

# Catholic Missionaries on China's Qinling Shu Roads: Including an account of the Hanzhong Mission at Guluba

David L B Jupp

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**Abstract:** The background to this document is found in the history of China's Shu Roads that passed through the Qinling and Ba Mountains for many years. The roads have linked the northern and southern parts of western China since the earliest records and probably before. In all that time, the common description of the Shu roads was that they were "hard". In the Yuan, Ming and Qing periods when China was open and accessible, foreign travellers visited the Shu Roads and some left accounts of their travels. Among the early travellers were Catholic Missionaries who moved into the west of China to spread Christianity. This document first outlines the historical environment of the open periods and then identifies various events and Catholic Priests who seem to have travelled the Shu Roads or have left descriptions that are of interest today. The main focus of this document is on the recorded experiences of Missionaries mostly from the Jesuit, Franciscan and Vincentian orders of the Catholic Church of Rome who travelled to the Hanzhong Basin. The main items include: Marco Polo's (*circa* 1290) account of travels in China which many Priests who arrived later had read to find out about China; Jesuit Fr. Étienne Faber's travels to Hanzhong in 1635; Jesuit Fr. Martino Martini's description of Plank Roads in his Atlas of China in 1655; Franciscan Fr. Basilio Brollo's travels through the Qinling in 1701 and his letters describing the road; Franciscan Fr. Jean Basset's travels through Hanzhong to Chengdu in 1703; and Vincentian Abbé Armand David's travels to Hanzhong in 1873. After the Opium Wars (after 1860) there were many accounts by secular and religious travellers who used Shu Roads. Among these later travellers of importance was the Abbé Armand David CM who was a naturalist missionary as well as traveller. In addition to accounts by travellers, the document includes an outline of the founding and development of the Franciscan mission at Guluba in Chenggu County. Guluba had been the site of a Christian Church since Fr. Étienne Faber visited Hanzhong before 1700. In 1888 Guluba was expanded into a walled settlement by Italian missionaries who remained there for over 50 years. During the time that Guluba was an active mission, China changed from Qing to Min, fell into civil unrest and banditry, was torn apart by warlords, invaded by Japan and endured Civil War until the founding of the PRC in 1949. In the same period, the Shu Roads continued to provide the only means for north-south communication across the Qinling Mountains and were still "hard" until a new motor highway was completed in 1941. The Shu Roads of northern Sichuan are only briefly mentioned in this document and will be presented in more detail separately.

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## Introduction

The geography, geology, climate, history and culture of China’s west are all influenced – possibly determined, by the east-west striking ranges of the Qinling Mountains to the north of the Hanzhong basin and the equally fierce mountains (often called the Ba Mountains) to the south. These structures separate the Wei valley, which drains into the Yellow River, from the Sichuan Basin which drains into the Yangtze. The Han River flows through the Hanzhong basin which lies between the other two areas and moves on into Hubei to meet the Yangtze at Wuhan. However, despite the hard conditions and mountainous terrains that needed to be overcome, the north-south communications between the capitals at Xi’an and Chengdu have been served by the important trade and transport routes that were cut through these mountains for all of China’s recorded history. The general name for the roads and tracks has been the “Shu Roads” as they went between the ancient kingdoms of “Qin” in the north and “Shu” and “Ba” in the south. The most persistent impression left on people who travelled these roads was that they were “hard”. The Tang poet Li Bai famously wrote “The road to Shu is hard, harder than ascending to heaven”.

This document concerns some of the western travellers who experienced the Shu Roads. In particular, it looks at the recorded experiences of various Catholic missionaries who travelled to China’s west and Hanzhong and developed Christian communities in these areas. Catholic missions have a long history of involvement in China and especially in China’s outer regions. Their history can be looked at as having three main periods of active involvement by foreign priests. These periods occurred in the Yuan, Ming and Qing reigns. During the times when China was open to the foreign Priests, they played out their role in the long history of the Shu Roads and in the wider history of western travellers on China’s roads. This document

identifies some of these Priests and describes their travels on Shu Roads. Much of the material accessed for this study can explain itself better than the present writer. The document therefore makes extensive use of extracts from various sources and translates those that were not originally in English<sup>1</sup>.

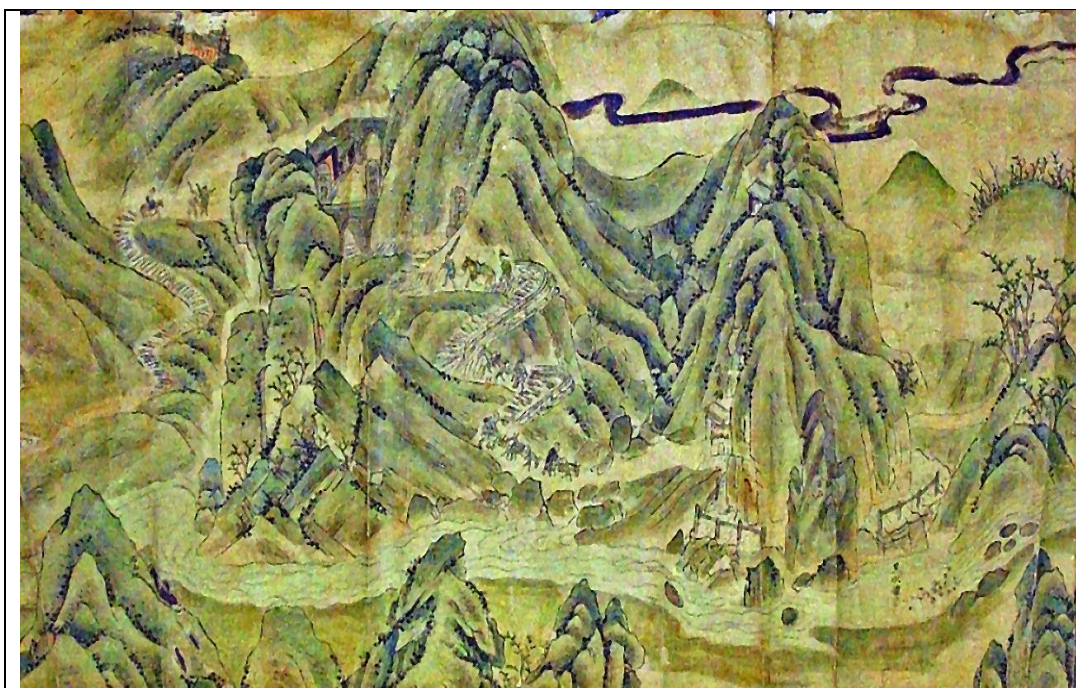


Figure 1 Dang Juyi's 1667 pictorial map of the Lianyun Road crossing the Qipan Pass through Jitou (Chicken Head) Pass to Baocheng at the entrance to the Hanzhong Plain.

For more of the background on Shu Roads, which are taken as “given” in this document, there are some options available. One is a brief introduction by the present writer that is available on the Qinling Plank Roads to Shu web site [HERE](#) (Jupp, 2010; PDF File). It is under the item “[Shu Roads Introduction](#)” that can be selected from the web site main page. To go further, it is also useful to read the paper by Alexander Wylie who travelled from Chendu to Hanzhong in 1868 (Wylie, 1870) along the “Gold Oxen” Road which can be found [HERE](#). Joseph Needham’s series “Science and Civilisation in China” covers the Shu Roads from an engineering as well as cultural perspective in Needham et al. (1971) and provides a number of useful English language references for further reading. Joseph Needham personally travelled the Shu Roads in 1943 just after the first motor road was opened. The most comprehensive English language description of the Shu Roads and their geography, history and extent was provided by Herold Weins in his Thesis of 1949 and in a paper of the same year (Weins, 1949a,b). In recent years, [Hope Justman](#) (Justman, 2007) has written a very interesting book about Shu Roads and everything you may need to know to visit them! If you wish some inspiration from Chinese literary history (although it is not quite “history”) you should read the famous novel “Romance of the Three Kingdoms” (Luo, 1360 Translated by Moss Roberts, 1994) which exists in a number of English translations. Certainly, the “Three Kingdoms” and Shu Roads are inextricably linked in Chinese minds and perhaps understanding the one is needed to truly understand the other.

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<sup>1</sup> See End Note [1] for a description and discussion of the translation process used for this draft.

# Catholic Missions to Shaanxi and Sichuan

## *Early Missions to Cathay*

The history of western visitors to China, including missionaries, reflects the history of China and whether access to China by land or sea was open or closed. The Silk Road was a major corridor between West and East but it was often closed or dangerous to travel due to war and social disruption. Buddhism came to China from India *via* the Silk Road in the first millennium of the Common Era, and Nestorian Christians (see Endnote [2]) apparently arrived as well. In the Tang Period, Chang'an became a major centre for international trade and cultural interchange. But the first period of interaction that caught the imagination of Europeans was the opening of the Silk Road in the Yuan period following the Mongol conquest of Asia. Sir Henry Yule, writing in 1866 (Yule, 1866) claimed this was a period spanning the 13 and 14<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE when China was known in the west as "Cathay". He also claims that the name came from that of the "Khitans" (Qidan, 契丹) or Liao people who battled Jin and Song until Mongols conquered them all.

According to Yule (1866), the first travellers of this time were Franciscan monks such as John of Piano Carpini (1182-1251) and William Ruysbroek in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. They were followed by the Polo brothers and their young brother Marco Polo (c. 1254-1324, Marco Polo, 马可波罗) whose book "The Book of Marco Polo" (Yule and Cordier, 1903) inspired so many in following centuries. His admirers included people we shall meet later in regard to Shu Roads such as Martino Martini, Alexander Wylie and Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen. The Polo Brothers returned to Italy in 1295 and were followed to China by more Franciscan monks, such as John of Montecorvino (1256-1328) and Friar Odoric of Pordenone in the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. At the time, the Franciscan brotherhood had patronage of the Great Khan and their missions flourished. But following the fall of the Mongol Dynasty at the end of the 14<sup>th</sup> Century, the land routes to China closed again to the west until the sea routes opened and Portuguese and Spanish ships arrived on the China coast carrying Jesuit missionaries in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear from Marco Polo's book (Yule and Cordier, 1903) that he or someone whose experiences he collected (Chen Dezhi, 1886; de Rachewiltz, 2004), travelled the hard road to Shu. Marco Polo describes travelling from Dadu (Beijing) on the Great Road (main postal road) to Xi'an, then across the Qinling Mountains from Baoji to the Hanzhong basin and on through the mountains of Sichuan to Chengdu. The narrative continues with his travel to Mianma and back and the geography seems to be quite sound and impossible to have been invented. Marco Polo makes no mention of Plank Roads but he does head his chapter describing the way across the Qinling as (translation by Yule and Cordier, 1903) "Concerning the Province of Cuncun [Hanzhong], which is right wearisome to travel through". The road to Shu was also hard for Marco Polo!

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<sup>2</sup> For a brief outline of the various Catholic Orders and the essential background for this document to the Catholic Church to which they belonged see Endnote [4].

## ***Return of Catholic Missions during the Ming and Qing***

During the Yuan period, Catholicism came to China in a similar way as had Buddhism 1000 years before (Zürcher, 1970). Catholic priests also arrived along the Silk Road and sought patronage of the rulers and aristocrats as the way to establish a presence in China. The patronage of the Emperor and the Mongol court was only maintained by the advantage a ruler might see in a new religion. But such patronage can disappear as quickly as it can arise and when Catholic missions returned to China in the late Ming and Qing periods there was no evidence of Catholic Christian communities that had started during the first entry into Cathay<sup>3</sup>.

The second and third main periods of China being open to foreign Priests followed advances in sea-faring and navigation that enabled Europeans to travel to the Americas and around Africa into the eastern seas to trade and to colonise. The first to arrive by ship on the south China coast were Portuguese in the 16th century and later Dutch, Spanish, English and French. Americans and others also arrived in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. Initially, trade and foreign contacts were allowed only through Canton (广州, present day Guangzhou) and the original concession to the Portuguese at Macao (澳门, Aomen). Between 1582 and 1705, the Portuguese Society of Jesus<sup>4</sup> mission overcame restrictions to journey to Beijing and into China's west and also introduced many western ideas to China, including western cartography. This started at the beginning of the 17th Century through the efforts of members of the Portuguese Jesuit mission led by an Italian missionary Mateo Ricci (SJ, 1552-1610, Li Madou, 利玛窦)<sup>5</sup>.

Ricci and others developed maps of the world in presentations aimed to inform Chinese about the new geography of the world and the relative placing of eastern and western peoples. But a primary aim was also to develop better maps of China, which was still an unknown place. Jesuits continued to follow a similar path to that taken by Buddhist Monks in that they sought the patronage of the Emperor and court, although their success with the aristocracy was less than that had by Buddhists (Zürcher, 1970) in the first millennium. As happened after the Yuan, as Ming gave way to Qing the fortunes of the Jesuits were variable and often difficult until the young Kangxi Emperor came to the throne. He saw benefits in their knowledge and initially encouraged their activities and reinstated their patronage - then later lost patience with the demands of their governing council in Rome. But before that occurred, in a time of uncertainty and danger between 1625 and 1665 as Qing replaced Ming, the Jesuit Father Martino Martini (SJ, 1614-1661, Wèi Kuāngguó, 卫匡国) returned to Europe bearing the fruits of Jesuit geographic and cartographic studies of China to date. He published a set of maps of China by Province in 1655 through the offices of the famous European cartographer Johannes Bleau. Martini's maps and associated descriptions of China's geography were collected in a book written in Latin named "Novus Atlas Sinensis" or "The New Atlas of China" (Martini, 1655). It became the

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<sup>3</sup> The Nestorian Stele (Endnote [2]) is evidence of an even earlier arrival of Christianity but (like the Catholic entry) seems to have had no followers remaining in the Ming Period.

<sup>4</sup> Members of the Catholic Society of Jesus, referred to in the following text as Jesuits. See End Notes [4] and [5].

<sup>5</sup> Where possible, first reference to priests provides information as (affiliation, years of life, Chinese name in pinyin, Chinese name in characters). Abbreviations are listed in End Note [5].

base for knowledge of China in Europe until later updates occurred following the development of the Kangxi secret maps (Yan et al., 1998).

## The Martini Maps

The Martini maps of 1655 included provincial geographic details that were comprehensive and detailed. However, since longitude could not be determined accurately, there is unavoidable distortion in the maps. Martini used material for his maps that was collected through his own experience and travel, as well as information provided by other foreigners and Chinese sources.

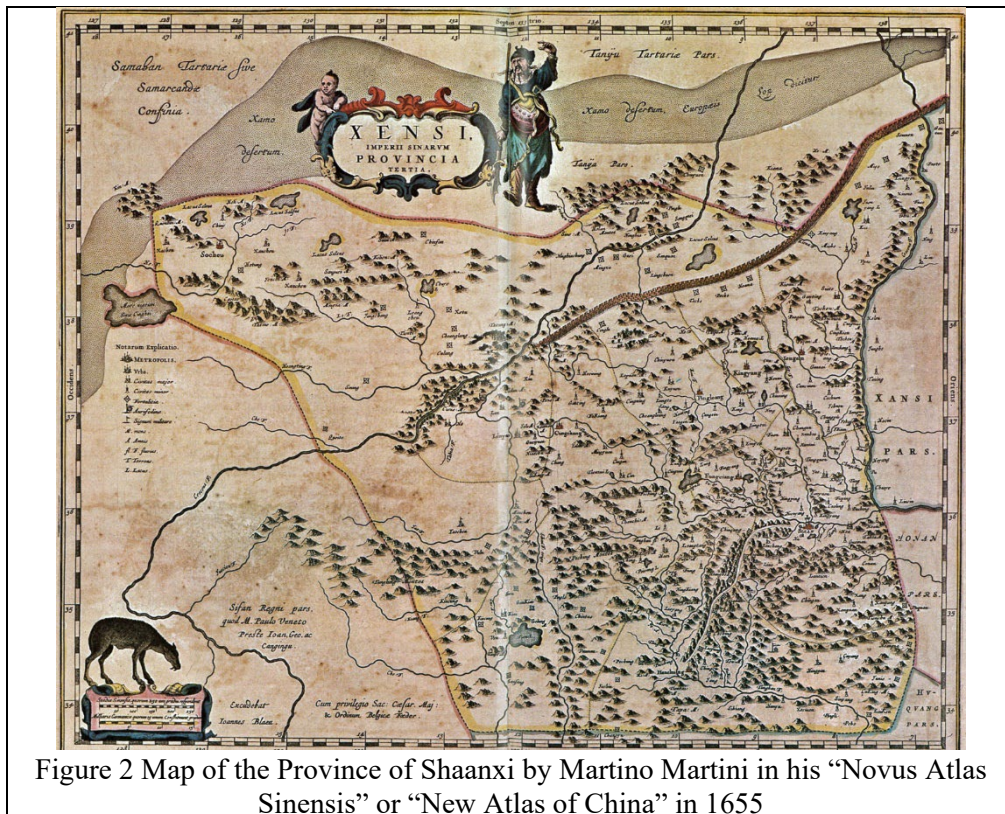


Figure 2 Map of the Province of Shaanxi by Martino Martini in his “Novus Atlas Sinensis” or “New Atlas of China” in 1655

The south east quadrant of the map of Shensi (Shaanxi) province in Figure 2 contains a remarkable depiction of the Northern Plank Road across the Qinling from Baoji to Baocheng. Its form and location may have been influenced by Marco Polo’s descriptions as Martini greatly admired Marco Polo’s book. While longitude distortions are to be expected, there are other major geographical errors present in this map. The upper catchment of the Yellow River is confused with rivers that drain into the Yangtze through Sichuan and the upper reaches of the Jialing River are shown draining into the Han River. The name “Jialing” is wrongly attached to one of these tributaries of the Han. The north-south strike of the terrain containing the Shu Road from the Wei River to Hanzhong is incorrect as the Qinling has a strong east-west strike and rivers cut steep gorges across that strike to provide north-south access. But it was still to be some years before these were corrected in western maps.

