

AT THE NEXUS: DE ROTZ'S LETTERS TO THE SHANGHAI PROCURE*

Abstract: Through an analysis of a series of letters written by Marc de Rotz, a missionary from the Paris Foreign Missions Society (MEP) in Nagasaki, to Jean-Baptiste Martinet, the Society's procurator in Shanghai, this study reveals the crucial role of the Shanghai Procure as a central hub in the Catholic missionary network in East Asia during the late nineteenth century. In the circulation system of the MEP's Eurasian routes at the time, Shanghai was a vital gateway connecting Japan with the headquarters in Paris, thus forming a close link between Shanghai and Nagasaki. The letters show that in the face of challenges, De Rotz turned to Shanghai for theological guidance, material support, and assistance with personal needs. He consulted with the Jesuit priest Aloysius Sica in Shanghai, through the procurator Martinet, on how to handle the question of traditional beliefs in Japan, which were similar to that in China. He requested prints from the Tushanwan Orphanage by Adolphe Vasseur to be replicated and disseminated in **Japan**. Additionally, with Martinet's help, he was able to withdraw funds he had raised in Europe from his Shanghai bank account to alleviate a famine in Sotome. The friendship between De Rotz and Martinet further facilitated the exchange of information and resources between them. This research emphasizes the lasting impact of the Shanghai Procure as a critical link in the broader network of East-West exchange.

Key words: Paris Foreign Missions Society, Shanghai Procure, Nagasaki, Marc de Rotz, Jean-Baptiste Martinet

PRELUDE

“To speed up the arrival of letters from Paris to Nagasaki by a month or sometimes two, please do not put them in the envelope to Yokohama, but to the Shanghai Procure.”¹ On 31st **October** 1865, Bernard Petitjean (1829-1884), Paris Foreign Missionary (*Missions Étrangères de Paris*, hereafter MEP) in Japan, wrote hastily in a post-script

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¹ ‘Lettre du 31 octobre 1865 de Bernard Petitjean’, in *Lettres de Nagasaki: Les Chrétiens Japonais au Milieu du XIXe Siècle d’après les Missions Étrangères de Paris*, by Sylvie Morishita (Paris: les Éditions du Cerf, 2024), p. 141.

to François-Antoine Albrand (1804-1867), superior of the MEP Seminary in Paris. The letter had to catch the next ship to Shanghai, via where the latest and confidential updates would reach Paris as timely as possible, about **the discovery** and its consequences of the hidden Christians on 17th **March**.² (There is a gap between the discovery of the hidden Christians in March and this letter written by Petitjean in October. As Shanghai is of such an importance, I would suggest the author also mention Petitjean's letter on the discovery of the hidden Christians that was written on the 18th of March, and was sent to Shanghai, see pp. 72-74 of the Morishita book. This letter shows that the Shanghai Procure became the first one to be notified of the discovery, about several days earlier before the MEP superior in Yokohama was informed.)

The Procure in Shanghai mentioned in Petitjean's letter was one of the agencies in the multi-tiered MEP accounting system, functioning as the intermediary between Paris and the missions. Together with the Procures in Hong Kong (since 1847) and Singapore (since 1857), the Shanghai one received money from the European headquarters, decided the allocation according to the commissions from missions it served and sent annual reports of income and expenditure to Paris.³ The Shanghai Procure was up and running from 1861. Relative to Japan by then, the Catholic mission in China had more freedom to carry out evangelical activities and build churches under the French protection, backed by the treaty system signed with western countries.⁴ Based on these conditions, French Jesuits had been well established here since 1842.⁵ Despite the predominate Jesuit presence, MEP and other congregations set up their own procures in Shanghai, not only an account but also real property, through which different communities maintained in contact.

Hence via Shanghai, requests kept flowing from Japan to Paris, asking for books, objects, personnel and overall support. Vice versa, to fulfil the commissions, equipment and new missionaries arrived at the Procures, including Shanghai, the gateway to the East Asian destinations.

² In 1865, after the Oura Church in Nagasaki was inaugurated, a group of hidden Christians who had survived more than 250 years of persecution, revealed their belief to Petitjean on 17th March. It led to the resurrection and conversion of local Catholics, but also provoked suspicions and hostilities from civil authorities, see *Un Jubilé au Japon: 1865-1915 de La Église Découverte*, 1915.

³ 'Notes sur les Diverses Procures de la Société des Missions-Étrangères', *Rapport Annuel*, 1876, AMEP, https://irfa.paris/ancienne_publication/rapport-annuel-1876/notes-sur-les-diverses-procures/.

⁴ Under the Treaty of Nanjing 南京条约 (1842), five Chinese cities were opened to foreign trade. The Treaty of Whampoa 黄埔条约 (1844) legalized the practice of Christianity in China and allowed missionaries to construct mission buildings in treaty ports. The Convention of Peking 北京条约 (1860) stipulated that the religious establishments shall be returned to their owners through the French Minister in China.

