

Abstract of

SEEKING A NEW WINESKIN FOR THE NEW WINE:

INTER-RELIGIOUS COMPARATIVE RESEARCH OF THE REGISTRATION ISSUE OF CHINESE HOUSE CHURCH

Paul N. Moon

Chinese House Churches (CHCs) have suffered from limited religious freedom. CHCs do not have legal legitimacy and social status. The tension between the state and CHCs should be resolved. However, CHCs do not have a common attitude or solution for the problem of illegal legitimacy. Rather, CHCs have contradicting idea and different voices about this issue.

This dissertation summarizes three positions of the various opinions of CHCs through its research. The goal of this dissertation is to examine and evaluate the three positions to explore which one is more appropriate for resolving this tension and its problems. To achieve this goal, this dissertation uses inter-religious comparative research, which is comparing the legitimacy problem with Prostration Debate of East Jin Buddhism in A.D. 3.

In Chapter 1, the conflict between the Chinese government and CHCs will be described through examining the *Shouwang* Church incident. It surveys the history of Chinese Christianity's legal status. It also introduces theoretical frameworks such as C.K. Yang's Chinese State-Religion relationship theory, East Jin Buddhism's Three Principles, and *Sun Mingyi* (孫明義)'s Three Classifications Theory of CHCs.

Chapter 2 surveys the framework of the state-religion relationship through C.K. Yang's theory. China has a unique framework for the state-religion relationship. Chapter 2 also proves that the modern Chinese government still has the same state-religion relationship through CCP's documents and regulations.

Chapter 3 provides three principles from the Prostration Debate of East Jin's Buddhism. The three principles of East Jin Buddhism are: a collaborative relationship with the government, a defined social role, and an active communication with the government. Using these three principles, East Jin Buddhism overcame conflicts with the government. The three principles will be used as criteria to examine the three positions of CHCs.

Chapter 4 surveys the three positions of CHCs. They are the Separation Position, the Human Rights Position, and the Dialogue Position. Every position is introduced as to its position regarding registration, its social backgrounds, its theoretical framework, and its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, the TSPM Registration Position is introduced as the Fourth Position.

In Chapter 5, the three positions (the Separation Position, the Human Rights Position, and the Dialogue Position) are evaluated by the three principles of East Jin Buddhism (a collaborative relationship with the government, social role, and active communication with the government). Chapter 5 explores which one is the most effective and appropriate to solve the conflict between the state and CHCs through an evaluation.

Chapter 6 provides summaries, conclusions, suggestions, and missiological implications. In Chapter 6, a position will be proposed for the future direction of Chinese House Churches to help solve conflicts and reduce the tensions with the government.

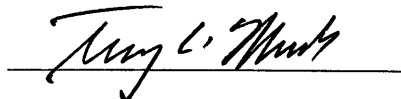
DISSERTATION APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation, entitled
SEEKING A NEW WINESKIN FOR NEW WINE:
INTER-RELIGIOUS COMPARATIVE RESEARCH CONCERNING
THE ISSUE OF REGISTRATION FOR THE CHINESE HOUSE CHURCH

Written by
Paul N. Moon

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

has been read and approved by the undersigned members of
the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary



Dr. Terry C. Muck, Mentor



Dr. Eunice L. Irwin, Reader

SEEKING A NEW WINESKIN FOR NEW WINE:
INTER-RELIGIOUS COMPARATIVE RESEARCH CONCERNING
THE ISSUE OF REGISTRATION FOR THE CHINESE HOUSE CHURCH

A Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of
Asbury Theological Seminary
Wilmore, Kentucky

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation Committee
Dr. Terry C. Muck, Mentor
Dr. Eunice L. Irwin, Reader

By

Paul N. Moon

December 2013

Copyright 2013
Paul N. Moon
All rights reserved

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
LIST OF TABLES	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	ix
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY	1
I. <i>Shouwang</i> Church (守望教會) Incident	2
II. History of Chinese Christianity’s Legal Status	4
A. Pioneering Era	4
B. The Opium War	5
C. <i>Xinhai</i> Revolution (辛亥革命)	6
D. Communist Revolution	6
E. Cultural Revolution	7
F. The Ear of Reform and Open	8
G. Raising Issue of Registration	9
H. Era of Hope	10
I. Broken Hope	11
J. Hope Again	12
III. Background of the Problem.....	13
IV. Statement of the Problem	15
V. Research Questions	16
VI. Theoretical Framework.....	16
A. C. K. Yang’s Chinese State-Religion Relationship Theory.....	16
B. Emile Durkheim’s Socio-Religion Theory	17
C. East Jin Buddhism’s Three Principles.....	18

D. <i>Sun Mingyi</i> (孫明義)'s Three Classifications Theory	21
VII. Data Collection	21
A. Library Research on Ancient Literature.....	21
B. Library Research on Modern Literature.....	22
C. Semi- Structured Interview	23
VIII. Delimitation.....	24
A. Limit on Registration Issue.....	24
B. The Fourth Position.....	24
C. Avoiding Individual's Categorizing.....	24
IX. Definition of Key Terms.....	25
CHAPTER 2: STRUCTURE OF CHINESE STATE-RELIGION RELATIONSHIP	31
I. Traditional State-Religion Relationship	31
A. State Control on Religions	32
B. Communal Religions	37
a. Classic Religion	38
b. Confucianism	39
C. Rebellious Religions	41
D. Conclusion	44
II. Modern State-Religion Relationship	45
A. CCP's Control on House Church.....	46
a. Document No. 19.....	47
b. Regulations on Religious Affairs	50
B. Social Change of House Church	55
a. Opposition to the Policy	55
b. Social and Political Implication	58
C. Anticipation of Post-Totalitarianism	60
III. Conclusion.....	61

CHAPTER 3: THREE PRINCIPLES OF EAST JIN’S BUDDHISM.....	62
I. Historical Backgrounds.....	62
A. History of East Jin Dynasty	62
B. Development of East Jin’s Buddhism	63
C. Relationship between State and Buddhism	66
II. Prostration Debate (行禮爭論).....	68
A. First Debate between <i>Hechong</i> (何充) and <i>Yubing</i> (庾冰)	69
B. Second Debate between <i>Wangmi</i> (王謐) and <i>Huanxuan</i> (桓玄)	74
C. <i>Huiyan</i> (慧遠)’s Treatises	77
III. Three Analytic Perspectives.....	79
A. Political Conflict Perspective.....	79
B. Religious Conflict Perspective	80
C. State and Religion Conflict Perspective.....	85
D. Conclusion	88
IV. Three Strategies of East Jin’s Buddhism	89
A. Collaborative Relationship.....	89
B. Social role.....	92
C. Active Communication	94
V. Social Science’s Support	95
A. Collaborative Relationship.....	96
B. Social role.....	97
C. Active Communication	98
VI. Three Strategies in the Early Church	100
A. Historical Background	101
B. Collaborative Relationship.....	101
C. Social role.....	104
D. Active Communication	105
VII. Conclusion	107

CHAPTER 4: FOUR POSTIONS FOR THE REGISTRATION ISSUE	109
I. The Separation Position	109
A. Position to Registration	109
B. Social Backgrounds	111
a. Social Marginality	111
b. Suffering Experience	113
C. Theoretical Framework	114
a. Absolute Sovereignty of God	114
b. Superior Ecclesiology	116
c. Separation of State and Religion	117
D. Strength and Weakness	118
II. The Human Rights Position.....	119
A. Civil Human Right Movement	119
B. Position to Registration	121
C. Social Backgrounds	123
D. Theoretical Framework	125
a. Human Right	126
b. The Rule of Law.....	127
c. NGO Ecclesiology.....	129
E. Strength and Weakness.....	131
a. Remind Social role	131
b. Conflict with the State.....	132
c. Limit of Political Approach.....	132
d. Danger of Losing its Substance as the Church.....	133
III. The Dialogue Position	134
A. Position to Registration.....	134
B. An Exceptional Case of Independent Registration	137
C. Social Backgrounds	138
D. Theoretical Framework	141
a. Double Ecclesiology.....	141
b. <i>Self-Legalization</i> Experience.....	144

E. Strength and Weakness.....	145
a. Minimize Conflicts with the State	145
b. Embraces for Two Extremes	146
IV. TSPM Registration Position.....	147
A. Position to Registration.....	148
B. Social Backgrounds	148
C. Characteristics as an Inter-mediator.....	148
a. CHC Tradition/Seeking Religious Freedom	149
b. TSPM Tradition.....	149
D. Positive Evaluation	151
E. Negative Evaluation	152
F. Conclusion	153
 CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION FOR THE THREE POSITIONS.....	 155
I. Collaborative Relationship.....	155
A. The Separation Position	155
B. The Human Rights Position	158
C. The Dialogue Position.....	159
D. Conclusion	161
II. Active Dialogue.....	162
A. The Separation Position	162
B. The Human Rights Position	165
C. The Dialogue Position.....	166
D. Conclusion	168
III. Social role	170
A. The Separation Position	170
B. The Human Rights Position	171
C. The Dialogue Position.....	174
D. Conclusion	178
IV. Conclusive Evaluation for the Three positions	179
A. The Separation Position	180

B. The Human Rights Position	180
C. The Dialogue Position.....	181

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICAITONS AND

SUGGESTIONS	183
I. Summaries.....	183
II. Conclusion	192
III. Suggestions.....	193
IV. Missiological Implications	194
 APPENDEX A	 196
BIBLIOGRAPHY	198

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation 1. CCP = Chinese Communist Party

Abbreviation 2. CHC = Chinese House Church

Abbreviation 3. EUHC = Emerging Urban House Church

Abbreviation 4. TSPM = Three-Self Patriotic Movement

Abbreviation 5. CCC = Chinese Christian Council

Abbreviation 6. RRA = Regulations on Religious Affairs

Abbreviation 7. RAB = Religious Affairs Bureau

Abbreviation 8. CAB = Civil Affairs Bureau

Abbreviation 9. SP = The Separation Position

Abbreviation 10. HRP = The Human Rights Position

Abbreviation 11. DP = The Dialogue Position

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Ancient Chinese State-Religion Relationship.....	32
Figure 2. Modern Chinese State-Religion Relationship.....	47
Figure 3. Various Positions of Chinese Churches.....	154

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. The Main Points of Four Positions.....	179
---	-----

Acknowledgements

“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.
We die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore,
or die, we are the Lord's.” (Romans 14:7-8)

I am eternally grateful for the opportunity that God has given me to have undertaken my doctoral studies at E. Stanly Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism, Asbury Theological Seminary. It has an enriched learning experience for me, a journey indeed worthwhile. God has trained me in His hand. God guide and lead me. He provided everything for this journey. Without His grace, I would not complete such a great work.

