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CHINA: Religious persecution and issues – Bimonthly Digest Jan 16-31

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Buddhists

24.01.2023 – Report offers fresh examples of destruction of religious sites in eastern Tibet

A new report by a rights group details fresh evidence of destruction of religious heritage sites and the mistreatment

of Tibetans by China in eastern Tibet since October 2021 in what locals say is a second Cultural Revolution.

Among the religious sites and objects destroyed in Drago county were three colossal Buddha statues, a Buddhist school, a building housing with 45 giant prayer wheels, the home of a revered spiritual leader and Drago Monastery's prayer flags, which were removed and burned, the report by London-based Free Tibet says.

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Protestants

30.01.2023 – Wang Hai: Miao Christian Pastor still harassed and investigated

Pastor Wang Hai is a legendary figure in Yunnan. He comes from a family of the Miao ethnic minority, where his father and brothers already served as elders of the Miao Trinity Church in Yongshan county, Yunnan province.

With great sacrifices, his father managed to enroll him at Yunnan Bible Seminary, and he was ordained in the government-controlled Three-Self Church in 2012. By then, he was already moving from village to village with his motorbike, planting new churches, and converting hundreds of Miao villagers. Most of them were very simple folks from villages with no regular water or electricity supplies. Yet, they were conquered by Wang's young, dynamic, and amiable ministry.

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25.01.2023 – Chinese Christians serving their persecutors

Many stories from Chinese Christians can be disheartening for

those in the West. After all, Chinese Christians face constant harassment, detention, and mistreatment because of their faith. Americans, discouraged by persecution, may not have much hope for the church in China. However, there are plenty of reasons to celebrate Chinese house churches.

THE STORY OF DAI ZHICHAO

Dai Zhichao from Early Rain Covenant Church led the “Tashui” small group in 2021 and became a more prominent figure within the church. His rising influence in the church painted a target on his back, and his family was constantly harassed during the last year. Plain-clothed officers vandalized their doors with threats and jammed obstructions into their keyholes several times.

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23.01.2023 – Wife of imprisoned Xi’an pastor advocates for her husband

Authorities arrested two Xi’an Church of Abundance pastors for “fraud”—Lian Xuliang and his father Lian Changnian. Without any update in five months, Pastor Lian Xuliang’s wife published an open letter on Chinese social media defending her husband and father-in-law.

THE WORK OF XI’AN CHURCH OF ABUNDANCE

In her letter, she said members of their church committed no crimes. Nobody in their congregation ever divorced. According to her, God transformed the hearts of the congregation:

Who doesn’t want to see a marriage turning from the verge of collapsing into a good relationship? My husband and my father-in-law are both faithful people. I don’t understand why they were charged with fraud and endangering national security.

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19.01.2023 – Police detain more ethnic Christians in rural Yunnan

Fugong police in China's Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan province, took four Christians into custody on 12 January for participating in a Bible study in August 2022.

Five Bible teachers who also attended the meeting have been detained since early August 2022. According to a source familiar with the situation, the teachers include three ethnic Nu men, Wang Shunping, Nu Sangdeng and San Luobo, and two women, Hua Xiuxia and Dong Mengru. All five have been formally charged with 'organising and sponsoring an illegal gathering', which in reality consisted of prayer and free Bible and music lessons for young people.

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18.01.2023 – Geng Zejun treated with respect in prison

Geng Zejun, the minister of the Church of the Rock in Ningxia province, was sentenced to one year and three months because he insisted on hosting Christian gatherings. Reports surfaced that while he is not in good health, guards and prisoners treat him with respect. His family has been banned from visiting him since his initial arrest on December 5, 2021.

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Falun Gong

31.01.2023 – Persecution of Falun Dafa practitioners by Jiangjin District 610 Office and Domestic Security Office in Chongqing

The 610 Office, Political and Legal Affairs Committee (PLAC),

and the Domestic Security Office of the Police Department in the Jiangjin District of Chongqing have been actively persecuting local Falun Dafa practitioners since the Chinese Communist Party launched a nationwide campaign against Falun Dafa in July 1999.

Many local practitioners have been arrested, jailed, and tortured for upholding their faith. Four of them died and three others were disabled. Forty-nine practitioners were sentenced to prison and another 35 were put in forced labor camps. Almost all of the practitioners in the district have endured some form of home raid, arrest, detention, and/or brainwashing. They were forced to pay a total of 44,600 yuan in illegal fines and extortion.

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29.01.2023 – In a vegetative state and denied medical parole for two years, Hebei man dies two months before prison release

Mr. Lai Zhiqiang's wife waited seven long years, eager to reunite with him, only to learn on January 3, 2023, that he had died two months before his scheduled release from serving a wrongful term for his faith in Falun Gong.

Mr. Lai's wife rushed to Jidong No. 2 Prison in Hebei Province after learning of his death, only to be told that she had to pay 1,000 yuan to see his body. While it's not clear whether or not she paid the 1,000 yuan, she wasn't allowed to see his body until the next day.

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26.01.2023 – Exposing the torture of Falun Gong practitioners in Sichuan Province women's prison

Female Falun Gong practitioners in Sichuan Province are held at the Sichuan Province Women's Prison in Chengdu City after they are sentenced for upholding their faith. As soon as they are admitted, they are subjected to brainwashing. There are also other cells in the prison with restricted access and no one knows what happens behind the closed doors.

The "study group" (brainwashing session) of each practitioner consists of four inmates: two felons (one with a higher education background), and two former practitioners who had been transformed.

Practitioners in the brainwashing session are ordered to write guarantee statements and repeat the communist regime's propaganda to smear Falun Gong. Various torture methods are used when the practitioners refuse to comply.

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23.01.2023 – US resident calls for the release of Sister and Nephew who are detained in China for their shared faith in Falun Gong

Ms. Kang Shumei and her son, Mr. Zhang Gu, both of Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province, were arrested on October 31, 2022 for practicing Falun Gong, a mind-body discipline that has been persecuted by the Chinese communist regime since 1999.

Ms. Kang's sister, Ms. Kang Shuzhi, who currently resides in Los Angeles, is calling on the international community to help rescue her sister and nephew.

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20.01.2023 – After enduring five arrests and seven years of torture for her faith, woman dies five months before

daughter's fifth birthday

Ms. Zhu Xiumin and her husband were both arrested on March 21, 2017, for their shared faith in Falun Gong.

Ms. Zhu went on a five-month hunger strike in protest of the arbitrary detention. As she became extremely weak and suffered severe constipation, she was taken to a hospital for a checkup. She was shocked to learn that she was pregnant. She was released two days later.

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