

# ***An Overview and Evaluation of Church and State Relations in China during the Past 30 Years***

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## **A) Foreword**

The Third Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party Congress in December 1978 marked the advent of reform and opening in China. During the past 30 years, the socialist economy of China has been turned upside down. Although reform and opening have been mainly expressed in the economic sphere, economic reform could not help but have a profound impact on thought and society. On one hand, China turned from the political messianism of the era of Mao Zedong to rationalism, and thinking became non-ideological. On the other hand, China gradually threw off the shackles of a politicized society, while the relationship between the Party-State and society underwent a complicated restructuring and reestablishment. No one should doubt that such transformations have had a fundamental impact in the religious sphere.

## **B) The Party-State's Understanding of the Link between Religion and Socialism**

### **1.) Recognizing the long-term reality of religion**

After the Cultural Revolution, and under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the Party discarded the hard-line dogmatism of Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong thought. Under the banner of "building socialism with Chinese special characteristics," the Party

promoted economic reform. Over these past 30 years, China has turned from a planned economy to a socialist market economy, a thorough change from an economic structure based on state-owned enterprises and public ownership of the means of production. The market economy is today the irreversible direction of China's economic growth.

The marketization of the economy provoked a great struggle in ideological circles. The prime example of this was the debate over whether the reforms should be surnamed Socialist or Capitalist. This reflected the dissatisfaction and anxiety among conservative forces inside the Party that the reforms were departing from Socialism. Finally, the officials reemphasized the guiding thoughts of "the theory of the preliminary stage of socialism," and "developing the productive forces," and they began to set aside ideological contradictions. During the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress [November 2002], Jiang Zemin issued the Three Represents theory, and allowed entrepreneurs to become Party members. This was a step forward in adjusting the viewpoint of the Party-State at the pragmatic and ideological levels.

With these new explanations of theory, the Party rationalized its pragmatic social course of action, and fully embodied that course in Church-State relations. Having been influenced for a long time by Marxism, the Chinese Communist Party defined the nature of religion as "the opium of the people." After the mid-1950s, when Leftist thought and policy were prominent, the extermination of religion became an objective of their work. During the Cultural Revolution, religion became a national target for criticism and struggle. It seemed, wrongly, that China had become a nation without religion.

After the Cultural Revolution, the Party discovered that the policy of destroying religion had not only been ineffective, but also that during the 1980's the number of believers was rising. For example, the number of Protestants in 1982 was 3 million according to government statistics, four times the number of 1949. For years, the government has been announcing that there are about 100



million or more believers in China, no different than in 1949. But scholars in China have their doubts about this statement.

The growth of religion during the period of reform presents a great challenge to the Communist theory of religion. After the founding of New China, why didn't the number of believers gradually fall as socialism was being constructed? The Marxist viewpoint predicted the dying out of religion. Why were there no signs of this happening in socialist China? In March 1982, Party Central circulated *Document 19: The Basic Viewpoint and Policy on the Religious Question during Our Country's Socialist Period*. The first point to clarify was the theoretical misunderstanding about "dying out:"

Those who think that, following upon the establishment of the socialist system and with a certain degree of economic and cultural progress, religion will die out within a short period, are not being realistic. Those who think to rely upon administrative decrees or other coercive measures to wipe out religious thinking and practices with one blow, are even further from the basic standpoint Marxism takes towards the religious question. They are entirely wrong and will do no small harm.

*Document 19* went on to say that, in the current stage of Chinese socialism, religion still had a long period of development ahead of it. Party Central explained it this way:

Now in a socialist society, with the extermination of the oppressive system and the oppressing class, the class origin behind the existence of religion already has been cut off in its roots. But owing to the fact that the development of people's awareness always falls behind the actual social situation, old ideas and old customs cannot be completely wiped out within a short period of time. Rather a long process of struggle is needed in order to give maximum

development to the social forces of production, to insure the maximum amount of material riches and to establish social democracy in the highest degree, as well as develop education, culture, science and the arts to their furthest limits. Because we cannot free ourselves within a short period of time from various hardships brought on by large scale natural and man-made calamities and because class struggle still exists within certain limits, and given the complex international situation, religion will, therefore, still have influence over a part of the people in a socialist society. So it will necessarily continue to exist for a long period. Eventually, as human history will show, religion will disappear. But this will happen only after all objective conditions have been met, having passed through the period of socialism and a long development of communism.

