: F4.7-VI.III.008.

³³ See Soetens, *L'Église catholique en Chine au XXe siècle*, 142. See also Young, “Vignettes of Responses by MEP Missionaries to China 1886-1936,” 242.

³⁴ Fourquet, *Relazione annua* 30 June 1930 - 30 June 1931, 10 October 1931; *Indice generale* 1931, 4057/645r.

³⁵ Fourquet, *Relazione annua* 30 June 1930 - 30 June 1931, 10 October 1931; *Indice generale* 1931, 4057/652v.

finances in the Canton Vicariate. Even though the ultimate end of the MEP was, in Canton as elsewhere, to help the local Church to obtain one day its full independence, MEP priests working in the Canton Vicariate and the MEP headquarters in Paris wanted to preserve their principal mission in China. Fourquet and Costantini understood better that the time had come for the Catholic Church in China to stand on its own.

In his annual report to Propaganda Fide, written in 1936, Fourquet makes the bold move of asking for the transfer of the Canton Vicariate to the Chinese clergy:

I would like to stress an eventuality which may come soon, that is transferring the ecclesiastical administration to a local. In fact, our Society has very few members here able of a great effort. Except two or three, all are old...To transfer the Vicariate to locals, the Holy See has one rare opportunity. In 1860 and 1862, Bishop Guillemin obtained from the imperial government the land where our cathedral is situated...This excellent bishop, as if he did not foresee the future developments of the Church in China, made the mistake to have a clause in the contract according to which the land shall belong to the Catholic Church as long as it has a bishop belonging to the MEP...We could submit the question to the Chinese government as follows: if we replace the foreign missionaries by Chinese, would you be ready to recognize the land where the Cathedral is located as belonging to the Catholic Church?³⁶

The question of the ownership of the land of the Canton cathedral is a complex issue since it involved the French government, and we shall not discuss it here,³⁷ but this document above shows that Fourquet was serious about transferring all the power to the Cantonese clergy, as he already said in 1930. With this plan of 1936, Fourquet suggested a way to give legal foundations to the Catholic Church, both for its leadership and for its land, which did not rest on privileges obtained under a colonial system, but on the common law of China. This project was far-reaching because it was not simply separating a territory of the Canton Vicariate and establishing a Chinese mission, but it was to entrust the whole Canton Vicariate, or most of it, including Canton, under the authority of the Chinese clergy.

However, Yang Fujue died on February 23, 1938, aged only 60 years old. The Japanese attacked Canton in 1937 and the bombing of the cathedral on August 8, 1938

³⁶ Fourquet, *Relazione annua e statistica, Progetto di affidare al clero indigeno il Vicariato*, to Fumasoni Biondi, 6 August 1936; *Indice generale 1936*, vol. 1279, 3013/706-708.

³⁷ See Jean-Paul Wiest, "The Building of the Cathedral of Canton: Political, Cultural and Religious Clashes," in *Religion and Culture* (Macau: Macau Ricci Institute, 2004), 231-252.

also made things more complicated. Fourquet's project of appointing Chinese coadjutor bishops in other big cities faced strong opposition.³⁸ Yang remained a lone and short-lived exception in the Catholic Church in the Republican era, being the only Chinese auxiliary bishop.

