

flame

JESUITS AND FRIENDS IN ASIA PACIFIC TODAY July 2010



Matteo Ricci 1610–2010



many sparks one fire
many stories one history
many dreams one vision

A new name
for Jesuit Conference
and its magazine

p4

Undermined
Protecting rural
people

p10



Asia Pacific snapshots



Jesuit Buddhist dialogue

On May 10 Jesuits concerned with the study of Buddhism met in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Fr Cyril Veliath, of Sophia University in Tokyo, has a website dedicated to the Jesuit Buddhist dialogue. It contains profiles of Jesuits in our region who are involved in this dialogue.



New EAPI director

Fr Arthur Leger sj, the next director of the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI), will take up his post in June. He will succeed Fr Jeyaraj Rasiah sj. Fr Leger, a Fiji citizen, joined the Jesuits in Micronesia in 1994. He has had a long career as an educator, both before joining the Society and afterwards. He is interested in pastoral adaptation and renewal, both central questions for the EAPI.

Ricci Symposium in Macau



The Macau Ricci Institute held its International Symposium dedicated to the intellectual and humanistic Jesuit formation that Matteo Ricci brought to China. It reflected on the Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* as the basis of Jesuit Education, and on the humane aspects that Ricci and other Jesuits brought to Chinese education.



Mark Makowiecki

From Taipei with love

Students and teachers from the Fu Jen Catholic University Service Learning Centre in Taipei University recently worked in the houses for the dying in Kolkata, India. The houses were founded by Blessed Mother Teresa. They met people different from themselves and did little things with great love.



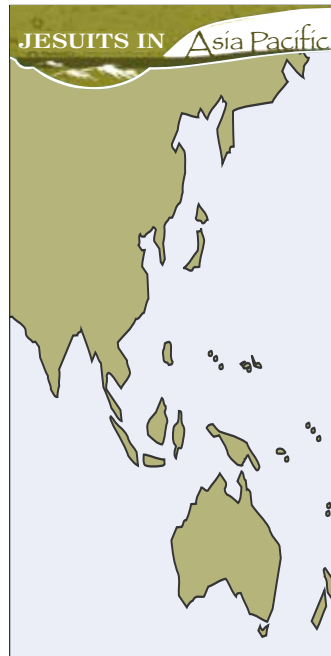
New Cambodian Centre

The Jesuit Conference met in Cambodia in January in the new Jesuit Community house, *Prieb So* (white dove). They also had the opportunity to meet the staff of Jesuit Service, now led by Fr Greg Priyadi, and the technical school for the Disabled at Banteay Prieb.



Korean Province meets

The Korean Province Assembly was held in the newly consecrated Jesuit Apostolic Centre in Seoul in January. The assembly came out of the desire to implement the spirit of GC 35 in the Province apostolates and communities. Twelve preparatory meetings guided the January meeting.



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Ricci carried the flame

This year we celebrate the 400th anniversary of the death of Matteo Ricci. The year has also marked other changes.

You will have noticed that our magazine has a new name, *flame*, to mark the renaming of our Jesuit region as the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific. You can read more about these changes later in this magazine.

Matteo Ricci's life continues to inspire and challenge us. In the words of the recent General Congregation:

'The Society of Jesus has carried a flame for nearly five hundred years through innumerable social and cultural circumstances that have challenged it intensely to keep that flame alive and burning. Things are no different today.'

We are committed to carry that same flame as Matteo Ricci did 400 years ago in China. But how could the Congregation say: 'Things are no different today?' Matteo Ricci's adventure took him to a world vastly different from ours. Without guides or dictionaries or the discipline of sinology, he immersed himself in the culture and language

of a world radically different from the one he had left. Yet he made himself understood. He made friends. He mediated between those two worlds.

In our world there are new boundaries and obstacles to mutual understanding. Ricci's example can inspire us to understand and to seek to be understood, and so to discover the flame of God's love and the universality that lies beyond cultural differences. His life gives flesh to the words of the *Constitutions*: 'Our vocation urges us to live...where we can anticipate we can offer a greater service to God and a more effective help to people.'

