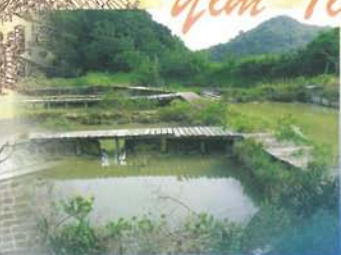


# The History of Evangelization in Hong Kong

Wun Yiu



Yim Tin Tsai



Ting Kok



## Preface


Our most venerable Cardinal John Baptist Wu accepted one of concrete suggestions by Group Four of the 2002 Diocesan Synod on Evangelization to non-Catholics. The Diocese hence announced the beginning of the Year of Evangelization. The period started from 2002 and ends on the feast of the Ascension of the Lord in 2005. The first year was a preparatory period - printing promotion pamphlets, organizing evangelization seminars for the deaneries, activities to promote the evangelization awareness of laity and training on evangelization skills etc. The Diocese also encouraged parishes to form a special team to follow up on the different evangelization activities. The implementation period started in October 2003. The Diocese continued to organize different activities and distributing information on evangelization, parishes were also encouraged to promote evangelization at all levels.

In order to promote the laity's evangelization awareness, the Working Group on the Year of Evangelization published a book "I am blessed for spreading the Good News". The purpose is to encourage laity to study the Acts of the Apostles and learn from the apostles' evangelization experience. The fruitful result that the Hong Kong Church experiencing today is actually the countless efforts and sacrifices made by the missionaries over a hundred years. The closing of the Diocesan Year of Evangelization is actually the beginning of a new era and evangelization culture. We thank Fr. Louis Ha for his precious contribution and studies on the evangelization history of the Hong Kong Church. Fr. Ha's study is published into a booklet. Let us continue the spirit of the former missionaries and to establish a new evangelization culture for the Hong Kong Church.

Chair of the Working Group on the Year of Evangelization

Fr. Ferdinand Lok

8th May 2005



This pamphlet is specially designed for readers who intend to visit Wun Yiu, Ting Kok and Yim Tin Tsai. The aim is to provide a solid background of the daily life of the people there and the Catholic missionary work over 100 years ago. In fact, these places experienced huge changes. The lifestyles of the local residents and even the Church's methods of evangelization had changed and all these became rather unrecognizable.

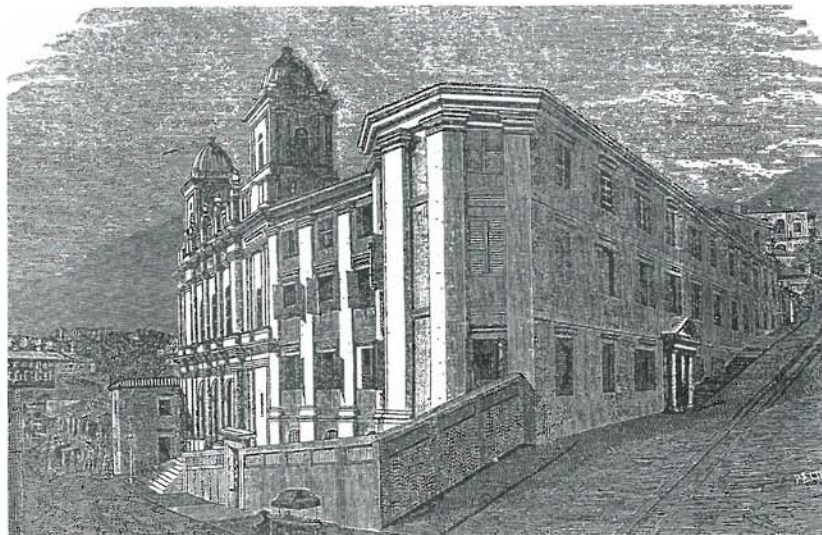
Some of these villages are already emptied. Readers can barely find the traces of the previous missionary activities. However, they were once an episode of the development of the Hong Kong Catholic Church. Many local residents were converted to Catholics due the tremendous efforts of the missionaries. There is still a strong force of spiritual interaction calling us to follow the footsteps of the forerunners. Calling us to move a step forward to live a new and active life of the evangelical journey, to complete the missionaries' dreams.





## AT THE BEGINNING...

The Hong Kong Catholic Church was established in April 1841. The missionaries built a church and a dormitory on Wellington Street, Central, the following year. It was the mission base of Hong Kong Island - a base facing China. The early Hong Kong Church was to provide support such as accommodation, transportation and finance to the missionaries travelling to/from China. She also served the Catholics in the British Army and the Portuguese businessmen from Macau.



*The first Catholic Church at Wellington Street in 1843.*

It was not until 1860 that the missionaries of Milan Mission Seminary (the former Pontifical Institute for Foreign Mission, PIME) started continuous missionary work with the locals. The Paris Foreign Missions (in charge of the Guang Zhou missionary field) handed over the ecclesiastical jurisdiction such as Tai Po and Sai Kung (still under the sovereignty of Qing Dynasty) to the Hong Kong missionaries.

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The Italian missionaries first started missionary work in Tai Po with some local clergies. Their next target was Sai Kung. In order to understand Hong Kong's missionary history, the most recommended places to visit are Wun Yiu in Tai Po, Ting Kok and Yim Tin Tsai in Sai Kung. These places were the starting point of the missionaries. Most residents there were Hakka.

## HAKKA VILLAGES

The 21st Century Hong Kong consists of Hong Kong Island, Kowloon Peninsula and New Territories at the south of Shen Zhen River. The earliest Hakka immigrants migrated to Hong Kong at the end of 14th Century. The second immigration wave started just after the cancellation of Evacuation Order of early Qing Dynasty in the 17th Century. The Qing Dynasty encouraged the Hakka to move south to make a living. These Hakka immigrants were very hard working. They earned their living by quarrying, making bricks, porcelain kiln and pottery etc. Some farmed at the remote hillside. These people were the



*The refurbished Hakka on Hong Kong Island.*

marginal ones in the society, both their social status and geographically. They were the working targets of the early missionaries in Hong Kong. Villages such as Wun Yiu, Ting Kok, Sai Kung and Yim Tin Tsai were still under the sovereignty of the Qing Dynasty. The missionaries from the west in Hong Kong were very fond of working at the areas that were governed by the Qing Dynasty. Some even dressed like Chinese when they went preaching to the Chinese in the villages.