I want to give special thanks to my mentor, Dr. Terry C. Muck. He guided me along with the best path through the completion of my dissertation. Furthermore, I am honored to have Eunice L. Irwin on my dissertation committee, who has provided me with valuable insights and support. I appreciate you to all the other members of the ESJ family who have shown me love and support.

I will also never forget to express my grateful heart to my wife and two lovely kids. They suffered and fully sacrificed themselves during my studies in Wilmore and Huntington. There are no words to express my gratitude for their dedication to me. I also give special thanks to my parents and my parents-in-law. I also would like to dedicate my dissertation to my parents and parents-in-law. They have been constant in prayer and support since I started studies and ministry.

Finally, I also want to express great thanks to Brother Li, who is a House church leader. Brother Li introduced a lot of interviewees for this research. Without his help, this research would not be completed.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

After joining an international mission team for Chinese House Churches, I had several chances to serve CHCs secretly. Our team visited several house churches at various locations in order to provide training for CHCs leaders. Because of security issues, for ourselves and the CHC leaders, we hid our identity completely. We were given limited information about the CHC leaders, often not knowing where we would go or whom we would meet. We were led to these clandestine meetings by following strangers holding placards and getting into unknown cars that would take us to secret locations. On one occasion we ended up in a basement of a factory, where approximately 30 CHCs leaders waited for us. Training lasted for several days, with everyone confined in doors for security reasons, even locking down the windows to prevent people from hearing our songs of praise.

Because these meetings were unauthorized illegal religious activity in accordance with the Chinese religious law, there was always tension that the Police would come and arrest us. This experience sparked my interest in the legal status and the registration of CHCs. I understood through these clandestine meetings, the importance of gaining legal status and legitimacy for CHCs. From this, I began thinking about what was necessary to solve the illegitimacy of CHC and what are CHC's thoughts for registration under the government. My experience with CHCs is the starting point of this dissertation.

I. *Shouwang* Church (守望教會) Incident

At 10 A.M. on November 8, 2009, there was a conflict between citizens and police officers at the east gate of *Haidian* Park (海澱公園) in Beijing, China. The conflict occurred between the Christians of *Shouwang* Church (守望教會) and the Beijing police. There were approximately 500 members of *Shouwang* Church at that time. They gathered for Sunday worship, attempting to use *Haidian* Park for their outdoor public space. They met there the previous Sunday for their first public worship service. However, on November 8, all the gates of *Haidian* Park were closed. *Tian Ming Jin* (金天明), the senior pastor of *Shouwang* Church, was arrested at 9 A.M. at his house. Due to the police's interference, the second outdoor worship of *Shouwang* Church did not happen.

With U.S. President Barack Obama's visit to China approaching, it was a sensitive time, politically, for the country. President Obama planned to visit China on November 16. The religious conflict, which took place in the middle of Beijing just the week prior, was enough to increase tension with the Chinese government. *The Wall Street Journal* also reported on the incident increasing pressures. Leslie Hook, a journalist, reported the incident as "*The China President Obama Didn't See: Dissident intellectuals have been attracted to Christianity*" (*The Wall Street Journal*, Nov. 19, 2009). The incident attracted attention at home and abroad.

Pastor *Tian Ming Jin* (金天明) founded *Shouwang* Church in 1993. In 2009, the *Shouwang* Church became the largest church in the Beijing area. More than 800 Christians attended Sunday worship services. Leslie Hook reported that members of *Shouwang* were composed of intellectuals, social leaders, and the elites of Chinese

society.¹ What made members of the largest church in the Beijing area, intellectuals and leaders of Chinese society, confront the government and police with their public worship? What made them act out publicly? To answer these questions, one must understand the “illegal status” or “unregistered status” of Chinese House Churches.

Showwang Church is a so-called “house churches” or “underground church.” A house churches is a church that fails to acquire legitimacy with the government and remains illegal in the eyes of the government. This situation began in 1979. *Showwang* is one of the first churches to create change. *Showwang* sought to eliminate its illegal status and acquire legitimacy from the government. In 2004, the State Council of China passed and promulgated “Regulations on Religious Affairs” (宗教事務條例), which is the new religious law. The new regulations promote and protect religious freedom. With the promulgating of the new religious law, *Showwang* Church applied for registration to the Religious Affairs Bureau in accordance with the Regulations on Religious Affairs. However, the Religious Affairs Bureau rejected the application for two official reasons. The first was Rev. *Tian Ming Jin* did not receive enough patriotic education and the second reason was that they believed there are enough registered Christian churches in the Beijing area. Rev. *Tian Ming Jin* stated, “The real reason for the failure to register is my refusal to join TSPM when they asked me to join.”² He testified that he was urged to join TSPM (Three-Self Patriotic Movement) by government officers during the process of registration. When Rev. *Jin* refused, the officers began to put pressure on *Showwang*

1 Leslie Hook, “The China President Obama Didn't See: Dissident intellectuals have been attracted to Christianity,” *Wall Street Journal*, Nov 19, 2009,

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704431804574539120649781240.html>

2 China Aid, “Beijing Continues Relentless Crackdown on *Showwang* Church,” *China Aid*, Nov 12, 2009. <http://www.chinaaid.org/2009/11/beijing-continues-relentless-crackdown.html>

Church and Rev *Jin. Shouwang* Church was not allowed to use their existing place of worship, because no one wanted to make a contract with them. In addition, Rev. *Jin* was placed under house arrest. These series of incidents prompted members of *Shouwang* to worship publicly in spite of conflicts with the police.

The incident at *Haidian* Park became a symbolic event, which demonstrated the reality of Chinese house churches in modern China. Many Chinese house churches are trying to change their status, attempting to retain legal status from the government. The incident of *Shouwang* Church demonstrates the issue of registration emerging as an important concern for the future development of Chinese house churches.

II. History of Chinese Christianity's Legal Status

To understand the issue of registration for Chinese house churches, it is necessary to understand the legal status of Christianity in China throughout the history of China.

A. Pioneering Era

Robert Morrison, the first Protestant missionary to China, arrived in Macao on September 4, 1807. He struggled with the translation of the Chinese Bible and making a Chinese dictionary in Macao. At that time, the Qing Dynasty restricted Christianity in accordance with its fundamental laws. Christianity was made illegal by the existing provision of the fundamental laws, which declared “magic, witchcraft, superstition were forbidden.”³ In 1814, Emperor *Jia Qing* (嘉庆帝) made clear the illegal status of Christianity by adding “Christianity” among “magic, witchcraft, and superstition.” In 1826, the illegal status of Christianity was further clarified by Emperor *Dao Guang* (道光

3 Robert Samuel Maclay. *Life among the Chinese: with characteristic sketches and incidents of missionary operations and prospects in China.* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1861), 335.

帝). He ordered that anyone who spread Christianity would be put to death based on the fundamental laws. The clause stated:

People of the Western Ocean, [Europeans or Portuguese,] should they propagate in the country the religion of heaven's Lord, [name given to Christianity by the Romanists,] or clandestinely print books, or collect congregations to be preached to, and thereby deceive many people, or should any Tartars or Chinese, in their turn, propagate the doctrines and clandestinely give names, (as in baptism,) inflaming and misleading many, if proved by authentic testimony, the head or leader shall be sentenced to immediate death by strangulations.⁴

B. The Opium War

The first and second Opium War brought drastic change to the illegal status of Christianity in China. The first Opium War took place between the United Kingdom and the Qing Dynasty from 1839 to 1842. The Qing Dynasty was defeated and ceded to Hong Kong Island, opening five harbors to Western countries through the Treaty of Nanking. Westerners were guaranteed residence and trade in the five open harbor areas. Christianity also obtained legal status, freedom of propagation, and establishment of churches in Westerners' residential areas. The legalization of Christianity was limited in the five open harbors through the Treaty of Nanking.

Christianity was legalized in inland provinces of China through the Treaty of Beijing in 1860. After the Second Opium War with the United Kingdom and France, the Qing Dynasty concluded with the Treaty of Beijing. Through the Treaty of Beijing, Christian missionaries were able to travel freely inland and obtained rights to establish Christian churches in inland provinces. Unfortunately, the legal status of Christianity was

⁴ Ibid., 336.

only enforced by the armed forces of the Western countries in the history of early Chinese Christianity.