Ricci and friendship

When Ricci arrived in China, he said, 'I have come because of the renown of the good governance of China, and I desire to remain until death, serving the Lord of Heaven.' He respected his hosts. In his first treatise, *On Friendship*, he expressed his desire to understand the world as seen by the other, and to find what friends hold in common.

Friendship for Ricci was a core part of his Jesuit way of life. In the famous treatise, which he revised again and again, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, he showed his appreciation of a world view developed over a thousand years and reflected in traditional calligraphy. Through this lens he seeks to explain the faith and morality that are not alien to Chinese tradition.

The way in which Ricci related with others and saw his world and himself, was the source of his success and of his lasting appeal. He had a great capacity for friendship, adapted himself to the language and culture of the society and mastered the sciences, especially astronomy and geometry. Learning and friendship were magnets that drew people to God. Ricci set himself to learn from those he wanted to teach. He wanted to know the things that they sought to know.

Ricci was born in the same year that Francis Xavier

died looking out towards China. Xavier had written, 'Across from Japan there is an immense empire that rejoices in extraordinary peace, and according to what the merchants say, is superior to all Christian states in the way it exercises justice...The Chinese whom I have met are alert and anxious to learn. Nothing suggests to me that they could not be Christians.'

Xavier had lit the flame that many afterwards tried unsuccessfully to carry to China. Alessandro Valignano then called his former novice Matteo Ricci to this mission. He instructed him to immerse himself in Chinese language and culture. Michele Ruggieri, who accompanied Ricci in his first steps, went to Europe to explain their mission and attract others to it.

Matteo Ricci today

Today, when globalisation brings so much contact across cultures and ways of life, between rich and poor, far and near, Ricci's style of wisdom and friendship holds enduring lessons for us. His whole life was a tenacious preparation for true encounter, for overcoming difference through a deep desire for understanding.



What's in a name?

When Francis Xavier first came to Asia, he soon recognised its religious and cultural diversity. He also experienced the political realities that controlled his access to different societies.

Now, as then, our region is home to major world religions and to ancient spiritual and cultural traditions. It embraces Indonesia, the most populous Islamic nation; four of the five countries that adhere to Theravada Buddhism: Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand; and all the countries of Confucian culture. Though Philippines and Timor-Leste are predominantly Christian. Christians still remain a tiny minority.

The Society of Jesus today must respond to the changing reality of our region. The response is reflected in the name change of the Jesuit Conference. Formerly the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania, it is now the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific. Our magazine also has a new name, *flame*. It echoes the words of General Congregation 35 that

spoke of the one flame of our Jesuit mission that lights many flames.

Both changes reflect the fact that many of the local challenges we face are not limited to the local scene, but have international causes. So our response to them must involve many Jesuit regions. That became very clear in the refugee crisis and the growth of the Jesuit Refugee Service.

Jesuit Conference

Fr Mark Raper, the President of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific explains the change. He says, 'Asia Pacific was first used to describe an economic zone. Now it is commonly used to describe the region. In March this year Father General Adolfo Nicolás approved a change of name for the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP). It includes

China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia, East Timor, Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Philippines, Indonesia, Australia and New Zealand and the countries of the Pacific, notably Micronesia. There are currently around 1,800 Jesuits in the Conference, with around 70 new entrants each year.'

The word Conference refers to the dozen Jesuit provincials of this region who meet in regular working sessions, with its office and president based in Manila. Mark continues, 'The six conferences that coordinate and facilitate the mission of the Jesuits worldwide were given an expanded role by General Congregation 35. They are asked to help the Jesuits of the regions to be united, communicate, share a common vision, and to

cooperate. JCAP is asked to focus the Society's mission in Asia Pacific, and to enable its members to cooperate.'

The Conference has a dozen or so coordinators in social ministries, education and social communications etc. They are based in ministry in their own countries, while carrying this additional international responsibility.

Conference works

JCAP also has responsibility for the East Asian Pastoral Institute for renewal of Church pastoral workers, and Arrupe International Residence for formation of Jesuits. In 1993 it assumed a responsibility for the mission of the Jesuits in Cambodia, and in the late 1990s for missions in East Timor and Myanmar. Although it does not govern these missions, it does support them with personnel



‘It is about cooperation in mission, about ensuring that the one flame burns brightly wherever there is great need.’

and funding. More recently the seven theological faculties of Asia Pacific have agreed to collaborate in an international theology program based on the Loyola School of Theology in Manila.