Serving Greater Needs through Social Works

During the Qing dynasty, social work in Canton was supported by the local government, but in the final decade of the Qing dynasty and the first decade of the Republic, due to political and social unrest, the local government withdrew from managing and funding social work. During this period of disengagement of the government, the local merchants and gentry got more involved in the operations of orphanages and hospices. The Fangbian Hospital 方便 (Fongpin) was established in 1899 by the local elites in the Western area of the city to fight against the plague.³⁹ It became one of the largest hospitals in Canton and even in South China, with close to one thousand beds, 21 medical doctors, and 210 staff.⁴⁰ Also, in 1920, the general Chen Jiongming 陳炯明 (Chan Kwing-Ming, 1878-1933), head of the Military Government of Guangdong and having little time for social work, entrusted the Three Hospitals of the General Relief 普濟三院 (*Puji sanyuan, Po Chai Sam Yun*) in the Eastern district (Dongguan 東關) to the Catholic Church, this included: a home for old men (*nan laorenyuan*), a home for old women (*nü laorenyuan*), and a home for the blind (*gumuyuan*). Chen Jiongming could entrust the Three Hospitals to the Catholic Church because since its beginning the Apostolic Prefecture and then the Vicariate of Canton had been involved in social works, running dispensaries, clinics, and orphanages in the city. In 1907, the MEP priest and medical doctor Louis Lambert Conrardy (1841-1914) established a modern leprosarium on the island of Shilong 石龍 (Shek-lung), 80 km from Canton, over the East River (東江), with the Canton government paying a monthly allowance. The Sisters Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception (MIC) 無原罪傳教女修會 (founded in 1902 at Montreal) came to Canton in 1909, and besides running the

³⁸ See Soetens, *L'Église catholique en Chine au XXe siècle*, 142.

³⁹ Shuk-wah Poon, *Negotiating Religion in Modern China: State and Common People in Guangzhou, 1900-1937* (Hong Kong, Chinese University Press, 2011), 107. In 1952, the Fangbian Hospital and the Hospital of the Canton government 廣州市立醫院 merged to form the First People's Hospital 第一人民醫院.

⁴⁰ Tang Fuman 唐富滿《廣州方便醫院與近代廣州社會》，《中山大學學報論叢》(Sun Yat-sen University Forum)，2007年，第10期，頁223-227。

school of Holy Spirit, they also established an orphanage. The Little Sisters of the Poor 安貧小姊妹會 (founded in 1839 in Britany) came to Canton in 1913; this international group (French, English, Belgian, Irish, Chinese) built a modern hospice for 100 elderly at Plum Village of the East Mountain 東山梅花村 (Tong Shan), a military area at the East of the city (now it is a kindergarten for the Provincial government 梅花村省委幼兒園).⁴¹ However, it seems that the chief concern of the Catholic Church in managing public institutions was to proselytize the inmates, and this created some incidents.⁴²

It was only in 1924 that the republican government engaged in social work, reassuming the management of the Three Hospitals. In 1925, it also founded the Municipal Poorhouse (*Shili pinmin jiaoyangyuan* 市立貧民教養院) in the western suburb (*shangxiguan* 上西關) and the First Municipal Insane Asylum (*Shili diyi shenjingbingyuan* 市立第一神經病院). In 1927, an asylum previously run by an American mission became the Second Municipal Insane Asylum (*Shili di'er shenjingbingyuan* 市立第二神經病院). In 1928, the Guangzhou Municipal Poorhouse (*Guangzhoushi pinmin jiaoyangyuan* 廣州市貧民教養院) was also established at Shipai 石牌, providing housing and food for some 4,600 indigents in 1933. In the 1930s, the government also built lodgings with cheap rent for workers and peddlers which housed more than 3,000 people in 1936.⁴³ In 1933, four institutions (a male hospice, a female hospice, a hospital for the blind, and the asylum for indigents of Shipai) merged into the Municipal Poorhouse 廣州市救濟院.

Unexpectedly, the war created the occasion for extending the social work of the Church to the general public. Indeed, when the Japanese army was about to enter Canton in October 1938, half of the population had already left the city, and there was a shortage of staff to run the social work in the city. In his report about the vicariate during the war years (1938-1945), Fourquet mentioned that two weeks before the capture of Canton by the Japanese army, on October 8 and 8, 1938, he received three visits. First, there was Mr. Cai Chang (蔡昌 Tsoi Cheung, 1877-1953), chairman of the board of the Fangbian Hospital, and the founder of the Daxin 大新 Department Store. Cai read the decision of the board entrusting Fourquet with the management of the hospital. The other visit

⁴¹ Dominique Tyl 狄明德, “1900-1930 年廣州慈善柴掘,” *Xixue dongjian yanjiu* 8, 2019, 214-224.

