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## **CHINA: Religious persecution and issues – Bimonthly digest Nov. 01-15**

### **Religious persecution and issues – Bimonthly digest November 01-15**

#### **General**

**13.11.2023 – China's new law on religion: A great leap backward**

The Japan Times – In September, the Chinese Communist Party

made a move to further subjugate and control religious institutions in China and the occupied regions of Tibet, East Turkestan and Southern Mongolia. Its law on Administrative Measures for Religious Activity Venues, also known as Order No.19, issued by the State Administration of Religious Affairs, repeals older regulations from 2005 and deals a further blow to the fundamental principles of all religions by smearing them with the party's ideology.

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### **10.11.2023 – Anhui: Bringing opera to villages—and anti-religious propaganda**

Bitter Winter – The “Opera in Ten Thousand Villages” project is used as yet another tool for propaganda for the CCP and against “xie jiao and illegal religion.”

China's traditional opera is a cultural treasure all Chinese love. In Anhui province, a campaign has been launched to bring opera also to remote villages and under-developed urban areas. The project is called “Bringing Opera to Ten Thousand Villages”. In fact, the villages involved are not ten thousand, but by setting up makeshift outdoor stages, performances have been offered even in areas where cultural events are rare.

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### **07.11.2023 – Unity forum in Beijing focused on sinicization of christianity**

ChinaAid – Envisioned and led by the Chinese Communist government, a vigorous “Sinicization of Christianity” movement

is underway across the country. Several official religious organizations held their first forum on Sinicization with the theme “unity”. It was held under the supervision of the Government, to construct Communist-friendly theology.

The official China Christian Council and National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement reported that the first forum on the “unity” of the Sinicization of Christianity, opened at the Beijing Conference Center on October 20th.

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### **Buddhists**

**10.11.2023 – China denies accusations of forced assimilation and curbs on religious freedom in Tibet**

Apnews – A government official from China’s Tibetan region on Friday rejected allegations of forced assimilation and curbs on religious freedom, while stressing that Tibetan Buddhism should adapt to the Chinese context.

Xu Zhitao, vice chairman of the Tibet region government, defended a boarding school system that overseas activists have said takes children away from their parents and their Tibetan communities. He said China has opened the schools to improve education for children from remote areas.

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**08.11.2023 – Tibetan parents told they should “educate minors**

## **not to believe in religion”**

Bitter Winter – A middle school attended mostly by Tibetan pupils in Yushu, Qinghai, sent to all parents a disturbing letter, confirming CCP’s plans of eradicating religion.

In Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, part of historical Tibet but now included in the Chinese province of Qinghai, Tibetan parents are told that they have an “obligation” to teach their children not to believe in religion.

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## **03.11.2023 – Two years after Leader’s death, CCP admits Guan Yin Chitta is still active in China**

Bitter Winter – Master Lu Junhong died on November 10, 2021. The Buddhist movement continues to flourish—and to be persecuted.

On November 10, 2023, devotees commemorate the second anniversary of the death of Master Lu Junhong, the founder of the Buddhist movement Guan Yin Citta Dharma Door, who passed away in Sydney on November 10, 2021.

Lu, a Shanghai music graduate and conductor, moved to Australia in 1989 and after several spiritual experiences decided to devote his life to spread Chinese-style Buddhism. His movement was successful in Australia and became a global phenomenon, with hundreds of thousands of followers (the movement claims they are ten million, but the figure is disputed).

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## Muslims

**07.11.2023 – China: Gate of famous Beijing Muslim school “sinicized”**

Bitter Winter – The campaign to eliminate visual traces of Islam in Chinese cities continues unabated.

“Sinicizing” mosques and Islamic center means stripping their architecture of distinctive Islamic features and references, making Islam invisible in Chinese cities. “Bitter Winter” has continued to report how this campaign continues unabated, including in Beijing.

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## Church of Almighty God

**04.11.2023 – Spain, Church of Almighty God performer tries to commit suicide rather than being deported to China**

Bitter Winter – She starred in “Xiaozhen’s Story,” now her life is at risk. Others are in a similar situation in Madrid. They need immediate help.

Li Yanli in a poster for the Spanish version of “Xiaozhen’s Story.”

