

Australia Tibet Council's submission
to the JSCFADT'S inquiry on
Protecting Freedom of Religion or Belief



Suffocating religious freedom in Tibet: China's draft regulations on religious affairs

(This report is prepared by our global partner, the International Campaign for Tibet)

"These tiny hermitages, built from the foundation with money that our parents accumulated, and with the blood and tears of our friends, were where we received transmissions and meditated."

From "From Larung Gar By Woesel Nyima"[1], an anonymous Tibetan commenting on the demolition of housings at the Buddhist institute of Larung Gar, Eastern Tibet.

In the past months, the Tibetan Buddhist institute of Larung Gar in eastern Tibet has come into the focus of international attention, as Chinese authorities have ordered the demolition of large parts of this authentic place of Buddhist religious life, which over the past years has become a destination for thousands of Buddhist practitioners, from Tibet and China.[2] While the Chinese authorities' measures at Larung Gar have come under scrutiny by a concerned international public, the Chinese government has drafted a revision of its religious affairs regulations[3] that may have a far reaching effect on Tibetan Buddhism, as it will consolidate the state's repressive approach towards religious groups.

These 2016 draft religious affairs regulations should be assessed against the background of a new set of laws that can be viewed as a systematic development of a security architecture[4], which – with regard to Tibet – dates back to the time before the presidency of Xi Jinping. Xi Jinping, most notably, has moved to ensure that a number of completely new laws have been drafted and adopted quickly, thereby completing this architecture. Among those are the 2015 Security Law, the NGO Law (in force January 2017), the 2016 Counter Terrorism Law, and the Cyber Security Law (not yet passed). With its ideological origins reflected in the notorious "Document No 9"[5] that became known in 2013, these laws represent the Communist Party's – and apparently foremost its leader's – will to gain maximum control over every aspect of societal activities, which from the Party's point of view pose a threat to its legitimacy.

Tibet has been a testing ground for such policies which later became law. Most notably, this refers to both physical and virtual control of the population ("grid management"[6], social media, phone and internet surveillance[7] and information blackouts[8]), as far as being a

testing ground for “counter-terror” rhetoric and measures that were labelled as of such intention[9], and which later could be rediscovered again in the so called Counter Terrorism Law.

The draft revision of the religious affairs regulations that has been published by the State Council this September thus does not represent a completely new approach to activities – in this case of religious nature – of the population, in particular with regard to Tibetan Buddhists, Uighur Muslims, or Chinese Christians. But with its measures they will contribute to an even more closely knit fabric of control vis a vis these groups. In September 2016, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reiterated his deep concern over allegations of discrimination, torture and ill-treatment, enforced disappearances and deaths in custody of members of ethnic and religious communities,[10] acknowledging the already tense situation in Tibet and Xinjiang (East Turkestan).

As a consequence, combined with the aforementioned security policies, the regulations will lead to an even more repressive situation particularly in Tibet that violates international human rights standards, and as obviously being hostile to independent expression of thought, belief and opinion, they will be counterproductive for peace and “stability” in Tibet.

The draft revision of the regulations on religious affairs must thus be opposed, as they will further restrict religious freedom, in particular for Tibetan Buddhists. Moreover, if they are not resisted by the concerned international public, the current Chinese leadership around Xi Jinping will most likely feel encouraged to implement even more repressive policies in Tibet, but also beyond in the entire PRC, eventually with unforeseeable effects for China’s position internationally. Instead, the Chinese government must be urged to revise its laws on religious affairs to bring them into conformity with international human rights standards. This is particularly true for the regulations on religious affairs.