Although the Party-State did not abandon belief in the final dying out of religion, it recognized that religion would exist in Chinese society for a long time to come. We can say that the basic viewpoint of the Party on religion during the period of reform is this coexistence of “final dying out” and “a long period of existence.” Is there a contradiction or tension between these two? Obviously Party Central did not want to press for an answer at the time the document was written.

As one more step to rationalize the long-term social reality of religion, Luo Zhufeng of the Institute on Religion in the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences edited a compilation, *The Question of Religion in China During the Socialist Period*. The book was an attempt to ameliorate this conflictive issue. This cadre has a deep store of experience from years of being in charge of religious work during the 1950s. He broke new ground by saying: “During China’s socialist period, religion cannot be described as ‘opium.’” Luo’s viewpoint was aimed directly at those in the Party who understood religion as the “opium of the people.” He also foresaw that the Party-State was planning to discard the Opium

Theory, as it searched for a reasonable stand vis-à-vis the long-term persistence of religion.

Sensing that religion could not be exterminated, the Party accepted its long-term nature. But the Marxist viewpoint on religion still continued to advocate that religion is fated finally to disappear. This unavoidably became implicated in the question of whether the essence of religion could be useful for the development of society. In 2000, the National Conference of the United Front Work Department considered a related question. Jiang Zemin noted, "We Communists are materialists. We do not believe in religion, but we respect the objective rules for the existence and development of religion." Thus differences in belief should not be equated with political stances. In 2001, Jiang gave an important clarification for the persistence of religion, when he spoke to the National Conference on Religious Work. He acknowledged that, viewed from a global perspective, religion had developed gradually. Especially in scientifically and technically advanced Western countries, religion still retained a deep influence. "There are still quite deep-rooted conditions present for its existence." Although Jiang did not deny that religion was still on the road to final extinction, "this definitely will not be attained in a short period of time." He even explained the long-term nature of religion this way: "It might be said that the final disappearance of religion will take even longer than the final disappearance of class and nation." In other words, even if classes and nations disappear, (according to Marxism, communism will already have been realized by that time), yet religion might still perhaps exist. This explanation from the highest leader of Party Central shows a new understanding within the Party on the question of religion.

## **2.) Adjusting religious theory**

The period from 1982, when *Document 19* officially posed the problem of the long-term persistence of religion, through 2002, when Jiang Zemin openly admitted that religion might outlast class and nation, reflects the acceptance on the part of the Party of the

fact of religion's existence and growth. Yet by being subordinated to "long-term existence," belief in "final extinction" had become marginalized and muddled. To resolve the contradiction between theory and reality, the Party-State could not but make some adjustments at the theoretical level, as it searched for a means of relating to religion.

Officials had been proclaiming for a long time that religion is a negative, even a reactionary, ideology. This view had deeply influenced cadres at every level. So the Party could not simply discard the Opium Theory and then move on. How to build a new foundation for the relationship between religion and socialism in Chinese society had become an unavoidable topic for the Party-State.

When they discarded the Opium Theory, the Party simultaneously mentioned promoting a plan for religious circles to contribute to the public good. However, determining the value of religion to society as a whole was limited to scholarly discussion only. In the early 1990s, the Party officially recognized the above viewpoint by proposing the theoretical framework of "the mutual adaptation of religion and socialism." In 1993, Jiang Zemin convened the 18<sup>th</sup> National United Front Works Conference, and put forth Three Sentences on religious work:

- a.) Fully, correctly and thoroughly implement the Party's religious policy;
- b.) Strengthen supervision over religious affairs according to law;
- c.) Positively guide the mutual adaptation of religion to socialist society.

The last of the Three Sentences mentioned the basic direction of Party Central toward religious work for the first time. Jiang clarified "mutual adaptation:"

This kind of adaptation certainly does not demand believers to discard theism and religious faith. Rather it demands them

in the political realm to love the motherland, support the socialist system, and support the leadership of the Communist Party. At the same time, they should reform those religious systems and doctrines, which are not adapted to socialism, and also utilize religious doctrines, regulations and ethics, which positively serve socialism.