⁵ The Jesuits arrived in 1842, just as Shanghai was opened to foreign trade as treaty port. In 1856, the Kiangnan (Jiangnan) apostolic vicariate covering Shanghai was erected and entrusted to French Jesuits, see Joseph de la Servière, *Jiangnan Chuanjiao Shi* 江南传教史 [*Histoire de la Mission du Kiangnan*], trans. Tianzhujiao Shanghai Jiaoyu Shiliao Yixiezu 天主教上海教区史料译写组, vol. 1 (Shanghai, 1983), p. 60.

In 1865, seeing the increasing need of mission publishing, Petitjean wrote back: “if you think it would be a good idea to buy us a lithographic press, please send us the method for using it or, better still, a colleague who knows how to operate it.”⁶ **Printing suppliers started coming via Hong Kong in 1867.**⁷ (the equipments from HK do not seem to be for lithographic printing, but rather for copper plate engraving, because of these words in bold. “Ce brave homme doit écrire le catéchisme, son modèle servira à guider **le ciseau d'un graveur**. Car maintenant nous allons avoir une imprimerie. On a reçu de Hong Kong tout ce qui est nécessaire pour **graver les planches et imprimer**. Deux de nos chrétiens vont se former au métier de **graveur**. » I would suggest the author omit this mention.) The void of an operator summoned Marc de Rotz (1840-1914). On 15th April 1868, he departed with Petitjean from France.⁸ Though Nagasaki-bound, he did not arrive directly. (it is better to add one more sentence to say something like, “Obviously he stayed in Shanghai for a while.”) On 19th June, the Shanghai Procure recorded that: “Mgr. Petitjean and F. de Rotz embark for Nagasaki.”⁹ The transit was the regular MEP route, according to the mission atlas of **1890**: “by Messageries Maritimes boats, from Marseille to Shanghai 36 to 40 days; from Shanghai to Nagasaki by Mitsu-Bichi boats, 3 days.”¹⁰ (If the atlas covers the year of de Rotz’s trip to Shanghai in 1868, it is better to mention it, otherwise the reader may wonder whether the atlas of 1890 reflects the situation of 1868.)

It was the first time for De Rotz to land on this soil, where he would return briefly ten years later. Many things happened from 1868 to 1878 for the Japan mission and for him. In Nagasaki, even with the **religious liberty** initially granted (only to foreigners, not to Japanese), the large-scale persecution resurged in 1867 to imprison Christians and suppress local Christian villages. (It is better to mention that De Rotz still managed to publish books and pamphlets using lithographical printing during the difficult period 1868-69.) MEP missionaries went underground again until the abolishment of the ban on Christianity in 1873. Having recovered from smallpox¹¹, De Rotz was assigned to Yokohama in 1871 where he arrived with 52 cases. He was building the new facilities for the Sisters of the Child Jesus, administrating the services for French engineers at the chapel of the Yokosuka arsenal, as well as continuing the printing work with the

⁶ ‘Lettre du 14 octobre 1865 de Bernard Petitjean’, in *Lettres de Nagasaki*, p. 137.

⁷ ‘Lettre d’Henri Armbruster du 12 mars 1867’, in *Lettres de Nagasaki*, p. 242.

⁸ Congrégation des Missions Étrangères, ‘Compte-Rendu Général de 1868’, 25 July 1868, AMEP, https://irfa.paris/ancienne_publication/rapport-annuel-1868/lettre-commune/.

⁹ ‘Procure de Shanghai (1861-1877)’, 2A05 (330), AMEP, https://irfa.paris/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/AMEP_table_analytique_330.pdf.

¹⁰ Adrien Launay, *Atlas des Missions de la Société des Missions-Étrangères* (Lille: Société de Saint-Augustin Desclée, de Brouwer et Cie, 1890).

¹¹ Aimé Villion, *Cinquante Ans d’Apostolat au Japon* (Hongkong: Imprimerie de la Société de Missions-Étrangères, 1923), p. 54.

help of the paper sent from the Hong Kong Procure.¹² When the **liberation came** (better to say “the ban on Christianity was lifted,” as “liberation” sounds vague), De Rotz returned to Nagasaki to take care of the needs of publications, medicals and the seminary construction.¹³ But as the number of Christians grew, challenges and divisions also emerged. In a foreign land, missionaries were surrounded by customs totally different from their home countries.¹⁴ Unable to reach a consensus (better to specify “on how to deal with local customs that clash with Christian doctrine.”) among themselves concerning day-to-day cases, the MEP needed external resources and supports.

