

# The Intellectual Approach of Chinese Academia towards the Orthodox Church

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**Abstract:** In this article, the author talks about general tendencies in the interpretation of the Orthodox Church and missionary work in the works by Chinese scholars. There are three major statements that can be found in the works by Chinese scholars; 1. The presence of the Orthodox Church in China is viewed as a result of the aggressive policy of the Russian Empire; 2. Missionaries are viewed as agents of the Russian government; 3. The Orthodox Church is closely linked with the Russian government. While focusing on the above-mentioned interpretations the author also provides overall comment on positive aspects and shortcomings of the studies done by the Chinese scholars.

**Key Words:** Orthodox Church, Russian Ecclesiastical mission, Chinese Academia, Sino-Russian relations

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Despite a 300 year long history of the Orthodox Church in China, its history and heritage remain fairly unknown to the most of the Chinese society. Even Chinese scholars indicate that Chinese Orthodox Church is a quite unpopular topic within Chinese Academia and there is a lack of specialists in this field.〔2〕

In this paper, I do not intend to provide criticism to every single article or monograph produced by Chinese scholars but will try to introduce general tendencies as well as positive aspects and shortcomings in Chinese Academia. Different scholars study different aspects of the Orthodox Church and it would be hard to discuss all these matters, that is why I will mainly focus on the authors who are studying the history of the

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〔1〕 Selected publications by the author; 1) Dmitrenko A. "Interpretation of the term "Comforter" in the Four Chinese Translations of the Gospel of John." In *Oriental Readings. Religions. Cultures. Literatures. The materials of the 4th Annual International Conference. Nov 17-18, 2017, Moscow*, Collection of materials/ ed. A. S. Balakhovskaya. Moscow, 2017, pp. 72-75. 2) Dmitrenko A. A. "St. Gury Karpov Chinese New Testament translation background" ( Rus. ) 47-я научная конференция Общество и гос-во в Китае. Том XLVII. Часть 1. / Редколл. : А. И. Кобзев и др. М. : ИВ РАН, 2017, с. 232-238. 3) Dmitrenko A. A. "Translation of Catechetical Literature as Basis for Preaching Christianity in China." ( Rus. ). *Issues of Far Eastern Literatures. Conference Materials. Vol. II, 2016*, pp. 30-38. The main fields of research; Chinese textbooks, the history of the Russian Orthodox Church in China, the history of Christianity in China, Chinese Bible translations.

〔2〕 李栋材 Li Dongcai, 《首届“中国的东正教研究及东正教群体”学术研讨会综述》Shoujie "Zhongguode Dongzhengjiao yanjiu ji Dongzhengjiao qunti" xueshuyantaohui zongshu [The Summary of the first conference on The studies of the Chinese Orthodox and Orthodox community], 《世界宗教研究》Shijie zongjiao yanjiu [Studies of World Religions], April (北京 Beijing: 中国社会科学院 [Chinese Academy of Social Sciences], 2015), 190.

Orthodox Church in China.

First of all, I would like to highlight a translation and publication of the work by a Russian scholar Nikolaj Adoratsky about the history of the Orthodox Church in China, entitled 东正教在华两百年史, completed by Xiao Yuqiu 肖玉秋 in 2007. This work is very important for Chinese Religious studies because it provides access to one of the most important studies about the history of the Orthodox Church in China to a Chinese reader and may act as a bridge or a path to a dialog between Chinese and Russian scholars.

Chinese scholars who have studied the Russian Ecclesiastical missions in China, or who are considered to be experts in the history and theology of the Orthodox Church, are Xiao Yuqiu, Yue Feng, Zhang Sui, Zhang Baichun, Xu Fenglin, Yan Guodong<sup>[3]</sup> and others. Especially important in this sphere is the doctoral dissertation by Zhang Fan on the interpretation of Orthodoxy in Modern China by modern Chinese scholars. This is a document that we will refer to in the analysis of works by Chinese scholars.<sup>[4]</sup>

Most Chinese scholars interpret the Orthodox Church in China as a foreign “Russian national religion.”<sup>[5]</sup> This, of course, is a false understanding, because Orthodox Christianity is an international religion, and the Russian Orthodox Church in its Moscow Patriarchate is just one of several autocephalous Orthodox Churches.<sup>[6]</sup> The Orthodox Church in China is not included among the five official religions,<sup>[7]</sup> and so is viewed as a separate religion distinct from Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.<sup>[8]</sup> In this regard, Yue Fang’s History of the Orthodox Church 东正教史 is definitely a good source for a Chinese reader to get information about the other autocephalous churches. Nonetheless, it would be incorrect to start talking about

