

Choosing among the Long Spoons: The MEP, The Catholic Church and Manchuria : 1900-1940

Míchéal Thompson

フランスのカトリック宣教師社会 の MEP (*société des missions étrangères de Paris*)、カトリック教会が設立されたのは近代。日本では 1850 年代。20 世紀めに数多くの課題が、起きた。にもかかわらず、日本のカトリック教会が大きく成長した。この成長は日本だせではなかった。制限されませんでした。MEP はまたマンチュリアにおいても活動した日本人はマンチュリアを支配して、マンチュクオ を作りました。マンチュクオは国際連盟により承認されませんでした。日本は本当に国際連盟マンチュクオの識が欲しかったです。バチカンによる識も重要でした。MEP はそしてバチカン、日本そしてマンチュクオを処理しなければなりません。MEP はバチカンの外交政策、と日本の要求、そして、自らの状況を評価します。この記事にはこの時代におけるマンチュリアノ MEP によってとられた。また、この困難な状況において、カトリック教会の存続つるために支払なければならなかつた代償についても書かれている。

The MEP (*société des missions-étrangères de Paris*), a French Catholic missionary society, had founded the Catholic Church in modern Japan in the 1850s. Despite many challenges the Catholic Church in Japan had grown significantly by the beginning of the twentieth century. This growth was not restricted to Japan. The MEP was also active in Manchuria. The Japanese came to dominate Manchuria and created the state of Manchukuo there. Manchukuo was not recognized by the League of Nations. Japan really wanted recognition for Manchukuo. The recognition of the Vatican was important for them. The MEP had to deal with Japan and Manchukuo and with the Vatican. The MEP was caught between the policies of Vatican diplomacy, the aspirations of the Japanese, and their own assessments of the situation. This article looks at the different strategies adopted by the MEP in Manchuria in this period, and at the cost they had to pay to try to secure the survival of the Catholic Church in this difficult situation.

Therefore behoveth him a full long spoon that shall eat with a fiend
(Geoffrey Chaucer: *The Squire's Tale*, c1386).

Introduction

The MEP (*société des missions-étrangères de Paris*), a French Catholic missionary society, had been founded in Paris in 1658 by a small group of socially well-connected French ecclesiastics and their supporters¹. From the beginning, they were explicitly linked in direct obedience to the Papacy as was the Society of Jesus. However, they were also very much of a national society, not an international one. Their personnel were exclusively French (except for a very small number of other European francophones) and they were very much tied to the French Catholic

¹ The most exhaustive history of the MEP remains Adrien Launay, *Histoire générale de la société des missions-étrangères* (Paris: Tequi, 1894) republished in 2003. For a shorter and more up to date treatment see: Jean Guenno, *Missions étrangères de Paris* (Paris: Fayard, 1986).

Church. Their origins lay in the combined enthusiasms of Tridentine Catholicism to expand the faith and of the French monarchy to expand its areas of influence overseas, in this case in Asia. For the MEP, there was no essential or logical dissonance with their allegiance to the Papacy and to France. This would only arise, and then in a somewhat partial form, with the French Revolution and especially with the Third Republic beginning in 1870.

Initially, the MEP's focus on Asia may have exacerbated antagonisms between France and Portugal (and by extension Spain) over control of the various Catholic churches and mission territories in Asia, but this was one of the reasons why the French monarchy favored the growth of the MEP in the first place. It was also, given the recurrent conflicts between the Papacy and the Iberian powers over the *Padroado*, one of the reasons for papal favor as well². The *Padroado* system was to be a source of endless vexation to the Catholic Church, though it was not finally suppressed until the agreement between the Vatican and the government of Portugal in 1928. Various Popes were not slow to see the problems attached to giving the Kings of Spain and Portugal a virtually free hand with missionary developments around the world. Lay Catholic rulers, especially the King of France, were likewise chagrined by the arrangement albeit for a mixture of religious and less religious motives. The Papacy's first formal response was to create the 'Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith' (*Propaganda Fide*) in 1622. But this congregation lacked funds and personnel and was attached to a papacy that was still understandably hesitant to enter into any ventures that might be seen as adversarial by the Catholic monarchs of Iberia. Alongside the Society of Jesus, the MEP was one of the proposed solutions to the problem.

For these reasons, the MEP was favorably viewed by the Papacy and received the sometimes explicit and sometimes tacit support of successive French governments. Based on this, the MEP became the principal (until 1900 the only) male Catholic missionary society in Japan. It also became one of the main Catholic missionary societies in the Chinese empire. In this field they were the successors to the Society of Jesus who had run into major difficulties over the issue of the Chinese Rites controversy³. During the latter half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, the MEP was to some extent marginalized by the influx of other Catholic missionary societies initially from Europe but increasingly from North America. However, while they never had the hegemonic status they achieved in Japan, in some areas, such as Manchuria, they remained the dominant Catholic missionary society well into the twentieth century.

The MEP was then, from its inception, linked to conceptions of French and, perhaps more importantly, Papal diplomacy. In fact, as the difficulties between the French Third Republic and the Papacy became more troubling during the nineteenth century culminating in the Papacy of Pius X (1903-1914), the MEP became more and more a concern of Vatican diplomacy and less important to France at least outside the French colonies in Southeast Asia. This was to become particularly clear with the Papacies of Pius XI (1922-1939) and Pius XII (1939-1958), which embodied some important changes, or at least shifts of emphasis, from what went before. In turn,

² On the *Padroado* system see: Joseph Schmidlin, *Catholic Mission History* (Techny, 1933) and Frédéric Mantiene, 'Etats et Eglises au temps de l'expansion européenne en Asie (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles)' in Patrice Morlat (ed) *La question religieuse dans l'empire colonial français* (Paris, 2003).

³ See: George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy from its Beginning to Modern Times* (Chicago: Loyola, 1985)

what came afterwards is often seen as representing another change in Papal diplomacy.

Papal diplomacy virtually since its inception has had as its cornerstone a system of concordats. The “Accord of Sutri” in 1111 between Pope Paschal II and the Emperor Henry V, which occurred as part of the ongoing “Investiture Controversy” has been claimed to be the first of the concordats. However, probably that honor belongs to the Concordat of Worms some eleven years later that finally (more or less) resolved the investiture issue⁴. The system of concordats was not really put into place however for another 500 years after the Reformation and the following Religious Wars had shaken Europe and the Catholic Church to the core. Concordats, in essence, guarantee the rights of the Catholic Church in any given society or national entity. Prior to the seventeenth century, this mainly meant establishing the division between the rights of the Church and the rights of the ruler. Manifestly this was not an easy task, however the emergence of non-Catholic forms of Christianity in Western Europe complicated this situation markedly. The following emergence of acceptable “irreligion”, then (often conflicting) nationalisms complicated it still further. In terms of Papal (and concordat) diplomacy, the major milestone in this process was the Concordat between the Emperor Napoleon and Pope Pius VII in 1801.

This concordat was both hard-fought and reluctantly conceded by either side⁵. While the Emperor conceded that Catholicism was the “religion of the majority of French citizens”, that was one of the reasons he wanted the concordat in the first place, it was not all French citizens and the key term was citizens. This concordat conceded rights to the Catholic Church, but they were “conceded” and not automatic; moreover, they were conceded despite those who might not be inclined to make such a concession. In other words, though both parties perceived benefit from the signing of the concordat, it represented both a passage to a new world in European religious terms and the triumph of *realpolitik* rather than either idealism or nostalgia. It took the Papacy some while to adjust to this new situation. The signature of Pius VII to the Concordat was made against the backdrop of the death, viewed by some as a martyrdom, of his predecessor Pius VI at the hands of French revolutionary forces and the Emperor Napoleon. Its acceptance was reluctant and clearly the hope - however unrealistic it now appears - was that things would return to “normal” (the *status quo ante*) with the effective end of the Napoleonic Empire and (by extension) the French Revolution. An additional realism had also appeared, namely that concordats could be (sometimes had to be) signed with governments that were in some respects hostile. In 1818 and 1821 respectively concordats were signed with Russia and Prussia, neither of which were “Catholic” powers though both of which contained substantial Catholic minorities – sharing one in Poland. It had been an unpleasant lesson to learn and to digest and the Papacy signed very few concordats in the following years. Other, and more salutary, lessons were to come which put the emphasis back on concordats once again.

Though it felt seismic to many at the time, the easiest to digest (partly because it was not entirely unwelcome) was the break-up to a large extent of the Iberian

⁴ Among the available studies, some of the best are: Uta-Renate Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1991); Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church 1050-1250* (Oxford: OUP, 1989); and Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the 10th to the early 12th Centuries* (Cambridge: CUP, 1993).