C. *Xinhai* Revolution (辛亥革命)

In 1911, the *Xinhai* Revolution, probably the most important turning point of Chinese history, broke out in China. The *Xinhai* Revolution ended feudalism, which had lasted in China for 5,000 years, and birthed republicanism. As a result of the *Xinhai* Revolution, the Republic of China (中華民國) was established on January 1, 1912. The government of the Republic of China stressed the people's rights because of *Sunwen's* (Sun Yat-Sen) San-min Doctrine.⁵ The legal status of Christianity was absolutely guaranteed under the rule of the Republic of China. Additionally, *Sunwen* and *Chiang Kai-shek* were baptized Christians. Christianity enjoyed its legal status and religious freedom under the leadership of Christian leaders.

D. Communist Revolution

In 1949, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) won the civil war over the National Party. As a result of victory, the CCP established the People's Republic of China. The establishment of the People's Republic of China significantly changed the legal status of Christianity in China since the CCP is ideologically based on materialism and atheism.

In 1951, the CCP founded the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) through Christians such as *Wu Yaozong* (吳耀宗). When TSPM was founded, there were two

⁵ The "Three Principles of the People:" the people's rule (*minzhu*, 民主), the people's power (*minquan*, 民權), and the people's welfare (*minsheng*, 民生).

main responses from Chinese Christians. The first response was that some Christian churches trusted the CCP's religious policy and joined TSPM. A lot of mainline denominations such as the Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church, and the Anglican Church joined TSPM without any doubts. Only Christians and churches that joined TSPM have legal status and are recognized by the government.

The second response was to refuse to join TSPM. *Wang Mingdao* (王明道), *John Sung* (宋尚節), and *Watchman Nee* (倪柝聲) of “the Little Flock” were representative Christian leaders who refused to join TSPM. By refusing to join TSPM, they lost legitimacy and legal status from the government and formed so-called “underground churches” or “house churches.” In conclusion, the establishment of TSPM brought division between legal churches and illegal churches in Chinese Christianity.

E. Cultural Revolution

After the Communist Revolution and the establishment of TSPM, religious freedom was severely restricted in China. Although religious freedom was undermined, many Christian churches maintained legitimacy and legal status under TSPM. However, during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976, many kinds of legitimate Christian churches disappeared in China. During this time, all religious activities, including TSPM, Daoism, Buddhism, and the Catholic Church, were banned and outlawed by the CCP. Nanjing Theological Seminary (南京金陵神学院), which survived with dozens of seminarians before the Cultural Revolution, closed in 1961. All churches, including TSPM, closed the doors and all kinds of worship services ceased. The era of the Cultural Revolution was the dark ages of Chinese Christianity. However, Chinese house churches

continued to exist and maintained vitality under the government's illegitimacy even in China's dark ages.

F. The Era of Reform and Openness

After Chairman Mao's death, China entered a new era. Since 1979, China implemented reform and policies that opened up under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping. Jianren Li described the situation of 1980s and the changes of religious policy like below:

Since Deng Xiaoping's launching of the Open Door Policy in 1978, great changes have taken in every corner of Chinese society. The most important part of the CCP's new policies had to do with economic reform and the opening of China to the West. The introduction of a market-driven economy and Western influenced modernization, resulted in a limited degree of ideological openness, and the government provided space for a revival of religious activities. In 1979, the five major official religions were restored.⁶

To characterize the nature of religion as an opiate under the Open Door Policy would have been considered inappropriate, according to its socio-political and socioeconomic contexts. From then on the Party theorists' attitude toward religion became positive.⁷

The reform and policies also brought fundamental change to China's religious policies. In 1979, the CCP restored TSPM. In 1980, the Chinese Christian Council (CCC, 中國基督教協會), another Christian organization, was established by the CCP. The two organizations were called *Liang Hui* (兩會). The reestablishment of *Liang Hui* means the restoration of legitimacy and the legal status of Christianity in China. Churches, which belonged to *Liang Hui*, obtained legal status.

⁶ Jieren Li, *In Search of the Via Media Between Christ and Marx: A Study of Bishop Ting Guangxun's Contextual Theology* (Spoleto, Lund: Lund University, 2008), 168.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

At the same time, Chinese house churches suffered persecution due to the illegal status according to the government. The CCP asked house churches to join TSPM to acquire a legal status and legitimacy. However, Chinese House Churches refused to join TSPM because they believed joining TSPM violated their beliefs of the separation of church and state.

Meanwhile, Chinese House Churches continued to experience explosive growth despite persecution and suffering. David Aikman states it like this:

From the grass roots of the peasantry to high within China's establishment, the country was being seeded with believing Christians... perhaps 7 to 8 percent of the country's 1.2 billion population.⁸

Why has Christianity been growing in China? Yalin Xin summarizes Aikman's two reasons for the explosive growth of Chinese Christianity as such:

First of all, the open-door policy and the economic growth since 1978 combine to create an atmosphere for the growth of Christianity in China both as a movement and as an ideology. Secondly, Christianity was able to fill in the "ideological vacuum" left in society by the nationwide collapse of belief in Marxism-Leninism.⁹

G. Raising Issue of Registration

Chinese house churches demonstrated a passive attitude toward the Chinese government. Regarding house churches' legitimacy, they never made their own opinion known to the government. The illegal status of Chinese house churches caused them to suffer much and be persecuted under and by the government. There was no room to raise the issues of legitimacy and religious freedom.

⁸ David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2003), 8.

⁹ Yalin Xin, *Inside China's House Church Network: The Word of Life Movement and Its Renewing Dynamic* (Lexington, KY: Library of Congress, 2009), 66.

However, there was a shift in the passive attitude of Chinese house churches. In November 26, 1998, the Chinese Gospel Association (中國福音聯合) and the *Fangcheng* Coalition (方城聯合) declared the “Chinese house churches’ Announcement to the Government’s Religious Policy and Three-Self Patriotic Church.” The two groups are regarded as major contributors in the Chinese house churches movement. Representative leaders of the Chinese house churches such as *Shen Yiping*, *Zhang Rongliang*, and *Wang Chulu* participated in the announcement of the document. The Announcement explained why they did not join TSPM and their attitude toward the religion policies of the government. In the Announcement, Chinese house churches did not request to register directly to the government without joining TSPM. However, the Announcement had important significance because CHCs demonstrated an active attitude to change its illegal status with the government. The Announcement demonstrated CHCs’ attitude change from passive to active in relation to the government and its passion to acquire legitimacy and legal status.

H. Era of Hope

There was a new religious law in China in 2004, the “No. 426 Regulations on Religious Affairs” (RRA). It was adopted at the 57th Executive Meeting of the State Council on July 7, 2004 and was promulgated and in effect on March 1, 2005. It opened an era of hope for CHCs regarding the issue of legitimacy and registration.

At the same time, CHCs experienced a great revival in urban areas in the 1990s and 2000s. These churches are known as “Emerging Urban house churches” (EUHC). EUHC claimed “Independent Registration” would solve the illegal status of CHCs. It

intended for CHCs to register with the government directly and independently without joining TSPM. The EUHC attempted to acquire legal status of CHCs through the Independent Registration.

During that time, leaders of the EUHC found the RRA, the new religious law, did not require joining TSPM to register to the RAB. The EUHC leaders were excited because of the possibility of acquiring legitimacy for CHCs. Regarding this, Liang Jialing (梁家麟) described their excitement in 2005,

One of the most important issues for the development of CHCs is the issue of registration. If CHCs could register directly under the government without joining TSPM, CHCs can be transformed into an independent and national organization. This can promote the development of CHCs in Chinese society. We still don't know when this will happen. However, I expect there could be a substantial change of CHCs' illegal status in one or two years, or possibly in the near future.¹⁰

The promulgation of the RRA and the freeing atmosphere of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games provided leaders of the EUHC an optimistic hope for solving the registration problem. Some applied to register with the RAB in accordance with the RRA to obtain legal status. *Shouwang* Church is the first church to register itself with the RAB in accordance with the RRA.

I. Broken Hope

However, the hope of the EUHC and *Shouwang* Church soon ended. *Shouwang* Church's application was rejected by the RAB. The RAB asked the *Shouwang* Church to join TSPM as a condition of registration. Senior Pastor *Tianming Jin* refused the RAB's

10 Liang Jialing (梁家麟), *Research for Chinese House Churches' Independent Registration* [有關家庭教會獨立登記問題的深研], (Hong Kong: The Journal of Jiandao, 建道學刊 24, 2005), 3.

request to join TSPM. The government made various demands of *Shouwang* Church. First, *Shouwang* Church was expected to secure a meeting place but no one wanted to make a contract with them because of the pressure from governmental officials. This caused *Shouwang* Church to worship in public areas (Haidai Park), which caused the large-scale conflict with police officers. Rev. *Jin* was placed under house arrest after the conflict. The *Shouwang* Church incident resulted in a failure to acquire legal status through registration. CHCs's effort for acquiring legal status was put on hold after the *Shouwang* Church incident. Hope was broken by the conflict.

J. Hope Again

Since 2009, with the conflict of *Shouwang* Church, leaders of CHCs seldom have raised the issue of registration and acquiring legal status for CHCs. However, not all have fallen into despair. Some leaders of CHCs argue they must consider the issue of registration with optimism and with the big picture in mind. Wang Wenfeng (王文峰) of the Chinese Theological Forum provides insight for the issue of registration from a social and political perspective.