I. Background

In April 2016, the State Council had put the revision of the 2005 religious affairs regulations onto its legislative work plan for 2016.[11] Also in April 2016, President Xi Jinping had attended a two-day government conference on religion presided by Chinese Premier Li Keqiang which was also attended by other top leaders including Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, and Wang Qishan. Notably, Xi Jinping underlined the CCP leadership vis a vis religious groups, who “must adhere to the leadership of the CPC, and support the socialist system and socialism with Chinese characteristics”. He also specifically referred to outside interference, by saying: “We must resolutely guard against overseas infiltrations via religious means and prevent ideological infringement by extremists,” while also focusing on the internet, both as opportunity to spread state propaganda, as well as threat of subversion which must be controlled.[12] As the draft revision shows, the elements mentioned by Xi Jinping in his April 2016 speech – state security, counter-terror and religious extremism; outside influence and to a lesser extent the role of the internet – can be found throughout the document, which underlines the importance of this top-level meeting.

In September 2016, the State Council put forward the draft revision of the religious regulations, for deliberation until October 7. At this moment, it is unclear when and in what shape the revision will enter into force.

The draft regulations add a number of new provisions and cover the following areas: general legal provisions, religious groups, religious schools, sites for religious activities, religious professionals, religious activity, religious assets and legal responsibility. This report seeks to highlight some provisions and patterns of the draft revision that are significant to Tibetan Buddhism.

State attitudes towards Tibetan Buddhism

Since 2008, Chinese authorities have instilled an oppressive environment in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and nunneries – an approach in which the state recognizes no limits to its authority, and strives to regulate every aspect of the religious life.

The theoretical underpinnings of hostility towards religion emerged in the late 1990s/early 2000s when it became clear through official statements that the CCP's position was that because of its link to the Dalai Lama, religious belief in Tibet was inherently antagonistic not just to socialism but also to the Chinese state. The Party's role in controlling Tibetan Buddhism has been emphasized by the top echelons of the CCP leadership. At a critical meeting setting policy on Tibet over the next decade, then President and Party Secretary Hu Jintao referred to the high political priority of guiding "Tibetan Buddhism to keep in line with the socialist society".^[13] As a consequence, religious laws rather define the scope of state intervention and detail unlawful activities by religious practitioners and groups than protecting the space of lawful religious activity from state intervention. As a result, religious groups, religious schools, sites for religious activities and religious citizens shall not only "abide by the Constitution, laws, regulations and rules," but they are also tasked with political goals and thus to "safeguard unification of the country, ethnic unity, religious harmony and social stability", as stated in Article 4 of the 2016 draft regulations.

For Tibet, this entails politicization and drastic state interference with religious activity. Tibetan Buddhism is to "support the socialist system and socialism with Chinese characteristics", as stated by Xi Jinping. During his visit to the town of Driyu on August 4-5 (2016), Wu Yingjie, the new party secretary of the Tibet Autonomous Region, declared that monasteries must "unswervingly" stand with the Chinese Communist Party in "struggling against the Dalai clique", and that monks and nuns must follow the guidance of Xi Jinping in order to carry out their religious work. Wu warned that it was imperative for monks and nuns to become "politically reliable". The CCP, which promotes atheism, requires monks and nuns to respect the Party above all other priorities. A harsh "rectification" drive that was launched in Driyu in 2014 as part of the crackdown stated that monasteries deemed 'illegal' will be torn down and Tibetans who possess images of the Dalai Lama or place traditional prayer (mani) stones will be severely punished.^[14]

In 2015, Tibet's top Party official called for Chinese red flags to be displayed on all Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, in a statement made in Lhasa reported in the Chinese media. This

followed a call for monasteries and nunneries to become centers for propaganda made by then Tibet Autonomous Region Party chief Chen Quanguo. The Party Secretary's comments were in the context of a strategy by the Beijing leadership to intensify CCP presence and control across Tibet, following the unrest that swept across the plateau from 2008 onwards. This has led to a more pervasive and systematic approach to 'patriotic education' and a dramatic increase in work teams and Party cadres in rural and urban areas.[15]

Rules and regulations on a local level in Tibet

Ideological rhetoric has been met with measures in Tibetan counties and prefectures across the provinces. Such regulations on a local level can be viewed as implementation and concretization of the 2005 regulations of religious affairs. Developments indicate that the repressive nature of the law and of the ideological rhetoric backing it is reproduced on the ground, as a few examples show.

