**Reexamine Sino-Vatican Relations:**

**The Triangle Game between Vatican, China, and Taiwan**

Yi-En Tso[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Abstract**

In recent years, several contradictions between the Holy See and China government such as two appointments of Chinese bishops in 2006 and 2011 that prevent China and Vatican from normalizing their bilateral relationship. Beijing considers the right to ordain Chinese Catholic bishops to be an “internal affair” in which Vatican should not interfere. The Holy See feels that the choosing of bishops around the world is a religious matter. Furthermore, pursuing an authentic religious freedom in China is the ultimate goal of Vatican in dealing with Sino-Vatican relationship issues. On the other hand, Taiwan also acts as a critical role in this triangle game. From Vatican’s standpoint, however, breaking diplomatic relation with Taiwan is a cost that she may not be willing to pay.

In this article, I try to analyze this triangle game in political, cultural and historical views. Using the ”Political Entity Approach” and the “Mental Approach” with the review of historical relationship between the Catholic Church and China will help us to have a more comprehensive understanding about the context of Sino-Vatican relationship. Social and historical events like Tunisian Revolution, Falun Gong, and the Tibetan independence movement also deeply affect China government leaders’ opinions in dealing with religious events. It seems that it is not just a question about what cost each actor is willing to pay but a question about how these actors select the optimal strategy to solve the “deadlock” within this triangle game.

Keywords: Sino-Vatican relations, Taiwan, Patriotic Church, Political Entity Approach, Mental Approach, Ideology.

*“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God, the things that are God’s (Mt 22:21)”*

**Introduction**

In November, 2010, the Chinese government ordained several bishops without papal approval and coerced Chinese bishops to attend the ceremonies. After being ordained as bishop of Shantou, Joseph Huang Bingzhang was thrown out of the church. The Vatican insists only the Pope has the right to appoint bishops, but the Chinese government insists that its own religious organization, the Patriotic Association, makes the final decision (Watts 2011). In February, 2011, Pope Benedict XVI ordained five new bishops and reiterated the argument that the Vatican has the authority to name new bishops. Such contradictions are not rare in the history of Sino-Vatican relationship. In 2006, the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) ordained two bishops in its discretion on the 30th of April and the 3rd of May which caused Vatican to express the tremendous protest against it. According to the BBC news report, the Holy See representative in Hong Kong Diocese, Bishop Chen advised Vatican to suspend the conversation with China government due to the private bishop-ordaining event. Bo-Nian Liu, the Vice Chairman of CCPA indicated that the Holy See could deliver the message via Bishops’ Conference of Catholic Church in China (BCCCC) to China and that it was unnecessary to deliver the message via other domestic dioceses and they did not receive any protest against it (BBC 2006a). The announcement made by the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) showed that this act had acquired the uniform acceptance of the ecclesiastics and Catholics in China and called for the respect of Vatican to the decision of Chinese Church with no intervention thereto. Meanwhile, Bishop Chen disclosed that the Holy See had sent a letter to China government indicating that this event was unauthorized by Vatican, forcing the ecclesiastics to accept post, leading to destroying the mood for establishing the diplomatic relation between China and Vatican; consequently, the case should be delayed (BBC 2006b). This dispute was a stun to the effort to replenish the relation between China and Vatican. The right to ordain bishop used to be in Vatican’s hand; however, China decided to retrieve this right and granted it to the CCPA built and supported by China government for execution. This act has been accused as the interference to the internal affairs of Church by Vatican and was suspected to impede the religious autonomy. In 2000, Pope John Paul II canonized several perished priests who had preached in China, which initiated the fierce protest made by the China officials for it was a disgrace to China to canonize those aiding the western imperial invasion. Meanwhile, the news center of the Holy See made the announcement that it would be protested for China government to replace Vatican in holding the canonization ceremony and ordaining bishops[[2]](#footnote-2). Since the issues concerning the canonization and bishop-ordaining failed to attain the effective solution, the relation between China and Vatican also failed to normalize and achieve the target of establishing the diplomatic relation. Accordingly, the expectation of Pope John Paul II to visit China also has been denied time after time. Although the successive Pope Benedict XVI expresses the expectation to normalize the relation between China and Vatican, this issue remains unsettled from the dispute of this event.

**Vatican and China**

1. Historical Background

From the recent historical perspective of the Communist Party of China (CPC), Catholicism attained the right to preach through the imperial weapon compelling Ching Government in imparity treaty. During the 19th and 20th centuries, the missionary and the Church were benefited from the Unequal Treaties between China and the colonial powers (Heyndrickx 2009) However, this phenomenon also creates a clear image to Chinese people that the Church is ally of foreign intruders, not friend to Chinese people. This image deeply affected Chinese people’s attitude and results in the two revenges against the Church, the Boxer Uprising (1900) and the destruction and plundering of the Church during the Cultural Revolution (1965-1975). Atheism of Communist Party addressed that the religion would decline as mankind accepted communism. Under the preceding historical and cultural factors, CPC began to conflict with and fight against Catholic Church in China with the establishment of the political power. In April 1950, En-Lai Zhou, the Prime Minister of PRC, proposed that the CPC religious policy was “We intend to protect the freedom of religion; nevertheless, there are agents from the imperialism in Protestantism and Catholicism all over China with the international background of imperialism. Consequently, we have to protest against the imperialism instead of the religious issue. We claim to insulate the imperialism and it will fail to achieve the aim as the Catholicism in China is under Vatican’s control. The religion in China shall be in charge in the Chinese hands” (Shong 1998).

In November 1950, a Catholic Priest Liang-Zhou Wang in Kuangyuan County, Sichuan Province announced the “Catholic Independent Reform Declaration” claiming the Chinese Catholicism to insulate the imperialism in all dimensions and to build a new church with autonomy, self-growing and self-preaching. Later on, the Catholic Reform Promotion Society was founded in China and CPC Government also announced to expel Antonio Riberi Monsignor to the Holy See in China. Pope Pius XII accordingly pronounced encyclical on Communist and the Church in China ad Apostolorum Principis in 1952 and 1954 as the resistance to the act that CPC attempted to reform and control the Catholic Church. In July 1957, a group comprised of the Chinese Catholic representatives established the Chinese Catholic Brethren Patriotic Association[[3]](#footnote-3) in Beijing. Archbishop Ping in Shenyang Diocese was elected as the first chairman. The object of CCPA was to “consolidate the national Catholic, develop the patriotism, involve in the construction and the patriotic movement of Socialism, protect the world peace and assist the government with the implementation of religious freedom.” Also the resolution was afterward that “we remain the pure religious relation with Vatican without violating national interests and independent esteem and obey Pope in compliance with the dogma and canon; however, the political and economical relation with Vatican shall be cut completely; any of the conspiracy that invades the sovereignty and breaches the just anti-imperialist patriotic movement via religious interference from the Holy See will be accordingly firmly opposed against” (Shong 1998). Since the institution of CCPA, China Catholicism stopped to elect the bishops in their discretion which violated the routine that Vatican held the right thereon. Consequently, Pope Pius XII accused Chinese Church of the illegality of the act which initiated the protest from the China Catholic. Since then, the dispute concerning bishop election right never stops. In the recent years, Vatican has proposed to grant Catholic Church in China the offer of the designate and Vatican made the final decision, but this proposal was rejected immediately by Chinese Church. It was rumored that the Hole See would not oppose against the commission if the designate to be ordained was informed to Vatican by Chinese Church. However, this “unspoken consensus” has been broken with the cases in April and May, 2006.