I believe that there will be a huge breakthrough between CHCs and CCP in 10 or 20 years. (1) The first reason is the stunning speed of the development of Christianity in China. If Chinese Christianity maintained the current rate of its development, China would have the largest Christian population in the world in a decade. The rise of Christian population in China will make CCP correct its religious policies to CHCs. (2) The second reason is the rise of the international social status of China. The Chinese government has to improve its political system and the relationship of state-religion in accordance with its rising status in the international community. (3) The third reason is the rise of the emerging urban house churches movement. Many urban house churches members are leading figures of Chinese society and can exert influence to CCP.

Based on these three reasons, the CCP will have to talk with CHCs for a reasonable legal status for CHCs.¹¹

In addition to Wenfeng's article, it is easy to find optimistic views for CHC movement. In his book, *Invitation to World Mission*, Timothy Tennent writes that there are over 90 million believers and 16,500 new believers in China everyday.¹² Xinhua News Agency reported that *Fu Xianwei* (傅先偉), the new President of TSPM, said "5,195 new churches of TSPM are built and 2,400,000 people were baptized in the past five years" for the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China (TSPM) and the China Christian Council (CCC).¹³ The Chinese government officially recognizes over 23 million Christians in China.¹⁴ Christian Today reported "there are different estimates on the total number of Christians in China when attendance at unregistered churches is taken into account, with figures ranging from 40 million to 130 million."¹⁵ Although there are no actual statistics on CHCs, these numbers suggest an optimistic view for CHCs.

III. Background of the Problem

CHCs have experienced tremendous revival and growth since the 1970s. *Li Fan* (李凡), chairman of the World and China Institute, said "the current Christian population

11 Wang Wenfeng (王文峰), "Where the Chinese Christianity goes in the 21st century!" *Dangdang News*, 2011.07.28.

<http://www.dangdangnews.com/news/quickViewArticleView.html?idxno=17607>

12 Timothy C. Tennent, *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty First Century* (Grand Rapid, MI: Kregel Publication, 2010), 36.

13 http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-09/12/c_125371601.htm and <http://www.missionews.co.kr/lib/209173>

14 Christian Today. "Over 23 million Christians in China, official survey shows"

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/over.23.million.christians.in.china.official.survey.shows/26488.htm>

15 *Idid.*,

of China is 100 million and the number of underground churches reached 800,000” in 2010.¹⁶ Although there is no precise statistics, most scholars agree that the number of CHCs could be at least 60 million to 120 million.

CHCs, which have a large membership, still remain illegal in Chinese society. They cannot register with the government as a religious organization. Since CHCs do not have legal status, they do not have any legal rights or religious protection. For example, CHCs cannot purchase land for religious activity. They cannot make a contract to rent a space for worship. They cannot open a bank account under the name of the church or conduct any other financial activity. They also cannot actively be involved in social missions because of its status. It is very clear the illegal status impedes the development of CHCs. Human Rights Watch describes CHCs’ non-registration and illegal status below:

Government control is exercised primarily through a registration process administered by the State Council’s Religious Affairs Bureau through which the government monitors membership in religious organizations, locations of meetings, religious training, selection of clergy, publication of religious materials, and funding for religious activities. The government also now undertakes annual inspections of registered religious organizations. Failure to register can result in the imposition of fines, seizure of property, razing of “illegal” religious structures, forcible dispersal of religious gatherings, and occasionally, short term detention.¹⁷

In response, the Chinese government recommends CHCs to obtain legal status by joining TSPM. However, the majority of CHCs oppose joining TSPM. CHCs regard TSPM as a political organization of the government, whose head is the government, not

16 David Mun, *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of the Chinese house churches*, 11.

17 Human Rights Watch/ Asia, *China: State Control of Religion* (USA: Human Rights Watch, 1997), 1.

the church. Leaders of CHCs believe if they join TSPM, the independence and religious freedom of CHCs cannot be ensured. They would rather keep their beliefs and maintain independence as illegal while facing persecution rather than joining TSPM.

Since the 1990s, there has been rapid growth of the Emerging Urban house churches (EUHC). Members of the EUHC are relatively highly educated people. As educated people, they raised the issue of registration for CHCs to acquire legal status. EUHC members attempt to obtain legal status and provide legal protection to CHCs through registration with the government. However, there is no common unified opinion, the variety of opinions conflict for CHCs and EUHC regarding the issue of registration.

IV. Statement of the Problem

Illegal status is one of the most important issues for CHCs. For further development of CHCs, this issue must be resolved, which could be done through registration with the government. The new wineskin, a symbol of legal status and legitimacy, must be prepared for the new wine, which is approximately 100 million Christians of CHCs. However, the CCP and CHCs have different opinions concerning this issue; even within CHCs, there is no common consensus. CHCs do not have a common perspective or solutions even though it is a crucial problem. Therefore, this dissertation will uncover how CHCs should solve the illegal status problem through inter-religious comparative research of Chinese Buddhism's reconciliation experience with the East Jin Dynasty. This dissertation will seek the solution of registration through the following five research questions.

V. Research Questions

1. What is the Chinese traditional framework of the state-religion relationship? Is the traditional framework still valid for modern China in the 21st century?
2. Which religion effectively overcame the state-religion conflict in Chinese history? What kinds of lessons can CHCs learn from the historical experience of overcoming conflict?
3. How many different opinions for the registration of CHCs exist? What are their opinions? What are the historical and theological reasons for their opinions?
4. What kinds of effort do CHCs need to demolish the illegitimacy of CHCs and acquire legal status?
5. Which reason is the most suitable and reasonable to solve the illegal status of CHCs from differing opinions?

VI. Theoretical Framework

A. C.K. Yang's Chinese State-Religion Relationship Theory

This dissertation uses C.K. Yang's Chinese state-religion relationship theory in two ways. First, this dissertation defines the framework of the Chinese state-religion relationship through his theory. It is necessary to define the framework of the Chinese state-religion relationship because it differs from the Western framework. According to Yang, the separation between state and religion will never happen in China. C.K. Yang defines the state-religion relationship of China as the frame of "control-communal-rebellious" in his book, *Religion in Chinese Society*. The 'Control' refers to the Chinese dynasty or government's control policy on religions. 'Communal' denotes the religions'

adaptive and supportive attitude toward political power such as Confucianism and the Classic religion.¹⁸ ‘Rebellious’ indicates the transformative responses of religions, such as Daoism and Buddhism, on political powers.

Second, this dissertation proves whether C.K. Yang’s theory is applicable in 21st century China. This dissertation will also make an inter-religious comparison between two religions’ state-religion relationship in two different eras. The comparison will be between Buddhism of East Jin in 3 A.D. and the Chinese house churches of the People of the Republic of China in the 21st century A.D. There are approximately 1,700 years between these two cases. The two countries also have different political systems. Therefore, it is necessary to prove the two eras have the same state-religion relationship in order to compare them. In the second half of chapter 2, this dissertation will prove that C.K. Yang’s theory is still applicable to modern Chinese society through the documents No. 19 and No. 426 of the CCP.

B. Emile Durkheim’s Socio-Religion Theory

Emile Durkheim studied the social roles of religions as a French sociologist in the early 20th century. This dissertation uses Emile Durkheim’s socio-religion theories in two ways.

First, Emile Durkheim’s theory plays the function of supporting Yang’s theory. Emile Durkheim says, “Religion is a mean of social control. Religion *sacralizes* the norms and values of established society, maintaining the dominance of group goals over

18 Yang defines classic religion as “the indigenous religious system, which developed and matured in relative isolation from outside influence during the classical period of Shang, Chou, and Early Han” on 106 of *Religion in Chinese Society*.

individual wishes.”¹⁹ Durkheim saw religion as the most fundamental social institution of humankind, and one that gave rise to other social forms. He believes religion is a stabilizing force within a political party or society. On the other hand, he saw religion provide a transformative function in a society. He called this religious function a prophetic function. Emile Durkheim’s two functions of religions match perfectly with the functions of ‘communal religion’ and ‘rebellious religion’ as theorized by C.K. Yang.

Second, Durkheim’s ‘prophetic function’ of religion plays the role of substitute in C.K. Yang’s ‘rebellious religion.’ The term, ‘rebellious religion’ describes the state-religion relationship in ancient times. Buddhism and Daoism aroused rebellions against the dynasties. However, the term, ‘rebellious religions’ is not suitable to use in modern times because modern religions do not use violence to the government unlike ancient Daoist and Buddhist. Therefore, this dissertation will use the ‘prophetic’ of Emile Durkheim as the substitute of Yang’s ‘rebellious.’

C. East Jin Buddhism’s Three Principles

Buddhism of East Jin conflicted with the East Jin Dynasty. The conflict was referred to as the ‘Prostration Debate.’ The ‘Prostration Debate’ was primarily concerned with whether Buddhist monks should bow down to the Emperor or not. This resulted from the differing worldviews between Buddhism and Confucianism. East Jin’s Buddhists successfully overcame the conflict and succeeded to defend their religious freedom. This dissertation will uncover three principles of Buddhism, which helped overcome the state-religion conflict during the East Jin Dynasty. The three principles

¹⁹ Kenneth D. Allan, *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World*. (US: Pine Forge Press, 2005), 112.

include a cooperative relationship, the social role, and active communication with the Dynasty. To prove the effectiveness of the principles, this dissertation uses Robert Montgomery's theory of the spread of a religion and Robert M. Krauss and Ezequiel Morsella's communication theory.