The harsh new "rectification" drive in the Driru region (Chinese: Biru) of Tibet mentioned before stated that monasteries deemed "illegal" will be torn down and Tibetans who possess images of the Dalai Lama or place traditional prayer (mani) stones will be severely punished.

The new measures detailing expulsions of monks and nuns from religious institutions appeared to have been enforced when 26 nuns characterized as "illegal" by the authorities were expelled from the historic Jada Nunnery in Driru on November 15, 2014, after a police raid. Many of the nuns had refused to denounce the Dalai Lama during their visit, according to Tibetan sources, and this led a work team of officials to examine the registration records of the nunnery to check that its population was in line with the officially-imposed quota of 140 nuns.

In January 2016, Tibetan shopkeepers were ordered to hand in images of the Dalai Lama by the county authorities in Draggo, Kardze, an extreme and counter-productive move that was endorsed later by an article in the Chinese state media comparing the Dalai Lama to Saddam Hussein. The orders came just a few days after a prayer ceremony for the Dalai Lama's health attended by hundreds of Tibetans on January 25, 2016.[17]

In a further escalation of state surveillance and intervention in Tibet, the establishment of five police offices in monasteries in a Tibetan area of Gansu was announced in 2014, with an official report stating that it was part of a "recent focus on policing monasteries". In Labrang (Sangchu, Chinese: Xiahe), Gansu, where a number of self-immolations have occurred, the authorities announced that 24 police stations had been set up in monasteries.

The new offices are part of a rollout of plans announced after 2008 for construction of police stations in Tibetan monasteries, under Chinese policies of placing almost every monastery in Tibet under direct government rule and intensifying Party presence in both rural and urban Tibetan areas.[18]

In 2015, new regulations issued in the Rebkong (Chinese: Tongren) area of eastern Tibet warned that various activities, including praying and lighting butter-lamps for the Dalai Lama or people who have self-immolated, are “illegal” and will be penalized.

The measures, which appeared to be guidelines for county officials mandated by higher-level authorities, enable criminal charges to be imposed for everyday and often devotional activities. They were another indicator of the political climate of impunity and the severity of repressive measures being imposed across Tibet, particularly in areas where there have been peaceful protests or self-immolations, such as Rebkong county. The measures heighten the dangers for Tibetans in the area, who have sought to protect their cultural and religious identity and traditions.[19]

II. The draft regulations[20]

Focus on “state security”, “religious extremism”, “terrorism” Consistent with the 2016 Counter Terrorism Law and the 2015 Security Law, the revision of the religious affairs regulations reflects the government’s intention to add and underline ideas and notions of “state security”, “religious extremism” and “terrorism” to the law, thereby linking religious activity directly to politically charged crimes. As in the 2016 Counter Terrorism law, neither “extremism”, nor “terrorism” are sufficiently detailed in the law, and remain vague notions, offering the authorities vast discretionary powers to apply the terminology with regard to unwanted religious activity. “State security”, “religious extremism” and “terrorism” have been added to both the general provisions, as well as to specific rules of the law.[21] Accordingly, Article 3, laying out the purpose of the law, states:

“The management of religious affairs upholds the principles of protecting what is lawful, prohibiting what is unlawful, suppressing extremism, resisting infiltration, and fighting crime”, which reflects Xi Jinping’s comments from April 2016.

Thus, in conflating the law with undefined “extremism” linked to religion, with “terrorism” and “state security”, the regulations, as well as the Counter Terrorism Law, give scope for the penalization of almost any peaceful expression of Tibetan identity, acts of non-violent dissent, or criticism of ethnic or religious policies. In this political climate the exiled Dalai Lama has been accused of inciting terrorism through self-immolations, and even terror through his teachings, notably as “outside infiltration.” Referring to religious authorities living outside the People’s Republic of China such as the Dalai Lama, the revision stipulates “independence” from “foreign domination” as a precondition for any lawful operation of religious groups.[22]