⁵ See: Bernard Ardura, *Le concordat entre Pie VII et Bonaparte* (Paris: Editions du cerf, 2001) and William Roberts ‘Napoleon, the Concordat of 1801, and its Consequences’ in Frank J. Coppa [ed] *Controversial Concordats* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University, 1999).

overseas empires, especially that of Spain. The Papal Response was the negotiation of new concordats with Spain (1851 and 1874) and a rash of concordats in Latin America. Though negotiated in the new environment, they were still largely negotiated in the traditional way: all parties were “Catholic” in theory so it was largely a question of the distribution (or re-distribution) of power and resources. The next lesson was far more shocking and its effect was far more profound. Whatever the religion of the “majority” of Italians, the logic of Italian unification meant the destruction of the Papal States. The Papacy was powerless to prevent this. The various interventions of the Emperor Napoleon III, though exceptionally divisive in France, were unable to prevent it as well. In the end, by 1871, both the Papal States and the Empire of Napoleon III had passed into history. The relationship of the Catholic Church and the French state had changed once again, with decidedly negative consequences for the MEP and perhaps for the French church as a whole. More significantly, the Papacy was now no longer in any real sense a territorial power or state on a par with other states. It was something different. The Papacy had to adjust to the fact that it was not a state like any other in addition to being a supra-national entity. Now it had only the latter, but that was a very big ‘only’. It would, however, take the Papacy a number of years to adjust to this and there were many who were reluctant to do so. With the advent of the twentieth century, the decision had to be made. It was a decision that was to affect the Catholic Church throughout the world, including the MEP and the Catholic Church in Japan and China and (perhaps most especially) in Manchuria.

The Evolution of Papal Diplomacy 1870-1940⁶

The First Vatican Council was held in Rome literally under the guns of the armies of Italian Unification⁷. The Pope felt himself to be (and literally was) under siege. The French defense force provided by the Emperor Napoleon III had been withdrawn and the Emperor himself had lost his power. There was no one left to defend the temporal powers of the Pope except for the ineffective army of volunteers who had gathered for that purpose. The Pope (Pius IX) in the end avoided any substantial loss of life by surrendering⁸. The Papal States were no more, un-mourned by most of their former citizens and the rest of Europe. The Vatican continued to exist, but what was it in legal and political terms? Papal diplomacy for the next fifty years was shaped by both its “traditional” concerns about establishing Church-State relations in any given place and by the need to define the Papacy/Vatican itself in “real” terms. These twin concerns give a particular flavor to this period of Papal/Vatican diplomacy not just with respect to Italy and to the continued existence of the Vatican as a territorial entity but to Papal diplomacy as whole.

⁶ Strangely, the available studies of Papal diplomacy are rather limited, especially for this period. A very good general study is: Michael Feldkamp, *La diplomazia pontificia* (Ascoli Piceno: Jack, 1998).

⁷ See: Paul Christophe, *Le concile Vatican I* (Paris: Cerf, 2000) for a brief overview. On some of the controversies that swirled around it see: *Varieties of Ultramontanism* [J. von Arx ed.] (Washington: Catholic University, 1998), Austin Gough, *Paris and Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1986), and Margaret O’Gara, *Triumph in Defeat* (Washington: Catholic University, 1988).

⁸ Pope Pius IX is a controversial figure still and there are many, often polemical studies, of his character and reign. Among the better recent studies is: Yvan Gobry, *Pie IX Le Pape des tempêtes* (Paris: Picollec, 1999).

Pope Pius IX had been a zealous promoter of the concordat concept and was responsible for signing a number of important ones including those with Spain in 1851, Austria in 1855 and with a variety of Latin American republics in the 1850s and 1860s. Clearly he felt that concordats would best guarantee the status of the Catholic Church, but also he seems to have looked at them as a possible insurance device against the corrosive pressures of Italian unification on the Papal States. In other words, they were not intended only to protect the Catholic Church in the signatory country but they were also intended to validate the international status of the papacy and thus serve to consolidate the Papal States. The Latin American concordats added to this by giving the process an extra-European dimension that had largely been lacking, if one excludes the concordat with Russia of 1847, which was largely directed at Polish Russia rather than the Czarist Empire as a whole. His successor, Leo XIII (1878-1903), in the aftermath of the *fait accompli* of Italian unification, was faced with a very different world.

Pius IX had been much interested in regularizing the position of the Catholic Church in Latin America as the Iberian empires disappeared there, hence the series of concordats with "successor states" in the region. Naturally enough, however, he had been preoccupied exclusively in the last years of his pontificate with Europe. While by no means neglecting Europe, Leo XIII was far more interested in establishing the global claims of the Catholic Church than his predecessor. He established regular hierarchies in North Africa and India. In 1891 he did the same in Japan as will be examined in more detail later.

A key to his strategy was not so much promoting concordats as establishing a system of Apostolic Delegates in various countries, largely those in which concordats did not exist or which did not have Catholic minorities, as vehicles for direct contact between the Vatican and any given national government. The relationship between these Apostolic Delegates and the indigenous Catholic hierarchy could be difficult, as was sometimes the case in the United States after the first Apostolic Delegate was appointed to that country in 1892. In the United States, though the clergy and their congregations still had strong links with the countries of emigration, there was a strong sense of national unity. Such a strong sense that Pope Leo felt that he should condemn 'Americanism' in 1899 as a movement which overly subjugated Catholic truths to national, American practices and sensibilities⁹. In Europe, especially in France, he promoted not so much the re-establishment of the concordat system, but an attempt to get Catholics and non-Catholics to function together in practical and political terms. For this he was both praised and condemned and so remains a somewhat controversial figure¹⁰. In other areas, the clergy and the faithful were culturally separated in many cases, as in Japan where much of the clergy was still attached to missionary societies (like the MEP). This made the role of Apostolic Delegates in such countries even more ambiguous.

The next Pope was Pius X (1903-1914) who rejected Pope Leo XIII's policies of trying to deal softly with secular governments as well as his emphasis on establishing both more independent Catholic hierarchies outside of Europe and such an elaborate system of Apostolic Delegates. He stressed the spiritual rather than the political and acted often as if the two were inherently in conflict. The biggest initial casualty of this stance was the concordat with France. The government of the Third

⁹ There is an extensive literature on this subject. The original text can be found at: H. Denziger, *Enchiridion Symbolorum* [35th Edition], (Barcelona: Herder, 1973) p.656ff.

¹⁰ See: Philippe Prévost, *L'église et le ralliement* (Paris: CEC, 2001) for a somewhat partial view and J. MacManners, *Church and State in France 1870-1914* (London: SPCK, 1972) for a more distanced and balanced one.

French Republic was aggressively anti-clerical and Pope Pius X was very far from conciliatory towards it¹¹. A collision course was decided on by both sides, the result was the abolition of the 1801 concordat, the financial impoverishment of the Catholic Church in France, and many decades of antagonism between Church and State¹². In all these things his chief advisor was Cardinal Merry del Val who acted as his Secretary of State. He was to lose this position under Pius X's successor Pope Benedict XV (1914-1922) who assumed office just as the First World War began. It, and its results, was to dominate his papacy and to start to change papal diplomacy.

Pope Benedict XV's choice of Secretary of State was Pietro Cardinal Gasparri who served in this position until 1930, when he was succeeded by Eugenio Cardinal Pacelli (who in turn became Pope Pius XII in 1939). So, from 1914 until the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958 there was a remarkable period of continuity in terms of the policies of the Catholic Church with respect to dealing with issues of relationships with sovereign states. This was most obviously clear in the period from the end of the First World War until 1940. Before looking more closely at the history of Catholic diplomacy with respect to Japan and Manchuria and at the role of the MEP in those often difficult relationships, it would be good to briefly summarize the key events of Catholic diplomacy in these decades and the backdrop this created for Catholic history in both Japan and Manchuria which can serve to underline both the differences and similarities between the two.

The diplomacy of the Vatican from 1914 to 1958 was dominated by certain key concepts: some were of more urgency at any given time while others (sometimes temporarily) lost their urgency. However, the key lines of continuity were clear.

