

Documentation

Religious Freedom Guaranteed

Duan Qiming, adviser of the Chinese delegation at the 52nd session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, held March 18-April 28, 1996, in Geneva explained China's freedom of religion policy in the following terms:

- It is the fundamental policy of the Chinese Government to respect people's religions and beliefs.
- Respect for and protection of freedom of religion or belief is separated from State political power and education.
- Scriptures, books and periodicals are available to every religion.
- Freedom of religion or belief includes the freedom both to believe or not to believe in religion. Whereas the government must protect its citizens' freedom to be religious, it has the obligation to safeguard the freedom of those who choose not to be religious.
- No one, no association and no religion can be allowed to violate national law, infringe upon the interests of people, foment splits among its nationalities and sabotage national unity.
- The Chinese Government advocates impartial treatment of and harmony among all religions, as well as equal treatment of all people, no matter if they are religious believers or not.
- All citizens and organizations, religious or not, are equal before the law, having the same rights and obligations.
- Chinese authorities at all levels have over the past decade made great efforts to help renovate temples and churches allocating several million renminbi to this end.

(China Daily, April 1, 1996)