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The “Brilliant Teaching”

The Rise and Fall of “Nestorianism” (Jingjiao) in Tang China**

If we think of Christianity in China – if we think about it at all – we probably first think of the Jesuit missionaries of the 16th and 17th century in China at the end of the Ming 明 (1368-1644) and the beginning of the Manchurian Qing 清 dynasty (1644-1912). The most famous of these missionaries certainly was Matteo Ricci / Li Madou 利瑪竇 (1552-1610).¹ Their earliest period, however, in which Christianity had moved to China was almost a millennium earlier, during the Tang 唐 (618-907) period and the following article will be mainly on the history of this Christian community, its sources and its fate.

In the year 1623 (or 1625), however, a stone tablet was unearthed in Xian 西安, the historical “successor” of the former imperial capital of Chang’an 長安,² which soon attracted the attention of a Chinese Christian convert who recognized the contents of the stele as Christian. After he had reported his discovery to Matteo Ricci in Beijing 北平 (Beijing) the document soon became the object of a careful investigation which resulted in the first translation attempt into Latin and was soon integrated in Athanasius Kircher’s (1602-1680) *China Illustrata*,³ an enormously influential description of things Asian. From the discovery of the so-called Nestorian stone-tablet it was known that Christianity in form of the Assyrian church

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** The following article is the revised and enlarged version of a paper which I had the honour to present in November 2005 in a public lecture at the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions. The editor of this journal was kind enough to ask me if I could prepare an article for publication. The article does not intend to give more than an overview on an otherwise either ignored topic or one which is distorted by the afflictions of theologizing interpretation. I would like to point out that at the moment I am preparing a German annotated translation of the Jingjiao-stele which will be followed by another volume containing the other Chinese Jingjiao-texts. Much more details will be found in these two forthcoming publications, but for the moment I would like to refer the reader to the various aspects of ‘Nestorianism’ dealt with in the recently published proceedings of the 1st International Conference on Jingjiao under the Tang and Yuan dynasty: Malek and Hofrichter (2006).

1. Cf. Mungello 1985.

2. For the question if the stele was really discovered in Xi’an or in Zhouzhi 鄯州, about 75 km west to the city of Xi’an, see Pelliot 1996: 5-94.

3. Kircher 1667.

called Nestorian⁴ had already reached China in the first half of the 7th century. The document, however, did not go undisputed and it was, among others, the notorious Voltaire (1694-1778) who doubted the authenticity of the stele and thought it to be a Jesuit fraud. Since then translations of the stele text were made into almost any European language, the last one published was the one by the eminent French sinologist Paul Pelliot (1878-1945), edited by Antonino Forte.⁵

The title of the document, given on the top between beautifully carved dragons flanking a Syrian cross on a lotus, is *Daqin-jingjiao-liuxing-zhongguo-bei* 大秦景教流行中國碑 [Stele of the Diffusion in of the Brilliant Teaching in the Middle Kingdom]. Jingjiao 景教 is the self-reference of the Jingjiao-church in Tang-China which is usually rendered as “Radiant Teaching”; not least for ecological reasons I prefer the translation Brilliant Teaching in English making the teaching more compatible with solar energy – which has probably been the basic symbolic value of the term *jing* 景.⁶

The text of the stele, written in the style of Tang-Chinese official documents, roughly consists of two parts, a “dogmatic” one in which the Genesis, the Christian soteriology and a description of East-Syrian monkhood is given in a rather Chinese disguise, and a church-historical part in which the reader of the stele is presented with some facts of the history of Jingjiao in China from the time of the advent of the first monk Aluoben 阿羅本 in Chang’an in the year 635. The stele is clearly datable by its Chinese and Syriac colophones to Sunday, February 4 of the year 781 (Western calendar) – second year of the era Jianzhong 建中, first month (Taicu-yue 太簇月), seventh day Da-yaosenwen(-ri) 大耀森文(日)⁷ – in the year 1092 of the Greek calendar (12 years after the death of Alexander the great and the conquest of the Seleucids: B.C. 311). The “author” of the stele is a priest called Jingjing 景淨 whose name is given as Adam in the Syriac colophon; this colophon also specifies that it was the father of Jingjing / Adam, a chorepiscopus of Kumdān (Chang’an 長安) called Yisi 伊斯 / Yazadbōzid – literally: “the one saved by God” – who had commissioned the erection of the stele.

Before presenting general informations of the historical setting of the Church of the East in China some other historical material will be introduced which was

4. The term Nestorian, though used in most publications, is misleading and the Church should be called the Assyrian Church or the Syrian Church of the East. At least in the Chinese documents there is no trace of the teachings of Nestorius. Chinese scholars, who have been attracted by the subject in recent years, call the Church by its own name, Jingjiao 景教, and even extend this name to the East Syrian Church in China under the rule of the Mongols, the Yuan dynasty, where these Christians were called Yelikewen 也里可溫.
5. Pelliot 1996. There was even an attempt by the traveller Frits Holm (1881-1930) to buy the original stele and bring it “back” to the West which finally did not materialize, but Holm had several copies of the stele made and sent them to different places around the world (one of these copies is now standing in the museum of Kyōto University): see Holm 1923.
6. It is worthwhile noting that in the title written above the stele text this character is engraved in a curious form with the element 口 as the upper part instead of the normal 日 which is used in the main text of the stele.
7. According to Pelliot this is a transcription of Pahlavi ‘*ev-šambat*’: Pelliot 1996: 308f., note 281.

discovered at the beginning of the 20th century. This period in the wake of World War I was the peak of European colonial expansion in Asia, but also the time of the great Central Asian expeditions instigated by the British with their hero-explorer Sir Marc Aurel Stein (1862-1943), the Germans with Albert Grünwedel (1856-1935) and Albert von Le Coq (1860-1930), the French with Paul Pelliot and the Japanese with (Count) Ōtani Kōzui 大谷光瑞 (1876-1948).⁸ Paul Pelliot, who collected manuscripts from the famous library cavern in Dunhuang 敦煌, brought with him a document containing two Christian texts, Nr. 5 and 6. Some time later Japanese scholars working in China found in the libraries of Chinese collectors other Jingjiao-manuscripts which were first made public by Haneda Tōru 羽田亨 (1882-1955) and then with an English translation published by (Peter) Yoshirō Saeki 佐伯好郎 (1871-1965), a Japanese Methodist minister.⁹ So at the beginning of the 20th century the situation for the study of Christianity under the Tang seemed to have gained considerable material through the discovery of the following texts:¹⁰

1. *Xuting-mishi-suo-jing (yijuan)* 序聽迷詩所經 [Sūtra of Hearing the (Preaching) of the Messias]¹¹