Mark Raper concludes, ‘The Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific exists to help bring an international perspective to local initiatives. It is about cooperation in mission, about ensuring that the one flame burns brightly wherever there is great need.’



THE JESUIT ASIA PACIFIC REGION

Jesuit governance in the Asia Pacific region has reflected the ways in which Jesuits have been present in Asia. Jesuit presence in turn is shaped by the political realities of Asia and by the way in which Asia was imagined in Europe.

The early Jesuits in Asia were European missionaries. They naturally went first to areas where there was a European presence. In the missionary expansion of the nineteenth century, European provinces manned and financed Asian missions, often in areas under European colonial government.

The missions were accountable to Father General through their superiors and also through the Provincials responsible for them. To help Father General with governance, Provinces

and missions were allocated to regional groups. Each was under the care of one of Fr General’s Assistants. After the Suppression, Jesuits in Asia came under the European Assistancies to which their missions belonged.

At the end of the war in 1945, the Jesuit presence in Asia grew. At the same time, many European colonies gained independence. Australia, Indonesia, Japan and the Philippines became provinces and the Chinese missions were unified.

East Asian and India Assistancy

The Assistancy of East Asia and India was formed in 1957. It was divided in 1962, when the distinct East Asian Assistancy came into existence. Its composition still did not reflect the emerging economic identity of the Asia Pacific region. Australia, Singapore

and Hong Kong still belonged to the English Assistancy, while Macau and Korea were missions of the Portuguese and Wisconsin provinces respectively. Fr Arrupe gradually shaped the present Assistancy so that it reflected the geographical and political reality of Asia Pacific.

General Congregation 31 encouraged international cooperation, particularly through the conferences of the regional Provincials. In part this responded to globalisation.

Regional view

The Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific began its life as the Bureau of Asian Affairs (BAA) in 1967. It connected Jesuits across the region for mutual solidarity, for corporate international initiatives, and to facilitate more appropriate engagement in regional needs. In the Asian region coordinators were named for different apostolic fields, while the Conference as a whole took responsibility for some works.

This later became known as the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania.



Drawn to the centre of things

Matteo Ricci spent his life moving from the periphery to the centres of culture. He was born in 1552 at Macerata, a small town in provincial Italy.

*'...they will receive
from you more
friendship than
they could receive from
those outside'.*

At 16 he went to Rome to study law, and when he finished he joined the Jesuits. He studied philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and technology at the Roman College.

While studying, he asked to be sent to the Indies. In 1578 he went to Goa. Alessandro Valignano, who was giving shape to Jesuit missionary strategy by emphasising the need to study local languages and cultures, was then the Visitor of the Indies. He sent Ricci to Macau to join Michele Ruggieri in the hope that they would be able to work in China. As in St Francis Xavier's time, foreigners were forbidden to make more than passing visits to Canton in order to trade. He began to learn the language and customs of China.

Ruggieri and Ricci were allowed to live in Zhaoqing, the capital of the southern provinces. Ricci dressed as a Buddhist, and became familiar with Chinese customs. The two Jesuits worked together on the first map of the world to be published in China, and Ricci also began work on the *Catechism*. Ricci's goal was to travel to the imperial court in Peking, to speak with the reclusive Emperor, and to gain from him permission and encouragement to preach the Gospel throughout China.

'Ricci was always curious, learning how one must act and live within China, studying its texts, finding agreed ground in natural theology and in moral teaching, and sharing with his hosts the fruits of his own intellectual tradition.'