[3] 肖玉秋 Xiao Yuqiu,《俄国东正教驻北京传教团在华活动的历史评价》Eguo Dongzhengjiao zhu Beijing chuanjiaotuan zaihua huodongde lishi pingjia [Historical evaluation of activity of the Russian Orthodox Beijing Ecclesiastical mission in China], Nikolaj Adorackij:《东正教在华两百年史》Dongzhengjiao zai Hua liangbainian shi [A 200 year History of the Orthodox Church in China], (广州 Guangzhou: 广东人民出版社 Guangdong renmin chubanshe [Guangdong People’s Publishing House], 2007), 293-320; 肖玉秋 Xiao Yuqiu,《俄国传教团与清代中俄文化交流》Eguo chuanjiaotuan yu Qingdai ZhongE wenhua jiaoliu [The Russian Orthodox Mission in Beijing and Sino-Russian Cultural Exchange during the Qing dynasty], (天津 Tianjin: 天津人民出版社 Tianjin renmin chubanshe [Tianjin People’s Publishing House], 2009); 乐峰 Yue Feng,《东正教史》Dongzhengjiao Shi [The History of the Orthodox Church], (北京 Beijing: 中国社会科学出版社 Zhongguo sheshui kexue chubanshe [Chinese Social Science Press], 1999); Yue Feng, “Pravoslavniye propovedniki i kuljtura Kitaja” [Orthodox missionaries and Culture of China. ] In S. L. Tikhvinsky, V. S. Myasnikov, eds, Istoriya Rossijskoj Duhovnoj Missii v Kitaje [The History of The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China. Collection of Articles. ], (Moscow: St. Vladimir Brotherhood Press, 1997), 376-382; 张绥 Zhang Sui,《东正教和东正教在中国》Dongzhengjiao he Dongzhengjiao zai Zhongguo [Orthodox Church and Orthodox Church in China], (上海 Shanghai: 学林出版社 Xuelin chubanshe [Xuelin Press], 1986); 张百春 Zhang Baichun, “俄罗斯政教关系” Eluosi zhengjiao guanxi [State and Church relations in Russia], in 乐峰 Yue Feng 主编:《俄国宗教史》Eguo Zongjiao Shi [The History of the Russian Religions], Vol. I. (北京 Beijing: 社会科学文献出版社 Shehui kexue wenxian chubanshe [Social Sciences Academic Press], 2008), 434-484; 徐凤林 Xu Fenglin,《俄罗斯宗教哲学》Eluosi zongjiao zhexue [Russian Religious Philosophy], (北京 Beijing: 北京大学出版社 Beijing daxue chubanshe [Peking University Press], 2006); 阎国栋 Yan Guodong, “19 世纪末 20 世纪初俄国东方派代表人物的中国观” 19 shijimo 20 shijichu Eguo dongfangpai daibiaorenwude Zhongguoguan [China Views of Representative Figures of the Russian Orientology School in late 19th and early 20th centuries] in A. A. Rodionov ed., Issues of the Far Eastern Literatures. The 7th Interantional Conference. Vol. 2, (Saint Petersburg, June 29-July 3, 2016), 149-157.

[4] Zhang Fan, Interpretacija Pravoslavlja v sovremennom Kitaje kitajskim religiovedenijem, [Interpretation of the Orthodox Church in the Modern Chinese Religious Studies] (Tzansbaikal State University, PhD dissertation, 2015).

[5] Ibid., p. 3.

[6] It is the same as to state that Catholicism is the national religion of the Romans. But as Zhang Fan indicates, Catholicism in fact is not associated with Rome, just as Protestantism is not associated with the US. See: Ibid., 95.

[7] The five official religions in the PRC are Buddhism, Daoism, Catholicism or 天主教, Islam, and Christianity (meaning Protestantism). See: Ibid., 19; 41.

[8] The Chinese Orthodox Church is not included into official religions because it does not have as many adherents in China. While the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Churches definitely represent different Churches, still all these Churches are related to Christianity.

the history of the Orthodox Church from the 4<sup>th</sup> century as it is indicated in his monograph<sup>[9]</sup> because Christianity appeared in the first century AD.

## 1. “The Orthodox Church in China as a result of aggressive policy of the Russian Empire”

As mentioned by both Dacyshen in his monograph<sup>[10]</sup> and Lomanov in his review of the above mentioned Yue Feng’s work the origin of the Russian Orthodox Church in China is explained by a statement which is typical of a Chinese historiography, namely: “aggressive policy of the Russian Empire”.<sup>[11]</sup> Russian missionaries, just like other foreign missionaries, are viewed by some Chinese scholars as agents of foreign aggression<sup>[12]</sup> and are accused of doing nothing related to missionary activities, having an inadequate knowledge of Chinese and Manchurian languages.<sup>[13]</sup> On the other hand, Yue Feng indicates some of the positive influences of Chinese culture on Russian missionaries and describes their deep understanding of Chinese culture and competent knowledge of Chinese languages.<sup>[14]</sup> According to Zhang Fan, Yue Feng’s

[9] 乐峰 Yue Feng,《东正教史》Dongzhengjiao Shi [The History of the Orthodox Church], (北京 Beijing: 中国社会科学出版社 Zhongguo sheshui kexue chubanshe [Chinese Social Science Press], 1999), 3; 121-135.