A well-known performer tried to commit suicide at Madrid Barajas Airport on November 3 by cutting her wrists rather than being deported back to China, where she would face imprisonment, rape, torture, and possibly death. She is Li Yanli, a member of The Church of Almighty God (CAG), a Christian new religious movement that is both heavily persecuted in China and well-known for its artistic productions. CAG movies have won awards from Christian film festivals' juries that did not agree with the movement's theology but were won by the quality of the films.

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## **Falun Gong**

**12.11.2023 – 55-year-old Jiangxi woman sentenced to 3.5 years for her faith still held in a Police Hospital**

ChinaAid – It was recently learned that a 55-year-old woman in Nanchang City, Jiangxi Province was sentenced to three and a half years in prison, with a 10,000-yuan fine, for her faith in Falun Gong.

**Ms. Xu Zhen** was arrested on March 12, 2023 and stood trial at the Xihu District Court on September 28. It is unclear when exactly she was sentenced. She has filed an appeal with the Nanchang City Intermediate Court.

Ms. Xu developed severe health symptoms not long after her arrest and was hospitalized multiple times in the following

few months. She remains at a police hospital at the time of this writing.

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**29.10.2023 – After nearly 11 years of incarceration, 70-year-old man gets another 4 years for practicing Falun Gong**

Minghui – A 70-year-old man in Mishan City, Heilongjiang Province was sentenced to four years with a 10,000-yuan fine on October 18, 2023, for his faith in Falun Gong, a mind-body.

This is not the first time that **Mr. Zhang Yutang** has been targeted for his faith. He was previously given two years of forced labor in 1999 and thrice sentenced (receiving three years in 2003, five months in 2012, and 5.5 years in 2014). He was brutally tortured each time. For details of his past persecution, see the related reports at the end of this article. His local government stopped his pension (a bit over 100 yuan each month) in early 2022, and he struggled to make ends meet.

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## **Catholics**

**11.11.2023 – “Good person of Nanjing”: Catholic nun honored as a “moral role model” by the authorities**

Fides – Nanjing (Agenzia Fides) – The Catholic nun Zheng Yueqin from the Diocese of Nanjing, in the Chinese province of Jiangsu, received the “Good Person of Nanjing” award given to citizens by the Propaganda Department of the Communist Party Committee of Nanjing City and the Municipal Bureau of Civilization who stand out for their contribution to the life of the community. Sister Yueqin is vice president of the Nanjing Catholic Charitable Foundation and founder of the special education center affiliated with the foundation.

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## **Protestants**

**14.11.2023 – Activist Zhu Yufu arrested for trying to leave China**

ChinaAid- Prominent pro-democracy activist **Zhu Yufu** from Zhejiang was arrested by Chinese border guards at the China-Vietnam border. He suffered sudden illnesses while in custody, but the police deliberately neglected his conditions. His relatives abroad have publicly called on the Zhejiang authorities to allow him to leave the country on humanitarian grounds and visit his terminally ill sister in Japan.

In the five years since his release, pro-democracy activist Zhu Yufu from Zhejiang has remained a low profile, declining media interviews and refraining from writing articles advocating for democracy. He hoped to avoid further confrontation with the Communist Party of China’s taboo on discussions about democratic politics. However, Zhu has endured years of restricted freedom. He had planned to visit his terminally ill sister with late-stage lung cancer in



Sasebo, Kyushu, Japan, but authorities stopped him from doing so in March of this year.

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### **09.11.2023 – Activist Ji Xiaolong sentenced to four and a half years in prison**

ChinaAid – **Ji Xiaolong** was sentenced on Friday, October 27 to four years and six months in prison by a Shanghai court for picking quarrels and provoking trouble. He disclosed the truth about Shanghai's lockdown during last year's COVID-19 pandemic. He demanded the Chinese government relax the excessive lockdown measures and for those responsible to be held accountable for their policy making.

“All the news I received today has not been good, sentenced to four and a half years, it will take more than three years to get out of prison. (They) have not given him a haircut yet, I do not know what these officials are plotting,” Ji Xiaolong's sister said in response.

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### **03.11.2023 – Police assault Early Rain Christians during detention**

ChinaAid – Early Rain Covenant Church revealed that nine members of the church were taken to Qingyang District police station on October 28. Police assaulted two of the arrested members.

During the interrogation, a national security agent dragged deacon Jia Xuewei into the bathroom and violently assaulted him. He also insulted Jia with filthy language. He kept beating Jia up until other police eventually stopped him. Preacher Ding Shuqi was dragged and beaten up when police took him away.

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