The Latin provincial description for Shaanxi provided by Martini includes a detailed description of the plank roads in a section outlining general information about

Hanzhong Fu and its counties. Under the column heading “Amazing Mountain Bridges” he wrote:

*“The city [of Hanzhong] is large and populous and is surrounded by mountains and forests creating natural bulwarks and making it secure. It is famous for its martial history and is especially important among Chinese for the famous heroes who have lived there. Among these is Zhang Liang, known for the amazing works that will be described here. Some say there is nothing else like his works in the world or, indeed, the Universe. Because of the roughness of the high mountain terrain and the deep valleys, the road between Hanzhong and the Metropolis of Xianyang (the Capital of China in the Qin Period) was winding and steep, and almost without any useable path so that at one time people were forced to go first toward the east through Henan Province and then journey towards the north, so that when the other end was reached almost eight hundred miles had been travelled. When Han Xin and Liu Bang combined to oppose Xiang Yu for the Empire, Liu Bang’s wise and faithful guide Zhang Liang found a new way for the retreating army to pass through the rough mountains and valleys. He built an extraordinary road with incredible speed, based on the labour of over one hundred thousand men. He ordered his army to labour and make the route accessible, and had them place platforms on the sides of the steep valleys.*

*It seemed like the platforms were lifted up to heaven. They rose towards the sky from the deep, with cliff holes to admit wooden beams. Planks were laid out on top to form a path from mountain to mountain, like cliff and mountain bridges, resting on beams placed in the holes sculpted out of the rock. These have formed a permanent pathway able to be used when the floods come down from the mountains. The cliff paths join up with others and where the valleys are too broad they have added supporting pillars to span them. The pillars of such bridges cover about one third of the journey. At times they are so high and the bottom is so deep that one can hardly dare to look into the gulf without horror. The width of the road is such that four horses can walk abreast. This road is still intact, preserved and restored for the benefit of those who make use of it. And for that reason at certain distances there are to be found inns and taverns. The route sometimes has rails to reduce the danger of falling from a bridge. Cladding has been added in places on both sides of the platform, using rails of wood or iron to create galleries. The road finishes about thirty miles north and west from Hanzhong and the complete pathway of bridges is called China’s Sky Road (Lianyun Road?).”*

While it is not certain whether an original first-hand description comes from a western traveller or from Chinese sources, it is known that at least one Jesuit missionary (Fr.<sup>6</sup> Étienne Faber) had reached the Hanzhong Basin from Xi’an (most likely along the same route as Marco Polo as shown in detail on the map in Figure 3) by the time Fr. Martino Martini left for Europe and published his maps. Fr. Faber’s story is included in the next section. It is possible he communicated with Fr. Martino Martini or wrote and sent a description of the journey to his Brother Jesuits at some time between 1635 and 1651 when Martini left China for Europe.

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<sup>6</sup> Fr. is an abbreviation for Latin “Frater” or French “Frère” meaning “Brother”. It is a common reference to a member of a Catholic religious order or “Brotherhood” and used here in this way. For a discussion of titles and religious abbreviations used in this document see Endnote [5].

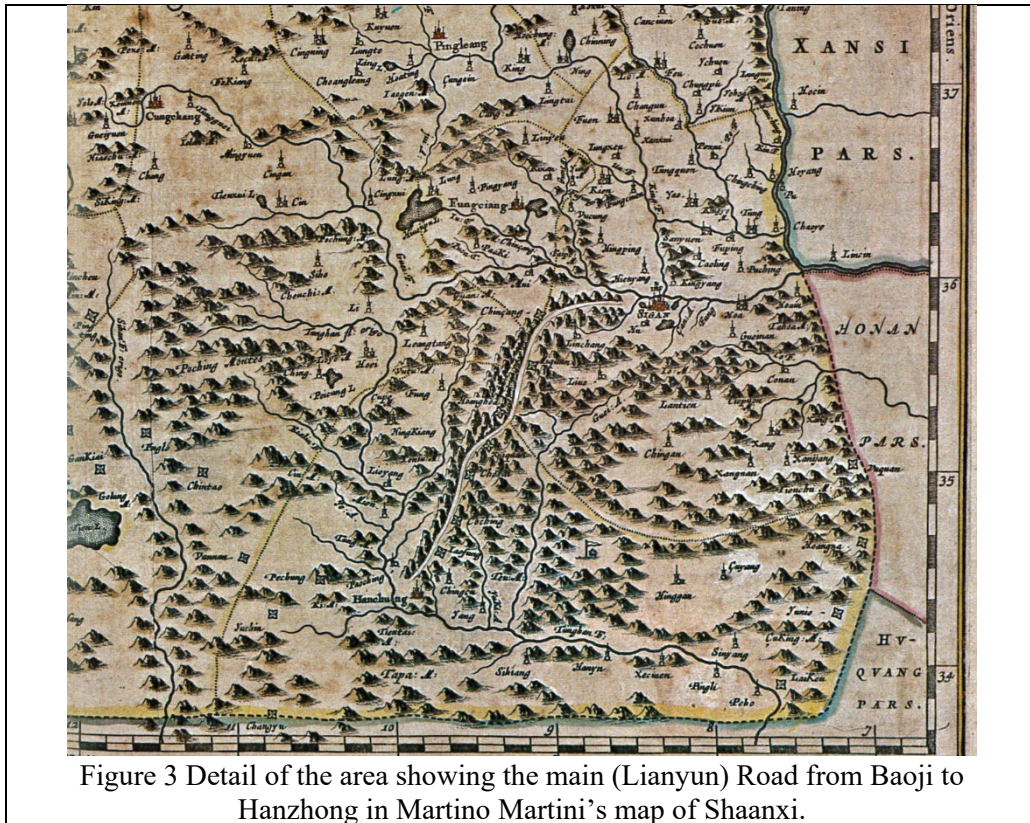


Figure 3 Detail of the area showing the main (Lianyun) Road from Baoji to Hanzhong in Martino Martini's map of Shaanxi.

Some later Jesuit writers seem to have repeated Martini's original description with little change. In his well-known "China Illustrata" (Kircher, 1667), Athanasius Kircher (SJ, 1602-1680), who never travelled to China, included a great deal of material obtained directly from Martino Martini, a former pupil of his, and includes the section on the Lianyun Road in Latin almost without change. In the later compendium of information about China collected by Fr. Jean-Baptiste du Halde (SJ, 1674-1743) (du Halde, 1732), du Halde also included much of the above information as provided by Martini, but in French.

In Volume 4:3 of the classic series "Science & Civilisation in China" (Needham *et al.*, 1971), the French Jesuit Louis-Daniel Le Comte (SJ, 1655-1728, Li Ming 李明) is quoted as writing (Le Compte, 1696):

*"The Road from Si-ngan-fou (Xi'an) to Hamtchoum (Hanzhong) is one of the strangest [most wonderful]<sup>7</sup> pieces of work in the world. They say, for I myself have not seen it, that upon the side of some Mountains which are perpendicular and have no shelving they have fixed large beams into them, upon the which beams they have made a sort of Balcony without rails [suspended gallery], which reaches thro' several Mountains in that fashion; those that are not used to these sort of Galleries, travel over them in a great deal of pain, afraid of some accident or other. But the people of the place are very hazardous; they have Mules used to these sort of Roads, which travel with as little fear or concern over these steep and hideous precipices as they would do in the best or plainest Heath [best roads in the world]."*

<sup>7</sup> Suggestions in [square brackets] indicate possible alternatives for the original French text that had been translated into this English version in 1697.



In the English translation above that was quoted by Joseph Needham, the text continues: “*I have in other places exposed myself very much by following too rashly my Guides.*” Louis Le Comte was an intrepid Jesuit missionary and traveller in China between 1688 and 1691 with much to report, but his book is probably better known for its role in the “Chinese Rites Controversy” than its geography. The description provided above by Le Comte is much more “processed” and (correctly) detailed than that repeated by du Halde from Martini and suggests that Le Comte, despite his disclaimer that “I myself have not seen it”, was in possession of additional first hand information about this road. Later, we will see that Le Comte also had much to say about Fr. Faber’s mission to Hanzhong, which he had also found out about during his time in Shaanxi.

Justman (2007) believes these are all just variations on Martini’s original description and this is still possible. But there remains the unanswered question of whether or not Martini based his original description on that of a western person who directly experienced the Gallery roads between Xi’an and Hanzhong? The degree of wonder expressed in Martini’s description suggests the traveller was a western person and, if not Martini himself, then perhaps it was Fr. Étienne Faber.

### ***Early Jesuit and Franciscan missions to Hanzhong***

The Jesuit mission to Shaanxi started quite soon after the Nestorian Stele (see Endnote [2]) was (conveniently) unearthed at Zhouzhi near Xi’an in 1625. At that time, a Shaanxi scholar official Wang Zhi (王徵), who was interested in Christianity, asked for a Jesuit mission to be sent to Shaanxi and also for them to investigate the Nestorian Stele which included languages Chinese could not read. A French Jesuit Fr. Nicolas Trigault (SJ, 1577-1628, Jin Nige, 金尼阁) went to Xi’an to investigate the stele and start work in the west of China. A number of well known Jesuits also spent time in this new region of Shaanxi (mainly based in Xi’an) after it had been established. They included the German astronomer Johann Adam Schall von Bell (SJ, 1592-1666, Tang Ruowang, 汤若望). Of special significance to the western experiences of Shu Roads was the arrival of the French Jesuit Fr. Étienne Faber (SJ, 1568-1659; Italian name Stefano Le Fevre, Fang Dewang, 方德望). In 1635, Fr. Faber went to Hanzhong to establish the first mission to southern Shaanxi. He travelled through the Qinling Mountains from Xi’an, almost certainly along the Lianyun Road, to arrive in Hanzhong, but at this time the present writer has not seen a personal record of his journey. Martino Martini left for Rome in 1651 allowing plenty of time for him to be appraised of Fr. Faber’s experiences. But such communications have also not yet been found.

In the Hanzhong area, Fr. Faber spent most time in Hanzhong, Chengu and Yangxian, building the first Church in the region at the village of Xiaozhai Cun (小寨村) which is close to Fengjiaying Cun (酆家营村), both in the present township area of Dongjiaying (董家营乡) in Chenggu County. Fr. Faber became associated with a number of miraculous events, such as driving off a locust plague and controlling floods. In his book about the Jesuit Mission to China published in 1696, Louis Le Comte recounted the stories he had heard in China of the miraculous events associated with Fr. Faber. His description is included here as Endnote [3] and makes

interesting comparison with the account by Fr. Armand David 200 years later. Fr. Faber passed away in 1659 and his tomb became a temple visited by local Chinese, Christian or not. His tomb near the village of Fengjiaying, with Stele intact, was active and popular until modern times (at least until 1948) and will be discussed separately later. Le Comte (1696) implies that the Jesuit mission in Hanzhong lapsed after Fr. Faber had deceased but other sources suggest that a number of Chinese were trained overseas and later became local priests who could carry on the mission when times got harder and foreign Priests less welcome.

By the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Franciscan missionaries were also moving along Shu roads from Xi'an to the Hanzhong Basin, often replacing the previous Jesuit missions. This pattern is consistent with the story of Fr. Basilio Brollo da Gemona<sup>8</sup> (OFM, 1648-1704, Ye Zunxiao, 葉尊孝) of the Franciscan Mission, as taken from the “Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani” (1972) and translated from Italian as follows:

*“Fr. Basilio Brollo (1648-1703) was the first Vicar Apostolic of Shaanxi. In November 1698 in Nanjing, Fr. Basilio Brollo received the brief of Innocent XII, dated 20 October 1696, appointing him the first vicar of the province of Shaanxi (陝西). At the time, this mission also included Shanxi, Gansu, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang. However, because of lack of funds and his not being able to find a companion for the journey, he had to postpone the departure. This delay enabled him to work on a new and larger version of his Latin-Chinese dictionary, this time ordered according to the pronunciation of the characters. On June 25 1700, he departed from Nanjing with Mons. Bernardino Della Chiesa, who had been appointed Bishop of Beijing.*

*On July 25 they arrived in Tianjin to await the arrival of a Brother who was to accompany Brollo on the trip. During the waiting period, he conducted a visit to Beijing, where he became involved in a dispute with Portuguese Jesuits of the city, who wanted to continue to exercise control over all missionaries working in China. The Brothers opposed the claim of the Portuguese to exclude French missionaries from China. On April 11, 1701 he departed from Tianjin with Fr. Antonio Laghi de Castrocaro (ie from Castrocaro in Italy), and they travelled to Xi'an together. When they arrived in Xi'an on 2<sup>nd</sup> of March they were greeted by the only missionary in the city, a Portuguese Jesuit. When the Jesuit was shortly after recalled to Beijing, the two Italian Franciscans were left to take care of the faithful throughout the vast region. In letters written during this period, the Brother gave interesting news of his travels and the status of the mission, which he described as deplorable. During the visits he made to the Catholic communities scattered in remote locations, he went to Hanzhong (then called Nanzheng), in the western extremity of the province. In 1703 the journey was finally completed by the men, but the fatigue which Fr. Brollo had undergone had undermined his health. He died on July 16, 1704 in Sanyuan, where he had travelled with Fr. Laghi.”*

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<sup>8</sup> The word following “da” or “de” (which means “of”) in the names indicates where the Priest came from. So, here the Priest is Fr. Basilio Brollo of (or from) Genoma in Italy.

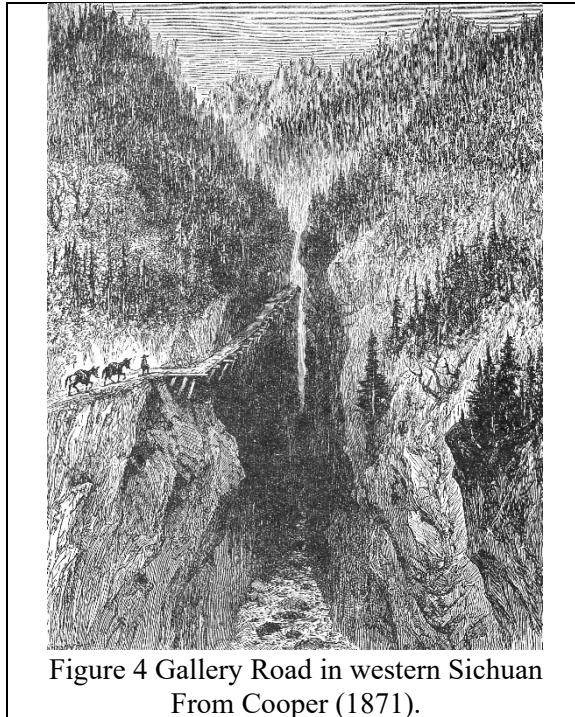


Figure 4 Gallery Road in western Sichuan  
From Cooper (1871).

