Presentation of collections of Sacred Hymns in Chinese was held in Moscow



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On November 18, the Russian-Chinese cultural center "Firebird" hosted the presentation of musical publications prepared by the center in 2024 with the support of the Chinese Patriarchal Metochion in Moscow and financial assistance from the "Russkiy Mir" Foundation, as reported by the Metochion's website.

The event showcased the "Two-Voice Liturgy in Chinese Based on Ancient Chants" and the bilingual "Collection of Sacred Songs in Russian and Chinese", which includes hymns for the Nativity and Pascha, as well as Russian spiritual and folk songs and canticles.

The opening remarks were delivered by Hieromonk Kirill (Peregudin), an employee of the DECR and a

cleric of the Chinese Metochion, who served as the curator of the publishing project. He spoke about the origins of the project, its participants, and how the first copies of the hymn collections had already been distributed to priests and choir directors of Orthodox communities in China.

During the presentation, the author and compiler of the collections, musicologist and choir director Olesya Lesina, a graduate of the Tchaikovsky Moscow State Conservatory, shared the story behind the creation of the collections. She detailed the process of arranging the music, collaborating with translators, and working with other project participants. Father Alexei Yusupov, secretary of the Chinese Metochion and coordinator of the translation team for the "Two-Voice Liturgy", illustrated some of the unique features and challenges of translating Orthodox liturgical texts. He also discussed the translation group's efforts to standardize Orthodox terminology.

The illustrator of the "Collection of Sacred Songs," artist Irina Vlasova, was also present at the event. She gifted Christmas postcards featuring her artwork to all attendees.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the choir of the Chinese Metochion performed several hymns from the published collections.

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The history of Orthodoxy in China dates back to the second half of the 17th century, during the establishment of the Russian Orthodox Mission in China. However, a stable and time-tested tradition of Orthodox singing in Chinese has not fully developed over the history of the Chinese Orthodox Church, leaving ample room for experimentation and creative exploration. This is particularly relevant today, as modern China places significant emphasis on the "Sinicization" of religious traditions.

The first publication is based on ancient Orthodox hymns that form the foundation of church singing traditions, including Znamenny, Byzantine, and other chants in two-voice arrangements, as well as stylized compositions by contemporary spiritual composers. The text of the collection draws on modern Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic translations, as well as the translation work of Saint Gurias of Tauris and Metropolitan Innocent (Figurovsky), leaders of the Beijing Ecclesiastical Mission. At the same time, some existing translations were significantly revised, and certain texts were translated anew.

The second publication, a bilingual collection of sacred hymns in Russian and Chinese, is designed to introduce Chinese people to Orthodox musical culture and church holidays through the singing tradition. It is intended for both Chinese people living in Russia and abroad, as well as Russian speakers learning Chinese. The book is richly illustrated, adding a deeper layer of meaning to the hymn texts.

Source: https://mospat.ru/en/news/92528/