Firstly, the object of Catholic Church diplomacy was to secure the legal position of the Catholic Church (as linked to the Vatican) and its right to operate at the given national level without undue pressure or harassment. In essence it was a bilateral arrangement between a nation state and the Vatican in which the "national" church was a useful accessory but not an essential signatory. The system of Apostolic Delegates underlined this with obviously ambiguous consequences. On the one hand, national representatives of the Catholic Church were in some ways "exempt" from praise or blame as they were the executors of the will of the universal church rather than independent actors. On the other hand, this very lack of effective (or at least accountable) moral agency allowed given bodies of Catholic clergy the opportunity to "unambiguously" support national governments without being required to question fully their morality. It also raised the issue of the responsibility of the national hierarchies to their faithful and, in the end, to Christianity and the Gospel. For the Catholic Church in many countries (such as Japan) taking responsibility is difficult, it was hard in the 1930s and has remained hard in many ways until the present.

A second bedrock of Papal Diplomacy was a visceral antipathy towards Communism and all of its associates and supporters. This was far from an irrational policy basis, founded as it was on the equally visceral hostility of most Communists towards the Catholic Church. Cardinal Gasparri had worked in Estonia and Lithuania (securing concordats in both) and supporting the work of the Papal

¹¹ The classic study of anti-clericalism in France in this period remains René Rémond *L'anticléricalisme en France de 1815 à nos jours* Paris: Fayard, 1976. See also: *Histoire religieuse de la France 1880-1914* Gérard Cholvy & Yves-Marie Hilaire (Eds.) Toulouse: Privat, 2000 esp. P.15-32.

¹² For a study of the fundamental texts see: 1905 *La séparation des églises et de l'état* (Paris: Perrin, 2004). For further consequences see: Jean Sévillia *Quand les catholiques étaient hors la loi* (Paris: Perrin, 2006).

Nuncio Achille Ratti (the future Pope Pius XI) in Poland. He also supported the Papal Nuncio Eugenio Pacelli (the future Pope Pius XII) in Berlin. In both these cases, and in many others, it became obvious that Communism viewed itself as the deadly enemy of Catholicism. It was a compliment that was to be returned. The threat to Catholic Poland receded and a concordat was signed with the Vatican in 1925 guaranteeing the Catholic Church a prominent place in Polish society, albeit one that was entirely commensurate with the one it currently exercised.

Cardinal Gasparri's major achievement, and one which is well worth considering with attention, is the Lateran Treaty and Concordat of 1929 between the Vatican and Italy, then under the control of Mussolini¹³. It has to be put into context in order to appreciate both what it was and what it was not and, more importantly for the current study, what precedents (if any) it might set for relations with other states especially those without a Catholic majority and those outside of Europe. Despite the popularity of Italian Unification - Pope Pius IX himself was a noticeable partisan at least as a younger cleric - the end result had been a disruption between the new state of Italy and the Papacy. This was in spite of the overwhelmingly Catholic population of the new state. Clearly, to all concerned, the situation was anomalous and a resolution was needed. However, such a resolution was not easy. The new state would brook no masters and could not do so without denying the somewhat tenuous concept of unity on which it was based. The Papacy was both wounded over its loss of direct territorial authority (the Papal States) and quietly confident over its religious authority over the majority of the inhabitants of Italy. A solution was difficult to reach for an obvious reason. The Catholic Church had never accepted the separation of Church and State or even the full autonomy of moral and religious choice for individuals. A concordat meant that neither of these things had to be accepted in Italy. The State would endorse the role of the Church in education etc; and its virtual control of many aspects of medical and social services. In return the antagonism between Church and State would be over and the State would no longer have to "watch its back" - in fact, the Church would perform that function for it. The Catholic Church would be the state approved moral arbitrator and so the state would be excused that function. The Catholic Church, in return, would agree to this role in education and social services and withdraw from direct political involvement. Catholic political parties would lose the support of the Catholic Church (if they ever had it) and either be abolished or retreat into being an organ supporting the state. For Don Luigi Sturzo and his political party (Partito Popolare Italiano - PPI) it was to prove "the Devil's Bargain" and he was to accept only reluctantly that all of his hard work and that of his supporters could be so "easily" discounted. Throughout Europe, similar problems would recur and continue to haunt the Catholic Church for years to come even though both Don Sturzo and his ideas were to be largely rehabilitated after 1945 with the formation of the various Christian Democrat parties in Western Europe¹⁴.

The essence of papal concordat style diplomacy in some ways reached its height under the papacy of Pope Pius XI, ably assisted by his secretaries of state Cardinals Gasparri and Pacelli. This coincided with the rise of extreme nationalism

¹³ One of the best of the recent studies is: Frank Coppa 'Mussolini and the Concordat of 1929' in *Controversial Concordats* Frank Coppa [Ed] (Washington D.C.: Catholic University, 1999).

¹⁴ On Don Sturzo and the origins of Christian Democracy in Italy see: 'Italy' John Pollard in *Political Catholicism in Europe 1918-1965* Tom Buchanan & Martin Conway [eds] (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1996). For a more general survey of Europe see: Martin Conway *Catholic Politics in Europe 1918-1945* (Routledge: London, 1997).

in Europe and around the world. In Italy in 1929 and in Germany in 1933, the Holy See attempted to deal with the situation through concordats which theoretically safeguarded the position of the Catholic Church and its relative autonomy albeit at the expense of national Catholic organizations¹⁵. It was against this background of the evolution of Papal diplomacy that the MEP and the Catholic Church in Manchuria developed their mission.

Manchuria and the Catholic Church 1870-1930

Beginning in the seventh century, the earliest Christian missionaries in the Chinese empire were from the Church of the East (sometimes incorrectly labeled as Nestorian). While all trace of their missions has disappeared, the influence (especially under the Mongols) was quite important. The Mongols themselves were also the targets of Dominican and especially Franciscan missions in the Thirteenth Century when their power (and their threat to Europe) was probably at its highest. Again these missions have left nothing behind in terms of Christian communities, though they are relatively well documented. Modern Catholic missions to China (and to Japan) begin with the Catholic Reformation and specifically with the rise to prominence of the Society of Jesus. The Jesuits, though largely Iberian initially, became an instrument on the Papal side in the protracted infighting with Portugal and Spain over the *Padroado*. Matters began to come to a head in the 1550s when the Portuguese established their port of Macao (in 1557) just five years after the death of Saint Francis Xavier on his way to establish a Jesuit mission in China. The Jesuits were assisted by the distrust of the territorial ambitions of Portugal on the part of the Chinese government. In the 1590s the Jesuits targeted the Chinese capital of Beijing and met with initial success¹⁶. The initial stages were indeed promising but this early promise was not to last.

The Jesuit missions and those of their Iberian compatriots were at odds for political reasons initially. However, while the Franciscans and Dominicans were active at the fringes of the Empire in Macao and Taiwan, the Jesuits exercised a monopoly in the Empire proper. It was a monopoly approved by both the Holy See and the Chinese Emperors. This was to change beginning in the 1640s. The Ming dynasty was replaced by the Manchus in 1644 at the same time as the Spanish Dominicans and Franciscans secured the first of many condemnations of the Jesuit's "accommodationist" approach to the missions in China. This was the beginning of the Chinese Rites Controversy, which was to roll on for, in the end, hundreds of years and has still not entirely lost its power to arouse emotions¹⁷. The Catholic 'infighting' and the general suspicion of foreigners in the Chinese empire naturally took its toll on the Catholic missions in China. By the beginning of the 19th century there were only about 290,000 Catholics left in the Chinese empire divided among three *Padroado* dioceses and three Apostolic Vicariates¹⁸. While the MEP had tried to

¹⁵ On the Reich Concordat see: Joseph A. Biesinger 'The Reich Concordat of 1933' in *Controversial Concordats* Frank Coppa [Ed] (Washington D.C.: Catholic University, 1999).

¹⁶ While there are numerous studies on the Jesuit missions in China, an enjoyable place to start is still: Jonathan D. Spence *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Penguin, 1985).

¹⁷ The best study of this issue is: *The Chinese Rites Controversy* D.E. Mungello [ed] (Nettetal: Steyler Verlag, 1994).

¹⁸ The three Portuguese *Padroado* dioceses were Beijing, Nanjing, and Macao which had a total of 130,000 Catholics. The Apostolic Vicariates (i.e. missions answering directly to the Holy See through the Office of *Propaganda Fidei*) were: Shansi (Franciscans) 60,000; Fukien (Dominicans) with 40,000; and the MEP Vicariate of Szechwan with 60,000. In addition

establish itself in China as early as the 1690s, they had only gained one of these Apostolic Vicariates in the early eighteenth century not entirely disconnected from the beginnings of French interest in adjacent Indo-China¹⁹. If the *Padroado* dioceses held the balance of Catholic missions in East Asia in 1800, this was rapidly to change and largely in the direction of France.