The roads to Shu were certainly very hard for Fr. Basilio Brollo and his health was ruined by the hard conditions of the journeys. But he left important information about the roads and the conditions he found on them in letters written at the time. More biographical information and copies of his letters are to be found in the “Sinica Franciscana” (Wyngaert, 1961). Volume 6 Part 2, Section 3 of these records is dedicated to Fr. Brollo. The introduction in Latin describes his time in Hanzhong in general terms as follows:

*“At the end of Oct. 1701 Brollo, together with his companion Antonius, began the very difficult journey to Hanchung-fu, which is accurately described in his letters. After 13 days, including 7 days crossing the Mountains, they arrived safe in this city. In this large district, he found 2,500 Christians, albeit with some being unworthy of the name, who were scattered through the mountains and the valleys. The faithful, who were generally poorer people and suffering from great ignorance, were distributed in three mission centres near the river Han. These were the Catholic village of Siao-Chai (Xiaozhai); the walled city of Chengku-Hsien (Chenggu Xian); and Ku-lu-pa (Guluba, 古路坝), a small place with a church on a mound overlooking a valley.”*

After a successful six month mission, the Brothers returned to Xi’an in May 1702, with Fr. Brollo never to return over the Qinling due to his increasing frailty. However, others were to carry on the mission later. Just before Fr. Brollo left to go to Hanzhong, a letter he sent (on 7 Sept 1701) provided insight into his anticipation. He wrote (in Italian):

*“There are two bodies of Christianity herein [in Shaanxi], the one in the northern region [north of the Qinling], and the other in the southern region of Hanchung-fu. The distance from each other is 12 long days, and mostly through mountains full of cliffs and falls, and inhabited only by apes, tigers, and other beasts. For now I am*

*going to visit the northern part, but in two months, if God gives me strength, I shall pass the winter in Hanchung where the air is milder.”*

After Fr. Brollo had experienced the roads across the Qinling to Hanzhong (perhaps like that shown in Figure 4) he provided some further insight into his preparation by confirming the accuracy of Fr. Martino Martini’s atlas. He wrote on June 6, 1702 from Xi’an (Wyngaert, 1961; this time in Spanish):

*“The road to Hanchung takes 13 days, 7 by arduous hills and cliffs, as previously described by Fr. Martinio. I do not think the world has any others with this sort of route. There are balconies on poles for up to 25 Li, there are also many bridges and roads clinging to the rocks and rivers and supported with timbers at the base of the mountains. Some of the rivers go to the Han River, others to the Hoei (Wei), which in the north enters the Hoang ho (Yellow River or Huang He).”*

In a general report dated 20 July 1702 (Wyngaert, 1961) on the progress of the mission in Shaanxi, Fr. Brollo described the route carefully as information for future travellers:

*“To go from Sigan (Xi’an) to Hanchung (Hanzhong) takes 11 long days or 13 short days. From here [Xi’an] to the mountains can be reduced to 5 days if time is short [otherwise 6]. At about 15 miles from here (Xi’an) you reach the citadel of Hieniang-hien (Xianyang Xian), from there to Hingping-hien (Xingping Xian) is about 18 miles, and from there to Vukung-hien (Wugong Xian) is about 27 miles. From this place to Fufung-hien (Fufeng Xian) is about 18 miles. From this place to Kyxan-hien (Qishan Xian) is about 18 miles, and from there to Paoky-hien (Baoji Xian) is about 33 miles. Here one crosses the Hoei (Wei) river and for about 6 or 7 days enters the mountains, of which I know the world has no equal.*

- 1. The first day there is a steep climb of more than 6 miles, after which there is little more than a mile down stone stairs to the rest point;*
- 2. The second day passes by many bridges and roads that are well supported and made of wood covered with earth, to render the road passable, and which are attached to the sides of the river. In many places there is no other way to pass. There are many more climbs up and down; so the journey is not measured in miles and leagues like the rest, until you reach the citadel of Fung-hien (Feng Xian), located in a valley between these mountains;*
- 3. The third day begins with an ascent from the town of more than 5 miles and then down more than 6. It is on a road that for any little rain presents an extremely slippery surface and if it is dry, with a little wind, is full of dust;*
- 4. On the fourth day, which has the least travails of all, you do not have more than 3 miles of ascent and descent;*
- 5. The fifth day is bad, and the whole day is consumed in going up and down the edges of mountains above the river with many steep gullies along a road of about 30 miles;*
- 6. The sixth day is no better than the fifth, and after you have made several ascents and descents you reach the last mountain called the Cock’s Head (Jitou Guan, see Figure 1 depicting this place in 1667). The truth is that it reaches up two miles, but worst of all is that it is made of stone stairs, which are broken and very steep, and the other vans, one above the other weave their*

*way up the mountain, to reach a place from where you can descend the other side to the valley of Hanchung. The descent of 3 miles is not very inconvenient and reaches the citadel of Paoching-hien (Baocheng Xian), about 12 miles away from Hanchung, and a little further to Hsiao-chai (Xiaozhai), where there is the church.”*

This description of the road in 1702 is not too different from those given by Baron von Richthofen in 1872 and the Abbé Armand David in 1873, but it is possible the road was in better repair at the earlier time. In his letters, Fr. Brollo also describes the state of the mission in Hanzhong which he found stronger than other places in Shaanxi but with much that also earned his displeasure.

In 1696, Artus de Lionne of the French “Missions Étrangères de Paris” (MEP) became Vicar Apostolic of Sichuan. Artus de Lionne and Fr. Basillio Brollo were allied against the Jesuits in what grew to be called the “Chinese Rites Controversy” which is returned to in the next section. Mons. Artus never went to Sichuan but appointed Jean Basset (MEP, 1662-1707, Xiàng Rìshēng, 向日升) as Pro-Vicar of Northern Sichuan. In 1703, Jean Basset came to Xi’an to negotiate conditions for his mission with Chinese officials (Wyngaert, 1961). It was not the first time he had travelled to Xi’an from Northern Sichuan. On his return, Jean Basset agreed to stay over in Hanzhong for an extra 20 days to follow up on the progress that Fr. Brollo and Fr. Lhagi had made in 1701-1702. At that time, Fr. Brollo was very frail and not able to travel. Fr. Basset clearly travelled by the main Shu road, including the Jinniu Road into Sichuan to his base in Chengdu. However, letters and reports similar to those of Fr. Brollo are yet to be found.<sup>9</sup>

### ***“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,…”***

At the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Franciscans continued to move into the interior of China to build local communities of Christians and train Chinese priests. The position of the Catholic Church in China was at zenith, enjoying the high regard of the Kangxi Emperor for the Jesuit intellectuals who attended his court. The advances in astronomy and calendar science, the extensive mapping of China under Jesuit management that also helped China negotiate boundaries with Russia and the advances in military technology that flowed from the time were more than matched by the personal interest and understanding of the Emperor. Between 1708 and 1718, during the far ranging survey that created the “Kangxi Secret Map”<sup>10</sup> (du Halde, 1736; or Jupp, 2017 for more recent details and references) the Jesuit Brothers travelled with support of the court and local officials giving the Church and its mission high visibility and status.

However, as the Yongzheng Emperor came to the throne in 1723 and the century passed, the Church of Rome’s Christian missions in China entered troubled times. These occurred when fallout from the Chinese Rites Controversy led to the Jesuit

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<sup>9</sup> Near Wulian Zhen between Zitong and Pu’an Zhen in Sichuan there is a Buddhist temple called the Jueyuan Temple (觉苑寺). It has famous Ming Period murals. One of them apparently depicts foreign priests with flowing beards and the style of dress of Catholic Priests at the time.

<sup>10</sup> [https://qinshuroads.org/Kangxi\\_Jesuit\\_Maps/Kangxi\\_Jesuit\\_Maps.htm](https://qinshuroads.org/Kangxi_Jesuit_Maps/Kangxi_Jesuit_Maps.htm)

mission losing its favoured position at the Chinese court and all of the missions becoming unwelcome in China. Previous hardships that occurred between Ming and Qing were primarily matters of changed patronage and general distrust for foreigners among Chinese but with the Chinese Rites Controversy the entry of Christianity into China lost any similarity it may have had with the entry of Buddhism a millennium before (Zürcher, 1993). The Chinese Rites Controversy arose following complaints about the Jesuit mission made by Dominican, Franciscan (such as Fr. Brollo) and French missionaries of the MEP (such as Artus de Lionne), to Pope Clement XI. The complaints concerned the compatibility of Catholic rites with those traditionally followed by Chinese and the tolerance being shown by Jesuits to the latter. The Pope and the Curia decided that no concessions would be made to local Chinese customs, traditions or beliefs in the religious life of Chinese Catholics and informed the Emperor. The Kangxi Emperor had been attracted by the more flexible and liberal approach of Jesuit missionaries and was not amused when, in 1715, Pope Clement dictated to him how Chinese must behave and believe to be Catholic.

The significant change that had occurred meant there could be no Chinese Catholic Christian congregation that was independent of the European parent denomination. Buddhism had been fundamentally changed and developed by being “translated” through Chinese culture and thinking to a point where many new (and significant) aspects of Buddhist thinking and practice were entirely Chinese in their origin. This was not to be allowed for Christianity which was to remain defined and controlled by the councils and practices of Europe down to the level of daily religious behaviour. Later, Protestants were to take essentially the same approach but in relation to their own versions of daily practice. The Kangxi Emperor, despite his residual respect for the Jesuit Brothers, responded near to the end of his reign in 1721 by banning preaching by westerners. Then under the Yongzheng Emperor, the Catholic Church was declared unwelcome in 1724. Then, between 1746 and 1748 and sporadically to 1812 there were persecutions of foreign missionaries and expulsions from the provinces. Despite this, the effects of the exclusions in many areas away from the eastern seaboard were not absolute. With care, and sometimes compromise, some foreign missionaries and Chinese Christians could quietly live and move around in many places where they were protected by the principle that “the mountains are high and the Emperor far away” (山高皇帝远). Away from Pope and Emperor alike, a more “Chinese” version of Catholic Christianity seems to have persisted over the following century.

Between 1840 and 1860, China was wracked by Opium Wars and the Unequal Treaties. The treaties extracted many concessions and forcibly opened China to western entry, influence and trade. At the same time, partly inspired or inflamed by early (poorly written) tracts distributed by Protestant Missionaries and their Chinese converts from Canton, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom sprang up and (possibly) 20 million Chinese died in the civil war that ensued. The Taipings were not popular among ordinary Chinese who were suspicious of their Christian behaviour but they were only subdued with help from western mercenary troops of whom probably the most famous was General “Chinese” Gordon. The obvious weakness of the central government in this situation also spawned other disastrous and murderous rebellions such as those by the Nian in Anhui and Muslims in Yunnan, Shaanxi and Gansu. The northwest Hui Muslim rebellion saw the indiscriminate slaughter of some more millions of Chinese (although, curiously, Christians were spared) and a Muslim state

set up temporarily in Xinjiang. The rebellion was finally suppressed in 1877 only by exploiting divisions among Muslims and with the help of modern weapons - which had become a new trade opportunity for the western nations.

The most unequal of the treaties was the “Treaty of Tien-tsin”, (Tienjin, 天津条约) which was signed in 1858. The Treaty established the foreign legations in Beijing; unlimited access for foreign vessels to the Yangtze River; the right of foreigners to go into the interior for travel, trade and missionary activities; Chinese to be Christian if they wished and various other things such as payment of a large amount of money, legalisation of the Opium Trade etc. etc. Following this treaty, the Yangtze River was opened to traders, gunboats and missionaries. An area called Hankou<sup>11</sup> in Hubei, where the Han River joins the Yangtze, became a centre of British interest with a naval presence (Blakiston, 1862) and from here shallow draft steamboats eventually moved through the Yangtze gorges into Sichuan. Many Protestant and Catholic missionaries followed the flags and ushered in a third major period of increasing missionary activity between 1862 and 1900. But during this time, the Colonial ambitions of the foreign powers and arrogance of many missionaries led eventually to suspicion, even hatred and certainly unrest amongst ordinary Chinese.

### ***Foreign travellers come to Hanzhong***

A growing number of foreign travellers also came to Hanzhong after 1860 and followed different sections of the Shu Roads. Alexander Wylie (Protestant Missionary) travelled the Jinniu Road from Chengdu to Hanzhong in 1868<sup>12</sup> and then explored the potential for travelling by boat on the Han River from Hanzhong to the Hankou settlement. Ferdinand von Richthofen (German explorer and geographer) travelled the old road from Xi’an to Chengdu in 1872 and published comprehensive accounts of the geology, geography and resource potential along the route. The French naturalist missionary Abbé Armand David, wishing to vary his path from that of von Richthofen, travelled the Baoye Road (from Meixian in the Wei Valley to Baocheng in the Han River Valley) in 1873<sup>13</sup> and then also went to Hankou from Hanzhong by boat. The Abbé Armand David was unfortunately boat wrecked on the Han River on his way to Hankou. He survived, but many items of his natural history collection were lost. Russian travellers accompanying Col. Sosnovsky’s expedition came to Hanzhong from Hankou by boat in 1874 and then travelled to Gansu and Lanzhou *via* Mianxian (勉县, Qing 沔县), Lüeyang (略阳县), Huixian (徽县), present day Tianshui (天水, Qing period Qin Zhou 秦州) and through the active Muslim war on their way back to Russia (see Piassetsky, 1884). Unfortunately, what the travellers found in China’s interior was a country decimated and impoverished by rebellions, famines and bandits. Many District level cities still had intact walls but due to previous deadly sieges, the remaining local people no longer wished to live inside

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<sup>11</sup> Hankou Zhen (汉口镇) was an area on the shores of the Yangtze apparently created by a change of course of the Han River which became an established foreign concession with British, French, German, Russian and American settlements at the (new) mouth of the Han River. It was close to the two Prefectural cities of Hanyang Fu (汉阳府) and Wuchang Fu (武昌府) and is now part of present day Wuhan (武汉).

<sup>12</sup> [https://qinshuroads.org/Alexander\\_Wylie\\_s\\_Travels/Alexander\\_Wylie.htm](https://qinshuroads.org/Alexander_Wylie_s_Travels/Alexander_Wylie.htm)

<sup>13</sup> [https://qinshuroads.org/Armand\\_David\\_CM/David\\_Qinling.htm](https://qinshuroads.org/Armand_David_CM/David_Qinling.htm)

the walls of smaller cities. One member of the Russian expedition said: “In China, there are no cities without walls, but it seems there are walls without cities” (Piassetsky, 1884).

The Russian expedition and the Abbé Armand David both had a similar experience of boat wreck on the Han River below Hanzhong. However, their experience did not prevent the Han River becoming a common route for later Missionaries of all denominations moving into and out of Hanzhong. An advantage of this route after 1862 was that travel between Shanghai and Hankou could be made by foreign steam ship. The dangers of the Han River at that time were also no more than those of the upper reaches of the Yangtze and its use avoided hard roads through mountains. The Han River route was not a Shu Road in that it was not between “Qin” and “Shu”, but its role in Shu road history and river trade was a significant part of the historical activities that occurred along Shu Roads and will be included as one here. The entry of the Chu forces into Hanzhong *via* the Han River in the warring states period was possibly the motivation for Qin to build plank roads and convince Shu to build the Jinniu Road. Moreover, when Alexander Wylie came through this area he noted (Wylie, 1870): “During the summer floods, when the gorges on the Yang-tsze are almost impassable, it is customary for native merchants to reach Sze-chuen [Sichuan] *via* the Han; and, having reached this point, they take mules to cross the hills, about 40 miles, to the Kea-ling River [Jialing], by which there is a direct communication with Chung-king [Chongqing] and the principal places of the province”. So, the river traffic between Shu and Chu *via* Han has always been a part of Shu Road history!

The river boat story in Sichuan in the later 19<sup>th</sup> Century was similar, with missionaries making good use of foreign steam boats to travel to Hankou or Yichang and more traditional river boats to navigate the Yangtze gorges to Chongqing. They then moved into the interior, often still by boat, as far as Baoning Fu (保宁府, present day Langzhong, 阆中), Bazhong (巴中) and on to Guanyuan (广元) in the north. When Mrs (Isabella L. Bird) Bishop visited Sichuan in 1896-1897 (Bishop, 1899), she travelled the Yangtze as far as Wanxian and then went by road to Baoning Fu. She described a strong presence of missions with a major centre being at Baoning. She also travelled the “Great Road” or Jinniu Road for a section between Jiange and Zitong and describes its state of disrepair as well as the reminders of its former greatness, such as the Cedar and Cypress trees that lined the old road. Nevertheless, the use of the old road by missionaries moving between Sichuan and the Wei River valley by this time was probably rare.

At the end of the century, China erupted in the anti-foreign Boxer (义和团) Uprising, and many missionaries, mostly in Shanxi and Bei Zhili (present day Hebei), were harassed and killed. In some provinces, (including Shandong, Shaanxi and Sichuan) the Governors did their best to protect the missions and there was less death and destruction but many missionaries still fled to safer areas with many foreigners from Shanxi and Shaanxi missions using the Han River route to reach Hankou. At the same time, Chinese Christians were mostly left to fend for themselves as they had before the foreign missionaries had returned. Foreign armies returned in force exacting revenge and reparations but foreigners in China were generally shocked by the Boxer Uprising and from that time lost their sense of invulnerability. Soon after, the Qing Dynasty fell apart and the Republic started in 1912. Following a short time of promising changes, China broke into warring factions of Northern and Southern



armies and into feudal territories under control of warlords, bandits, ultra-conservatives and communists, all well-armed with modern weapons. After 1927 there was some hope of unity under the Guomindang until, during the 1930's, Japan invaded China and then the world went to war as well. Foreign Missions came and went during the 100 years that followed the start of the Opium Wars, while life remained hard for all Chinese and throughout China.

For all of these reasons, after 1900 was not a good time for general travel and diaries, but some official travellers have left accurate and detailed accounts that are useful now for their impressions of the old Shu Roads as well as the state of China during these times. Sir Eric Teichman (1921), on reconnaissance for the British Embassy, left accounts of various roads, including the Tangluo Road<sup>14</sup> through Foping Ting and the main road from Xi'an to Chengdu in a detailed travel diary. He also travelled in the eastern part of the Qinling Shu Roads. Brig. General George Pereira (1926), on his way to Lhasa in Tibet, with two kinds of altitude instrument, passed through the Qinling. Due to widespread bandit activity he used the Ziwu Road to go from Xi'an to Hanzhong and a back path along the Micang Road to travel to Chengdu. Although these two accounts are not directly about Catholic Missions, which are the subject of this document, what they say about China, law and order, Shu Roads and the Missions they visited in these turbulent times are of interest.