The first principle is the cooperative relationship with the government, which is supported by Robert Montgomery's theory. Montgomery researched the spread of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam and built social scientific theories based on the spread of these religions. In his book, *The Spread of Religions*, he demonstrates the propagation of a religion is closely related to its relationship with the political power. For example, at the time of the Maurya Dynasty of India in B.C. 4, Buddhism was a dominant religion. Buddhist teachings were officially favored by the Emperor Asoka. The king was the protector of Buddhism. There is an intimate relationship between the state and Buddhism. Under the protection of the Maura dynasty, many people within the Indian community converted to Buddhism.

The second principle demonstrates that Buddhism played an important role as a social role in East Jin society. The religion's active contribution to society can be critical to solving conflict with the government. This principle is also supported by Robert Montgomery's 'Moral Guidance and Moral Energy' theory. He found that when a religion provides moral guidance and moral energy to society, the spread of religion is generally promoted. Montgomery supports the second principle of East Jin Buddhism. He suggests the Noble Eightfold Path as an example of moral guidance and moral energy.

The Noble Eightfold, for example, would be considered. I am only noting that Buddhism found a pervasive place throughout Asia because it contributed moral guidance, but particularly moral energy, to diverse societies having their own moralities. Buddhism provided a spiritual

source for morality in its doctrines of salvation for all and compassion toward all life. These doctrines were personalized in the Buddha in a clearer way than in any of other Asian religions.²⁰

The third principle is about active communication. East Jin's Buddhism actively communicated with the government and society in various ways such as writing appeals to the Emperor, debates with officials, and publishing books. The efforts of communication played an important role in resolving conflict with the East Jin Dynasty. This dissertation uses Krauss and Morsella's 'Dialogic Paradigm,' their communication theory, to prove the third principle of East Jin Buddhism. They reveal how communication affects the resolution of conflicts in their article, "Communication and Conflict."²¹ The dialogic paradigm emphasizes a social consensus, which is achieved through its communicative goal. Various cooperative behaviors happen between two speakers in order to resolve conflict. The paradigm also focuses on the social environment as the background of the conflict and communication. The ultimate goal of the two speakers, who live in the same society, is to resolve conflict. Therefore, both speakers use a variety of communication methods, including conversation, to achieve communicative goals and resolve conflict. The Krauss and Morsella's dialogic paradigm illustrate the effectiveness of Buddhism's communication during the East Jin Dynasty in solving the state-religion conflict.

D. Sun Mingyi (孫明義)'s Three Classifications Theory

20 Robert L. Montgomery, *The Spread of Religions: A Social Scientific Theory Based on the Spread of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam* (NJ: Long Dash Publishing, 2007), 57, 58.

21 Robert M. Krauss and Ezequiel Morsella, *Communication and Conflict* (Columbia University), <http://www.columbia.edu/~rmk7/PDF/Confl.pdf>

CHCs have various voices regarding the issue of registration with the government. It is necessary to classify the different voices concerning registration. This dissertation will use *Sun Mingyi*'s three classifications. He classifies the three positions as the Separation Position (*Fenlipai*, 分离派), Human Rights Position (*Weiquanpai*, 维权派), and Dialogue Position (*Duihuapai*, 对话派). These parties provide different opinions of each position and reasonable explanations of why each party has distinctive views based on their background. This dissertation focuses on *Sun Mingyi*'s three classifications because they provide a much more accurate perspective for the issue of registration.

VII. Data Collection

A. Library Research on Ancient literature

This dissertation focuses on the inter-religious comparative research concerning the 'Prostration Debate' between Buddhism and the East Jin Dynasty in the 3rd century AD, the state-religion conflict of ancient China. The 'Prostration Debate' consisted of two controversial arguments. The first debate took place between *Hechong* (何充) and *Yubing* (庾冰) in 340 AD and the second took place between *Wangmi* (王謐) and *Huanxuan* (桓玄) in 403 AD. The two debates occurred throughout three instances of appeal of each person to the Emperor. These appeals of the prostration debate were found in *Hongmingji* (弘明集). *Zengyou* (僧祐: 445~518), a Buddhist monk of *Liang* (梁), wrote about the debate from 502 to 518 AD in the *Jianchu* Temple (建初寺). His writings contain the history of Buddhism's propagation in the late *Han* (漢), *Wei* (魏), *Jin*

(晉), Southern and Northern dynasties (南北朝). *Hongmingji* (弘明集) was published by Japanese Buddhism as *Dazheng Xinxiu Dazangjing* (大正新脩大藏經). The Japanese Buddhist community collected and published the most precious Buddhist manuscripts from 1924 to 1934 as a national project. The ‘Prostration Debate’ can be understood through the research of *Hongmingji* (弘明集), which is contained in *Dazheng Xinxiu Dazangjing* (大正新脩大藏經).

B. Library Research on Modern Literature

This dissertation uses the resources of the ‘Beijing University Summit Conference for Religion and Society.’ The Universal Academy of Social Sciences held the ‘Beijing University Summit Conference for Religion and Society’ to discuss the illegal status of CHCs and the issue of registration at Beijing University in 2008. Leaders of CHCs, scholars, and government officials attended the conference. Fifteen scholars and church leaders released twenty resources at the conference. These resources are precious materials, which demonstrate various attitudes of CHCs toward registration. The resources of the conference were published in Seoul, Korea under the title *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church*. This dissertation utilizes the Chinese version and Korean version of the Beijing Summit Conference.

C. Semi-Structured Interview

The researcher conducted interviews with various interviewees from January to March 2012 in China, the US, and South Korea. The researcher visited Beijing, Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Shanghai, Wen Zhou, Qingdao, Tianjin, Seoul, and Los Angeles to

meet various interviewees. The researcher interviewed five interviewees from each position of the Separation Position, Human Rights Position, and Dialogue Position. Five interviewees were selected as representatives of house churches leaders, scholars at home and abroad, and missionaries. During the time period in 2012, twenty interviews were conducted in totality including five additional interviews. Twenty interviewees are well-known church leaders and scholars who represent their positions well. Brother Li of Beijing contributed in choosing and contacting these interviewees. At the requests of the interviewees, their names will be indicated by pseudonyms such as Li, Fang, and Jin. However, if there is a published document with the author's real name, the actual name will be used in this dissertation.

The researcher uses the method of a semi-structured interview, which is a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Questions are asked by the interviewer to obtain information from the interviewee. This is a flexible and adaptable way of collecting information.²² This interview mostly consists of open-ended questions, and the questions were answered and recorded through face-to-face or group interviews. The purpose of this method is to collect further data on the Chinese house churches leaders' personal experiences, biblical and theological concepts, beliefs, and perspectives of the relationship between the state and Christianity.

VIII. Delimitation

A. Limit on Registration Issue

There are many issues and conflicts between CHCs (Chinese house churches) and CCP (Chinese Communist Party). This dissertation defines the issue of registration,

22 Colin Robson, *Real World Research*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 272.

which is a method for solving the illegal status of CHCs and the conflict between CHCs and CCP. Other topics and issues of conflict between CHCs and CCP will not be addressed as subjects of this dissertation.

B. The Fourth Position

Sun Mingyi defines the three positions of CHCs in accordance with its stance concerning the registration. The three camps are the Separation Position, Human Rights Position, and Dialogue Position. However, there is an additional stance in the classification of CHCs, 'the Third Way,' which refers to a middle path between CHCs and TSPM. It asserts CHCs should register itself to the RAB through TSPM. They believe CHCs should join TSPM to acquire legitimacy. The Fourth Position will be introduced in Chapter 4 about its position to registration, characteristics of traditions, and evaluations. However, it will not be examined by the three principles of East Jin Buddhism in Chapter 5.

First, there is a shortage of resources to explain this alternate position because most leaders of the Third Way refuse interviews and there is no way to obtain academic resources related to this group. Second, the Third Way is beyond the research boundaries of this dissertation, which focuses on the Chinese house churches. The Third Way has already predominantly joined TSPM and has left CHCs. Due to these reasons, the Third Way will not be included in Chapter 5 with two reasons.

C. Avoiding Individual's Categorizing

This dissertation divides CHCs into three different groups regarding their stances on the issue of registration. Classification is not about categorizing individual church leaders and scholars, but defining the different voices of CHCs with this certain issue, which is important for the future development of CHCs. It is not only ineffective, but also not ideal to categorize individuals into certain parties. Most interviewees had different stances at a time. For example, one interviewee demonstrated opinion of both the Dialogue Position and Human Rights Position regarding different questions. Another interviewee expressed opinions about the Separation Position and Dialogue Position during an interview. Therefore, the purpose of the classification is to define the different voices of CHCs, not categorize individuals.

IX. Definition of Key Terms

A. Chinese House Churches (CHCs)

Chinese house churches are a religious movement of unregistered assemblies of Christians in the People's Republic of China, which operate independently of the government-run Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and the China Christian Council (CCC) for Protestant groups. CHCs are also known as the “Underground Church” or the “Unofficial Church.” They are called “house churches” because they are not officially registered organizations and cannot independently own property, but rather they meet in private houses, often in secret, for fear of arrest or imprisonment.

B. Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM)

The Three-Self Patriotic Movement or TSPM is a state-controlled Protestant church in the People's Republic of China. TSPM is the only state approved national religious organization. In 1951, Y. T. Wu initiated the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, which promoted a strategy of “self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation” in order to remove foreign influences from Chinese churches and assure the communist government the churches would be patriotic to the newly-established People's Republic of China. The movement began formally in 1954 and allowed the government to infiltrate, subvert, and control much of organized Christianity in China. From 1966 to 1976 during the Cultural Revolution, TSPM was effectively banned. In 1979, the government officially restored it.

There are various opinions of TSPM including severe critics of CHCs. However, positive opinions exist. Philip L. Wickeri suggests that TSPM plays a role of being bridge between Marxism and Christianity in China. He defines TSPM as “it is truly Christian and truly Chinese.”²³ He defines the function of TSPM with the communist government as follows:

The Three-Self Movement has sought to develop a functional working relationship between Marxism and Chinese Christianity. In the realm of ideas, ethics and social life, there has thus emerged a matrix of mutually supportive and interdependent relationships between Christians and Communists. This has been the purpose of Three-Self as a mass organization within the united front.²⁴

C. China Christian Council (CCC) and Two Organizations (Liang Hui)

The China Christian Council (CCC, 中国基督教协会) was founded in 1980 as an umbrella organization for all Protestant churches in the People's Republic of China with

²³ Philip L. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (New York: Orbis Books, 1988), 7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 282.

Bishop K. H. Ting (丁光訓, 1915–2012) as its president. It works to provide theological education and the publication of Bibles, hymnals, and other religious literature. It encourages the exchange of information among local churches in evangelism, pastoral work and administration. It has formulated a church order for local churches, and seeks to continue to develop friendly relations with churches overseas. Together with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the organizations are known as the lianghui (两会), or "two organizations."²⁵

D. Emerging Urban house churches (EUHC)

Since 1990, urban house churches have emerged with the rapid urbanization of Chinese society. Those emerging house churches are called EUHC (Emerging Urban house churches). EUHC are formed around a young and educated Christian population in urban areas. Due to its short history, the EUHC have not yet suffered from severe persecution from the government. In many ways, the EUHC have demonstrated different aspects and characteristics of traditional house churches in rural areas.

E. TSPM Registration (*Sanzi Dengji*, 三自登記)

TSPM registration is a way of acquiring legitimacy for CHCs through joining TSPM. The CCP asks CHCs to join TSPM and acquire legal status. Most CHCs refused TSPM registration. CHCs believe they will be controlled by the CCP through joining TSPM.

²⁵ [http://www.amitynewsservice.org/frequently asked questions about the Protestant church in China](http://www.amitynewsservice.org/frequently%20asked%20questions%20about%20the%20Protestant%20church%20in%20China)

F. Independent Registration (*Duli Dengzi*, 獨立登記)

Independent registration is a way of acquiring legitimacy without joining TSPM or CCC. Most house churches prefer this method of registration. There are two ways of the Independent Registration whether to register with CAB (Civil Affairs) or RAB (Religious Affairs Bureau). The Human Right Position seems to prefer to register with CAB because they believe registration CAB can provide more religious freedom than registration with RAB. However, the Dialogue Position seems to still prefer to register with RAB because they believe CHCs are religious organizations, not social organizations. Regardless of which group they register with, they believe the Independence Registration process can protect house churches' independence and religious freedom from the government.

G. The Separation Position (*Fenlipai*, 分离派)

The Separation Position believes itself to be the true church, refusing to compromise with the atheistic, communist government. They view those who join TSPM or those who work with the CCC as liberal and not true believers. For these churches, the 1950s presented a legacy of control and denunciation, which has not been forgotten. The belief that the Church is under God's authority, rather than the Party's, has not changed. The Separation Position believes the church is under God's sole authority, and that the church should go underground, refusing to register with the government. Geographically, it is based on rural areas. Theologically, it is based on Pietism and Pentecostalism. Registration or dialogue with the government is viewed as compromising with the secular

world. Their primal interest is in maintaining their pure beliefs without compromising with the secular world.

H. The Human Rights Position (*Weiquanpai*, 维权派)

The Human Rights Position deals with the issue of registration from a political or human rights perspective. From this perspective, the registration issue is about human rights, in particular the freedom of association and religion. Members of the Human Rights Position emphasize the legalism and human rights in Chinese society can solve the illegal status of CHCs. They believe the Chinese people already have religious freedom according to the Constitution of China. China's Constitution states, "its religious citizens have the rights to freedom of religious belief, freedom from discrimination and protection for 'normal' (*zhengchang*, 正常) religious activities."²⁶ China is a signatory or party to numerous international agreements that provide for the religious freedom of its citizens and gives them the right to practice their faith "individually or in community with others."²⁷ The Human Rights Position believes they can solve conflicts with the Chinese government through their political movement and by building civil society.

I. The Dialogue Position (对话派)

The Dialogue Position believes that the Chinese government can be changed by building a constructive relationship with house churches through continuing dialogue. They attempt to build a constructive relationship with the government through dialogue with the government. Dialogue does not necessarily mean compromise, instead offering a

²⁶ The Constitution of China., art. 36.

²⁷ 2005 Regulations, art Const., art. 36.

way to change government policy. While in dialogue with the government, they establish and insist on their basic position, which is self-legalization. They believe they have the right to legal status according to God and China's Constitution. They ask for independence from the government as a precondition of registration.

J. Civil Society (*Gongmin Shehui*, 公民社會)

Civil society refers to the society of post-totalitarianism, which overcomes authoritarian and totalitarian society in China. It also encompasses society, which ensures human rights and is ruled by the law and civil power. However, the civil society cannot be identified with the Western democracy for Chinese people because Chinese people demonstrate different attitudes to the Western democracy. There are various opinions about democracy as a political system. Some are positive and some are negative. The progressives, who pursue political and social reform and resemble the Human Rights Position, hope to build a civil society as the future of Chinese society.

CHAPTER 2.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHINESE STATE-RELIGION RELATIONSHIP

It is unavoidable to encounter the structure of the traditional state-religion relationship in China while researching religious conflict in China, which has been occurred between the Chinese government and house churches since the 20th century. China has developed a unique framework of a state-religion relationship within her long history, which is totally different from that found in the Western world. C.K. Yang has researched the state-religion relationship throughout China's history. He defines the framework of the state-religion relationship in his book, *Religion in Chinese Society*. In the first half of this chapter, the structure of the Chinese state-religion relationship is described through Yang's research and theory.

I. Traditional State-Religion Relationship

Yang's theory of Chinese state-religion relationship can be described as "Control-Support-Rebellion." This framework is constituted of two reactions: the religious policy of the government and the religion's reaction to the government's policy. According to Yang, as the first element, the Chinese government has attempted to control various religions since ancient dynasties. Secondly, some religions conformed in response to the government's attempts at control. They played supportive and cooperative roles in Chinese society under the control of political power. Third, Yang claims other religions demonstrated characteristics of rebelliousness toward political power and social

transformation. In addition, Yang's theory is supported by Emile Durkheim's theory of religious function.

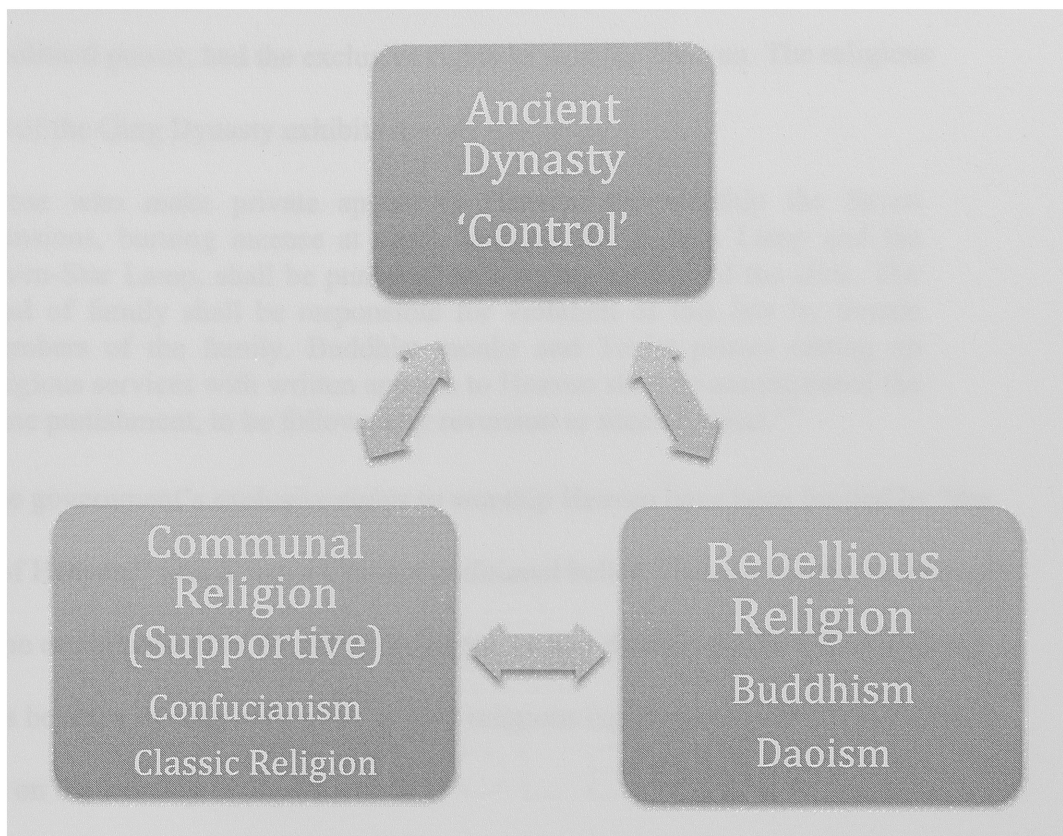


Figure 1. Ancient Chinese State-Religion Relationship

A. State's Control on Religion

It is easy to identify China's tendency to control religion throughout China's history. The traditional government attempted to demonstrate a mastery over supernatural forces and imposed a monopoly over certain rituals and interpretations of religious matters, and exerted administrative control over religious organizations and the priesthood. Chinese political power controlled religions through laws and administrative control.

