

# Chinese Orthodox Martyrs of 1900: Survey of Historical Sources and Church Veneration

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**Abstract:** The author summarized and thoroughly examined all available sources on the Chinese Orthodox martyrs, who had suffered during the Yihetuan (Boxer's) uprising in 1900, analyzed the wide-spread historical myths concerning this topic and described the procedure of glorification and the practice of veneration of the Chinese martyrs in the Orthodox Church in different historical periods.

**Key Words:** Chinese Orthodox martyrs, Yihetuan uprising, Boxer's rebellion, Orthodoxy in China, Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China

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At the turn of the twentieth century China was in fact a semi-colonial, backwardly developed country in which foreigners were dominated in many spheres of life. The local population perceived the imposition by foreign powers of the latest technology and the import of goods extremely negatively, since this led to the destruction of the traditional way of life and left a huge number of people without a means of living. One of the most important reasons for enmity towards foreigners was widespread drug abuse due to the spreading of opium by Europeans. Gradually, popular discontent turned into social uprisings, especially in the north-east regions, where in the last years of the nineteenth century the failed harvests as a result of drought made worse the already poverty-ridden state of the people. The Qing government, in order to divert popular anger, had an interest in the formation and inflaming of a public opinion which tied China's misfortunes to foreign dominion.

Alongside the numerous foreigners in China engaged in trade, railway construction and factory output there arrived in the country Christian missionaries who had the ambitious aim of converting the Chinese to Christianity.

The issue of missionaries became particularly acute after the signing in 1858 of the Tianjin international

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treaties that permitted freedom to preach religion in China. The Celestial Empire was inundated by representatives of various Christian groups who earlier had no presence in China and who actively began to exert their influence.

In China at the end of the nineteenth century there could be noticed the numerical successes of the Catholic and Protestant preachers; however, the fact that the locals were baptized was not always accompanied by a sincere acceptance of the faith of the adepts, but at times signified a desire to obtain various advantages through membership of a community. In spite of the visible results of preaching in society as a whole, there still hung around the spirit of a negative attitude towards foreign missionaries, at times going as far as genuine enmity. This is explained by the generally hostile mood towards foreigners and as a result of the unworthy behavior of many missionaries and their open denigration of the Chinese gods, who, so the people believed, could be moved to anger.

The appeals of the Zongli Yamen (总理衙门, the Main Directorate of Foreign Affairs of the Qing Empire) to the Russian ambassador in Beijing A. G. Vlangali for 1871 contain a comment on what was happening: “Since China and the European powers have exchanged treaties, many unworthy people have become the followers of Christian teaching. Although they follow a teaching which leads people to good, they in fact despise people. They do not respect the feelings of the people. And the newly-converted have used the missionaries’ influence to denigrate the simple people. The people all the more so could not accept this. The result has been a mutual enmity between the people and the missionaries. There have been heated exchanges and incidents have been provoked. But as soon as the local authorities started to take notice, the missionaries would take under their protection their faithful, thereby opposing the authorities. The people’s feelings even more so became set against them. Moreover, Chinese criminals and rebels inciting riots, in order to save themselves, accepted Christianity, and, using its influence, provoked disorder. Anger boiled over even among the simple people. Anger grew into hatred. Hatred grew into confrontation. In various places the people, unable to understand the difference between Protestants and Catholics, on the whole expressed their dissatisfaction with Christianity. Not knowing the differences between Western countries, the people expressed its common dissatisfaction in relation to all foreigners”<sup>[2]</sup>.

The negative attitude of the Chinese towards missionaries, the “evil-temperedness of missionary failures,” was testified in the travel diary for 1907 of the Russian Sinologist Academician V. M. Alexeyev. He brought together a huge collection of Chinese popular prints, some of them clearly expressed the feelings of the aggrieved population towards the missionaries and which called upon the people to rise up against them. Alexeyev convincingly wrote that the “unconcealed contempt for the national Chinese religion cannot but evoke protest”<sup>[3]</sup>. He points also towards the complex situation which baffled the Chinese in which Christian denominations would fight among themselves<sup>[4]</sup>.

Alexeyev noticed that the British consul E. Werner severely condemned the missionaries and was of the firm belief that the missionaries had brought to China a weapon that could be used against all Europeans<sup>[5]</sup>.

The participant in defending the foreign embassies and the siege of Beijing in May-August 1900 and

[2] S. G. Andreyeva, “Anti-missionary Disturbance in China in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century with Particular Regard to the Situation of the Beijing Ecclesiastical Mission” (in Russian), *State and Society in China* (in Russian), №32, (2002), 116-125.

[3] V. M. Alexeyev, *In Old China* (in Russian), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Moscow: Vostochnaya Literature, 2012), 229.

[4] *Ibid.*, 308.

[5] *Ibid.*, 478.

medical doctor of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China (REMC) and the Russian Imperial Embassy V. V. Korsakov, in analyzing the causes for what happened, came to the following conclusion: “Catholicism primarily wields a huge economic power in China, it owns huge swathes of land. The missionaries are constantly buying up land from poor Chinese and settling their Christians upon them. Having planted the first grain, the missionaries began to exert their influence so that it bears fruit. The new Christian already begins making converts to Christianity by influencing the poor. He prepares the soil. The missionaries immediately offer help and money to the poor Chinaman who is inclined to accept Catholicism or they buy the necessary implements for the poor Chinese farmer and even buy him land—and land for a Chinese farmer is the only ideal of happiness! Having created a Catholic nucleus in the village, the missionaries keep a tight grip on it, while the new members, the Chinese Catholics, immediately break their ties with their blood brothers. They not only become alienated from one another, but begin to hate each other. If a misfortune befalls a Chinese Christian or if he is humiliated by a Chinese official, then the Christian complains to the missionary; the missionary quickly passes on the complaint to the embassy, which sees itself as the protector of Catholicism; the Chinese Christian, it turns out, is always right: he is backed not only by a multitude of missionaries, but also by Christian Europeans. In brief, Catholic mission has created in China its own state and made subjects out of the Chinese Catholics”<sup>[6]</sup>.

He testified that the missionaries in Chinese society were universally hated by everyone—both the aristocracy and the officials, both the military and people.

Archimandrite Avraamy (Chasovnikov), who served at that time at the REMC, speaks of the causes for the rebellion: “The people sought a cause for the disasters visited upon them from heaven, while at the same time the people were indignant at the intrigues of unworthy Christians who denigrated their neighbors the farmers by using the influence and authority of the foreign missions”<sup>[7]</sup>. He called this situation a “repression of Chinese heathen by Chinese Christians”: “The Chinese Christians abused too often their ties with Europeans, using these ties for scaring the local courts and for taking away land from their neighbors”<sup>[8]</sup>.

Thus, after 1858, the number of Christian missionaries who had come to work in China increased, their number changed and the nature of their preaching changed, which led to conflicts between the missionaries and the Chinese, and often there were instances of attacks upon and killings of missionaries<sup>[9]</sup>.

The first wave of anti-missionary demonstrations from 1868 to 1871 led to a fall in the activities of religious missions in the 1870s, but from the 1880s the number of missionary societies in China began to rise, which became the reason for the new popular demonstrations that enveloped the country.

Against the background of the above, let us turn to the presence of Orthodox Christianity in China. The Orthodox community was formed in Beijing at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Its life and work were linked to the activities of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China (REMC). Originally the Mission was dispatched to

[6] Ibid, 90-91.

[7] Avraamy, hieromonk. A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence in 1913 (in Russian), (Peking: Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 189.

[8] Avraamy, hieromonk. “The Beijing Siege; from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China” (in Russian), Christian Readings, №1, (1901), 65.

[9] S. G. Andreyeva, “Anti-missionary Disturbance in China in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century with Particular Regard to the Situation of the Beijing Ecclesiastical Mission” (in Russian), State and Society in China (in Russian), №32, (2002), 116-125.

China for the spiritual care of compatriots who were to be found there—Cossacks who had been captured by Chinese imperial guards in 1685 during the defense of the Albazin fortress. Hence their historical name—the Albazinians. The Albazinian Cossacks settled in Beijing and were incorporated into the Manchurian military of Bordered Yellow Banner, were married off to the wives of executed criminals and were given a building to be used as an Orthodox church. In spite of the contradictory historical information on the life of the Albazinians in China, for many centuries they succeeded in retaining the memory of their origin and their faith.

Gradually, the Mission concentrated its efforts on attending to the spiritual needs of Russians who found themselves in China, while only a single hieromonk from the Mission's clergy attended to the Albazinians. Moreover, throughout the first 150 years of its existence, the REMC was obliged to solve problems unusual for an ecclesiastical representation, such as guaranteeing diplomatic interaction between the Qing and Russian Empires. The setting up of a Russian embassy in Beijing in 1861 allowed the REMC to concentrate exclusively upon church work.

As a result of the active work of the Mission, towards the end of the nineteenth century the Orthodox faith had already begun to spread among the local population. By 1898 the community of Orthodox Chinese in Beijing numbered 458 people<sup>[10]</sup>. The Mission had five churches—in Beijing the Church of the Dormition in the north metochion (Beiguan) and the Church of the Meeting of our Lord at the diplomatic mission (previously the south metochion of the REMC), the Church of St. Innocent of Irkutsk in the village of Dongding'an (Tongzhou district located 50 km from Beijing), the Church of St. Alexander Nevsky in Wuhan, and the Church of the Trinity in Zhangjiakou<sup>[11]</sup>.

By the end of the nineteenth century an important historical event occurred in the life of the Orthodox community of Beijing—the first Chinese priest in history was ordained: Fr. Mitrofan Yang Ji (杨吉). He was born on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1865<sup>[12]</sup>, (according to the traditional Chinese calendar the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 12<sup>th</sup> month 1855)<sup>[13]</sup>, and his ancestors came from the Manchurian banner troops<sup>[14]</sup>. His father died when he was still a young child and he was brought up by his Orthodox grandmother Yekaterina and his mother Marina, who was a teacher in the women's mission school. The head of the 15<sup>th</sup> REMC (1865-1878) Archimandrite Pallady (Kafarov) paid special attention to the upbringing of Mitrofan with the aim of preparing him later on for ordination to the priesthood.