⁴² See Alfred Lin, “Warlord, Social Welfare and Philanthropy: The Case of Guangzhou Under Chen Jitang, 1929-1936,” in *Modern China* 30 (2): 151-198, 157.

⁴³ See Alfred Lin, “Warlord, Social Welfare and Philanthropy,” 151-198, 169-175.

happened on October 9. The two general secretaries of the municipal government and the provincial government requested Fourquet to manage the Municipal Poorhouse. The third and final visit, still on October 9, 1938, was by the director of Hygiene who entrusted Fourquet with the asylum for 300 insane 廣州市立精神病療養院 at Fangcun 芳村 (Fong Tsun).⁴⁴

It seems that all those public institutions had reached a similar conclusion: besides the issue of the lack of staff, they would be better protected from the Japanese by being under the management of a French bishop. The Catholic Church had already managed public institutions in the years 1920-1924, as mentioned above, and though there was concern about proselytizing, the performance was still recognized as acceptable.

Because Cai Chang and all the directors of the hospital had to flee Canton, they entrusted the direction to Fourquet.⁴⁵ In fact, Cai had contacted Fourquet six months earlier with the request of transferring the management of the hospital, and on March 17, Fourquet sent a letter to the Superior General of the Canadian Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Holy Angels 天神之后傳教女修會 (founded in 1922 at Sherbrooke) asking them to send first three or four sisters. When the Japanese entered Canton in October 1938, the sisters remained alone to take care of some 600 patients in the hospital, with all the nurses except two having fled.⁴⁶

The Canadian Sisters Missionaries of the Immaculate Conception (MIC) took care of the asylum for the insane at Fangcun, with Sister Gratia Blanchet (連道明, 1894-1997) as director from October 1938 to November 1945. At the end of 1939, the number of patients had grown from the initial 300 to 740.⁴⁷

The forty-plus Chinese sisters belonging to the local congregation of the Immaculate Conception 中華女士聖母無原罪善會 (established in 1898) oversaw 5,450 persons, consisting of the patients in the male and female hospices (2,300), in the blind hospital (950), and the Municipal Poorhouse of Shipai (2,200). The latter accommodated many emigrants who had returned from Malaysia and Indonesia since the economic crisis of 1929 et 1930.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Ricci, F10.25.024.

⁴⁵ Ricci, F6.4_035.

⁴⁶ Ricci, F8.1.077 & F10.25.024.

⁴⁷ Alfred Fabre MEP, "La charité du Christ à Canton," *Bulletin des Missions Étrangères de Paris*, 1940, 459.

⁴⁸ Alfred Fabre MEP, "La charité du Christ à Canton," *Bulletin des Missions Étrangères de Paris*, 1940, 466.

In total, Fourquet computed that he had taken responsibility for 5,000 patients in those public institutions in 1938.⁴⁹ In another letter around the same time, he mentioned a total of 10,000 persons,⁵⁰ including 5,000 persons in the Catholic institutions, though those numbers seem inflated.

With the Japanese occupation followed economic and social difficulties, and in his report of 1946, Fourquet mentioned that the number of patients in the public institutions had reached 6,300.⁵¹ At some point, Fangbian Hospital had to feed, clothe, or bury around 20,000 patients per year.⁵²

In October 1938, Fourquet had received from the provincial government 13,000 Dollars, and from the Director of Hygiene 4,000 Dollars. After the arrival of the Japanese army, the Cantonese who had taken refuge in Macao and Hong Kong sent financial support. In 1941, the American Red Cross also donated to the Canton refugee area committee of the International Red Cross some 960 tons of wheat and 240 tons of rice, and the Catholic Church apparently received part of this.⁵³ Since 1944, the French government in Indochina regularly sent through the consulate of France in Canton some shipments of rice for the Catholic missions in Canton, with two-thirds being free of charge, and the third being sold at the market price in Saigon. For example, in 1946, 52 tons of rice were sent, in 1947, some 90 tons; in 1948, 28 tons.⁵⁴ Sometimes Fourquet himself was on board a truck with the Chinese sisters, and they passed the Japanese checkpoints to deliver the rice to the different institutions.