The following three texts were called *Yisben-lun* 一神論 [Treatise of the One God] by Haneda Tōru, the Japanese editor of the documents:

2. *Yu di'er* 喻第二 [Similes, Number 2]
3. *Yitian-lun diyi* 一天論第一 [Treatise of the One God]
4. *Shizun-bushi-lun disan* 世尊布施論第三 [Treatise of the Alms-Giving of the World-Honored One]
5. *Jingjiao-san-weimeng-du-zan* 景教三威蒙度讚 [Praise of the redemption by the Three Majestics of the Illustrious Teaching]
6. *Zun-jing* 尊經 [Sūtra of Veneration]
7. *Zhixuan-anle-jing* 至玄安樂經 [Sūtra of the Ultimate and Mysterious Happiness]
8. *Daqin-jingjiao-xuanyuan-(zhi)ben-jing* 大秦景教宣元至本經 [Sūtra of the Origin of Origins of the Illustrious Teaching from Daqin]
9. *Daqin-jingjiao-dasheng-tongzhen-guifa-zan* 大秦景教大聖通真歸法讚 [The Praise of the Seeking Refuge to the Pervading Truth of the Great Saint of the Illustrious Teaching from Daqin]¹²

8. See Dabbs 1963.

9. On this and other translations and on the need of a new annotated translation see Deeg 2006b.

10. The authenticity of the manuscripts collected by Japanese scholars has become the object of serious doubts by Chinese scholars like Rong Xinjiang 榮新江 and Lin Wushu 林悟殊; see Lin 2003.

11. I cannot discuss here all the difficulties connected with the title but only want to point out that the form in which the title is preserved in the extant manuscript is, in my opinion, due to a scribal mistake: see Deeg 2004. Saeki's follow-up of Moule's attempt to identify the first two characters Xu-ting 序聽 as a transliteration of the Syrian form of the name Jesus, although definitely wrong, is still repeated in modern Western scholarship.

12. For an overview in English see Riboud 2001 and Matteo Nicolini-Zani in Malek and Hofrichter 2006: 23-44; for a discussion of most of the documents and an extensive bibliography see Lin 2003.

A first look on the texts reveals several important and interesting details: 1) The texts are not translations of Christian texts, but are rather compiled vademecums for the use of a Chinese-speaking and -reading audience; 2) The texts are full of Buddhist,¹³ Daoist¹⁴ and Ruist (Confucian) terminology, thus throwing an interesting light on the “missionary”¹⁵ techniques and strategies of the Church of the East in Tang-China.

The first point brings up the important question for what purpose the texts were written. In principal two groups of audience are possible: Chinese converts who should been taught the basic teachings and conceptions of their newly adopted faith, or Iranian immigrants who had already adopted Chinese culture. As an analysis of the Chinese-Syriac bilingual name-list seems to imply, the percentage of at least ordained Chinese converts was rather low, and this may also reflect the situation of the lay people of the Church of the East in China: it has been mainly, at least in its beginning, an organization for the Persian diaspora in the Chinese capital.

The second point brings up a question which is very much discussed in the context of the introduction and development of Buddhism in China: sinisation or sinification. These terms are used to express the adaption of Buddhism to Chinese autochthonous and proper values and concepts. When, for instance, the term *dao* 道 is used for the Buddhist *bodhi* or sometimes even for *nirvāṇa* the translators of the text quite obviously did this because they wanted to express the transcendent *ens realissimum* of Buddhism through a classical Daoist central concept. Another example would be the Chinese attempt to systematize all the different and sometimes contradicting teachings of Buddhism, the *panjiao*-method 判教 (dividing the teaching), first introduced as a principle by the Tiantai 天台 patriarch Zhiyi 智顗 (538-597); in India such an approach to religion is not found at all. In the case of the Church of the East this use of already established religious terms and concepts is clearly found in the texts, and I will refer to some examples in the second part.

It is well known that the contact between the Western regions, Xiyu 西域 (Jp. Saiiki), and China has been established through the trade-routes called the Silk Road at a relatively early period which finally brought Buddhism to China under the rule of the Later Han-dynasty.¹⁶ The peak of religious and cultural pluralism in imperial China was then definitely reached under the rule of the Tang-dynasty, considered to represent the “Golden Age” in the history of the Chinese empire. Buddhism had achieved its highest degree of development under this dynasty with the formation of Chinese Buddhist schools (Chan 禪, Jingtu 淨土, Huayan 華嚴, and Lüzhong 律宗)¹⁷

13. See in general the article of Gunner Bjerg Mikkelsen in Malek and Hofrichter 2006.

14. See Nishiwaki 1988 and Stephen Eskildsen's article “Parallel Themes in Chinese Nestorianism and Medieval Daoist Religion” in Malek and Hofrichter 2006: 57-91.

15. The term mission can be questioned in the context of Jingjiao as it seems to have been a religious institution mainly aimed at the Persian diaspora community in Tang-China; one could, however, keep the term in the framework of missiology as an example of an early inner mission.

16. For the early period of Chinese Buddhism still see Zürcher 1972.

17. For an overview see Ch'en 1972.

which were more or less independent from developments in India proper, although this period showed the most vivid travel activities of Chinese Buddhist monks to Central Asia, South-East Asia and India, like Xuanzang 玄奘 (596/599?-664), Yijing 義淨 (635-713) and others, and of Indian monks like the propagators of esoteric Buddhism Amoghavajra / Bukong-jingang 不空金剛 (705-774) and Śubhākarasiṃha / Shanwuwei 善無畏 (637-735) in order to bring the new religious "trends" in India to the Middle Kingdom (Zhongguo 中國).¹⁸

It was, however, also under the Tang that new foreign religions arrived in the empire, and it was mainly Persia (Iran)¹⁹ from which more and more adherents of these religions came to China under the pressure of the Islamic conquest of the Persian-Sassanian empire. These are Manichaeism, Zoroastrism and the Christian Church of the East, called the "three barbarian teachings" (*san-yijiao* 三夷教) in China. More and more Iranians, merchants who have always been present and noblemen who mainly seemed to have served in the Tang-army, came to China and brought their autochthonous religion with them.

In the year 694 the empress Wu Zetian 武則天 (r. 790-705) received a Persian Manichaean "episcopus" (bishop), whose religion was called Mingjiao 明教, the "Bright Teaching," in Chinese.²⁰ But it has been the conversion to Manichaeism through the Uighur Qagan during his imprisonment in Luoyang 洛陽 in the year 762 that for a certain period made Manichaeism the state religion of the Uighurs which, however, led to the prosecution of Manichaeism by the Tang in the year 840 when the Uighur empire collapsed.

