

"Strohgäu Extra" July 23, 2007:

一个特殊的使命

25 位中国朋友访问 并带来了具有特殊意义的照片

A very special Mission

25 Chinese visit Gerlingen and bring along important photos

Gerlingen/Germany. A delegation from Hong Kong began its ten day tour in Germany on Saturday in Gerlingen. There the Chinese sleuthed the missionary Wilhelm Maisch. The visit came by chance.

Translated into English from the German text of Ms. VERENA MAYER

When the bus with the Chinese drives around the corner at a quarter to two, the First Councilor of the town Gerlingen, Mr. Wolfgang Steng, waves his white handkerchief good-bye to the guests and then puts it back into his pocket. Reverend Ms. Sabine Goller-Braun breathes deeply. The previous hours were a bit turbulent and they didn't stick with the plan. In fact the delegation should have been at 1 o'clock on the way to the Mercedes Museum in Stuttgart. But the guests took their time, they wanted to hear about Wilhelm Maisch - the missionary from Gerlingen who brought 103 years ago Christianity to South China and whose grave was found only last year by Mr. Thomas Tsang, the Secretary-General of Tsung Tsin Mission Hong Kong.

Wilhelm Maisch left Gerlingen in 1904 for Hong Kong and worked there until his death for the Basler Mission. The Chinese, with who he worked, appreciated that he didn't treat them like second class people. He involved them self dependent in the mission work. "Wilhelm Maisch enjoyed everywhere a lot of confidence", reports the town historian Mr. Imanuel Stutzmann in the church service in the church Petruskirche. "Many people who confront the mission critically see it only as a kind of rule over "other civilizations", says Sabine Goller-Braun, the pastor who confronted the mission herself a bit critically - until she got to know Thomas Tsang and experienced new the "revolutionary power of Christianity" due to his "inner point of view".

It was a year ago when the Secretary-General rang at the parsonage's door on a lovely summer evening. He wanted to know where the grave of Wilhelm Maisch was. For many hours he had searched it in vain in Gerlingen's cemetery. At the first go the reverend didn't know the answer, but she knew the missionary's niece Erika Maisch, who lives in Gerlingen. And Erika Maisch knew: her uncle was buried in South China, where he had died in 1924 at the age of 46. So Thomas Tsang searched there again - with success. And six weeks ago he got in touch again with Sabine Goller-Braun, reported about the grave and announced an other visit - and of his 24 fellow passengers.

On the occasion of the 160 year anniversary of Tsung Tsin Mission (TTM) the Chinese sleuth the tracks of the missionaries who had travelled from South Germany to Hong Kong. They travel now for ten days with Mr. Ulrich Bubeck, director of the German sector of Basler Mission, from Gerlingen via Kornwestheim, Esslingen and Ulm to Black Forest and Switzerland. "The Chinese have an impressive condition", says Bubeck about his guests who landed only on this Saturday morning in Germany. Amongst other things they had in their luggage photos of Wilhelm Maisch's grave in Kutschuk, which was destroyed during the cultural revolution from 1966 to 1976. In the decades afterwards botanical growth grew on the grave and it sank into oblivion. Till Thomas Tsang found it.

He uncovered the grave and repaired the broken stone. The photos of the last resting-place of Gerlingen's missionary will be shown in the future in Rebmann House. "In our hearts the work of missionaries is an important item", says Councilor Wolfgang Steng in "Missionarstube" (Missionary's Room) in Rebmann House. Before in the church Petruskirche Sabine Goller-Braun had waived the "Lord's Prayer" and the final organ. In front of the door the guests are waiting for a following wedding. The translation of the speech, the lection, the report of Imanuel Stutzmann and a surprisingly long film about TTM's work had stirred up the schedule.



It makes no odds to the guests. They take photos, are happy that there are 100 visitors in the church on a Saturday and they write into the guest book "Thank you for the warm hospitality this morning." At a quarter to two the bus eventually managed to depart. Wolfgang Steng waves good-bye with his handkerchief, Sabine Goller-Braun breathes deeply. Everything went well.

And then she finds out, that Thomas Tsang had packed in again the photos of the grave in the heat of the moment.