After the institution of the official-friendly Patriotic Association, the ecclesiastics and Catholic pledging loyalty to the Holy See became undercover forming so-called “Underground Church” and insisting on loyalty to the Holy See[[4]](#footnote-4). Consequently, PRC government began to strive for striking at Underground Church and arrested many ecclesiastics and brethren.[[5]](#footnote-5) Meanwhile, Vatican never admits Underground Church for protecting it in public, but the pertinent congregants are allowed to learn at an abbey under CCPA’s control approved by Vatican to facilitate them to be included in CCPA for the future unification of the both parties afterwards. Also CCPA was reorganized in 1992 and became the common leading institution of Chinese Catholicism in collaboration with Bishops’ Conference of Catholic Church in China (BCCCC). In the memorandum BCCCC added the recognition of Papal supremacy and the clause praying for Pope, making BCCCC the main channel to the external contact for Chinese Catholic Church; meanwhile, CCPA became the main channel to the internal management. CCPA and BCCCC jointly bear duty to “Chinese Catholic Representative Conference”.

Table 1 Comparison between Chinese Catholic Patriotic Church and Underground Church

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Church | Bishop number | Priest number | Distribution area | Abbey | Regular |
| Patriotic Church | 70 bishops ordained by Church. | 1600 | Coastal and inland cities in all provinces. | 24 abbeys and 40 convents. | 950 major regulars, minor regulars and 2150 nuns. |
| Underground Church | 60 bishops (25 ordained by Pope). | 900 | 17 cities and provinces, most in He Bei, Fu Qian, San Si, Wen Zhou, and Tian Sui. | 10 abbeys and 20 convents. | 800 regulars and 1000 nuns. |

Data source: Liu (2001)

2. Attitude of CPC toward Catholicism

As stated in the preceding paragraph, CPC treats Vatican in collaboration with the foreign imperialism and accordingly strives for preventing Vatican power from entering China and assists so-called CCPA and BCCCC to resist against it. Also CPC proposes “Church managed independently” as the principle for developing Catholicism. During the Cultural Revolution from 1965 to 1975, the religious activity was attacked for being deemed as the reaction; till early 1980s, the promotion of reform and openness, CPC started to stress the international communication of religious domain for facilitating the friendly socialization between foreign nations and CPC. Still CPC insisted on the principle “Church managed independently” and ordered the related policy for the international communication.

After Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, CPC realized that the religion has played a key role in East Europe democratization movement and prevented the foreign forces from attaining “peaceful evolvement” via religion, so CPC announced “Some notification for further doing religious work well” and reasserted that ‘it is a vital issue for the religious work with the external openness to resist the interpenetration of the foreign enemy powers through religion. It is an important means to interpenetrate via religion for the foreign enemy powers….. The religious work for this year is to implement the central notification deeply and firmly, to totally and accurately execute religious freedom policy, to maintain the stability and continuity of the policy, to enhance the management of religious affairs, to strengthen the thought and political work for those in religious domain and mass brethren, to consolidate and to broaden the patriotic unification line…”[[6]](#footnote-6). CPC referred the issue concerning Underground Church to the interpenetration of the foreign enemy power (Vatican), so adopted the hard-soft policy: on one hand, the members were drawn to participate in official organizations for grasping; on the other hand, the opposing ones were attacked severely[[7]](#footnote-7). In addition to the expansion to the external communication, CPC held the control right of domestic Catholic Church and adopted the means like severe management for religious activities and enhancement of patriotic education to insure the control.

As for the issue of bishop-ordaining, CCPA and BCCCC announced declarations and regulations to confirm the management principles and system of self-managing Church. The most detailed is “Regulations relating to the Catholic affairs for Bishops’ Conference of Catholic Church in China and Council of Chinese Catholic Affairs”. The objects are:

1. The sacrament carried by the ecclesiastics must be granted by the local authorized bishop or bishop of diocese and be reported to the Council of Catholic Affairs in that province; the ecclesiastics who are overseas or from Hong Kong, Macau or Taiwan for business visiting or visiting relatives have no right to carry out the sacrament.
2. The ecclesiastics granted for the sacrament shall comply with the conventional manners and norm of Chinese Church and shall not alter or simply in one’s discretion.
3. Whenever the election of bishop is demanded in diocese, it must be applied to then acquire the agreement from the local Council of Catholic Affairs in the province (city or autonomous region) involved. The bishop designate is elected via the negotiation of the priests in the diocese and the representatives of the brethren then the election is done…the new bishop shall be informed to BCCCC and the consecration in half a year (Tsao 2000).

It can be seen from the foresaid regulations that Catholic Church in China expels the power of Vatican concerning bishop election and consecration which solicited the disputes hereon between Vatican and PRC.