When Alexander Wylie came to Hanzhong in 1868 he made no mention of any foreign mission or any Christians being active in the area at that time. In fact, it seems from his published account (Wylie, 1870) that he believed he was the first European since Marco Polo to have visited at least some of the places on his route. Of course, we know from the previous accounts of Jesuit and Franciscan missions to Hanzhong and Sichuan that it was not true and Christians were well established. On the contrary, when the Abbé Armand David came to the Hanzhong area in 1873, he stayed with active Christian communities and liaised with a resident Italian Franciscan priest, Fr. Pius Vidi (OFM, 1842-1906, Wei Mingde, 魏明德). The Russian expedition also met Fr. Vidi in Hanzhong a year later but was rather scathing of the perceived success of his work (see Endnote [6]). Fr. Vidi told the Russian group that he had been in the Hanzhong area for eight years – implying he had come there, most likely from Xi'an, in 1866.

The Russian expedition was an official visit with papers. However, Wylie, David and Vidi all avoided officials and soldiers as travel in these areas was often restricted. In 1875, a British Consular Officer, Augustus Raymond Magary was murdered by brigands in Yunnan. In the Treaty of Zhifu that followed in 1875, British citizens were to be allowed to travel anywhere in China under protection of the local officials. British protestant missionaries seem to have arrived in Hanzhong in increasing numbers after this time. An unconfirmed notice on the web attributed to the China Inland Mission says: "In 1875, George King and Frederick Baller of the China Inland Mission became the first Protestant missionaries to visit Shaanxi. Four years later (1879), King and his new wife settled in Hanzhong in southwest Shaanxi."

In 1921, Brig. General George Pereira visited Hanzhong and noted (Pereira, 1926): "There was an Italian bishop and a fine cathedral at Han-chung. The only British were

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.qinshuroads.org/Tangluo\\_Teichman/Tangluodao\\_Teichman.htm](http://www.qinshuroads.org/Tangluo_Teichman/Tangluodao_Teichman.htm)

Mr. Easton, who had been there forty years, and his wife. He belonged to the China Inland Mission.” Forty years would put his arrival at 1881. In 1887, it is known that Mr. Robert Davidson and his wife of the Friends Mission came to Hanzhong from Hankou *via* the Han River and stayed with the then resident missionary of the China Inland Mission (Dr. William Wilson) and his wife while they prepared to move into Sichuan (Davidson and Mason, 1905).

A Catholic mission staffed by Italian Franciscan Priests was also established in 1888 at Guluba, which, as we know from Fr. Basilio Brollo’s letters, had been a Chinese Christian settlement since before 1702. Guluba was established as the seat of a separate Vicariate Apostolic<sup>15</sup> for the Hanzhong area. The history of the Guluba settlement will be discussed in more detail below after we have looked more carefully at the situation that obtained in the Hanzhong Plain when the Abbé Armand David visited in 1873.

## The “Chenggu plain of Christianity”

### ***Abbé Armand David CM***

Monsieur L’Abbé Père Jean Pierre Armand David (CM, 1826-1900, 谭卫道, Tan Weidao, see Figure 5) was a French Natural Historian and Vincentian (or Lazarist) missionary who made three major journeys into the interior of China studying the wildlife and collecting specimens of the flora and fauna. He will be referred to here as Abbé Armand David using the general French term for a member of the clergy or more simply as Fr. David, in line with previous designations. In addition to natural science, Abbé Armand David was a keen geologist and palaeontologist and made an extensive study of the rocks and fossils of the places he visited. During his first two journeys (1866 and 1868-70), he was the first European to see and study many species, including the Giant Panda (called at that time in Sichuan the White Bear, 白熊, *Ailuropoda melanoleuca*) and has given his name to many present (western) biological names. Among these is a species of deer (the “Père David Deer”, *Elaphurus davidianus*) previously unknown to Europeans<sup>16</sup> and at the time almost extinct in China except for a few in the Imperial Hunting Park near Beijing. Abbé Armand David and the French Embassy were able to organise for some of the deer to be taken to Europe and all presently remaining members of the species are descended from these refugee deer.

Fr. David’s third journey in 1872-1873 (David, 1875) is of direct interest for this document as it included investigating areas of the Qinling Mountains from bases in both the Wei River Valley and the Han River Valley. He initially worked on the northern slopes of the Qinling near Xi’an but, because of the continuing fighting connected with the Moslem uprising in Gansu, decided to go the Hanzhong basin

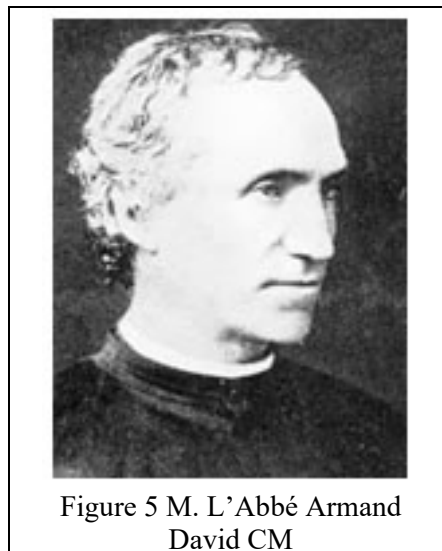
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<sup>15</sup> A “Vicariate Apostolic” was a Catholic missionary district administered by a “Vicar Apostolic” who had the rank of a Bishop. Previously, Hanzhong would have been administered by the Vicar Apostolic in Xi’an so it was a significant change of status.

<sup>16</sup> The animal drawn on the lower left of Martini’s map in Figure 2 is apparently a Père David Deer so perhaps not completely unknown to Europeans!

before returning to Hankou by boat. Fr. David was aware that Baron von Richthofen had just (1872) travelled through the Qinling using the Lianyun Road so he decided to take another route along what is usually called the Baoye Road<sup>17</sup>. The Baoye Road went from Meixian to the Bao River Valley and then down the Bao River along a road that formed a common section with the Lianyun Road to the Hanzhong Basin. It is interesting to compare the similarity of Abbé Armand David's account of the climb to "Chicken Head" Pass (Jitou Guan) with the description we have seen by Fr. Basilio Brollo and the illustration of the pass in Figure 1 that was painted in 1667:

*"Immediately before it flows into the valley of the Han River, the river [Bao or Heilong River] is squeezed between the mountains so much that there is no room at its edge for a path; so the route must pass over the mountains. Starting at 2 pm, we climbed the last hill using a winding paved road. At the top of the mountain there were several beautiful pagodas, in whose surrounds were numerous stone votive offerings [Stele]. At the highest point of our way, my barometer fell to six hundred and eighty-six millimetres indicating an altitude of some nine hundred meters<sup>18</sup> at the top of the "Miao Shan", or Pagoda Mountain."*



An account of his travels along the Baoye Road to Baocheng is intended for another document, but for now our primary interest will be in what he found when he reached the Hanzhong plain. Abbé Armand David rarely stayed in main towns or in travel accommodation. Rather, he made contact with local Christian communities and stayed with them. Before he left for the Hanzhong plain he arranged to go to a Christian community near Hanzhong called Wangjia Wan (perhaps 王家湾). There are many places at village level with names like this near Hanzhong with the only difference being the "family" name. In this case it was the "Wang" family. His porters were members of the Christian village where he stayed near Baoji and they took him to Baocheng at the entrance to the Hanzhong plain. He expected to be met but no one seemed to be waiting. Fortunately, he came across some Christians, one of whom had a relative at Wangjia Wan and they took him there. It would seem that some of the

<sup>17</sup> [https://qinshuroads.org/Armand\\_David\\_CM/David\\_Qinling.htm](https://qinshuroads.org/Armand_David_CM/David_Qinling.htm)

<sup>18</sup> The site of the pass is at about 810m altitude ASL using pressure assisted GPS. Abbé Armand David's heights seem to have had a consistent offset due to baseline pressure/height setting.

same “signalling” was occurring as happened with the Russian Expedition or else they were already patiently waiting for him to arrive. Abbé Armand David wrote:

*“The Hamlet of the Wang family is two leagues (8 km) north of the Han River, and three leagues (12 km) north-east of Han-chung. There is a chapel and convenient room for the missionary.”*

The present writer believes Wangjia Wan to be on the undulated plain between Hanzhong and Chenggu a little north of the Han River where a village of this name can be found today. But when he arrived at Wangjia Wan, Fr. David had a problem. He wrote:

*“I had thought that P. Ouey [Fr. Pius Vidi] would have been here or in the neighbourhood, to provide me such information and assistance as was necessary to get established and get ready to go into the midst of the great mountains. Unfortunately, he left only two days previously, to go far into the south-west, and he will not return, they say, until after a month! There are three Chinese priests serving the Christian communities of this valley, but it seems they are also more or less distant from Wangjia Wan. Patience!”*

Fr. David was initially depressed at his circumstances but later regained his enthusiasm and decided to go to the mountains north of Mianxian of his own volition to collect animals and birds. The scientific value of his mission was his personal medicine. The arrival of a Chinese Priest P. Tchao was of great assistance and P. Tchao would later organise the expeditions he made and also his eventual journey down the Han River to Hankou. P. Tchao described to him the terrible recent scourges of bandits and the destruction and killings by the “Long Hair” bandits in 1862. “Long Hair” was a general name for bandits including the Taiping revolutionaries who teamed with other bandit units to besiege Hanzhong in 1863 and who brought terrible death and destruction. The Taiping left in 1864 to go back and defend their capital at Nanjing but the remaining bandits continued to harass the people of the plain and were only eventually defeated in 1868. Hanzhong was more peaceful than most other places but life in Hanzhong in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century was still difficult and unpredictable.

When Fr. David had made this initial survey and was returning to Wangjia Wan, he found that Fr. P. Vidi had suddenly returned after all and as Fr. Vidi was also a keen natural historian they got along very well. Fr. Vidi collected fossils and had some specimens from near Hanzhong that amazed David. As if there had not been enough coincidence, at the place they met, a messenger suddenly arrived from Xi’an with the mail, including letters for Fr. David describing two recent expeditions to Tongking and Yunnan by French explorers. Such “coincidences” probably indicate that communication in the region was better than Fr. David had supposed. Fr. David and Fr. Vidi then went to Fengjiaying Village (on the southern side of the Han River) and visited the tomb of Fr. Étienne Faber. The description he provided as to the condition of the tomb in 1873 is translated in Endnote [7]. But Fr. David was in Hanzhong to study its animals, plants, insects and geology and he threw himself into his work to be continually impressed by the fossil record he found as well as the wealth of living species he found in the Qinling and Ba Mountains. He continued with the work for some time and then finally travelled by boat from Chenggu to where the Han River

joins the Yangtze at the Hankou settlement. On the way he was unfortunately boat wrecked and lost many specimens and samples from his natural history collections. There was certainly no “easy” way to Shu whether it was from Qin or Chu.

Fr. David’s diary comments favourably on the strong traditions of Christian villages that existed in the Chenggu area and the close ties that existed between people who belonged to the Christian communities. This seems to contradict the observations and opinions of Wylie (1870); Piassetsky (1884) and later travellers such as Teichman (1921). But perhaps it took someone like Fr. David to find out the true situation by living and working with the local people. It is clear that after the time of Fr. Étienne Faber, when hard times came at the end of the Ming, Christian villages maintained their identity and also blended into the population. When foreign missionaries were expelled after the Rites Controversy in 1746-1748, and during the troubled times of the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, Chinese Christians must have followed a similar strategy allowing them to ride the waves of change and emerge intact. It is significant that Fr. Pius Vidi lived in the villages and stayed away from major towns. His behaviour was probably typical of the Priests who had maintained contact with local Christians in the difficult times since 1746.

The Russian Expedition of 1874 also met with Fr. Vidi and reported from their conversation (Piassetsky, 1884):

*“He spoke very highly of the Chinese, and praised their kindness and industry but accused the higher classes, and especially the lesser officials, of a good deal of presumption.”*

Fr. David’s diary records that there were (still) three main Chinese Priests (possibly associated with the churches at Xiaozhai, Chenggu and Guluba) and that a visiting Priest stayed in a small room that was part of the chapel of the village. These observations, plus the healthy condition of the Tomb of Fr. Étienne Faber indicate that things were very similar to what they were when Fr. Basilio Brollo arrived in Hanzhong in 1702. In regard to the accommodation, Brollo (1703) had reported:

*“all [churches] have accommodation attached for the father, as it is the custom in China that the church is also the missionary’s dwelling. Only Ku-lu-pa (Guluba) has a separate dwelling.”*

Despite going to Fengjiaying village to visit the Tomb of Fr. Faber, Abbé Armand David does not mention Guluba. But he did provide the world with considerable scientific information about the region as well as insight into the situation in 1873 of local Chinese Christians in what the Superior General of PIME (Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions), P. Luigi Risso later called (in 1948) “the beautiful Chenggu plain of Christianity”.

The published report of David’s third expedition (David, 1875) contains a map (see Figure 6) of his journeys. The representation of Fr. David’s travel in the map is rather poor. However, there are many improvements in this map since the Martini map, such as the correct linkage between the Jialing River north and south of Yangping Guan and with the upper catchment of the Bailong Jiang. But it still has errors such as the incorrect general strike of the Qinling. The Baron von Richthofen (1870) seems to

have been the first of the travellers to realise that the predominant strike of the Qinling is west to east with rivers often cutting across the strike in a north to south direction. This means river “valleys” are more often better described as steep sided gorges and explains the need for the plank roads. In early maps, terrain was often not independently mapped but simply drawn to provide “fill in” around the mapped streams and rivers. Fr. David’s observations on geology and altitude could have provided the basis for a better map of his journeys but it seems only a contemporary map was used by the publishers.



Figure 6 Map of Abbe Armand David’s travels during his Third Expedition in 1873-1874, including travelling the Baoye Road and visiting Hanzhong

### ***The Hanzhong Vicariate Apostolic***

After 1880, the Hanzhong Vicariate Apostolic was established and it was decided to establish a substantial settlement as the seat of the Vicariate. This was to be at Guluba, where Fr. Basilio Brollo had reported there being a Church in 1702, and not far from where the first Church in the valley was reported to have been originally built by Fr. Étienne Faber some 200 years previously at Xiaozhai. The terrain at Guluba included a raised hillock where, with added fortification, it was possible to mount a defence in the event of an attack by bandits. The story of the Guluba settlement as outlined below is taken from material in Italian stored in the PIME archives as collated by Piero Gheddo (2000). Where appropriate, information from other sources has been added.

In its introduction, the material from the PIME archive (Gheddo, 2000) notes:

*“In 1926, a union between missionary seminaries in Milan and Rome formed the new Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions (PIME). One of the members joining the union was the Vicariate Apostolic of Hanchung in the province of Shensi (now*

*Shaanxi). The Vicariate Apostolic had worked there since 1887. Shaanxi is considered the cradle of the civilisation of the Chinese people. Xi'an was once the imperial capital and there is a stone "Stele" there (see Endnote [2]) which is the oldest and most authoritative document to the entry of Christianity into China by the Nestorians (635 AD). The Shaanxi mission was originally set up by Franciscans and later continued by Jesuits (1625-1701). Jesuits left a great legacy through Father Stefano Le Fevre (Étienne Faber) whose tomb was still popular in the mid-century. Later, under the Franciscans (1701-1762), Chinese priests were educated in the College of S. Famiglia of Naples, and with further efforts by the Franciscans, the work continued until 1887. In 1887, Propaganda Fide<sup>19</sup> created the Vicariate Apostolic of Hanzhong entrusting it to the Seminary for Foreign Missions in Rome. P. Francesco Giulianelli went to Shaanxi with the first missionaries and was acting Director of the new mission until the arrival of the first Vicar Apostolic, Mons.<sup>20</sup> Gregorio Antonucci, in 1888."*

In a similar way to Fr. Brollo in 1702, P. Francesco Giulianelli was not impressed by everything he found. He wrote (in PIME, 2012):

*"I have visited most Christian communities and found great needs: The majority of Churches are in a terrible state: some are untidy, some have only crumbling paper images, which could not be called altars, and among them I found some without a crucifix ... I have not found a monstrance, nor an altar-cloth, in a word found nothing, and this not because these objects were removed prior to our arrival, but because they never existed. I know that the Father [Pius] Vidi has sacred vessels which he uses, but they are not of the Mission, rather the property of an individual who has brought them with him."*

It is clear that Fr. Pius Vidi (who had met Abbé Armand David in 1873 as well as the Russian expedition in 1874) was still working in the Hanzhong region on behalf of the Franciscan mission in 1887, although separately from the Guluba Vicariate, and was probably still living in villages rather than in Hanzhong. A web entry found by searching his name<sup>21</sup> found the following reference: "Bishop Pius Vidi, (OFM, 1882-1906, Wei Mingde, 魏明德), Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic emeritus of Northern Shensi 陝西北境". This Vidi is almost certainly the same person and the reference records that he was appointed Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic of Shaanxi in Aug 1886 and became a Bishop in 1887. P. Francesco Giulianelli must have met Fr. Vidi at the end of his time in Hanzhong.