In 1876, Jean-Baptiste Martinet (1844-1905) was appointed to be the procurator in Shanghai. He was not stranger of this city: as soon as his arrival for the procure post in Hong Kong, he sojourned in Shanghai for about five months and learned Chinese.¹⁵ He was not an outsider of the Japan mission either. In July 1877, Bishop Petitjean stopped by Shanghai on his way from Europe back to Japan. Martinet accompanied him to visit the Jesuit mission complex, Xujiahui (Zi-ka-wei) 徐家汇, where they had dinner.¹⁶ In May 1878, Martinet made a one-month trip to the Apostolic Vicariate of Southern Japan (*Japon Méridional*), i.e. Nagasaki and Fukuoka areas.¹⁷

It was very probable that Martinet and De Rotz got along well with each other on that occasion, because soon after his return, De Rotz not only passed by Shanghai to pay him a visit, but also started writing a series of letters addressed to him at the Shanghai Procure, precisely:

三德堂 Procure des Missions Étrangères

French Bund, above S.S.N. Co. (Shanghai Steam Navigation Company)'s Godowns No.16
Martinet, Rev. J. B.¹⁸

In the letters, De Rotz talked about his concerns and needs for the improvement of the Japan mission, and **later Sotome** (meaning the people's life in Sotome?) where he devoted most of the lifetime. Working at the nexus connecting Nagasaki to anywhere

¹² 'Japon Avant Division (1839-1872)', 6A13/03 (569), AMEP, https://irfa.paris/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/AMEP_table_analytique_569.pdf.

¹³ 'Nécrologe - M. De Rotz', *Société des Mission-Étrangères Compte Rendu des Travaux de l'année 1915*, 1916, pp. 211–12.

¹⁴ Marc de Rotz, 'To Jean-Baptiste Martinet', 24 February 1879, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

¹⁵ 'Procure de Shanghai (1861-1877)'.

¹⁶ Gabriel Palatre, 'Diarium de la Mission du Kiang-Nan, Depuis le 1er Juillet 1876 Jusqu'au 28 Février 1878' (Zi-Ka-Wei, 1878), p. 276, unpublished manuscript, Xujiahui Library 徐家汇藏书楼, Shanghai.

¹⁷ 'Procure de Shanghai (1878-1906)', 2A05 (331), AMEP, https://irfa.paris/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/AMEP_table_analytique_331.pdf; 'Japon Avant Division (1873-1884)', 6A13/03 (570), AMEP, https://irfa.paris/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/AMEP_table_analytique_570.pdf.

¹⁸ *The North China and Japan Desk Hong List for 1877* (Shanghai: North-China Herald Office, 1877), p. 21.

and anyone else, Martinet helped him with getting advices, obtaining supplies, and providing personal considerations. Though long gone, these words and phrases capture the crisscrossed paths and trails in that spatiotemporal moment.

ABOUT ADVISES

On 1st July 1878, Joseph Marie Laucaine (1838-1885), Auxiliary to Bishop Petitjean, notified the procures in Hong Kong and Shanghai respectively that De Rotz, exhausted, would depart for the Béthanie Sanatorium in Hong Kong and made a stop in Shanghai. Ten days later, De Rotz arrived at the sanatorium where he would stay for about two months.¹⁹ It turned out to be more than a journey for recuperation. Mentioned in a later correspondence **in the following year** from Florentin Bourelle (1847-1885) to the MEP Paris seminary, his trip in **(to?) Hong Kong and Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) was “to study superstitious matters in depth, of each Christendom the principal Christian personages to hear according to their depositions what the Christians did in the past, and what they still did now in relation to superstition.”**²⁰ (Looking at the original letter by Bourelle, it seems he was suspecting De Rotz’s real reason for going to Saigon, apart from his health issues. The quoted part here is rather about the missionary activities in Nagasaki, instead of what Bourelle knows. I suggest the author delete this part and simply put a sentence like, “his trip to HK and Saigon was deemed to look for advice outside Japan to properly deal with Japanese Christians’ superstitions, according to Bourelle’s letter.)

On 2nd August 1878, De Rotz wrote to Martinet that he left for Saigon with Eugène Lemonnier (1828-1899), the Hong Kong procurator. Having already gathered a few questions, he would like to ask for answers from a certain “P. Sica” in Shanghai.²¹ A month later, responses from Sica via Martinet reached De Rotz, which he deemed to be “helpful”.²²

This resourceful “P. Sica” was Aloysius Sica 薛孔昭 (1814-1895), a Jesuit missionary in Shanghai. During 1876-1878, he was based at the Major Seminary and the St Ignatius Middle School 徐汇公学 in Xujiahui, teaching scripting and exhortation, as well as listening to confessions at several Xujiahui establishments.²³ He had written about consciences and the ways of conducting affairs with Chinese.²⁴ But the most important

¹⁹ ‘Japon Avant Division (1873-1884)’.

²⁰ Florentin Bourelle, ‘To Henri Armbruster’, 11 May 1879, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

²¹ ‘Japon Avant Division (1873-1884)’.