Table 2 Related policies and laws of religious freedom after 1980

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year (A.D.) | Policies and laws | Related regulations |
| 1982 | Document No 19 issued by People’s Republic of China (PRC) “Basic ideas and policy relating to religious issues in the socialist era” | Implementation of religious policy: restore the closed religious organizations, store and open some religious locations and develop aggressively the international religious interchange. |
| 1982 (5th NPC)1988 (7th NPC)1993 (8th NPC) | The “Constitution” of PRCArticle 36 | Citizens in the People’s Republic of China enjoy the religious freedom.Any national agency, social group or individual cannot enforce citizens to believe or not to believe the religion; the citizens with religion or without religion shall not be discriminated. Nation will protect the normal religious activities; anyone shall not employ the religion to destroy social order, damage civil health and hinder the activities of national educational system. |
| 1991 | Document No 6 issued by PRC “Some notification for further doing religious work well from Central State Council of PRC” | Strongly criticizing: the foreign enemy forces keep using religion as a vital means to promote the ‘peaceful evolvement’ strategy for doing interpenetration and damage…some basic levels appear the religious interference to national administration, jurisdiction and schooling.  |
| 1994 | State Council Order No 144 “PRC Religious Activity Management Regulations Nationally and Internationally” Article 8 | It is inhibited to build any religious organization, to set any religious office, to set any religious location, or to establish any religious college in China. It is inhibited to develop believers among Chinese citizens, to commission religious personnel and engage in any missionary activity. |
| 1994 | State Administration for Religious Affairs of PRC “PRC Religious Activity Management Regulations Nationally and Internationally Implementation Specification” Article 6 | Foreign ecclesiastics invited by the religious social groups in provinces, autonomous regions or cities under central governmental jurisdiction with the religious identity can lecture in the legally registered religious locations. Foreign ecclesiastics invited by the religious social groups in provinces, autonomous regions or cities under central governmental jurisdiction and approved by the provincial governmental religious affairs division with other than the religious identity can lecture in the legally registered religious locations. |
| 1994 | State Council Order No 145 “Religious location management regulations” Article 4 | There shall be management regulations for religious locations; the religious activities engaged in religious locations shall comply with laws and orders…the religious locations shall not be dominated by any foreign organization or individual. |

Data source: Tsao (2000), website of Catholic information

 In addition to the institutional norm such as legal orders and policies, atheism demands the people to refuse involvement in religious affairs and opposes the donation of people to church, making the church decline for failing to achieve the goal of self growing. In fact, most Chinese maintain the traditional ideas of ghosts and gods and the belief system; they are unaltered for the official promotion of atheism thought education. According to the religious belief survey in an elementary school in Ji-lin Province, more than 700 students accepting the survey, 14.5% believe in religious ideas like “heaven and hell”, “God and Allah”; 60% believe in the existence of ghosts, gods and spirits. Divided by age, the students in higher grades indicate higher proportion in believing the foresaid religious ideas (Liu 2001). Based on the statistic data, the number of Chinese Catholic mounted from 4 million in 1982[[8]](#footnote-8) to 8 million in 2000 (Liu 2001).

 At the institutional analysis of the foreign scholars, Tony Lambert (Tso 2003) thought that CPC originated the religious policy from the ideology of Carl Marx, Vladimir Lenin and Mao Ze-Dong and the tradition of Lenin controlling society via party, but CPC granted some religious freedom for the attainment of unification fight; with the social chaos brought by the economical development, many local officials began to stress the education capacity of religion, so they tolerated the development of religion. For in need of the assistance from the religious groups in social welfare domain, CPC is expected to loosen the control of religious groups in the future. Nevertheless, Pitman Potter (Tso 2003) proposed that CPC obtained the loyalty of the religious groups and the followers with the partial religious freedom; this trade-off behavior represented the weakening of the government, so the religious policy had to restrain itself to avoid the followers turning underground affecting the legality of political power. Potter addressed that the legality would be the key factor that impacted the CPC religious policy, but the effect of the policy is to be observed.

3. Diplomacy Strategies of Vatican

The Holy See maintains diplomatic relations with 177 countries, including its relations of a special nature with the Russian Federation and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Despite the deficiency of the armed force, Vatican still has powerful religious force; consequently, the other nations dare not ignore the communication with it which grants diplomatic power to Vatican. The diplomatic fundamental of Vatican builds on the ethics and just of theology.

It is indicated that the Holy See is passive to the legate/envoy principle. When a nation shows the will to send an envoy to the Holy See, the Holy See will not refuse as long as the nation pertains to a legal government in compliance with international law and will accordingly send a legate to establish the diplomatic relation with the nation involved. In the late Ching Dynasty the Chinese government had the demand for a legate and the Holy See approved it, but it failed for the hindrance of France government (Tsao 2000). In 1943, regardless the protest of the Nanjing Kuoming Government, the Holy See still delivered a bishop in Ji-lin Diocese to serve as the representative in Manchukuo (Chiao 1998). The Holy See will not be restrained by the exchange of legate/envoy, i.e. one or the other will do; one ambassador and the other envoy will do. For example, in 1980, the United Kingdom had an envoy in the Holy See and there was no legate in the United Kingdom. When there is a conflict between a government and the Holy See, the Holy See will not withdraw the legate unless the government orders to expel the legate. For example, Legate Riberi remained in China after 1949 till he was expelled by CPC and left for Taiwan in September 1951. Another special situation is that the legal government is overturned by the foreign force and the envoy will remain the post unless the spontaneous resignation is proposed; otherwise, the Holy See will treat the envoy representing the original government. For example, during the World War II, Poland was dismembered by German and Soviet, but the envoy in the Holy See was remained as the same (Tsao 2000).

The diplomatic demand from the Holy See is to insure the national Catholic liberty. However, CPC identifies Church as a civil group to be controlled completely by the government; Church should serve the country, not foreigners. Besides, CPC identifies Pope as the foreign power and requires the national brethren not to follow the orders from Pope. Consequently, CPC strives for expelling the domestic power of the Holy See via various means after the attainment of the political power; accordingly, the Holy See calls for the joint resistance to CPC for a long-term protest. It makes almost the communist nations have no diplomatic relation with the Holy See.

Still the Holy See maintains the flexibility for diplomatic matter and it is expressed in the so-called Oriental Policy. The Oriental Policy is to compromise with the oriental nations (especially for communist nations) for power expansion in the nations involved in addition to the interest reservation of the Holy See for achieving the close collaboration. Consequently, it results in the contradiction and conflict between “principle” and “convenience” (Tsao 2000). For example, concerning the normalization for the relation with PRC, the members in Underground Church in China express the discontent toward immolating the interests and rights of the underground brethren of the Holy See for improving the relation with PRC (Tsao 2000). Besides, in the *Letter of Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*, the Holy See announced that she leaves the decision to the individual Bishop who, have consulted his presbyterate, to weigh the concrete possibilities of choice and to evaluate the possible consequences within the diocesan community. It could be that the final decision does not obtain the consensus of all the priests and faithful. Still, the Holy See reiterates that the Catholic Church which is in China does not have a mission to change the structure or administration of the State (Radio Vaticana 2009). These statements not only could be viewed as a good will from Vatican to China government but also reflect a fact that although democracy is an important moral orientation for the Roman Catholic Church’s social ethics, but the Holy See’s core value is religious, not political freedom.

