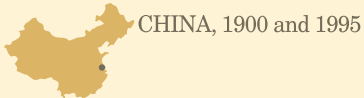




**THE APPEALS
OF OUR LADY
APPARITIONS
AND
MARIAN SHRINES
IN THE WORLD**

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in DONG LU



CHINA, 1900 and 1995

The anti-colonialist and anti-Christian members of the Boxer Rebellion tormented China from the 2nd of November 1899 to the 7th of September 1901. They were adverse to many political issues but they also opposed religion and often attacked the missions. Furthermore, they sacked the foreign embassies and committed so many atrocities that the diplomats, civilians, military and several Christian Chinese retreated into the diplomat's residence where they remained for fifty-five days until the Alliance of the Eight Nations, which included the United States of America, mobilized twenty thousand armed troops to defeat the rebels.

Nevertheless, during their activity, in 1900, ten thousand rebels attacked the small impoverished village of Dong Lu, the dwelling of about one thousand Christians. While they fired their weapons on the frightened crowds of Christians, suddenly the aggressors began to fire into the air. When they saw that their attack was not giving the expected result, they stopped. It was then that the People saw in the sky a vision of the Virgin Mary, surrounded by a resplendent light, together with Saint Michael the Archangel. The rebels, with their great surprise and dismay, were driven out of the village by Saint Michael. Grateful for the protection received by Our Lady, the inhabitants of the village built a beautiful church in her honor. At the time, the pastor had a painting that depicted the Virgin dressed in the imperial garb of the Dowager Empress Ci Xi while Baby Jesus wore precious imperial attire. The painting was hung in the church of Dong Lu where pilgrims began to venerate it in 1924. It was actually this painting to be officially approved with the name of Our Lady of China. It was blessed by Pope Pius XI in 1928, in response to the requests presented by the Synod of Chinese Bishops that was held in Shanghai in 1927. It was the first national conference of Bishops of the country.

The little church was recognized in 1932, when Pope Pius XI approved the church as an official Marian Shrine. In 1941 Pope Pius XII proclaimed the second Sunday of May as the special feast day of Our Lady of China and approved its insertion into the liturgical calendar.

Another apparition of Our Lady and of the Baby Jesus occurred on the 23rd of May 1995 when 30,000 Catholics gathered at the Shrine on the Vigil of the Feast of Our Lady, Mary Help of Christians. Four Bishops were present and about one hundred priests were gathered in an open field to celebrate Holy Mass outside. When the opening prayer began, and then again during the consecration, everyone observed the sun which moved from right to left, emanating various colors. Our Lady of China held Baby Jesus in her arms, and He too, was clearly seen. Just like at Fatima, during the miracle of the sun, when the vision was well-known, also in this case Our Lady was joined by the Holy Family and by other individuals. The phenomenon went on for about twenty minutes. The following day, the 24th of May 1995, members of the Forces of Public Safety prohibited pilgrims to gather on the hill and forced many of them to go back onto the buses and trains. Nevertheless, it is estimated that one hundred thousand of them had arrived by alternate ways and succeeded in gathering with the others in the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady, Our Lady of China. The persecution of the pilgrims continued the following year when in April and May of 1996, five thousand troops were mobilized with thirty tanks and helicopters to destroy the shrine in an attempt to isolate the village. A beloved statue of Mary was also confiscated. The painting had been hidden and a reproduction of it was displayed in the church. The original portrait is in the possession of Chinese priests who carry out their duties incognito.

Presently, because of the political situation in China, many bishops, priests, and Catholics faithful to the Pope were arrested and tortured. The pilgrimages to Dong Lu were declared illegal by the government and those faithful to the Pope must practice their religion in secret.

There exists an "official church," in which several functions are allowed, under strict surveillance of the government. Each year, on the 1st of October, celebrations take place in commemoration of the canonization by Pope John Paul II of the 120 martyrs of the Boxer Rebellion.



Image that illustrates the apparition of the Virgin Mary and Saint Michael the Archangel while they drive out the soldiers.



That which can only be described as a supernatural phenomenon was witnessed by about 30,000 "underground" Catholics and the majority of the consociation on the 23rd of May 1995. These faithful were gathered in the Marian shrine of Dong Lu in the province of Hebei, in China, to participate in a Holy Mass consecrated by four "underground" bishops and about 110 "underground" priests in an open field. During the prayer of the Mass and the consecration of the Holy Eucharist, they witnessed a supernatural phenomenon of the sun in movement similar to that which occurred in Fatima. As described by several testimonies, and confirmed by the Bishop of the Diocese, the sun suddenly had lost its blinding glare so as to allow people to directly look at it. The sun moved alternatively to the right and to the left. The center of the sun was covered by a Host of Holy Communion from which emanated rays of various colors. With the passing of minutes, the sun changed colors: first yellow, then red, blue, violet, orange, and other colors. Subsequently, the people saw diverse apparitions in the nucleus of the sun: a Holy Cross, the Holy Family, Saint Mary, and the Holy Eucharist. At times the sun approached the crowd and then it retreated. "People began to cry out: 'Holy Mother of God, have mercy on us—your children!' as well as other expressions.



Church of Our Lady of China



Each year on the 1st of October, celebrations take place in commemoration of the canonization of Pope John Paul II of the 120 martyrs of the Boxer Rebellion.



Interior of the Church of Our Lady of China



When the regime permitted it, huge crowds of faithful in procession to honor Our Lady of China of Dong Lu



Images of Our Lady of China