Probably already in an earlier period with Persian merchants and finally under the Tang with the refugees of the more and more troubled Sassanian empire Zoroastrism, the "state-religion" of the Sassanids, arrived in China.²¹ Only a few hints do exist about the "fire-religion" which seems to have been restricted to the Iranian diaspora in China. The Chinese term for Zoroastrism was *xian* 祇, what means according to the American Sinologist Edwin Pulleyblank "god," "god heaven" (Skt. *deva*), and is alternatively found in the more detailed expression *huoxian* 火祇 (fire god).²² Zoroastrism – as all foreign religions in Tang-China – has been effected by the persecution of Buddhism in the year 845 but it has, despite or because of its quantitatively low profile, never completely disappeared in the integrated Persian upper-level diaspora. A Pahlavi-Chinese bilingual grave-inscription dated 874 proves this very impressively.²³

The religion from Iran which is first historically documented in Tang-China is, however, the Eastern or Assyrian Church, usually called Nestorianism or Jingjiao 景教 in Chinese and Keikyō in Japanese.

18. See Weinstein 1987; Kamata 1999.

19. For a general overview on the connection between see Daffinà 1983. On various aspects of these three Persian religions in China see Lin 2005.

20. See Lieu 1998, and on various aspects of Manichaeism in China also Lin 2005.

21. See the relevant papers on Zoroastrism in Lin 2005.

22. Pulleyblank 1992.

23. Humbach 1988.

But what do we really know about the Church of the East in Tang-China? Most of the historical data, to be sure, have to be distilled from the official language ductus of the stele text; distilled meaning that the text does not give us data for a real “Ereignisgeschichte” (history of event) but allusions often presented by quotations from the Chinese classics (*sijing* 四經), *Shijing* 詩經, *Yijing* 易經, *Shujing* 書經, the Ruist (Confucian) “classics” *Lunyu* 論語, *Zhongyong* 中庸, *Daxue* 大學 and *Mengzi* 孟子 and the two Daoist “classics,” the *Daodejing* 道德經 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. The stele presents the Church of the East and its relationship with the imperial house of the Tang and other high-standing officials in a rather propagandistic pitchfall.²⁴ The description of the advent of the first missionary Aluoben 阿羅本²⁵ in Chang’an is a good example for this kind of presentation:

The “Cultivated” emperor Taizong 太宗 (635-649) (caused the empire) to radiate and to prosper, and he approached the people as an enlightened and wise (ruler). (At that time) there was a Venerable One (*dade* 大德 : *bhadanta*) in the kingdom of Daqin, called Aluoben. (After he) had interpreted the azure clouds, had loaded the “True Sūtras,” had observed the “tunes of the wind” and had thereby overcome the difficulties (of his journey) he arrived at Chang’an 長安 in the ninth year of (the era) Zhenguan 貞觀 (635). The emperor ordered the revered minister Fang Xuanling 房玄齡 to proceed to the western suburb together with the Imperial Guard (in order to) welcome (Aluoben) as an (official) guest and to bring him to the palace. (The emperor had him) translate the sūtras (at the) Learned Academy; in the precincts of the forbidden gates he asked (Aluoben) about the Dao and he realized the Truth in a profound way. In the twelfth year (of the era) Zhenguan (638), in the seventh month in fall (Taizong) issued an edict saying: “The Dao is without a permanent name, the Wise One is without a permanent form. (Religious) teachings are established according to the region (of their origin) and the living beings are rescued in a mysterious way. The Venerable Aluoben of the kingdom of Daqin has brought sūtras and statues from afar to present them at the Supreme Capital (of the Tang). After the essence of the teaching had been expounded (We have seen) that it is mysterious and sublime, without activity (*wuwei*). (After We) regarded its (the teaching’s) ancestor (Christ) (We have stated) that he has procured the means for the protection from (evil powers). (Concerning) its words there are no superfluous explanations, its principles bear the Oblivion of the Net. (This teaching) rescues the living being and is usefull for mankind – it is (therefore) appropriate to propagate it in the empire. The responsible institutions should built a Daqin-monastery in the Yining-district 義寧 of the capital and twenty-one monks should be ordained.”²⁶

24. See Deeg 2006a.

25. This name has been identified in different ways, the most “popular” one being Abraham, which is phonetically completely unsatisfying. I have, with all necessary awareness of the difficulties of such an attempt, tried to show elsewhere (Deeg 2004) that the underlying name might in fact be the Iranian name Ardabān.

26. 太宗文皇帝，光華啓運，明聖臨人，大秦國有上德，曰阿羅本，占青雲而載真經，望風律以馳艱險。貞觀九祀，至於長安。帝使宰臣房公玄齡，摠仗西郊，賓迎入內。翻經書殿，問道禁闈；深知正真，特令傳授。貞觀十有二年，秋七月，詔曰：「道無常名，聖無常體；隨方設

Taizong's edict fortunately is preserved – with some slight but important variations – in the collection of documents from the period Tang-huiyao 唐會要 49.1011-1012. It is important to emphasize this very fact because it is one of the problems of the study of the history of Tang-Jingjiao that the facts given in the texts, mainly in the stele, cannot be verified by other documents or by direct archaeological evidence. So, for instance, when the stele speaks of the erection of Jingjiao-monasteries in hundred cities under the reign of emperor Gaozong 高宗 (r. 649-683)²⁷ and states that emperor Suzong 肅宗 (r. 756-762) reerected monasteries in five provinces in the empire²⁸ we would expect archaeologists at least to find some remains but up to now nothing has been found in China.²⁹

Reading the text of the stele one is struck by the high standard of classical Chinese learning which the redactor of the stele text, Jingjing / Adam, shows. Jingjing, according to the Dunhuang document *Zun-jing* 尊經 (Veneration Sūtra), which comprises a list of Jingjiao documents translated into Chinese, also had produced thirty other Jingjiao-texts in Chinese. He was obviously in close contact and cooperation with Buddhists in the capital which is shown by an entry in a Buddhist *sūtra* catalogue, the *Datang-zhenyuan-xu-kaiyuan-shijiao-lu* 大唐貞元續開元釋教錄 (1st fascicle)³⁰ by Yuanzhao 圓照, where it is stated that Jingjing worked together with the Indian monk *Prajña* / *Banruo* 般若 in translating the *ṣaṭpāramitā-sūtra* / *Liu-boluomi-jing* 六波羅蜜經:

In the 2nd (year) of the (era) Zhenyuan (786) (Prajña) met a relative from his home, the Commander (of the Army) of Emminent Strategy (Shence-shijiang), Luo Haoxin,³¹ who was the son of the maternal uncle of the Tripiṭaka-master

教，密濟群生。大秦國大德阿羅本，遠將經像，來獻上京。詳其教旨，玄妙無爲；觀其元宗，生成立要。詞無繁說，理有忘筌；濟物利人，宜行天下。所司即於京義寧坊，造大秦寺一所，度僧廿一人。」 For a discussion of this edict see A. Forte's article "The Edict of 638 Allowing the Diffusion of Christianity in China" in Pelliot 1996: 349-367.