²² Marc de Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 2 September 1878, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

²³ Palatre, ‘Diarium de la Mission du Kiang-Nan’, p. 283.

²⁴ Aloysius Sica, *De Ratione Agendi cum Sinensibus* (Zi-Ka-Wei: Imprimerie de T’ou-Sè-Wè, 1877); Aloysius Sica, *Ad Casus Conscientiae in Missione Nankinensi Resolutos Appendix Secunda* (Shanghai: Typ. Missionis Catholicae in Orphanotrophio T’ou-Se-We, 1884).

reason for De Rotz seeking his expertise was his contributions of (to?) *Monita ad Missionarios Provinciae Nankinensis*²⁵: “Did you receive your *Monita ad Missionarios* from the Jesuit fathers?”²⁶ He asked Martinet so.

Monita was (first) published in 1871 (it seems to be the first of a series, followed by other issues in 1881 and 1933). Commissioned by Adrien Languillat (1808-1878) 郎怀仁, Jesuit Vicar Apostolic of Nanjing, Sica together with some others drafted a detailed guidance of conducts, which for a long time was a necessity for the missionaries.²⁷ Drawn on the theological principles from the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) and the Bull on the Chinese rites (1715) (change the name order in this list?), *Monita* regulated the issues of the governance of the vicariate, the training of catechumens, the main Chinese superstitions, the administration of the sacraments, virgins and confreres, etc.²⁸

Many could be of references to similar situations in Japan, for example about dealing with Buddhism or about local practices of marriage. In fact, ever since the discovery of hidden Christians, Petitjean had begun consulting the Holy See for proper rules to be adopted on baptism, marriage and superstitions.²⁹ Attending the First Vatican Council in 1870 (1869-1870)³⁰, Petitjean was very likely to come across Sica on the spot: Languillat selected Sica to accompany him from Shanghai to Rome to be his theologian during the Council.³¹

In Japan, when the discrepancies exacerbated to the extents that ministry had to be suspended (this part is not clear), De Rotz resorted to Sica for advice, although not always satisfactory. “So far since January the ministry of the sick only has not been interrupted. The reason for this was superstitions. It has been thought that we were all too ignorant of them to be able to instruct Christians usefully”, Bourelle reported in 1879. (According to Bourelle’s letter, he and several new missionaries were not allowed to perform ministry because of a lack of trust of their ability by their superiors. They were only allowed to serve the sick. So, I suggest the author mention this fact and the disagreement between the new missionaries and Monsignor Laucaigne. From this letter by Bourelle and other letters by De Rotz, we can see the advices De Rotz was seeking

²⁵ *Monita ad Missionarios Provinciae Nankinensis* (Zi-Ka-Wei: Ex Typographia Missionis Catholicae in Orphanotrophio Tou-sé-wé, 1871).

²⁶ Marc de Rotz, “To Jean-Baptiste Martinet”, 27 April 1879, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

²⁷ Augustinus M. Colombel, *Historie de la Mission du Kiang-Nan*, vol. 4 (Zi-Ka-Wei, n.d.), p. 206, unpublished lithograph, Xujiahui Library, Shanghai.

²⁸ Joseph de la Servière, *Histoire de la mission du Kiang-nan: Jésuites de la province de France (Paris) 1840-1899*, vol. 2 (Shanghai: l’Orphelinat de T’ou-sè-wè, 1914), p. 187.

²⁹ ‘Japon Avant Division (1839-1872)’.

³⁰ Adolphe Perraud, *Lettre au Clergé et aux Fidèles du Diocèse pour leur Annoncer la Mort de Mgr Petitjean, Evêque de Myriophyte et Vicaire Apostolique du Japon Méridional* (Saône-et-Loire: Église catholique. Diocèse. Autun, 1884), pp. 8–9.

³¹ Colombel, *Historie de la Mission du Kiang-Nan*, vol. 4, p. 216.

from Sica was not only how to deal with superstitions, but also how to convince the new missionaries to strictly follow the Catholic doctrine established over the last two centuries.) Petitjean and Laucaigne were divided **on whether and how to resume**, while De Rotz was busy studying the cases he collected and circulating them to all his colleagues for **observations** (According to letters by De Rotz, Petitjean and Laucaigne were keeping a similar line. De Rotz seems to be between the Bishop and the young missionaries. Here the “observation” means how to supervise the new missionaries.).³² He already started the work during his short stay in Shanghai in July 1878, which Martinet was well aware of.³³

On 30th September 1878, De Rotz asked Martinet: “I beg you to send this little note to Fr. Sica. It is purely a theological matter but since it is a practical case here, it must be kept secret. Besides, in my little note, I tell him and ask for a response.”³⁴ Another one on 19th October, hoping to get a valid answer from Shanghai instead of waiting for one from Paris for months, De Rotz requested: “Mgr. Laucaigne would like to ask you to present these marriage cases to Fr. Sica without mentioning from which mission these cases are sent for his consideration. The two bishops, [Amédée] Salmon, and all of us have been so tangled up that...we ask you to seek a solution from Fr. Sica. The solution should be written, of course.”³⁵ **(the secrecy presented here means that De Rotz had to deal with his young colleagues carefully.)**