Before his priestly ordination, Yang Ji worked at the Mission as an instructor in catechism and a translator. Being a humble and silent man, and considering himself unworthy, he refused to become a priest. However, he was persuaded by the head of the 16<sup>th</sup> REMC Archimandrite Flavian (Gorodetsky). At the behest of Archimandrite Flavian on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1881 the Holy Synod by its decision of the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1881 confirmed Mitrofan as worthy of receiving the office of priest. It should be especially noted that this position among the staff of the Mission had existed since 1863, yet had not been occupied by virtue of the fact of an

[10] Avraamy, hieromonk. A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence in 1913 (in Russian), (Peking: Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 188.

[11] Orthodoxy in China (in Russian), (Moscow: Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, 2010), 256.

[12] All events and documents relating to the period before 1<sup>st</sup> February 1918 are dated according to the Julian calendar (Old Style) and from 1<sup>st</sup> February 1918 according to the Gregorian calendar (New Style).

[13] The Orthodox Church in Japan, 06. 2011. URL: <http://www.orthodoxjapan.jp/jihou/201106.pdf>

[14] Eight Banners' is the Manchurian principle of administrative division combining military and civil elements and an integral part of the state of the Qing Empire.

absence of worthy candidates.

In his petition Archimandrite Flavian characterized Mitrofan thus: “Instructor in catechism Mitrofan Ji, by both his moral qualities and his deep knowledge of Orthodox Christian doctrine, is deemed worthy, capable and trustworthy of occupying this position as a priest from among the natives”<sup>[15]</sup>.

On his visit to Tokyo in 1882 during the All-Japanese Orthodox Council Mitrofan became a deacon on 27<sup>th</sup> June and on 29<sup>th</sup> June he became a priest. His ordination to the priesthood was performed by the head of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Japan Bishop Nikolai (Kasatkin) of Revel in the Cathedral Church of the Resurrection. On this trip to Japan Mitrofan was accompanied by Archimandrite Flavian, the instructor in catechism Pavel Wang Wen (王文) and translator of the Mission Yevmeny Li Yu (李玉) who at the same place were tonsured as readers.

Fr. Mitrofan carried out his priestly ministry in the Dormition Church in Beiguan. Upon his ordination the practice of worshipping in the Chinese language was established. As his descendants recall, at the metochion of the Mission he was known as priest Ji (吉神父), which came from his Manchurian name, or as priest Fan (梵神父), from his name in baptism, Mitrofan (弥特罗梵).

He combined his pastoral work with teaching in the men’s school of the Mission<sup>[16]</sup>. It is known that Mitrofan had a fine command of the Russian language and translated works of religious literature. For his translation work Fr. Mitrofan was awarded the epigonation on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1884<sup>[17]</sup>.

Because of the humble and quiet demeanor of Fr. Mitrofan Yang Ji and his characteristic kindness and credulity, he often had to endure offensive incidents and many people took advantage of his unmercenary nature. At the same time, he suffered from nervous attacks which became more frequent with every year and eventually made Fr. Mitrofan mentally ill so that towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Mission (1884-1896) he began to avoid people and he could no longer serve in church or work with translations<sup>[18]</sup>. From 1897 onwards the priest ceased to celebrate the services regularly and led a quiet life in his native home near Beiguan. The Holy Synod, out of respect for his work, allocated him an annual pension of 240 roubles<sup>[19]</sup>. The priest had a family—his wife Tatiana Li and his sons Isaiah, Sergei and Ioann.

So that the practice of serving in the Chinese language could be continued after Fr. Mitrofan’s illness, in October 1897 Archimandrite Innocent proposed to the Holy Synod two candidates for ordination to holy orders—Pavel Wang Wen as priest and Innocent Fan Zhihai as deacon<sup>[20]</sup>.

It is important to note that over the two centuries of its peaceful and legal existence the REMC, unlike the other Christian missions, was never subjected neither to persecution from the authorities, nor to attacks

[15] National Library of Russia (RNB). Manuscript Department. Inventory №1457. Document №197: “Bulletin on the Service of the Head and Members of the Mission” (in Russian), 14<sup>th</sup> January 1885.

[16] Avraamy, hieromonk. A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence in 1913 (in Russian), (Peking: Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 166.

[17] National Library of Russia (RNB). Manuscript Department. Inventory №1457. Document №215. ‘Proposal of the Holy Synod on the Appointment to Free Vacancies of the Priest and Teacher of the Mission Pavel Wan and Innokenty Fan’ (in Russian), 5<sup>th</sup> October 1897.

[18] Avraamy, hieromonk. A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence in 1913 (in Russian), (Peking: Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 182.

[19] “The First Christian Martyrs from among the Orthodox Chinese” (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, (1935), 79-85.

[20] Avraamy, hieromonk. A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence in 1913 (in Russian), (Peking: Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 186.

from the mob<sup>[21]</sup>. However, in May and June of 1900 the Orthodox community of Beijing encountered much tribulation.

In 1898 in the province of Shandong there arose a xenophobic patriotic sect called the Yihetuan Movement (义和团运动), which brought many victims in its wake. The beginnings of the Yihetuan Movement go back to the period of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895, when upon the end of the war, Chinese mercenary soldiers were discharged and, by way of an alternative means of making a living, these former soldiers formed bands to rob the local inhabitants. In order to defend the local population the Yihetuan Movement was formed with the task to protect the oppressed and support justice.

The formation of an anti-foreign movement in the province of Shandong was not fortuitous. In Shandong at the end of the nineteenth century the Germans dominated, their treatment of the population led to conflict and clashes as a result of which the population set up a militia calling itself the Yihetuan in order to combat the Germans. As a result the self-protection units formed into political unions with the intention of defending the integrity and independence of China and of getting rid of the Manchurian dynasty in favor of a Chinese dynasty.

The movement against the Europeans was gradually expanded by the addition of new members. The rebels seized various areas and battled against the troops and moved closer to Beijing. On the way they treated the Christian settlements brutally, believing that the missionaries had brought calamity to the Chinese people, while those Chinese who had adopted Christianity had renounced the cult of the ancestors and worship of the Buddha, for which the heavens had punished the people by sending down drought and disease.

The symbol of the Yihetuan Movement was a clenched fist. For this reason, and also for the reason that among the rebels there were many masters of the Chinese martial arts, the Europeans gave them the nickname of the "Boxers". The Yihetuan had as their goal to destroy everything that was foreign, as well as those Chinese who had contact with foreigners through trade or religion. They believed the Europeans and missionaries to be the cause of all the bad things that had befallen China, and considered the destruction of the enemy, for which they zealously prepared, to be a heroic deed. They called foreigners demons, baptized Chinese the off spring of demons<sup>[22]</sup>.

The rhetoric of the Yihetuans was full of superstitious heathen and Buddhist concepts with elements of mysticism such as witchcraft and curses. They knew that it was pointless to engage in combat with well-armed Europeans using conventional weapons, and so they tried to make themselves invulnerable to attack by means of exercises and the reading of curses. They called down a spirit to enter the person which could manifest in him a great strength not normally granted to people. V. N. Korsakov described these ritual actions thus: "They would face the south-east before votive candles, chanted curses and burnt pieces of paper on the candles, calling upon the spirit to enter into them. After this, they would get down on all fours, fold their arms in a peculiar way, and would sway their torsos from side to side. These monotonous exercises would lead them into a state of nervous hysteria and gave rise to a fanatically inclined mob"<sup>[23]</sup>.

A new member of the society was to bow down to the earth three times before the altar with his hands

[21] "The Feast Day of the Holy Martyrs of the Orthodox Church in China" (in Russian) // The Chinese Herald, No6-7, (1904), 12-17.

[22] "Materials for the Acts of the Martyrs in China; The Notes of Priest Fr. Sergei Chang" (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, No5-6, (1918), 12-18.

[23] V. V. Korakov, The Beijing Events; The Personal Events of a Participant in the Siege in Beijing-May-August 1900 (in Russian), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Moscow; Lenand, 2016), 416.

folded and placed on his forehead. Then he would fall and lie for three hours with his eyes closed and afterwards, without opening his eyes, he would move his hands around as though he was cutting something with a knife<sup>[24]</sup>. When the leaders recognized the new member's readiness, they would present to him a consecrated knife and sable. After this, exercises would be continued in the temples preceded by a twenty-four fast and all the society's members were forbidden to eat animal flesh. Buddhist bonzes played a significant role among the rebels.

The Yihetuan units would be organized into communities. The basis of the society's organization would be circles led by one of the society's experienced members. When each circle would reach a state of readiness, then its members would gather new circles and become their leaders. The unit's fighters would wear red sashes and red headbands with the 'Fo' (佛) hieroglyph written on them, meaning "Buddha."

The leaders of the units would spread rumors about the supernatural powers of their members. There was the belief that the Boxers were invulnerable to cold arms and rifle bullets, they did not need the use of fire to burn down buildings—it would be enough merely to point their finger at them. The Yihetuans said that they could see the white smoke coming from houses where Christians were in hiding [18].

The simple people willingly believed all of this, as well as in the immortality of the Yihetuans. It was believed that the state of visible death of a Yihetuan could last for three days, after which they would arise and continue to fight further. There is even testimony that some Boxers would put on armor made from a cloth of compressed wadding for self-protection to support the myth of their invulnerability [14].

Many adolescents and young people were excited by the teaching of the secret society of the Yihetuans and resorted to ritual actions and bodily exercises to attain a miraculous strength and invulnerability. Street urchins also became Boxers and there were many beggars who joined them in order to be fed [14]. It has to be added that when there was no rain the peasants did not have anything to occupy themselves with, inaction and the feeling of inevitable famine often propelled them into taking part in the actions of the Yihetuans, and after they were initiated they were given food.

In the spring of 1900 throughout Beijing and its environs news started to spread about the success of the Yihetuan rebellion, about the miraculous abilities of the sect's members and of the burning down of Christian missions in their way. At that same time there appeared proclamations calling upon people to rise up against the Europeans. Rumors started to spread among the city's inhabitants that Europeans were poisoning the water in the wells, which was the reason for an epidemic of various diseases and high mortality rates. The posters also stated that there would be no rain until the Europeans would be expelled from Beijing.

