







up is an 'infidel', a Chinese local who wanted to learn about the reason of the coming of the friars. He hinted at the fact that all those who did not wear 'the large hat' (as sign of erudition) were not allowed to enter China and exchange ideas with the Chinese.

He even knew details of punishments for those who bound round a belt to the habit. The punishments started from perpetual prison to death penalty<sup>[9]</sup>. Of course the Franciscan friars knew exactly about the risk and the law preventing them from entering China but nevertheless they gave it a try, exactly because they could be not only identified as foreigners but as missionaries who had to fulfill a mandate. The Franciscans have chosen an obvious and easily identifiable, because uniform expression of being but according to those hints given by the 'infidel' on conformity that allowed at least in its apparition the entry to China, one first step could have been a change in details by adapting to local preferences and positive connotations, just as the Jesuits used to do in terms of their mission.

Attributions can still be made nowadays by styles and clothings, and even if the consequences are very different from what the clergymen experienced, a kind of visible mindset and group specific might help to decide about the fitting to each other and help to identify some concerns of staying abroad.

The last reference<sup>[10]</sup> I would like to make is a situation described quite similar to the one before with just one difference, that was the general prohibition of entering the country independent of appearance. One can see that in the Early Qing-Dynasty a new way of identification showed up that might be considered as symbol reference of the catholic faith itself to an unsatisfying situation caused by politics. Due to revolutions led by some provinces whose rulers had unified under Wu Sangui against emperor Kangxi it was not possible to enter the country again and head north-eastwards towards Shandong province where one of the main Franciscan missions was located. It was exactly Wu Sangui who was one of the most important contact persons of the missionaries and who gave them every support possible to lead a spiritual life and to win new souls for the catholic faith in Canton. Nevertheless the situation of lacking liberty of movement led to a phenomenon of comparing the frustrating situation itself to well known Christian stories by using very deep connotations and symbols such as 'Lucifer', 'Pontius Pilatus', 'desert', 'wolves' towards the other in direct contrast to 'pastors', 'Christ Redemptor', 'vineyards that were needed to be cultivated', 'lambs' as explanation of the own situation. It was a kind of struggle of opposites that came up as on the one hand the desire to move in the country was a very strong force and on the other hand the faced restrictions interpreted as a sign of significance that only could be solved by God as each single moment of struggle was bringing the whole mission forward at the right moment. For sure it was not only a struggle with the situation, it was as well a permanently struggle brought up in written documents with the budgeting if kept for too long from

a more nationwide activity, but a very valuable time that led to further analysis of how to deal with the other and what aspects one should focus on in order to reach the main aim: inland China.

The same often is true nowadays when encountered difficulties combined with the strong will to reach one's aims are discussed with a view on the foreign other and strengthening the own identity by defining one's mission, be it the product, the inner drive, even the financial situation that is a quite necessary part of the play.

### 3. Summary

It was possible to give just a very short insight into what could be considered a philosophy of being to the Franciscans by dealing with the Chinese other. As a first result one can say that changes within the historic development and establishment of the Franciscan order in China can be recognized.

That is part of a more and more self-aware and self-motivated understanding of feeling the personal need of dealing in and with China and learning to understand relations on various levels such as political, geographical, inter-personal and social, spiritual, habitual.

Of course the more details and examples one can provide in its analysis the more the concepts of being can be interlinked and abstracted to a more general Franciscan philosophy of being in China.

Nevertheless I decided to see this paper as a first approach to get into this intercultural discussion of historic events of a specific group compared to a at the moment very generally and roughly hinted at nowadays situation that I could strive at the moment only as part of intercultural learning.

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<sup>9</sup> *ibid.* (1933, p. 53f.)

<sup>10</sup> Bonav. Ibanez (1936)