Unfortunately, “Fr. Sica’s letter did not clarify anything at all. Now, how to untangle this whole question, I do not know.”³⁶ De Rotz complained to Martinet a fortnight later. This disappointment did not frustrate him. In April next year, he turned to the wise man again: “Why don’t we have the new cases from Fr. Sica to help us? Why have they not yet appeared?” He presented questions including attending non-Christian funeral, wedding and other ceremonies to Martinet “If you could use your nicest pen to ask Fr. Sica for the solutions to the following three cases, you would render us a great service.”³⁷

It was probably beyond De Rotz’s ability and authority to solve the difficulty in its entirety. His letters did not disclose the outcomes, especially after being fully engaged with Sotome in 1879. Nevertheless, it was certain that the MEPs continuously looked to Sica for references when in doubt: in May 1879, Petitjean requested for Sica’s book; in October 1883, Jean-Marie Corre (1850-1911) ordered 30 copies of *Monita*; in November, Corre submitted doubts to Sica concerning the profession of faith of Pius

³² Bourelle, ‘To Henri Armbruster’, 11 May 1879.

³³ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 24 February 1879.

³⁴ Marc de Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 30 September 1878, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

³⁵ Marc de Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 19 October 1878, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

³⁶ Marc de Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 4 November 1878, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

³⁷ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 27 April 1879.

IV, appendix No. 2 in *Monita*. All the correspondences were handed back and forth by Martinet.³⁸ Whether or not Sica helped, the Shanghai Procure played its role in putting in touch with qualified advisors.

ABOUT SUPPLIES

In addition to the main contents of theological difficulties, De Rotz tended to simultaneously attach his needs of supplies at the end of the letters to Martinet. In charge of printing since the arrival, he maintained and developed on this work by securing new resources.

According to the study of Nanyan Guo, the “De Rotz Prints”, lithographic and woodblock prints of biblical stories, were imitated after the Jesuit Adolphe Vasseur’s 范式熙 (1828-1899) project carried out in the Tushanwan Orphanage (*L’Orphelinat de T’ou-sè-wè*) 土山湾 (further details below), due to the similarities they bear.³⁹ It was likely that De Rotz had been interested in the effects of images for a long time and joined Vasseur’s initiatives. In 1882, Vasseur promoted his idea of religious paintings done by mission workshops adopting local styles in *Les Missions Catholiques*, which mentioned that: “Several mission centres...have their own painting workshops to decorate churches and serve the propagation of the faith. Among others, we will mention those set up by Fr. Vasseur at the Tou-Sei-Wei [Tushanwan] orphanage (Kiang-Nan [Jiangnan]), by Fr. Taïx in Madagascar and by Fr. De Rotz in Yokohama (Japan).”⁴⁰ By that time, De Rotz was not (no?) longer stationing in Yokohama. Probably because Vasseur had been away from Shanghai from 1871, he lost the updates of De Rotz’s whereabouts. Nonetheless, this misinformation indicates that they knew about each other’s activities well before 1873.

Returning from the trip in 1878, De Rotz kept discussing about **sacred** images with Martinet. Due to the succinctness in the descriptions, it is difficult to identify whether the referred pictures belonged to Vasseur’s portfolio or not. What could be extracted from the messages is that he had seen a collection of images produced by Tushanwan in Shanghai, and (**decided to make**) **made** his own reproductions in Nagasaki: “If I reproduce two or three of the large images from Shanghai on wood, what would they say? Would they want them engraved? We are waiting here impatiently for the images

³⁸ ‘Japon Avant Division (1873-1884)’.

³⁹ Nanyan Guo, ‘A Flow of Christian Images from the Shanghai Jesuits to the Paris Foreign Missions in Japan: Imitation, Alteration, and Returning to the Roots’, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 10, no. 4 (10 August 2023): pp. 605–39.

⁴⁰ Adolphe Vasseur, ‘Les Images Destinées aux Missions’, *Les Missions Catholiques: Bulletin Hebdomadaire de l’Oeuvre de la Propagation de la Foi* 14 (1882): p. 515.

from Sicawei [Zi-ka-wei], which should be in colour.”⁴¹

As aforementioned, Vasseur ran his project at the Tushanwan Orphanage, one of the establishments in Xujiahui. Since the completion of the Jesuit residence in 1847, several institutions were added to the complex: St. Ignatius Middle School (1849), St. Ignatius Cathedral (1851), Tushanwan Orphanage (1864), Seng-Mou-Yeu (Convent of the Helpers of the Holy Souls, 1868 69?), Xujiahui Museum (1868) and Xujiahui Observatory (1873 72?). Accommodating over 300 children by 1868, in addition to nourishing them, the Orphanage taught them technical skills to “learn a lucrative trade” by opening several workshops.⁴²