From mid-May the Boxers started to be active on the territory between Tianjin and Beijing. The Chinese population had always disliked the Europeans, but with the coming of the railway from Tianjin to Beijing, when tens of thousands of people were left without an income from carrying passengers and loads, it was easy to arouse a feeling of hatred in them. On 23<sup>rd</sup> May the railway connection between the cities was destroyed. Then the government once more tried to dispatch troops to quell the rebels, but at the same time soldiers willingly went over to the side of the Boxers [14].

In May of 1900, having received support from the Empress Dowager Cixi (慈禧太后), Yihetuan units moved on Beijing. According to the written testimony of Archpriest Sergei Chang Fu (常福, son of the priest-

[24] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege; from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), Christian Readings, No1, (1901), 67.

martyr Mitrofan Yang Ji), not long before the Boxers appeared in Beijing, the city police gathered information on the number of Chinese Christians and checked their lists street by street, carrying out a type of registration<sup>[25]</sup>. If we take this testimony into account, as well as the fact that the rebels together with soldiers from the imperial army often went out seeking reprisal, all that took place in those days was the result of a deliberate internal political decision taken at the highest level.

In that year half of the Orthodox community of Beijing perished. The 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June of 1900 were the days which claimed most martyrs. Very few testimonies have survived of their lives and deeds, much of it scarce and contradictory information. We can imagine what sort of people they were, how they lived and how they died, on the basis of the following documents that have come down to us.

The earliest main source is a list given by the head of the 18<sup>th</sup> REMC Archimandrite Innocent (Figurovsky) on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1901 to the Holy Governing Synod (published in the journal of the REMC Kitaisky blagovestnik (The Chinese Herald) in 1904, issues 6-7)<sup>[26]</sup>. It was compiled from the evidence given by relatives and neighbors of Christians who died a martyr's death. The list was most probably used as the justification for the amount of compensation the Chinese government ought to pay. The list can be used as a reference material, but does not contain any exhaustive information, it has a number of inaccuracies and, compared to later sources, poses many questions.

Additional information on some martyrs can be gleaned from the material of hieromonk Avraamy (Chasovnikov) entitled 'Praise for the Murdered' (Izvestiya Bratstva pravoslanoi tserkvi v Kitae (News of the Brotherhood of the Orthodox Church in China), 1905, issue 8)<sup>[27]</sup>.

The article entitled 'The Feast of All Martyrs' (in the 'Chronicle of Church Life' section of Izvestiya Bratstva pravoslanoi tserkvi v Kitae (News of the Brotherhood of the Orthodox Church in China), 1905, issue 8) provides information on the renewal of the community's life after the tragic events, on the first honoring of the memory of those who suffered and on the commemoration of those Christians who perished at the hands of the Yihetuan<sup>[28]</sup>.

The entry entitled 'The Holy Martyrs' tells us of the details of the terrible days of the tragedy (Kitaisky blagovestnik (The Chinese Herald), 1911, issue 8)<sup>[29]</sup>.

A most important testimony to the martyrs is the detailed narrative by Archimandrite Avraamy (Chasovnikov) entitled 'Stories of the Martyrs of the Chinese Orthodox Church Who Suffered in Beijing in 1900' (published in the journal Kitaisky blagovestnik (The Chinese Herald), 1917, issues 12, 13-14). It gives more detailed information on most of those who suffered. In all probability the text was compiled from reminiscences by eyewitnesses more than ten years after the tragedy<sup>[30]</sup>.

Of interest are the reminiscences of archpriest Sergei Chang Fu, the son of the priest-martyr Mitrofan, under the title 'Materials for the Acts of the Martyrs in China. Notes of priest Fr. Sergei Chang' (Kitaisky

[25] "Materials for the Acts of the Martyrs in China: The Notes of Priest Fr. Sergei Chang" (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, №5-6, (1918), 12-18.

[26] "List of Orthodox Christians Murdered in China in 1900", News of the Brotherhood of the Orthodox Church in China, № 6-7, (1904), 3-11. URL: <http://orthodox.cn/localchurch/izvestijabratstva/1904/190407...htm>

[27] "Praise for the Murdered" (in Russian), News of the Brotherhood of the Orthodox Church in China, №8, (1905), 5-8.

[28] "The Feast Day of the Holy Martyrs of the Orthodox Church in China" (in Russian) // The Chinese Herald, №6-7, (1904), 12-17.

[29] "The Holy Martyrs" (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, №8, (1911), 13-18.

[30] "Stories of the Martyrs of the Chinese Orthodox Church in Beijing in 1900" (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, №12, (1917), 8-15.



blagovestnik (The Chinese Herald), 1918, issues 5-6)<sup>[31]</sup>.

The first Orthodox Christians to encounter the rebel killers were the inhabitants of the village of Dongding'an (东定安) 50 km from Beijing, where the mission station and Church of St. Innocent of Irkutsk were located. Several families of Orthodox Chinese who had converted in the 1860s lived there.

In April of 1900 the Yihetuans formed their own lodge here and began to recruit the local inhabitants. Having received a letter on affairs in the village, as well as being aware of Christian victims in the other populated areas, the head of the 18<sup>th</sup> Mission Archimandrite Innocent (Figurovsky), along with volunteers (singers and teachers) undertook the risky journey to Dongding'an to render spiritual support to the faithful. Here he celebrated services in the church and visited the homes of Christians<sup>[32]</sup>. It must be noted that in these conditions of fear and uncertainty people accepted baptism—the archimandrite performed this sacrament over six believers during his visit. The local inhabitants, when they saw the sacraments being celebrated, hurled insults upon the newly baptized.

Several days before the tragedy a notice was stuck to the wall of the metochion stating that the church would be destroyed. A few days past after the archimandrite's visit, on 25<sup>th</sup> May at six o'clock in the early evening, a unit of Boxers, consisting of no more than ten men accompanied by a mob, appeared in the village. They conducted their prayer ritual on the square with lit torches and, shouting "Sha!" ("Kill!"), they pulled down the locked gates of the churchyard and belfry constructed in the form of gates of triumph on wooden columns with an awning, burnt down the guardhouse and then headed for the church. While the Boxers broke down the doors of the church, local women and children brought straw and reeds in order to burn it down. There were no valuable items in the church, so the riot was limited to smashing windows and scattering books and candle stands. Flammable liquid was poured all over the church and it went up in flames in an instant when torched.

Other Boxers at the same time burnt down the homes of Christians, the majority of whom had managed to escape. However, there were fatal casualties, among whom were heathen suspected of being sympathetic towards the Christians. In various circumstances and at different times among the Orthodox inhabitants of the village nine or ten people became victims of revenge, among them children. The following day those Orthodox who had managed to escape this revenge conveyed what had happened to Beijing<sup>[33]</sup>.

The Boxers treated the majority of Christians according to the same scenario as had happened in Dongding'an. They would warn of their attacks on villages or buildings several days beforehand in proclamations glued to the walls in the street. On the appointed day (and more often with a delay) they would come, perform their prayer ritual with lit torches, head for the churches, pour inflammable liquid over them and then over the homes of Christians. Those who could not escape were murdered or burnt alive. The Yihetuans themselves had no use for the Mission's or Christians' property, but bands of robbers who followed them would plunder them for valuable items and murder unfortunate victims.

The proclamation that appeared in Beijing stated that the destruction of the Orthodox Mission in Beiguan

[31] "Materials for the Acts of the Martyrs in China; The Notes of Priest Fr. Sergei Chang" (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, No 5-6, (1918), 12-18.

[32] Avraamy, hieromonk. A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence in 1913 (in Russian), (Peking: Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 190.

[33] "Materials for the Acts of the Martyrs in China; The Notes of Priest Fr. Sergei Chang" (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, No 5-6, (1918), 12-18.

was planned for 27<sup>th</sup> May and the chapel at the Orthodox cemetery for the 29<sup>th</sup> May. The walls and gates of Beiguan were not used for defense purposes and so would be unable to withstand any attack. And there was nearby a city wall which was higher than all of the Mission's buildings, which made it impossible to defend<sup>[34]</sup>.

All foreigners in Beijing and the environs at that time gathered in the embassy quarters. In view of the situation which had arisen, the Russian ambassador to Beijing M. N. Girs personally journeyed to Archimandrite Innocent and convinced him and the members of the Mission to flee Beiguan and with those Orthodox Chinese who so desired to move under the protection of the embassy. Archimandrite Innocent agreed to this only after having to be long convinced<sup>[35]</sup>.

Having decided to leave, Archimandrite Innocent gathered his Chinese flock and spoke to them of the need to flee Beiguan. He proposed that they should seek refuge in another place or go with him to the embassy. Only two Chinese-Yakov Qi (齐) and Luka Quan (全)-dared to make the journey to the Russian Embassy. Almost no information about Yakov has survived other than that he was a servant at the Mission. But it is known about Luka that he was a widower over the age of sixty, a descendant of Russians who had retained some of their European physical features, but who spoke Russian very badly. He was devout, attended all of the church services, enjoyed respect and influence among the Christians, occupied an administrative post in the Albazian regiment and had the rank of major. At the time of the tragedy he had married children who decided to seek refuge in a different secure place<sup>[36]</sup>. After the tragedy Luka Quan was tonsured a monk and given the name Papius.

The remaining Chinese Orthodox did not want to go with the Russian missionaries as to be found with Europeans at that time was too dangerous.

In the evening of 26<sup>th</sup> May there moved from Beiguan to the embassy quarters under the protection of the army all the Russian missionaries-Archimandrite Innocent, hieromonk Avraamy (Chasovnikov), priest Nikolai (Shastin), deacon Vasily Skrizhalin, two students of the Ecclesiastical Mission and two Chinese, who stayed with the head of the Mission until the end of the siege<sup>[37]</sup>.

The Chinese government ordered that the Mission's property be kept under guard. The missionaries were assured that the church and living premises would fall under the responsibility of the Chinese Foreign Ministry and that officials would come to seal the property, but this never happened<sup>[38]</sup>. Before leaving, the missionaries made an inventory of the property and took with themselves only the liturgical vessels and a Gospel book, as well as an old icon of St. Nicholas of Mozhaik, which had been brought to China by the Albazianians in the 17<sup>th</sup> century<sup>[39]</sup>. The remaining holy items were locked away beneath the sanctuary of the

[34] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege; from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), Christian Readings, №1, (1901), 69.

