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CHINA: Religious persecution and issues, Bimonthly Digest April 16-30

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Buddhists

28.04.2023 – Tibetan Buddhists traveling to Lhasa on pilgrimages face new hurdles

They now must file a form with a local official and have a city resident vouch for them.

Tibetans heading to the capital of Lhasa for pilgrimages or for other reasons must obtain a permission letter from a local official assuring that the traveler will not instigate or participate in any protests that would disrupt social order, Tibetans inside the region said.

Many Tibetan Buddhists travel to Lhasa, which has a population of about 560,000, to visit the major religious sites such as the Potala Palace, Barkhor Street, Jokhang Temple and Norbulingka Palace.

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19.04.2023 – Representative Dr Arya appeals to G7 leaders to issue statement condemning China for violations in Tibet

With the G7 leaders' conference scheduled to take place soon in Hiroshima city next month, the representatives of Tibet, Uyghur, Southern Mongolia, and Hong Kong organised a press conference today at the Lower House of Japan Parliament.

The objective of the press conference, according to the moderator Fumie Furukawa, was to draw the attention of the G7 leaders to the deteriorating state of human rights violations and increased repressions in Tibet, Uyghur, Southern Mongolia, and Hong Kong.

Lawmaker Mitsubayashi Hiromi, General Secretary of the Japanese Parliamentary Caucus to Monitor Chinese Human Rights Violations (Chugoku Jinken Kyumei), and Lawmaker Ishikawa Akimasa, General Secretary of the Japanese Parliamentary Group for Tibet, attended the press conference.

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17.04.2023 – The Dalai Lama, the boy, and the CCP: The true story of a tempest in a teapot

Is the Father of Tibet a pedophile? The story can be dismissed as a tempest in a pot of Himalayan black tea but is being maliciously exploited by the CCP and its fellow travellers.

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Protestants

28.04.2023 – The small church that disturbed the CCP: Preacher Chang Hao detained in Yunnan

He had what looked like a good idea and distributed anti-COVID masks with Bible verses. The police did not appreciate it.

Not even small, rural house churches escape the persecution of the CCP if they are not affiliated with the government-controlled Three-Self Church and show a certain activism.

On April 24, 2023, Sister Enlin, the wife of **Preacher Chang Hao**, sent a report about the confused situation of her husband. He runs a small rural church in Zhenxiong County, under the administration of Zhaotong City, Yunnan Province. On April 14, his church was raided by the police who took away Bibles, Christian books, and the anti-COVID masks inscribed with verses from the Bible he distributed, which had become popular in the area and had specially disturbed the authorities.

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28.04.2023 – Pastor Li Taiyun and Dr. Zhang Yi imprisoned for two years with no information on verdict.

Pastor Li Taiyuan and his wife **Dr. Zhang Yi** have been detained by Wuhan authorities for two years. Their case recently went to trial. The verdict is not known to the outside world because the government kept the information under tight control.

According to a church elder who knows Pastor Li Taiyuan, the case mainly involved the export of biological products, relating to their original professions. Specific details are unclear at this time. The elder who once interviewed Pastor Li said it was “too early to draw a conclusion.”

Wuhan Public Security Bureau arrested Professor Li Taiyuan Dr. Zhang Yi of the College of Life Sciences of Wuhan University in May 2021. The authorities threatened them with capital punishment and heavy sentences.

According to ChinaAid sources, Li and Dr. Zhang were the project leaders of a DNA research project at the university. Authorities accused their scientific research team of traveling to Xinjiang without permission to collect Uyghur biological specimens. Police further alleged that the couple leaked research data pertaining to Uyghur fertility and genetic mapping.

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25.04.2023 – CCP establishes committee to advance the sinicization of christianity

The government-controlled Christian “patriotic organizations” established a new “Special Committee To Advance the Sinicization of Christianity,” which may be China’s first committee dedicated to promoting the development of Christianity in the Chinese Communist context.

The Qingdao Christian website reported that on the morning of March 16, 2023, the Qingdao City Christian Council held a ceremony to establish a special committee to advance the Sinicization of Christianity. More than 30 people, including the representatives of pastoral ministry, representatives of believers, and expert scholars from Qingdao, attended the ceremony. Officials sent personnel to attend and speak at the inauguration ceremony.