Shrinking space for religious pilgrimage – more detailed sanctions for travelling abroad Consistent with the strident official language used to emphasize the new counter-terror drive, a major religious teaching by the Dalai Lama in exile, the Kalachakra in Ladakh in 2014, was described by the Chinese state media in harsher language than before, saying that it incited terror. The authorities linked their attempts to prevent Tibetans from attending the Dalai

Lama's teachings in exile with 'counter-terrorist' work in the 'frontline' border areas of Tibet, including Ngari (Chinese: Ali) in the Tibet Autonomous Region, which borders India.[23]

The draft regulations introduce monetary sanctions for travelling abroad without approval and permission[24], while stating "where a crime is constituted, criminal responsibility is pursued in accordance with law", apparently targeting not only Muslim practitioners, but also Tibetan Buddhists who wish to attend religious teachings of the Dalai Lama in exile.

An earlier set of measures issued in the Tibet Autonomous Region was evidence of this approach, detailing "punishment" for "Chinese Communist Party Members and Public Servants who Exit the Border to Participate in Such Splittist Activities as the Dalai Clique's 'Kalachakra'". The regulations, dated April 29, 2012, were disseminated by the TAR CCP Discipline Inspection Committee General Office, a department associated with the ongoing investigation into corruption, which has been conflated with "anti-separatism" in Tibet.

According to a translation into English of the document by Human Rights Watch, the 'punishments' were in order to "uphold the unification of the Motherland and the unity of the nationalities, to strictly enforce Party discipline and government discipline, and to strictly forbid Chinese Communist Party members and public servants from exiting the border to participate in such splittist activities as the Dalai clique's 'Kalachakra'."

Although the document refers only to Party officials and government cadres, it follows the imposition of a more systematic approach in seeking to prevent any Tibetans travelling into exile for teachings by the Dalai Lama, and punishment of those who do.

Three months before the measures were disseminated, in January, 2012, the Chinese authorities mounted a major operation to track and detain Tibetans who had attended a Kalachakra teaching by the Dalai Lama in Bodh Gaya, India. At least 7-8000 Tibetans from inside Tibet attended this major teaching at the place where the Buddha achieved enlightenment, a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists worldwide. Chinese agents operating on Indian soil even gathered information about Tibetan pilgrims prior to their return.

Returning Tibetans, many of whom were elderly, were detained and compelled to undergo intensive 'patriotic education' sessions. Some were kept in prison or forced to do hard labor for longer periods, for instance if they were caught with photographs of the Dalai Lama or mementoes of the teaching. Those who possessed passports had their passports taken from them, and not returned.[25]

State approves Buddhist reincarnations – repressive rules retained

In 2007, the Chinese government announced new measures, known under the title "Order No 5", stating that all reincarnated lamas (tulkus) must have government approval. The measures, which are deliberately targeted at one of the core belief systems of Tibetan Buddhism, reveal the Party's agenda to undermine and supplant the Tibetan religious hierarchy and weaken the authority of legitimate Tibetan religious leaders including the Dalai Lama.[26]

As in the 2005 regulations of religious affairs, the 2016 draft revision legally authorizes the authorities to interfere with the process of identifying Tibetan Buddhist lamas, as it is detailed and rolled out in “Order No 5”.^[27] The authorities and the Party have recently underlined that they seek to be in charge of the process.

In April 2016, the Chinese authorities announced that they were nearing the completion of the construction of a “Living Buddha database with biographies of over 1,300 Living Buddhas residing in the country”. The Chinese state media said that the online registration system contains the profiles of 1,311 individuals approved by the state “as reincarnated Buddhas”.

The new data added to the site follows details of 870 ‘Living Buddhas’ uploaded in January by the Buddhist Association of China. The authorities describe this as a protection against fraudulence, although it is undoubtedly part of their more systematic approach to control Tibet and Tibetans.

Tibetan delegates at the March 2016 Party meetings of the National People’s Congress and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference affirmed this new layer of control, with a monk identified by the media as “the abbot of Sera monastery Phurbu Tsering” being cited as saying: “The highest level of living Buddhas must be approved by the central government [...] Other Living Buddhas must be approved by local governments.”