The Catholic Church assumed the management of the public institutions of Canton from 1938 to 1946 to respond to the exceptional circumstances of the war. This generous decision can be seen along the line of the Indigenization of the Church. The Church

⁴⁹ Ricci, F8.1.017.

⁵⁰ Fourquet to Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, dated 22 November 1938; *Indice generale* 1938, Vol. 1408 ; *Informa sulla condizione della cita di Canton in seguito alla occupazione giapponese*, 5051/1938, ff. 700-704; 701v-702r.

⁵¹ F10.25.024.

⁵² F7.81.003.

⁵³ F4.2.046.

⁵⁴ F6.4.005; F6.4.013 ; F.6.4.018. It seems that those shipments went for the Catholic missions and not for the public works managed by the Church. For example, in 1947, the Archdiocese of Canton allocated 24 tons to the orphanage of the sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MIC), 15 tons to the leprosarium of Shilong, 10 tons to the works of the Archdiocese, six tons to the asylum of the Little Sisters of the Poor, and one ton to the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of the Holy Angels.

accepted temporarily the management of public institutions to serve the greater good, for the sake of the needy, regardless of their personal faith.

On December 8, 1948, Ou Yangju 歐陽駒 (Au Yang Kiu, 1896-1958), mayor of Canton (1946-1949), wished to honor the generous support of the Canton Vicariate in 1938, and thus he decided to confer the title of Honorable Citizen 榮譽公民 to three persons who had contributed greatly to Canton. James McClure Henry 香雅各(1880-1956), who was born in Canton, the son of a Baptist missionary, had been provost of the Lingnan University. F. A. Nixon 聶克遜 had been a British postal commissioner in Peking. About Mgr. Fourquet, the official letter mentioned his caritative works during the Japanese occupation, maintaining the hospices, the hospital for war victims, and the public hospital of Fangbian. Because Fourquet had already left Canton, Gustave-Joseph Deswazières, administrator of the Canton Archdiocese, replaced him at the ceremony. The Golden Key of Canton awarded to Fourquet is still preserved at the museum of the MEP in Paris.

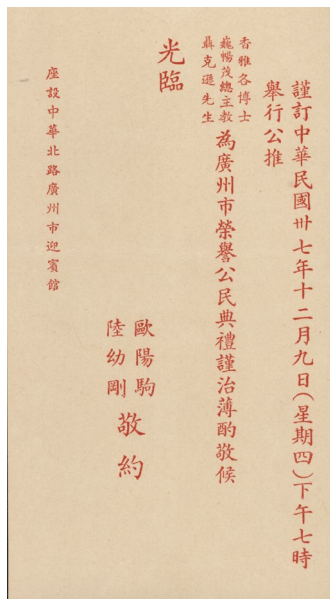


Fig. 4 - Canton Archives, Boston Ricci Institute F7.9.001



Fig. 5 - Key of Canton 廣州之鑰; photography: Meynard, 2022

Conclusion

In the 17th century, Propaganda Fide relied on new missionary societies like the MEP so that the Vatican could regain ecclesiastical control of the missions from the Spanish and Portuguese colonial powers. In the case of China, the effects of the new policy had limited effects because the Rite Controversy and the subsequent prohibition of Catholicism in the 18th century had frozen the dissemination of the Church, which was allowed to exist only on the fringes. In the 19th century, the French government and missionaries (MEP, Lazarists and Jesuits) progressively imposed the idea of a protectorate of France, and it was only with *Maximum Illud* in 1919 that Propaganda Fide attempted to disentangle itself from the colonial power of France.