In 1827, the mission to Korea was entrusted to the MEP²⁰. Again this extension of the mission territories of the MEP reflected the increasing centrality of France in Catholic Europe and its rising power, only equaled by officially Protestant Britain, in Asia. In 1838, the MEP was assigned the mission in Manchuria and in 1840 that in Mongolia. The new mission in Manchuria was explicitly given on the basis of the pre-existing mission in Korea. Though perhaps Manchuria could in some ways be seen as close to its heart, both of these new missions were at the edges of the Chinese Empire and were largely nominal assignments. The linkage of Manchuria and Korea, the latter of which had fallen out of the ambit of Chinese suzerainty, can hardly have been reassuring to many in China. However, the new French king Louis-Philippe (king from 1830 to 1848) was enthusiastic to expand the global role of France and equally enthusiastic about the value of the linkage between the Catholic Church and France in so doing. The Opium Wars and the resulting Treaties were used by France to gain an Edict of Toleration for Catholicism and foreign missionaries in China in 1845, which laid the basis for turning the nominal missions of the MEP in the north into concrete realities. The explicit link between foreign influence/coercive power and Christianity was perhaps unwise. By 1890, the MEP had a substantial mission in Manchuria with a French Bishop and 27 MEP missionaries assisted by five local priests. In addition, 32 French sisters and more than 240 local sisters ran a variety of schools, hospitals, etc²¹.

In 1898, the success of the Manchurian mission and the commitment of the MEP to it had become so apparent that it was divided into two dioceses (an Apostolic Vicariate in the north) with Laurent Guillon²² becoming Bishop in the south (centered on Mukden) and Pierre Lalouyer²³ as the Apostolic Vicar in the north (based in Kirin/Jilin). While the French directed Catholic mission in Manchuria went from strength to strength, both French and papal diplomacy had taken some unusual turns. As previously noted, the French government had become increasingly anti-clerical culminating in the unilateral rejection of the Concordat of 1801 between France and the Holy See. However, despite all of this, successive French governments saw the value of French Catholic missions in promoting the overseas ambitions of France and, while the concept of a *ralliement* was ultimately

see: Josef Metzler *Die synoden in China, Japan und Korea 1570-1931* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1980).

¹⁹ Launay (1894) I: 546.

²⁰ Launay (1894) II: 575.

²¹ Launay (1894) III: 546 ff.

²² Laurent Guillon was born in the Archdiocese of Chambéry in 1854. He joined the MEP in 1873 and left for Manchuria in 1878. He became Vicar Apostolic of Manchuria in 1889 and was well known for his ability to convert the indigenous people to Catholicism (10,000 between 1894 and 1898). With the division of Manchuria in 1898, he became Bishop of Mukden. He was murdered there in 1900.

²³ Pierre Lalouyer was born in the Archdiocese of Rennes in 1850. He joined the MEP in 1871 and left for Manchuria in 1873. After various positions, he became Apostolic Vicar for southern Manchuria in 1898. He left the country during the fighting of 1900-1901 from Japan. On his return he continued his missionary work in Manchuria until his death in 1923.

largely rejected by both rightwing French Catholics and Pope Pius X, in the final years of Pope Leo XIII it was seen as perhaps the best way out of the impasse. Despite these disputes, it was generally accepted that the MEP missions reflected well on both France and the Catholic Church and thus should be supported by both. A further twist, of particular relevance for Manchuria, was the agreement between France and Russia (the Franco-Russian Alliance), which came into force in 1894. It not only linked the two countries together, it also established a “working relationship” between anti-clerical, Republican France and zealously Orthodox and monarchist Russia. If this was disturbing to many on the Left in France, it was understandably less worrisome to the MEP. In Manchuria, so far from a French military presence and so close to a Russian one, and which was still embedded in a state that had little time for foreigners and their ideas, this could obviously be potentially tested at any time.

In 1900 the test came. The “Boxer Rebellion” was directed against foreigners and foreign influence in China, including the “foreign religion” of Christianity. While a complex and still debated subject, it was clear that, in Manchuria in any case, government officials felt that the movement against foreigners was one that had been given full, official support from the Chinese imperial government²⁴. The Boxer Rebellion led to the death of forty-five missionaries throughout China, a quarter of these were MEP missionaries in Manchuria²⁵. Most of the other MEP missionaries in Manchuria had to go into hiding as best they could and a further ten fled as refugees to Russia, and then often on to Japan. Of these refugees, at least one died while working for the Russians as a translator²⁶. Clearly, the MEP in some measure looked to the Russians as the nearest power to protect them and as the power most closely linked to France in the area. However, it was not quite that simple for many of the MEP missionaries. Russia was emphatically not a “Catholic Nation” and its alliance with anti-clerical France was not exactly reassuring either. As schismatics and somewhat marginal Europeans, many MEP missionaries appear to have welcomed Russian help in the short term but to have been definitely quizzical over the longer term. They were definitely not sure that Russia would, in the end be a positive force for the Catholic missions, and they were understandably unconvinced by the endorsement of the French Third Republic. What they wanted was an environment in which their mission could prosper without being visibly dependent on (non-French) Europeans and yet somehow be protected from the contrived wrath of the Mandarin bureaucracy of China and their easily incited followers. In the Boxer Rebellion, the Russians were the only force at hand to help the MEP but their help was of limited (though positive) effectiveness. In particular, many of the MEP missionaries believed that the Russians were inclined to “massacre” any one in their path, which could include Manchurian Catholics²⁷. Of

²⁴ For a still useful older summary see: Victor Purcell *The Boxer Uprising* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960). For a more analytical approach see: Paul Cohen *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia, 1997). See also: Diana Preston *The Boxer Rebellion* (New York: Berkley, 2001).

²⁵ The ten deceased MEP missionaries in Manchuria were: Edouard Agnius (1874-1900), Jules Bayart (1877-1900), Louis Bourgeois (1863-1900), Noel Emonet (1849-1900), Jean Georjon (1869-1900), Laurent Guillon (1854-1900), Auguste Le Guevel (1875-1900), Louis Leray (1872-1900), Régis Souvignet (1854-1900), and Jean Viaud (1864-1900).

²⁶ Frédéric Flandin (1860-1900).

²⁷ See the letters of Fr. Alfred Caubrière in August and September 1900 on the siege of his mission at Santaitse, its rescue by the Russians (and, he claims, the direct intervention of the Virgin) and the massacres conducted by the Russians afterwards.

course, the MEP missionaries were not at all ungrateful to the Russians for helping them and in some cases saving their lives²⁸. This was especially the case for the nine MEP missionaries who were forced to flee Manchuria by boat to Khabarovsk (under periodic attack throughout the voyage) and then to Vladivostok²⁹. However, it would seem that only a minority of MEP missionaries were truly positive about the Russians³⁰. A restraint on the full exercise of Russian power was the fact that Japan was also interested in controlling Manchuria. While Japan had taken part in the Eight-Nation Alliance forces and their attack against Beijing, and it had taken control of Taiwan in 1895 after a brief war with China, it was not entirely sure what Japan's future role would be. Would Japan be, albeit geographically displaced, a quasi-European power and in which case, with what other countries would it be linked? Was Japan to be a 'Champion of Asia' against the Europeans?

In 1904, the Japanese issued a Declaration of War against Russia. The Russians had not only failed to withdraw from their advance positions in Manchuria but had actually strengthened them. If the Japanese were not to lose their claim to Manchuria completely, then they would have to fight for it and they would have to fight the Russians. In keeping with this decision, the Japanese attacked the Russian Far East Fleet in Port Arthur (Manchuria) three hours prior to their declaration of war. In fact, Port Arthur was to remain the principal focus of military activity for much of the war. As for the other Europeans (and the Americans), what would they do? Would France defend its ally and what would be the position of the Holy See and therefore of the MEP which was in some way suspended between the two³¹. The general lack of affection for the Russians among the MEP, even among those who had been constrained to be rescued by them, helped in the decision making process. More importantly, practical developments during the Russo-Japanese War helped in shaping MEP opinion (and therefore that of Catholic Europe) in favor of Japan. This in turn was to interact with the diplomacy of the Holy See.

The Russians lost the war in a vacillating yet in the end decisive manner. The Tsarist government had few supporters outside of Russia and, as future events would quickly prove, not too many in Russia itself. In Manchuria, the MEP were in a position to evaluate the two sides and, in fact, were practically constrained to do so. Their verdict was not in favor of the Russians. Initially, this was not a position shared by the officially sponsored French community in China as represented by their newspaper "L'écho de Chine". This newspaper (published in Shanghai) was enthusiastically pro-Russian and, as such, was largely rejected by the MEP in

²⁸ It needs to be remembered that many of these "Russians" were in fact Polish Catholic subjects of the Tsar.