The system operates by issuing permits to those who can be recognized officially as reincarnate Tibetan lamas, but is itself open to corruption in terms of back-door payments to those in charge of providing permits. 441 names with biographical details were added to the list of 870 individuals last week by the Buddhist Association of China, according to a state media report on April 28. Xinhua reported: “The bios, accessible at www.chinabuddhism.com.cn, www.sara.gov.cn and www.tibet.cn, have been viewed up to 98,000 times per day.”

Zhu Wei-qun, the former deputy head of the United Front Work Department, was cited as saying that: “The system will strike a heavy blow to the Dalai Lama, as he has been utilizing his religious status to ratify Living Buddhas at will – which is against religious tradition – in an attempt to control Tibetan monasteries and divide the country.”^[28]

Tightening web for religious venues, personnel, activities

The draft religious affairs regulations extensively list requirements for approval of religious activities, religious sites, “religious professionals”, religious schools and religious assets.

Politically, and in general, permission and approval of activities, sites or professionals are connected to the adherence to general provisions of the law, namely they must not promote religious extremism, and must not use religion to undermine ethnic unity, divide the nation or carry out terrorist activities (Article 4). If found to be in violation of these principles, approval

and permission for religious groups, professionals, activities or sites can be revoked by the authorities.

The requirement for state approval of any religious activity, for individuals and groups, does not only reflect the government's intention to control these activities, but also raises the question under which circumstances spontaneous religious activity, in private or public, regardless of the number of practitioners, will be treated as protected expression of religious belief. The regulations, again, offer vast inroads for state interference with such expression

of religious belief. The provisions offer grounds for shutting down prayer ceremonies outside monasteries, at private homes, conducted by lay individuals, regardless of the number of practitioners.

The draft regulations, furthermore, add extensive censorship of any religious publication and in particular online or internet publications to the law.[29]

Expulsions of monks and nuns – demolitions of unapproved religious sites

The recent case of expulsions and demolitions at the Buddhist institute of Larung Gar in Eastern Tibet appear to follow a pattern of state intervention which has occurred already after the passing of the 2005 regulations on religious affairs.

In 2007, the Chinese authorities had issued a rare statement acknowledging the 'removal' of a giant gold and copper plated statue of Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) donated by Chinese Buddhists to Samye monastery in Tibet and demolished by Chinese People's Armed Police in mid-May 2007. The 30-feet high statue at Samye, Tibet's oldest monastery, was apparently funded by two Chinese devotees from Guangzhou in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong. Local Tibetan devotees were frightened to disclose information about the incident after People's Armed Police troops were deployed around the monastic compound during the demolition process in Lhoka prefecture (Chinese: Shannan), the TAR.[30] In another incident taking place in September 2007, local Tibetans attempted to prevent the demolition of a statue of Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) near Mt Kailash in the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). Approximately 20 Tibetans were seen forming a human shield around the two meter high statue before they were dispersed and the statue demolished by armed security personnel.[31]

III. Recommendations

The People's Republic of China has signed, but has not ratified the International Covenant on Political and Civil Rights. However, the country has ratified a number of human rights related treaties, such as the Convention Against Torture or the Child Right Convention, the latter stipulating the right to freedom of religion[32]. Moreover, the Chinese government seeks reelection to the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2016 which, according to General Assembly Resolution 60/251 should, consist of members which "uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, shall fully cooperate with the

Council and be reviewed under the universal periodic review mechanism during their term of membership.”

The International Campaign for Tibet, referring to international human rights standards, would like to offer the following recommendations:

To the Chinese government

- Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; provide a concrete timeline for the ratification process;
- Revise the current regulations on religious affairs according to international human rights standards, in particular with the principles enshrined in Article 18 ICCPR.
- Apply comments and resolutions by international human rights bodies or the United Nations General assembly with regard to Article 18 ICCPR, in particular,
 - Refrain from appointing or approving religious personnel, in accordance with the 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly^[33] and Human Rights Committee general comment 22, para. 4;
 - Refrain from using broad and vague language such as “State Security”, “religious extremism” and “terrorism” as a pretext for swift interventions with religious activities, groups, practitioners or religious professionals, in accordance with Human Rights Committee general comment 22, para. 8, ICCPR, Article 18, para 3, CRC, Article 14, para. 3, Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/40, para. 12, and Human Rights Council resolution 6/37, para. 14;
 - Refrain from applying censorship to Buddhist literature or related information disseminated in publications or via the internet, in accordance with 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly, Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/40 (paragraph 4 (d)) and Human Rights Council resolution 6/37 (paragraph 9 (g)), Human Rights Committee general comment 22, para. 4;
 - Refrain from requiring approval, oversight and management of religious affairs, in accordance with Article 18 ICCPR;
 - Refrain from demolishing Tibetan Buddhist sites, in accordance with the 1981 Declaration of the General Assembly, Article 6, Human Rights Council resolution 6/37, Article 9e;
- Refrain from penalizing Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage abroad, in accordance with Article 12 ICCPR;

- Seek dialogue with Tibetan Buddhist leaders on a regular basis when state oversight, according to international human rights principles, is justified, in order to solve conflicts amicably while respecting principles of freedom of religion and belief;

To the international community

- Urge the Chinese government to ratify the ICCPR and to provide a concrete timeline for the ratification;
- Urge the Chinese government to stop demolitions of Tibetan Buddhist religious sites, such as Larung Gar;
- Urge the Chinese government to fully revise religious affairs regulations and bring them in conformity with Article 18 ICCPR and international human rights standards.
- Urge the Chinese government to refrain from using broad and vague language such as “National Security”, “terrorism” or “religious extremism” as a pretext for wide ranging interventions into Tibetan Buddhist life.
- Use international fora, such as the United Nations Human Rights Council, to publicly address the restrictions of freedom of religion with regard to religious groups in the People’s Republic of China;
- Use bilateral dialogues with the People’s Republic of China to address the restrictions of freedom of religion in the People’s Republic of China;
- Seek close consultation with Tibetan Buddhist leaders living in exile on the status of religious freedom in Tibet.

Footnotes:

[1] High Peaks Pure Earth, October 12, 2016: “From Larung Gar By Woesel Nyima”, <http://highpeakspureearth.com/2016/from-larung-gar-by-woesel-nyima/>;

[2] International Campaign for Tibet, October 4, 2016: “Emotional video of nuns leaving Larung Gar as expulsions continue in ‘religious winter’”,

<https://www.savetibet.org/emotional-video-of-nuns-leaving-larung-gar-as-expulsions-continue-in-religious-winter/>;

[3] An unofficial translation can be found at “China Law Translate”:
<http://chinalawtranslate.com/religious-regulations/?lang=en>;
<http://www.chinalaw.gov.cn/article/cazjgg/201609/20160900481651.shtml>

[4] International Campaign for Tibet, June 3, 2015: „Alarm at repressive new laws in China on counter-terror, security and NGOs”, <https://www.savetibet.org/alarm-at-repressive-new-laws-in-china-on-counter-terror-security-and-ngos/>,

[5] Chinafile, November 3, 2013: "Document 9: A ChinaFile Translation",
<https://www.chinafile.com/document-9-chinafile-translation>;

[6] Human Rights Watch, March 20, 2013: "China: Alarming New Surveillance, Security in Tibet",
<https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/03/20/china-alarming-new-surveillance-security-tibet>;

[7] <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-tibet-idUSBRE95I0FI20130619>; some policies apparently implemented or tested as early as 2003, <https://www.savetibet.org/chinese-authorities-institute-internet-id-card-system-in-tibet-for-online-surveillance/>;

[8] The Guardian, February 3, 2012: "China cut off internet in area of Tibetan unrest",
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/feb/03/china-internet-links-tibetan-unrest>;

[9] International Campaign for Tibet, January 7, 2016: "China's first counter-terror law and its implications for Tibet", <https://www.savetibet.org/chinas-first-counter-terror-law-and-its-implications-for-tibet/>;

[10] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Opening Statement by Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, at the 33rd session of the Human Rights Council, www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20474;