The main workshops included the painting studio, printing, woodcraft and goldsmithery. The studio for religious arts and sculpture in Xujiahui had started (since?) in 1852 and moved to Tushanwan in 1868, where boys were taught of Chinese and Western painting skills.⁴³ Together with other workshops, Tushanwan produced numerous religious images and objects for churches both in China and abroad.⁴⁴

In 1878, De Rotz requested from Tushanwan the images of the “Stations of the Cross”, “two kneeling angels (seen in Saigon)”⁴⁵, “Sacred Heart”, “Holy Virgin and St. Joseph”⁴⁶. With the help of Martinet, they reached De Rotz in good conditions.⁴⁷ In the next year, he sent his reproductions to Martinet: “from your poor friend a disguised Jesuit copy⁴⁸, engraved, printed and coloured at home, and two or three Stations [of the Cross] drawn on stone here and printed here too.” He added that “the price would be very moderate,” if other missions needed them.⁴⁹

The transmission of images only accounted for a very small portion of the supplies from the Shanghai Procure. According to ? Judging from the letters, De Rotz had his own bank account set in Shanghai to receive money from his family and friends in France, for the use in his parish in Nagasaki, which was managed by the Procure.

“So here I am, the parish priest of Sotome, with two chapels, one in Shitsu and the other in Kurosaki,”⁵⁰ De Rotz declared to Martinet of his new position in August 1879. The

⁴¹ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 2 September 1878.

⁴² Joseph de la Serrière, *Histoire de la mission du Kiang-nan: Jésuites de la province de France (Paris) 1840-1899*, vol. 1 (Shanghai: l’Orphelinat de T’ou-sè-wè, 1914), p. 225.

⁴³ Anon., “Jiangnan Yuying Tang Ji 江南育嬰堂记”, part 2, in *Xujiahui Cangshulou Mingqing Tianzhujiào Wenxian* 徐家汇藏书楼明清天主教文献, ed. Nicolas Standaert et al., vol. 5 (Taipei: Faculty of Theology, Fujen Catholic University, 1996), pp. 2503–4.

⁴⁴ Colombel, *Historie de la Mission du Kiang-Nan*, vol. 4, pp. 240–44.

⁴⁵ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 30 September 1878.

⁴⁶ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 4 November 1878.

⁴⁷ Marc de Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 29 December 1878, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

⁴⁸ It probably means a pirated copy of the images made by the Jesuits.

⁴⁹ Marc de Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 24 March 1879, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

⁵⁰ Marc de Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 18 August 1879, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

different nature of work gave rise to new requirements, as he wrote: “I thank you for shipping the objects I asked for my horse which could be called a donkey, and for the pen with which I am writing today.” But the challenging part was the resources for construction and relief. He asked Martinet to draw money on his behalf in 1880: “what documents you would need so that you can obtain in my name from the Shanghai bank account (*comptoir d’escompte de Shanghai*)”? He urgently needed the annual pension, inheritance from his father in Normandy, to build a chapel (church?) in Shitsu and two schools without delay.⁵¹

In 1882, there was a shortage of food in his parish: “my district is in grinding misery because the harvests have been so bad, that 64000 pounds of [sweet] potatoes are not enough for one month.” De Rotz tried all means to borrow money for food purchase: “I want to buy now to avoid to have to pay twice as much later on; the price right now is already three times higher than the ordinary price.” He asked Martinet to check whether the 1500 francs he had asked for could be lent to him through the bank account in Shanghai. Further on, he jotted: “Today I am writing to my family and friends in France so that they can help me, because starvation will have to be taken in its real sense.”⁵² As the usual practice, these supplies for relief would go through his bank account in Shanghai. De Rotz fully entrusted them to Martinet, not merely a colleague, but a dear friend.

ABOUT FRIENDSHIP

“I do not know if I said good evening to you, but what I am certain of is that I did not thank you...So, I beg your pardon for having behaved unwittingly like a rude person. Please accept today all my most friendly and grateful greetings.”⁵³ In 1878, back from the trip to Hong Kong and Saigon, De Rotz wrote cordially to Martinet. Though briefly, the reunion in Shanghai was so memorable that by the end of 1880, he still held on to the good memory: “I want to send you my best wishes for 1881 from an old friend who cannot forget your hospitality while in Shanghai.”⁵⁴

It was apparent in the letters that De Rotz was vexed during that time. He shared all the problems and moods honestly with Martinet: “If I haven’t responded to your good letter sooner, it is not because I wanted to break off with you, even for a moment.”⁵⁵ Apart from helping him finding solutions, Martinet was concerned about his wellbeing, in view of De Rotz’s responses: “in the name of friendship, since you want a word from

⁵¹ Marc de Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 19 December 1880, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

⁵² Marc de Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 24 April 1882, 6A13/03 (570), AMEP.