[35] V. V. Korakov, The Beijing Events; The Personal Events of a Participant in the Siege in Beijing-May-August 1900 (in Russian), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Moscow; Lenand, 2016), 416.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Avraamy, hieromonk. A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence in 1913 (in Russian), (Peking; Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 190.

[38] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege; from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), Christian Readings, №1, (1901), 73.

[39] "Materials for the Acts of the Martyrs in China; The Notes of Priest Fr. Sergei Chang" (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, №5-6, (1918), 12-18.

church.

Some Orthodox Chinese would come to the embassy during five days reporting to the head of the Mission that Beiguan was in good condition and was being guarded by Chinese soldiers<sup>[40]</sup>.

On 29<sup>th</sup> May an imperial order was issued appointing Zaifen (载沣)<sup>[41]</sup>, the Grand Prince Chun (醇亲王)<sup>[42]</sup> as main chancellor. He was known as an implacable enemy of Europeans and curator of the Boxer Rebellion. Then started the siege of the foreign embassies by the Boxers and regular troops, that lasted two months. The unrelenting attacks of night and day were exhausting for them. People lived in overcrowded accommodation, undergoing a lack of food provisions, oppressive heat, a vast number of insects and disease.

Yet nevertheless the Europeans never abandoned the Chinese Christians. Thus, during the siege 356 Chinese lived in the British Embassy<sup>[43]</sup>. It is to be noted that the Chinese Christians rendered invaluable help by working to build up barricades and digging earthen trenches<sup>[44]</sup>.

More than 1500 Chinese Christians, under the protection of forty French and Italian marines, hid in the Catholic Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Beitang (北堂), having been surrounded by Chinese soldiers in difficult conditions under siege with limited food supplies<sup>[45]</sup>.

From the end of May the Boxers went through the streets of Beijing in military formation, in places where there were Christian communities notices were put up telling people on what day which Christian areas and buildings would be destroyed [30]. From the 31<sup>st</sup> May arson attacks upon buildings began in the city, in the homes of Europeans and in areas where Chinese Christians lived. There were destroyed the Catholic Cathedrals of the Immaculate Conception of the Holy Virgin Mary (南堂, Nantang), of the Holy Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel (西堂, Xitang), of St. Joseph (东堂, Dongtang), as well as the Orthodox chapel at the cemetery and a number of Protestant churches.

The Boxers kept the inhabitants of Beijing in a state of subjugation, forcing them to make sacrifices and worship pagan gods, making a note of how enthusiastic or otherwise they were in doing so<sup>[46]</sup>. For example, the city dwellers were forced to place a cup of water in front of their homes with incense sticks. Those who disobeyed were robbed and murdered. Denunciations were commonplace-neighbors indicated to the Boxers the houses of Christian families<sup>[47]</sup>.

The Boxers used quite strange means of defining who was a Christian, and quite a few heathens suffered alongside the Christians. Someone suspected of confessing Christianity would be struck on the forehead with an open palm, and if he was a Christian a white cross would appear where he had been struck<sup>[48]</sup>. Often it

[40] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege: from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), Christian Readings, №1, (1901), 74.

[41] The father of Puyi, the last emperor of China.

[42] One of the highest official titles under the Qing dynasty.

[43] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege: from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), Christian Readings, №1, (1901), 65-112.

[44] Avraamy, hieromonk. A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence (in Russian), (Peking: Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 191.

[45] P. S. Popov. "The Two Months of the Siege of Beijing" (in Russian), The Herald of Europe, № 2, (1901). URL: [http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/China/XIX/1880-1900/Popov\\_P\\_S/2\\_mes\\_pekkin\\_1.htm](http://www.vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/China/XIX/1880-1900/Popov_P_S/2_mes_pekkin_1.htm)

[46] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege: from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), Christian Readings, №1, (1901), 68.

[47] "The Holy Martyrs" (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, №8, (1911), 13-18.

[48] Ibid.

was enough to point somebody out to the Boxers and say that he was a Christian for him to be murdered.

The Mission was destroyed on 1<sup>st</sup> June. As the gates had been locked, the fighters destroyed the wall by using rocket shells. The first things to be plundered were the missionaries' quarters, the library, the school and the printing house. The Mission's archives and the rich library which contained many rare books were also destroyed<sup>[49]</sup>. After this the robbers broke down the doors to the Dormition Church, plundered it and set it on fire. Having destroyed the church, the Boxers made their way up the bell tower and struck the bells with sticks, making a senseless noise. The bell tower burned until two o'clock in the morning, first the main bell fell and then the other bells<sup>[50]</sup>. Soldiers from the imperial army also took part in the plundering of the metochion of the Mission alongside the Boxers and raiders.

After the Mission had been burnt down, many Orthodox Christians fled from the city, but soon they had to return to their homes since they had no means of hiding or taking shelter, or of being able to feed themselves outside Beijing<sup>[51]</sup>.

Shortly before the mass killings in the city, around seventy Orthodox Chinese gathered in the house of Fr. Mitrofan. The faithful found themselves in the depressed state of the presentiment and expectation of death. Fr. Mitrofan strengthened those who had gathered with words of support, among whom were his former offenders. It is known that several times a day he would go and look at the burnt down church<sup>[52]</sup>.

On the eve of the terrible night from the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> June the area where the houses of Orthodox Christians were located was cordoned off by soldiers. From the city wall they observed the actions of the Boxers who, accompanied by a mob, entered the courtyards of houses with lit torches. If the inhabitants showed submission by kneeling and burning incense before the spirits they would be left alone, but if they did not submit, then the Boxers would rush into their house, take all the property and people and kill them on the threshold with spears and knives, while setting fire to the house, often with people still alive inside.

On 10<sup>th</sup> June at nine o'clock in the evening the soldiers and Boxers surrounded the courtyard of the priest. The strongest and most agile inside were able to flee the house—some avoided an unfortunate fate, others were caught and killed. The priest remained in the house with many women and children.

Fr. Mitrofan was found murdered in the courtyard of the house beneath a fig tree; he had up to thirty stab wounds on his chest. The crude weapons of the Boxers were made of iron and were rusty, but they could inflict many avulsive wounds with them. Fr. Mitrofan had come out into the courtyard to meet the killers, leaving his wife and children inside, probably in the hope that his death alone would suffice. However, the killers did not spare the women and the children in the house, subjecting them to torture and death. The house of the priest was burnt down and many perished in the fire.

The Boxers had heard of the Christian teaching on the resurrection of the dead. In order to avert the resurrection of their bodies, they assaulted and stabbed the already dead bodies (as was the case with Fr. Mitrofan) and this is why they tried to burn the bodies of the murdered<sup>[53]</sup>.

Another group of Orthodox Christians was taken behind the Gates of Andingmen (安定门) to the Boxer

[49] "The Boxer Rebellion of 1900", *The Chinese Herald* (in Russian), (1935), 105-108.

[50] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege: from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), *Christian Readings*, No1, (1901), 94.

[51] *Ibid.*, 92.

[52] "Stories of the Martyrs of the Chinese Orthodox Church in Beijing in 1900" (in Russian), *The Chinese Herald*, No12, (1917), 8-15.

[53] "The Holy Martyrs" (in Russian), *The Chinese Herald*, No8, (1911), 13-18.

lodge near the Temple of the Earth (地坛, Ditan), where on 11<sup>th</sup> June in the morning they were executed en masse. Among them was the wife of Fr. Mitrofan, Tatiana Li, who on the day her husband died had managed to escape but was captured the following day and beheaded. The place of their martyr's death in historical literature and in the reminiscences of the Albazianians is called the Triangle (三角地), where the old Albazianian cemetery was located, and later an almshouse was built on the site of the martyrdom.

Fr. Mitrofan eldest son Isaiah was twenty-three when he was beheaded at the Gates of Pingzemen (平则门) (now—阜成门, Fuchengmen). His middle son Sergei Chang Fu managed to escape death. He later became a priest and continued his father's work of giving spiritual guidance to the Chinese flock. The Boxers had hacked away at the shoulders and cut off the toes, nose and ears of his youngest son Ioann, who was eight years old. The following night Maria, the bride of his brother Isaiah, hid him in the backhouse and by morning Ioann was sitting at the entrance without clothing or shoes. Asked whether he was in pain, he replied that "it is not painful to suffer for Christ." He had to endure the mockeries of the boys from neighboring courtyards. He asked for water from his neighbors but was refused. Later he was captured by executioners and tortured to death<sup>[54]</sup>.

The faithful who were brought to the Boxer lodge were subjected to harsh trials. Here they were forced to renounce their faith in Christ and burn sweet-smelling incense before the Buddhist deities. The place of the martyrdom of many Orthodox Chinese was the ancient Buddhist temple of Cheng'ensi (承恩寺), located in the Dongsu Batiao hutong (东四八条胡同). The hutong has survived in its historical form with buildings which saw the sufferings of Orthodox Chinese martyrs; however, the temples there were closed and rebuilt as living accommodation in the first years after establishment of the People's Republic of China.

Archimandrite Innocent testifies to the heroic feat of the Chinese Christians: "On the previous evening proclamations had been hung up on the streets calling upon the heathen to assault Christians and threatening with death anyone who dared to give them shelter. At night, the Boxers appeared with burning torches all over Beijing, attacked Christian homes, kidnapped unfortunate Christians and tortured them, forcing them to renounce Christ. Many, out of fear of torture and death, renounced Orthodoxy in order to save their lives and burnt incense before the idols. But others, not fearing torment, courageously confessed Christ. Their lot was terrible. Their stomachs were ripped open, they were beheaded and burnt alive in their homes. The search for Christians and killing continued throughout all of the following days of the rebellion. After the destruction of their homes Christians were taken beyond the city gates to the temples of the Boxers, where they were interrogated and burnt alive"<sup>[55]</sup>.

On those days one could see all over Beijing burnt out decapitated bodies with stomachs ripped open, heads, hands and legs cut off, and children's bodies cut in half or with the smashed skulls.