During the past decades, China’s diplomatic strategies toward Sino-Vatican relationship are clear that “First, to sever the so-called diplomatic ties with Taiwan and recognize the People’s Republic of China as the sole legitimate government. Second, do not interfere in China’s internal affairs, including in the naming of bishops” (Hou 2011). Thus, the main motivation for the Chinese government to negotiate the revival of Sino-Vatican diplomatic relations is to isolate Taiwan in the international arena by demanding the termination of the Vatican-Taiwan diplomatic relationship (Leung 1998). After the PRC was created in October 1949, both Republic of China (ROC, Taiwan) and PRC governments claimed that they were the only legitimate government of China (the so-called “One China” policy). Hence, the relationship between these two rival governments (the so-called “cross-strait relations”) has become a critical and debated issue in world politics. From the 1980s onward, the ROC government began to talk with the PRC and created several mutual beneficial efforts such as allowing Taiwanese people visit China mainland for tourism and business. When Ma Ying-jeou was elected as the President of ROC in 2008, he started to enhance the cooperation with PRC. Thus, the tension between these rival governments has been reduced over time. Although the cooperation between two governments has been enhanced, however, China government still insists its One China policy as their guidelines in dealing with foreign affairs.

On the other hand, the Holy See’s attitude toward such issue is clear that “The Holy Father… realizes that the normalization of relations with the People’s Republic of China requires time and presupposes the good will of both parties… the Holy See always remains open to negotiations… The Catholic Church seeks no privilege from China and its leaders, but solely to dialogue, in order to build a relationship based upon mutual respect and deeper understanding. Compliance with the legitimate civil authorities is not acceptable when they interfere unduly in matters regarding the faith and discipline of the Church. It is likewise clear that she (the Church) asks the State to guarantee to those same Catholic citizens the full exercise of their faith, with respect for authentic religious freedom” (Radio Vaticana 2009). Pursuing the freedom of religious is still the core value of Vatican’s diplomatic strategy and the bishop appointment power has still acted as the main block of the normalization of Sino-Vatican relationship.

To sum up, the diplomatic property of the Holy See is a means and tool to care for the brethren and to obtain religious freedom; hence, the Holy See will handle the foreign affairs in accordance with the realistic consideration, e.g. the recognition of Manchukuo and the normalization of the relation with PRC. Currently the Holy See engages in the negotiation and communication with PRC via the churches in Hong Kong and Macau. Bishop Chen in Hong Kong Diocese ordained to be Archbishop by the Holy See plays the bridge between CCPA and the Holy See. As for the Holy See, the numerous Catholic brethren are the subject to be endeavored after; the religious freedom in Taiwan relieves the Holy See from worrying the rights of the Taiwanese brethren, so the Holy See transfers the attention to China in need of freedom. Considering the reality and functionality, the current attitude of the Holy See is clear (Tsao 2000; Chiao 1998).

Owing to the foresaid attitude, the rumor that the Holy See will sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan and reestablish diplomatic relations with China comes out during these years. The Foreign Minister of the Holy See –Archbishop Giovanni Lajolo- announced in the interview by the media from Hong Kong in March 2006 that “the Holy See has shown the will to move the embassy from Taipei to Beijing as if in 1952 the embassy was moved from China to Taiwan due to the status” and “time is ripe for reestablishment”. The preceding statements indicate that the Holy See strives for executing the policy to reestablish diplomatic relations with PRC[[9]](#footnote-9). The statements trigger the concerns of the persons in political and Catholic domains in Taiwan. Therefore, the Holy See initiates to pacify Taiwan. The former Foreign Minister of the Holy See –Archbishop Jean-Louis Tauran- visited Taiwan in November 2005 stated in the public speech that the rumor that the Holy See would sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan was to garble a statement and the Holy See appreciated the religious liberty in Taiwan (FJ News 2005). President Chen attended the funeral of Pope John Paul II in April 2005 which was deemed as the substantial expression of the Holy See to maintain the diplomatic relations with Taiwan (e-Government 2005). Viewing from this event, the Holy See on one hand improves the relations with PRC and on the other hand pacifies Taiwan for maintaining the friendly collaborative relations.

4. China-Vatican Interaction after the Chinese Economic Reform

 From late 1970’s, as the Chinese economy had started to pick up and to grow faster, China government figured out that it should promote not only its economic growth but also improve the opinion that other countries had about it. Thus, the coordination with the Holy See is something that would make the relations with the rest of the world easier and would help its intent of showing to the world China’s new face (Carletti 2005).

In 1982, PRC announced “Basic Ideas and Policy Relating to Religious Issues in the Socialist Era” (Ye 2001) indicating that the international reaction power, especially the imperialist religious power, including the churches of the Holy See and Christianity, endeavored after diverse opportunities in interpenetration for returning to China. The policy was to develop the international friendly religious communication aggressively and to insist on the prevention against the interpenetration of the enemy power from foreign religion. The preceding statement was the basic ground held by PRC in the reform and openness period toward the reinitiating the communications between China and Vatican. Actually CCPA pronounced to welcome the replenishment with the Holy See. The chronicle of the interaction between China and Vatican is collated in Table 3