⁵³ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 2 September 1878.

⁵⁴ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 19 December 1880.

⁵⁵ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 29 December 1878.

me on what is happening currently, I will not refuse you”⁵⁶ (this quotation does not say much except the word “friendship.” It is better to quote the sentences about De Rotz’s illness, “votre serviteur qui pour le moment est en démolition : le foie, vieille rengaine, la rate et le rein gauche en dérouté. En traitement depuis deux jours car il a fallu abandonner son poste.” And continues with the following sentence.) ; “Forgive me for not writing to you sooner; my situation here was such that I preferred to suffer alone and not speak of it. When I was about to leave for my district, I had so much to do that I couldn’t manage it either.”⁵⁷ (it seems his health issue was only disclosed to Martinet. It is also necessary to mention why De Rotz wrote “about to leave” in this letter.)

The friendship and concerns were reciprocal. On 15th August 1879, the MEP Procure narrowly escaped a disastrous fire breaking out at 5:45 a.m. in the French Concession in Shanghai. According to the news reports from *The North-China Daily News* in Shanghai: “in the extent of its destruction, is unparalleled in the history of the Settlements”⁵⁸, “Literally the whole area of property, except the China Merchants’ Company’s godowns and the front premises of the Procure des Missions des Étrangères, bounded by the Rue Takou, (opposite the Tientsin Wharf,) on the north, the city Moat on the west and south, and the Bund, or Quai de France, on the west, has been reduced to ruins.”⁵⁹

At the critical moment as it happened, the Procure was luckily guarded by an extinguisher engine pouring water, based on the account of the district engineer of the French Settlement working at the scene: “The No. 2 engine had charge to protect the Missions Étrangères.” This survived house became a temporary safety zone for everyone: “After that terrible struggle every man without exception was exhausted. The Missions Étrangères had their house open...Great credit is due to the Fathers of the Missions for their kindness in providing for and waiting on the people.”⁶⁰ The comparatively few casualties occurred during the disaster was the only relieving point, “doubtless owing to the ice and cold light drinks that were supplied without stint to the firemen and others engaged in extinguishing the flames.” Joining the hotel proprietor who liberally provided the provisions at disposal, “the Rev. J. B. Martinet and the other missionaries at the Strangers’ (Étrangères ?) [Foreign] Mission also rendered valuable aid in a similar manner.”⁶¹ Moreover, the MEPs offered first aids: “at 9 o’clock the Missions provided an ambulance, for it was at that hour most men fell sick and the first treatment was given by the Fathers.”⁶²

⁵⁶ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 24 February 1879.

⁵⁷ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 18 August 1879.

⁵⁸ ‘Great Fire in the French Concession’, *The North-China Daily News*, 16 August 1879.

⁵⁹ ‘The Fire on the French Concession’, *The North-China Daily News*, 18 August 1879.

⁶⁰ A. Charrier, ‘The Recent Fire in the French Concession’, *The North-China Daily News*, 21 August 1879.

⁶¹ ‘The Fire on the French Concession’.

⁶² Charrier, ‘The Recent Fire in the French Concession’.

Martinet might have told De Rotz about the calamity and the aftermaths, after the fire totally burning out and extent of the disaster being clear. On 18th August, De Rotz wrote to him: “Now let me send you my condolences and congratulations on the fire that did nothing, but burn down your kitchens and toilets.”⁶³

There were other common friends of them in Shanghai, to whom De Rotz always asked Martinet to pass his greetings: “My regards to Fr. Bettembourg”⁶⁴; “I think I can give a good handshake to Fr. Bettembourg. He is not happy either.”⁶⁵; “My regards to Fr. Bettembourg, who is also not happy.”⁶⁶ At the end of year 1878, he wrote: “With this, I wish you a good year as well as Fr. Emery [Aymeri] and Fr. Bettembourg. How I wish I could wish you that in person. I would have so many things to tell you.”⁶⁷

Fr. Bettembourg and Fr. Aymeri were not MEPs but Lazarist (Congregation of the Mission) procurators. Close to the MEP one, the Lazarist Procure 首善堂 was located on Rue Laguerre, French Concession.⁶⁸ It appeared that the two congregations also had frequent communications, in addition to the MEP connections with the Jesuits. Nicolas Bettembourg 丕丕 (1850-1926), French, arrived at the Procure in 1878. He later returned to France in 1881, and served as Visitor to Argentina.⁶⁹ Michel-Ange Aymeri 高慕理 (1820-1880), Italian, appointed to the Shanghai Procure in 1857 after the post in Beijing, perished in the last stop in 1880.⁷⁰ Overall their time overlapped with De Rotz was short, but in any case, De Rotz cherished the bond.