People lived in fear and tried to escape death—some managed to bribe their way out of death, others died even though they had paid money to the Boxers, others managed to flee the city or hide away by some miracle in the city. Fear and despair engendered suicide attempts, there were those who renounced their faith and worshiped idols, some sought refuge with their relatives, others hid themselves in the cemetery. Relatives and neighbors would denounce Christians to the Boxers out of fear and hatred. Many were burnt alive in their homes, others were stabbed to death with spears or hacked to death by sword, still others were held at Boxer

[54] "Stories of the Martyrs of the Chinese Orthodox Church in Beijing in 1900" (in Russian), *The Chinese Herald*, No12, (1917), 8-15.

[55] D. Pozdnyaev, priest. "Orthodoxy in China" (in Russian), *Russia and the Modern World* (in Russian), No1, (2001), 165-181.

lodges and subjected to torture; the most common form of execution was beheading. The killers spared neither women nor children. The sources even mention the ritual extraction and eating of the hearts of their victims by the Yihetuans. There were some Orthodox Christians who had been murdered and later found covered in stones at the bottom of wells.

When the Christians tried to flee the city, the imperial soldiers captured them as they went through the city gates. The fugitives were subjected to interrogation and execution in one of the temples at the Gates of Aningmen and their bodies would be buried nearby. The Chinese authorities undertook no measures to stop the orgy of violence.

There were many Albazinians among the martyrs who suffered for their faith. The materials of the REMC before the Boxer Rebellion mention the Albazinians as being ignorant people who had forgotten their homeland and faith, lazy and deprived in their idleness of all moral virtues, and inclined towards vice [10]. When the critical situation arose, and the preservation of one's life depended on simple ritual actions, these people testified to their fidelity to Christ unto death. Thus, Fr. Avraamy in his reminiscences wrote: "All of these dubious Christians, whom we believed to be indifferent to religion and the Church, now wept like children and wailed over the destruction of God's temple"<sup>[56]</sup>.

Among those who perished in the mass killings were Pavel Wang Wen and Innocent FanZhihai, who had been presented to the Holy Synod as candidates for ordination to holy orders. The Synod confirmed their candidacy on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1900, but they were never to learn of this<sup>[57]</sup>.

More than two hundred Orthodox Chinese died in the most horrible manner in those days. One important issue is the number of those murdered for their faith during those terrible days. Church circles speak of 222 Chinese martyrs. This is the number quoted by Archimandrite Innocent in the list presented to the Holy Governing Synod. However, it would be wrong to claim on this basis alone that the number of martyrs matched this convenient figure. We have our doubts as to this and can adduce a number of arguments to the contrary.

Two of the martyrs in the list of Archimandrite Innocent in later sources are said to have survived, and these are Herman, the grandson of Kyr Zhang Fucheng, and Yevdokia, the daughter of Alexey Zhang Furun. And in the Stories... of Archimandrite Avraamy new names of the murdered are added who were absent in the 1901 list, for example, Ioann, the son of Kyr Zhang Fucheng, and some others.

And from the Stories... we know that the daughter-in-law of Kyr Zhang Fucheng, whose name is unknown, was killed along with her three children and thrown into a swamp. We do not know their names, only that they were not baptized. By tradition they can be considered as having received baptism through the shedding of blood.

The circumstances and place of death of a whole number of people is indicated as being uncertain, while the site of death for many who suffered is indicated only conditionally. Some may have disappeared without trace, that is, there is a definite possibility that they may have survived. For example, the young Filimon, the son of the Albazinian Petr Li Yunan, is listed in the 1901 list as having died, while the Stories... say that he was abandoned by the Boxers on the road and most likely taken in by locals. That is, his genuine fate is not known to us.

[56] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege: from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), Christian Readings, №1, (1901), 65-112.

[57] Ibid.

The Stories... list the names and the narratives of the deaths of almost all people from Archimandrite Innocent's list, with the exception of the wife and children of Pavel Wang (not the instructor in catechism), Nikolai A with his wife and daughter and Olga, the daughter of Samson Pan. The Stories... were written in detail, all of the names of those who suffered are listed diligently, but it remains a mystery why they made no mention of these people.

The materials give us two episodes linked to suicide attempts. There is the testimony of Joseph Lun, who was surrounded by Boxers and, out of fear of torture, hanged himself from a tree using his belt. After he had hanged himself, the Boxers cut off his head, but the true cause of his death and how to qualify this episode correctly remain unclear. At the same time, a different earlier source by Fr. Avraamy states that Joseph was strangled to death by the Boxers with a rope. The family of Alexey Wen Heng, before the arrival of the Boxers, was poisoned by opium. It is also known that the father of the family was subjected to torture before death, as were his family, and then the Boxers would rip out his heart and bite of it in a ritual manner.

There was in the family of Iliya Quan an infant who is not mentioned in the list of Archimandrite Innocent, but there is information about him in later sources stating that the child was cut in half. It should also be noted that among the martyrs there were at least two pregnant women.

The 1901 list mentions the children of Ivan Rong who perished—Nina and Maria, but for some reason their brother Vasily and Yelena, the daughter of Mikhail Quan, who perished as a result of the appalling conditions at the Boxer lodge, are forgotten, as well as Maria, the daughter of Alexander Cheng, who was with them and also died.

Innocent's list mentions only the daughter Elizabeth in the family of Feodor Yue, while the Stories... also mention alongside with her the eighteen year-old Tatiana. At the same time, the list of Archimandrite Innocent notes Tatiana separately as being nineteen years old without any family. It is quite probable that we are dealing with the same martyred young woman, and probably not.

There is information to suggest that the martyr Matrona Lian, apart from the daughter mentioned in the List of Archimandrite Innocent, also had an older daughter who was married to a heathen. When the rebellion began, her husband's relatives starved her to death. Here we ought to mention that according to the List by Archimandrite Innocent Minodora Wang had a daughter called Anna, who was married to a heathen. It is noteworthy that she is absent in the Stories...

The inaccuracy of the accounts is affirmed by the following phrase from the reminiscences of Fr. Avraamy, written immediately after the tragedy: "It is difficult to say how many of our Christians were murdered on that night. Undoubtedly, many of those who fled and have yet to return will be located, maybe there are those who will not return, but there cannot be so many of them. If we take into account that now around one hundred people have returned to us and if the same amount of people were still to return, and there were as many as up to five hundred people, then the number of those murdered with those murdered previously comes to around three hundred people"<sup>[58]</sup>.

There is also a discrepancy in the dates of the martyrs' deaths in the sources. For example, hieromonk Avraamy in his reminiscences entitled *Siege of Beijing* indicates that on the day Beiguan was burnt down there were murdered around twenty-nine Orthodox Christians. However, neither in the List of Archimandrite

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[58] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege: from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), *Christian Readings*, No1, (1901), 65-112.

Innocent, nor in the Stories... compiled by the then Archimandrite Avraamy do we find the first of June as the date of death.

It is evident that the dates of all those villagers of Dongding'an who suffered are mistakenly indicated in the List as they are given as the date of the burning down of the village church. The majority of them suffered after a number of days in exile.

In the List we find discrepancies also on the age of some of those killed—there is a difference in age indicated in the List of Archimandrite Innocent and in the Stories... of Archimandrite Avraamy. It is possible that this is linked to the method of calculating age in the Chinese tradition which is done according to the number of lunar new years one has lived. A newborn is considered to be one year old if he was born after the day of the new year according to the lunar calendar, but if he was born on the eve of the lunar new year, then on the first day of the year he will be considered to be two years old [1].

The following fact points to the approximate age of those killed. According to the List of Archimandrite Innocent, at the time of his martyr's death the priest Mitrofan was forty-five years old and his wife Tatiana was forty-four. However, in Fr. Mitrofan's service record, under the signature of the head of the 17<sup>th</sup> REMC Archimandrite Amfilokhy (Lutinov), it is indicated that in 1884 Mitrofan Yang Ji was twenty-nine, whereas his wife Tatiana was twenty-six<sup>[59]</sup>. It is clear that there is a discrepancy in the age difference between man and wife in two sources. The same picture presents itself with the age of the two instructors in catechism—Innocent Fan and Pavel Wang. According to the List of Archimandrite Innocent, their ages at the time of their martyr's death in 1900 were forty-eight and thirty-six respectively; however, in a document from 1897 presented to the Holy Synod, their ages were indicated as forty and thirty-four<sup>[60]</sup>.

When reading the List, another question arises—why do we not see the surnames of the Albazianians widespread in the literature? The answer is that up until 1911 the Albazianians usually did not use them but used Chinese surnames of Manchurian origin. After the overthrow of the Manchurian Qing dynasty, they gradually went over to using surnames derived from their Russian surnames. For example, Yao (from Yakovlev) previously had the surname Shuang, Luo (Romanov)—Ming, Du (Dubinin)—De, and so on.

The Chinese Orthodox faithful in the main were of noble origin and were representatives of the aristocracy, belonging to Manchurian banners.

Very little data on relatives who perished in 1900 have survived in the Albazianian families. This is most probably a result of the fact that they were thought of as being victims of violence, but not as being holy martyrs who died for their faith. However, the rare descendants of the Albazianians can nonetheless list the names of those who died in 1900. For example, Anna Luo, who lives in Tianjin, testifies to the death of her grandfather who was called Ivan and whose skull was smashed to pieces by the killers.

On the basis of the analysis carried out, we can assume that not all information on those who suffered was documented. In spite of the fact that over fifteen years later Archimandrite Avraamy tried to fill this gap, this information is nevertheless not exhaustive and allows for questions to be raised. Unfortunately, the Chinese names of the martyrs were not recorded by the members of the Mission.

[59] National Library of Russia (RNB). Manuscript Department. Inventory №1457. Document №197. 'Record about work of head of Mission and its members (in Russian), 14th January 1885.

[60] National Library of Russia (RNB). Manuscript Department. Fund №1457. Document №215. 'Proposal to the Holy Synod on the Appointment to Free Vacancies of the Priest and Teacher of the Mission Pavel Wan and Innokenty Fan respectively' (in Russian), 5<sup>th</sup> October 1897.



The further study of the circumstances of the deaths of the Chinese Orthodox may lead us to surmise exactly what rank of saint they may belong to. In view of the fact that there is information on their deaths from disease, from being badly treated by their heathen kin, from long periods of wandering in exile in an attempt to be saved and from the unbearable conditions of the Boxer lodges, it is probable that some of them should be called confessors of the faith, rather than martyrs.