In fact, in back of the hypothesis of “mutual adaptation,” there is a place for the possibility of “non-adaptation.” The link is this: given the premise of the objective, long-term persistence of religion, how can religious systems and doctrines, which are not adapted to socialism, be reformed? Furthermore, how can religious ideas be pushed ahead and so be of service to a socialist society? Keep in mind the two-sided, unequal relationship of mutual adaptation, and the distinction between primary and secondary. “It is important to point out that religion must adapt to the demands of socialist development, not that socialism must adapt to religion,” the scholar of religion Gong Xuezheng had written in 1994. Concretely speaking, religion must reform itself and adapt to and contribute to socialism.

Entering the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, if religion and a socialist society will co-exist for a long period of time, then how should the relationship between the two be reestablished? Ye Xiaowen, the Director of the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB), pointed to the heart of the problem: The ruling party of a socialist nation, in guiding people’s thoughts, firmly promotes dialectical materialism and historical materialism (including atheism) and stands in opposition to all forms of idealism (including theism). Thus, faced with the reality of the persistence of religion, how should the political authority in a socialist nation handle religion? In 2003, the national RAB officially promulgated the Socialist Theory of Religion.

As Ye Xiaowen explained, religion has three special traits. It is by nature: fundamentally long-term, linked to the masses, and especially complicated. “Fundamentally long-term” means we must

respect the objective laws of the development of religion. Even in the developed nations, religion still has an important influence. How much more so in China during the initial stage of socialism? In other words, religious workers need to avoid shortsightedness. They should not impatiently hasten the extinction of religion. Instead, they should recognize the mutual tolerance of religion and socialism, and promote religion so that it becomes a factor for social harmony. "Linked to the masses," is a new request for religious work to be done as mass work. It is necessary to view the broad masses of believers as a positive force in society. But an "especially complicated nature" stresses never to underestimate the potential of religion to be put to negative use. This means specifically the political strategy of Western imperialist forces which exploit religion to westernize and divide. Thus the Party must firmly uphold the policy of the independent administration of religion, and guard against foreign forces using religion to carry out infiltration.

After the 16<sup>th</sup> Party Congress (November 2002), the Party changed its objective from socialist revolution to socialist reconstruction. The party in power thus set forth the theoretical framework of the Socialist Theory of Religion. The aim was how to get an atheistic ruling power and the mass of believers to peacefully coexist during the stage of constructing socialism. The phrase, "fundamentally long-term," reflects how the Party took a step forward in recognizing the fact of the persistence of religion. It's no surprise that Ye Xiaowen described this as a major development for the Party, a breakthrough in the difficult question of the theory of religion.

### **C.) The Party-State's Control of Religious Organizations**

When the Party-State determined the proper contribution of religion to society, it did not neglect the misuses of religion. As we look at the development of the administrative regulations regarding religion from the angle of social control, it becomes another important aspect of state and church relations during the reform

period.

The 1982 Constitution clearly defined that religion could not interfere in the nation's administration, legal system, or education. Most cadres invoked the principle of separation of state and religion to describe China's situation. In fact, "separation of state and religion" has never yet officially appeared in the Constitution, in documents of Party policy, in government administrative regulations, or in the decrees of People's Congresses at any level. Jiang Zemin had freely admitted, "Religion is entangled with national interests and activities on behalf of the common good. It must come within the scope of governmental supervision in accordance with law." Separation of state and religion with "special Chinese characteristics" means that religion cannot interfere in national and governmental affairs; it does not mean that religion can avoid interference from the political authority.

### **1.) Interfering in and remolding the religious market**

Since 1949, the Chinese government has actively interfered in the religious market. The most obvious reconstruction has been distinguishing legal religions from feudal superstition and "reactionary secret societies." The legal religions are Buddhism, Daoism, Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, and Islam. The six major religions during the 1950s established Patriotic Organizations, one after the other. These received official authorization, giving them a monopoly power to represent their religions. Speaking from the other side of the situation, traditional Chinese folk beliefs and denominations such as Yiguandao, Limen, Tongshanshe, Anqingdao, and Hongqianghui, were all tagged as "feudal superstitions" and "reactionary secret societies" to be uprooted throughout China.