Hakka always has strong clan unity and solidarity. They hold strong on to their traditions. Their attitude and loyalty are reflected in their religious ritual. The Hakka customs of ancestor worship and building shrine for gods have their social function. These customs cannot be shaken easily. However, in the 19th Century, the Catholic missionaries requested them to burn all superstitious things such as the shrine for gods according to the prescription after the Chinese Rites controversy. It was not easy to preach to the Hakka back then.

In order to meet the needs of the locals and also to achieve the goal of preaching to the Hakka, the missionaries first established schools for them. Farming had always been the Hakka women's job so that men could concentrate on preparing for the Imperial Examination. The Imperial Examination was abolished in 1905 (the end of Qing Dynasty). The Hakka men then studied in order to better equip themselves for competing in the commercial world. The Hakka needed to raise their education level so that they could increase their outward mobility. The act of establishing schools by the missionaries met perfectly with their needs. The Hakka were always good at moving out of their own territories and the Catholic Church is always universal. Many Hakka went abroad to work with the help and referral of the missionaries.

There was a rather ridiculous rumour but yet could somehow reflect the reason of Hakka's conversion. There was a critically ill man in one of the Hakka villages. The catechist persuaded him to be baptized so that he could go to heaven.

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He was finally baptized before he passed away. Some women at the village asked for the medium to call for his soul to confirm whether he really did go to heaven. Like the catechist said, the man confirmed: 'I'm lucky that I was baptized. Now I'm in heaven.' This story spread around so fast that many people joined the catechesis classes and got baptized. Although the reason for their conversion might sound strange, the Hakka Catholics still respected the priests. They always genuflected and said 'God bless Father' every time they saw a priest.

## THE MISSIONARIES

There were only two or sometimes even one missionary at these ecclesiastical stations. Later it was increased to four or five. Father Simeon Volonteri (1865-1878), Father Luigi Piazzoli (1877-1892) and Father Domenico Pozzoni (1892-1905) were the missionaries in charge back then. Coincidentally, they all became bishops - Father Volonteri in 1873, Father Piazzoli in 1894 and Father Pozzoni in 1905. The Church paid special attention to the clergy at the remote villages. They were appointed to lead the missionaries there.

These European missionaries learned Hakka for conversational and preaching purpose. The liturgy and the sacraments were conducted in Latin. The clergies had Chinese servants to travel around the villages with them. The servants knew the missionaries well enough to be their interpreters. The lay people and the villagers can understand the communication difficulty of the missionaries and they read the prayers loudly in Mass. When the



*Bp. S. Volonteri*



*Bp. L. Piazzoli*



*Bp. D. Pozzoni*

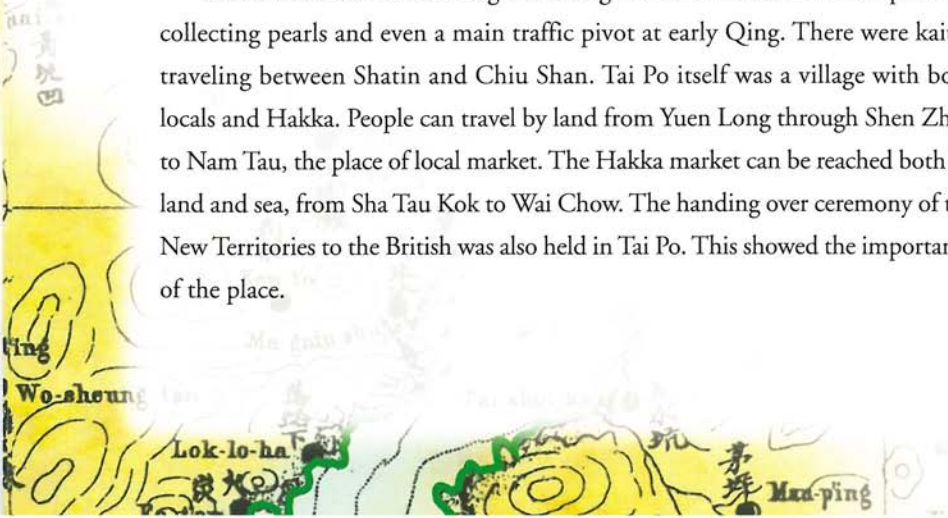
priest was still learning the language and was unable to give homily in Hakka, the lay people would recite the Catholic Catechism instead of the priest giving homily.

Priests usually travelled around all villages to preach. They stayed for no more than 8 days in each place. Their main duties were to minister baptism and other sacraments, say Mass and to examine the catechumens on the catechism they had learned. There were Chinese religious sisters visiting these Hakka villages one month before the priests arrived. Catechists stationed at these places for a longer period to teach.

## TAI PO AREA

After established the Hong Kong Island mission, the Church's target was the fishermen at the southern part of Hong Kong - Shek Pai Wan, Tin Wan and Aberdeen. Later, across the harbour to the fishing village Chin Wan (Tsuen Wan today), western part of the Kowloon Peninsula. In 1862, about thirty odd years before the New Territories was leased to Great Britain by the Qing government, the missionaries went preaching by climbing over Tai Mo Shan from Chin Wan to Tai Po.

Tai Po is behind Pat Sin Leng and facing the Tolo Harbour. It was a place for collecting pearls and even a main traffic pivot at early Qing. There were kaitos traveling between Shatin and Chiu Shan. Tai Po itself was a village with both locals and Hakka. People can travel by land from Yuen Long through Shen Zhen to Nam Tau, the place of local market. The Hakka market can be reached both by land and sea, from Sha Tau Kok to Wai Chow. The handing over ceremony of the New Territories to the British was also held in Tai Po. This showed the importance of the place.







*The Immaculate Heart of Mary Church (2005)*

There was a chapel and a short term stay dormitory for the missionaries at Wun Yiu and Ting Kok mission stations. The chapel could only accommodate about twenty people. They had no priest to station there. These two chapels were closed after Tai Wo was built. The missionaries built a much bigger church at the Kam Shan area in Tai Wo. When the missionaries came back after preaching at other places, there was a flag hanging outside the church to let the lay people know that there would be Sunday Mass. As the number of lay people increased, the Kam Shan Church was too small to accommodate them. The Immaculate Heart of Mary Church at Wan Tau Street, Tai Po was built in 1961.