Table 3 Chronicle of interaction between China and Vatican (1979-)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Year (A.D.) | Actor  | Content |
| 1979 | CCPA, BCCCC | Announcement that welcoming the reestablishment of diplomatic relations with the Holy See was made, but the independence and patriotism of Catholic Church in China must be recognized and the order issued by the Holy See in 1957 that turned against communism must be amended.  |
| 1981 | Vatican, the Secretary of State Casaroli and Yi-Ming Dun | Announcement that the Holy See had intention to discuss the issue of reestablishment of diplomatic relations with China was made; then Yi-Ming Dun was ordained as Archbishop in Guangzhou Diocese soliciting the protest of PRC.  |
| 1982 | Chinese government | The promulgation of Document 19 and the passage of Article 36 of the revised Constitution that guaranteed the freedom of religious belief to all citizens of PRC. |
| 1982 | Pope John Paul II | He called for the pray for the Catholic Disaster in China and thought that the brethren in China went through the days in Rome Empire and requested to make 21st of March the Day of Pray for Chinese Catholic Disaster. |
| 1986 | Bang-Yo Hu, Secretary General of PRC | He addressed that the hindrance of the normalization of China-Vatican relations was Taiwan issue.  |
| 1991 | Pope John Paul II | He ordained former Bishop Gong in Shanghai Diocese as Cardinal Gong and lead to the protest of PRC. PRC declared that the act of the Holy See intervened in the internal politics; PRC was willing to improve the relations with the Holy See, but the Holy See must sever the relations with Taiwan and identify PRC Government.[[10]](#footnote-10) |
| 1993 | Winner of Nobel Prize in Peace,Mother Sister of Calcutta | She visited China and expected the nuns affiliated to her to preach in China and develop China-Vatican relations. |
| 1994 | Holy See | It addressed that “PRC Religious Activity Management Regulations Nationally and Internationally” announced by State Council of PRC increased a new hindrance to the mutual communications. |
| 1995 | CCPA | It delivered the representative team to the Philippines for participating in the Papal Mass of the International Youth Day. |
| 1995February | Pope John Paul II | He stated to the brethren in China that they were not the true Catholic unless they accepted the principle of unification with Pope in Manila radio station. Afterwards, 8 bishops in Underground Church sent a letter jointly to demonstrate the loyalty to Pope.  |
| 1995June | CCPA | 3 priests affiliated to CCPA offered sacrifice with Pope in Belgium for enhancing the interaction. |
| 1995November | Holy See  | She stressed that the principle for the Holy See to establish diplomatic relations was that the nation involved had the religious freedom and freedom to preach, but PRC still restrained the people’s freedom to believe and to preach; consequently, there was no space for diplomatic relations between China and Vatican.  |
| 1997 | State Council of PRC | *The White Paper Freedom of Religious Belief in China* accused that the Holy See intervened in the internal affairs in China and quoted the recognition of Manchukuo prior to WWII as the evidence.  |
| 1998 | Holy See  | She pronounced to promote 23 bishops and archbishop as cardinals, but 2 of whom remained untold. It was suspected that at least one was a bishop in China.  |
| 2000 | Pope John Paul II | He canonized 120 martyrs in China soliciting the discontent of PRC. The PRC government launched a vitriolic attack the Holy See. |
| 2006March | Holy See and Bishop Chen | She pronounced to promote Archbishop Chen in Hong Kong Diocese as Cardinal Chen; Chen stated that Vatican might compromise to the bishop-ordaining issue for eliminating the biggest obstacle of establishment of diplomatic relations. |
| 2006AprilMay | CCPA | It ordained 2 bishops prior to informing the Holy See initiating the discontent of the Holy See; it might make the mutual relations backwards.  |
| 2006June | Holy See and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of PRC | Cardinal Chen verified that a secret representative team was discussing the matters relating to establishment of diplomatic relations with Ministry of the Foreign Affairs of PRC in Beijing and indicated that PRC would stop ordaining any bishop without informing the Holy See afterwards.  |
| 2009 May | Pope Benedict XVI | Announced the *Letter of the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People’s Republic of China*. |
| 2010November | CCPA | Rev. Joseph Guo Jincai was ordained by CCPA without papal approval. The Vatican said the ordination would have “painful repercussions” for Rev. Guo. |
| 2011July | Pope Benedict XVI | He ordained five bishops, includes a Chinese bishop who comes from Hongkong and insisted that only the Holy See can ordain bishops. |

Data source: BBC (2010b), Brown (2007), Catholic information website (2009), Chu (2006), Chiao (1998), Liu (2001), Maheu (2005), Shong (1998), and The Observer (2011)

According to the listed data, the biggest obstacle of China-Vatican relations exists in bishop-ordaining and right to canonize. Besides, the restrictions made by PRC to the foreign churches and ecclesiastics disappoint the Holy See about the religious freedom, which also forms another obstacle of the road to establish diplomatic relations. Nonetheless, the Holy See keeps improving the current relation with PRC and PRC relieves some good intentions. There is a light to the relations between chin and Vatican. What can be affirmed is that the mutual relations will not develop and progress much by the time the true agreement for bishop-ordaining and preaching issues has been made. Also the resolution to underground churches is a big test to relation improvement.

**Dimensions for Analyzing Sino-Vatican Relation**

1. Political Entity Approach

In this article, Vatican is seen as a sovereign despite Vatican differs from the common sovereign familiar to us due to the specific historical and cultural factors (Vatican owns no armed force and the internal security is maintained by the Swiss guards recruited; the so-called citizens are all ecclesiastics serving the Holy See many of whom reside in Italy.). Owing to the constitution components like land, sovereignty and people and the recognition of the corporate status in international law by many other nations, this article identifies Vatican is the same as the other sovereigns such as USA or PRC. In this section, the international relation theory “political entity approach” is employed as a path to analyze China-Vatican relation.

 In compliance with the views of Yu-Shan Wu et al., the mutual power comparison will produce a severe condition to the policy option of the smaller nation and hereby result in the significant impact on the mutual interaction if there is a huge dispute between the nations with the uneven power heights. The political entity approach proposes two fundamental prerequisites: the uneven power and the sovereignty request from the big nation to the small nation (Wu 1997; Tang 2000)[[11]](#footnote-11). Completely imitating the China-Vatican relation, the comparison of the comprehensive national powers of China and Vatican matches the definition of the big nation and small nation. Still Vatican owns the powerful religious spiritual power despite the deficiency of the comprehensive national power. The impact of Pope on the global Catholic will not be inferior to any powerful leader in the world; moreover, at the spiritual perspective, the Holy See shows no deference to China. However, the revision of the two preceding prerequisites need be proposed, i.e. the “sovereignty request” from China (big nation) to Vatican (small nation) hereon refers to “bishop-ordaining and right to canonize”. Actually PRC identifies the request demanded by Vatican as a challenge to the sovereignty; thence, it fits the definition of this theory.

Wu (1997) proposes that the small nation can only either protest against or follow the sovereignty request as the big nation proposes such a request to the small nation. Tang (2000) argues that the small nation will choose to follow the big nation via comparing the interests involved in addition to the support form a strong third nation after the collation of the historical cases. As for this case, the foreign aid for the small nation is the Catholic worldwide and the power from Underground Church in China. It is difficult to judge the strength of the powers available straightly. After all, the spiritual power is sometimes huge in the international political stage (e.g. the terrorists with faithful belief) and sometimes nullified (e.g. Underground Church can hardly impact the government under the severe suppression of PRC). The Vatican is seen to be sacrificing its moral principles for the sake of political gain. The Vatican could, of course, justify the possible diplomatic shift of emphasis away from Taiwan towards the mainland for the greater good of the Universal Church, while, at the same time, such a shift would not diminish pastoral care for the faithful in Taiwan (Chan 1989).