## **The Settlement at Guluba**

The brief introduction from the PIME document above provides background for a more complete description of the founding and development of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Century settlement of foreign missionaries at Guluba (古路坝).

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<sup>19</sup> "Congregatio de Propaganda Fide" (Latin). (Translation "Association for the spread of the faith"). This was a Catholic organization established in 1623 to administer foreign missionary territories.

<sup>20</sup> The Vicar Apostolic had the rank of a Bishop and used the title of Monsignor (abbrev. Mons.).

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/bishop/bvidi.html>

Gheddo (2000) continues:

*“The main residence was constructed by Mons. Antonucci at Guluba, not far from the city of Hanzhong, with a seminary and various schools. In 1895 he was succeeded by Mons. Pio Passerini, of whom Mons. Lorenzo Balconi [1878-1969; see Balconi, 1946] writes: ‘Being of a young age and full of intelligence and zeal, he took the reins of the vicarage and an immense work load that continued for 23 years; he really founded the mission. His completed activities include the Cathedral of the Apostles Peter and Paul at Guluba and twenty other churches elsewhere. In 1913 he brought the Canossian Sisters to Guluba and to whom he entrusted the large orphanage and school and they began to build a large hospital’”.*

In 1904, a young missionary Fr. Leone Nani arrived by boat from Hankou to work for 10 years at Guluba. He brought modern camera equipment and recorded his time at Guluba and the life and times of Chinese whom he met as he moved around the area. Fr. Nani’s photographs and some written material about the Hanzhong region as it was in those times of change have been collected and published in Nani (2003). The Publishers description of the book is attached as Endnote [8]. Fr. Nani was at Guluba until 1914 during which time he experienced the change from Ching Dynasty to Republic. Eric Teichman (Teichman, 1921) visited Guluba in 1917 (see Figure 7). It was on his way to Hanzhong and he was warmly welcomed by the Brothers. He noted (full text is attached as Endnote [9]):



Figure 7 Approach to Guluba from Xixiang in 1917. Note wall, watch tower and buildings. (from Teichman, 1921)

*“[Guluba] is a walled stronghold of the Catholics on the top of a hill and is the centre of Catholic missionary work in Southern Shensi, though the Bishop resides at Hanchung. The Italian Fathers who have been established in this corner of Shensi for a great many years, have attained considerable power and influence in the neighbourhood. They work on different lines to the Protestant Missions, but from their point of view with greater success. Their plan is to collect orphans or other children who are not wanted by their parents, to educate them and teach them all*



*kinds of useful industries, and to bring them up as Catholics. This is the work that is carried on at Kulupa, where there are usually some hundreds of children being brought up as members of the Catholic Church, mostly girls, as these are easier to secure. These old-established Catholic Missions usually own a good deal of land acquired in a variety of ways, and are practically self-supporting. At Kulupa, an entire hill top is covered by substantial buildings and the whole surrounded by a good wall. When trouble comes, the gates are shut, the community fetches out its arms, and the brigands, or whoever they may be, pass on to easier prey.”*

The stern exterior of Guluba had also been useful in the years preceding those of Sir Eric’s travels. During the time that Leone Nani was at Guluba, China changed from Qing to Min (Republican or Minguo, 民国). We will return to this story later.

### ***The Tomb of Fr. Étienne Faber***

The brief statement above (“Jesuits left a great legacy through Father Stefano Le Fevre whose tomb was still popular in the mid-century”) does not sufficiently address the significant recent history of the Tomb of Fr. Étienne Faber. The Abbé Armand David visited the Tomb in 1873 by invitation of the resident foreign priest, Fr. Pius Vidi. They stayed overnight at Fengjiaying village and the next day made a visit to the Tomb. He wrote (full text is attached as Endnote [7]):

*“After Mass, P. Vidi and I visited a tomb that enjoys the veneration of local Christians as well as pagans. This is where the first missionary who implanted the Christian faith into this country was buried nearly two centuries ago. Tradition has not preserved here the name for this apostle, but the Chinese inscription of the tombstone says he was a French priest, belonging to the company of Jesus (I heard elsewhere that it is of Fr. Fabre, a native of Avignon). To him all the Christian communities of this valley of Han-chung owe their origin, and he has the reputation of a saint. His name is invoked every day, as much by pagans as by Christians and his tomb is a place of rendezvous for the sick, the faithful and the infidels, who all believe in the power of his intercession.”*

The Abbé Armand David’s description of the miracles reported around Fr. Faber’s time in Hanzhong and since then in connection with his tomb shows a polite and scientific constraint as indicated by his comment *“Fortunately, the reputation for virtue and holiness of the apostle of Han-chung is based on more serious events than this one.”* His account and comments make an interesting echo of those by the Jesuit Fr. Louis Le Comte in Le Comte (1696) some 200 years earlier and included here as Endnote [3]. Le Comte wrote in conclusion: *“but the greatest Miracle of all was his Life, which he spent in the continual exercise of all the Apostolic Virtues, in a profound Humility, in a severe Mortification, in a settled Patience, proof against all sorts of Injuries, with a flaming [ardent] Charity, and a tender Devotion to the Mother of God, all which he practised to his Death; to the Edification, and I may say the Admiration even of the Idolaters”.*

After 1873, the Tomb was still active and intact and it seems the Guluba mission actively pursued further recognition of Fr. Faber as in May, 1903 his remains were

exhumed and possibly taken to another place – perhaps overseas. This was recorded in the first part of the PIME history of the Hanzhong Vicariate (PIME, 2012):

*“In May 1903, Bishop Passerini examined the tomb and the remains of P. Stefano Le Fevre (1598-1659) during a canonical process of review. It was done together with the Jesuit postulator P. Gabriel Rossi from Shanghai, who collected the documentation and promulgated it. In the following year, his bones were removed and placed in a bronze chest, then moved with great solemnity through a great concourse of people.”*

A note recorded in a brief biography of the Fr. Faber in the web based “Ricci Roundtable” (<http://ricci.rt.usfca.edu/biography/view.aspx?biographyID=508>) adds: “Case brought to Rome, 1905. Photos of the tomb (and the stele) in 1940, and smiling statue of the Father, to ASJP.” Further information on the Tomb in the modern era can be found in the PIME history of the Hanzhong Vicariate (PIME, 2012) as follows:

*“In 1926, the Mission launched a project, welcomed enthusiastically by all, to surround the tomb with a wall and make a Chinese style cover for the headstone and grave. The sky brightened for long enough to complete the project. The priest, Matthias Yuan [later Bishop of Hanzhong], who had prepared the working party for over a month, was ill and shuffled between bed and stretcher, and he fully expected to be absent when the anticipated large crowd of people came to the mass. This Father had made a vow that he would celebrate three Masses for the beatification of Father Le Fevre if he got well. Then after the first Mass, he immediately felt his strength returning, so that the doctor could not believe his eyes. In fact, P. Yuan was able to work for all three days and direct the parties as if he had never been sick. Moreover, the place near Fengjiaying where the tomb of Father Le Fevre is located and the place near Xiaozhai where the Christian Church is located are divided by the Sha He [Sandy Creek], a tributary of the Han River, which was usually overflowing with water. He was worried because the bridge, which was only a simple plank bridge without sides and twenty meters across, was the only means of transit between the two main centres of celebration. He had planned to use the bridge for a solemn procession. On the first day of the festivities, the bed of the Sha He in the proximity of the two centres remained dry, while in other places the water flowed, and so the congregation and the procession were able to pass through easily. When all was over the water once again flowed.”*

It seems that miracles continued to be associated with Fr. Étienne Faber even up until 1926. The description of a visit by the Superior General of PIME, P. Luigi Riso (quoted later in another context) shows that the Tomb was intact, with its ancient Stele and relics and in operational use until at least 1948. Apart from a brief report in a web blog describing a visit to a site purporting to be this one near Xiaozhai, but with only a simple and rather new looking wooden cross, the current condition and whereabouts of any remains of the original site seem to be unknown.

### ***Guluba and the Qing Min transition***

The book of photographs and letters summarising the observations and opinions of Fr. Leone Nani (Nani, 2003) during his time at Guluba contains rare photographs of

Chinese and China as well as written accounts of the traumatic time when the Qing dynasty fell and was replaced by the Chinese Republic, or Minguo (民国). The changes impacted significantly on the Guluba mission. The Qing Dynasty had increasingly been eroding since the end of the Jiaqing Period in 1822. Incursions of foreign armies, internal rebellions and banditry tore the dynasty apart and by the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the end of the dynasty seemed only a matter of time. The complete overthrow of dynastic rule and the introduction of a Republic was the objective pursued by Sun Yatsen (Sun Zhongshan, 孙中山) and the Geming Dang (革命党) or Revolutionary Party. Their support base included many South China and overseas Chinese and in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century they carried out a series of abortive “revolutions” and anarchist actions that in each case failed to create enough momentum to succeed. Then on 10 October in 1911 (the Xinhai, 辛亥 or 48<sup>th</sup> year of the Chinese calendar) military units in Hankou rebelled and the spark precipitated a country-wide revolution. From the revolution that followed emerged an anarchy of warlords, secret societies, warring parties and foreign invasion; and China descended into a chaos that did not fully resolve until 1949.

General histories that focus on leaders, battles and events rarely address the terrifying fear, anguish and dislocation experienced by ordinary people as their present system of law and order breaks down and there is nothing to take its place. The spark from Hankou took hold in Shaanxi quickly as on 22 October 1911, members of the Shaanxi military who were also members of the Gemingdang took over the Xi’an magazine. They then armed a wider group of military forces who were either supporters of the Gemindang or members of an anti-Qing secret society called the Gelaohui (哥老会) and called for open rebellion. As well as military personnel, the general uprising unfortunately attracted many opportunistic criminals and bandits along with the ordinary citizens who were caught up in the fervour. As a result it got out of control and many of Xi’an’s Manchu population (perhaps as many as 10,000) were massacred in two days of chaos and lawlessness. Anarchy followed as various military units and generals tried to restore law and order. Moslem forces attacked Shaanxi from Gansu on behalf of the Qing Emperor while in Beijing, Yuan Shikai manoeuvred to take control of the Empire and in the South, Sun Yatsen’s party announced in Nanjing that their new Republic had arrived.

In one paragraph from a long written report home, Leone Nani (Nani, 2003) wrote:

*“At chilling news of the kind, one can only imagine the infinite horror that consumed the citizens of Hanchunfu, leaving the local authorities in the utmost anxiety about what might be in store for them. All the more so because they were afraid of compromising themselves by surrendering to the demands of the revolutionaries: after all Peking could well repulse the rebels, and the provincial troops of Kan-su might come down and form a resistance. For these reasons they deemed it wiser to focus their efforts on attempting to calm the panic-stricken population.”*

Leone Nani reports how the citizens formed a local militia of the former Qing guards and local people to keep law and order. They repaired the city walls and organised to resist bandits and unofficial bands of “revolutionaries” that had formed to take

advantage of the chaos. Many local people, especially women, children and aged parents fled to their mountain “Zhai<sup>22</sup>”. Leone Nani wrote:

*“I cannot enter into details about this pitiful exodus which would wring the heart of anyone kindly disposed and ready to shed a tear with these suffering people.”*

Leone Nani then describes how in one terrifying event, after attacking Fengxiang Fu and murdering the city officials, a group of desperados headed towards Hanzhong – only to be ambushed in a narrow pass of the Northern Plank Road by the Hanzhong militia and severely defeated - with the leaders’ heads going on display in Hanzhong. But this was not the end of the chaos – just a skirmish. Then as military units of the emerging provincial government in Xi’an started to move south the Republican sentiment firmed on the Hanzhong plain. Leone Nani reported that the Qing officials in Hanzhong then stood down and as the new year of 1912 arrived, Hanzhong declared for the Republic.

It is not easy to find corroborating information about these difficult times in Hanzhong but Leone Nani provides unique information based on his own observations and some rare photographs to back up his words. In researching these times, a web based “diary” of the county of Nanzheng ([http://www.nzdqw.cn/12\\_1/12z2/201210/t20121015\\_389972.htm](http://www.nzdqw.cn/12_1/12z2/201210/t20121015_389972.htm)) was found which records:

*“March 1, 1912, Liu Yinxi's Sichuan "Support Shaanxi Expeditionary forces" entered the city area at the same time as forces of the Shaanxi "Qinlong Han Restoration Government" under the commanding officer charged with restoring order in the south, Zhang Baolin and both camped. On the 11th, at a Public Meeting, Liu executed the previous Qing Guard Commander Li Guanghui, took over his assets and dismissed the former guard. Not long after, Liu returned south with his troops and Zhang took over the garrison and local defence.”*

Leone Nani provides a more detailed account of this period with interesting additions and variations. He reports that after Hanzhong declared for the Republic, the former officials were worried for their safety and that of their families and possessions. Eventually the former Daotai (who from other sources was Huang Gao, 黄浩) and the Garrison Brigadier (also identified independently as Jiang Chaozong, 江朝宗, 1861-1943) and their families took refuge at Guluba under the protection of the Catholic Mission. Leone Nani then reports the arrival of the Sichuan partisan forces who demanded the former officials come to town for a “meeting”<sup>23</sup>. They declined and the Mission stood firm behind them. Instead, the Sichuan partisans killed the Colonel (most likely Li Guanghui as mentioned above) as well as some of the local troops and seized ammunition, weapons and horses that belonged to the guard. Thus armed, they then marched to Gansu and plundered some towns. Leone Nani says that when they arrived back in Hanzhong with their loot, the troops from Xi’an had arrived and the Sichuan partisans moved out quickly and returned to Sichuan.

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<sup>22</sup> By late 19<sup>th</sup> century, people had grown to distrust all but the walls of major cities as modern cannon and explosives made short work of normal walls and gates. City walls could be more like traps than refuges. So they created Zhai (寨) on mountain tops with almost impossible climbs as refuges. Zhai is a common village name in southern Shaanxi in reference to such local refuges.

<sup>23</sup> At which they would certainly have been painfully executed.

Leone Nani's account and the official "diary" are not the same but as Nani was present in person we should certainly respect his story. With the arrival of Zhang Baolin (张宝麟, 1883-1946), things would have settled down and the panic would have eased among the townspeople and (most likely) people would have returned from the Zhai. Zhang Baolin was a commander in the group that was moving to take control of the Shaanxi government. He was also a local man, being born near Ankang at Ziyang, not far from where another who was to play some significant part in Hanzhong's story, Chen Shufan (陈树藩, 1885-1949) had also grown up.



Figure 8 Qing Period Garrison at Hanzhong with the Brigadier, Jiang Chaozong, at its front. (Untitled Photo taken by Fr. Leone Nani and included in Nani, 2003).

But Leone Nani had more to add. The former officials were probably safer with Zhang Baolin but chose to leave Hanzhong and head to the East. Nani reports:

*“The smart and vigorous Brigadier managed to survive a good deal of danger along the way. When he finally reached Peking he hoped to visit the President, Yuen sche Kië, a close friend of his for many years<sup>24</sup>. Tao-tai, who was made of more timid and gentle stuff and already suffering from low morale, was obliged to pass through quite a number of adventures and misfortunes that drove him to the edge of madness.”*

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<sup>24</sup> The Hanzhong Government web site has an article that can be found [HERE](#) that describes how Jiang and Huang escaped east disguised as Catholic Priests. This seems possible. It is well known that Jiang reached Beijing and joined Yuan Shikai. He was Commander of the Peking Gendarmerie 1912-16 and briefly acting Premier of the Republic of China in 1917 but later lived under the Japanese occupation and died in 1943.

As well as this information, from which it is clear that the presence of the Guluba settlement helped stabilise Hanzhong and prevent vengeful murders, Leone Nani also provides photographs of various military groups. He has some of the former Qing Guard of which one has been used for Figure 8. In addition, Leone Nani has photographs of other soldiers from various Republican groups. One shows soldiers mounted on mountain ponies, possibly the Sichuan partisans, another has soldiers in a barracks with title over the entrance, “Qin Army regular troop, first Division” who may have been Zhang Baolin’s men. Another image shows an impressive parade of well-dressed troops. It seems to match Leone Nani’s description of the parade on the first anniversary of the Republic at the beginning of 1913 and it is likely the troops were by then from better-trained and better-equipped regular Shaanxi provincial regiments.