# Wun Yiu

Fr. Volonteri, Fr. Giuseppe Burghignoli (1833-1892) and Fr. Andrew Leong (1837-1920) were the first missionaries to walk from the hillside of Tsuen Wan to Tai Po. The first mission station was at the southern hill side of Tai Po - Wun Yiu village. Wun Yiu was the centre for manufacturing porcelain. During the Ming Dynasty, the kilns used here belonged to the Man and Tse clans of Jiangxi province Ji Shui County (now Jian). The residents of Wun Yiu were forced to leave their homes after the Qing emperor Kangxi demanded the Evacuation Order. This order ceased in 1669 and the border was restored. However, the Man and Tse clans were not interested in reopening the porcelain business. The Hakka man Ma Choi Yuen from the Quangdong Changle County (now Wu Hua) together with his clan purchased the porcelain kilns of Wun Yiu from the Man clan in the 13th year of Kangxi's reign (1674). The Ma clan started manufacturing the blue and white porcelains, which they produced much more in quantity than before the Evacuation Order.

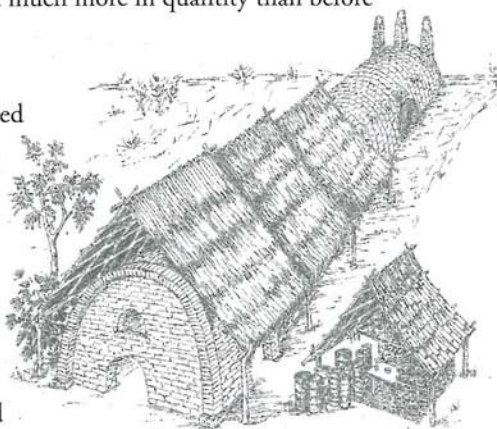


*Fr. Giuseppe Burghignoli*

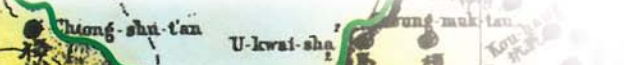


*Fr. Andrew Leong*

Ma Choi Yuen had four sons. He owned 13 water mills and animal driven dragon kilns in Sheung Wun Yiu. The Ma Sei Yue Tong was established in order to manage the expanding porcelain business. During the Dao Guang years, the descendent of the Ma clan Ma Man Hap built a place at Ha Wun Yiu for manufacturing blue and white porcelain kilns. This helped further developing the industry. The industry declined in



*Re-sketch of the dragon kiln at Sheung Wun Yiu.*





*Aerial Photo of Wun Yiu (2001). The far right end of the photo shows the small path that connects Tat Wan Road and Sheung Wun Yiu. The centre of the photo illustrates a car park that leads to Fan Sin Temple and plaza on the right hand side.*





the early 20th century due to the strong competition with Mainland China and overseas. The porcelain production at Wun Yiu was stopped completely in 1932.

The Ma Ancestral Hall in Sheung Wun Yiu is the place where the Ma clan keeps their ancestral tablets. There is also a Fan Sin Temple for the worship of Fan Tai Sin Sze, the patron saint of potters. The missionaries built a chapel next to Fan Sin Temple in 1863. The first baptism in the chapel was for a 60 year-old villager. They also built a small school with only two classes - one for younger children and the other for older ones. It is to prepare them for public examinations. There were thirty people baptized ten years later.

The Ma clan in Wun Yiu had a close connection with the Catholic Church and many people were baptized. Among the baptized, two of them were very outstanding. One was a Hakka Catechist and the other was a Hakka priest. The Wun Yiu catechist is Kim-siu. He requested to be baptized at 12, but his parents strongly rejected and he was even beaten up for that. In 1860, he was 14, Fr. Raimondi (later Bishop Raimondi) visited Wun Yiu and stayed at Kim-siu's house.

After that his parents barely permitted him to study in Hong Kong with Fr. Raimondi. Kim-siu received good education and training there. He got baptized and was sent at Aberdeen to help preaching there. In 1864 he went back to Wun Yiu to help the priest establish the mission station. Though his parents were not baptized, he managed to persuade his brothers to do so. Kim-siu was hired as catechist and teacher to help looking after the Catholics in the Hakka villages. However, he had tuberculosis and passed away in 1877 at the young age of 30. Bishop Raimondi called him the apostle of China. He hoped to have more catechists like Kim-siu - trained by missionaries at young age and could have the potential to lead more people to God. Fr. Andrew Leong was the celebrant of Kim-siu's funeral. There were lay people from Yim Tin Tsai, Wong Nai Chung, Che Lap and Wu Kwai Sha attended the funeral. The Catholics back then appreciated greatly the contribution of this catechist.

Fr. Anthony Ma Chun Yin of Wun Yiu was consecrated priest on 28 December 1911, 24 years after the great catechist's death. Fr. Anthony Ma (1887-1957) was born in Wun Yiu, Tai Po. His parents Ma Sin Kei

*Fan Sin Temple in Wun  
Yiu (2004)*





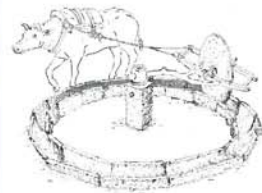
and Mdm Lau were Catholics. Anthony was sent to the seminary when he was young. His father passed away in 1905 and left him 1.5 acres of land. However, he was determined to pursue his spiritual career and did not leave the seminary.



*Fr. Anthony Ma*

After Fr. Anthony was ordained, he was sent to southern Wai Chau, Tam Tong district to serve the Hakka villages there. The bishop appointed him the supervisor of Wai Chau Fan Wo Kong District. The Japanese army occupied this area during the World War II. Fr. Anthony was then the representative of the bishop for Wai Chau and Wai Yang districts. When the Chinese Communist Party came in power, all church activities ceased. He was imprisoned in Guang Zhou and later in 1957, he was permitted to leave China for medical reason. However, few months after he had arrived Hong Kong, he passed away on October, 14 in Precious Blood Hospital at Sham Shui Po.

*Archeological site of an ancient animal driven grinder found at Sheung Wun Yiu*



*Animal driven grinder*

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Lin-ao  
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Un-in  
Un-in

Chung-shu-tan

U-kwai-sha

Wung muk lau



# Ting Kok

Fr. Giuseppe Burghignoli and Fr. Andrew Leong was working at Wun Yiu while Fr. Volonteri worked alone at the Tai Wo mission station in Tai Po. He asked the workers to hollow out a window in his house. On that very same day, a baby died and a woman felt sick. The villagers strongly believed that the priest's act made God angry and Fr. Volonteri had to leave.