In order to solve the problem, Vatican compromised to China behaviorally and China attempted to make a concession accordingly. This declined the face-off mood. In 1970’s, Vatican tried to improve its relations with China by downgrading its diplomatic representation in Taipei, however, this move not only failed to win Beijing’s favor but also hurt the feelings of Taipei (Chan 1989). If Vatican break off its diplomatic relations with Taiwan, it will not only signal the diplomatic failure of Taiwan but also several Catholic countries may follow the Holy See’s step to cut off their diplomatic relationships with Taiwan as well. With less diplomatic relationships Taiwan has, the less chips the Taiwan government will have in this international politics game.

As the big nation declines the sovereignty request, the small nation will hereby respond to the other party in a moderate manner, i.e. following instead of protesting against. According to the history, the probability to obtain peace is high.

1. Mental Approach: Resistance between Nationalism and Theology

The analysis approach proposed in the preceding paragraph is based on the judgment of the rationality of the leaders of both nations. In this section, the mental approach to be discussed involves the alteration of the rationality in human nature. The discussion starts at the nationalist perspective and inquires the conflict between PRC anti-imperialist claim and Vatican’s theology. As a result, the cognition and decision making of the leaders of both nations will impact on the continuous development a lot.

 CPC historically proposed that the Catholic development linked closely to the invasion of the imperialism. The Holy See meanwhile condemned the communist atheism and the oppression to religious freedom and requested the Catholic worldwide to fight against the communist domination. Therefore, at the time when the communist nations rose, the communist nations severed the diplomatic relations with the Holy See; China also instituted the independent Catholic Church organization (i.e. CCPA) with the CPC encouragement. China detached from the jurisdiction of the Holy See and became the specific case like Albania. In accordance with the official statement, PRC identifies that Catholic Church had been in line with the enemy of Chinese since Opium War, e.g. recognition of Manchukuo, opposing against the Catholic to fight against the Japanese invaders, or supporting Nanjing Kuoming Government to fight against CPC in domestic war. Also the Holy See boycotted PRC by all means even after the establishment of the political power, making Catholic Church in China in the semi-colonized status as if in late Ching Dynasty on the contrary to the independence. Hence, PRC decided to expel all power affiliated to the Holy See and promoted the patriotic education aggressively for educating the ecclesiastics with patriotic affection and identifying communist leadership. PRC fought against the Holy See through the patriotic ecclesiastics and expected to lead Chinese religion to the right way (Ren 2003).

 From the ideological view, Marxism, still operated under the belief that religion was socially backward and doomed to eventual extinction (Maheu 2005). Although the idea that religion was the opium of the people was no longer popular, nonetheless, Chinese leaders still insist their perspective that all religions in China still had to operate under Party rules in order to eliminate the possible negative impacts on citizens from religions.

 Chinese government could not tolerate a foreign leader acts as a spiritual leader of part of Chinese people’s living. There is only one political and spiritual leader in China, unless the leader is totally followed the central government’s will and demand. That is why Chinese government insists to hold the authority to choose the successors of two spiritual and political leaders in Tibet, Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama. Such religious leaders may become the potential threats to Chinese government’s ruling. The near complete destruction of Falun Gong by mainland authorities is a vivid demonstration of the party’s inability to tolerate a mass movement, particularly if it is perceived as a threatening political opposition (Brown 2007). The happenings concerning the fall of communist governments in the USSR and other East European countries strengthened in the Chinese government the mistrust not only towards religion, only seen as a non-destabilization factor to the Chinese society in the case of having its activities extremely limited (Carletti 2005). The Tunisian Revolution, occurred in December, 2010, also warns Chinese leaders the possible damage caused from mass civil resistance. In Chinese history, we may find out several similar riots caused by religious leaders, like the Yellow Turban Rebellion[[12]](#footnote-12) and Taiping Rebellion[[13]](#footnote-13). The religious crackdown in Tibet in 1996, and the Muslim riots in Xinjiang in 1998 and 2010, blamed on those who sought to break Xinjiang away from China, such as the Eastern Turkistan Organization based in Turkey, have confirmed that religious problems in the views of China’s leaders are associated with national security (Leung 1998).

Due to the discrepancy of the religious freedom, the Holy See used to hold the negative views toward CPC and CPC identifies the unfriendliness shown by the Holy See resulted from the imperialist invasion status. For example, Pope John Paul II was clear about what he thought of Communism. In his book, *Memory and Identity, Personal Reflections*, he linked Communism to “ideologies of evil” (Maheu 2005). The request on the internal religious freedom and right to ordain ecclesiastics is the interference to the interior affairs. In addition, the Holy See felt disappointed at the efforts done by PRC for improving the missionary environment. Besides, it made the PRC government hard to control the ecclesiastics and the society and impacted negatively on the domination stability. After the incident that the Holy See canonized the Chinese martyrs, that some of the canonized were deemed as the helpers of the imperialist invasion impressed PRC that the Holy See collaborated with the imperialism. In order to repair the wound caused by historical events, the Holy See has made many efforts. For instance, Pope John Paul II had apologized for the mistakes made by some missionaries in the past during their evangelization efforts. He took every opportunity to talk to China and the Church in China (Maheu 2005).

When Vatican announced the progress of canonization of Paul, Xu Guangqi and Mateo Ricci has been started, this announcement was viewed as a signal to show its good will to Chinese government. Both Xu and Ricci were the founding figures of the Jesuit China Mission, as it existed in the 17th-18th centuries. They not only introduced Catholics to Chinese people but also successfully gained the trust and help from Chinese Emperor. This success has changed the history of Catholic Church in China. The importance of this canonization is that Mateo Ricci is a priest who has highly appreciation of Chinese culture. With his fluent Chinese speaking, he worked hard to link Catholic faith with Chinese culture. He did not explain the Catholic faith as something foreign or new, instead, he said that the Chinese culture and people always believed in God, and that Christianity is simply the most perfect manifestation of their faith. Thus the Chinese Lord of Heaven is identical with God. He supported Chinese traditions by agreeing with the veneration of the dead (Wikipedia 2011a). He worked with Xu to translate the Confucian classics into Latin and introduced this Chinese dominant thought to Western world. Both Ricci and Xu’s efforts are critical in promoting Catholic in China. Thus, the meaning of the canonization not only falls on praising their efforts but also to manifest the importance of mutual respect and toleration. Ricci’s abundant understanding about Chinese traditional culture helps him to gain support from Chinese Emperor and bureaucrats. His hard working also promotes the cultural exchange between China and Western countries. The canonization reflects the value of cooperation and mutual tolerance. There may have a hint that the Holy See is willing to negotiate with China government based on mutual trust and tolerance. And these are the points that help to resolve the present deadlock and mistrust between China and the Holy See. We may wait and see to what extent could this canonization have impact upon the Sino-Vatican relationship in the coming future.