27. Line 47: *si man bai-cheng* 寺滿百城.

28. Line 59: *yu Lingwu-deng wujun, chong-li jingsi* 於靈武等五郡，重立景寺.

29. I will not discuss here the issue of an assumed Jingjiao monastery about 70 km from Xi'an labelled and identified as Daqin-si 大秦寺 by the British Martin Palmer (2001) and now half promoted as such, half disclosed by the Chinese authorities.

30. T. 2156.756a.17ff.; better readings in Yuanzhao's *Zhenyuan-xinding-shijiao-mulu* 貞元新定釋教錄, T. 2157.892a.4ff.

31. The text of the T.-edition is to be corrected from *xiuce* to *shence* 神策 according to T. 2157. Nothing is known about this Indian mercenary officer in the Tang empire from other sources although he had the high rank of a general (*jiang* 將) of the elite troops which were stationed in the range of the imperial palace. The rank of a Great General (*dajiang* 大將) existed from the year 786 and there were each one for the army of right-hand and the army of the left: des Rotours 1974: 2, 565f., note 1f. and 858. *Shijiang* 十將 [tenth general], could refer to a general who led one of the ten armies (*shijun*) into which the imperial troops were divided after they had been renamed *Shenwei-jun* in the year 787: des Rotours 1974: 1, LVIII. If the reading in T. 2157: *zhengjiang* 正將 [regular general], is correct he would have been one of the sixteen generals in one of the two Great Armies (*dajun* 大軍): cp. Hucker 1985: 122b., s.v. *chèng-chiàng*. Whatever the rank

Prajña. They were sad (because they were so far away from their homeland but also) pleased (to see each other) and consoled each other. They went into the house (of Luo who) paid (Prajña) much honour, had him stay very long and made donations to him. (As Haoshin) was a fervent believer in the three jewels (of Buddhism he asked Prajña) to translate Buddhist sūtras; thereupon (Prajña) translated the *Ṣaṭpāramitā*-(sūtra) in seven fascicles on the basis of a version in a *bu*-(language) together with the Persian monk Jingjing from the Daqin-monastery. As Prajña did not understand the *bu*-language at this time and also had not mastered the language of the Tāng (Chinese), and Jingjing did not know Sanskrit (*fanwen*) and did not understand the Buddhist teaching (*shijiao*) they did not grasp half of the jewels (of the Buddhist teaching) although they called (their work) translation. They strived for superficial and empty honour but did not achieve merit. They made a petition to the throne to have (their translation) be inserted in the (official) catalogue (of Buddhist texts) and hoped that this would help to propagate (their work). His Imperial Majesty with His austere wisdom and erudity had seriously (studied) the Buddhist scriptures and realized after a thoroughful inspection (of the translation) that the principles (of the dharma) had been obscured and that (their) rendering was without context. Besides the living style in a Buddhist monastery (*jialan*) and in a temple of Daqin are completely incompatible. Jingjing should teach the teaching of the Messiah (*mishibe-jiao*), the *śramaṇa* and Śākya-son should propagate the Buddhist sūtras. (His Majesty) wished that the ways of teaching should be clearly discerned from each other so that the people would not be confused. True and false teaching (should) remain different like the Jing- and the Wei-river flow separately.³²

of Prajña's relative may have been, it was a high position. He might have belonged to the army of the right hand because this army was stationed closely to the district of Yining 義寧 where the Church of the East had its monastery which lay on the same height as the imperial gate *Anfu-men* 安福門: see the map in Pelliot 1996. Daring a reconstruction of an Indian name which could underly the Chinese 好心 I would provisionally suggest Sumanas or Suceta.

32. 般若三藏續翻。譯經圖紀曰。昔秦主姚氏有連理樹生於廟庭。龜茲羅什踐西涼而入貢。今我皇睿哲。合蔓瓜生於御苑。闕賓龍象汎南海以來朝。手持梵經六波羅蜜。大臣聞奏。帝俞其言。制委有司精選碩德。就西明寺譯訖奏聞者。即般若三藏法師其人矣。法師梵名般刺若(唐言智慧)。北天竺境迦畢試國人也(言闕賓者訛略)姓喬答摩氏(言瞿曇者訛略不正)。顯悟天假。七□發心。違侍二親歸依三寶。時依大德名調伏軍。誦四阿含滿十萬頌。阿毘達摩二萬頌。餘又乃隨師詣迦濕蜜。至年二十具足律儀誦。薩婆多近四萬頌。及俱舍論誦二萬八千。并大婆沙兼受其義七年。此國學習小乘。至二十三詣中天竺那爛陀寺。受學大乘。唯識瑜伽中邊等論。及聲明論與金剛經因明醫明工律論等並。依智護進友智友三大論師時乃。遊從雙林八塔往來。瞻禮一十八年時聞南天尚持明藏。遂便往詣諸稟未聞。有灌頂師厥名法稱授瑜伽教入曼荼羅三密護身五部契印。如是承奉住經一年。誦滿三千五百餘經。嘗聞支那大國文殊在中。東赴大唐誓傳佛教。汎海東邁駕險乘航。垂至廣州風飄却至執師子國之東隅。又集資糧堅修航舶備歷南海。路次國中二十二年。垂至廣府。風吹舶破平沒數船。始從五更泊平日出。或漂或溺。賴遇順風。所持資財焚夾經論。遭此厄難不知所之。及至海墻已在岸上。於白沙內大竹筒中。宛若有神。數未曾有。是知大乘理趣六波羅蜜經。與大唐國中根緣熟矣。東行半月方達廣州。泊建中三年屆于上國矣。至貞元二祀訪見鄉親。袖策十將羅好心即般若三藏舅氏之子也。悲喜相慰將至家中。用展親親。遂留供養。既信重三寶。請譯佛經。乃與大秦寺波斯僧景淨。依胡本六波羅蜜譯成七卷。時爲般若不閑胡語。復未解唐言。景淨不識梵文。復

What is here put into the mouth of the emperor is clearly a propagandistic Buddhist position of keeping the foreign minority religions out of its sphere of influence but it points out the problems of communication with which the Church of the East was confronted in China. They came into a society with a highly literate culture and a long cultural tradition in which they could only gain access through an adoptional process. This is clearly reflected, for instance, in the cosmogonic first part of the stele which is a kind of sinisized Genesis I:

(Lo), thus it is said: eternally in seclusion, at the very beginning (but) without origin; abysmal will (he be) like the cosmos until the last end and of transcendent existence. Reigning over the central point (of the universe) he created (the world), the one who has given spirit to the saints and who is venerated (by them) from the origin: (who could) this be except the sublime body of Our Trinity (Three-One), (the one who is) without origin and is the True Lord: Aluohe! He measured out the cross and fixed the four cardinal directions; he has stirred the original breath and (has thereby) created the two basic principles. Darkness and void succeed each other and heaven and earth opened; sun and moon started to move and morning and evening are created. Skillfully he created the Ten Thousand Things, erected the first man, especially granted him content, subdued the ocean of creation for him, ...³³

It is striking that the name of the Christian god is mentioned in Chinese transliteration, Aluohe 阿羅訶, corresponding to Syriac 'Allāhā : Hebrew Elohim. In my translation all the attributes and actions seem to refer to God but in reality the Chinese text is not so clear. The first part could also describe a primordial situation of the cosmos before God starts to act, a situation which is very conform with the traditional Chinese cosmological or cosmogonic scheme of a chaos which has not yet developed into duality and not brought forth the concrete phenomena. The creative function of God then is first restricted to the extension of space in which the original energy, the *qi* 氣, is able to develop the two polar principles which is made concrete by the separation of heaven and earth. Separation of heaven and earth then is the precondition for the evolvment of light which leads to the evolvment of the dimensions of time represented by sun and moon and morning and evening. It is not until this stage that God clearly becomes the bearer of action in creating the Ten Thousand Things (*wanwu* 万物), the *res extensa*, and then creates man without any mentioning of the creation of the primordial couple and the temptation through the Serpent. The scenarium is an almost completely Chinese cosmological one in which there is no creating Being but the cosmos is almost

未明釋教。雖稱傳譯未獲半珠。圖竊虛名匪爲福利錄表聞奏。意望流行。聖上睿哲文明允恭釋典。察其所譯理味詞疎。且夫釋氏伽藍大秦僧寺居止既別。行法全乖。景淨應傳彌尸訶教。沙門釋子弘闡佛經。欲使教法區分人無濫涉。正邪異類。涇渭殊流。

33. 粵若，常然真寂，先先而無元；窅然靈虛，後後而妙有。摠玄樞而造化，妙眾聖以元尊者；其唯 我三一妙身，無元真主阿羅訶賦(°)判十字以定四方，鼓(+)皮元風而生二氣；韻空易而天地開，日月運而晝夜作。匠成万物，然立初人，別賜良和，令鎮化海；渾元之性，虛而不盈，素蕩之心，本無希嗜，泊乎娑婆施妄，鈿飾純精；閭平大於此是之中，隙冥同於彼非之內，是以三百六十五種，肩隨結轍，競織法羅；...

automatically creating itself through the stages of a chaos to primordial energy and polarity. So far, there was nothing special for a learned Chinese of the period except the fact that he probably was a bit surprised by the fact that at some points a Supreme Being was involved and acted who, named Alouhe and “Our Three-One Sublime Body,” *wo-sanyi-miaoshen* 我三一妙身, did not mean too much to him. Middle Chinese Aluohe 阿羅訶, **a-la-xa* (reconstruction Pulleyblank), which corresponds fairly to Syr. ʾAllāhā, is one of the few transliterations found in the Jingjiao-texts. In the same way as loanwords from the original languages of the Assyrian church, Syriac or Persian, are rarely found in the material, probably in order to avoid the impression of a foreign origin, transliterations are restricted to some few key words and names: The Messiah is called *wo-sanyifenshen jingzun Mishibe* 我三一分身景尊彌施訶, “Our Partition Body of Trinity, the Brilliant Venerated One Mishihe,” Mishihe 彌施訶, **mji-si-(sɿ-)xa* : standing for Syr. Mešîḥā; in the other texts several transliterations for Jesus are found, as for example Yishu 翳數 (**ji-siě / *?jiaj’-suě*), rendering Syr. ʾĪšō. The religious specialists of the Church of the East seem to have rather used loanwords of Buddhist and Daoist origin to sound Chinese, but it is difficult for us now to determine what they meant when they speak, for instance, in the *Xuting-mishi-suo-jing* (see above, text 1) of Buddhas, *fo* 佛, and Bodhisattvas, *pusa* 菩薩 – were these term supposed to translate the concept of angels? We are not able to say this for sure because the texts are no translations but obviously have been produced as a kind of introduction to the religion. They cannot be counterchecked with Syriac (or Iranian) original texts.

To give examples for what has been called the syncretistic form and contents of the Jingjiao-texts I have chosen the *Zhixuan-anle-jing* 至玄安樂經 (Sūtra of the Ultimate and Mysterious Happiness). The advantage of this text is that it dates from a relatively late period in which the Church of the East had already existed in China for more than a century and the language had already been adapted to Tang Chinese without showing any more the clumsy and experimenting style of the older text from the period shortly after the introduction of the religion in China. The author of the text is known according to a list of texts found in another Jingjiao-text which Paul Pelliot had found in Dunhuang, the *Zun-jing* 尊經 (Sūtra of Veneration): it is Jingjing, the author of the text of the Xi’an-stele. The text presents itself in an extremely Buddhist, sometimes Daoist language and underlines the already quoted statement in the Buddhist catalogue that Jingjing had contact with Buddhist circles. This should not be surprising because the Jingjiao-monastery Daqin-si 大秦寺, “Daqin-monastery,” or Bosi-si 波斯寺, “Persian monastery,” was situated in the Yining-district (Yining-fang 義寧坊) of the capital in the direct vicinity of a number of Buddhist monasteries.³⁴

34. To the Northeast, in the ward of Xiuxiang 休祥 there were the Zhaocheng-nisi 昭成尼寺 and the Chongfu-si 崇福寺; in the ward of Anding 安定 there was the Qianfu-si 千福寺; to the East, in the ward of Fenzheng 頒政, there was the Puguang-si 普光寺; to the Southeast, in the ward of Huaiyuan 懷遠, there was the Dayun-si 大雲寺; and in the ward of Yankang 延康 the Ximing-si 西明寺. For a discussion of this local situation see Forte. “The Chongfu-si in Chang’an. A Neglected Buddhist Monastery and Nestorianism.” (Pelliot 1996: 447ff).