²⁹ The nine MEP missionaries who can be identified as exiting Manchuria with Russian assistance for Vladivostok were: Edmond Gérard (1874-1951); Joseph Cubizolles (1863-1933); Jules Samoy (1861-1913); Camille Sandrin (1862-1938); Jean Monnier (1856-1910); André Roubin (1871-1935); Élie Delpal (1872-1911); Joseph Vuillemot (1865-1912); and Paul Lamasse (1869-1952).

³⁰ Prominent among these were Fr. Lamasse, Aristide Letort (1844-1904), and Jean Corbel (1865-1920). The latter even went so far as to open a school to teach Russian to the Manchurians, though it would seem his own knowledge of the language was somewhat limited (letter of Fr. Caubrière 11/01/01).

³¹ In the end, only the Kingdom of Montenegro supported Russia. Strangely, as a peace treaty was never signed between Japan and Montenegro prior to the latter losing its identity as part of Yugoslavia in 1918, the eventual formal end of hostilities between Japan and Montenegro only happened in 2006, one hundred years after the end of the Russo-Japanese War.

Manchuria³². It became clear exactly why the MEP might object to the “pro-Russian” stance of the ‘L’echo de Chine’, the (perceived) support of the French government for the Russians was unfair to the Japanese and incited their hatred towards Japan³³. This was both an intrusion of French (domestic) politics where it was not relevant and damaging to the MEP mission in Manchuria³⁴. Obviously, this was a reflection in part of the estrangement between the Catholic Church and the Third Republic following the revocation of the Concordat. In turn, this had freed the MEP in Manchuria from any need to support the Russians merely because they were in alliance with France. This was perhaps just as well, as the experience of the MEP with the Russians in Manchuria was not often a positive one. In essence, the MEP missionaries in Manchuria found the Russians to be uncommitted, disorganized, ineffectual, badly led, more interested in alcohol than fighting the enemy, and (perhaps above all) out of sympathy with the local population³⁵. This contrasted strongly with the Japanese: “The Japanese ask if there are Russians in the village, the Russians ask if there is any alcohol”. In addition, their officers were largely absent. Both of these added to the general unwillingness of the Russians to fight and their apparent inability to do so. The MEP missionaries valued order and the ability to act, the Japanese seemed to have these qualities and the Russians did not. The Russians were also the allies of the anti-clerical and dissolute Third Republic and schismatics to boot. It was perhaps highly understandable that the MEP favored the Japanese. This was reinforced by the fact that most of the MEP missionaries who had fled Manchuria via Russia had headed for Japan where the seemingly flourishing MEP mission had welcomed them. Of course, the preference of the Manchurians for the (Asian) Japanese as against the (European) Russians was also a factor. The MEP, foreign and European though they were, wished to be on the side of Asia not Russia. It was, at least in the short term, a wise decision.

If Japan was seen as the principal bastion of order in 1905, it was to be an even more important question as China (and especially Manchuria) plunged deeper into disorder in the years that followed and there seemed to be no other countries to which to turn. The overthrow of the Manchu (Qing) dynasty in 1911 left China (and Manchuria) in turmoil. The ideas of Sun Yat-sen (1866-1925) were somewhat less alarming to the MEP in Manchuria. He was, or seemed to be, both a moderate and closely linked to Japan as well as to (Protestant) Christianity. His death left the situation of Manchuria open again. Of course, coterminously with these changes in China, Russia had experienced its own revolution beginning in 1917. The resulting militantly atheistic régime had certainly obviated any sentiment of sympathy for Russia among the MEP. As Manchuria (and China) spiraled into further crises, it seemed that the Japanese were the only effective power to which the MEP could turn with any degree of confidence in Manchuria. In 1931 the Japanese definitively intervened in Manchuria and provided the muscle to create the new state of Manchukuo with the last Manchu Emperor of China as its leader, which at the same time dismembered China³⁶. In this situation, what were the MEP and the Holy See to

³² See, most notably, the Letter of Fr. Letort (Manchourie: correspondance: 566: 1701-1704. 09/07/04) which condemned the newspaper as being more Russian than French. Of equal note is the fact that he had been previously considered as one of the more Pro-Russian” of the MEP missionaries in Manchuria.

³³ Manchourie: correspondance: 566: 1716-1719. 02/08/04.

³⁴ Manchourie: correspondance: 566: 1720-1723. 10/08/04

³⁵ This is especially made clear in the correspondence of Fr. Caubrière during 1904 and 1905.

do? Their experience in Japan was to provide some interesting guidelines and contrasts.

Reflections on the MEP experience in Japan and Papal Diplomacy 1900-1930

The MEP had been the first Catholic missionary society to enter Japan in the 1850s after the long Tokugawa ban on Christianity started to be lifted and contact and trade with Western powers became established. The Catholic Church had been reestablished by the MEP in 1859 and had been able to build on the hitherto forgotten survivals of the sixteenth and seventeenth Portuguese and Spanish missionaries. The situation of the Church in Japan had been regularized into two Vicariates (northern and Southern Japan) in 1876 and then still further into four Arch/Dioceses in 1889. The numbers of faithful rose slowly but steadily through the 19th century, though by 1900 60% of the total were still to be found in the Archdiocese of Nagasaki in Kyushu where the legacy of the Iberian missionaries was concentrated. The MEP, largely because of its own inability to adequately staff the Church in Japan, had begun to progressively cede some of its territories to other religious orders, beginning with the cession of Shikoku to the Spanish Dominicans. The process of cession continued with further areas in Hokkaido, Honshu, and Kyushu being reassigned to German and Italian Catholic missionary societies. In 1926 the MEP still retained their control of the Catholic Church in Japan with the two Archdioceses (Nagasaki and Tokyo) and the two Dioceses of Osaka and Hakodate in their hands. The other religious orders had to be content with Prefectures Apostolic (Shikoku, Niigata, Nagoya, and Sapporo).

The control of the MEP had been much contested at least since the anti-clerical legislation of the French Third Republic and, furthermore, the cataclysm of the First World War in Europe had undermined much of the society's claim to authority. This had coincided with a massive drop in clerical recruitment to the MEP and in a corresponding loss in financial contributions to the *Oeuvre de la propagation de la foi*, which since the 1830's had provided most of the funding for French Catholic missionary ventures. These had affected the missions of the MEP (and other French missionary societies) around the world. Specifically in Japan, the role taken by France with respect to the Sino-Japanese War of 1895, and especially the alliance of the French Third Republic with Czarist Russia prior to the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, had placed France, and with it the MEP and (perhaps) Catholicism in general, in a negative light. While this overt hostility quickly abated, Catholicism and especially the MEP remained to some degree suspect. The First World War, on the other hand, had seen France and Japan as allies.

In the aftermath of the war, and the economic and social problems which followed on from it in the 1920s, it was obvious to the Japanese authorities that there was a need, not just to repress unwelcome social tendencies, but also to establish (and enforce) positive ones, particularly nationalism. An increasingly important aspect of this was religion. Buddhism could be relied upon to support the nationalist agenda; in particular, since the 1890s - especially since the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 - it had regularly done so; nevertheless more support was needed. The hostility towards Buddhism in some areas and its virtual absence in others made it a useful

³⁶ While there is as yet not a great deal of scholarship on Manchukuo in English, two outstanding recent works are: Louise Young *Japan's Total Empire: Manchuria and the Culture of Wartime Imperialism* (Berkeley: University of California, 1998) and Yamamuro Shin'ichi [Translated by Joshua Fogel] *Manchuria under Japanese Dominion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2006).

adjunct, but not a perfect instrument. That instrument could only be found in State Shinto and, since that same war, Japanese governments had increasingly honed it and put it to this use.

This was a major problem for some, especially Catholics, who viewed Shinto as not just a demonstration of non-religious patriotism, but as an alternative religion to their own. This potential for conflict had nearly come to a head during the First World War. In 1915 the Governor of Nagasaki had initiated a formal conversation with Bishop Combaz³⁷ about this issue. Despite the contentions of the Governor that the State Shinto shrines and rites were solely civil and not religious, Bishop Combaz reiterated the ban on Catholic participation in a pastoral letter of 1916. The Vatican's Office of *Propaganda Fide* dispatched Monsignor Petrelli³⁸ to Tokyo to smooth things over bearing an official letter of felicitations to the Emperor. However, Bishop Combaz was unconvinced, declaring in 1918: 'We regret exceedingly that as Catholics we cannot accept the interpretation of shrine worship given by the government nor can we visit the shrines and engage in the services for the dead nor can we ever pay respect to the so-called gods'³⁹. There the matter rested: the government adamant that shrine observance should be mandatory for all loyal Japanese, though insisting that it was non-religious; the MEP adamant that it was religious and therefore not possible for Catholics, though insisting on the loyalty of the Catholic Church in Japan to the state.