1. Historical and Cultural analysis

Several scholars try to analyze the complex Sino-Vatican relationship with a historical context. Brown (2007) argues that “Catholic missionary work ambled on during the seventeenth century, but soon after the turn of the eighteenth century, the struggle to spread Catholicism in China fell on disastrous times with the eruption of a test of wills between Pope Clement XI and Emperor Kangxi over honoring Confucian practices, which evolved into what the emperor viewed as a challenge by the Pope, a foreign power, to his authority over Chinese rites. Kangxi’s edict banning Christianity in 1724 cast Catholicism as a heterodox practice, and began a long siege for Catholic missionaries”. Similar to this argument, Heyndrickx (2009) asserts that “Confrontation instead of dialogue now grew both inside the Church and between the Church and China as a culture and civil society. This tragic confrontational development, caused Emperor Kangxi to withdraw his Edict of Tolerance — castigating Catholic faith officially as “foreign” and “not fit for China”. They ascribe Emperor Kangxi’s banning Christianity as an important action which blocked the missionary work in China. However, in fact, Emperor Kangxi did not execute the ban seriously. Instead, it is his successor, Emperor Yongzheng strictly banned all the missionary works in China. He forced most of missionaries leave China to Macao, only few of them were allowed to stay in Beijing as technical officials served for the Emperor. This action not only results from the contradictions between the doctrine of Catholicism and traditional Chinese culture but also comes from an important political issue: a few Jesuits were accused to be involved in the dispute of Emperor succession occurred in late Kangxi era. It is obviously that these Jesuits did not stand with Yongzheng so the young Emperor decided to revenge on these foreigners. This affair reflects all the leaders’ deeply nightmare that the foreigners intervene in political conflicts. This historical event may answer why Pope Benedict XVI has to assert that the Catholic Church does not have a mission to change the structure or administration of the State (Radio Vaticana 2009).

 After reviewing Chinese history, Carletti (2005) asserts that “Chinese people have a tendency to “making everything Chinese”… China has always been a country that considered itself the center of the world. Its strong cultural identity has always led China to assimilate local cultures that it has been in contact with for commercial or religious motives”. He takes Chinese Buddhism and Marxism as examples to show how Chinese people adapted these foreign thought to Chinese culture. From this point, Carletti believes that Chinese government tends to cut off the linkage between Chinese Catholic Church and the Holy See. The traditional evangelization methods would not take Chinese customs and traditions into account, besides forcing them to adopt certain western cultural elements that did not belong to the essence of Christian faith is the major reason which cause contradictions between Chinese leaders and the Church (Carletti 2005).

However, it does not mean that the Vatican did not make efforts to solve this problem. Matteo Ricci’s efforts to present Christianity in harmony with Chinese traditional values are the critical points to his success in China. In recent years, the Holy See has reiterated her respect to Chinese culture and people could be seen as trying to eliminate the negative affects result from cultural differences. Besides, “making everything Chinese” just reflects the value of “when in Rome, do as Romans do”. Following the local customs and traditions is the key to help a foreign religion accepted by local people easily. In China, it is all about politics (Carletti 2005). The reason of why Chinese government insists its control over Chinese bishops and churches falls on its political interests. Based on the historical experiences and Marxism ideology, the CPC has to maintain its fully control over the society. Any religious leaders who do not belong to CPC may become potential threats to the Party. In order to assure the ruling class’ benefits, it is necessary to hold the appointment power of bishops.

1. The perspective

What will be the future of Catholic Church in China? Both uncritical optimism and unmitigated pessimism camps offer its own perspectives. David Aikman, in his book *Jesus in Beijing*, is convinced that religion is already having a significant impact in politics, education and economics (Maheu 2005). He extrapolates that within 30 years, China could become the largest Christian nation ever in the entire history of Christianity. This shift in mentality and ideology would be nothing short of a genuine revolution of such major proportions that a new Christianity would emerge and Christianity would be changed forever. On the contrary, other scholars, like Gianni Criveller, argue that there is very little in the way of any new openness and change exists in matters of politics and religions. Since the communist led government so far has failed to eradicate religion, religion must be tolerated as part of the present reality. This toleration is a political expediency and does not change the long term goal expressed in various ways in the speeches of Ye Xiaowen, the director of the State Administration of Religious Affairs (SARA) “to eliminate the impact of religion in China”. Furthermore, there are already signs indicating that the present leadership under Hu Jintao is ready to crackdown on any dissent including religion (Maheu 2005). This argument could be supported by Chinese leaders’ actions and basic attitudes toward several religious affairs such as Tibet and Falun Gong. In order to well implement Hu’s political program, the “Harmonious Society”, the Chinese government will make any efforts to maintain the social stability thus the ruling of CCP would be assured. How to deal with Sino-Vatican relationship and well control Chinese Catholic Churches has become a critical issue both in China’s foreign and internal policies. Although the number of followers is still increasing, however, Chinese leaders still view maintaining the social and political stability as their core value of governance. From this point, Chinese government will keep its control power over domestic religious affairs and the “deadlock” between the Holy See and China may still exist as the major barrier which impairs the Sino-Vatican relationship.

If China government still insists that the Holy See has to break off its diplomatic relationship with Taiwan, from some scholars’ view, the Vatican may follow some alternative ways of maintaining its religious relations with Taiwan (Chan 1989). For example, in the “Olympic formula” both the Chinese Olympic committee and the Taiwanese Olympic committee are members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). They both enjoy the same rights and status. However, with the gradually relax in the cross-strait relationship in the present years, whether the Chinese government will insist its demand that the Holy See must cut off its relationship with Taiwan may leave a matter for future consideration. With the increase of cooperation between Taiwan and China, the diplomatic fighting may be decreased[[14]](#footnote-14). When Taiwan no longer acts as China’s opponent in global politics, the religious freedom will become the most critical issue within the Sino-Vatican relationship.

**Conclusion**

PRC government holds the control right concerning the domestic Catholic affairs via CCPA and BCCCC and excludes the power from the Holy See through self-ordaining bishop, self-managing church and self-educating ecclesiastics then educates a group of ecclesiastics with patriotism and supporting communist leadership in order to impact on the political behaviors of the Catholic. However, PRC is confronted with the dilemma. On one hand, it seeks the target to normalize the relations with Vatican; on the other hand, it is worried about the consequence that it will bring a troublemaker –the Holy See- in China affecting the Catholic obedience to the official power and lowering the national control over the religious affairs. Notwithstanding the dual influences of education and policy, PRC failed to eliminate private religious belief resulting from the human nature longing for spiritual dependence. Chinese government also needs to promote its modernization image by enhancing its relationship with the Holy See. Therefore, with strengthening the mutual interaction for improving the ready-to-fight relations, it is believed that the official will adopt more friendly propaganda act to the Holy See and conciliate the conflict between the nationalism and the theology[[15]](#footnote-15).