A tentative translation of the rather fragmentary beginning of the text would be:

(I have) heard these Highest Words: the Supreme One (dwelt) [...] in the Hall of Pure Voidness with [...] on (his) right and left (side) he was encompassed [...] by a crowd (which) [sat] at his side in veneration [...] [Thereupon the] monk (Simon) arose in (middle of) the crowd, crossed his arms [...] and said to the Messias: “We human beings roam around engulfed in doubts [...] By which skillfull means (are you able) to rescue the living beings?” [...] The Messias answered: “Well[-spoken is this question, well-spoken is this question. You] (living) beings [of the (world) of passions] are rescued in the Noble Teaching. You [should] sit down again and restrain your spirit [...] Thus] all kinds (of living beings) will have the nature of happiness and consequently [...] As for instance the moon reflected in the muddy water does not create a mirror image,³⁵ (and) as the fire (kindled by) grass does not show brightness if (kindled) by wet grass.³⁶ O monk Simon! When one practices the excellent way, (one should) first extract the movements (of feeling) and the desires. When one is without movements (of feeling), without desires one is able to be pure, is able to be calm. When one is able to be pure, to be calm, one is able to realize. When one is able to realize, to understand, one transcends the range of phenomena: these are the (causal) conditions for happiness.³⁷

What we can see is that the text starts, with some alterations,³⁸ like a Buddhist *sūtra* which typically would be: *rushi wo wen: yi-shi fo zai Luoyue-cheng* ... 如是我聞。一時。佛在羅閱城 ... (“Thus I have heard: once the Buddha dwelt in Rājagṛha ...”)³⁹

35. For this simile in Buddhist literature see e.g. 金剛般若經贊述, T. 1700.153a.15ff., and 金剛經纂要刊定記, T. 1702.223b.23ff., 妙法蓮華經玄贊, T. 1723.830b.24ff., etc.

36. The closest parallel of a simile around fire and wet grass which I could find in Buddhist literature is in the Da-baoji-jing / Mahāratnakūṭa(sūtra) 大寶積經, in the “Chapter on the merit of the nirvāṇa,” Niepan-gongde-pin 涅槃功德品 T. 310.109c.9ff., translated by Bodhiruci / Putiliuzhi 菩提流志: 或有菩薩住虛空中。自身漸滅不遺少分。譬然濕草煙氣上騰。漸以消至于滅盡。(“... or there a bodhisattvas dwelling in the air whose bodies extinguish gradually and do not (even) leave a small remainder – as if one kindles wet grass and the smoke the smoke is extraordinary (but) gradually expires until it is completely extinguished.”) The Christian example, however, if taken from this Buddhist context.

37. 聞是至言。時无上《一尊彌施訶。在與脫出愛》河。淨虛堂內与諸《俱。□岑穩僧伽□與諸人》衆。左右環遶。恭敬侍《坐。□□□□。岑穩僧》伽。從眾而起。交臂《而進作禮讚。白彌施訶言》我等人衆迷惑固《久。□□□□□□非以》何方便救護有情《者。何可得安樂道哉。一尊》彌施訶。答言。善哉《斯問。善哉斯問。汝等欲衆》生救預勝法。汝□(復)坐斂神《□□□□□如是》一切品類皆有(安樂)性隨《。□□沈埋而不見。譬》如水中月以水濁故。不生影像。如草中火。以草濕故。不見光明。含生沈埋亦復如是。岑穩僧伽。凡修勝道。先除動欲。无動无欲。則不求。不爲。无求无爲。則能清能淨。能清能淨。則能晤能證。能晤能證。則遍照遍境。遍照遍境。是安樂緣。 I have given Saeki’s text with his reconstructional additions to the readings of the heavily damaged manuscript for the sake of presenting a smoother translation, but also substituted them by Lin’s (2003: 152) readings (marked underlined) where they differ from Saeki. As I am fully aware of Saeki’s deliberateness I have marked his additions by 《》 in the Chinese text and by [] in my translation. For a discussion of Saeki’s reconstruction see Lin 2003: 152–155.

38. Usually in Buddhist texts the formula *wen shi yan (yi)* 聞是言(已) (“[after] they had heard these words, ...”) comes in the middle of a *sūtra*.

39. E.g. Dīrghāgama / Chang’aban-jing 長阿含經, T. 1.11a.8, passim.

The term *anle* 安樂,⁴⁰ already found in the title, which I have translated with “happiness,” is the Chinese translation of the Skt.-term *Sukhāvatī*, which in a concrete soteriological context means the Western Paradise of the Buddha Amitābha / Amituo-fo 阿彌陀佛.

The Messiah is asked by a certain Cenwen sengjia 岑穩僧伽, (EMC) *dzjm-?wen’ sen-gia; the first part of this name is probably a transliteration of the name Simon, Syr. *Šēmōn* – I assume that this should be Simon the Zealot who according to a younger tradition of the Eastern Church together with Thaddeus proselytized Edessa and Persia.⁴¹ The title of Simon is *sengjia* which originally is an ancient Buddhist transliteration of a Skt. *saṅgha*, which the Chinese sometimes also use for individual monks.

The first question which Simon asks the Messiah is full of Buddhist terminology: the “skillfull means,” Chinese *fangbian* 方便, Skt. *upāyakaśālyā*, are used by the Buddha in most of the Mahāyāna *sūtras* to adapt the way of his teaching to the ability of his hearers. What I have translated by “living beings,” Chinese *youqing* 有情, is a Buddhist translation term for Skt. *prāṇin*, literally meaning “possessing live (originally: breath).” The teaching of the Messiah is called *shengfa* 勝法, literally meaning: “the victorious law” for Skt. *āryadharma*, the “noble teaching (of the Buddha).” When the Messiah answers: “well-spoken” (*shan zai* 善哉)⁴² this is exactly what the Buddha very often answers when he is questioned by his disciples. The answer of the Messiah is presented in a typical Buddhist chain of causal preconditions and the terminus for this is given at the end of the Messiah’ answer: it is through the causal conditions, *yuan* 緣, that the living beings are led to happiness (*anle-yuan* 安樂緣).

Besides this prevailing Buddhist terminology we also find Daoist terms adopted from the basic texts, the *Daode-jing* 道德經 and the *Zhuangzi* 莊子. At one point the Messiah speaks of a primordial beginning which is called in Chinese, as in the *Zhuangzi*, *wushi* 无始 (without beginning).

Elsewhere in the text we read:

As soon as this crowd of good (men) comes together with the Truth, the light of benevolence (or: wisdom) is able to radiate, everything is in mysterious transgression (and) mounts up to the realm of happiness. (They) are redeemed, everything has stopped and (the circle) of birth and life does not revolve anymore.⁴³

40. The term *anle-xing* 安樂性, found in the quoted passage at the beginning of the text, is found very wide-spread in the (Mahāyāna) Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra and its commentaries.

41. See Gillman and Klimkeit 1999: 10, 109.

42. I would rather see the usual short double formula *shan zai! shan zai!* 善哉! 善哉! than Saeki’s reconstructed *shan zai si-wen* 善哉斯問! which is reconstructed by Saeki by filling in characters in his assumed 17-character-pro-line-scheme; the latter formula is only found four times in the whole Buddhist canon (two times in the early translator Zhu Fonian 竺佛念).