Recently, Ambrose Mong stated that the failure of the missionaries in China was closely linked to their reluctance in handing over the leadership to the local clergy:

The main reason for their failure was the refusal of European clergy to hand over the leadership of the Church to the Chinese, in spite of Rome's edicts to establish an indigenous ecclesiastical hierarchy. With local clergy in charge, the issue of language and cultural adaptation would have been resolved.⁵⁵

This suggests that the reasoning of delaying the transfer of power to the locals until they met the requirements was flawed. Funding new seminaries and recruiting local vocations as Guébriant advocated could not solve the basic problem. As Propaganda Fide, Costantini and Fourquet clearly understood, the local clergy needed to be first empowered through the nomination of Chinese bishops, not only in remote mission territories, but also in the major cities of China.

In the spirit of *Maximum Illud*, Fourquet made great efforts to insert the Church into Chinese politics. Though the Catholics in Europe were traditionally monarchists and suspicious of the republics, Fourquet developed polite relations with the revolutionary government of Canton. His involvement not only reached out to political circles, but also to other religions. According to his necrology, Fourquet had met a Buddhist monk who had progressive social ideas like him, and he made the vow to eat vegetarian, a vow that he kept until his death.⁵⁶ He also promoted the establishment of a Catholic university or Normal College in Canton, that could train teachers for the Catholic schools of the

⁵⁵ Ambrose Mong, "Catholic missions in China: failure to form native clergy," *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 19.2 (2019): 30-43.

⁵⁶ Notice nécrologique d'Antoine Fourquet, Institut de Recherche France-Asie: <https://www.irfa.paris/fr/notices/notices-necrologiques/fourquet-1872-1952> (16 September 2021)

Vicariate and could also train non-Catholics. This plan of a Catholic institution of higher learning did not materialize but it inserted itself into the larger project of having the voice of the Catholic Church heard in the intellectual scene. In his annual report to Propaganda Fide of 1933, he mentioned the intellectual debates taking place in China, with many negative ideologies coming from the West, and the need for the Church not to ignore the new “hypothetical teachings” but to show that “many so-called scientific facts lack foundations.”⁵⁷ Its intellectual attitude seems here to be quite reactionary and apologetic, but we have seen that he could also embrace the cause of Chinese nationalism.

Through all his engagements, Fourquet wanted the Catholic Church not to be a colonial church, but to be assimilated into the Chinese modern society. He could count on the support of Propaganda Fide, but he faced the strong opposition of his MEP confreres and headquarters in Paris. The circumstances around his resignation and departure from Canton would need a more precise study.

Western name	Chinese name	Period	Title
Jean-Marie Mérel	梅致遠	1901-1914	Apostolic Prefect
Adolphe Rayssac	實茂芳	1915-1916	Administrator
Jean-Baptiste de Guébriant	光若翰	1916-1921	Apostolic Vicar
Antoine Fourquet	魏暢茂	1923-1946	Apostolic Vicar
Antoine Fourquet	魏暢茂	1946-1947	Archbishop
Gustave Deswazières	祝福	1946-1951	Administrator
Tang Yee-ming	鄧以明	1951-1995	Archbishop

Chart 2 – List of the bishops of Canton

⁵⁷ Fourquet, *Relazione annua* to Cardinal Fumasoni Biondi, 20 October 1933; APF, *Indice generale* 1933, vol. 1150, 4130/654v-655r.

【摘要】1919 年，《夫至大》宗座牧函標誌梵蒂岡呼籲在歐洲和北美以外的傳教地區促進教會本地化。事實證明，它在中國的接受和實施特別困難，但傳信部大力支持巴黎外方傳教會士、廣州宗座代牧魏暢茂（Antoine Fourquet，1923-1947）的努力。本文根據傳信部和廣州教區的原始檔案，檢視當時中國教會的情況，更具體地探究魏暢茂在廣州是如何積極推行傳信部制定的新政策，以及在他與自己修會的衝突中，傳信部是如何支持他。儘管天主教在很多方面很好地融入中國社會，但魏暢茂的個性和他的方法卻得不到許多人的認同，尤其是他本身的修會，並使傳信部最終責令他辭職。透過這個案研究，我們將反思促進教會本地化的歷史意義，以及當時以傳信部為代表的普世教會的角色。