As for Vatican, the numerous brethren in China are the subjects to be served and strived for; nevertheless, it is a major hindrance to solve the issues arising from Underground Church on the way to normalization. At the same time, the Holy See will keep her concerns over her loyal brethren in Taiwan. Even if the Vatican has to cut off diplomatic relationship with Taiwan, however, there are some alternative ways such as the “Olympic Formula” which could be used to make a balance between Taiwan and China. Still, as the tension between Taiwan and China has been reduced in recent years, it is possible that the Holy See will negotiate with Taiwan and China government to make a consensus to solve the problem. In spit of the problems left unsolved, the two sovereignties will move toward the reconciliation in the future and obtain the utmost mutual interest at the international relation analysis approaches. Although the line between Caesar’s and God’s things may not clear, however, when Caesar tries to find the delegate of God, numerous problems will occur.

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1. Yi-En Tso is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Public Administration at the University of North Texas, Denton, Texas. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Here is the announcement of the Holy See: (1) it is a severe damage to Church consensus and orders to consecrate a bishop without the approval of apostolic delegate; (2) this act involves the Church charter; the code says that it will punish the bishop whoever consecrates and is consecrated; (3) bishop against the Saint Peter’s successor (i.e. Pope) will hinder the relation improvement between the Holy See and the People’s Republic of China and the life of Church in China; (4) this status makes people amaze at the announcement of Chinese Government Leader. Recently the members from China Government mentioned the will to converse with the Holy See. Honestly, the consecrating and the consecrated will be punished by Church Law (Tsao 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It was renamed as Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) in 1962 and two Articles were added in memorandum: “under the leadership of CPC and People’s Government” and “complying with the national policy and orders.” [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In comparison of these two “churches”, Sister Betty Ann Maheu (2005) has an argument as the following: “For most Americans, the simplistic approach to this situation goes something like this: The open church is a patriotic church loyal to the government, and not in communion with the Holy Father or the Universal Church. The underground church, on the other hand, is the loyal church in communion with the Holy See and the Universal Church. This is far from the reality of the situation… There is only one Catholic Church in China. Pope John Paul II was always so careful about speaking of the Church in China as one. China does not have a patriotic Catholic Church. There is a Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, which is a political organization set up by the Party to monitor and direct the activities of the open church. The Chinese Patriotic Association is not an organization unite to the Catholic Church. The terms “open” and “underground” are not accurate descriptions of the reality of the Church in China. Churches are either registered or unregistered”. From this point, the Holy See denies the validity and authority of CCPA as the representative of Catholic Churches in China. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Despite the PRC constitution notes that the people own the religious freedom, PRC implements the dichotomy policy on Catholic Church. Those that do not join the official organizations (e.g. CCPA and BCCCC) will be deemed as the illegal underground organizations and will be banned in accordance with the related rules. In September 2004, Pastor Tsai leading six family churches was arrested for illegal operation and was sentenced three years in November 2005; CPC Public Security said it to be the “most severe foreign religious interpenetration case”, see Ya (2005). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. More information about CPC’s arguments toward such issue, see “Enhance the Catholic work under new pattern”, Catholic information, <http://www.cathlinks.org> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The official attitude is: “the distinctive policy shall be adopted for the underground priests and bishops. For those who are willing to accept the leadership from CPC and Government and demonstrate the patriotism and legality, it can be accepted to manage an independent church and the religious identity can be recognized for those with religious attainments via the evaluation of local Catholic patriotic group and the approval of BCCCC. For those who insist on the enemy position and engage in the protest activity, abetment and damage to the societal order, the crime proof shall be held and revealed and punished by law”. *Ibid*. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Including the Christian [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. “Normalization of China-Vatican Relations: Who Holds the Ball?” from Washington Observer. In the article, the view of Richard Madsen was quoted: “in 1999 China and Vatican were about to reestablish diplomatic relations. At that time, Vatican expressed that the diplomatic relations with Taiwan was possible to be immolated. In recent 7-8 years, Vatican’s legate in Taipei is unequipped with the highest diplomatic legate status, i.e. Papal Nunico equal to bishop or archbishop of the Holy See. The diplomatic level between Taiwan and Vatican is less particular than before. The low attitude of the Holy See is to prepare for the severance of diplomatic relations with Taiwan”. It was taken as the fundamental attitude of the Holy See toward the diplomatic relation issue. Also refer to “Foreign Minister of the Holy See talks about the future of China-Vatican reestablishing diplomatic relations” (website of China Bridge [2005).](http://www.hsstudyc.org.hk/chinesehsscweb/Webpage/Tripod/T141/T141_C04.htm)  [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. According to the Holy See, this commission was made in 1979 as Bishop Gong was in prison which was kept in confidence. The overseas Catholic journal revealed this news in advance. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. The part of political entity refers to the definition and the discourses of Yu-Shan Wu and Shin-Wei Tang. Tang addressed that the comparison standard complied with the comprehensive national power. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. It is a peasant revolt that broke out in 184 CE in China during the reign of Emperor Ling of the Han Dynasty. The rebellion, which got its name from the color of the scarves that the rebels wore on their heads, marked an important point in the history of Taoism due to the rebels' association with secret Taoist societies (Wikipedia 2011b). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. It is a widespread civil war in southern China from 1850 to 1864, led by heterodox Christian convert Hong Xiuquan, who, having received visions, maintained that he was the younger brother of Jesus Christ, against the ruling Manchu-led Qing Dynasty. About 20 million people died, mainly civilians, in one of the deadliest military conflicts in history (Wikipedia 2011c). [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. When Ma Ying-jeou was elected as the President of Republic of China (Taiwan) in 2008, he announced that the diplomacy policy will be changed to the so called “viable diplomacy” which refers to take a pragmatic approach to break through the impasses that have dogged Taiwan’s foreign relations, and to replace confrontation with dialogue in a manner that respects the principles of dignity, autonomy, pragmatism, and flexibility (Office of the President 2011). Besides, Ma has abandoned the hostility cross-strait policy, instead, he is trying to create more opportunities to cooperate with China. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Although Brown (2007) holds the opposite opinion, she concludes that there is no indication that Chinese officials will yield on this issue. But I prefer to hold an optimistic view, with the increasing interactions with the Holy See, Chinese leaders will have a more elastic attitude toward this issue. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)