The visit of Monsignor Petrelli indicated change and was a sign of things to come with the establishment of direct relations between the Vatican and Japan and the residence of Monsignor Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi⁴⁰ as Apostolic Delegate from 1919 to 1921. This Apostolic Delegation was also to include the Japanese Imperial territories of Korea and Taiwan, thus pragmatically accepting the realities of Japanese Imperialism. From his elevation to Cardinal in 1933 to his death in 1960, Fumasoni-Biondi was the Prefect of the Congregation *Propaganda Fide* and so a key influence on Japanese-Vatican relations throughout this period. The inauguration of direct diplomatic links meant, though the MEP in Japan only slowly incorporated this fact, that issues to do with State Shinto were now to be handled through the Apostolic Delegate (and thus the Vatican) rather than through the diocesan bishops (and thus the MEP). It was, in part at least, a realistic recognition of the centrality of the Vatican to Catholicism and equally a recognition of the loss of French claims to represent the Catholic Church in Asia. Though a barely noticed change, it was to prove an important one.

The first move of Bishop Fumasoni-Biondi's successor as Apostolic Delegate (Monsignor Mario Giardini⁴¹), which impacted on this issue, was the calling of the second provincial synod in 1924 (the first had been held in 1895). It was not to offer much in the way of a solution to the impasse concerning State Shinto in which the Catholic Church in Japan now found itself. Clearly, the desires of the Apostolic

³⁷ Jean Combaz was born in the Archdiocese of Chambéry in December 1856. He died in Nagasaki in 1926.

³⁸ Joseph Petrelli was born in the Marche in 1873. He was a curial official from 1915 until his death in 1962.

³⁹ George Minamiki, *The Chinese Rites Controversy from its Beginning to Modern Times* (Chicago, 1985) 130.

⁴⁰ Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi was born in Rome in 1872. He was elevated to Cardinal and became Prefect of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith in 1933. He died in office in 1960.

⁴¹ Mario Giardini was born in Milan in December 1877. He became Archbishop of Ancona in 1931. He resigned in 1940 and died in 1947.

Delegate and the Japanese clergy were not entirely commensurate with those of the MEP. A compromise between these two positions was sought and the resulting documents reflect this⁴². Basically, certain acts of 'passive' or solely 'material' participation in certain shrine rites could be tolerated (*tolerari potest* in accordance with Canon 1258), in particular for soldiers or government workers, but 'signs of reverence' could not. The acts of reverence for the war dead were prohibited (despite some disagreement) because of their continuing religious nature. Catholic students in state schools were not allowed 'material' participation in any form. While hope was held out for the future when all State Shinto rites would lose their religious or quasi-religious character, the synod could not reach agreement and they could not see their way to deciding upon a common guideline (*Communis autem regula nulla ratione statui posse videtur*)⁴³. Even this limited compromise, inadequate from both the Japanese and the Apostolic Delegate's perspective, was not well received in certain quarters. The section of the synod documents dealing with State Shinto, because they involved questions of faith, were separated from the other documents and forwarded to the Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office for consideration.

In 1926, the die was cast and it was made clear that the Apostolic Delegate (Bishop Mario Giardini) with the authority of *Propaganda Fide* was intent on implementing the transition to a Japanese controlled diocese in Nagasaki as soon as possible. Despite the spirited opposition of some MEP missionaries, they were soon made aware of its futility. In December 1926, a letter was received from Bishop Giardini 'in the name of the Pope' (*sub sigillo pontificio*) that the decision had been made and that a Japanese Bishop for the whole Diocese of Nagasaki would be appointed. All that was required of the MEP missionaries were nominations for the episcopate⁴⁴. The MEP in Japan nominated Fr. Moriyama and Fr. Urakawa, both of whom were rejected in favor of the choice of *Propaganda Fide*. In July 1927, Fr. Hayasaki Kyunosuke⁴⁵ became the first Japanese Bishop of Nagasaki.

The reasons for over-riding the objections of the MEP in Japan and for swiftly executing the policy of indigenizing the 'flagship' Diocese of Nagasaki are not difficult to discern. Pope Pius XI was acutely aware of the dangers of modern nationalism to the Catholic Church in Europe and throughout the world. He was seconded in this by his Secretaries of State. The Vatican believed that the best way to secure the best position for the Church was through direct negotiations with national governments with the aim of achieving detailed written agreements (preferably Concordats) with them, which would provide guarantees for the Catholic Church at the national level. From 1916, and especially from 1919, the Vatican had been working towards this end in Japan with increasing urgency, as nationalism appeared to increase in strength. To achieve this goal, in Japan as elsewhere, would mean some concessions to 'give a mark of respect and show confidence in the government'⁴⁶.

⁴² The documents of this synod were never published, this account of the documents relies on the summary found in George Minamiki *The Chinese Rites Controversy* Chicago: Loyola University, 1985 and on Josef Metzler, *Die Synoden in China, Japan und Korea: 1570-1931* (Paderborn, 1980) 268-292.

⁴³ Metzler (1980) 283-284.

⁴⁴ 23/12/1926 MC 571a (1926).

⁴⁵ Bishop Hayasaka was born in Sendai in 1883. He was appointed Bishop of Nagasaki in 1927 at the age of 43. He resigned in 1937 and died in 1959.

⁴⁶ *Comptes Rendus* (1927).

The Manchurian Incident of 1931 was the active beginning of the Greater East Asia War. The army (and the navy) increasingly influenced all of the decisions of the government. With the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi in May 1932, civilian government virtually ended in Japan. The Japanese nation was put on a permanent war footing and all sectors of the economy were directed towards the war effort. To mobilize a nation and to keep it mobilized is not an easy task since an accessible set of beliefs and practices, which are inclusive of all the people of the nation need to be put into place and maintained. In Japan, this set of beliefs and practices was to be found in State Shinto. The military-based governments were intent on imposing State Shinto throughout Japan and, in fact, throughout the Japanese Empire, and so the Catholic Church had to deal with this. It was a matter of urgency and it would no longer be possible to let the decision disappear into the files of the Holy Office. The transfer of Nagasaki Diocese had proved the willingness on the part of the Pope to make reasonable compromises for a greater good, now was the time to consider State Shinto.

Matters came to a head in May 1932, just before the assassination of Prime Minister Inukai. A group of sixty Sophia University students had been led on a march as part of the compulsory military training program. When they reached Yasukuni Shrine they were required to present arms as a show of homage to the war dead, but two or three Catholic students refused to do so⁴⁷. In response, the Army Ministry threatened to cancel the position of military training officer at the school, which would have effectively meant its closure. Bishop Ross, the new German Jesuit Bishop of Hiroshima, intervened with a more liberal interpretation of the rules (Canon 1258) governing these matters⁴⁸. Archbishop Chambon⁴⁹ of Tokyo agreed to go along with this and permission was granted 'by word of mouth and for this instance' (*mündlich und pro casu*) for Sophia students to perform homage at shrines pending a decision of all of the ordinaries. As the next synod was not scheduled until 1934, Archbishop Chambon wrote directly to the Ministry of Education requesting clarification of the purpose and meaning to be attached to shrine visits. They replied that the 'bow that is required of the group of students of the higher schools and the students of the middle and primary schools has no other purpose than that of manifesting the sentiments of patriotism and loyalty'⁵⁰. This was sufficient for the Apostolic Delegate (Monsignor Edward Mooney) to issue his approval, which the synod of 1934 then approved in its turn. In 1935, the then Apostolic Delegate (Monsignor Paolo Marella⁵¹) requested revisions of the previous guidelines governing shrine visits from *Propaganda Fide*. The reply, in the form of an instruction (*Pluries instanterque*), was issued by the Prefect of *Propaganda Fide* (Cardinal Fumasoni-Biondi, a previous Apostolic Delegate to Japan). It was declared lawful for Catholics to attend and participate in shrine ceremonies since they were solely of a 'civil nature'. Catholics could also take part in other private rites (funerals, weddings, etc), which had also lost their religious nature. The norms given

⁴⁷ This account is based on Minamiki (1985) who in turn used an unpublished account of the affair written by Fr. von Küenburg the Rector of Sophia University.

⁴⁸ *Codex iuris canonici* (Rome, 1909).