[10] V. G. Dacyšen, Istorija Rossijskoj duhovnoj missii v Kitae [History of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], (Hong Kong: Orthodox Brotherhood of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 2010), 36.

[11] A. V. Lomanov, “Recenzija na knigu professor Jue Fen Dongzhengjiao shi,” [Review of the book by prof. Yue Feng Dongzhengjiao shi] Kitajskij Blagovestnik, Nr. 2, (1999); <http://www.chinese.orthodoxy.ru/russian/kb2/Review.htm>, 2016-11-5.

[12] 肖玉秋 Xiao Yuqiu,《俄国传教团与清代中俄文化交流》Eguo chuanjiaotuan yu Qingdai ZhongE wenhua jiaoliu [The Russian Orthodox Mission in Beijing and Sino-Russian Cultural Exchange during the Qing dynasty], (天津 Tianjin: 天津人民出版社 Tianjin renmin chubanshe [Tianjin People’s Publishing House], 2009), 1-18; 肖玉秋 Xiao Yuqiu, “俄国东正教驻北京传教团在华活动的历史评价” Eguo Dongzhengjiao zhu Beijing chuanjiaotuan zaihua huodongde lishi pingjia [Historical evaluation of activity of the Russian Orthodox Beijing Ecclesiastical mission in China], in Nikolaj Adorackij:《东正教在华两百年史》Dongzhengjiao zai Hua liangbainian shi [A 200 year History of the Orthodox Church in China], (广州 Guangzhou: 广东人民出版社 Guangdong renmin chubanshe [Guangdong People’s Publishing House], 2007), 293-320; 乐峰 Yue Feng,《东方基督教探索》Dongfang jidujiao tansuo [The study of the Eastern Christianity], (北京 Beijing: 宗教文化出版社 zongjiao wenhua chubanshe [China Religious Culture Publisher], 2008), 413-426; 郑永旺 Zheng Yongwang,《俄罗斯东正教与黑龙江文化》Eluosi dongzhengjiao yu Heilongjiang wenhua [Russian Orthodox Church and the Heilongjiang culture], (哈尔滨 Harbin: 黑龙江大学出版社 Heilongjiang daxue chubanshe [Heilongjiang University Publishing House], 2010), 96, 97. Zhang Fan indicates the same characteristics found in works by Chinese scholars, stating that there are political reasons for viewing Christian missionaries as aggressors. See: Zhang Fan, Interpretacija Pravoslavija v sovremennom Kitaje kitajskim religiovedenijem, [Interpretation of the Orthodox Church in the Modern Chinese Religious Studies] (Tzansbaikal State University, PhD dissertation, 2015), 42. It can be stated that in certain circumstances missionaries were used by political powers for their national interests, like in case of the Juye incident (1897) when two German priests were murdered by members of the Big Sword Society (大刀会 Dādāohuì). However, this is not a good reason to accuse missionaries of only being agents of “Western Powers” who came to China not for God’s sake, but to occupy China. See more on the Juye incident in: Joseph W. Esherick, The Origins of the Boxer Uprising, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 123-135.

[13] 张绥 Zhang Sui,《东正教和东正教在中国》Dongzhengjiao he Dongzhengjiao zai Zhongguo [Orthodox Church and Orthodox Church in China], (上海 Shanghai: 学林出版社 Xuelin chubanshe [Xuelin Press], 1986), 241, 242. It should be noted that this volume was one of the first Chinese monographs focusing on the history of Orthodoxy and the Orthodox Church in China. See: Zhang Fan, Interpretacija Pravoslavija v sovremennom Kitaje kitajskim religiovedenijem, [Interpretation of the Orthodox Church in the Modern Chinese Religious Studies] (Tzansbaikal State University, PhD dissertation, 2015), 42.

[14] Yue Feng, “Pravoslavnije propovedniki i kuljtura Kitaja” [Orthodox missionaries and Culture of China. ] In S. L. Tikhvinsky, V. S. Myasnikov, eds, Istorija Rossijskoj Duhovnoj Missii v Kitaje [The History of The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China. Collection of Articles. ], (Moscow: St. Vladimir Brotherhood Press, 1997), 376-382.

work on Orthodoxy is a widely read book, not only by Chinese scholars but also among Russian scholars,<sup>[15]</sup> indicating the high academic level of this work.