The villagers at Ting Kok, at the hillside of Pat Sin Leng urgently needed to establish a school. Fr. Volonteri was invited there to help. The school started on 8 April 1864. There were 80 students of which 20 lived in the school. The site of the school was probably located at the unoccupied land next to Mo Dai Temple. The locals said that there was once a private school. Eight students started learning the Catholic doctrine a year later at Easter. At Pentecost, Fr. Volonteri performed Catholic rites at the plaza of the village and gave homily to the people gathering around. A young priest Fr. Gaetano Origo (1835-1868) joined Fr. Volonteri to preach in Ting Kok at spring, 1865. There were many pirates back then. The villagers requested Fr. Gaetano to help. Fr. Gaetano wrote to the Superior General in Milan to see whether he should ask either the British Hong Kong or Guang Zhou officials to help protecting the villages.

Ting Kok is a Hakka village with mixed family names. Inside the Mo Dai Temple there were two plaques dated back to Qing Chien-Lung year 50 (1785). On the plaques were the names of the 155 donors who helped renovate the temple. Among them, there were 27 surnames. The plaques reflected that there were already villages with mixed surnames in Ting Kok. There were also many names of owners of transportation boats on the donation list. This shows that the shipping business was already very advanced at Ting Kok area. It was clearly written on the



*Mo Dai Temple in Ting Kok (2005)*

*Part of the plaque inside Mo Dai Temple in Ting Kok (2005)*

plaque - "The descendents of those who have no name on the plaque will never be allowed to study here". Education is of high importance for the villagers in the Qing Hong Kong. This is the reason they could request villagers for donations to help renovate the temple in order to provide spaces for their descendents to study. This temple was destroyed by typhoon after renovation in the 2nd year of Xuan Tong (year 1910). The present Mo Dai Temple was refurbished in 1978.





*Photo of Ting Kok from the sky in 2001. The lower right corner is Ting Kok Road. In the middle northern side are two big trees with the plaza and car park around them. The upper left hand side near left is Mo Dai Temple (with the green roof top).*



Fr. Volonteri established a mission station at Ting Kok. The Chinese priest Fr. Andrew Leong was sent there to work with him. The missionary built a spacious house among the hidden trees. However, the villagers strongly believed in Feng Shui and they were unwilling to cut off the trees from the Feng Shui forest. Fr. Volonteri and Fr. Andrew also preached at Ting Kok. They had to climb over the hills to get to different villages. Fr. Volonteri drew the famous map of Sin An County according to the information he collected every time they went there. This map was the only detailed reference that the missionaries had at that time. The Chinese names on the map could be the handwriting of Fr. Andrew Leong. Fr. Volonteri later preached mainly in Sai Kung. Fr. Andrew was there by himself to take care of the pastoral work of Wun Yiu and Ting Kok.

When Fr. Volonteri worked at Wun Yiu, a happy and memorable thing happened. A clerk was sent to Tai Po for business by the official of Nam Tau, Sin On County in 1869. This clerk requested Fr. Volonteri to accommodate him. During his 15 day stay in Ting Kok, he listened to Fr. Volonteri teaching catechism to his students. The clerk also glanced through the catechism books at the mission station. Fr. Volonteri did not deliberately preach to him. The clerk appreciated the freedom that the priest gave him. He then had a strong wish to become a Catholic. He started learning Catholic doctrine after leaving Ting Kok and was baptized a year later.

However, there was a tragic accident happened here in 1875. Fr. Anthony Tam was from a devoted lay family of the Tam clan in Macau. He had a brother studying at the seminary. His sister was one of the founders of the Precious Blood religious congregation - Magdalene Tam and Jonathan Tam. Fr. Anthony was the first priest ordained by Bishop Raimondi. Before he was ordained in 1875, he preached around the Sai Kung area and six months after his ordination he was sent to Ting Kok. On the day of the accident, he left Ting Kok with a lay person and a carpenter and went on a sampan. When they left Ting Kok Bay, there was



strong wind and the sampan sank. They all fell into the sea. The lay person survived because he was good at swimming. Fr. Tam and the carpenter hung onto a piece of wood floating on the sea but the wind was too strong and they finally drowned. Fr. Tam baptized the carpenter at the sea, and performed his final missionary work.



*Fr. Anthony Tam*

## SAI KUNG AREA

After the missionaries had established the bases at Wun Yiu and Ting Kok, Fr. Gaetano moved from Tai Po to Sai Kung in 1864. In order to provide residence for missionaries that had to travel constantly to Sai Kung, the Church built two dormitories near the seashore of Sha Ti Yuen Kowloon City in 1869. The place was also used as a mission station and chapel. The chapel was named after St. Francis Xavier. It took three hours to walk from the chapel to Sai Kung by foot.

Sai Kung market situated at the centre of the Sai Kung Area naturally becomes the centre for preaching. The Sai Kung market mission station was established in March 1866. Fr. Gaetano was the host of the opening ceremony. There were 19 people baptized. They were from the Lam, Lau, Lee and Wan families of Sai Kung, also the Ho family of Kei Leng Ha and the Lee family of Che Ha. By the end of the year, there were about 30 people baptized at Sai Kung, most of them were from the Liu and Lee families. The Sai Kung market mission station became the place for social gathering, and meeting place for lay Catholics. Unfortunately, Fr. Gaetano passed away two years later at the age of 33.

There was a rumour that between 1867 and 1869, the missionaries organized the lay people at Sai Kung to defend themselves from the rich families of Sheung



Shui. The villagers there were very poor, they became the tenant farmers of these Sheung Shui people. However, they were unable to pay the heavy rent.

The missionaries always emphasized on building schools to provide catholic education to the lay Catholics. This was also a chance for them to contact the non-Catholic students and their parents. Just like how it all started at Wun Yiu and Ting Kok, the missionaries started a school at Sai Kung. However, the number of schools was rather unstable. Sometimes it was difficult to find teachers, or other times, they had not enough money to hire them.