After the Cultural Revolution, the Five Major Religions (but not the Orthodox Church) and their Patriotic Associations were permitted to resume activities nationwide. This framework for the five still exists. Due to unique historical circumstances, the birth and growth of the Patriotic Associations were hastened to a great

degree by the state. They may be viewed as “top to bottom social groups.” *Document 19* clearly indicates, “All Patriotic Associations should accept guidance from the Party and the government.”

The Five Major Religions currently have seven distinct Patriotic Associations at the national level, two each for Catholics and Protestants, and one each for the other religions. Branch associations on the local level (province, city, and county) were established at the same time. During the reforms, the essence of the Patriotic Associations has been like that of other social organizations: originally they represented the government, but now they have both governmental and non-governmental aspects.

In addition to the Five Major Religions, during the 1980s popular religions and sects startled people by their growth. Anthropologists describe such phenomena as “recycling rituals.” Leading authorities have repeatedly prohibited cadres from participating in feudal superstitious activities. This indirectly is a clear statement of the seriousness of the problem.

According to *Document 19*, feudal superstition is still “harming the national interest and the productive forces of the people.” That document also says:

All those reactionary secret societies, sorcerers and witches, who had been banned, without exception will not be permitted to resume their activities. All those who spread fallacies to deceive people and all those who hoodwink people out of their money will, without exception, be severely punished in accordance with the law...all those who make their living by physiognomy, fortune telling and *fengshui* should be educated, warned and helped to earn their living through their own labor, and not engage again in these superstitious practices which only deceive people. Should they not obey, then they should be dealt with in accordance with the law.

In the late 1990s, the state firmly tried to uproot Falun Gong,



and defined it as a “heretical association.” So-called heretical associations “falsely use religion, breathing exercises or other names to set themselves up as the Number One religion spiritually. They create or spread superstitious heresies and other means to bewitch and cheat others. These are illegal organizations which expand, control their members, and threaten society.” The Party views heretical groups as a head-on threat to social order. Currently 40 such groups have been so designated, more than 20 of which have a Christian background.

## **2.) The system of religious control**

The state has established specific administrative bureaus to manage religious work. In the government system, the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) of the State Council (plus RABs at every level) is specifically responsible for supervising religious affairs. It's called the Official Supervisory Work Unit for every religious group. As defined in the *Handbook for Supervising Social Organizations*, a Supervisory Work Unit will “be responsible for managing the daily affairs of social organizations which have already been registered.” Outside of the governmental system, religious work belongs within the systematic scope of a Party committee. It is the specific responsibility of Party Central and of every level of the United Front Work Department. Under the current system of “the Party ruling the country,” the important role of the United Front appears everywhere.

The establishment of the Patriotic Associations mirrored the Party's plan to control the religious market. Not only was legal religion restricted to the Five Major Religions. Beyond that, the aim was to define religion as corresponding to Religious Patriotic Organizations. Through the United Front and through the Supervisory Work Units, the Party came to lead the Patriotic Associations, and a monolithic system for controlling religion emerged.

Another special feature of this monolithic system is that religion is subject to administrative supervision. Ever since the

founding of New China, the government has implemented a tight network of social control, establishing the solemn power of Party leadership. To enforce social order, it has unfolded the administrative principle of "Combine the lines and squares, with the squares coming first" The "lines" are the vertical lines of control from higher units, while the "squares" are the joint leadership of the local Party committee and government over the area.

As defined in the *Handbook for Supervising Social Organizations*, "Social organizations may not set up geographical branches." (Art. 19). As early as 1978, the National Religious Works Congress drew up this regulation: local religious organizations, as they conduct their activities under the leadership of the Religious Works Office of the local government, are not under the jurisdiction of national religious organizations. Because of this, the Patriotic Organizations at every level (national, provincial, municipal, and county) currently do not possess an up-and-down chain of command. This model of subordination to local administration is aimed at guarding against any social organization setting itself up nationwide, or extending its network across geographical boundaries. This will prevent the emergence of a tight social organization, other than the Party and the government, anything that could become a substantive opposition force in society.

