

Documentation

**TALK POLICY, TALK SUPERVISION
AND TALK ADAPTATION: THE “THREE
PHRASES” MUST BE THOROUGHLY
IMPLEMENTED IN ORDER TO DO
RELIGIOUS WORK WELL**

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When examining the question of religion, we need to view the overall picture and size up the situation. When considering religious work we need to pay attention to the law of dialectics and seek the truth from facts. We fully affirm that the religious situation is currently in good shape and our work has achieved results. We must also take a cool, objective look at present real outstanding problems. There is nothing trivial about religion. The management of religious problems is deeply concerned with politics, government policy and the masses. We need a political, policy and mass outlook. We must definitely adopt Lenin's attitude on such questions: “Be especially cautious,” “Be most rigorous,” and “Think things over carefully.” With only a little lack of caution, we will not manage things as we should. This would have an effect on the overall situation of social stability, reform, opening to the outside world, and economic reconstruction.

Comrade Jiang Zemin has pointed out that we must emphasize three phrases when discussing the question of religion:

1. Comprehensively and correctly implement the Party's religious policy,

2. Strengthen the supervision of religious affairs according to the law, and
3. Positively guide religion to adapt to socialism. Comrade Li Peng also stressed these three phrases the other day in his report to the Fourth Plenum of the Eighth National People's Congress.

To put it briefly, Talk Policy, Talk Supervision, and Talk Adaptation. These are the guiding directives which we must follow in order to do religious work well in the new period.

Conscientiously Grasp the Rich Content of the Three Phrases

Following the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee [December 1978], Party Central promulgated two important documents on religion. One is *The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period* [Document 19], issued in 1982, and the other is the *Circular from Party Central and the State Council Concerning Certain Problems in Further Improving Religious Work* [Document 6], issued in 1991. These two documents are the guiding outline for religious work in the new era. In 1994 the State Council issued two sets of administrative decrees: *Regulations on the Supervision of the Religious Activities of Foreigners in China* [Document 144], and *Regulations Regarding the Management of Places of Religious Activity* [Document 145].

Stability in the religious field, and the unity of religious leaders and with the broad masses of believers, can only be maintained by implementing these two documents and two decrees, and by following the important, systematic guiding spirit of leading comrades in Party Central. Practice has proven that, in the new historical period, our Party firmly upholds the Marxist viewpoint on religion, combined with a view of the actual situation of religion in China, to create a correct basic viewpoint and basic policy for facing and managing the religious question.

The Party has produced a correct line, having special Chinese characteristics, for solving religious problems. This forms one component of Deng Xiaoping's theory of building socialism with Chinese characteristics. The Three Phrases embody the basic spirit of

the two documents and two decrees and summarize to a high degree the spirit and essence of the Party's religious policy. They are a penetrating statement of the dialectical relationships which must be grasped, and the key principles and main direction which must be upheld when doing religious work. The Three Phrases are extremely rich in content. Their main points are as follows:

Comprehensively and correctly implement the Party's religious policy.

Religion has its own process of originating, developing and dying out. In socialist society its nature is still long-term, complex, of the masses, ethnic and international. Religion is no trivial matter. To face and deal with the religious question correctly is an important task in our work of building socialism in China, and it is a key element in building socialism with Chinese characteristics. To respect and protect the freedom of religious belief is a basic policy of our Party and country. Citizens have the freedom to believe in religion, and freedom not to believe in religion. Our nation observes the principles of separation of state and church and the separation of religion from education.

While religions, on the basis of independence and self-government, develop friendly relations with the outside world, and actively develop international friendship and exchanges, they also firmly resist the infiltration of all hostile influences from foreign religions. Be united and cooperate politically; respect one another's religious beliefs, and strengthen and expand the Patriotic United Front in religious circles. We thoroughly implement the policy of religious freedom, and handle all components of the religious question from beginning to end, in order to bring about the unity of the whole mass of believers and non-believers to concentrate their will and strength on the common goal of building a modern, strong, socialist nation. Win over, unify and educate people in religious circles, and in a systematic way train a younger generation of patriotic religious personnel. Make full use of patriotic religious organizations. These organizations are helpful in implementing the religious policy, but the Party and government still have their systematic and concrete policy directives.