[11] China Law Translate: "State Council Legislative Workplan for 2016",
<http://chinalawtranslate.com/2016scworkplan/?lang=en>; State Council of the People's Republic of China, April 13, 2016: "State Council highlights key tasks in 2016 legislative work",
http://english.gov.cn/policies/latest_releases/2016/04/13/content_281475326751655.htm;

[12] Xinhua, April 23, 2016: "China Focus: Xi calls for improved religious work",
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-04/23/c_135306131.htm;

[13] International Campaign for Tibet, April 25, 2007: "The Communist Party as Living Buddha",
<https://www.savetibet.org/the-communist-party-as-living-buddha/>;

[14] International Campaign for Tibet, September 2, 2016: "New Party boss in Tibet Autonomous Region associated with hardline campaigns, anti-Dalai Lama struggle",
<https://www.savetibet.org/new-party-boss-in-tibet-autonomous-region-associated-with-hardline-campaigns-anti-dalai-lama-struggle/>;

[15] International Campaign for Tibet, April 8, 2015: "Tibet's Party boss calls for all monasteries to fly the red flag", <https://www.savetibet.org/tibets-party-boss-calls-for-all-monasteries-to-fly-the-red-flag/>;

[16] International Campaign for Tibet, November 20, 2014: "Harsh new 'rectification' drive in Driru: nuns expelled and warning of destruction of monasteries and 'mani walls'",
<https://www.savetibet.org/harsh-new-rectification-drive-in-driru-nuns-expelled-and-warning-of-destruction-of-monasteries-and-mani-walls/>;

[17] International Campaign for Tibet, February 11, 2016: "Dalai Lama compared to Iraqi dictator by Chinese state media as order issued for seizure of pictures",
<https://www.savetibet.org/dalai-lama-compared-to-iraqi-dictator-by-chinese-state-media-as-order-issued-for-seizure-of-pictures/>;

[18] International Campaign for Tibet, June 20, 2014: "Escalation of surveillance over monks as authorities announce opening of police stations in Tibetan monasteries",
<https://www.savetibet.org/escalation-of-surveillance-over-monks-as-authorities-announce->

opening-of-police-stations-in-tibetan-monasteries/;

[19] International Campaign for Tibet, April 14, 2015: "Praying and lighting butter-lamps for Dalai Lama 'illegal': new regulations in Rebkong", <https://www.savetibet.org/praying-and-lighting-butter-lamps-for-dalai-lama-illegal-new-regulations-in-rebkong/>;

[20] For an in-depth juxtaposition of the 2005 and 2016 versions of the regulations, see: Thomas DuBois, https://www.academia.edu/28414977/Chinas_Religion_Law_2005_vs._2016;

[21] Article 3: The management of religious affairs upholds the principles of protecting what is lawful, prohibiting what is unlawful, suppressing extremism, resisting infiltration, and fighting crime.

Article 4: (...) Individuals and organizations must not create contradictions and conflicts between different religions, within a single religion, or between religious and non-religious citizens; must not advocate religious extremism, and must not use religion to undermine ethnic unity, divide the nation or carry out terrorist activities.

Article 45: (...) Publications involving religious contents shall comply with laws and regulations on the administration of publications, and must not contain the following content:

(...) (4) which propagate religious extremism, or incite ethnic hatred, separatism, and terrorist activities;

Article 63: Where religion is used to engage in illegal activities such as endangering national security, public safety, advocating extremism, undermining the principle of independent self-rule, inciting ethnic hatred and separatism or terrorist activities, infringing upon citizens' right in their person and democratic rights, impeding the administration of public order, or encroaching upon public or private property; where a crime is constituted, criminal responsibility is pursued in accordance with law; where no crime is constituted, the relevant competent department are to give administrative punishments in accordance with law; and where losses are caused to citizens, legal persons or other organizations, civil liability in borne in accordance with law.