*Fr. Francis Wong*



*Fr. Renatus Kwok*



*Fr. Emilio Teruzzi*



*Fr. Valeriano  
Fraccaro*

During the Sino-Franco War in 1884, Chinese government issued a \$500 warrant to arrest Fr. Piazzoli because he held a French passport. He was forced to leave Sai Kung. It was rather dangerous to preach in Sai Kung area. Three missionaries in Sai Kung were murdered in 1942:- Fr. Francis Wong (1894-1942), Fr. Renatus Kwok (1911-1942) and Fr. Emilio Teruzzi (1887-1942). Fr. Valeriano Fraccaro (1913-1974) was murdered at his Sai Kung residence.



# Yim Tin Tsai



*Aerial view of Yim Tin Tsai, Sai Kung, in 1994. The distribution of salt field (Yim Tin) can be seen clearly at the upper part of the photo. The lower part of the photo near the centre is the pier. The red roof building on the left is the church.*



Although Sai Kung Market was the centre of preaching and the missionaries always preached at the Sai Kung villages, the main lay community was in Yim Tin Tsai. The Chan Hakka clan migrated from the north to Ng Wah in Guang



*The former site of the salt field in Yim Tin Tsai, Sai Kung*

Dong in the 15th century. They moved to Koon Lan Shen Zhen in 18th century. During 19th century, the three tribes of the Chan clan moved to Yim Tin Tsai in Sai Kung, Yim Tin Tsai in Tai Po (near the typhoon shelter in Shuen Wan) and Ping Yeung, Sheung Shui (Da Koo Leng). The Yim Tin Tsai Chan clan farmed 6 acres of salt field, the smallest of the 5 salt fields in Hong Kong. Other salt fields



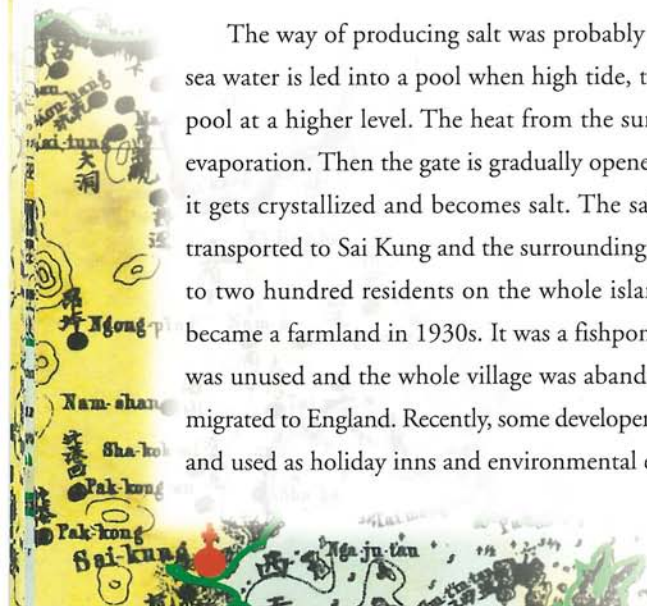
*The most newly refurbished St. Joseph's Chapel in Yim Tin Tsai (2004).*





were in Tai O, Lantau Island, San Hui and Wong Ka Wai in Tuen Mun, Yim Liu Ha in Sha Tau Kok and Yim Tin Tsai in Sheun Wan, Tai Po. The Chan's Hakka clan in Yim Tin Tsai relied on salt production and fishing to make a living.

The way of producing salt was probably through natural evaporation. The sea water is led into a pool when high tide, then manually transport to the salt pool at a higher level. The heat from the sun will condense the salty water by evaporation. Then the gate is gradually opened and continues to evaporate until it gets crystallized and becomes salt. The salt produced and fish will then be transported to Sai Kung and the surrounding areas for sale. There were only one to two hundred residents on the whole island. The salt field at Yim Tin Tsai became a farmland in 1930s. It was a fishpond at the 1960s. However, the land was unused and the whole village was abandoned in the 1990s. Most residents migrated to England. Recently, some developers refurbished the abandoned houses and used as holiday inns and environmental education site.



Fr. Gaetano baptized seven Yim Tin Tsai villagers in autumn 1866. Later the same year at Christmas, he baptized another 33 residents from the Chan clan. Among them, there were three generations from the clan baptized at the same time. They were of the 'yuen' generation (Chan Yuen Cheong (80 years old). The 'kei' generation - Lung Kei (43), Sing Kei (41), Kwong Kei (27) and Chuen Kei (19). The 'Ting' generation - Ting Wo (3) and Ting Hing (9). This village gave the most concrete evidence of the three generations of the same village got baptized at the same time. Yim Tin Tsai was a small island with scarce population from the same clan. This was the most favourable condition for the residents of the village to get baptized en masse. Later they joined the Catholics from other villages to offer land to build a church, missionary residence and school. Ching Po School on the island was closed down in the 1990s due to the shortage of students.



*The recently refurbished St. Joseph's Chapel in Yim Tin Tsai (2004).*



St. Josef Freinademetz (1852-1908) was at Yim Tin Tsai to baptize two baby girls in 1879 & 1880. St. Joseph's Church at Yim Tin Tsai was consecrated in 1890 and officially replaced the old chapel. The number of Catholics was 43 in 1872 and 110 in 1892. There were 193 Catholics until 1959. The missionaries counted them among the best Catholics in the missionary station. However, the community disappeared as the Kai To from Sai Kung to Yim Tin Tsai was stopped. There is no resident on the island now as the last person moved out few years ago. The Chan clan still goes back to the church for gathering every year on the Sunday before / after 1st May. They celebrate the feast of St. Joseph, the patron saint of workers. The existing church was built in 1890 and it was renovated in 1949 and 1962. The most recent renovation was finished in May 2004. It is admirable that this first Catholic village still keeps an annual meeting after over a century.