One of the main problems in justifying such statements as: “aggressive policy of the Russian Empire” or “mission was only a tool of Czarist Russia aggressive policy” is that at the very beginning the Chinese authors provide these statements without providing adequate proof;<sup>[16]</sup> certainly, every particular historical claim does not necessarily indicate that missionaries came to China for that reason, or that they did nothing related to missionary work.<sup>[17]</sup> Such an interpretation of the Ecclesiastical Mission in China is close to interpretations given in atheistic literature during Soviet times, where the Mission was viewed as “a military-political agency of the tsarist government” and missionaries were “accused of supporting the colonial expansion and ideological aggression of the Russian tsarism.” This kind of statements are viewed by the Russian scholars, Bogoliubov and Samoylov, as not objective and biased.<sup>[18]</sup>

Certainly, this kind of statements made by various Chinese and Russian scholars raise several questions: Why and how could a government use the Church as a means of “aggressive policies”? If a government intends to invade a country it may not need to study the history, culture, and philosophy of this country (and that is exactly what the Russian missionaries and sinologists did in China).<sup>[19]</sup> If the Russian imperial government used the conflict in Albazin in 1685 as an excuse to bring Orthodox faith to China, and by that

[15] Zhang Fan, *Interpretacija Pravoslavlja v sovremenom Kitaje kitajskim religiovedenjem*, [Interpretation of the Orthodox Church in the Modern Chinese Religious Studies] (Zansbaikal State University, PhD dissertation, 2015), 9. I would rather doubt this statement, because I've never met any reference to this book in works by Russian scholars. Even if certain Russian scholars read this book, I assume they do it just to know how Yue Feng interprets the history of the Orthodox Church.

[16] For instance, Yue Feng states that mission became a kind of “spiritual weapon”, See: 乐峰 Yue Feng, 《东方基督教探索》 *Dongfang jidujiao tansuo* [The study of the Eastern Christianity], (北京 Beijing: 宗教文化出版社 *zongjiao wenhua chubanshe* [China Religious Culture Publisher], 2008), 414. despite the fact, that missionaries were not active in spreading Orthodox faith and from 1685 till 1900 the amount of Orthodox Christians in Beijing has reached only 450 members. See: V. G. Dacyšen, *Istorija Rossijskoj duhovnoj missii v Kitae* [History of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], (Hong Kong: Orthodox Brotherhood of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 2010), 261. When the eighth mission arrived (1794) only 10 Orthodox Christians were not descendants of Albazinitians. See: A. A. Volokhova, ‘Rossijskaja dukhovanaja missija v Kitae v XVIII v.: ocenka amerikanskogo istorika’ [Russian Ecclesiastical mission in China during the XVIII c.: opinion of the American scholar], in M. N. Bogoliubov ed., *Pravoslavije na Daljnem Vostoke* [Orthodox Church in the Far East], (Saint Petersburg: Andreev i Sinivja, 1993), 28.

[17] Similar statements were used by Xiao Jingyu in his article about the Orthodox Church in five Middle East countries. See: 萧净宇 Xiao Jingyu, “俄罗斯东正教在中亚五国” *Eluosi Dongzhengjiao zai Zhongya wuguo* [Russian Orthodox Church in five countries in the Central Asia], in 《俄罗斯研究》 *Eluosi yanjiu* [Russian Studies], No. 6, Dec., (上海 Shanghai: 华东师范大学 *Huadong shifan daxue* [East China Normal University] 2009), 132-143.

[18] M. N. Bogoliubov, N. A. Samoylov, Forewords to M. N. Bogoliubov ed., *Pravoslavie na Daljnem Vostoke* [Orthodox Church in the Far East] Nr. 4 (Saint Petersburg: Izdatelstvo Sankt-Peterburgskogo universiteta, 2004), 4.

[19] Some would argue that this was exactly what was needed to invade the foreign country successfully, but it is a simplification of a problem. In each certain case one should analyze actions of each particular missionary and indicate what kind of role he played in a particular conflict. For instance, archimandrite Pallady (Kafarov, 1817-1878), while being involved into diplomatic discussions between the Russian Empire and Qing Empire, condemned aggressive attitude and actions of the Russian admiral Y. V. Putyatin (1803-1883) towards the Qing government while signing a trade agreement with China at Tianjin (1858), and believed that Russians should give the Qing government an advice about how they should resist to the British army during the Second Opium War (1856-1860). See: A. M. Kulikov, *Kitaevedcheskaja I diplomateskaja dejatel'nost' arhimandrita Palladija (Kafarova)* [Archimandrite Pallady (Kafarov's) involvement into Sinology and Diplomacy], (Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, PhD dissertation, 2016), 242-245. Certain religious leaders might be more or less politically engaged, but it's a choice of each particular man.

means to occupy China,<sup>[20]</sup> why did the Qing government supported the mission and allowed the Russian Ecclesiastical mission to enter China in 1715? Why did the mission repeatedly have little financial support from the Russian government?<sup>[21]</sup> Why did the Ecclesiastical mission continue to exist after 1861, when the Russian Imperial Diplomatic mission was established? Moreover, Metropolitan Innokenty Figurovsky, the head of 18<sup>th</sup> mission (1897-1931), was in conflict with Russian officials who wanted to abolish the mission, and so Figurovsky was able to save the mission and lead it to its most flourishing period.<sup>[22]</sup> Remarkably for some, this same mission existed even after the USSR was established, and from 1920 to 1945 was administrated by the synod of the Russian Orthodox Church outside of Russia.<sup>[23]</sup>