Strengthen supervision over religious affairs according to law.

Implementing the policy of religious freedom and strengthening supervision over religious affairs according to law are one and the same. We cannot put the two at odds with each other. To conduct the supervision of religious affairs according to law points to the implementation of the relevant laws, regulations and policies of the government for the administrative supervision of religion. To supervise according to law is to make religious activity fall within the scope of laws, regulations and policies. All venues for religious activities must be registered according to law, and supervision over them strengthened. Concerned government offices conduct their supervision of religious affairs according to the law. This work must be strengthened, definitely not slackened, let alone be abandoned. While simultaneously protecting the freedom of religious belief and normal religious activities, we will strongly attack all illegal, criminal activities hiding under the guise of religion. We must have a good grasp of policy, strictly distinguishing and correctly administering the two different types of contradiction in religion. To a large extent, religious questions are related to ethnic questions. Be adept at sizing up the differences and relationships between ethnic and religious problems, and deal with them correctly.

To carry out supervision of religious affairs according to the laws, regulations and policies, the government will raise the standards and abilities of all levels of cadres (especially the leading cadres) in administering and supervising according to law. We will establish and perfect a body of regulations and enforcement mechanisms for all aspects of religion, perfect religious work organizations, and build up contingents of religious workers. Base-level Party and government organizations must increase involvement in religious work. This goes for the Party leadership as well. All relevant bureaus will share the work and the responsibility, and cooperate closely.

Positively guide religion to adapt to socialism.

The purpose of implementing the Party's policy of religious freedom, and of increasing supervision over religious work according to the law, is to guide religion to adapt to socialism. The broad

masses of believers support the socialist system. They have the same basic interests as all the citizens of our nation. This provides the political foundation for religion to adapt to socialism. Religion must perform its activities within the scope of the Constitution and the laws. Religion must take as the basic norm for its behaviour the safeguarding of respect for the law, of the public interest, of the unity of the nation and of unity among ethnic groups. Religious circles must continue to advance in adapting to socialism, and not fall back. Guide religious circles to develop the positive factors within religion, restrain the negative factors, and unify the believing masses to participate positively in economic reconstruction.

Correctly Understand the Internal Relationship among the Three Phrases

The Three Phrases of Jiang Zemin have an internal relationship among themselves which cannot be broken up. The expression of the implementation of the religious policy and the lawful supervision of religious affairs, from the point of view of policy and law, is completely one and the same. Its core in dealing with religious questions is to protect the lawful, put a stop to the illegal and attack the unlawful. The process of the lawful supervision of religious affairs is just the process of implementing the religious policy. But the ways of manifesting the two are not the same. Religious laws and regulations are the systematizing and legalizing of the religious policy. Lawful supervision has a compelling force. Whether to completely and accurately implement religious policy or to strengthen supervision over religious affairs, both have as their object to positively guide religion to adapt itself to socialist society. The "Three Phrases" embody one principle, namely to correctly and accurately implement the Party's religious policy; they highlight one main point, namely, taking into consideration present problems in religious work, to earnestly increase lawful supervision over religious affairs; and they aim at one objective, namely to positively guide religion to accommodate itself to socialist society.

When we emphasize "talking policy" in the implementation of basic principles, when we stress the focus of our work and emphasize "talking supervision," and when we give expression to the goal of our

work and emphasize “talking adaptation,” of course it is difficult to avoid a stress on only “one phrase.” However, each “single phrase” has a close relationship with and embodies all “three phrases.” To understand these three phrases as a whole is to understand and to grasp the Party’s religious policy in the new circumstances; it is to persevere in seeking truth from facts in religious work, to adhere to the laws of dialectics, and to stick to the Party’s great principles and direction. To separate the policy of religious freedom from the lawful supervision of religious affairs, and even to put them into conflict with each other, is an error in understanding, and to act in accordance with it must lead to errors in practice.

There are officials who talk about implementing the religious policy yet who look at religious problems without seeing, who shirk responsibility and let things take their course, who neither hear nor ask questions about illegal activities which take place under the guise of religion, and who might even be unaware of armed rebellion taking place.

Then there are officials who talk about supervising religious work, but who lack a legal viewpoint, who do not talk about policy, who do not understand religion, who do not understand the feelings of the people and cannot work with the masses, who do not even distinguish between normal and illegal religious activities, but who have a general attitude of prohibiting and suppressing.