43. 方始善眾會合正真。因茲惠明而得遍照玄通昇進至安樂緣。超彼凝圓无轉生命。

The main factor that the true believers ascend to the realm of happiness, *anle-xiang* 安樂鄉, is "mysterious," *xuantong* 玄通, a term taken over from *Daode-jing* 15 where it is used for the wise men of antiquity.⁴⁴ Somewhat odd for a Christian text is of course the idea of a circle of rebirth (abbreviated to *wu chuan shenming* 无轉生命 : buddh. *zhuan shengsi-lun* 轉生死輪). So here we have in one short passage one Buddhist and one Daoist key-concept standing side by side in a Christian text.

To show that this is not only found in one text, another example from text 4, *Shizun-bushi-lun disan* 世尊布施論第三 (Treatise of the Alms-Giving of the World-Honored One) will be given. This text, which together with two other texts is part of one manuscript, has the rare advantage that we can, at least for the first part, identify a parallel in the New Testament:

Says the World-Honored One: "If you donate (alms) you should not donate to men; you should only let it know to the World-Honored One, the (benevolent) friend. First you should donate in a way that the left hand donates but you should not have the right hand feel it. If you venerate you should not expect the eyes of others to see it, the others take notice of it. The One God, however, should see it. First you should venerate in such a way that if you ask for something this is not done in exaggeration. If you ask for something you should first forgive the others' transgressions. If you then go to the place (of veneration) and you have committed a transgression then you should also forgive your own violations. If everyone is forgiven you are forgiven, too."⁴⁵

It is evident, this Chinese text renders Matthews 6.1ff., the famous "Sermon on the Mountain" for which I give now the English translation from the Revised Standard version:

1. Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them; for then you will have no reward from your father who is in heaven. 2. Thus, when you give alms, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 3. But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4. so that your alms may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 5. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 6. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. 7. And in praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard for their many words. ... 14. For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father also will forgive you; but if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.⁴⁶

44. 古之善爲士者，微妙玄通，深不可識。（“*The masters, skilful in antiquity, were subtle, wonderful, mysterious (and) transgressing – so deep that one cannot understand.*”）

45. 世尊曰。如有人布施時。勿對人布施。會須遣世尊知識。然始布施。若左手布施。勿令右手覺。若禮拜時。勿聽外人眼見。外人知聞。會須一神自見。然始禮拜。若其乞願時勿觸礙乞願時先放人劫。若然後向汝處作罪過。汝亦還放汝劫。若放得一。即放得汝。知其當家放得罪。

46. In the translation of *The Holy Bible* 1980: 839.

Now, if we compare both texts it is clear that the Chinese text has skipped the Pater-Noster and thus has not rendered the basic idea of the “Sermon on the Mountain”; some passages have been altered and changed. Jesus is called by the Buddha’s epitheta, *shizun* 世尊, “World-Honored One,” and *zhishi* 知識 for Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*, and it is he who is first to be addressed by the believer, not God who is only introduced in the second part. The principle in the New Testament that one should first forgive (*fang* 放) the other his transgressions (*zuiguo* 罪過, *jie* 劫) to get forgiveness by the One God (*yishen* 一神) is turned into a different idea: first forgive the other, then forgive yourself, because if the other can be forgiven you also can be forgiven – God does not play an active role at first sight.

One may have also noticed another difference between the Chinese text and the New Testament: in the Chinese text it is the left hand, not the right one, which donates in a way that the right hand does not feel it. This difference is probably an adaptation to a traditional Chinese concept. In China the left side was the side reserved for high-standing persons in relation to the emperor⁴⁷; from the third century onward the ministers and official to the left hand had a higher rank than these to the right hand. In a classical text on the rites, the *Yili* 易禮 (chapter 3) we find the rule to give presents the left hand and accept them with the right hand.⁴⁸

Let me conclude with an attempt to touch, very briefly due the lack of space, on one the last keywords in the title of this article, the fall of the Church of the East. What were the reasons of its disappearance at the end of the Tang dynasty until it reappeared in the Chinese Empire of the Mongols, the Yuan dynasty?

It is assumed that Christianity in China was extinguished during and after the persecutions of Buddhism under emperor Wuzong in the middle of the 9th century. In general descriptions of the history of the Church of the East in China one may read, however, that there was still a rest of the Church of the East in China as late as the 10th century.⁴⁹ This is only based on two doubtful pieces of evidence, the first being the thesis of Yoshirō Saeki that text no. 6, *Zunjing*, should be dated to the 10th century.⁵⁰ Another hint that there still existed a community of Christians in China at

47. See Eberhard 1994: 178f.; left is, seen from the position of the emperor who headed south, the direction of sunrise, etc. Granet 1985: 277.

48. Granet 1985: 275. This is already mirrored in the old custom to give the left half of the broken contract document to the debtor but the right one to the creditor: see Möller 1995: 142f.; Henricks 1989: 184, as expressed, e.g., in *Daodejing* 79 (it does not matter if one reads with Mawangdui A “right (half of the) contract” or with the standard text and Mawangdui B “left (half of the) treaty”: (standard text) 是以聖人執左契, ... (“... therefore the holy one seizes the left half of the contract ...”) According to *Daodejing* 31 left is the side of a peaceful civic life while right is the side of war, the sinister side: (standard text) 君子居則貴左, 用兵則貴右. (“If a gentleman (lives at home) he estimates left, if he uses weapons he estimates right.”)

49. See e.g. Klimkeit 1990: 87; Moule 1930: 78.

50. Saeki’s argument that the text has only Tang instead of Datang 大唐, “Great Tang,” for the dynasty (Saeki 1951: 249ff.) is not convincing as the succeeding dynasties usually kept the honorific *Da-* for the preceding house of rulers and because it is very likely that the loss of *Da-* is only a scribe error.

the end of the 10th century is found in the *Kitāb al Fibrīst* by Abu'l Faradj in which the author states that in the year 987 (377 after the Hijra) he had met a monk of the East-Syrian church reporting that he had been sent to China by the Catholicos but had only found one Christian left there.⁵¹ It is clear to me that this report proves exactly the contrary: the topical number of one believer is meant to say that there was no Christian community left in China.⁵²

We have to assume that the small Christian communities in Tang-China disappeared almost completely during and after the great persecution of Buddhism between 843 and 845.⁵³ They do not seem to have survived so-to-speak undercover in an adapted and syncretistic form as the Japanese Kakure-Kirishitan⁵⁴ have done after the Tokugawa regime swept Christian missionaries out of Japan.