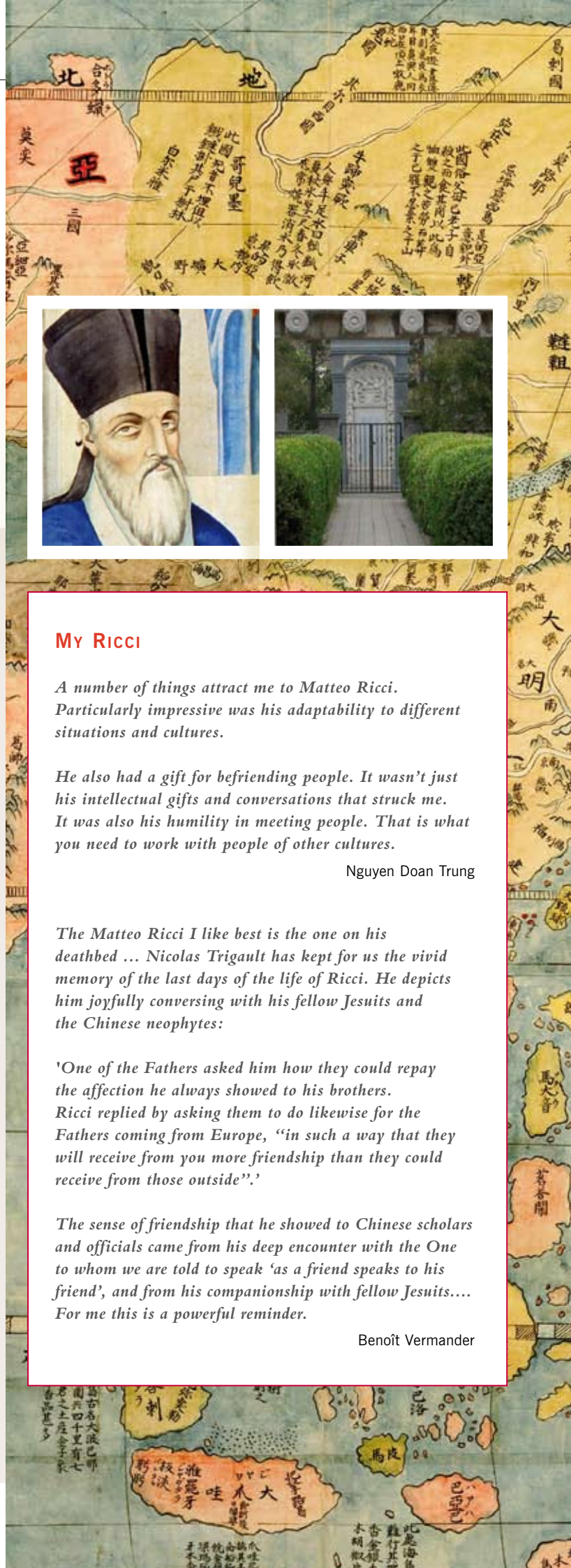
After a few years he was obliged to move into Shaozhou, still in Southern China, where he deepened his study of Confucianism, and was persuaded to wear the dress of the scholar officials. He cooperated with them in their project of reforming the Chinese calendar. He also began to oversee the translation of many western mathematical and other texts into Chinese.

He continued to set his face towards Peking, the imperial centre of China. In 1594 he tried to join the party of a General who was departing to fight in the Korean war. He reached Nanking but could go no further. He opened new residences in Nanchang and Nanking, and published his first work in Chinese, *On Friendship*. He had now been named superior of the China mission, and reached Peking briefly, with a Minister of Rites.

Eventually, he received imperial permission to stay in Peking as a European ambassador. He was unable to meet the Emperor, and realised that his first plan to spread the Gospel in China with imperial support would not be quickly realised. He had come to realise that, in such a developed civilisation, it was necessary to lay careful foundations and to find common ground in philosophy and natural theology with the Chinese scholarly class. He died in 1610, and was allowed to be buried on Chinese soil.

Unlike St Francis Xavier, Ricci had found his way to China. But he too was unable to realise the dream that brought him to the centre of the kingdom. He recognised that if you were to speak of Christ in a sophisticated culture, you needed to enter that culture deeply. You also needed to befriend the educated people who shaped it. His was a ministry based in conversation and friendship. His ministry flew in the face of the view of the time that non-Christian religions were diabolically inspired.

