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CHINA : Religious persecution and issues – Bimonthly digest June 01-15

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General

08.06.2023 – China’s “Query system for Islamic, Catholic, and Christian clergy,” another tool for repression

After the one for Buddhist monks and Taoist priests, a new

data base will allow the authorities to identify priests, pastors, and imams not controlled by the CCP.

Earlier this year, Bitter Winter reported that the “Buddhist and Taoist Clerical Personnel Information Query System” had been launched in Beijing. It was presented as a tool to “unmask” false and fraudulent Taoist priests and Buddhist monks. Where frauds are not unknown, the main reason for the creation of the data base was to identify, expose as illegitimate, and persecute Buddhist and Taoist clergy not subservient to the CCP nor part of the government-controlled China Buddhist Association and China Taoist Association.

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Chinese Muslims

12.06.2023 – Attempt to distort and slander mosque renovation truly ill-intentioned, malicious

Recently, the renovation of the dome of the historic Najiyang Mosque in Tonghai County, Yuxi City, Southwest China’s Yunnan Province, has been manipulated by certain forces and foreign media to attack China’s religious policy. They deliberately and ill-intentionally view the localization of religion, especially the Chinese government’s efforts to adapt religion to a socialist society, as “suppressing religious freedom.”

Given the sensitivity of religious affairs, the renovation of mosques in China can easily lead to misinterpretations. However, in reality, the Chinese-style mosque has always been the tradition of Chinese mosque architecture, and is deeply supported by Muslim communities.

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05.06.2023 – Chinese Muslims told mosques should preach communism too

Just like Christians, Muslims should “Sinicize” more quickly, as they “celebrate” the 70th anniversary of China Islamic Association.

Just as there is a government-controlled Three-Self Church for converting “legal” Protestant churches into transmission belts of the CCP directives to Christians, there is a China Islamic Association playing the same role for Muslims. It is less well-known, and it is challenged by independent or underground mosques just as the Three-Self Church should face the competition of “illegal” but flourishing house churches.

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Buddhists

12.06.2023 – ‘Rewards’ for Tibetans meeting China-backed Buddhist leader

Chinese authorities are paying Tibetans 100 yuan (US\$14) each to meet, greet and receive blessings from a Beijing-backed Buddhist leader who is tapped as the spiritual successor of the Dalai Lama, says a report.

Gyaltzen Norbu, the China-backed Panchen Lama, is currently visiting the region to give his blessings, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported on June 7. Many Tibetans consider him an “imposter.”

According to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama are reincarnated as children when they die.

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Protestants

13.06.2023 – Bible College Teachers indoctrinated at Beijing's Central Institute of Socialism

Christian professors from all over the country were summoned to the capital to attend a mandatory course on Marxism and Xi Jinping thought.

The Central Institute of Socialism was founded in 1956 by Chairman Mao to educate to Marxism those who were not members of the Chinese Communist Party. It has become the main educational institution of the United Front.

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12.06.2023 – Beijing Lampstand Church: Pastor Qin Sifeng sentenced to five years in jail

Two co-workers were also sentenced but released. The successful house church is being punished for its national outreach.

“Bitter Winter” reported last year that Pastor Qin Sifeng and Sister Su Minjun of Beijing Lampstand Church had been arrested in Zibo, Shandong, while traveling for evangelizing purposes to faraway Yunnan. Subsequently another co-worker, **We Ling'e**, was also arrested.

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12.06.2023 – Chinese preacher detained and charged with ‘illegal business operations’

Public security arrested Chinese Christian Zeng Chuandao in May. After he served his 15-day detention, Zeng was charged with supposed illegal business operations. His wife, Wanjuan Quan, calls on Christians to pray for him.

After a Sunday service on May 14th, the Lanshan Public Security Bureau arrested Zeng Chuandao. He suffered a 15-day administrative detention until May 30th. Police placed him in criminal detention for “illegal business operations” on June 1st.