The horrific murders and riots ended only in August. On 1<sup>st</sup> August 1900 troops from the international coalition entered Beijing, and by the end of the month the Yihetuans were finally driven from the city. Bonfires smoldered on the streets of the city and uncollected bodies and abandoned weapons lay scattered around.

On the second day after the allied troops entered Beijing, Archimandrite Innocent returned to Beiguan to find the charred ruins of the Mission's buildings. The Chinese faithful thought that all the Europeans had perished, which is why they were so joyful to see that the missionaries were alive. Many tears of grief and joy were shed in these days—people learnt of the death of their beloved and rejoiced in the miraculous discovery of relatives who had survived<sup>[61]</sup>.

The archimandrite set off for the neighboring Yonghe Lama Temple (雍和宫). According to the reminiscences of the Albazianians, it was here that some Orthodox Christians managed to hide, including the future bishop of Beijing Vasily Yao Fuan (姚福安), who was then an adolescent. The Yonghe Temple and the ruins of Beiguan were at that time under the control of the Japanese army, and so Archimandrite Innocent had to apply to the Japanese ambassador to allow him to occupy the palace which was earlier used by the emperors<sup>[62]</sup>.

The palace buildings were ideal for accommodating the suffered Christian families who had come to the archimandrite. In one of the palace halls a temporary church was built where the Chinese began daily prayers for their relatives who had died a martyr's death. In order to accommodate those families who had nowhere to live, the head of the Mission purchased near the burnt out land several dozen half-destroyed houses where they could spend the winter.

Immediately after the end of the siege of the embassies, i. e. two months after the tragedy, the Russian missionaries with the Christians who had survived began to bury the dead. Unfortunately, no information has come down to us on what happened to the bodies during these two months. There is evidence that from a well the remains of Orthodox Chinese tortured by the Boxers were removed only after the rebellion had been crushed. It is important to note that, in spite of the hot Beijing summer, many of the bodies were untouched by corruption<sup>[63]</sup>.

The bodies of many of the martyrs had been hacked to pieces, making them difficult to identify, while others had been burnt. Others were buried beyond the city walls immediately after the tragedy but their burial sites could not be found, while the circumstances of the deaths of some could not be ascertained. All of the

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[61] Avraamy, hieromonk. *A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China*, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence in 1913 (in Russian), (Peking: Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 192.

[62] Avraamy, hieromonk. "The Beijing Siege: from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China" (in Russian), *Christian Readings*, No1, (1901), 65-112.

[63] "Church Festivities in Beijing on the Occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China" (in Russian), *The Chinese Herald*, (1935), 13-20.

remains gathered after the end of the rebellion were buried in a common grave in the Mission's estate<sup>[64]</sup>. Hieromonk Avraamy carried out the burial service for Fr. Mitrofan separately.

In July 1901 the head of the 18<sup>th</sup> REMC Archimandrite Innocent (Figurovsky) was recalled to St. Petersburg, where, upon learning of the terrible tragedy in Beijing, the idea arose of closing the Mission. However, thanks to the leading member of the Holy Synod Metropolitan Anthony (Vadkovsky) of St. Petersburg and Ladoga, the Mission was not only saved, but also its income was doubled, and the head of the Mission was elevated to the rank of bishop<sup>[65]</sup>.

On 11<sup>th</sup> October 1901 Archimandrite Innocent presented to the Holy Governing Synod a list of Orthodox Chinese who were killed for their faith in Beijing in 1900. To the list was added his petition (document no. 104) on the permission in memory of the martyrs to build on the site of the destroyed Dormition Church in Beijing a church of All the Holy Martyrs with a vault beneath the sanctuary for the burial of the remains of those who had been murdered. Archimandrite Innocent proposed making the 10<sup>th</sup> June in China a day of strict fasting and to celebrate a memorial Liturgy with a requiem service for those murdered. He proposed that worship should be conducted on the 11<sup>th</sup> June in the name of the holy martyrs of the Orthodox Church with a procession of the Cross on the site where the Chinese Orthodox were assaulted or around the church while singing the heirmos for Great Saturday 'He, who with a sea-wave had buried the tyrant pursuer long ago...' and, after the customary salutation of Many Years, to sing 'Memory Eternal' to all those Chinese who had suffered with dignity for their Orthodox faith<sup>[66]</sup>.

By decree no. 2874 of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1902 the Holy Synod satisfied the petition of Archimandrite Innocent. The text of the decree in effect repeats the text of the archimandrite's petition. The Holy Governing Synod decreed: "To convey its blessing to the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China to satisfy the proposals of Archimandrite Innocent on the making eternal of the memory of the Orthodox Chinese who have died a martyr's death for their faith during the Boxer Rebellion in China in 1900 by building in Beijing a church in honor of All the Holy Martyrs of the Orthodox Church with a vault beneath the sanctuary for the burial therein of the bones of the murdered Orthodox Chinese and the establishment for the Orthodox community in China an annual commemoration on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> June according to the aforementioned proposal with, if local conditions permit, a procession of the Cross to the site of the murdered Orthodox Chinese or around the church."

In other words, commemorative services were to be celebrated for the Chinese martyrs who suffered for Christ. This was how their memory was venerated henceforth.

However, many modern-day publications on the Orthodox martyrs of China mistakenly speak of their canonization as taking place in 1902. This information has been put about widely but does not correspond to historical reality. When reading the materials of the REMC we see that throughout the decades of its existence after the tragedy no services were compiled to the martyrs, no prayer services were conducted to them, their icons were not painted, but only commemorative services to them were celebrated. Having thus described their deaths in his *Stories of the Martyrs of the Chinese Orthodox Church* in 1917 Archimandrite Avraamy adds:

[64] "The Boxer Rebellion of 1900", *The Chinese Herald* (in Russian), (1935), 105-108.

[65] Avraamy, hieromonk. *A Short History of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China*, compiled on the Occasion of the 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Its Existence in 1913 (in Russian), (Peking: Dormition monastery printing house, 1916), 194.

[66] Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), fund 796, inventory 182, file 4123, list 1-9.

“Give rest, O Lord, to the souls of thy servants the priest Mitrofan and those with him and make their memory to be eternal!”<sup>[67]</sup>. The commemorative service is also mentioned in the description of the solemnities on the occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Orthodoxy in China in 1935. There was no act of their glorification among the church-wide or locally venerated saints.

On the basis of the agreement between the Chinese Qing government and the Russian Embassy, the REMC received compensation for the Orthodox faithful who had died-for adults one hundredtaels of silver, and for children and adolescents fifty taels of silver. On the 18000 taels of silvers given as contributions there were built houses for Chinese families, a house church, a school and boarding school for orphans, while those who suffered were given financial compensation<sup>[68]</sup>. Moreover, Bishop Innocent acquired large plots of land upon which there were constructed churches, monastery hostels, libraries and workshops for laborers from among the Chinese flock<sup>[69]</sup>.

By 1903 the Church of All the Holy Martyrs had been built on the site of the burnt down Dormition Church. This was a white stone church with two altars in the Old Russian style, topped by five cupolas. A staircase led from both sides to a platform in front of the Church of St. Nicholas on the second floor. The Church of the All the Holy Martyrs became a symbol of the Mission and was depicted on the title page of the periodical *Kitaisky blagovestnik* (The Chinese Herald).

Part of an estate near to Beiguan with the Siyefu palace (四爷府) of the son of the Qianlong Emperor (乾隆), was purchased. The prince's palace became the residence of the head of the Mission and in one wing of the palace there was built a house church dedicated to St. Innocent of Irkutsk. On the contributions received from the Chinese government there was also constructed the Dormition Church in 1903, a stone Church of St. John the Theologian in the village of Dongding'an, and some other churches.

In 1900, beyond the Gates of Andingmen where the country road branches off, the Boxers buried the bodies of Christians whom they had tortured. In the middle of July 1901 the Chinese government, by way of compensation for the destruction of the building, granted the REMC the right to build a wall around this site without having to redress the owners of the land<sup>[70]</sup>. On this site there was instituted a new Russian Orthodox cemetery where between 1903 and 1906 a church dedicated to St. Seraphim of Sarov was built.

After the tragedy Archimandrite Innocent was faced with the decision of what to do with the apostates from within his flock who fulfilled all the heathen rituals demanded of them but later returned to the community, being aware of their guilt and begged to be allowed to become again members of the community. Nobody reproached them for their apostasy; they came to the Russian missionaries and wept as they repented<sup>[71]</sup>. Archimandrite Innocent sent to the Holy Synod notification of those Chinese who had renounced their faith and had now repented by dividing them into three categories according to culpability and asking how they should be received back into the Church<sup>[72]</sup>. In August 1902, when Archimandrite Innocent returned from Russia to Beijing, Christians received the joyous news that the Synod had permitted them to

[67] “Stories of the Martyrs of the Chinese Orthodox Church in Beijing in 1900” (in Russian), *The Chinese Herald*, No12, (1917), 8-15.

[68] “The Phoenix” (in Russian), *News of the Brotherhood of the Orthodox Church in China*, No2, (1905), 1-4.

[69] “The Boxer Rebellion of 1900”, *The Chinese Herald* (in Russian), (1935), 105-108.

[70] Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA), fund. 796, inventory 180, file 3567-a, list 82, 83-86.

[71] “Archimandrite Avraamy”, *The Chinese Herald* (in Russian), vol. 7-8, (1918), 5.

[72] Avraamy, hieromonk. “The Beijing Siege: from the Diary of a Member of the Orthodox Russian Mission in China” (in Russian), *Christian Readings*, No1, (1901), 94.

join once more the Orthodox Church. The rite of reconciliation with the Church was conducted with great solemnity<sup>[73]</sup>.

The feast day of all the holy martyrs was celebrated in 1903 for the first time and the anniversary of the murder of Christians in Beijing was marked. The feast day was celebrated on two days: the 10<sup>th</sup> June was a day of fasting and commemoration, while the 11<sup>th</sup> July was a day of festive divine worship.