⁴⁹ Jean-Baptiste Chambon was born in March 1875. He became Archbishop of Tokyo in 1927. Following the division of the diocese in 1937 he became Bishop of Yokohama. He surrendered his diocese in 1940 and retired. He died in Japan in 1948.

⁵⁰ Minamiki (1985) 145.

⁵¹ Paolo Marella was born in Rome in 1895. He was appointed to the Roman Curia and elevated to be a Cardinal in 1959. He retired in 1983 and died in the following year.

in these instructions were not just recommendations; Bishops were required (deberere) to observe them. The final seal was placed on this in February 1937 when Monsignor Marella and the new Archbishop Designate of Tokyo (Archbishop Takeo Doi⁵²) visited the Yasukuni Shrine along with a number of Catholic clergy and laity. The nature of Shinto rites, the separation of Religion and the State, and the relationship of the Catholic Church to them remains a debate to the present day⁵³.

The MEP, Japan, and Manchuria: Experiences and Results: 1930-1940

The Holy See had succeeded in establishing a working *modus vivendi* with the Japanese government based on direct contacts between the Holy See and that government. The progressive creation of an indigenous hierarchy in Japan, beginning in 1927, despite the objections of many of the MEP in Japan (and other missionaries), had demonstrated the willingness and ability of the Holy See to act directly and to exact (or at least unconditionally expect) compliance. The newly minted indigenous hierarchy saw no contradiction between their roles as Catholic bishops and supporters of Japanese nationalism. The Shrine issue, and the extended questions related to the meaning and purpose of Shinto rites, which had exercised both the civil and religious authorities in Japan for some time, was resolved or effectively circumvented in a seemingly largely effortless manner. It was also resolved in a very expeditious one. Those in the MEP who objected to these compromises which favored *real politik* over other concerns continued to fight a somewhat covert rearguard action until the enforced indigenization of the Japanese Catholic hierarchy in 1940. The final holdout was the MEP Bishop of Osaka, Jean-Baptiste Castanier⁵⁴ who caused some concerns among the Japanese hierarchy and at the Vatican right until the end of the process⁵⁵. In these years, Japan had moved to become master of Manchuria and thus the temporal power to which the Catholic missionaries must answer. Their experiences in Japan and in Manchuria itself, coupled with the policies of the Holy See, made it obvious what this answer was likely to be. What separates Japan and Manchuria for the MEP was not the nature of the response, but the willingness with which it was made.

The MEP experience in Manchuria between the Russo-Japanese War in 1905 and the Manchurian Incident in 1931, which led to the extension of Japanese power throughout Manchuria and the creation of the new state of Manchukuo, underlined its prior experiences and especially its perceptions of the Chinese, Japanese, and Russian roles in the area. The Russians were no longer a viable presence for the MEP in Manchuria in the 1930s, at least until the Japanese invasion of 1931 when once again they appeared to be ready to launch an attack⁵⁶. They had been soundly beaten by Japan in the Russo-Japanese War and, in the opinion of most of the missionaries, had richly merited their defeat. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the consequent

⁵² Archbishop Peter Doi was born in 1892 and ordained in 1921. In 1937 he was appointed Archbishop of Tokyo. He was elevated to Cardinal in 1960 and died in 1970.

⁵³ Matsumoto Saburo 'The Roman Catholic Church in Japan' in Kumazawa Yoshinobu and David Swain [eds] *Christianity in Japan, 1971-1990* (Tokyo, 1990).

⁵⁴ He was born in the Diocese of Saint Flour in 1877, joined the MEP in 1894, and was ordained a priest and left for Japan in 1899. After mobilization in the First World War, he became Bishop of Osaka in 1917. His demission took effect in 1941 at which time retired. He died in Japan in 1943.

⁵⁵ Letter of Bishop Castanier to Bishop Doi 06/11/1940 in papers of Bishop Castanier.

⁵⁶ Correspondence of Fr. Caubrière 10/30/1931.

Russian championing of Communism had finally written them off. The assumption was that their earlier traits of drunkenness and indiscipline had remained to be augmented by Atheism. In turn, China had undergone its own revolution beginning in 1911, which had destabilized civic and economic life in Manchuria for twenty years. The two major threats in Manchuria were “brigandage” and the spill over of civil war from the rest of China. Throughout the period from 1905 to 1931, Manchuria and the MEP suffered from periodic attacks from “Brigands”. Some of these were, perhaps, ideologically motivated, if a hatred of foreigners and of Christians can be called an ideology, though most were merely opportunistic. The Chinese government was manifestly unable to restore order, and perhaps local officials may have even been complicit in this brigandage as they had been during the Boxer Rebellion. The First World War, though there had been some noticeable “tensions”, had left Manchuria and the Manchurians largely alone⁵⁷.

The Civil Wars of the 1920s could easily have been another story. Marshal Zhang Zuolin (Chang Tso-Lin) had moved from being a mercenary in the pay of the Japanese in 1905 to being the Governor-General of Manchuria (on behalf of the Republic of China) in 1920⁵⁸. In that year he launched an attack on northern China, which failed, and then subsequently announced the independence of Manchuria in 1922. For the next six years he was involved in the bloody civil war in northern China. Only the presence of the Japanese troops in Manchuria prevented the war from spilling over into that area, though the possibility was always present. The general feeling among the MEP was that Zhang Zuolin was worthy of their support because he represented the principle of order; Manchuria was a comparatively well run province under his rule; and he was an implacable enemy of Bolshevism⁵⁹. They were, however, increasingly aware of his reliance on the Japanese. When Zhang Zuolin started to defy them, the Japanese army engineered his assassination in June 1928. The Japanese continued to control the railways and their own mandated areas but tension increased. The son of Zhang Zuolin (Marshal Zhang Xueliang) was responsible for the official Chinese military presence in the area. In September 1931, sections of the Japanese army launched a fake attack on their own railway, blamed the Chinese, and moved to take full control of Manchuria. In March 1932, they created the state of Manchukuo, which was to be ruled by the former Emperor of China.

Manchuria again descended into “brigandage” which, once more, targeted foreigners and Christians. The MEP Bishop of Southern Manchuria (Bishop Jean-Marie Blois) was attacked in his palace by brigands but rescued by the Japanese⁶⁰. Within three months of the Manchurian Incident, the Chinese army had retreated from Manchuria and the Japanese had commenced operations against the brigands. The Japanese were intent on restoring “order” in Manchuria and eliminating brigandage and they were willing to commit substantial numbers of troops to achieve these goals. While many brigands resisted, others were willing to negotiate surrender. At least one MEP missionary acted as an intermediary in these

⁵⁷ Correspondence of Fr. Caubrière ?/04/1915.

⁵⁸ See: Gavan McCormack *Chang Tso-Lin in Northeast China 1911-1928* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1977).

⁵⁹ Comptes-rendus 1925.

⁶⁰ Jean-Marie Blois was born in the Diocese of Nantes in 1881. He joined the MEP in 1904, was ordained in the following year and left for Manchuria. Apart from two years in Paris (1919-1921) he stayed in Manchuria throughout his career and died there in 1946.

negotiations (Fr. Pierre Cambon)⁶¹. The Japanese acted as the “policeman of the Orient” and “the barrier against Bolshevism” and, as such, deserved the support of the MEP according to many of their missionaries⁶². While the Shrine Issue had not quite been resolved in Japan, it was clear that it would be soon and that there was no inherent obstacle in the way of cooperation between the Catholic Church in Manchuria and the Japanese (and Manchukuo) authorities. There was also a great deal to be said in its favor. The Chinese appeared to be either brigands or Communists, or even both, while the Japanese offered peace and protection. The choice was clear but the price was high. What the Japanese wanted was recognition for the new state of Manchukuo. The League of Nations in the end denied this, despite the support for it of the French general Henri Claudel who was part of the commission sent by the League of Nations (the Lytton Commission)⁶³ to investigate the matter. The Japanese left the League of Nations, but they still wanted recognition for Manchukuo, which would also bring validation for their own actions in its train. If not the League, then maybe the Holy See could provide this recognition. After all, the protection of the Catholic Church in Manchuria (and in Japan) relied on the goodwill of the Japanese government. Vatican diplomats, negotiating the Concordat with the German Reich (signed in July 1933), were to be given another delicate task.