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07.06.2023 – Christian students asked to study 20th Congress and Celebrate “Heroes” who betrayed the Church

Shaanxi Bible School held a study session on the CCP Congress. It also honored an early pro-CCP bishop and two “revolutionary heroes” who were raised as Christians.

The Shaanxi Bible School, located in Xixian New Area, is in the forefront of “Sinicization,” i.e., of adapting its programs and activities to the aims and ideology of the Chinese Communist Party. It also maintains a “cosmetic” ecumenical dialogue with, and receives support from, Western churches that fail to see the true nature of the Three-Self Church as a puppet of the regime.

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06.06.2023 – Hebei: Friends pray in your home, the CCP cuts

off your water and electricity

In Sanhe, Yang Yingle was told that houses where illegal religious gatherings take place are subject to this and worse retaliations.

In Sanhe, a county-level city administered by the Langfang prefecture-level city in Hebei province, a Christian called Yang Yingle had his water and electricity cut off. It was not a technical failure but a punishment and a warning.

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06.06.2023 – Pastor Qin Sifeng sentenced to five years; other coworkers released.

In the recent case regarding the staff of Beijing Lampstand Church, ChinaAid sources discovered the verdict. The Court sentenced Pastor **Qin Sifeng** to five and a half years for “illegal business operations.” Church co-worker Su Minjun was sentenced to three and a half years of probation. Authorities released Wu Ling’e, counting her 18-month sentence as time served.

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Falun Gong

13.06.2023 – 74-year-old woman taken straight to brainwashing Center after serving five years in prison for her faith

May 18, 2023, was the day Ms. Wu Bilin, 74, was set to be released after serving five years for her faith in Falun Gong.

Her family, who had not been allowed to visit her even once during her imprisonment, didn't see her when they went to pick her up.

They later found out that the police had come before them and taken **Ms. Wu** to a brainwashing center for "further education," because she still refused to renounce Falun Gong after five years. Her continued detention crushed her 80-year-old husband, who is in frail health.

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11.06.2023 – Reported in May 2023: 133 Falun Gong practitioners sentenced for their faith

A total of 133 cases of Falun Gong practitioners sentenced to prison for their faith were reported in May 2023.

Among the newly confirmed cases, 40 took place between 2016 and 2021, 8 in 2022 and 85 in 2023. The delay in reporting was caused by the strict information censorship under China's communist regime, which essentially keeps the persecution underground to avoid international scrutiny.

The sentenced practitioners are from 23 provinces, centrally controlled municipalities and autonomous regions in China. Liaoning topped the list with 19 cases, followed by Shandong (18), Heilongjiang (11) and Hebei (10). The remaining 19 regions reported sentencing cases between 1 and 9.

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09.06.2023 – Liaoning man sentenced to 3.5 years, denied family visits in prison

A resident of Anshan City, Liaoning Province, was sentenced to

3.5 years for his faith in Falun Gong. **Mr. Bai Xuesong** has been denied family visits since May 2023 because he remains firm in his faith.

Mr. Bai was arrested on January 20, 2021, while visiting a local Falun Gong practitioner. He was convicted on September 29, 2022, after making four court appearances, on December 27, 2021, and January 7, August 19, and September 16, 2022.

Mr. Bai was transferred from Anshan City Second Detention Center to Nanguanling Prison in Dalian City, Liaoning Province on April 10, 2023. Fifteen days later, he was moved again, to Dalian City Prison. He was assigned to Division 2, and the guard in charge of monitoring him was Yang Deqiang.

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Others

15.06.2023 – China Cracks Down on the Bodhi Gong Movement

The international group, known internationally as Bodhi Meditation, may now have more practitioners abroad, but is still active in China despite a long repression.

Another group is being labeled as “xie jiao” (“heterodox teaching,” sometimes incorrectly translated as “evil cult”) by the China Anti-Xie-Jiao Association, which started a nationwide campaign in June 2023, with the police actively looking for clandestine practitioners of Bodhi Gong, or Bodhi Meditation, in several provinces.

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