### **3.) Religious activities "outside the law"**

Since the reforms, it has not been possible to coordinate the monolithic system for controlling religion, as described above, with either the growth of religion or an increasingly pluralistic society. First, have the government recognized patriotic organizations of the five major religions been able to maintain their monopolistic positions? The growth of the underground Catholic and Protestant House churches clearly indicate that there is a problem. During the 1980s, underground Catholics grew vigorously, and established close ties with the Vatican. Generally speaking, house churches have not received government recognition. They have not entered

the community of the Protestant patriotic association. Their existence is a threat to it. The house churches are not like the underground church. They do not form a unified body of religious activity, but instead they are mutually independent, isolated, local in nature, and not in a mutual relationship. Thus they are not uniform regarding theological traditions or questions of the state and the Protestant patriotic association.

Catholicism and Protestantism already possess a legal religious status. But even so, because the underground and the house churches do not belong to the patriotic associations, they do not have a legitimate identity. Their religious organizations and activities are criticized and labeled criminal, illegal, and unlawful. Yet the reforms have propelled transformations in society. These have provided a certain degree (or a limited amount) of space and a foundation where “extra-legal” churches can build and grow. How to resolve the problem of the underground and house churches? This has become a challenge to which the Party-State cannot avoid responding.

Besides problems within the five major religions themselves, there are also some objective realities following in the wake of the reforms. The structure of those religions is totally the result of the Party interfering in the religious market, the planned economy practiced and experimented in the religious sphere. After the Cultural Revolution, the growth of popular beliefs and the revival of religion were novel challenges to a “planned religion.” At the same time, as China opened to the outside world, numerous citizens went overseas for study, business or tourism. They were extremely likely to encounter other religions than the five major ones. So how could the right to freedom of religious belief for those citizens be guaranteed? After returning to China, could they establish similar religious organizations? How to manage religions other than the Five became (and still remains) a difficult problem.

The *Regulations for Religious Affairs*, which came into effect in 2005, do not specifically itemize the five major religions. This shows that the Party recognizes the problem. Does this foretell that

the Party is willing to expand the legal room for other religions, and give them an environment in which they might propagate? This obviously would not accord with the current national policy on religion. Actually, the Party-State has not clearly described the five major religions, but by allowing only the Five to establish themselves as social organizations, it has prevented other religions from spreading in China.

On a related point, the expanding influence of folk religion in Chinese society has drawn serious attention in recent years. As early as the beginning of the 1980s, folk religion sought room to exist in society, wanted to avoid being attacked as “feudal superstition,” and mostly opted to “register” itself under the name of the Daoist or the Buddhist Association. Also, with its rapid rise, folk religion can no longer be ignored as a force in Chinese society. The Party cannot but recognize the fact that it exists and cannot be banned. So it would be better to bring it inside the system of government administration. In July 2005, the national RAB created another four offices to oversee religious work. Their main responsibility is to supervise folk religion. One can foresee that the Party will not use the blanket generalization of “feudal superstition” again. This was a formal acknowledgement of the legal status of folk religion. In various places (e.g., Fujian) the RAB even put into effect a *Circular on Strengthening Control over the Activities of Folk Religion*, with clear methods for supervision. This officially brings folk religion within the scope of the RAB.

If we say that economic reforms tend towards creating a market economy, then market principles have not been fully incorporated into the Party’s structures for managing religion. We can see from the documents discussed above, that the Party still schemes its old plan: to use the old model of administrative control to intervene in the religious market and to coerce it. There is no sign of the reality of pluralism, which has been developing in Chinese society and religion during the past 30 years of reform. The contradiction between this system of control and social reality leads religious groups (other than the legal ones) to organize themselves

and to conduct their activities against the law or outside the law. One scholar uses “red market,” “black market,” and “gray market” to describe the space religion has under the current special conditions of relations between state and religion.

#### **D.) Conclusion**

For 30 years, the Chinese government has promoted a series of reforms, which have had a profound impact on the economic sphere. The market has established a position for itself in China. Let no one doubt, the march of the marketization has had a deep-rooted influence on society and social thought. This kind of transformation has evoked a response in state-church relations.