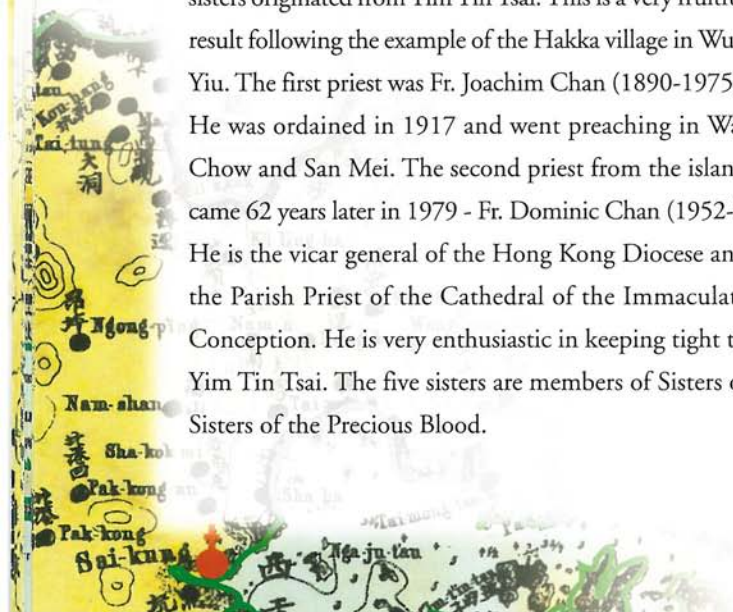


*St. Josef Freinademetz*

There are all together two priests and five religious sisters originated from Yim Tin Tsai. This is a very fruitful result following the example of the Hakka village in Wun Yiu. The first priest was Fr. Joachim Chan (1890-1975). He was ordained in 1917 and went preaching in Wai Chow and San Mei. The second priest from the island came 62 years later in 1979 - Fr. Dominic Chan (1952-). He is the vicar general of the Hong Kong Diocese and the Parish Priest of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. He is very enthusiastic in keeping tight the Catholic community of Yim Tin Tsai. The five sisters are members of Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres and Sisters of the Precious Blood.



*Fr. Joachim Chan*



## OTHER VILLAGES

There are three main lay communities in Sai Kung besides Yim Tin Tsai - Tai Long Bay, Chek Keng and Sham Chung.

The residents at Tai Long Bay were mainly farmers and fishermen. During the golden period of 1950s, there were approximately six to seven hundred people living there. The village was abandoned and the houses collapsed after a large number of young people went to work in England. According to the 1996 bi-census, there were only fourteen residents living in Tai Long Bay. The Catholic chapel there was built in 1867. It is called the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. The chapel was expanded 1/3 in size six years later. It could accommodate about two to three hundred people. It was the largest both in size and the number of Catholic in this area then. The existing chapel was built in 1931.

Chek Keng was mainly a Hakka village with mixed surnames - Fan, Chiu, Lee, Wong and Cheng. Fr. Giuseppe Burghignoli was already preaching there in 1866. He later built a dormitory and a chapel there. There were still 248 lay people in 1959. Every clan in the village had paper banners with the Catholic doctrine and scripture related contents on their doors in the 1960s. However, by the 1990s, the whole village only had three permanent residents living there. During the Japanese occupation, Chinese resistants used the Chek Keng and Tai Long Bay chapels as their bases.

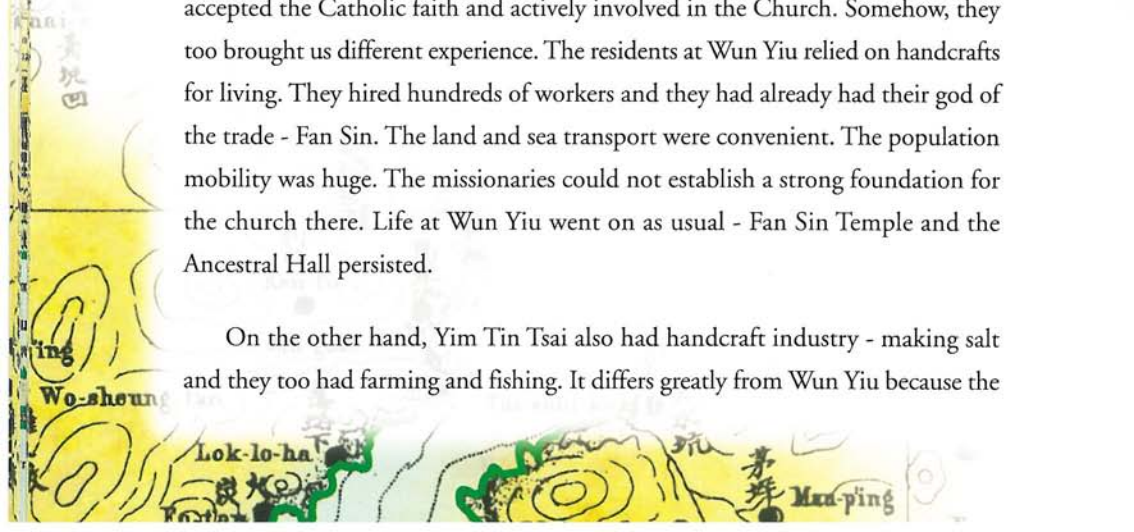
In Sham Chung, Fr. Piazzoli helped the residents build a long dam to avoid flooding of the farm during the high tide. The missionaries also founded a school called Kung Man School. There was also a saying that the pirates avoided Sham Chung because of the presence of missionaries. In 1959, the number of Catholics in Sham Chung was 120.