On 10<sup>th</sup> June 1903 the vault was consecrated, and with a lesser procession of the Cross and the singing of the heirmoses of the Burial Canon the remains of the martyrs were brought to the vault beneath the church. Before this the remains had to be removed from the earth<sup>[74]</sup>. By evening they were laid out on a long table, wrapped in silk clothes and oil-proof canvas. With the arrival of Bishop Innocent there began the singing of a Vigil for the Departed with kneeling prayers. Prayers were sung alternately in Slavonic and Chinese. The teaching at the reading of the Psalms was given by the son of the murdered priest Mitrofan, Sergei Chang, the then instructor in catechism. He spoke of the history of the creation of Christ's Church from the beginning of the world, turning his listeners' attention to the fact that the blood of the martyrs was always the vivifying water which fed her roots and embellished her with the flowers of piety. Afterwards the Psalter was read throughout the night in the vault [36].

A memorial Liturgy was served in the Dormition Church on 11<sup>th</sup> June early in the morning. The iconostasis was decorated with flowers while the worshippers also held flowers in their hands. All of the clergy of the Mission took part in the service.

At the end of the Liturgy there began a prayer service to all the holy martyrs<sup>[75]</sup>, and as the canon of Great Saturday was being sung, the procession of the Cross made its way towards the vault of the martyrs.

In the vault Bishop Innocent read the prayer of absolution above the bodies of the buried and after the litanies the graves were sprinkled with holy water. As the heirmos "Lament not for me, O Mother..."<sup>[76]</sup> was being sung, the bodies of the martyrs were lowered into six marble burial vaults, which became their common grave, covered with marble plinths with depictions of the Cross. The archive's documents do not mention the number of martyrs found and buried. "Memory Eternal!" was sung to all those who had suffered for their faith in China<sup>[77]</sup>.

After serving the Litiya in the vault, the procession headed through the gates of the monastery to the sites where the just buried Christians were tortured and killed. The Litiya was served on the sites of the martyrs' deaths, including the site of the mass killings of the martyrs by the gates of the shelter known as the Triangle (in memory of those who died here the Mission built a refuge home for sixty persons for the Chinese people, and not only for those who were Orthodox<sup>[78]</sup>). On the way back the procession of the Cross passed through the monastery courtyard where the Litiya was served at the site of the death of Fr. Mitrofan and others who were murdered. The final destination of the procession of the Cross was the Russian cemetery situated beyond

[73] "The Feast Day of the Holy Martyrs of the Orthodox Church in China" (in Russian) // The Chinese Herald, №6-7, (1904), 12-17.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

[76] The 9<sup>th</sup> heirmos of the Canon for Great and Holy Saturday

[77] "Chronicle of Church Life: the Feast of All the Martyrs" (in Russian). News of the Brotherhood of the Orthodox Church in China, №2, (1905), 9-14.

[78] K. B. Keping, "The Church of All the Martyrs in Beiguan (Beijing)" (in Russian), Orthodoxy in the Far East (in Russian), issue 3, (2001), 113-124.

the city walls of Beijing at a distance of just over three kilometers from Beiguan<sup>[79]</sup>. To the sound of the bells of the cemetery bell tower the procession of the Cross came into the cemetery where in the church the Litiya was served and “Memory Eternal!” was sung to the Christians who had perished.

It is worthwhile to note that on that very same day of 11<sup>th</sup> June 1903 sixteen Chinese received baptism in the domestic church, heralding the second hundred of those baptized after the riots. This particularly interesting fact demonstrates that, in spite of persecutions and fear, the Chinese Church had begun to revive and to be filled with new people.

From that time on in the Church of All the Holy Martyrs the names of those who had suffered were commemorated daily at the Proskomedia and on Saturdays at the Litiya<sup>[80]</sup>. Annually on 11<sup>th</sup> June according to the Old Calendar the solemn commemoration of those who had died was marked with a procession of the Cross. This tradition of marking the feast day did not change for decades.

Using the same approach as was employed in 1902, the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church of 1917-1918, by decree of 18<sup>th</sup> January 1918 [32], determined that the 25<sup>th</sup> of January or the following Sunday ought to be a day for the prayerful commemoration of “all those confessors and martyrs who have fallen asleep in the Lord in these harsh times of persecution.” The Council recommended that on this day processions of the Cross should take place to the sites where the new martyrs were killed and buried and that commemorative services should be performed for them.

In 1935 there were solemnities on the occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the REMC. By this time there had been erected three monuments in honor of those who had been killed for their faith in 1900; the first was on the site of the murder of Fr. Mitrofan, the second in the garden by the well where the Boxers had thrown the bodies of the Orthodox Chinese whom they had tortured, and the third by the candle workshop of the Mission<sup>[81]</sup>.

During the solemnities in the Church of All the Holy Martyrs a Litiya was served for the murdered Orthodox Chinese, a procession of the Cross took place to all three monuments where the head of the 20<sup>th</sup> REMC Bishop Viktor (Svyatin) of Beijing and China read the prayer of consecration and blessed the monuments with holy water.

The first and third monuments were openwork metal crosses on a granite base. The second monument was made of white marble, its foundation was made of stones taken from the well into which thirty-five years ago the bodies of the martyrs had been cast, while at the foot of the monument a granite ring had been erected which served as the opening to the well. On the front of the monument in Russian and Chinese was the inscription: “Blessed are those whom thou has chosen and taken, O Lord. To the memory of the 222 Orthodox Chinese who suffered here in the name of Christ on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1900.” On the reverse side there was the inscription: “Consecrated on the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China. 1685-1935”<sup>[82]</sup>.

In 1954 for political reasons the REMC was abolished. In those years the Chinese government conducted

[79] “Chronicle of Church Life; the Feast of All the Martyrs” (in Russian). News of the Brotherhood of the Orthodox Church in China, №2, (1905), 9-14.

[80] “The Holy Martyrs” (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, №8, (1911), 13-18.

[81] “Church Festivities in Beijing on the Occasion of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China” (in Russian), The Chinese Herald, (1935), 13-20.

[82] Ibid.

a policy of autonomy for Chinese religious organizations and the rupture of their ties with foreign religious centres. The Mission's property was transferred to the Chinese government, while moveable items were placed at the disposal of Archimandrite Vasily (Yao Fuan). The territory of Beiguan was transferred by the Chinese government for the use of the embassy of the USSR (now the Embassy of the Russian Federation in China). The churches and monasteries in Beiguan were desecrated and pulled down on the orders of the Soviet ambassador to the People's Republic of China P. F. Yudin. The Church of All the Holy Martyrs and a monument to the Chinese martyrs were demolished in 1957<sup>[83]</sup>.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1957 Archimandrite Vasily (Yao Fuan) appealed to His Holiness Patriarch Alexy I (Simansky) of Moscow and All Russia for a blessing to transfer the remains of the martyrs to the Church of St. Seraphim at the cemetery because of the intention of the Chinese authorities to remove the territory of Beiguan from the Church's jurisdiction and transfer it to the Soviet embassy. On 12<sup>th</sup> January 1957 His Holiness Patriarch Alexy I sent a telegram blessing the transfer of the remains of the martyrs to the cemetery church.

In January 1957 the remains of the martyrs, according to the reminiscences of the granddaughter of Bishop Yao Fuan, were placed into two coffins and reburied alongside the Church of St. Seraphim of Sarov. And by 1958 the authorities had decided to use part of the mission's cemetery and its adjacent land to build a park called The Lake of Youth (青年湖公园, Qingnianhu). Part of the cemetery was flooded during the construction works, which, however, did not affect the church, and the rest of the cemetery continued to function as such. Bishop Vasily (Yao Fuan) of Beijing reposed in the Lord on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1962 and was buried at the cemetery. It was in the same year that the last service in the Church of St. Seraphim was celebrated. The church was then used as a warehouse.

In 1966 the park was renamed as the Park of Red Youth (红色青年公园). In August of the same year the cemetery was desecrated. Detachments of Red Guards made up of students from Beijing's secondary schools, as part of the campaign of the struggle against the Four Olds, most likely by command from on high, laid to waste the cemetery monuments located in the central part of the park. The cemetery church was also desecrated.

The only things that were not destroyed were several grave monuments relating to the burials connected to the Soviet embassy, while the tombs of Bishop Innocent, Bishop Simon and Bishop Vasily (Yao Fuan), located in the vault, were opened, emptied and desecrated.

According to a document of 20<sup>th</sup> September 1966 presented to the Chinese Foreign Ministry by the People's Committee of Beijing entitled 'An Inquiry into the Instructions Regarding the Situation on the Ruined Orthodox Cemetery,' the cemetery was surrounded by a wall, occupied 0.6 hectares of land and contained 318 burials (excluding, most likely, those flooded in 1958)<sup>[84]</sup>.

The document contained an inquiry into the closure of the cemetery and its transfer to the park. It was proposed to preserve the three graves belonging to the Soviet embassy (including the grave of the Russian mother-in-law of Li Lisan (李立三), one of the founders of the People's Republic of China) and not to rebury

[83] D. G. Napara. "In Memory of the Alapaevsk Martyrs Rested Beneath the Vault in China" (in Russian), 5 January, 2005. URL: <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/1838.html>

[84] 关于东正教公墓被砸毁情况和处理意见的请示 Guanyu dogzhengjiao gongmu bei zahui qingkuang he chuli yijian de qingshi [The People's Committee of Beijing: Inquiry into Instructions Concerning the Resolution of the Situation on the Ruined Orthodox Cemetery], 20 September, 1966.

the remains in the already ruined graves. It was proposed that it was the obligation of the park's administration to clear the territory.

A secret document from the foreign department of the People's Committee of Beijing of 7<sup>th</sup> November 1966 entitled 'Additional Information on the Beijing Soviet Orthodox Cemetery' confirms that the burial sites of the two Russian bishops would not be preserved, but their coffins would be buried deeper on the site of the former cemetery. The People's Committee of Beijing decreed to use the territory of the cemetery as the territory of the park and to preserve only those burial sites relating to the Soviet embassy as well as the three burial sites of Russians after 1949 by transferring them to another cemetery (东郊外侨公墓)<sup>[85]</sup>. The decision was made to get rid of the other burial sites.