First of all, the Party’s theory of religion has striven for thoroughness. Religion is no longer viewed as an object of class struggle, or understood as simply a negative, reactionary ideological force. On the contrary, the Party has admitted the objective reality and long-term development of religion, and has tested new structures to relate it to the ruling socialist party. On one hand, the Party still actively guards against the negative influence of religion; while on the other hand; it affirms religion’s contribution and positive usefulness to society.

In his opening report to the 17<sup>th</sup> Party Congress in October 2007, Hu Jintao promoted the policy of uniting all groups to broaden the great patriotic United Front. He stated, “The basic direction of our Party’s religious work will fully and thoroughly elicit the active usefulness of religious personnel and the broad masses of believers to promote an economically developing society.” The Congress also amended the Constitution of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the term “religion” appeared in it for the first time. Party Central affirmed the contribution of believers, and made a breakthrough in theoretical explanations. But this was not as good as admitting the social reality of religion and rationalizing it at the theoretical level. This kind of “religious pragmatism” sums up the reform era in a nutshell, and embodies the Party’s protection against leftist tendencies.

In addition, when it comes to social control, the government has not yet extricated itself from the Party's Anti-Rightist position on state and religion. The Party still exercises strict social control over religious bodies, and widely uses intrusive administrative methods to thrust itself into the sphere of China's religious marketplace.

As everyone knows, the Chinese government always pays a great deal of attention to the problem of religious infiltration, viewing this as an important factor threatening national security. Liu Yandong, the director of the United Front, pointed out to a congress of provincial Religious Affairs Directors in October 2006, that as China moved forward in opening up to the outside world, new facets of the religious problem continually multiplied. The question of religion is ever more strongly related to national security and social harmony, unity among different ethnic groups, and with the fundamental position of the ruling party. At his opening report to the National Religious Work Congress in January 2007, Jia Qinglin, a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo, said "Resolutely resist foreign forces using religion for infiltration." Ye Xiaowen stressed this even more as a main aim of religious work in 2007.

Let no one doubt that the government has made major progress since the reforms began in protecting the right of citizens to freedom of religious belief. Yet a gap definitely exists between this protection and the definition of freedom of religion. As stated in the Chinese Constitution, "freedom of religious belief" mainly means making religious faith and doctrine a "private matter" of the individual. When "religious affairs" impinge on public interests, they come within the scope of government regulation and control. The Party-State has not yet abandoned placing religion side by side with national security, and still uses methods of social control to guard against religious thinking. Article 18 of *The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) reads:

1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to

- have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.
  3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
  4. The States, parties to the present Covenant, undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

The Chinese government signed this *Covenant* in 1998, but the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has still not yet permitted it to come into effect. Is the Chinese government willing to expand the people's right of religious freedom from "freedom of religious belief" to "freedom of religion," or not? A related question arises regarding the scope of freedom of religion, which is intimately connected to the implementation of freedom of association and of speech.

Looking towards the future, whether or not state and religion in China undergo a major transformation will depend on how the Party manages the two following sensitive topics. A.) On the ideological level, it is unavoidable to touch upon the last forbidden zone of thought: the government's standpoint on Marxist atheism. Article 24 of the Constitution clearly indicates that the nation "promotes patriotism, collectivism and internationalism among the people, and promotes dialectical materialism and historical materialism in education." In recent years the Central Government has emphasized and reemphasized the promotion of atheistic education. This is aimed especially at the political thinking of minors and university students. Defending them from a religious

influence fully mirrors the Party's anti-religious bias and prohibitions. How will the Party manage the tension between religious freedom and the promotion of atheism? This definitely will have a great influence on adjusting the relations between the state and religion. B.) The above restrictions and control over religion, in the final analysis, cannot be separated from implementing freedom of association, assembly, and speech. In other words, guaranteeing the religious freedom of Chinese citizens, opening China's religious market, giving full autonomy to every religious body, and letting them become civic organizations, are all important content for Party deliberations as China marches in the direction of a civil society.

(For footnotes, please refer to the Chinese original in this issue.)