Article 70: Where religious professionals exhibit any of the following conduct, the Religious Affairs Department will give a warning, confiscate unlawful gains and confiscate illegal assets; where the circumstances are serious, the Religious Affairs Department will recommend that the relevant religious group, religious school or religious activity sites temporarily stop them from presiding over religious affairs activities or revoke their status as religious professionals; and pursue the responsibility of the relevant religious group, religious school, or religious activity sites' responsible party, and where there is conduct in violation of public security management, the public security organs are to give a public security administrative sanction in accordance with law; and where a crime is constituted, criminal responsibility is pursued in accordance with law:

(1) advocating religious extremism, inciting ethnic separatism and terrorist activities, or participating in related activities;

[22] Article 5: All religions shall adhere to the principle of independence and self-governance; religious groups, religious schools, and sites for religious activities and religious affairs are not controlled by foreign forces.

[23] International Campaign for Tibet, January 7, 2016: "China's first counter-terror law and its implications for Tibet", <https://www.savetibet.org/chinas-first-counter-terror-law-and-its-implications-for-tibet/>;

[24] Article 67: (...) Where, without authorization, religious citizens are organized to go abroad on hajj, or to leave the mainland to participate in religious trainings, meetings, or other activities, the religious affairs department, together with public security, is to order it to discontinue the activities, may impose a concurrent fine of between 20,000 and 200,000 yuan, and is to confiscate the unlawful gains, if any; where a crime is constituted, criminal responsibility is pursued in accordance with law.

[25] International Campaign for Tibet, July 13, 2015: "A policy alienating Tibetans", <https://www.savetibet.org/policy-alienating-tibetans-denial-passports-tibetans-china-intensifies-control/>;

[26] International Campaign for Tibet, August 15, 2007: "New measures on reincarnation reveal party's objectives of political control", <https://www.savetibet.org/new-measures-on-reincarnation-reveal-party-objectives-of-political-control/>;

[27] Article 36: (...): The succession of living Buddhas in Tibetan Buddhism is to be conducted under the guidance of Buddhist groups and in accordance with the religious rites and historical conventions, and is to be reported for approval to the religious affairs department of people's governments at the provincial level or above or to a people's government at the provincial level or above.

[28] <https://www.savetibet.org/the-poisonous-fruit-of-tibets-religious-policy-as-china-publishes-living-buddha-database/>

[29] Article 45: Religious groups, religious schools, and churches and temples may, in accordance with the relevant national provisions, compile and distribute internal religious informational publications. Religious publications for public distribution are to be handled in accordance with the relevant national provisions on the administration of publications.

Publications involving religious contents shall comply with laws and regulations on the administration of publications, and must not contain the following content:

- (1) that which undermines the harmonious co-existence between religious and non-religious citizens;
- (2) that which undermines the harmony between different religions or within a religion;
- (3) that which discriminates against or insults religious or non-religious citizens;
- (4) which propagate religious extremism, or incite ethnic hatred, separatism, and terrorist activities;
- (5) that which contravenes the principle of religions' independence and self-governance.

Article 46: Importing printed religious materials or a/v materials to the mainland that go beyond personal use and reasonable amounts, or otherwise importing printed religious materials or a/v materials, shall be done in accordance with relevant provisions.

Article 47: Engagement in internet religious information services shall be upon the review and consent of the religious affairs department for a people's governments at the provincial level or above, and follow the relevant laws and regulations on internet information services management.

Article 48: Information on internet religious information services must comply with relevant national laws and regulations and with relevant provisions on the management of religious affairs. Engagement in internet religious information services must not contain content prohibited by the second paragraph of article 45.

[30] International Campaign for Tibet, 14 June, 2007: "Demolition of giant Buddha statue at Tibetan monastery confirmed by China", <https://www.savetibet.org/demolition-of-giant-buddha-statue/>;

[31] International Campaign for Tibet, November 1, 2007: "Rare protest as Tibetans attempt to save Buddhist statue from demolition", <https://www.savetibet.org/rare-protest-as-tibetans-attempt-to-save-buddhist-statue-from-demolition/>;

[32] Art. 30: “In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.”

[33] United Nations General Assembly, November 1981 (A/RES/36/55), Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief.

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