Both kinds of officials do serious harm to the Party’s religious work. Yet if in implementing the policy and supervising according to law, we forget the starting point and the final goal, which is to unite the mass of believers and unbelievers to concentrate their will and strength on the common goal of building a modern, strong and socialist nation, then our religious policy will lose its sense of direction and fail to reach its goal.

In Religious Work, Profoundly Understand and Implement the Three Phrases over the Long Term

The way to use Comrade Jiang Zemin’s Three Phrases to guide us correctly in our work is to have ongoing, widespread and profound study of them among the mass of cadres in religious work. Propagating and studying the Three Phrases them will make them sink

into the cadres' hearts, fortify their minds, and make them want to take action. No matter if it is pondering great questions or managing concrete affairs, cadres need to maintain a sober comprehension, with the spirit of the Three Phrases applied to every item of business and running through the entire process. Given study and comprehension, with a grasp of the big principles and main direction in religious work from beginning to end, we can effectively resist vacillation to the Right or to the Left, and guard against the emergence of deviations.

Seeking the truth from facts is the soul of the Three Phrases.

We cannot merely allow the Three Phrases to remain on our lips or take them as dogma only, but we must put them into living, concrete practice. Under the circumstances of reform and opening, an endless stream of new problems arise in the religious sphere. We must delve deeply into the facts, enter deeply into the masses and the base levels to understand the true situation, gather research material and conscientiously examine it, pay attention to accumulated experience, and vigorously enhance our abilities. Religious work will progress through our well-done and effective work. Fresh experiences in our practice, plus an even more profound and precise understanding, will enrich the implications of the Three Phrases.

Here I want to especially mention the Four Safeguards: safeguard dignity of the law, safeguard people's interest, safeguard unity of nationalities, and safeguard national unification. These are totally identical with the basic spirit of the Three Phrases. The Four Safeguards originated from the Two Sided Banner, namely, safeguard the public interest and safeguard respect for the law, which was a guideline issued by Party Central for handling the feud with the *Jiyisi* Islamic sect in Ningxia. Later, when guiding the work of selecting the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama, Party Central took a step forward and explicitly stated: "Every person and every organization, including religion, in our nation, ought to safeguard respect for law, safeguard the public interest, safeguard unity among ethnic groups, and safeguard the unity of the country. Absolutely no person and no organization, including religion, in our nation, is allowed to violate the nation's laws, to damage the public interest, to create division among

ethnic groups, or to destroy national unity. This is the most basic criterion of conduct.” If some people place themselves in opposition to the nation’s laws and discipline, and stand opposed to the public interest, then they must lose their standing and future in our nation, and must lose the confidence and respect of the broad masses of the people. Some people use the current difficult points and hotspots in supervising religious affairs according to the law as excuses to incite religious disturbances which are hard to handle in a timely manner. In these kinds of disturbances, antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradictions are frequently interwoven, and the masses are not clearly distinguished from bad people with ulterior motives. Practice proves that clearly holding aloft the banner of the Four Safeguards makes it easier to educate and win over the vast majority of the people, to distinguish and attack a small handful of bad characters, and to resolve contradictions at the base level, nipping this state of affairs in the bud. We may also say that the Four Safeguards are the norm of conduct for adapting religion to socialism. This so-called “adaptation” demands that religion conduct its activities within the scope of the Four Safeguards, and not come into conflict with them.

Conclusion

Summarizing the above, religious work is a task with a strongly political, policy and mass nature. First among these is the political nature. We must give expression to the political nature of religious work, and concretely talk politics in religious affairs. In religious work, talking politics first of all means talking about the Three Phrases, and conscientiously putting the Three Phrases into practice. Only in this way can we face the complex new situation, and not become disoriented amid new problems. Only in this way can our religious work become more effective.□

Do you know that:

- there is a total of 123,000 kilometers of roads in China--not including alleys and dirt roads, and their total area is 1.25 billion sq. meters?
- that China has 32,000 bridges, 1,434 ring roads and 883 pedestrian flyovers?
- that China has 2.5 million street lights with a combined capacity of 1.11 million kilowatts? (SCMP, Aug. 4, 1996)