Leone Nani left Guluba for unknown reasons in late 1914. Between 1914 and 1921, Hanzhong was apparently in good hands. Its military Garrison Commanders (the position of greatest power at the time) were either local men who were also well placed in the Shaanxi Provincial Military or from the Zhili Clique’s Beiyang Army. The local commanders were Zhang Fang (张飭, in 1914), Chen Shufan (from 1915-1916) and Zhang Baolin (from 1920-1921). The Beiyang Commanders were Jia Deyao (贾德耀, in 1916) and Maj.-General Guan Jinju (管金聚, from 1916-1920). This period of relative peace was very good for the Guluba mission as well as the people of the Upper Han Valley. When Sir Eric Teichman<sup>25</sup> came through Hanzhong in 1917 he noted:

*“When Yuan Shikai was busy with his monarchical scheme and was centralizing his rule by posting his own Generals and detachments of his Northern troops at various strategic points in the provinces, he sent a Northern Mixed Brigade into the upper Han valley to hold that region, and to keep open his overland communications with Sichuan. Owing to the geographical isolation of its position this Brigade and its Northern General<sup>26</sup> were still in Hanzhong at the time of our visit, a year after Yuan and his short-lived Empire had been swept away by the rebellion of 1916, and were continuing to control the basin of the upper Han though the rest of the province was enjoying a sort of independent home rule. It must be admitted that under the control of these comparatively well disciplined Northerners the Han valley was much more peaceful and less preyed on by brigands than the rest of the province under home rule.”*

At the time Sir Eric Teichman visited Hanzhong, the Zhenshoushi was Major General Guan Jinju (管金聚, 1870-1927) of the Beiyang Army. General Guan was a traditional scholar warrior who is still remembered in the valuable stone carved calligraphy (碑刻) he presented to the Zhang Liang Temple in 1919<sup>27</sup>. After his time in Hanzhong, Guan Jinju and his troops fought hard for the Beiyang cause but were defeated by the Fengtian Army faction (奉天军) of Zhang Zuolin (张作霖).

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<sup>25</sup> [https://qinshuroads.org/Tangluo\\_Teichman/Tangluodao\\_Teichman.htm](https://qinshuroads.org/Tangluo_Teichman/Tangluodao_Teichman.htm)

<sup>26</sup> The Zhenshoushi (Garrison Commander, 镇守使) had the powers of a “Warlord” at this time of the Republic.

<sup>27</sup> The large stone stele has the characters “英雄神仙” or “Heroic Immortal” carved vertically. Annotations at the sides record that it was a gift of Guan Jinju and was presented in 1919.

Following his defeats, Guan withdrew from the troubles to Kaifang where, until his death in 1927 he was known by local people as “Old Retired Scholar Guan”.

Between 1916 and 1921, Chen Shufan had risen to “Warlord” status as the Shaanxi Provincial Military Governor and pursued the local provincial autonomy from Beijing, or home-rule, mentioned by Sir Eric Teichman. But after 1921 he was deposed by the “Christian” Warlord Feng Yuxiang (冯玉祥, 1882-1948) and he fled south with his army taking temporary refuge in Hanzhong where it was likely he kept his home valley safe and protected it from bandits. Then after 1921 things changed in Hanzhong as new officials and garrisons arrived who were more corrupt than in the past and Chen Shufan fled south. Opium poppy plantings increased dramatically and bandits took over outlying towns. Finally, the settlement of Guluba became unsafe for foreigners and missionaries in the face of the everyday presence of bandits and roaming armies armed with modern weapons.

After a time of wandering and fighting in Sichuan, Chen Shufan retired to the East and later supported the Nanjing and Chongqing Governments, as well as the United Front. He opposed the resumption of the Civil War by Jiang Jieshi after the defeat of Japan and died in Hangzhou in 1949. The local commanders who kept Hanzhong safe between 1914 and 1920 went various ways. They all continued to support the Republic and the resistance against Japan, but none of them fled to Taiwan in 1949.

### **Robbers storm Guluba and the Vicariate moves**

Gheddo (2000) continues:

*“In 1930 there was a serious matter: the assault by a gang of bandits on the citadel of Christian Guluba, the seat of the Vicariate Apostolic of Hanzhong, where the principal works of the mission were located with about 800 inhabitants. Robbery, organized in bands, has been an endemic disease in China, but after the revolt of the Boxers it had become for many a normal way of living. Since the beginning of this century, and especially after 1912 when the central government lost its authority, the bands of brigands began to grow into real armies, creating a terrible scourge for the people. Mons. Lorenzo Balconi (Balconi, 1946) recorded that in May 1929, a brigand chief by the name of Wang Sanchoen (ie Wang Sanchun, 王三春), who had an army of 30,000 men, sent him an ambassador. ‘In the letter he said he had always been a friend of the missionaries and of having protected them and also wanted to be a friend of the new Apostolic Vicar. So he asked a small favour, being sure it was one I would not deny him: that is, to send him ten thousand rifles, one hundred thousand cartridges, a hundred hand guns and some machine guns. I could add to taste a bit of medicine for his soldiers, protesting that for all this he would be very grateful. The courier left the next day with a direct response to the ringleader, in which, declaring myself a much honoured friend, I expressed all my displeasure at not being able to meet his noble desires. I did not have weapons and ammunition, and I therefore could not provide them’.*

*The danger of Wang Sanchun’s displeasure and the army camp both went away. However the rumour that the Bishop had a cache of weapons still circulated, and a*

*year later another robber, Kao Chou-tchen (Gao Zhouchen), came with a band of about 3,000 communist rebels who lived by pillage. In the night between 11 and 12 October 1930, Kao's robbers surrounded Guluba and, using bamboo ladders, jumped the walls and penetrated the first fence. They then broke down the doors and entered the courtyards of the mission: "A thousand men rushed inside shouting loudly: 'Pan-k'ai le-leao, pan-k'ai le-leao': The robbers! The robbers! In the residence they invaded every corner of every room to rummage. The closed doors were smashed with sledgehammers and crates were opened with crowbars. A well-established residence like Guluba, which was also a refuelling mission, obviously had some useful material. They took the opportunity to change all their torn and dirty clothes, each dressing in up to two and even three suits. In short, they took what would still allow them to walk, considering this the best way to take away more things by leaving their hands free. More than half the windows were shattered; altars, furniture, chairs and pews were broken in pure vandalism. All that did not seem useful was piled in the yard and before leaving they made a great fire. The books, you can well imagine, were the first to be burned".*

*But the robbers were primarily looking for weapons. Failing to find any, they carried off thirty hostages, including four priests. The priests were one Chinese, Luca Chang and three Italians, Salvatore Filia, Emilio Ghislanzoni and Rodolfo Mazzoli. Eight Canossian Sisters were taken hostage but were released at the last minute at the insistence of the brigand chief, who declared himself a Catholic! The story of how the hostages were taken by the robbers for three months and then released is a fascinating adventure story and it was later written down by Father Salvatore Filia (in a dramatic, but also ironic style!). It was first serialized in "The Catholic Missions" and then published as a book (Filia, 1931)."*

The PIME document believes that the bandits who breached the wall at Guluba were "communists". This was perhaps a common label for bandits among missionaries at the time. But the raiders may not have been Red Army guerrillas as before 1932, while agents from the southern Soviets were sometimes present in southern Shaanxi they were apparently not there in force but more for reconnaissance and negotiation. In late 1932, the 4<sup>th</sup> Front Army of the Chinese Workers' and Peasants' Red Army certainly passed through southern Shaanxi but crossed quickly into Sichuan *via* ancient Shu Roads and created the Northern Sichuan Soviet at Tongjiang (near present day Bazhong) in the Da Ba Mountains. So in 1933 or 1934 it may have been better supported to blame communists. There were more skirmishes in Southern Shaanxi in 1935 involving Zhu De's Red Army on the outskirts of the Long March which the 4<sup>th</sup> Front Army then joined, bringing the story of the Northern Sichuan Soviet to an end. It seems to the present writer that the bandits who came to Guluba in 1929 would certainly have been led by the famous bandit leader Wang Sanchun and it is also possible the second group that arrived in 1930 was sent by Wang Sanchun (who was in control of Zhenba Xian at that time) to find weapons but otherwise they may simply have been opportunistic local bandits rather than communists.

Another question is whether there actually were rifles and other modern weapons at Guluba? Teichman (1920) says that "When trouble comes, the gates are shut, the community fetches out its arms" but it is not fully clear whether he meant firearms or simply clubs and other more old fashioned means of defence. According to Smith (1901), before the Boxer uprising, Catholic "fortresses" were common and included



defensive walls and modern weapons. But it is likely that after the Uprising, the wisdom of this was questioned. The presence of such weapons was more likely to make the settlement a target than provide for its defence. The present writer believes that it is very unlikely there were military grade weapons stored at Guluba in 1929 and the descriptions in Nani (2003) of the preparations being made at Guluba for possible attacks after the fall of the Qing in 1911 support this conclusion.

The mission site at Guluba seems to have been abandoned after 1934 when Mons. Balconi left, and it also seems that at least some of the Canossian Sisters went to Hong Kong at that time. By then, it had become clear that Guluba was not equipped to resist modern bandit armies, let alone the real armies that were starting to appear in 1934, and was becoming unsafe. In 1935, the PIME History records that bandits again broke into Guluba and caused extensive damage. After this event, it seems that the Guluba site was finally abandoned when the foreign missionaries moved to the relative safety of Hanzhong and to other large towns including some in the province of Henan.

If 1934/35 was the end of the period of occupation of Guluba by the Italian Catholic mission, it was not the end of the story for the Guluba site. Following the Japanese invasion in 1937, by 1938 it was not safe for the Tianjin and Beiping University students to stay near the east coast. In response, students of three Universities (Beiping University, 北平大学、Beiping Normal University, 北平师大 and the Tienjin Northern Ocean Engineering Academy, 北洋工学院) were moved to Shaanxi with some being resettled in the Hanzhong area. The students now belonged to what was called the National Northwest United Universities (国立西北联合大学) and Guluba, Nanzheng, Chenggu and Mianxian all became the locations of various departments and colleges. For example, the college at Guluba was the National Northwest Engineering Academy (国立西北工学院).

In the years that followed, the United Universities were the scene of upheaval and protest as students called for firmer resistance to Japan. The students also actively supported the local community when trouble arrived such as when Nanzheng and Hanzhong were bombed by Japanese aeroplanes on a number of occasions. The United Universities lasted until 1945 when the component groups started to separate out and move back to major cities. However, not all of them went back to the East. The Engineering Academy returned to Tianjin but when the present Northwest University in Xi'an was formed, it included components of the United Universities. Others became part of today's Northwest Agricultural and Forestry Technology University in Yangling.

### ***Foreign Missions leave and the situation today***

The story of the Vicar Apostolic and the missionary Fathers after 1935 and through the war years is a little complex and sometimes vague. There were people appointed to the position of Apostolic Vicar of Hanzhong but not all were located in Hanzhong and some were located in Henan from where they apparently managed Hanzhong affairs and liaised with the Japanese who were, at that time, Axis Allies with Italy. But after years of trouble due to bandits and roaming soldiers in the mountains, the

missions had already been spending most of their time on the Hanzhong Plain rather than travelling to remote sub-prefectures such as Foping and Zhenba and it is reasonable to assume it was prudent for them all to move into the larger cities to live at this time. But from the patchy records available it is rather hard to be clear about the exact sequence of events between 1935 and the end of the Civil War in 1949 as sources are scattered.

Some reports from Protestant Missionaries seem to indicate that the Hanzhong area was more peaceful and tolerant to missionaries than many other places during this time. However, the situation of the Italian missionaries in Hanzhong and relations with local Chinese were complicated because Italy was a member of the Axis powers together with Germany and Japan. The missionaries had to fight hard to avoid internment at one time and faced disapprobation and pressure from students and others for the allegiances of their home country. But they certainly suffered no less than anyone else when Hanzhong and Nanzheng were bombed heavily in 1939 and their Cathedral was destroyed. They came under specific stress in Hanzhong in 1941 from Chinese when Italy recognised the Nanjing government of Wang Jingwei and in Henan in 1943 from Japanese when Italy capitulated in Europe. In the end, a group of missionaries and some Canossian Sisters were sent to Lüeyang and confined to a temple (as the “Thirty Spies”). They were apparently only set free after the US 4<sup>th</sup> Air Force started operating from the Hanzhong Airport in 1944.

Despite the many problems brought into the Hanzhong area, and particularly to the Italian missionaries, by global, international and civil wars, in 1948 the Hanzhong mission was intact and its Priests were continuing their work with local Christian communities. The local communities had survived hard times on quite a number of occasions since Fr. Étienne Faber arrived after crossing the Qinling from Xi’an in 1635 and were certainly still intact in 1948. The Superior General of PIME, P. Luigi Risso visited Hanzhong between 18 November and 15 December in 1948 and recorded his impressions as follows (PIME, 2012):

*“In Hanchung I found the most perfect peace. Beyond the great chain of Qinling breathes a different atmosphere and it seems that these high mountains stop the cold north winds, as well as preserve the region from other kinds of wind that upset many parts of China. I was able to go to places where P. Crescitelli shed his blood; visit the tomb of the holy missionary Stefano Le Fevre<sup>28</sup>, so venerated by Christians and pagans, and to see the places where the Franciscan Fr. Giovanni da Triora<sup>29</sup> carried out his apostolate among pitfalls and persecutors. I visited the beautiful Chenggu plain of Christianity, all with beautiful churches and residences, and went up to the grand Guluba residence, situated in a beautiful valley between the mountains. Everywhere I have found the Fathers intent on their work, under the leadership of Bishop Maggi, just recently appointed Bishop of this beautiful Diocese. At the mission I passed twenty-six days of great peace and comfort, and leaving I felt a great pain thinking that maybe all this peaceful work will soon be disturbed and perhaps shut down by the red wave that is sweeping inexorably across China.”*

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<sup>28</sup> Stefano Le Fevre was the name used by Italians for Étienne Faber, who was French. Like many early missionaries, there have been a number of variants of his name using Latin, the language of the user or the origin country of the Priest.

<sup>29</sup> Franciscan Brother who spent 8 years in Hanzhong 1804-1812, but was forced to leave and later martyred in Changsha in 1816 during a time of general persecution. Beatified in 1900.

Following the establishment of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949 by Mao Zedong in Tian'enmen Square, foreign missions and missionaries again became unwelcome in China. By 1954, foreign priests had left and Chinese Christian communities once again faced changing times with the same forbearance that had seen them survive through the centuries before. Hanzhong now has a new Cathedral (completed in 2010 after work was delayed following the 2008 earthquake) and it seems that the Church at Xiaozhai, where the first Church was built is still operational and well cared for.

However, the present day Guluba site is in relatively poor condition. A number of former buildings, including the Cathedral, have been dismantled and removed and the Canossian Sisters' orphanage is in ruins and dangerous to enter (see Figure 9). There are some memorial stones to the National Northwest Engineering Academy use of the site after 1938 but not a lot of information about the mission. The main missionaries' accommodation is mostly safe to occupy and is being used by local Catholics. At the time of a visit in June 2012 it had an exhibition around the inner corridors of the main "Siheyuan" (四合院) of some of the photographs taken by Fr. Leone Nani during his stay at Guluba between 1904 and 1914 (published in Nani, 2003). The restored area also now has a Chapel that is being used for Catholic services.



Figure 9 Relic of the Canossian Sisters Orphanage at Guluba, June 2012.

There have been proposals to renovate and repair the buildings that remain in reasonable condition but the Orphanage is obviously beyond repair now. The combination of historical presences of the former mission and the National Northwest Engineering Academy of the United Universities seem to make it a multi-purpose historical site and it may be possible to have more work undertaken in the future.

## Summary of records of the Shu Roads

We have discussed the activity generated along the Shu Roads by Catholic missions and missionaries in western China since early times, and especially those that involved Hanzhong. Activities in northern Sichuan have so far been harder to establish than those in Hanzhong but Catholic missions to Hanzhong and northern Sichuan have been using the Shu Roads since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The activities in northern Sichuan will have to be presented elsewhere. A summary of the main events covered by this document follows:

Records of direct experience or documentation of Shu Roads start with **Marco Polo** (Yule and Cordier, 1903) when China was known to the west as “Cathay”. Marco Polo was not a Priest, but it is likely that he was Catholic and (more significantly) his book was used by many Catholic Priests to plan their travels in China. Marco Polo described the hard roads to Shu accurately but he did not remember the Plank Roads of the Qinling.

Jesuit missions were established in China during the Ming Period. One of the famous Priests of this time was **Fr. Martino Martini**. (SJ, 1614-1661, Wèi Kuāngguó, 卫匡国). Fr. Martini left China as the Ming gave way to Qing and returned to Europe. In Europe, in 1655, he published a set of maps of the Provinces of China called “Novus Atlas Sinensis” or “The New Atlas of China”. His map of Shaanxi contains what is clearly the main road between the Wei Valley and Hanzhong and his description of Hanzhong provides an account of the plank roads that he claims were built by Zhang Liang. Fr. Martini’s account was often repeated by other Jesuits in later years who published information about the history and geography of China such as **Louis Le Comte** (SJ, 1655-1728, Li Ming, 李明) in *Le Compte* (1696) and **Jean-Baptiste du Halde** (SJ, 1674-1743) in *du Halde* (1732). It is not clear who was the source for the description or mapping information reported by Martino Martini. One possibility was that it was the Jesuit missionary **Fr. Étienne Faber** (SJ, 1568-1659; Fang Dewang, 方德望). Fr. Faber was the person who first went to Hanzhong by the Shu Roads from Xi’an to develop Christian communities in southern Shaanxi. Fr. Faber built the first Church and his Tomb became famous among local Chinese so that he became a local deity.