Ricci was always curious, learning how one must act and live within China, studying its texts, finding agreed ground in natural theology and in moral teaching, and sharing with his hosts the fruits of his own intellectual tradition. He opened new possibilities for Christian and Jesuit mission.



MY RICCI

A number of things attract me to Matteo Ricci. Particularly impressive was his adaptability to different situations and cultures.

He also had a gift for befriending people. It wasn't just his intellectual gifts and conversations that struck me. It was also his humility in meeting people. That is what you need to work with people of other cultures.

Nguyen Doan Trung

The Matteo Ricci I like best is the one on his deathbed ... Nicolas Trigault has kept for us the vivid memory of the last days of the life of Ricci. He depicts him joyfully conversing with his fellow Jesuits and the Chinese neophytes:

'One of the Fathers asked him how they could repay the affection he always showed to his brothers. Ricci replied by asking them to do likewise for the Fathers coming from Europe, "in such a way that they will receive from you more friendship than they could receive from those outside".'

The sense of friendship that he showed to Chinese scholars and officials came from his deep encounter with the One to whom we are told to speak 'as a friend speaks to his friend', and from his companionship with fellow Jesuits.... For me this is a powerful reminder.

Benoît Vermander



IN THE STEPS OF RICCI

Matteo Ricci's engagement with China has inspired many Jesuits since his death. His example has influenced Jesuit approaches to mission. Among them are the Ricci Institutes.

The Ricci Institutes in the Society show how Matteo Ricci has fascinated Jesuits. In addition to the Institutes in Paris and San Francisco, Ricci Institutes flourish in Macau and Taipei. They all engage with the legacy of Matteo Ricci and ministry to present day China.



Gateway to China

Macau and Matteo Ricci go together in the story of the Jesuit presence in China. For centuries Macau was the gateway of the West to China. Matteo Ricci spent some time there in order to prepare himself for his mission to China. Macau was and remains an international city where people of different origins can meet.

The Macau Ricci Institute was conceived at a meeting in 1994. It was held to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Macau College of St Paul. International scholars who came for the event recognised the great importance of Macau in the Jesuit missionary presence in China, Japan and Vietnam. Fr Artur Wadega, the current director of the Macau Ricci Institute, says, 'Fr Ed Malatesta was director of the University of San Francisco Ricci

Institute. He launched the idea of creating in Macau a Jesuit Centre that would encourage research on our missions in Chinese history. It would also encourage intercultural dialogue and exchange between China and Europe.'

The suggestion fell on fertile ground. Fr Wadega explains, 'The idea was welcomed by Fr Luís Sequeira, a Portuguese Jesuit in Macau, who implemented it with the help of his friends and Jesuit companions,

especially Fr Yves Camus. The inauguration of the Institute took place at the end of 1999, a few days before Macau's transfer to China. So in 2010, the Institute celebrates both the 400th anniversary of Matteo Ricci's death and the tenth year of its own existence.'

The Institute is a non-profit, study and research institution dedicated to fostering better mutual understanding between China and the world. Fr Wadega says, 'Scholars come from Western and Chinese academic institutions to work closely with the MRI researchers and members. These include three Jesuits who work full time at the Institute. The Institute offers international symposia and conferences and engages in an interreligious

and intercultural dialogue with China.' The fruits of these colloquia, seminars and conferences is published in the Macau Ricci Institute Studies series.

The Ricci Institute is international in outlook, but also is a fixture in the life of Macau. Fr Wadega says, 'On the local level it contributes to Macau's intellectual community by its monthly Fora, and by its cultural programs such as pipe organ concerts held at the St Joseph Seminary Church, exhibitions and literary salons.'

The Ricci Institute recalls the role that Macau had in introducing so many Jesuits, including Matteo Ricci, to the Chinese world. It also takes up Ricci's own mission to enter the rich Chinese intellectual and cultural tradition.



A passion for words

The Ricci Institute in Taipei began in 1966 as a work of the Chinese Province. It explores important issues in Chinese culture. Until the last decade, the focus of the Institute was on Chinese language, religion and society.