## 2. “Missionaries Agents the Russian Government”

Missionaries are accused by some scholars of being the agents of the Russian Empire and doing nothing related to a missionary work, and their involvement in diplomatic affairs is usually mentioned as the only reason for the failure<sup>[24]</sup> of the Ecclesiastical mission.<sup>[25]</sup> Indeed some of the missionaries like Archimandrite Gury Karpov, Archimandrite Pallady Kafarov, some of the mission students, like N. K. Vojkov or A. L. Leontjev worked in Lifanyuan or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>[26]</sup> But the question is what is bad in diplomacy? It was official; some mission members were teaching Russian in the school established by Lifanyuan.<sup>[27]</sup> As indicated by Pang this school was founded during the reign of Kangxi between 1707 and 1719 for preparing translators and interpreters for communication with Russia.<sup>[28]</sup> In 1858 Qing government

[20] 肖玉秋 Xiao Yuqiu, “俄国东正教驻北京传教团在华活动的历史评价” Eguo Dongzhengjiao zhu Beijing chuanjiaotuan zaihua huodongde lishi pingjia [Historical evaluation of activity of the Russian Orthodox Beijing Ecclesiastical mission in China], in Nikolaj Adorackij: 《东正教在华两百年史》 Dongzhengjiao zai Hua liangbainian shi [A 200 year History of the Orthodox Church in China], (广州 Guangzhou: 广东人民出版社 Guangdong renmin chubanshe [Guangdong People’s Publishing House], 2007), 295.

[21] V. G. Dacyšen, Istorija Rossijskoj duhovnoj missii v Kitae [History of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], (Hong Kong: Orthodox Brotherhood of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 2010), 209.

[22] V. G. Dacyšen, Mitropolit Innokentij Pekinskij [Metropolitan Innocent of Beijing], (Hong Kong: Orthodox Brotherhood of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 2011), 195-201.

[23] V. G. Dacyšen, Istorija Rossijskoj duhovnoj missii v Kitae [History of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], (Hong Kong: Orthodox Brotherhood of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 2010), 304-360.

[24] 张绥 Zhang Sui, 《东正教和东正教在中国》 Dongzhengjiao he Dongzhengjiao zai Zhongguo [Orthodox Church and Orthodox Church in China], (上海 Shanghai: 学林出版社 Xuelin chubanshe [Xuelin Press], 1986), 241, 242;

[25] I mention 4 main reasons for the failure: 1. Lack of the outstanding missionaries; 2. Lack of interest of the Holy Synod. 3. Bad financial support. 4. Lack of effort in translating catechetical literature. See: A. Dmitrenko, “Translation of Catechetical Literature as Basis for Preaching Christianity in China,” (Rus.) A. A. Rodionov ed., Issues of the Far Eastern Literatures. The 7th Interantional Conference. Vol. 2, (Saint Petersburg, June 29-July 3, 2016), 29-38. Kulikov thinks that mission failure was due to difficulties in preaching Orthodox faith in the unknown cultural environment, as well as due to the fact that missionaries were not prepared enough (were not qualified enough as missionaries). See: A. M. Kulikov, Kitaevvedcheskaja I diplomatičeskaja dejatel’nostj arhimandrita Palladija (Kafarova) [Archimandrite Pallady (Kafarov’s) involvement into Sinology and Diplomacy], (Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, PhD dissertation, 2016), 48.

[26] V. G. Dacyšen, Istorija Rossijskoj duhovnoj missii v Kitae [History of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], (Hong Kong: Orthodox Brotherhood of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 2010), 110.

[27] N. Adoratskij, ‘Istorija Rossijskoj Duhovnoj Missii v Kitaje’ [The History of The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], in S. L. Tikhvinsky, V. S. Myasnikov, eds, Istorija Rossijskoj Duhovnoj Missii v Kitaje [The History of The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China. Collection of Articles.], (Moscow: St. Vladimir Brotherhood Press, 1997), 23.