An edict of emperor Wuzong 武宗 (Huichang 5, 8th month: 845) is rather clear about this persecution of non-Chinese religions in general:

More than 4.600 (Buddhist) monasteries have been destroyed in the whole empire, more than 260.000 monks and nuns were laicised and were imposed double tax; more than 40.000 temples and shrines have been destroyed, some ten millions of *jing* of fertile land and fields have been confiscated, 150.000 slaves have been taken over (by the state) in order to bring up (the imposed) double tax. Beneath the monks and nuns (which were laicised) there are Chinese as well as foreigners. As the (latter) lead to the appearance of foreign religions (in the empire). We laicised more than 3.000 (monks) of the Daqin 大秦 (religion) and Zoroastrians (Muhu-xian 穆護祆) so that they will not degenerate the customs of China any more.⁵⁵

The anti-Buddhist measures of the fervent Daoist Wuzong⁵⁶ were already inflicting the Iranian religions: the Church of the East, Manichaeism and Zoroastrism, at an

51. Moule 1930: 75f.

52. Another source, the "*Book of Governors*" by the bishop Thomas of Marga who has been secretary of the patriarch Mar Abraham between 832 and 840 mentions a certain David who had been elected metropolite of Beth Sinaye (China): see Moule 1930: 75. This source is, however, referring to the period shortly before the persecution of Buddhism and cannot be taken as a proof for a continuous existence of a Chinese metropolity.

53. To the economic reasons for his persecution see Ch'en 1956.

54. For the Kakure-kirishitan see Turnbull 1998.

55. *Tang-huiyao* 47; *Jiu-tangshu* 18A (82.b.25ff.) 其天下所拆寺四千六百餘所，還俗僧尼二十六萬五千人，收充兩稅戶，拆招提、蘭若四萬餘所，收膏腴上田數千萬頃，收奴婢為兩稅戶十五萬人。隸僧尼屬主客，顯明外國之教。勒大秦穆護、祆三千餘人還俗[一三]，不雜中華之風。於戲！前古未行，似將有待；及今盡去，豈謂無時。驅游惰不業之徒，已踰十萬；廢丹牘無用之室，何啻億千。自此清淨訓人，慕無為之理；簡易齊政，成一俗之功。將使六合黔黎，同歸皇化。尚以革弊之始，日用不知，下制明廷，宜體予意。； English translation in: Reisschauer 1955b: 227; the complete chapter VII. in Reisschauer's book represents a good picture of the persecution. It should be mentioned that the main instigator of the persecution, Li Deyu, in a congratulation note addressed to the emperor gives different numbers: 46.600 destroyed and confiscated monasteries, 410.000 laicised monks and nuns and 2.000 (in a different reading even only 20) laicised East-Syrian monks and Zoroastrians; Reisschauer 1955b: 225.

56. Cf. Weinstein 1987: 114ff.

earlier date, as in another edict from the year 842 Wuzong had ordered the laisation of all religious persons who did not possess official ordination papers. As the clerics and priests of the Iranian religions did not have these papers, the consequences were clear. In the year of the great persecution (845) we find in another decree:

(The Bureau for Sacrifices) also reported to the throne that monks and nuns did not belong to the responsibility of the Bureau of Sacrifices (*cibu* 祠部) but to the responsibility of the Office for Ceremonies for Foreign Missions (Honglu-si 鴻臚寺).⁵⁷ The temples⁵⁸ of (the religion of) Daqin, of the Zoroastrians (Muhu) and other heretic teachings are not allowed to remain after Buddhism (Shijiao) has been completely done away with. Their members must be ordered to return to laity and to their original tax districts and, if they are foreigners, they should be sent back to their home countries and (to make sure that this is done) they should be taken under official observance.⁵⁹

How dramatically these measures were implied can be shown by a quotation from the well-known Japanese Buddhist pilgrim Ennin 圓仁 who has been in the capital Chang'an during the persecution:

In the second third of the fourth month (of the year 843) an imperial decree was issued (to order that) the Manichaean priests (*moni-shi*) in the empire should be killed. Their heads should be shaven, they should wear *kāṣāyas* in order to look like Buddhist *śramaṇas* and then they should be killed.⁶⁰

It is clear that these measures had a double meaning: it was supposed to humiliate the Manichaean *electi* in transforming them into Buddhist monks before they were executed; on the other hand it was a menacing signal in direction of the Buddhist *saṅgha* and probably also of the other foreign religions.

It cannot be excluded that the attacks against Manichaeism were also transferred to the two other Persian religions, the East-Syrian church and Zoroastrism, although there are no direct sources to prove this.⁶¹

57. See Hucker 1985, 264b, no. 2906, s.v. *búng-lú ssù*: "Court of State Ceremonial, in charge of the court receptions of foreign dignitaries, ..."; this shift meant a degradation as Buddhists from that moment on were treated as foreigners.

58. *Ci* 祠, "a smaller shrine for ancestor veneration," may also show that at least in the view of the historiographer members of the Church of the East and Zoroastrians were rather insignificant religious groups.

59. *Jiu-tangshu* 18A (82b.8ff.) 又奏:「僧尼不合隸祠部,請隸鴻臚寺。其大秦穆護等祠,釋教既已釐革,邪法不可獨存。其人並勒還俗,遞歸本貫充稅戶。如外國人,送還本處收管。」; translation and text in: de Groot 1901: 63f.

60. Cf. Reisschauer 1955a, 327; see also Adachi and Shioiri 1992: 2, 191, and 204, note 39.

61. The measures were clearly taken because Manichaeism was the state religion of the Uighurs who, after having been allies of the Tang, had Chinese territory; see Reisschauer 1955b: 233; Scharlipp 1992: 99ff. Another reason why the measures hit Manichaeism especially hard may be that their clerics had to confront the same reproach which had already haunted Buddhism since centuries, and that their dualistic teaching of a strict separation between material and spiritual spheres was not attractive for the imperial ideology. A hint for this could be the fact that the Tang in the year 817 turned down a

It is very likely that in the south of the empire, especially in the area of Canton with its foreign trade centers, Christianity besides other foreign religions could persist a bit longer than in the central regions and in the north. These remainders were then certainly destroyed through the rebel army of Huang Chao who, according to the report of the Arab Abu Said conquered Canton and in the year 877 / 78 slaughtered thousands of Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Parthian merchants.⁶² Christianity then had disappeared from the stage of historical sources until the Church of the East was able to establish for a second time under the rule of the Mongolian conquerors, the Yuan dynasty.

request of the Uighur Khagan to be given a Chinese princess as bride. The reason brought forward was that a Chinese princess could not be married with a Manichaeian. (Scharlipp 1992: 100)

62. Moule 1930: 76. It should be mentioned that Abu Said refers to the travelogue of a certain eye-witness Suleiman. According to Chinese sources, Canton fell not before the year 879, though it is clear that both sources mean the same historical event: see Moule 1930: 76f., note 97.

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