

砲彈鋼十字架的和平、愛與救贖

The Artillery Shell Cross for Peace, Love and Redemption

In 1945, the Japanese surrendered to the Allies and the Republic of China (ROC) took control of Taiwan. However, the Chinese Civil War led to the loss of the mainland to the Communists, and the ROC government fled to Taiwan in 1949. Hostilities between Mainland China and Taiwan continued. On August 23, 1958, the world-shaking 823 Artillery Bombardment started, better known as the Second Taiwan Strait Crisis. In the first few months of the artillery bombing, the outlying Kinmen Islands (located only 2 km off the coast of China, but governed by Taiwan) were bombarded with hundreds of thousands of shells from China. But, with God's blessing, Kinmen stood firm, and was not invaded. Later, the military situation greatly changed and the shelling decreased, but both sides continued to bombard each other "every other day" (mostly with shells containing propaganda leaflets) until the year 1979. As a result, Kinmen has a huge quantity of shell casings and fragments, some of which have been used by local blacksmiths to make such high quality products as farm tools, kitchen knives, and other types of utensils.

As the cross-strait political situation improved, military tension subsided. Tourism and sightseeing was promoted on both sides, and travel between Kinmen and Xiamen, and between Fuzhou and Matsu, was made easier through the "Three Links" Policy (meaning postal, transportation, and trade links between Mainland China and Taiwan). In recent years, artillery shell knife factories in Kinmen have become tourist attractions; and the Kinmen knife is one of the most popular souvenirs to take home.

In 2016, while Bishop David J. H. Lai was leading a church group to visit Kinmen, he was so inspired by the Holy Spirit that he had such a vision: How wonderful it would be for those artillery shell fragments (which are reminders of fear, destruction, and death) to be transformed into crosses -- to bring peace, harmony, comfort and care into the world! Bishop Lai shared his wonderful vision with some of the Kinmen-knife factory owners. They all agreed, and promised to make come true the idea of making the waste metal fragments into the meaningful symbol of a cross.

Due to the hardness of the material (steel) taken from the 823 artillery shell casings and fragments, it proved to be more workable to use "mold casting" rather than a blacksmith's forge in the production process. Now, with the Kinmen-knife factories providing the needed materials and techniques, Bishop Lai prayed and created a

suitable model of the cross. The design embodies the Trinitarian God; it also symbolizes the Christian notion of faith, hope, and love. The oblique angles at the ends of the “crossbar” (the horizontal part of the cross) represent human arms uplifted in prayer toward the Lord. The curved lines in black signify the rifling inside the gun-barrel through which the gun was fired, and the letter “P” at the center stands for Peace.

The peace of world is constantly under threat, and this is one tangible way of promoting world peace, by ‘turning swords into ploughshares’, and of reminding us that good can come out of evil.

O God, who granted such a vision by which we are inspired to make this Cross of Peace: May you bless us and these crosses in your love and mercy, so that all your children, ourselves, our friends, and all those around the world, can pray and work hard for the transformation of the world. May this world be transformed from confusion into order, from evil into good, from fear into peace, from death into life. May you wonderfully help both Mainland China and Taiwan, so that the people on both sides will really become brothers and sisters, and be a vital force for world peace. O Lord, may Your Holy Spirit always reside with this symbol of love and redemption – the 823 Artillery Shell Cross, so that everyone who sees it will be deeply touched, and joyfully sing: HALLELUJAH!

Rt. Rev. David J. H. Lai,
Bishop of Taiwan