[28] T. A. Pang, “Nekotorije manchurskije dokumenti o dejatel’nosti pekinskoj duhovnoj missii v XIX veke,” [Some Manchu documents on the Beijing Ecclesiastical mission in XIX century], in M. N. Bigilubov ed., Pravoslavie na Daljnem Vostoke [Orthodox Church in the Far East], (Saint Petersburg: Izdatel’stvo Sankt Peterburgskogo Universiteta, 2004), 26, 27.

officially stated that it will not prosecute Christians and allow spreading Christianity among Chinese people, but even in 1768, when the Roman Catholic Christians were prosecuted, the Orthodox Christians were not prosecuted because they were viewed as descendants of Albazians.<sup>[29]</sup> From the very beginning, missionaries were mainly focusing on ministering to Albazians or previous members of a parish.<sup>[30]</sup> Even Russian sinologists admit that the mission was established in order to respond to religious needs of a small group of Albazians and prepare translators. The Russian Academy of Sciences indicated that missionaries should perform certain academic tasks.<sup>[31]</sup> But this does not allow anyone to view missionaries only as the political agents. Both Russian government and missionaries were interested in building good relationships with Qing government and not to cause any negative attitude of the Qing government towards Orthodoxy (in contrast to the Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries). Xiao Yuqiu mentions that archimandrite Iakinf Bichurin in twelve years of ministry in China has never come to celebrate service in Church (making this an argument to show that the Ecclesiastical mission was not doing any missionary work),<sup>[32]</sup> but he does not mention that this kind of actions were condemned by the Holy Synod. After coming back to Russia Iakinf Bichurin was prosecuted by the Holy Synod, deprived of his title and position as Archimandrite, and was banished to the Valaam Monastery in the status of an ordinary monk. He spent four years in exile in Valaam. Moreover, almost all members of this mission were prosecuted.<sup>[33]</sup> It should be mentioned that the lack of involvement of missionaries in missionary work was criticized by both the Holy Synod and scholars in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Russia.<sup>[34]</sup>

### 3. Orthodox Church and Russian Government

As indicated by Zhang Fan, Chinese scholars analyze Orthodoxy through the analyses of the attitude of the leaders of the Russian government towards Orthodoxy, while in analyses of the Western missionaries Chinese scholars never mention that missionaries acted in accordance with an order of a particular leader of a certain European country.<sup>[35]</sup> In other words, what we can see is that certain Chinese scholars link together Orthodox Church and policy of the Russian government, which is inherently wrong. First of all, Orthodox

[29] V. G. Dacyšen, *Istorija Rossijskoj duhovnoj missii v Kitae* [History of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], (Hong Kong: Orthodox Brotherhood of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 2010), 185, 186; B. G. Aleksandrov, *Bej-guanj; Kratkaja istorija Rossijskoj Duhovnoj Missii v Kitae* [Beiguan: A short history of the Russian Orthodox mission in China], (Moskva; Sankt-Peterburg; Aljans-Arheo, 2006), 46.

[30] V. G. Dacyšen, *Istorija Rossijskoj duhovnoj missii v Kitae* [History of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], (Hong Kong: Orthodox Brotherhood of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 2010), 104, 105; N. Adoratskij, 'Istorija Rossijskoj Duhovnoj Missii v Kitaje' [The History of The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], in S. L. Tikhvinsky, V. S. Myasnikov, eds, *Istorija Rossijskoj Duhovnoj Missii v Kitaje* [The History of The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China. Collection of Articles.], (Moscow; St. Vladimir Brotherhood Press, 1997), 21.

[31] V. S. Myasnikov, "Zametki o Hristianstve v Kitae" [Notes on Christianity in China], *Pravoslavie na Dalnjem Vostoke* [Orthodox Church in the Far East], Vol. 4, (Saint Petersburg; Izdatelstvo Sankt Peterburgskogo Universiteta, 2004), 17.

[32] 肖玉秋 Xiao Yuqiu, "俄国东正教驻北京传教团在华活动的历史评价" *Eguo Dongzhengjiao zhu Beijing chuanjiaotuan zaihua huodongde lishi pingjia* [Historical evaluation of activity of the Russian Orthodox Beijing Ecclesiastical mission in China], in Nikolaj Adorackij: 《东正教在华两百年史》 *Dongzhengjiao zai Hua liangbainian shi* [A 200 year History of the Orthodox Church in China], (广州 Guangzhou: 广东人民出版社 Guangdong renmin chubanshe [Guangdong People's Publishing House], 2007), 302.

[33] V. G. Dacyšen, *Istorija Rossijskoj duhovnoj missii v Kitae* [History of the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], (Hong Kong: Orthodox Brotherhood of Apostles Saints Peter and Paul, 2010), 129.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 91.

[35] Zhang Fan, *Interpretacija Pravoslavija v sovremenom Kitaje kitajskim religiovedenijem*, [Interpretation of the Orthodox Church in the Modern Chinese Religious Studies] (Tzansbaikal State University, PhD dissertation, 2015), 95.