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24.04.2023 – Bengbu Dissident Christian Pastor arrested

Popular house church **Pastor Wan Changchun** was arrested earlier this month when he was traveling in Lijiang, Yunnan province, and taken back to the prison of his home city of Bengbu, Anhui province, where he is currently detained, according to information supplied by his co-workers to Bitter Winter and other human rights media.

Wan is the pastor of the Living Stone Reformed Church in Bengbu. In 2018, he was one of the house church leaders who signed a statement against the 2017 Regulation on Religious Affairs.

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20.04.2023 – New round of persecution: several pastors arrested or convicted.

A new round of persecution begins in China as several pastors and Christians have been arrested on arbitrary charges.

Beijing Christian entrepreneur **Gao Guojie** was arrested on September 24, 2022 for suspected “fraud.” Police classified a financial transaction between him and another entrepreneur as

fraud. His wife Zhou Dahui has asked Christians to pray for them.

On April 11, 2023, Pastor Wan Changchun of the Living Stone Reformed Church in Bengbu City, Anhui Province was arrested while serving in Lijiang, Yunnan Province. His charge was suspicion of “illegal business operations.” The authorities currently hold Pastor Wan in the Bengbu City Detention Center. After Pastor Wan was arrested, police questioned his wife and the church’s leadership. All the church accounts were frozen and audited. Three days after Pastor Wan’s arrest, police ransacked his home.

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19.04.2023 – Father Xie Tianming disappears, reportedly joining CCP church

Father Xie Tianming of the Diocese of Baoding, Hebei province, “lost contact” with the outside world at 6 PM on April 10. However, it may be because he decided to become a government-recognized priest. In order to join the official Church, he has to undergo compulsory secret sessions of “political indoctrination.”

According to reports from AsiaNews, Fr. Xie Tianming’s disappearance has to do with his decision to join the official Church and obey the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The authorities took the priest away and detained him in an undisclosed location, where he would be politically “re-educated.” In other words, they will brainwash him. Priests may be detained for long periods of time until they prove that their mindsets have changed.

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Falun Gong

27.04.2023 – After losing her daughter and husband, 73-year-old woman also dies due to the persecution of Falun Gong

After the tragic deaths of her daughter and husband years ago, Ms. Xiang Huaixiang, of Chenzhou City, Hunan Province, also died on April 2, 2023, due to the persecution of Falun Gong. She was 73.

Ms. Xiang's only daughter, Ms. Chen Lijuan, was arrested in 2000 while doing the Falun Gong exercises at Tiananmen Square in Beijing. She was around 20 years old at the time and still a college student. The police went to Beijing and took her back to Chenzhou. She became mentally disordered due to the torture in custody. She was released on bail and sent to a mental hospital in July 2000. However, her condition worsened and she died in November 2004.

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26.04.2023 – Five Liaoning residents detained for practicing Falun Gong

At least five Jinzhou City, Liaoning Province residents have been arrested since late February 2023 for their faith in Falun Gong.

Under orders from Li Meishan, director of the 610 Office branch in the Jinzhou City Police Department, the police monitored local practitioners' daily lives and photographed them. Some practitioners found tracking devices on their electric motorcycles while others noted button surveillance cameras on their front doors. There were also practitioners who realized that they were being followed by plainclothes officers in cars when they went out.

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21.04.2023 – Six-year-old girl orphaned in the persecution of Falun Gong

Having lost her mother in July 2022, a six-year-old girl Lily (alias) recently became an orphan when her father also died in April 2023.

Even before she was born, Lily's suffering had already started in her mother's womb. Not knowing she was pregnant, Ms. Zhu Xiumin held a five-month-long hunger strike to protest the arbitrary detention and torture of her for practicing Falun Gong. It was a miracle that her pregnancy remained viable throughout her ordeals and she delivered her baby Lily on December 8, 2017.

Only six days after her birthday, Lily's father, Mr. Wang Yudong, was sentenced to three years for his faith in Falun Gong. Ms. Zhu struggled to care for Lily all by herself while dodging police harassment.

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