Ricci himself was interested in the Chinese language and wrote a Chinese-Portuguese dictionary. Institute scholars have followed him in producing dictionaries. They include modest Chinese-Hungarian, Chinese-Spanish and Chinese-Hungarian dictionaries. But the Institute's major work appeared in 2002. *Le Grand Ricci* was published in seven volumes comprising over nine thousand pages. It is the most extensive Chinese dictionary to be directed to a foreign language audience. The dictionary was more than fifty years in

the making. Many Jesuits, institutions and lay people shared the labour involved.

Fr Yves Raguin, who directed the Institute for many years encouraged the work on the dictionary. In his own writing he focused on Chinese religious experience. He was inspired by the emphasis on dialogue that came in with Vatican II. He published more than twenty books on comparative spirituality, particularly on Chinese Taoism and Buddhism. The Institute has also published many other books. Of particular interest to Jesuits

is the twelve volume collection of Chinese Christian Texts from the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus.

The heart of day to day work of any Institute is its library. The Ricci Institute has gathered a good collection of works in Chinese and in Western languages on China, particularly on Chinese religions. The Institute also holds conferences on issues of social and cultural interest, and encourages its members to publish widely in newspapers and magazines on topics of current interest.

Pictured above: Scenes from the Ricci Institute in Taipei.
Pictured opposite page: Matteo Ricci's statue in Beijing at the Nantang Church. Macau Ricci Institute members. Macau harbour.

It also cooperates with the French Jesuit cultural periodical *Etudes*, in publishing the monthly *Renlai Magazine* which deals with social and cultural issues. In 2006 the internet magazine *eRenlai* began to appear. Both magazines focus on sustainable development, cultural diversity and the mobilisation of spiritual resources in the Chinese world. The associated website also encourages communication among social agents, intellectuals and also grassroots communities.

The death of a tree

Over summer 2010, Jesuits and Companions from the Assistancies of Africa-Madagascar, Asia Pacific and South Asia came together in India to reflect on the Jesuit response to the impact on vulnerable people of the exploitation of the earth.



A participant from the Asia Pacific, Jin-hyuk Park, was struck by what he saw. Jin-hyuk, from the Korean Province, spent two years in Cambodia. He saw there the threat to the farmers and ecology of the Tonle Sap posed by mining developments. He also saw how villagers are powerless in the face of the wealthy in their own nation who join international enterprises.

The image that stayed with Jin-hyuk was of a tall Pipal tree which is believed to be sacred for Indians. He says the tree 'was scooped out and remained alone disconnected with surroundings. The gradual death of this tree was clear to anyone's eye. The tree amidst reality seemed to represent sadly the reality of the tribal peoples who are dispossessed of their ancestral lands by the ethnocide of

indigenous communities and cultures'.

The tree was a symbol of a way of exploiting the land that had lost its connection with the human values that it is supposed to support. Not only the tree, but a way of life that was in touch with the soil, had been destroyed. Jin-hyuk continues, 'In the rural areas of India, it is very common to see cow dung being dried. Usually women collect lots of cow dung and dry the patties in a pancake shape. These cow dung cakes are natural, ecological, and economical resources for burning and cooking. They are even currently being used as alternative fuels for cremations. Moreover, cow dung has proved to have capacity to kill bacteria and heal wounds.'

The destruction of this life lived in communion



with nature is heard in the overwhelming noise from huge TATA trucks overloaded with coal. The abundant natural and mineral resources in the State of Jharkand have brought about many industries in the state. But this richness has resulted in the displacement and dispossession of land and culture of many indigenous people. The poverty was imposed by a denial of human rights of these people.

So it is essential to make known the impact of mining and other exploitation of land

'The tree amidst reality seemed to represent sadly the reality of the tribal peoples who are dispossessed of their ancestral lands by the ethnocide of indigenous communities and cultures'.

on the environment and on people, and to strengthen the people who are affected by change to resist destruction.

The meeting also discussed how Jesuits could best be involved in this. Jesuits have an advantage, in that it is very difficult to act locally alone. Large scale exploitation of resources involves local companies and governments, but is also often financed by overseas companies. Those responsible need to be educated and pressured at all points. One attempt by miners to drive

Slow boat to China

'If the Society loses the umbilical cord with the small people, the Society will lose its identity.'