Church existed in different countries under different forms of government: Christianity (as a united church) existed in the Roman Empire when Christians were persecuted, it existed in Byzantine Empire, in the Soviet Union (where it was persecuted by the government), it exists in modern democratic countries as well as non-democratic countries. Orthodox Christianity as a religion neither should be linked to any particular form of government nor to any particular country (in this case, the Russian Empire). If someone is studying political history of the Sino-Russian relationships he should not talk about that only in the context of the history of the Orthodox church in China (because it's not about the Orthodox Church but about Sino-Russian political history). If particular missionaries or students of the mission were involved in diplomacy, then one should indicate the particular role of these members of the mission. If they acted as translators, interpreters, diplomats and teachers of the Russian language why their actions are viewed as a threat to Qing government? As indicated by a Russian scholar and a member of the Ecclesiastical mission N. Adoratsky, missionaries have received information from the Qing government and informed the Russian officials, but all that was known to the Chinese government.<sup>[36]</sup> It is diplomatic matters and there is nothing bad in providing information about the political situation in a particular country.

Moreover, the Orthodox missionaries had good relationships with the Qing government. For instance, in 1844 Qing Emperor Daoguang has even given mission members as a present such important Tibetan classics as Kanjur(甘珠尔) and Tengjur(丹珠尔).<sup>[37]</sup>

## Overall Comment

A very positive aspect in Chinese Religious studies is translations of the Russian religious philosophers (such as S. N. Bulgakov, P. N. Evdokimov, N. A. Berdyaev and others). Many Chinese scholars provide references not only to previous studies done by Chinese scholars but also to Russian authors as well as original resources such as letters, official documents etc. Chinese scholar Zhang Baichun has pointed out that Chinese scholars should focus more on studies of the Orthodox Church per se. He also states that Chinese scholars should be more objective.<sup>[38]</sup> Indeed; quite often scholars are talking about political history and not indicating specifically in what kind of missionary activities they were involved? How much was done in translating service books, the Bible or any other literature?

It should be noted that some scholars<sup>[39]</sup> indicate certain positive aspects of the influence of the

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[36] N. Adoratskij, "Istorija Rossijskoj Duhovnoj Missii v Kitaje" [The History of The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China], in S. L. Tikhvinsky, V. S. Myasnikov, eds, *Istorija Rossijskoj Duhovnoj Missii v Kitaje* [The History of The Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in China. Collection of Articles. ], (Moscow; St. Vladimir Brotherhood Press, 1997), 20.

[37] Avgustin Nikitin, arhimandite, "Sankt-Peterbugskaja Duhovnaja akademija i Rossijskaja Duhovnaja Missija v Pekine: Arhimandrit Gurij Karpov (1814-1882)" [Saint Petersburg Theological Academy and the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Beijing: Archimandrite Gury Karpov (1814-1882)], in ed. M. N. Bogoljubov, *Pravoslavije na Daljnem Vostoke* [Orthodox Church in the Far East] Vol. II, (Saint Petersburg: Andreev i Sinivja, 1993), 40.

[38] 李栋材 Li Dongcai, "首届中国的东正教研究及东正教群"学术研讨会综述" Shoujie "Zhongguode Dongzhengjiao yanjiu ji Dongzhengjiao quanti" xueshuyantaohui zongshu [The Summary of the first conference on The studies of the Chinese Orthodox and Orthodox community], in 《世界宗教研究》Shijie zongjiao yanjiu [Studies of World Religions], April (北京 Beijing: 中国社会科学院 [Chinese Academy of Social Sciences], 2015), 191.

[39] For instance, Yue Feng, Zheng Yongwang.

Orthodox Church (such as literature and education)<sup>[40]</sup> as well as achievements in Sinology. Zheng Yongwang also indicates that mission cannot be viewed only as a “spy ring”.<sup>[41]</sup> It is also very good that Zheng Yongwang at least points out some interpretations or opinions of the Russian scholars on certain problems or events.<sup>[42]</sup>

Nonetheless, despite the fact that Chinese scholars use original documents and works by Russian sinologists (but not all of them) sometimes one can find factual mistakes or misinterpretations. For instance, as it was precisely pointed out by Lomanov,<sup>[43]</sup> it is strange that Yue Feng indicates “fundamental characteristics” of the Orthodox Church by referring to works by K. Marx.<sup>[44]</sup>

Zheng Yongwang indicates that Metropolitan Vladimir of Tashkent has pointed out that Alexander Nevsky has sent missionaries to China during Yuan dynasty. First of all, Zheng Yongwang does not provide a reference to the source where this information comes from;<sup>[45]</sup> secondly, Alexander Nevsky has never sent any missionaries to China.<sup>[46]</sup> 耿旭 Geng Xu states that Russian missionaries have entered North East China region after 1898 together with “Tsarist Russia invasion” and Beijing missionaries after getting legal status together with new missionaries “have seized political and economic information”.<sup>[47]</sup> It would be incorrect to state this, because by that time Orthodox mission already had “a legal status” mentioned by the author and could spread Orthodox faith all over the country, it was not related to any “Russian invasion”, nor missionaries “main responsibility” (as stated by the author) was seizing or getting political information. As it was already mentioned the head of mission archim. Innokenty Figurovsky was in conflict with the Russian officials and it was only due to his effort that mission continued to exist in China.