Later, a Franciscan missionary **Fr. Basilio Brollo da Gemona** (OFM, Ye Zunxiao 葉尊孝, 1648-1704) became the first Vicar Apostolic of Hanzhong. He then travelled by the Lianyun Road to Hanzhong in 1701 to revive the Catholic mission among the local communities of Chinese Christians. The communities had been originally established by Fr. Étienne Faber. Fr. Brollo’s description of the stages of the road from Xi’an to Hanzhong was provided by him for others to use and is of great interest today for Shu Road studies. One of his brother Priests was Pro-Vicar of Northern Sichuan based in Chengdu. This was **Fr. Jean Basset** (MEP, 1662-1707, Xiàng Rìshēng, 向日升) who came to Xi’an near the end of Fr. Basilio Brollo’s life. On his way back to northern Sichuan, Fr. Basset stayed 20 days in Hanzhong to support the mission. More documentation is being sought to find out if Fr. Basset left as clear descriptions of the Jinniu Road as Fr. Brollo did of the Lianyun Road.

For a period that included most of the 18<sup>th</sup> and half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries, foreign missionaries were discouraged from working in China. It became dangerous for Priests to continue this work although in outer areas many did so. After the Opium Wars (1840-1860) and subsequent unequal treaties, many new groups of missionaries arrived in China to pursue their missions under the protection of the Unequal Treaties and the threat of intervention by foreign forces. They included Catholic and Protestant missionaries and they spread far and wide through China. At this time many religious and secular travellers wrote accounts of the Shu Roads. These included accounts by **Alexander Wylie** (British Missionary) in 1868, the German explorer **Baron Ferdinand von Richthofen** who travelled the Shu Roads in 1872, a Vincentian Priest and Natural Historian Abbé Armand David in 1873 and a Russian Expedition led by **Col. Sosnovsky** in 1874. Of these, only Abbé Armand David was a Catholic missionary. However, they all provided important information on the Shu Roads, about missions they visited or saw and about the state of China at the time.

**M. L' Abbé Armand David** (CM, 1826-1900, Tan Weidao, 譚卫道) was a French Natural Historian and Vincentian Priest who made three journeys in China studying the wildlife and collecting specimens of the flora and fauna as well as sampling geology and paleontology from the Qinling. Among other finds he was the first European to see and describe the Great Panda. In his third expedition in 1873 he explored the Qinling and the Hanzhong area. He knew that Baron von Richthofen had travelled the main Shu Road across the Qinling (the Lianyun Road) and decided to use the Baoye Road instead. His travel diary is an important source for information on the condition of this famous Qinling Shu Road in 1873. In Hanzhong, Fr. David was hosted by Christian communities and an Italian Franciscan Priest **Fr. Pius Vidi** (OFM, 1842-1906, Wei Mingde, 魏明德). For Fr. Vidi, the road between Xi'an and Hanzhong was the main road and source of communications, mail and supplies. Fr. Vidi also met the Russian Expedition of Col. Sosnovsky in 1874 and he was an example of a missionary who worked away from cities in the local Christian communities and avoided officials and soldiers – at least before he became a Bishop and Coadjutor Vicar Apostolic Emeritus of Shaanxi in 1887.

Alexander Wylie, Col. Sosnovsky, Abbé Armand David and many of the missionaries who came to the area made use of the river route from or to the Hankou concession in Hubei to come to or leave from Hanzhong. This was an important route to Hanzhong and also to Sichuan but it was not a Qin Shu Road. Rather it was a linking route between the Shu Road system and other places – in this case Hubei. But its historical significance for Shu Roads should not be discounted as the arrival of armies from Chu at Hanzhong *via* this route in the Warring States period possibly prompted Qin to build the Plank Roads and convince Shu to build the Jinniu Road along which Qin armies annexed Shu. Missionaries going to Sichuan after 1862 almost all travelled as far as possible along the Yangtze River and often used river transport to go far into Sichuan as well as Hanzhong.

In 1887, the Vicariate Apostolic of Hanzhong was created by the Catholic Church and a significant centre for Italian Franciscan missionaries was built at **Guluba**, near Chenggu. The history of the Guluba settlement has been discussed in some detail in this document. Guluba had been the site of a church for a long time and was an operational Christian community when Fr. Brollo visited in 1701-1702. The road between Baocheng and Baoji was the main road for communications between

Hanzhong and the Shaanxi mission headquarters in Xi'an during the 50 years of the settlement. **Mons. Lorenzo Balconi** (Balconi, 1946) reported how when he was going to Xi'an for a meeting at one time he met a number of new priests on their way to Hanzhong at Liuba. It was simply a normal event. In the early days, the Guluba base also supported missions at remote places such as Yanzhibian, Ningqiang, Lüeyang, Mianxian, Liuba, Foping, Hanyin, Zhenba and others. Travelling to these places meant using the "linking Shu roads" of the Hanzhong plain and adjacent mountains. If records of the journeys to these places can be found they will be very valuable. During the stay of **Fr. Leone Nani** (Nani, 2003), Guluba and Hanzhong experienced the pains of the end of the Qing and start of the Republic. Guluba survived and played a stabilizing role in the events.

In 1917 and 1921, **Sir Eric Teichman** and **Brig. Gen. George Pereira** came through these places and observed the effects of social dislocation, warlords and banditry. Teichman travelled the Tangluo Road as well as the main road to Chengdu and also travelled a number of off-roads in the East of the Qinling. Pereira travelled the Ziwu Road and an off road section of the Micang Road. The uncontrolled banditry eventually became so bad that the mission at Guluba at first stopped supporting the remote places and later abandoned the main site itself and moved the mission headquarters to major cities. Civil and International Wars later put great pressure on Chinese and foreigners. This document outlines how these events played out in Guluba and how the Italian missionaries left in 1935 after well organised bandit raids, including at least one by **Wang Sanchun's** bandit group, made it unsafe. The foreign Priests left the buildings free until the **National Northwest United Universities** made use of them in the war effort. Guluba has clearly had a diverse and significant place in the history of the Han River Plain making it part of the history of the Shu Roads system.

The story of the **Hanzhong Vicariate Apostolic** continued into the post-revolutionary period until once again, foreigner missionaries were not welcome and Chinese Christians were left once more to make their own way. But by this time, a significant change had come over the Shu Roads. The **new motor highway between Chengdu and Xi'an** was completed in time for the war efforts between 1941 and 1945. Suddenly, it was possible to drive a vehicle from Chengdu to Xi'an and the hard roads to Shu were never quite the same. Since 1655, Catholic missionaries had moved through the aging road network of the Shu Road system. From these times, we have obtained clear and valuable descriptions of the old Shu Roads and their enduring hardship. In the future, new information concerning the Sichuan missionaries can be added if additional material can be located.

In 1949, as the PRC came into being, **Herold Weins** published his comprehensive Thesis and paper on the history and geography of the Shu Roads from earliest historical times of foot traffic to the present day of motor traffic (Weins, 1949a,b). A little earlier, in 1943, **Joseph Needham** had been travelling the Shu Roads at a time when military reconnaissance was being undertaken to evaluate bridge loads and capacity of the new road. But perhaps the hard road to Shu was still not quite tamed at that time. Joseph Needham wrote a poem based on a 10 day forced stay brought about by a culvert being washed out near Jianmen Guan on the new motor road. Its final lines capture the spirit of forbearance that all travellers needed to cope with the ancient Roads to Shu:

“After ten days we were going on our way.  
 Mr. Wang, the highway engineer,  
 Poising his chopsticks, inviting to eat, said, ‘I am afraid,  
 Our Chinese roads are really very bad.’  
 We (the Hellenes) replied, ‘Not at all, they may do with some improvement  
 But the Chinese weather is certainly sometimes rather severe.’”

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[Description: In her book “Did Marco Polo Go To China?” (first published by Secker & Warburg, London, in 1995), Dr Frances Wood claims that Marco did not go to China and that he ‘probably never travelled much further than the family’s trading post on the Black Sea and in Constantinople’. F.W.’s thesis, leading to the above conclusion, is based on a number of principal arguments and a few secondary ones as props. It should be mentioned that most of these arguments have been ‘aired’ by various writers since the beginning of the 19th century, but were never taken seriously by Polan scholars.]

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## ENDNOTES

[1] Notes on the translations provided for this document.

The material accessed for this document was originally in a number of languages other than English, specifically Latin, French, Italian and Spanish. If this document is to go beyond a general information sheet, the translations will need to be checked by a professional. But, until that happens, what has been done to obtain the draft translations? First, the base material had to be checked and scanned. Some of the material must have been transcribed from written letters and the styles of individuals, spelling and punctuation etc were all somewhat variable and often in error – either in the original or in the transcription. For French, Spanish and Italian, the material can be specified as the “set” language in Microsoft Word and the spelling checker can then pick up many errors in presentation and transcription as well as some questionable grammar. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be the case for Latin. The first step was for the present writer to read the material and understand the general content of the document. Then Google Translate was used with initial preparation to optimise the result. For example, the languages usually needed to use all of their correctly written special symbols and pass the spelling checker. There are options to explore alternatives in Google Translate and generally you must (1) get the sentence correctly prepared and presented; (2) try alternatives offered in the result box and (3) have a fair idea of (at least) the general content of the text before using Google Translate. If the correct spellings are used and special characters are all correct, the results for French, Italian and Spanish have been good. Latin is much harder and needs the person involved to understand the basic meaning of the sentence. This is surprising for a “dead” language but it is possible that “Church” Latin has its own style. In the material translated here, the Latin from Martino Martini’s book was the most difficult as the old type settings added complexity and room for error (especially “f” and “s”). If only there were a Latin spelling check! It is hoped that – despite all these issues – the translations seem to provide a sufficiently accurate idea of the original material for the purposes of this draft document.

[2] The Nestorian Stele.

The PIME document records: “The ‘Stele of Xi’an’ was engraved in 781 A.D. and rediscovered in 1625. It is preserved in a local museum and is a black stone weighing 1,728 kg., 2.70 m high, 0.925 wide at the top and 1.02 m wide at the bottom. It is supported by a huge turtle such as the Chinese use for all the gravestones as a sign of longevity. The stele contains 1800 Chinese characters and other Syrian symbols with the names of 70 bishops and Nestorian priests who then worked in China. The Stele says that in the year 636 AD, the priest Alopen (A’luoben 阿罗本) came from the kingdom of Ta Tsin (Judea, Persia, Chaldea or Syria). He came with other monks who brought books and images belonging to the Christian religion. The inscription goes on to explain the new doctrine of God, creation, sin and its consequences, the incarnation and redemption, as well as the rites.” Gen. George Pereira (Pereira, 1926, as compiled by Sir Francis Younghusband) has a slightly different view of the same item: “The Nestorian tablet for which Sian is famous was erected in A.D. 787 in honour of the bishop Izadbuzid of Walk. It is the earliest monument of Christianity in China and dates back to the second year of Hsüan Chung of the T’ang dynasty. It is an oblong

black piece of stone, shining like polished marble, 6 or 7 feet high and 3½ feet wide. It stands on a tortoise, and is surmounted by a top piece 3 feet high, on which are carved entwining dragons. The monument is said to have been dug up early in 1625 near Chow Chih. Pereira was the first European after the Boxer Rising to visit it. It then stood in the open outside the west gate. Later a foreigner had the original stone copied, and tried to carry off the original. But his plans were prevented, and for greater safety and better preservation the tablet has been removed to the old Confucian temple in the city, near the south wall. This building is now known as the Peilin or “Forest of Tablets”, and contains 424 tablets. Mostly of the T’ang dynasty, but some are of the Sung dynasty.”

### [3] Account of the miraculous mission of Fr. Faber to Hanzhong

This account was included in the account of the Jesuit Mission to China written by Louis Le Comte and published in 1696 (Le Comte, 1696). Le Comte had been travelling in Shaanxi and heard these stories first hand – probably in Xi’an. Le Comte was previously quoted for his description of the road between Baoji and Hanzhong. The text is from the English translation published in 1697. Notes in [square brackets] indicate alternative suggestions to the translation based on the original French. One note is especially important. It is the serious translation error indicated by [translation error, should be twelve, 12]. The estimate of 12 days is accurate and shows Le Comte must have obtained his information from people who had travelled the road – even if he did not travel there himself as claimed in the other quotation.

“Among those extraordinary Men, Father *Faber*, a *Frenchman*, distinguished himself above the rest, I had the happiness to tarry some time in that Province which was allotted to his Care; and I have, after so many Years, found the precious remains there, which are the necessary consequences of Holiness. Those who were Witnesses of his Actions, tell to their Children the Miracles which he wrought to confirm them in their Faith, and although one need not believe all which they relate of him, we cannot nevertheless deny that God did in many occasions give an extraordinary concurrence in several great things which he enterprised [exploited] for His Glory. It is worth knowing after what manner he founded the Mission of *Hanchum*, a Town of the first Rank in *Xensi*, two [translation error, should be twelve, 12] days Journey distant from the Capital. He was invited thither by a *Mandarin*, and a small number of Christians which he found there, made him the more laborious to increase their number. God put into his hands a means of doing this which he never expected. One of the great Boroughs, which in *China* are as big as the Towns, was then over-run by a prodigious multitude of Locusts, which eat up all the Leaves of the Trees, and gnawed the Grass to the very Roots.

The Inhabitants after having used all imaginable means, thought fit to apply themselves to Father *Faber*, whose Repute was every where talked of. The Father took from thence an occasion to explain the principal Mysteries of our Faith, and added that if they would submit themselves thereto, they should not only be delivered from the present Plague, but that also they should obtain innumerable Blessings, and eternal Happiness, They embraced it willingly, and the father to keep his word with them, marched in Ceremony into the Highways in his Stole and his Surplice; and sprinkled up and down Holy Water, accompanying his Action with the Prayers of the Church, but especially with a lively Faith. God heard the Voice of his Servant, and the next day all the Insects disappeared.

But the People, whose minds were wholly bent upon the things of this World, as soon as they saw themselves delivered, neglected the Counsel which the Missionary had given them. They were therefore immediately punished, and the plague grew worse than it was before. Then they accused one the other of their want of Faith; they ran in Crowds to the Father's House, and casting themselves at his Feet: we will not rise up Father, said they till you have pardoned us. We confess our Fault, and protest that if you will a second time deliver us from this Affliction with which Heaven threatens us, the whole Borough will immediately acknowledge your God, who alone can work such great Miracles.

The Father, to increase their Faith, made them beg a great while. At last inspired as before, he sent up his Prayer, and sprinkled his Holy-Water, and by the next day there was not an Insect to be found in the Fields. Then the whole Borough being brought over to the Truth, followed the guidance God's Holy Spirit; they were all instructed and formed into a Church, which though it was [has been] abandoned for some years, is still reckoned one of the devoutest [most fervent] Missions in *China*.

They say also of this Father that he has been carried over Rivers [and] thro' the Air, that they have seen him in an ecstasy, that he foretold his own Death, and did several other such Wonders; but the greatest Miracle of all was his Life, which he spent in the continual exercise of all the Apostolic Virtues, in a profound Humility, in a severe Mortification, in a settled Patience, proof against all sorts of Injuries, in a flaming [ardent] Charity, and a tender Devotion to the Mother of God, all which he practised to his Death; to the Edification, and I may say the Admiration even of the Idolaters."

[4] Brief introduction to the Catholic Church as it is met in this document

*[This brief introduction to the Catholic Church is a personal view and provided to give a reader an idea of how I understand the people I am writing about. It has no references but the usual introductory resources such as Wikipedia etc can start people who wish to know more for themselves on the necessary journey.]* The Catholic Church, whose Priests and emissaries in China are the subject of this document, refers to the Church of Rome, or Roman Catholic Church. It is the largest branch of the Christian religion in the world today and the one which dominated Europe until the protestant reformation in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century. Christianity, like Buddhism, started with a charismatic founder and a group of disciples who went out to spread the words of the founder to the world. The two religions both had early internal conflicts and schisms leading to there being different (often warring) denominations with varying ideas and beliefs. However, they have both accepted some diversity within the primary factions. The first main schism of the Christian Church mirrored the splitting of the Roman Empire into Eastern and Western branches in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. In the west, the Bishop of Rome led the Church and consolidated what is today the Roman Catholic Church. The Bishops of the Catholic Church considered themselves to be the direct successors of Jesus' Apostles and accepted that the Bishop of Rome (the Pope) was the direct successor to St. Peter's authority and mission. Within the Church, there has always been diversity of opinion among various groups, as there has been in Buddhism and most of the world's churches. In the Catholic Church, diversity has been accommodated within the general rules and rites by decision of the Roman Curia, the ruling council of the Church. An aspect of the Catholic Church that many regard as characteristic has been the special position of Mary, the mother of Jesus. The devotion to Mary among Catholics has been likened to the devotion shown to the Guanyin (觀音) by Eastern Buddhists. Many branches, or Orders, have arisen from the example of

special people who became saints or gained great spiritual fame and inspired people to follow specific aspects and ideas that could (often after initial conflict) be accommodated within the Church. These have included, for example, Jesuits who followed the teachings of St. Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556); Dominicans who followed the teachings of St. Dominic of Osma (1170-1221); Franciscan Brothers who followed teachings developed by St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226); and Augustinians who followed the teachings of St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430). In a similar way to Buddhism, Priests and Nuns of the orders do not marry and often form cloistered Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods to carry on separate but complementary service. Some of the orders have missionary activity as a particular emphasis and provided priests who were moved to live in countries away from Europe and spread Roman Christianity. Such orders often came from those known as “mendicant” orders because they went out into the community rather than stay in cloisters. Dominicans, Franciscans and Augustinians are three of the four main such orders. In China, the first order to arrive was the Franciscans who sent a number of missionaries to China during the 14<sup>th</sup> Century. Portuguese Jesuits were dominant in the Indian Ocean and China following the division of the world into Spanish and Portuguese interests in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century and had great influence on the China mission. In the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Franciscan and other orders (including Augustinian and Lazarist) also came to China as missionaries and in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century the various orders fought bitterly over the Chinese Rites issue. This is discussed briefly in the text. All of the orders up to this time were controlled by Rome. Later, French missionaries in orders based in France (such as the Vincentians) or were part of the French mission called the Missions Étrangères de Paris (MEP) came to China – especially to the south and south-west. The MEP was also part of the French government’s colonial ambitions at the time as well as later. All of the Catholic missions that came to China worked within the basic rules and rites of the Roman Church, accepted the primacy of the Pope and spread what was (in their opinion) the one true form of the Christian faith. Even if Chinese were not confused by the various orders (Buddhism had just as many variants) they certainly became so when large numbers of Protestants of many and various kinds arrived in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to spread their own ideas of the “one true religion” and Chinese could well still be more than a little bemused. By then the Catholic Church was strongly established in China and has continued to be so.