The first example is the government's claim over exclusive rights to worship Heaven. Religious monks were prohibited to sacrifice to the Heaven. Only the state, as the main political power, had the exclusive rights to worship Heaven. The religious legislation of the Qing Dynasty exhibits it.

Those who make private appeal to Heaven and worship the Seven Mansions, burning incense at night, lighting the Heaven Lamp and the Seven-Star Lamp, shall be punished with eighty strokes of the stick. The head of family shall be responsible for violation of this law by female members of the family. Buddhist monks and Taoist priests setting up religious services with written appeals to Heaven shall be administered the same punishment, to be followed by reversion to secular status.²⁸

The government's exclusive rights to worship Heaven have been limited by "the Mandate of Heaven," which was a Chinese traditional belief. Chinese people traditionally believed the establishment of dynasties or Emperors was decided by the will of Heaven. Due to this belief, a dynasty attempted to give religious legitimacy to itself by keeping a monopoly on the worship of Heaven.

The Chinese government controlled the numbers of monks by defining qualification or restricting eligibility to be monks.

Surreptitious receiving of ordination by the Buddhist and Taoist priesthood without an official ordination certificate shall be punished with eighty strokes of the stick; the master priest administering the surreptitious ordination is punishable by the same, to be followed by reversion to secular status. Buddhist and Taoist must be over forty years of age before giving apprenticeship to a neophyte and each ordained priest is permitted to train only one neophyte.²⁹

The law of the Qing Dynasty restricted a person, under the age of forty, from becoming a Buddhism or Daoism priest. This law had three purposes: first, it prevented young people from the exemption of compulsory labor for the state. Second, the law

28 *Ta-ching lu li cheng-hsiu t'ung-ts'uan chin-ch'eng: Revised Complete Edition of Fundamental and Supplementary Laws of the Ch'ing Dynasty* (Shanghai, 1908), Chuan 23, p 10.

29 *Ta-ching lu li*, Chuan, 8, p15.

sought to maintain social stability. They believed this law would prevent young clergy, who were less reliable, from harming social stability. Third, the Qing Dynasty endeavored to control the growth of religious organizations through this law.

The construction of temples was also under the control of the state. When a religious organization wanted to build a temple, permission from the state was required first. The state can even decide the scale of the temple. Some smaller temples were built without government approval. The larger temples were established under the control of the government. The state attempted to prohibit the development of anti-social heterodoxy religions and believed they could control the number of priests through this law.

The state used various religious policies for new, untraditional, and heterodoxy religions. Toward existing, major religions, such as Confucianism and Daoism, the state demonstrated milder religious sanctions as compared to non-traditional religions. The state sought to put them under the control of the government. However, the state severely persecuted and repressed new, non-traditional religions. Religious policy of the Qing Dynasty demonstrated this well.

The accomplishment of the sages and the principles of the sovereign are all founded upon orthodoxy learnings. As to the writings that are not those of the sages, and those un-classical books which arouse mankind and alarm the populace, causing disorder and confusion of views and gnawing at the people and their wealth as corroding insects – these are all heterodoxy (*i-tuan*) and ought to be absolutely excluded.³⁰

Buddhism is the most representative of an unorthodox religion in China's history, which was persecuted and suppressed by the government. Recognized as a foreign

30 J.J. M and De Groot, *The Religion of the Chinese in the Chinese Text of Religious Persecution*, (New York, 1910), 244.

religion imported from India, the government oppressed Buddhism and persecuted Buddhists. Yang notes,

The policy of keeping the Confucian orthodoxy in the supreme position was ever-present in over a thousand years of continuous struggle against the influence from religions, particularly Buddhism. The assertion of Confucian supremacy over religion gained national attention from the famous tirades uttered by the rulers during the four most disastrous persecutions of Buddhism in Chinese history, in 446, 574, 845, and 955.³¹

The state chose “sophisticated control” as its religious policy for major existing religions, whereas the state chose a “severe destruction” policy for new heterodox religions. Regardless of control or destruction, it is obvious Chinese political power wanted to retain religion under the control of the government.

What is the purpose of the state’s control of religions? Yang answered this question by comparing the history of the Ch’in Dynasty and Han Dynasty.

To build a lasting unified empire on the foundation of such a society required more than the success of power politics alone. The short-lived Ch’in dynasty, the precursor of the Han Empire, was crowned with success in secular power, but it was singularly lacking in religious vitality, suggesting a reason for its early disintegration. The long-lasting unification of the Han Empire saw not merely a revival of religious influence in general but also a theological systematization of the classical religion, which exerted a universalization influence on the many local religious traditions.³²

The Ch’in Dynasty had more political and military capabilities than the Han Dynasty. However, due to its failure to have religious influence and maintain social stability and integration, the Ch’in Empire disappeared after a short period in power (221-206 BC). China’s dynasties realized that religion is the most effective and powerful way to maintain social stability and retain leadership within the political regime.

31 C. K. Yang. *Religion in Chinese Society*. 197.

32 *Ibid.*, 109.

Another reason for the state's control over religion is due to China's history of religious forces becoming political forces. Religious leadership can be easily replaced by political regimes. Religious forces have brought crisis and have been the downfall of dynasties throughout Chinese history. For example, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (1851-1864), which began as a religious movement, became a political movement and was a tremendous threat to the Qing Dynasty. Daoist religious movements, such as *The Way of the Five Pecks of Rice* (142 AD) and the *Yellow Turban Rebellion* (184 AD), have also turned into political rebellions. The state attempted to control religious groups in order to prevent these movements from turning into political threats. China's government policies pertaining to religion can be summed up in one word: "control."

Geographic variation provided another reason for the tightening of religious freedom in China. Geographically, China is 9,596,961 sq km.³³ The coastline of China is 14,500 km. China stretches some 5,026 sq km (3,123 mi) across the East Asian landmass. The geographical area of China is 94% of the geographical area of Europe, which is 10,180,000 sq km,³⁴ and contains 50 different countries. The area of Sichuan Province (485,000 sq km), which is the fifth largest province, is much larger than the area of Germany (357,021 km sq).³⁵ Historically, China has maintained its geographic boundaries by tightly controlling political and religious forces. For example, at the end of the Qing dynasty, the central government was weakened by foreign powers. Due to the weakening of the central government, local government units emerged as independent ruling governments,³⁶ which ultimately forced the collapse of the dynasty. In this

³³ National Geographic. <http://nationalgeographic.com/China>

³⁴ National Geographic. <http://nationalgeographic.com/Europe>

³⁵ National Geographic. <http://nationalgeographic.com/China&Europe>

³⁶ Dohee Kim, *Understanding of China* (Goyang, Korea: Ingan Sarang, 2008), 123.

situation, religion is considered an effective tool to control local people and provincial governments beyond the limitations of time and space.

B. Communal Religion

Chinese religions have responded in two ways to the government's "control" policies on religions. The first response has been to be cooperative with the state and maintain an adaptive attitude, which pursues social stability rather than social reform. Yang refers to these supportive religions as "communal religions." He defines them in this way:

The communal character of classic religion and Confucianism, which grew up as a tradition without a distinct founder, was based on universal acceptance of a system of common belief, which, in principle, admitted of no choice.³⁷

Communal religions are in contrast to voluntary religions. Believers of voluntary religions, such as Christianity and Buddhism, join the religion through a personal decision. However, believers of communal religions have no choice in regards to joining the religion because it is a system of common beliefs. Yang regards Confucianism and classic religions as representative of communal religions. Communal religions also play an important role for social and political stability. Yang describes the supportive function,

In most periods of Chinese history, religion consistently lent support to government by giving supernatural sanction to the ruling groups and by enforcing traditional values instrumental in maintaining the ethnic-political order. To assure itself of the desired support from religion and at the same time to minimize religious organization as competitive political forces, the Chinese state exercised elaborate control over religious belief and organization.³⁸

37 Ibid., 111.

38 Ibid., 105.

a. Classic Religion

Yang defines classic religion as “the indigenous religious system, which developed and matured in relative isolation from outside influence during the classical period of Shang, Chou, and Early Han.”³⁹ According to Yang, classic religion has three main elements: ancestor worship, the worship of Heaven and its subordinate system of naturalistic deities, divination, and sacrifice.⁴⁰ The three elements are related to its function of political and social stability.

First, ancestor worship performed the critical function of consolidating and stabilizing Chinese kinship. The social class of a Chinese person was determined by his or her kinship system. Ancestor worship provided personal identity and social status or class through the kinship system. In other words, ancestor worship, as a core value of the kinship system, can maintain social and political stability. For example, when nobles build temples for ancestors, they build larger and more ornate temples as compared to commoners. A magnificent temple serves as a symbol of their political influence and upper class status. The social status system and political regime are protected and maintained by the use of the religious symbol found in ancestor worship.