Such author as Tong Xun 佟洵 states that Tsarist government has strengthened its Religious control in 1721 in order to invade China,<sup>[48]</sup> hence this author is basically stating that the Holy Synod of Russia was

[40] 郑永旺 Zheng Yongwang, 《俄罗斯东正教与黑龙江文化》Eluosi dongzhengjiao yu Heilongjiang wenhua [Russian Orthodox Church and the Heilongjiang culture], (哈尔滨 Harbin: 黑龙江大学出版社 Heilongjiangdaxue chubanshe [Heilongjiang University Publishing House], 2010), 91.

[41] 同上书 Ibid, 第 96 页.

[42] 同上书 Ibid, 第 96 页.

[43] A. V. Lomanov, “Recenzija na knigu professor Jue Fen Dongzhengjiao shi,” [Review of the book by prof. Yue Feng Dongzhengjiao shi] Kitajskij Blagovestnik, Nr. 2, (1999); <http://www.chinese.orthodoxy.ru/russian/kb2/Review.htm>, 2016-11-5.

[44] 乐峰 Yue Feng, 《东正教史》DongzhengjiaoShi [The History of the Orthodox Church], (北京 Beijing: 中国社会科学出版社 Zhongguo sheshui kexue chubanshe [Chinese Social Science Press], 1999), 46, 47.

[45] 郑永旺 Zheng Yongwang, 《俄罗斯东正教与黑龙江文化》Eluosi dongzhengjiao yu Heilongjiang wenhua [Russian Orthodox Church and the Heilongjiang culture], (哈尔滨 Harbin: 黑龙江大学出版社 Heilongjiangdaxue chubanshe [Heilongjiang University Publishing House], 2010), 92.

[46] For instance a Russian historian A. P. Bogdanov in his study “Aleksandr Nevsky” has not indicated it anywhere in the whole book (197 pages). I haven’t read this kind of information in any other study or the life of saint. See: A. P. Bogdanov, Aleksandr Nevsky, (Moskva: Veche, 2009).

[47] 耿旭 Geng Xu, 《近代东正教在我国东北地区的传播及影响》Jindai Dongzhengjiao zai Woguo Dongbeidiqude chuanbo ji yingxiang [Spread and influence of the Orthodoxy in China during the Modern times], (烟台 Yantai: 鲁东大学硕士学位论文 Ludong daxue shuoshi xuewei lunwen [MA dissertation in Ludong University], 2016), II. This sounds even stranger, in the context of the author describing later on that “the Tsar suppressed minorities both politically and economically” and “forced them to become Orthodox Christians”, hence some of them escaped to China, only some of them continued to be the Orthodox Christians thus becoming the first Orthodox to come to China. At the same time, the author also mentions the treaty of Nerchinsk and the first Orthodox Ecclesiastical mission entering Beijing in 1715. Wasn’t that “legal”? See: 同上书 Ibid, 第 9, 10 页.

[48] 佟洵 Tong Xun, “试论东正教在北京的传播” Shilun Dongzhengjiao zai Beijingde chuanbo [On spread of the Orthodox Church in Beijing], in 《北京联合大学学报》Beijing lianhe daxue xuebao [Journal of Beijing Union University], Jun. Vol. 13, No 2. Sum No. 36, (北京 Beijing: 北京联合大学学报编辑部 Beijing lianhe daxue bianjibu [Beijing Union University editorial office], 1999), 9.

created by Peter the Great only because of his kind of ambitions, namely in order to invade China! It is inherently wrong to state that Politico-Religious organ influencing first of all the inner political and religious situation (or something related to domestic policy) was created in order to implement certain political ambitions of the ruler related to the foreign affairs. Otherwise, the author should prove on the basis of documents, that the Holy Synod had been established for the sake of the Russian Ecclesiastical mission in China and the foreign affairs.

These are only some examples of the factual mistakes and misinterpretations that can be found in works by the Chinese scholars. I assume that some interpretations of certain historical events will never be changed (in national historiographies), but it definitely would be an advantage if scholars could introduce a variety of interpretations and provide some comments on them.

**中文题目:**

## **汉语学界对东正教研究的基本取向**

**亚历山大·德米特兰科**,德国海德堡大学中国研究所博士后、2017 从香港城市大学获中国历史学博士、2013 年从台湾云林科技大学获硕士学位、2010 从拉脱维亚大学获人文学学士。

**提要:**在本篇文章,作者介绍中国学者对东正教及其传教活动的解释的基本取向。中国学者的著作有三个主要的论点:1. 东正教因俄罗斯帝国侵略政策来华;2. 传教士是俄国政府的间谍;3. 东正教与俄国政府有密切的关系。作者不仅为这三个论点作出详细的注释,他也为中国学者的著作的优点及缺点作出整体性的评论。

**关键词:**东正教、俄罗斯传教团、汉语学术界、中俄关系