[5] Notes on titles and abbreviations associated with the Catholic missions.

There are many abbreviations and terms that you meet in the references to this document. They depend on the language being used and there are too many to cover here. As to those used or met in the document, the first type is the designation of the missionaries. A sample is:

Fr. -- Frater (Latin), Frère (French) (“Brother” or sometimes “Friar”)

B. -- Beatus, Beati (“Blessed”)

Mgr., Msgr., Mons. -- Monseigneur, Monsignor (“My Lord”)

P. -- Pius (“Dutiful”)

P. -- Pater (Latin), Père (French), Padre (Italian), (“Father”)

In this document, the term used most has been “Fr.” as all of the missionaries are members of a non-English speaking (eg French, Italian, Spanish or Portuguese) Catholic Order and the term “Brother” is suitable for them all. Mons. is used in

referring to Vicars Apostolic. These people had the rank of Bishop, and their Vicariates had the rank of Dioceses. The term Monsignor is equivalent to “My Lord” as used in English speaking countries for a Bishop. In some cases, the abbreviation “P.” has been retained for the term “Father”. However, it is sometimes ambiguous being also used for Pius and can look like an initial for a given name. So, “Fr.” is the preferred term in this document. Often “Fr.” is used in the simpler (eg) “Fr. Brollo” form rather than use a full name such as B. Basillio Brollo OFM etc. In addition, in the case of Dominican, Franciscan and Augustinian Brothers the abbreviation “Fr.” can be read as “Friar” since they are often called “Mendicant Friars”. Finally, if an English speaker interpreted “Fr.” As “Father” it would not be a problem.

For some French missionaries, the term Abbé has been retained as it is most commonly used for these men in other texts. Strictly this means “Abbot” which is a high position, but in France in the past it has also been used as a general term for “clergy” like “Rev.” or “Reverend” in English speaking countries. So l’Abbé Armand David is like the Rev. Herman David in England or the US. He is not an “Abbot”.

The missionaries belong to a number of different orders or missions with established abbreviations. The most commonly used in this document are:

- SJ -- Societas Jesu (“Society of Jesus” or Jesuits)
- OFM -- Ordo Fratrum Minorum (Franciscans)
- CM -- Congregatio Missionis (Vincentians or Lazarists)
- MEP -- Missions Étrangères de Paris (Paris Missionary Society)
- OSA – Order of St. Augustine (Augustinians)
- OP - Ordo Praedicatorum (Dominicans)

Another abbreviation (not an order) commonly used in this document is:

PIME -- Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions

For other terms and abbreviations as well as information on the various orders involved in Catholic missionary work in China, a useful web site can be reached at: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>

[6] Comments by P. Piassetsky on the meeting with Fr. Vidi

P. Piassetsky (1884, Volume 2, Chapter 1) records the meeting between the Russian Expedition of Col. Sosnovsky and Fr. P. Vidi. Col. Sosnovsky was the leader of the expedition was but it was the Medical Dr. Pavel Yakovlevich Piassetsky who wrote the diary that was published in 1883 and translated into English and French soon after. The Diary records:

*“April 13<sup>th</sup>. ...*

*... Two well-dressed young Chinamen made their way through the crowd to speak to us, and not being able to make themselves understood, they made the sign of the cross. It would be difficult to describe the impression this simple action made upon me in the midst of this crowd of strangers with whom I had nothing in common; this sign, needing no other explanation, told me that these were brothers. They took us under their protection and led us to the door of the house reserved for our use. I*

gathered from their talk that there were other Chinese Christians in the town, and that one of them could speak Latin (*houa*).

.....

The Chinese Christians returned with two others, bringing a letter from an Italian missionary, Father Vidi, from Verona, with greetings on our arrival, and informing us that he had lived eight years at Han-Tchong-Fou, and greatly desired to make our acquaintances. This letter, written in Latin, was sent to me by Sosnowsky with a request that I would answer it, which I immediately did. We continued with our unpacking.....

.....

*April 16th.* Visit from Father Vidi, the Verona missionary, who came with a Chinese Christian called Tjchan. The father was still quite young and could not have been any more than thirty-five years old, but his hand shook and his step was uncertain. He was dressed like a Chinese, his head was shaven, and he wore a long artificial tail. As he had lived seven years in China, he must have been thoroughly acquainted with the language by this time, but it was difficult to get on with him as he only knew Italian and I had not much facility in expressing myself in Latin. He spoke very highly of the Chinese, and praised their kindness and industry but accused the higher classes, and especially the lesser officials, of a good deal of presumption. He questioned us on the object of our journey and could scarcely conceal the dread he had of our eastern railways, wishing much to know if they were approaching Kouldja. Seven years in China had not made him indifferent to European politics, or to the amount of attention the West was devoting to the Eastern Question. He was probably interested in Kouldja owing to the disappearance of a missionary who had left for that country three years ago; however, he was sincerely glad to see Europeans again, and asked us all to dine with him that night.

The Catholic mission was at a considerable distance from the town, and having no horses, we were obliged to go there in palanquins. The two Chinese Christians before mentioned accompanied us, besides two policemen to each palanquin. The bearers walked fast, but kept step with each other, and notwithstanding the swinging of the palanquin I was able to note the various small retail wares sold along the roads: salt, powder, cottons, vegetables, medicines, spectacles, fans, pottery, saddles, copper pots, combs, nails, boxes, beans, wadding, vermicelli, radishes, ribbons, birds, pastry, boots, tea-oil (*tza-you*), sugar-canes, pork, candles, garments, jelly of peas (*doou-fou*), hemp, red pepper in pods, rice, plaits of hair, sweetmeats, &c., were all to be had within half a mile. The silence of the fields succeeded the noise of the town, but we very shortly came to a suburban village, then more fields, and another village, with such a number of shops that one wondered where the purchasers could come from, as every human being seemed to sell something. [This could have been Shibali Pu, 十八里铺].

The corn they cultivated was chiefly wheat and barley; there were also poppy-fields, with flowers of every shade, beans, radishes, and saffron. The clay cottages thatched with straw recalled our Russian hamlets. There were numerous little temples and mounds surmounted by slabs clearly indicating Mahomedan cemeteries; for the country folk have no common cemetery, but bury their dead in the fields near their houses. The plain was watered by a number of canals, indispensable to the culture of

rice. The mission-house was built in Chinese style, only more spacious and comfortable, and was kept very clean. We went to the church where service was taking place. On the left were twelve Chinese women on their knees and on the right twenty-five men singing at the pitch of their voices. It would not have been discreet to inquire into the number of native Christians, but the mission did not seem to make much progress, Christianity in China appearing to be a mere matter of gain, and only embraced from interested motives.”

[7] Abbé Armand David’s discussion of the shrine to Fr. Étienne Faber

“After Mass, P. Vidi and I visited a tomb that enjoys the veneration of local Christians as well as pagans. This is where the first missionary who implanted the Christian faith into this country was buried nearly two centuries ago. Tradition has not preserved here the name for this apostle, but the Chinese inscription of the tombstone says it was a French priest, belonging to the company of Jesus (I heard elsewhere that it is of P. Fabre, a native of Avignon). To him all the Christian communities of this valley of Han-chung owe their origin, and he has the reputation of a saint. His name is invoked every day, as much by the pagans as by the Christians, and his tomb is a place of rendezvous for the sick, the faithful and the infidels, who all believe in the power of his intercession. He is credited with many miracles.... But this may not always be believable. It is said that at a time of persecution, a Mandarin enemy of Christians wanted to destroy the stone that bears the Chinese inscription, but as the first hammer fell, the memorial began to shed blood, that made him relinquish this sacrilegious destruction. The margins of the slit are still shown, where it is said there are traces of miraculous blood. But here’s what I saw with my own eyes: the stone (a large block of marble in parallelogram form, planted vertically in the ground) indeed has a transverse slot, which is scorched, and reddened by some foreign matter. But it is only iron oxide, which is abundant in the mass of limestone and dissolves in the rainwater as it oozes over the edge of the slit! Fortunately, the reputation for virtue and holiness of the apostle of Han-chung is based on more serious events than this one.”

He also reported another temple (locally also attributed to Fr. Faber) that he was told about. He writes: “Another Priest venerated by Christians and pagans alike is called P. Fan (the common name for the missionary) and there is a temple in a gulley of the Qinling in his honour. The local tradition is as follows: “One day when a holy preacher was passing through the mountains, the men who carried his luggage refused to follow him, saying that the road was infested by tigers and they never passed it without someone being removed and devoured by these animals. Do not worry, said the missionary, and after having made them come along with him, they say it never again happened that a traveller was killed by a tiger in these parts. And that is why they erected a chapel to him, and the statue, representing more or less a Catholic priest in church costume is invoked every day by apprehensive passersby.” As I did not go to the place in question, what I have written is just hearsay, and I cannot guarantee the authenticity of the story or the existence of the pagoda of Fan Hsien-sheng.”

[8] Publisher’s description for P. Leone Nani’s Photographs

“The stunning photographic reportage of Father Leone Nani presents early twentieth-century China as seen through the lens of an “outsider” who brought to life the



people, places and traditions of a lost empire. The sheer quality and quantity of his pictures, the choice of subjects and handling of widely different situations, have reserved Nani the right to be considered a master of black-and-white photography. Leone Nani (1880-1935) lived in central China from 1904 to 1914. His missionary work took him to remote villages where he captured a world beyond the reach of other Westerners. Working in large format (mostly on glass plates he developed and printed himself in his mobile studio), Nani portrayed young couples, dignitaries, peasants and artisans. Equally gifted as an observer and reporter, he recorded everyday life scenes, religious ceremonies, architecture, and landscapes. Beautifully reproduced here in duotone, Nani's extraordinary material bears witness to a turbulent time in China's history: a period of transition from the Q'ing dynasty into the twentieth century world order as a republic. Father Nani's pictures closed the era of Western photographers who eagerly preserved aspects of authentic China that would have otherwise been lost."

[9] Sir Eric Teichman on Guluba (in full with comments about the route).

"There are at least three roads from Hsihsiang to Hanchung, *via* Yang Hsien, Ch'engku Hsien, and Kulupa respectively. We followed the latter, a three days' march. The path runs up the Muma Ho for some 15 li, where the hills close in on the river and bring the valley to an end, and then runs through the hills and along the river to the village of Matsung T'an, 50 li from Hsihsiang and, owing to a small rapid, the head of navigation for small boats on the Muma Ho, up to this point a placid stream. A little further on the trail leaves the main stream, which here flows down from the south, and turns up a small sandy tributary to the south-west, then turns west through low wooded hills intersected by rice fields, and then runs north-west up a small valley to reach the village of Shaho K'an, 25 li from Matsung T'an. This village lies, as its name implies, in a pleasant region of low sandy hills covered with small woods and intersected by rice fields much resembling Szechuan. For some reason or other it is largely a Mahomedan community with two mosques. In the woods one will often see heaps of old timber, carefully stacked, for the growth of a vegetable fungus called *mu erh* (wood ears), which is a much esteemed delicacy and forms quite an important article of commerce in the Han valley.

The next stage is from Shaho K'an to Kulupa, a distance of 70 li. The path runs up the narrow valley of the stream, occasionally cutting across the low wooded hills, for 30 li to the village of Sunchia P'ing, where the hills open out and encircle a little rice plain. The district of Ch'engku is here entered. The country is a maze of little wooded hills intersected by gullies growing rice, and its chief feature is the sand. The hills are of soft disintegrating sandstone, the stream is a trickle of water in a sandy bed, and the path a firm sand embankment between stream and rice fields. It is evidently an old sandstone plateau cut up into hills and gullies by the action of water, like so much of Szechuan. North of the Ch'inling Shan such a country would be a desert; here with the more abundant rainfall and its resultant vegetation, it is a garden. From Sunchia P'ing the trail continues westwards for a time up the stream, and then, as the latter gradually comes to an end, winds through the same low hills in a northerly direction until, crossing a low divide, it emerges into more open country to reach Kulupa.

The latter is a walled stronghold of the Catholics on the top of a hill and is the centre of Catholic missionary work in Southern Shensi, though the Bishop resides at

Hanchung. The Italian Fathers who have been established in this corner of Shensi for a great many years, have attained considerable power and influence in the neighbourhood. They work on different lines to the Protestant Missions, but from their point of view with greater success. Their plan is to collect orphans or other children who are not wanted by their parents, to educate them and teach them all kinds of useful industries, and to bring them up as Catholics. This is the work that is carried on at Kulupa, where there are usually some hundreds of children being brought up as members of the Catholic Church, mostly girls, as these are easier to secure. These old-established Catholic Missions usually own a good deal of land acquired in a variety of ways, and are practically self-supporting. At Kulupa an entire hill top is covered by substantial buildings and the whole surrounded by a good wall. When trouble comes, the gates are shut, the community fetches out its arms, and the brigands, or whoever they may be, pass on to easier prey.

To many Catholics the Protestant missionaries, who are usually married and live as far as possible a comfortable European family life, seem entirely out of touch with the Chinese amongst whom they are working. To many Protestants the life led by the children in such an establishment as Kulupa seems somewhat dreary, inhuman, and lacking in the comforts and interests of home life. The ideas of Catholics and Protestants in regard to Christianity and the converting of the Chinese are certainly very divergent and consequently puzzling to the latter, but they both do an enormous amount of good in different ways. The priest appears perhaps to sacrifice his life more completely to the Chinese, as he usually comes out from Europe never to return, and often lives for the rest of his days practically as a Chinese amongst the Chinese. But no missionaries of any persuasion have done more good for the Chinese people than some of the veterans of the China Inland Mission, who have passed the best part of their lives in isolated stations in Shensi and Kansu, such as Hsingan, Hanchung, Fenghsiang, Lanchou, Liangchou, Hsining, and Ninghsia, where months and years pass by without their ever seeing another foreigner. Their success in securing converts may not have been striking, but it is permissible to speculate on whether those whom they have secured are not more genuine Christians than the native Catholics. Often in spite of the basest ingratitude on the part of the Chinese, whose wounds and illnesses they tend one day, only to be passed by in the street with a scowl on the next, these noble men have laboured on year after year doing good and leavening, in however small a degree, the leaden mass of Chinese materialism. The results of their work may not always be apparent now, but they have sown a seed which cannot fail in time to produce a harvest of some kind, a harvest of which other Missions not infrequently reap the benefit. We spent the night at Kulupa, where we were most hospitably received and entertained with a banquet.

The distance to Hanchung is called 75 li. After descending for about an hour's march through gullies in the hills the track debouches on to the famous plain of Hanchung, a highly fertile, heavily cultivated, and densely populated region, stretching for a certain distance along both banks of the Han, and entirely surrounded by mountains. Another two hours' march across this plain, past the boundary between Ch'engku and Hanchung (Nanch'eng) districts, brings one to the Han River here a shallow stream flowing in a broad sandy bed, a hundred yards wide and a few feet deep. The path runs along the banks of the Han for a short distance, and then, crossing by a ferry, continues for ten li over the plain to reach the busy township of Shihpali P'u. This village, which, as its name implies, is 18 li from Hanchung, is developing into a large

town, and is evidently the centre of the through trade from Szechuan, Kansu, and Northern Shensi, which, as is usually the case in China, is driven to avoid the capital by the various tolls and dues. From here the road runs west for the rest of the way to Hanchung, passing through a rich suburb to reach the East Gate of the city.”