Despite the lack of international recognition, Manchukuo gradually began to establish the offices of state and assert itself in the region. The strength of the Japanese (and the weakness of China) strengthened Manchukuo in a variety of ways from the Chinese decision to withdraw not only their army but even their postal service from Manchuria to the murder by Chinese troops of the Catholic Prefect Apostolic of Yenki⁶⁴. The MEP (and the Catholic Church) were faced with an increasingly strong state, which was both positively inclined towards the Church and anxious for international recognition. In addition, both Germany and Italy (concordats of 1929 and 1933) were positive towards Manchukuo, though the final “Axis” Tripartite Alliance with Japan was not to be signed until September 1940, and certain elements in France (such as General Claudel) were positive too. In early 1934, Pu-Yi was officially enthroned as Emperor of Manchukuo and the pressure for recognition by the Catholic Church increased. On the ground, the Catholic churches displayed the flag of Manchukuo (alongside that of the Vatican) and prayers for the Emperor were authorised⁶⁵. Though a full concordat was not possible at this stage (if ever) the next stage would have to be recognition of Manchukuo by the Holy See. This is what happened, or did it?⁶⁶.

In February 1934, Auguste Gaspais MEP (Vicar Apostolic/Bishop of Kirin) was appointed as the representative of the Holy See to the government of

⁶¹ Pierre Cambon was born in the Diocese of Rodez in 1902. He joined the MEP in 1920 and was ordained and left for Manchuria in 1926. He remained there until his death in Mukden in 1949.

⁶² For example: see the correspondence of Fr. Marie Sagard. He was born in the Diocese of Saint Dié in 1894, was ordained in 1922, joined the MEP in 1923, and left for Manchuria in the following year. He stayed there until his death from typhus in 1946.

⁶³ Francis Walters *A History of the League of Nations* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1960) and Thomas Burkman *Japan and the League of Nations* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2007).

⁶⁴ Correspondence of Fr. Caubrière 30/06/32 and 31/07/32.

⁶⁵ Correspondence of Fr. Caubrière 12/02/1934.

⁶⁶ For an excellent selection of documents and a thorough, though perhaps unconvincing, discussion of the question see: Giovanni Coco *Santa Sede e Manchiukuo* (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2006).

Manchukuo⁶⁷. But what did this mean? For his fellow MEP Bishop of Mukden (Jean-Marie Blois) it meant *de facto* recognition of Manchukuo by the Holy See and he said so in a circular letter to the clergy⁶⁸. Supporters of Manchukuo, like Fr. Caubrière, were equally convinced that this was what it meant and expressed their gratitude to the Holy See for its actions⁶⁹. The Japanese government believed that this was what it meant⁷⁰ and so clearly did the Communists in China, it is still the generally accepted view⁷¹. The MEP and the Holy See did nothing at the time to correct this interpretation, though with the end of the war and the Communist takeover of China and Manchuria they tried to do so⁷². In January 19387, Bishop Gaspais received (and accepted) a decoration from the government of Manchukuo⁷³. Clearly, the Holy See acted as if Manchukuo was a state and that it had a legitimate government with which it was willing to deal. It seemed that, once again, in the persons of Cardinals Gasperi and Fumasoni-Biondi⁷⁴ (*Propaganda fidei*) the Holy See had made a pragmatic choice among the long spoons on offer and reached a diplomatic solution which was advantageous in the short term, though perhaps of more dubious long term value.

Conclusion

The experiences of the Catholic Church, and consequently of the diplomats of the Holy See, during the period after the French Revolution had necessitated the reinforcement of a degree of pragmatism and *real politik* which had led in turn to the reinforcement of the centrality of the Vatican and a consequent downgrading of the local and national hierarchies. In most cases, these hierarchies along with missionary societies like the MEP were equally ultramontanist and accepted this centrality of the Holy See not just in ecclesiastical but also in ecclesiological terms. The Holy See, operating through both *Propaganda Fide* and the Secretaries of State, was seen to be safeguarding the interests of the church in the area as best it could. If there were casualties, such as the Catholic political parties in Germany or Italy, this was a price that regrettably had to be paid. Even the effective acquiescence of Don Sturzo underlines this. The attachment of any régime to Catholicism could no longer be accepted without question, in fact it was obvious that they were more and more hostile to the Church. The pragmatism of the diplomacy of the Holy See was dictated by the antagonism of European secular régimes. The explicit rejection of an existing concordat by the government of the Third French Republic, underlined both the fragility of such agreements and (for Vatican diplomats at least) their necessity as the best available option for the Church. The successive Popes and their Secretaries

⁶⁷ Auguste Gaspais was born in 1884 in the Diocese of Vannes, joined the MEP in 1903 and left in 1907 for Manchuria. He stayed there until he was expelled by the Communists in 1951. He died in the following year in France.

⁶⁸ Letter of Jean-Marie Blois 22/09/1934.

⁶⁹ Correspondence of Fr. Caubrière 22/09/1934.

⁷⁰ Letter of Morizumi Yoshiura 31/10/1952 on the occasion of the death of Bishop Gaspais.

⁷¹ Yamamuro [2006], 237.

⁷² *Rapport annuel* 1947 the latest presentation of this view is Coco [2006].

⁷³ Letter of Gaspais 02/02/1938.

⁷⁴ Pietro Fumasoni-Biondi was born in Rome in 1872 became a priest in 1897. He had a long and distinguished career at the Vatican, becoming a Cardinal in 1933. He died in Rome in 1960. The office of *Propaganda fidei* is directly responsible for all mission territories/dioceses of the Catholic Church until they become established as national hierarchies.

of State dealt with these situations as best they could in Europe, outside of Europe the office of *Propaganda Fide* was also involved. However, with the tightening up of the bureaucracy of the Holy See, this made little difference in the end result as the examples of Japan and Manchukuo demonstrate.

Japan had never been at the center of French foreign policy, even in Asia, and as such the French claim to protect Catholic missions overseas was always a moot one. With the advent of the Third Republic, this was underlined. The MEP, though intensely French, was always directly linked to the Holy See and, in Japan as opposed to Southeast Asia, there were no intermediaries to be considered. The Holy See recognized the increasing importance of Japan in Asia and the need to accommodate, as far as possible, the rising nationalism of Japan. This meant cutting the Gordian Knot of the Chinese Rites issue, accepting the allegedly non-religious nature of Shinto shrine attendance, and establishing an indigenous Catholic hierarchy as soon as possible. The reward for this would be a favorable image of the Catholic Church in Japan and throughout the Japanese Empire, some measure of protection for Catholics in this empire, and the possibility of a concordat in the future. The actions and flexibility of the Holy See were very positively perceived in Japan, the actions of the Holy See in Manchukuo only added to this. If not exactly the friend of the Japanese Empire and of Manchukuo, the Holy See was certainly not among the ranks of their enemies and even more certainly it did not wish to be perceived as such. The actions of the Holy See were seen as an important endorsement of Manchukuo and so of the role of the Japanese in Asia. For the MEP in Manchukuo, this was undoubtedly true and was viewed in a positive light. By contrast, in Japan, the over-ruling of MEP opposition was a bitter pill to swallow for some. But swallowed it was. Arguably, at the time, it was a price that was worth paying.

The aftermath of the Second World War, and in Papal terms especially the death of Pope Pius XII in 1958, was the beginning of a new perspective for the Catholic Church in Asia and around the world. The triumphant Chinese Communists accused the Holy See of complicity with Japanese imperialism in China and Japan and it was a charge that was very difficult to refute. Manchukuo disappeared from the map and the MEP disappeared from Manchukuo. At least it did so without loss of life. All of the MEP missionaries were expelled from Manchukuo. This was in stark contrast to Korea, where nine of the MEP missionaries were murdered by Chinese and Korean Communists. The negative aspects of Japanese imperialism were increasingly highlighted and complicity became less and less forgivable. However, it was not until the 1980s or even the 1990s that the Japanese Catholic Church began to disassociate itself from the events of the 1930s. To date, their efforts are not always convincing in a fundamental sense, perhaps because the current missionaries in Japan and the church they support often seem to have a greater devotion to enculturation into Japan rather than an enculturation of Catholicism.

Other things have changed, however, both in the light of the Second Vatican Council and a changing world situation. Firstly, national hierarchies and their views have achieved precedence or at least equality with those of the Holy See in terms of bilateral relations with national governments. The situation in which the Holy See could effectively override the majority of experienced church personnel in favor of a more pragmatic approach, as in Japan in the late 1920s, is no longer acceptable. Given the indigenization of national hierarchies, this may be a difference without a distinction in practical terms at least in Japan. Secondly, the concept of collegiality has tempered not only the willingness of the Holy See to act without adequate

consultation but has also hopefully modified the opposing tendency of national hierarchies to act as if they only had a vertical relationship to the Holy See rather than a series of horizontal relationships to other hierarchies. In the case of the Japanese Catholic Church this may be crucial not only to its self-perception but also to its future in the wider dimensions of Asia and global Catholicism.