In 1886, Martinet made a trip to Japan visiting both the Northern and Southern vicarates, with “good impression of the Japan missions”.⁷¹ A new missionary François Bonne (1855-1912) at the Nagasaki seminary particularly wrote to thank him for his gifts to the seminarians. At the beginning of the following year, Bonne informed Martinet that De Rotz left for Hong Kong.⁷² Without other records, it could only be inferred that, the same as May 1878, they (Martinet and De Rotz) probably met up in Nagasaki, and then on the way to or return from Hong Kong, De Rotz passed by the Shanghai Procure again. In 1891, Martinet was called to Hong Kong as the General Procurator and left

⁶³ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 18 August 1879.

⁶⁴ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 2 September 1878.

⁶⁵ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 30 September 1878.

⁶⁶ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 4 November 1878.

⁶⁷ De Rotz, ‘To Jean-Baptiste Martinet’, 29 December 1878.

⁶⁸ *The North China Desk Hong List* (Shanghai: North-China Herald Office, 1877), p. 26.

⁶⁹ *Catalogue des Prêtres, Clercs, et Frères de la Congrégation de la Mission Qui Ont Travaillé en Chine Depuis 1697* (Pékin: Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1911), pp. 20–21; Joseph van den Brandt, *Les Lazaristes en Chine, 1697-1935: Notes Biographiques, Recueillies et Mises à Jour* (Peiping: Imprimerie des Lazaristes, 1936).

⁷⁰ *Catalogue des Prêtres, Clercs, et Frères de la Congrégation de la Mission Qui Ont Travaillé en Chine Depuis 1697*, pp. 12–13; Brandt, *Les Lazaristes en Chine, 1697-1935*.

⁷¹ ‘Procure de Shanghai (1878-1906)’.

⁷² ‘Japon Méridional (Nagasaki, Fukuoka) (1885-1905)’, 6A13/03 (571), AMEP, https://irfa.paris/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/AMEP_table_analytique_571.pdf.

Shanghai for good.

EPILOGUE

On 19th November, 1914, about 10 days after the sudden death of De Rotz, an obituary appeared in *The China Press*, an English periodical in Shanghai:

The Nagasaki Press reports the death of Father de Rotz, a missionary of the Roman Catholic Church, aged 75 years. Death was rather sudden, an attack of illness on Friday, the 6th instant, ending fatally next morning at ten o'clock.

Father de Rotz went to Japan in June, 1868, three months earlier than Father Salmon. For the past 35 years he was stationed at Kurosaki-mura, Nagasaki-ken, a village with three thousand Roman Catholics. He was a descendant of a noble family of Normandy, and his father, with memories of the great Revolution to prompt him, insisted that he should learn some useful trade or profession. He therefore became an architect, and as such superintended the erection of the residential building next to the cathedral on Minami-yamate, Nagasaki, forty years ago. The building now being erected to replace that was also designed by him, and during the last twelve months he spent considerable time in Nagasaki superintending the work. His death occurred during a visit to the port. A service was held in the Cathedral, the remains being afterwards removed to Kurosaki-mura for interment at the scene of his lifework.⁷³

For the last time and in a different way, De Rotz returned to Shanghai. By that time, his old friend Martinet had passed away for nine years due to incurable disease. The location of the Shanghai Procure had moved from the French Bund to Quai du Yang **kingpang** (King Pang). The vicariates in Japan gradually became dioceses, relying less on the externals. Nevertheless, new procurators took over. In 1922, a notice from the Shanghai Procure regarding to placing orders with the Jesuit Tushanwan workshops, instructed that all the orders from the MEP missions shall be made through the Procure with clear indication of recipient address in accordance with the Chinese postal system.⁷⁴ For a long time already and for some time still, the Procure carried on as the nexus between Japan and the wider world, between MEP and the Catholic communities.

A short conclusion is necessary at the end of this paper. The author may deliberate on the following points. (1) many correspondences between the Shanghai Procure and missionaries in Japan can be found in AMEP; (2) why the correspondence between De

⁷³ 'Obituary - Father M. M. De Rotz', *The China Press*, 19 November 1914.

⁷⁴ 'Procure de Shanghai: Avis Relatif aux Commandes Faites à l'Imprimerie de Zikawei et à l'Orphelinat de Touséwé Dirigés Par les RR. PP. Jésuites', *Bulletin de la Société des Missions-Étrangères de Paris* 1, no. 12 (December 1922), https://irfa.paris/ancienne_publication/bulletin-de-la-societe-des-missions-etrangeres-1922/bulletin-serie-1-n-12/.

Rotz and Martinet is focused on in this paper; (3) the importance of Shanghai's geographical position and regular ships between Shanghai and Nagasaki, which made it easier to reach Shanghai from Nagasaki, whereas the major Japanese port Yokohama takes much longer to reach from Nagasaki because of the lack of regular ships between the two ports, etc.

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