The cemetery was cleared by 1968. There is no information on whether any other graves, apart from those mentioned above, were moved or to where. It was at this time that the cupola of the Church of St. Seraphim was destroyed. On 28<sup>th</sup> January 1976 the surrounding railing of the cemetery was destroyed. In 1977 work was completed on the construction of a canal on the north side of the cemetery. On 25<sup>th</sup> March 1987 the Committee for National Affairs of Beijing and the Bureau of Religious Affairs of Beijing agreed to the laying down of new grass and the planting of new flowers and the reconstruction of the cemetery territory by the Beijing Directorate of Parks, as well as to the pulling down of the church building<sup>[86]</sup>. In 1987 the church building was totally destroyed.

A golf course is now located on the site of the church and the cemetery in Qingnianhu Park. On the west side of the field a part of the old cemetery wall has survived, the north staircase of the cemetery has been preserved, and if one looks carefully around the park, one can come across fragments of grave plinths. There is definite evidence to suggest that the remains of the Chinese martyrs to this day rest in Beijing in the place where there is now a golf course in the park.

On 9<sup>th</sup> September 1996 the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR), on the basis of the report presented by Archbishop Hilarion (Kapral) of Sydney and Australia and New Zealand (evidently inspired by the Chinese Orthodox faithful who had emigrated to Australia), resolved to venerate the memory of holy Chinese new martyrs on 11<sup>th</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> June. From this moment the calendars of the ROCOR contain the names of the Chinese martyrs, services are celebrated to them and an icon has been painted of them. The first service to the Chinese martyrs took place on their feast day in 1997 in the Church of the Protecting Veil in the Sydney suburb of Cabramatta. The service was headed by Archbishop Hilarion of Sydney and Australia and New Zealand, now the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia.

Following this, the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1997 decided to commemorate liturgically the martyrs of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church who were murdered for Christ in 1900. If we ignore an obvious inaccuracy—"to restore the execution of the degree of the Holy Synod no. 2874 of 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1902 on the veneration as local saints (as was pointed out above, the decree speaks only about the commemoration of the departed) of the martyrs the priest-martyr Mitrofan and the 221

[85] 北京市人民委员会外事处关于北京苏联东正教公墓的补充情况 Beijing shi renmin weiyuanhui waishichu guanyu Beijing sullivan dongzhengjiao gongmu de buchong qingkuang [The Foreign Department of the People's Committee of Beijing: Additional Information on the Beijing Soviet Orthodox Cemetery], 7 November 1966.

[86] 李萌 Li Men, 青年湖与尼布楚 Qingnianhu yu Nibuchu [Qingnianhu Park and Nerchinsk], 《万象》 Wanxiang [All things in the world], No3, 2011.

Orthodox laymen and women who suffered with him in China”-then we can consider the Synodal decision of 1997 to be an act of canonization by the Russian Orthodox Church of the Chinese martyrs as locally venerated saints. Their feast day was fixed as the 11<sup>th</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> June<sup>[87]</sup>.

On the basis of the decision by the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church of 17<sup>th</sup> February 1997 the temporary head of the Chinese Autonomous Orthodox Church was to be the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. In accordance with the order adopted on 25<sup>th</sup> March 1993 on the canonization of locally venerated saints, the right of canonization of saints venerated in local churches and the local dioceses belongs to the ruling bishop with the knowledge and blessing of the Primate of the Church-the Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia.

However, after 1997 the Chinese martyrs were not to be found in the calendar of the Moscow Patriarchate as locally venerated saints are not indicated in church-wide calendars. Nevertheless, in some places-in some churches of Moscow and the Far East dioceses of the Russian Orthodox Church, in parishes in China and in the parish of the Antiochian Patriarchate in Boston-services were conducted to them and icons have been painted of them both in synaxis form and individually.

After the signing of the Act of Canonical Communion between the Moscow Patriarchate and the ROCOR in May 2007, by decision of the Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church of 2008 the Holy Synod was entrusted with the task of reviewing in the inter-council period the issue of canonizing the saints of the ROCOR who had been canonized during the period of division.

The work undertaken by an ad hoc group set up by the Holy Synod on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008 (protocol no. 73)<sup>[88]</sup> was continued from 2013 in the working group on the harmonization of the calendars of the Moscow Patriarchate and the ROCOR, formed with the blessing of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia. The topic of the Chinese martyrs was one of the first to be reviewed.

The Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church on 2-3 February 2016 took a decision on the church-wide glorification of a number of locally venerated saints, including a number of saints of the ROCOR glorified during the period of division. The decision blessed the church-wide veneration of the “priest-martyr Mitrofan and those many martyrs who suffered with him and received the crowns of martyrs in 1900 in Beijing.” The date for the church-wide veneration of the martyrs was rightly chosen as 10<sup>th</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> June-the date when Fr. Mitrofan accepted a martyr's death.

It ought to be noted that the Council did not limit the number of the martyrs as it is genuinely not known precisely how many people suffered for their faith in those days, while an analysis of the Archimandrite Innocent's list of the 222 people and of the accompanying sources leads us to conclude that the numbers of martyrs differ.

The Bishops' Council resolved to inform the Primates of all the Local Orthodox Churches of the glorification among the saints of the Chinese martyrs so that that they can be included in the calendars of world Orthodoxy.

At present we know of the following liturgical texts in memory of the Chinese martyrs:

[87] “Minutes of the Session of the Holy Synod of the Russian Church for the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1997” (in Russian), Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate, 1997, № 6, 7-8.

[88] “Minutes of the Session of the Holy Synod of the Russian Church for the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2008” (in Russian). URL <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/470180.html>



1. The All-Night Vigil service to the Chinese new martyrs compiled in 1997 by the sisters of the Convent of the Protecting Veil in Knyazhevo (the Bulgarian Old Style Orthodox Church) with the blessing of Archbishop Hilarion of Sidney and Australia and New Zealand (the ROCOR). It is used in ROCOR up to the present.

2. A Vigil service to the Chinese new martyrs was compiled by the nun Nadezhda (Soboleva, 1922 – 2001) of the Russian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. When she compiled it she used only one source: *The Stories of the Martyrs of the Chinese Orthodox Church, who suffered in Beijing in 1900*, which was published in 1917 and reprinted in 1932. The text of the service was published in *Kitaisky blagovestnik* (The Chinese Herald) (no. 2 for 1995) issued with the blessing of Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad, now Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. The service is used in parishes of the Moscow Patriarchate and ROCOR. However, it has not yet received the approval of the Synodal Liturgical Commission. A Chinese translation exists of this service.

3. Another version of this service (edited in 2001 by nun Kassia [Senina], who is in the jurisdiction of the Russian Orthodox Autonomous Church)<sup>[89]</sup> was published on the website of the St. Elisabeth parish of the ROAC in St. Petersburg. There is no information on its use.

4. A Vigil service to the Chinese new martyrs was also compiled at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery of the Holy Orthodox Church of North America (Boston, USA)<sup>[90]</sup> in English. There is no information on its use.

We hope that in the near future the resolution of the 2016 Bishops' Council of the Russian Orthodox Church to compile a service to the priest-martyr Mitrofan and those martyrs who suffered with him in Beijing will receive the blessing of the highest ecclesiastical authorities for universal use in all of the churches of the Russian Orthodox Church.

It should be especially noted that the veneration of the Chinese Orthodox martyrs has never incurred the disapproval of the Chinese authorities—neither at the time of the Chinese Empire, nor in Republican China, nor in Communist China. This can be explained by the local character of veneration among the few Orthodox communities. Moreover, the aforementioned decision of the authorities to transfer the remains from Beiguan to the cemetery by the Gates of Andingmen may be viewed as a manifestation of certain concern on the part of the state authorities.

On the commemoration day of the Chinese martyrs in 2012 the chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate's Department for External Church Relations Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, with the consent of the Chinese authorities, celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the Church of the Protecting Veil in the city of Harbin. Representatives of the State Administration for Religious Affairs of the People's Republic of China and of the Administration for Religious Affairs of the province of Heilongjiang and the city of Harbin attended the service. In his sermon Metropolitan Hilarion made a positive reference to the Chinese martyrs and this did not incur any negative public reaction from the official Chinese representatives.

Against the background of complex evaluations in modern-day China of the Boxer Rebellion, the Orthodox Church has never given a political evaluation to this event; it is only the fate of those who died for their faith that has been the object of study in this historical topic.

[89] Not recognized by any of the Local Orthodox Churches and has no Eucharistic communion with them.

[90] A non-canonical Old Style jurisdiction.

Separate mention should be made of priest Mitrofan's three children only the middle one survived-Sergei Chang Fu (常福). Chan Fu became a priest soon after the Yihetuan rebellion, the first to be ordained after the tragedy of 1900, and later elevated to the rank of archpriest. Fr. Sergei died in Tianjin in 1936 at the age of fifty-six. He was buried in Beijing at the cemetery beyond the Gates of Andingmen. Fr. Sergei and his wife Yelena (常徐氏, who died in 1968 from cancer) had four children-two sons and two daughters. At present his two granddaughters live in Beijing-Anna and Nina, who have been located and were happy to share their reminiscences.

Like the early Christian martyrs, the Chinese who suffered for Christ became the seeds of the Chinese Church. God has glorified them and revealed to us all the images of their sanctity so that the fullness of the Church can offer up prayers to them for the rebirth of Orthodox Christianity in China. At the same time, their life, sufferings and the fate of their relics require deeper study. The introduction of new information into scientific use would not only enrich academic Sinology, but would also be a new testimony of the Chinese Orthodox faithfuls' fidelity to Christ. At the same time, the study of Chinese sainthood ought not to be limited to the martyrs of the beginning of the twentieth century. The destinies of the Chinese Orthodox confessors who underwent the crucible of the Cultural Revolution also await their researchers.

**中文题目:**

**1900 年的中国东正教殉道者: 历史记载及教会敬奉研究**

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**提要:** 本文章作者试图全面、系统的收集和辨析可以用于探究有关于在 1900 年义和团起义中死亡的中国东正教殉道者的各种信息来源, 分析很普遍的与该题目有关的历史认识误区与空白, 同时介绍中国殉道者宣圣过程和在不同历史阶段的教会敬奉方式。

**关键词:** 中国东正教殉道者; 义和团起义; 东正教在中国; 俄罗斯驻华东正教传教团; 基督教