## Reflection

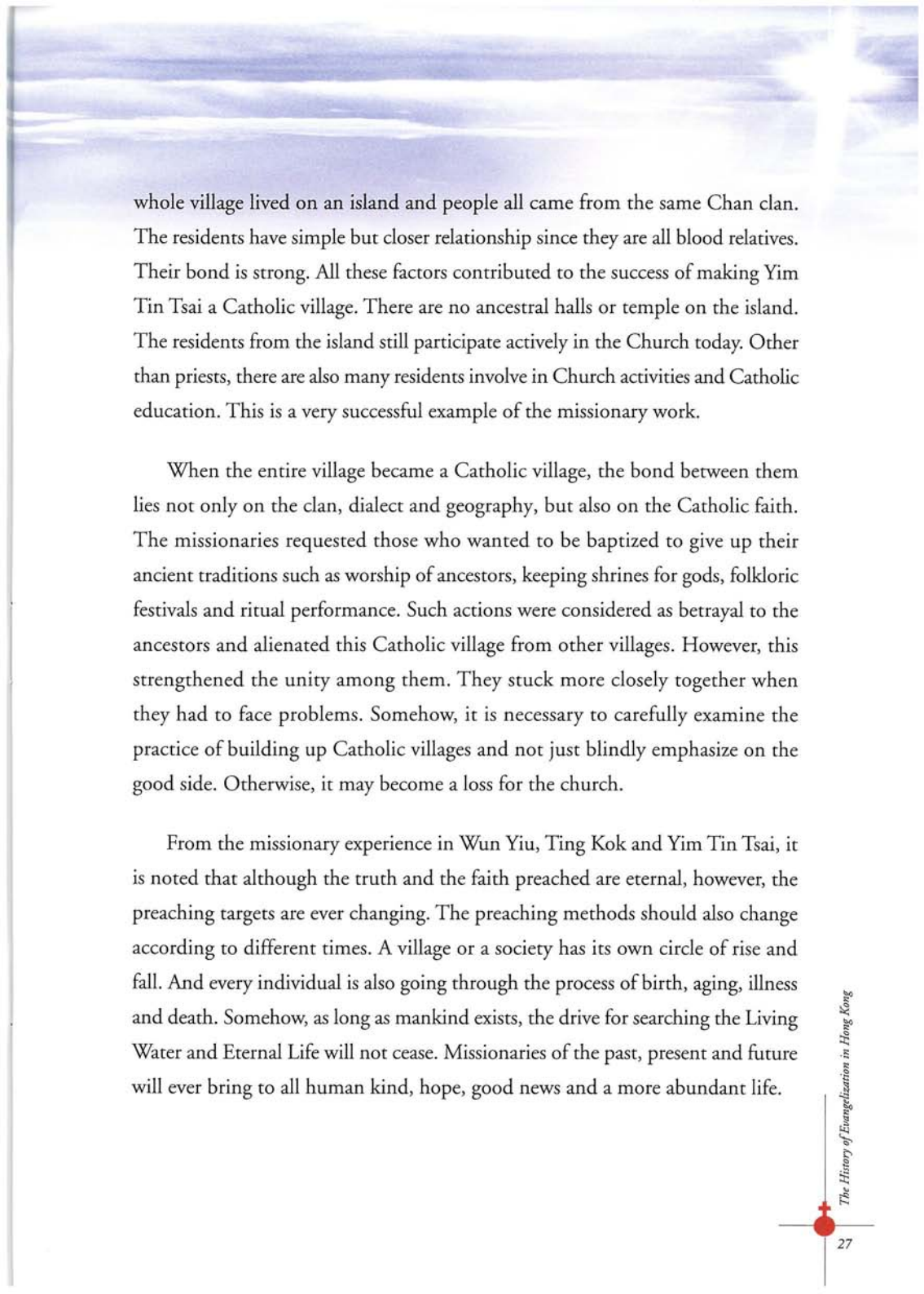
The missionaries preached at the Hakka villages. They represented the new era, western force and western civilization. People were looking for changes at the end of the Qing Dynasty. They could not see them as barbarians anymore. This western force threatened the Dynasty which had to open up to missionaries' activities. In the eyes of some Chinese, this is to encourage people to accept things from outside China. On the other hand the residents realized the actual benefits of having the western materialistic civilization, they could no longer stick to the old tradition and habits. The protection of traditional force and clan structure became a weak and demanding one. The residents had to consider getting help from these outsiders when they needed protection. The missionaries broke the traditional customs and brought in a new faith - the enlightener of the new civilization. It was also a media for the residents to be in touch with the western civilization. Although missionary activities were not by-products of the time, it was definitely part of it.

There were residents from Wun Yiu and Yim Tin Tsai who chose preaching as their life long career. This illustrated that people from these two villages seriously accepted the Catholic faith and actively involved in the Church. Somehow, they too brought us different experience. The residents at Wun Yiu relied on handicrafts for living. They hired hundreds of workers and they had already had their god of the trade - Fan Sin. The land and sea transport were convenient. The population mobility was huge. The missionaries could not establish a strong foundation for the church there. Life at Wun Yiu went on as usual - Fan Sin Temple and the Ancestral Hall persisted.

On the other hand, Yim Tin Tsai also had handcraft industry - making salt and they too had farming and fishing. It differs greatly from Wun Yiu because the







whole village lived on an island and people all came from the same Chan clan. The residents have simple but closer relationship since they are all blood relatives. Their bond is strong. All these factors contributed to the success of making Yim Tin Tsai a Catholic village. There are no ancestral halls or temple on the island. The residents from the island still participate actively in the Church today. Other than priests, there are also many residents involve in Church activities and Catholic education. This is a very successful example of the missionary work.

When the entire village became a Catholic village, the bond between them lies not only on the clan, dialect and geography, but also on the Catholic faith. The missionaries requested those who wanted to be baptized to give up their ancient traditions such as worship of ancestors, keeping shrines for gods, folkloric festivals and ritual performance. Such actions were considered as betrayal to the ancestors and alienated this Catholic village from other villages. However, this strengthened the unity among them. They stuck more closely together when they had to face problems. Somehow, it is necessary to carefully examine the practice of building up Catholic villages and not just blindly emphasize on the good side. Otherwise, it may become a loss for the church.

From the missionary experience in Wun Yiu, Ting Kok and Yim Tin Tsai, it is noted that although the truth and the faith preached are eternal, however, the preaching targets are ever changing. The preaching methods should also change according to different times. A village or a society has its own circle of rise and fall. And every individual is also going through the process of birth, aging, illness and death. Somehow, as long as mankind exists, the drive for searching the Living Water and Eternal Life will not cease. Missionaries of the past, present and future will ever bring to all human kind, hope, good news and a more abundant life.

## Public Transportation Information

### WUN YIU

Tai Po Market - San Uk Ka

New Territories-Green Mini Bus Routes: 23K

(Via Sheung Wun Yiu)

### TING KOK

Tai Po Market - Tai Mei Tuk

Bus Routes: 75K (Via Ting Kok Tsuen)

New Territories-Green Mini Bus Routes: 20C (Via Ting Kok Tsuen)

### YIM TAI TSAI

Sai Kung Ferry (Roll-on Roll-off) - Yim Tai Tsai

### Sai Kung

Bus Routes:

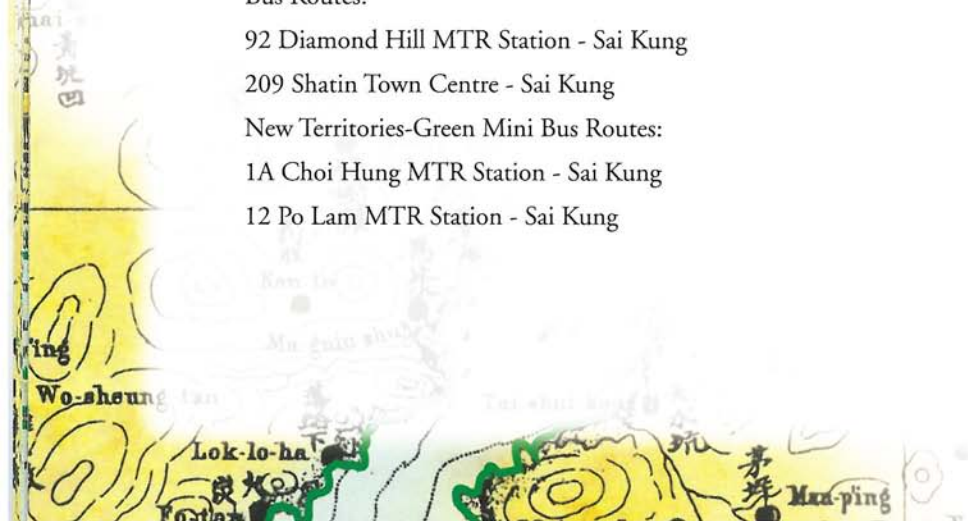
92 Diamond Hill MTR Station - Sai Kung

209 Shatin Town Centre - Sai Kung

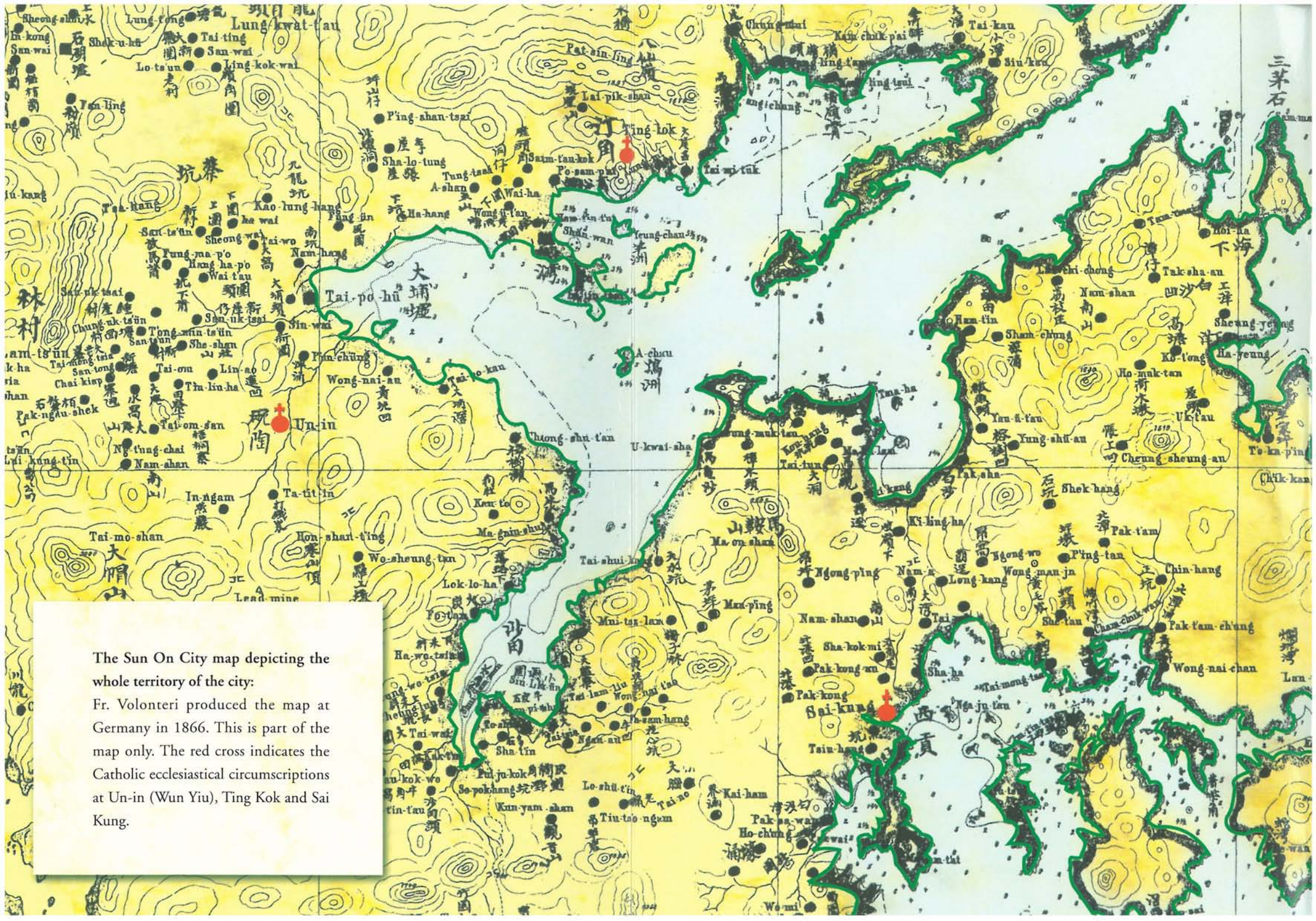
New Territories-Green Mini Bus Routes:

1A Choi Hung MTR Station - Sai Kung

12 Po Lam MTR Station - Sai Kung







The Sun On City map depicting the whole territory of the city:  
 Fr. Volonteri produced the map at Germany in 1866. This is part of the map only. The red cross indicates the Catholic ecclesiastical circumscriptions at Un-in (Wun Yiu), Ting Kok and Sai Kung.





## Acknowledgement

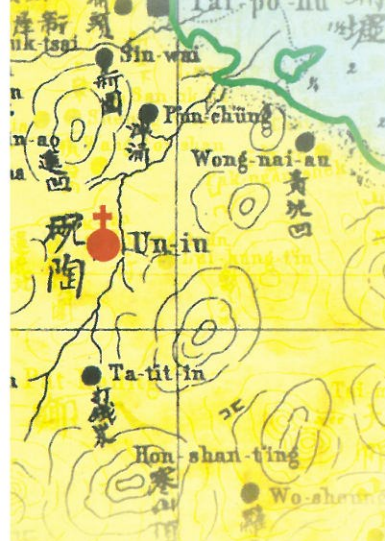
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P. 2, 5, 8, 12, 17, 18, 24

\* Immaculate Heart of Mary Church  
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