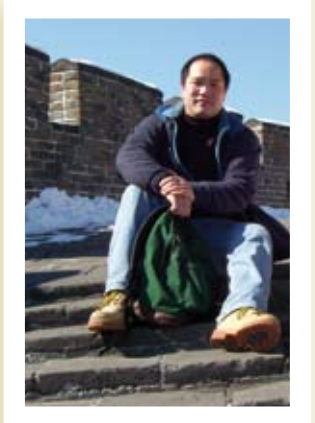


people off their land in India was impeded by persuading an overseas company of its destructive effects.

But the way to conversion is through experience, and the key is for Jesuits to be involved at the grass roots. Jin-hyuk was much taken by the comment from Fr Nicolás, 'If the Society loses the umbilical cord with the small people, the Society will lose its identity.'

Much is at stake. Jin-hyuk speaks of a 'barren place near one of the coalfields, Only one month ago, there were houses in that place. What I saw there was uprooted and fallen trees, one left shoe and a schoolbag, smashed bricks, and a huge drilling machine. For some reason, I began to imagine people's laughter, cheerful sounds of children's playing, smell of mother's cooking and a hungry stomach of a baby.'

For the early Jesuits like Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci, the journey to China began by boat. It was long and dangerous. For Nguyen Doan Trung who is preparing himself for the China mission today, the path has also been long. It too included a decisive boat journey.



Trung was born in Saigon in 1974. Seven years later he embarked with his family on a perilous journey to Thailand to seek a new life. The crossing took two days. Trung says, 'On the way we were stopped by pirates. They took us to a small island, stripped us, robbed us, took our boat and left us there. Some fishermen saw us there and took us to shore in Thailand.' Trung adds, 'In later years the pirates became much more cruel'.

Trung and his family stayed two years in refugee camps at Sikhieu and Phanat Nikhom before being resettled in Australia. He attended school, and studied to be a motor mechanic. After working for a few years, he studied theology to discern his attraction to be a priest. He became interested in the Jesuits and in 2001 he joined the Jesuit noviceship.

During his Jesuit studies his interest turned to China. He says, 'When I joined the Jesuits I thought I might work with refugees like myself. But then my Jesuit brothers came back from a Scholastics and Brothers Circle at which China was presented as a high priority Jesuit ministry. That interested me.'

Trung began to study Chinese and visited China for the first time. 'I was in Beijing, and had the opportunity to visit the Jesuit graves and places associated with Matteo Ricci', he says.

He later continued his language studies in Beijing, and spent 2008 at Fu Jen University, where he studied Chinese language and philosophy. 'I was struck by the similarities between Confucianism and the Spiritual Exercises', he says. "I was also lucky enough to accompany a group of Taiwanese pilgrims to World Youth Day in Sydney'.

Trung is now finishing his theological studies and will be ordained Deacon later this year. He hopes that he will be involved in charity work in China. Trung adds, 'I see my own role as most likely being in administration and in spiritual support'.

Trung's journey from Vietnam to China has been long and winding. But like others on the China mission, he has walked with purpose, gathering the knowledge and familiarity with language he needs for his work.



*A shepherd boy fell sad one day,
hating the hillside on which he stood;
he thought a distant hill he saw
more beautiful from afar,*

*and that going there would wipe away his sorrows.
So he set off to that distant hill,
but as he drew near it
it looked less good than it had from afar.*

*O shepherd boy, shepherd boy,
how can you expect to transform yourself
by changing your dwelling place?*

*If you move away can you leave yourself behind?
Sorrow and joy sprout in the heart.*

*If the heart is peaceful, you'll be happy everywhere,
if the heart is in turmoil, every place brings sorrow.*

*A grain of dust in your eye
brings discomfort speedily.*

*How can you then ignore this sharp awl
that pierces your heart?*

*If you yearn for things outside yourself
you will never obtain what you are seeking.*

*Why not put your own heart in order
and find peace on your own hillside?*

*Old and new writers alike give this advice:
there's no advantage to roaming outside.*

*Keep the heart inside, for
that brings the profit.*

Matteo Ricci



many sparks one fire
many stories one history
many dreams one vision