Second, the worship of Heaven is related to the Chinese traditional belief of “the Mandate of Heaven.” It was believed that “the right to rule China is granted by Heaven and the right to rule may be passed down from father to son.”⁴¹ The worship of Heaven was important to the state because this belief decided the fate of the regime. Chinese

39 Ibid., 106.

40 Ibid., 106.

41 Paul Halsall, *Chinese Cultural Studies: Selections from the Shu Jing: The Classic of History (6th Cent. BCE)*. <http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/shu-jing.html>.

dynasties attempted to monopolize the worship of Heaven. The worship of Heaven contributed to social and political stability through the belief of the Mandate of Heaven.

Third, divination and sacrifice were used for strengthening political leadership in the early history of China. For example, *I-Ching* (Classic of Changes), one of the oldest Chinese classic texts, has been used as a divination tool for political purposes. Political decisions, which were made by Emperors and politicians, became the religious commands of deities through divination. Divination influences the people's acceptance of the political decisions of the state by providing religious authority over the decisions.

In conclusion, the three elements of classic religion have played an important political role, which has contributed to social stability. The classic religion demonstrates its cooperative and adaptive functions as "control" policy of the state and can be regarded as communal religion because of its cooperative and adaptive functions.

b. Confucianism

The teaching of Confucianism served as a method for acquiring social harmony and human happiness through learning social norms and order. Confucianism seeks ideal relationships and unity for human society. Confucian teaches "the three bonds and the five moral disciplines in human relations" (三刚五伦), which can maintain a society and a country, for social harmony. In the five kinds of relationship, Confucianism defines the relationship between the ruler and the ruled as *Jun-Chen-You-Yi* (君臣有义).

The Emperor is the Heaven but the people are the Earth. The ruled is noble and high, but the ruled are humble and lowly. It is natural for the noble king to make lowly people force to work for him. It is reasonable for the humble ruled to serve the noble ruler. It is the order of the nature for the subject to serve the royal kingship. Therefore, the king should make decisions by the Mandate of the Heaven as the ruler. The subject should

prevent to put evil mind in the heart of the king and help him to achieve great things for the people.⁴²

Confucianism describes the ruler as Heaven and the ruled as Earth. He put clear distinctions between the ruler and the ruled as providing the function of protection for the political regime and for social stability. Confucianism emphasizes the ethical, social, and political obligations of the ruled for the ruler. It strengthens political leadership and kingship over the ruled.

The Mandate of Heaven, which came from a classic religion, can be found in Confucianism. Confucius defined the ruler as the one “who makes decisions by the Mandate of Heaven.” It gives the royal kingship divine power and religious authority, and is a major contribution in maintaining social order and political power.

Confucianism is one of the most important elements of Chinese culture and civilization. It provides principles and fundamental values for the foundation of Chinese culture. How can Confucianism be the most fundamental religion in the thousand-year history of China? Confucianism has served the role of creating and maintaining social stability while strengthening political leadership as a communal religion. In other words, the state used Confucianism as a tool for maintaining stability in the social and political realms.

Yang’s theory of communal religion is supported by Emile Durkheim’s religious theory. As Durkheim noted, “Religion is a means of social control. Religion sacralizes the norms and values of established society, maintaining the dominance of group goals

42 Confucius, the Analects of Confucius (論語)

<http://osj1952.com.ne.kr/interpretation/dongmogsunsop/dl/1-03.htm>

君臣天地之分. 尊且貴焉 尊且貴焉. 卑且賤焉 尊貴之使卑賤 卑賤之事尊貴 天地之常經 古今之通義. 是故君者體元而發號施令者也 臣者調元而陣善閉邪者也.

over individual wishes.”⁴³ Durkheim’s theory on religion illustrates how Confucianism was used as a tool of social control in Chinese society.

In conclusion, when the state attempted to control the people through religion, the response of communal religions was to be supportive and adaptive to the existing common social order. The classic religions and Confucianism became tools of the political power for social control. Communal religion contributed to the social and political stability by providing ethnic-political values and placing obligations on the members of the society.

C. Rebellious Religions

Contrary to communal religions’ supportive and adaptive responses to the control policy of the state, other Chinese religions had different responses. Daoism and Buddhism exhibited anti-social, or change-agent characteristics, against the state’s control policy. Yang defines these religions as rebellious religions.

The most significant feature of rebellious religions is that these religions are voluntary religions. Voluntary religions are defined by the involvement of a conversion process or personal decision to follow or accept the religion. In communal religions, people are expected to uncritically accept the beliefs and be part of the religion without a personal, voluntary decision as a member of the society. The process of voluntary conversion demands serious participation in the religious organization. Voluntary religions demonstrate strength in the ability to organize. Yang believes the development of voluntary religions has political implications in Chinese society.

43 Kenneth D. Allan, *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World*. (US: Pine Forge Press, 2005), 112.

Voluntary religion based on conversion, imply a departure from the accepted belief of the group. The very nature of deviation in voluntary religion lent itself to the development of political movement in two ways. First, political groups and leaders struggling against the established ruling power might utilize the deviate nature of voluntary religion to build up their own movement of rebellion. Second, voluntary religion might become a political movement itself because of its deviate character.⁴⁴

Voluntary religious movements have political implication on Chinese society.

When members of a society face hardship and suffering, they seek a new ideal and answers for their suffering. For example, when people in a society suffer from widespread pain and problems such as famine, extreme natural disasters, an economic crash, lack of political leadership, corruption, and injustice, people pursue a new social and political ideal instead of depending on the old one. Buddhism and Daoism played this function of providing new social and political ideals for the Chinese people who were suffering. Many occasions exist where the new ideals of Buddhism and Daoism developed into political movements to relieve suffering and change social problems.

Daoism has twice caused large-scale armed revolutions against the Han (漢) Dynasty. The authoritarian government's persecution of Daoism became a starting point for armed revolutions of Daoism. The first large-scale revolution of Daoism was the *Taiping Revolution* in 184 AD. The Taiping Revolution, under the leadership of *Chang Chueh* (张角), originated in the *Hubei* province and then widely spread throughout eastern China. The second armed revolution of Daoism was the *Five Peck Rice sect* (*Wudoumidao*, 五斗米道) in 189 AD in the *Sichuan* province under the leadership of *Zhangling* (張陵). At first, the *Wudoumidao* was a religious movement that was part of

44 C.K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society*. 111, 112.

Daoism. However, later, it became a nation-wide armed revolution against the Han Dynasty. The two groups transformed from religious movements to political revolutions.

Buddhism also demonstrated its transformation from a religious movement into a political revolution. The main reason for the transformation was the conflict between the political power of the state and the Buddhist monastery (*Seng Tuan*, 僧團). The Buddhist monastery pursued an independently organized existence, a self-contained system of authority, and a material sustenance to attain its religious purpose of discipline. The Buddhist monastery tried to be separate from the control of the state and society. It is inevitable for conflict to exist between the secular political power of the dynasty and the monastery, which pursued autonomy. The conflict led Buddhists into armed rebellion. Buddhists incited eight armed rebellions from 477 to 535 AD in the Northern Wei Dynasty (北魏). According to Yang, there were four instances of massive persecution toward Buddhism in Chinese history, 446, 574, 845, and 955 AD. Buddhism confronted the Tang Dynasty concerning the government's tax policy, which had a strong influence over the political power of the central government.⁴⁵

It can be criticized that defining Buddhism and Daoism as rebellious religions is overly simplified. The reason for the criticism is that Daoism and Buddhism reconciled with the political power of the secular state in the later part of Chinese history, unlike rebellious religions. Since the Song Dynasty, both religions provided ethical and moral values in the society to promote social stability rather than anti-government rebellion or confrontation. For this reason, the large-scale persecution of Buddhism disappeared after 955 AD. Therefore, it can be said the anti-government tendencies of Buddhism and

45 Ibid., 122.

Daoism were limited before the 10th century AD. In other words, the rebellious tendency of Buddhism and Daoism cannot be denied since it played a role in the social transformation of China, particularly before the 10th century AD.

The rebellious function of Buddhism and Daoism, which is Yang's theory, is supported by Emile Durkheim's theory of religion's social role. Durkheim described a religion's function on social change.

Religion provides mechanisms for social change. Religion has served a "prophetic" function in which absolute standards take precedence over "earthly" ones. Religious belief is thus used as justification for social protests, social movements, political revolutions, etc.⁴⁶

Yang's "rebellious religion" and Durkheim's "prophetic function of religion" can be regarded as having the same function, which acts as a change agent or as a transformational function in a society.

In conclusion, Buddhism and Daoism, as rebellious religions, took the position opposing Confucianism and the Classic Religion, as communal religions in the Chinese state-religion relationship. Communal religion contributed to the current political power in providing social and political stability with its adaptive attitude. Unlike communal religions, rebellious religions function as change agents and transform the society to provide hope and new ideals.

D. Conclusion

Yang defines the context of the Chinese state-religion relationship as "control-communal-rebellion." First, the state tried to control religions in order to maintain social stability and attain political purposes. Second, Confucianism and the classic religions

46 Emile Durkheim. *On Morality and Society, Selected Writings*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.) <https://webdisk.ucalgary.ca/.../13%20The%20Sociology%20of%20R...>

demonstrate adaptive and cooperative responses to the state as communal religions.

Third, unlike communal religions, Buddhism and Daoism had rebellious attitudes toward the existing political forces. Emile Durkheim's theory on the social role of religion proves Yang's theory, which is the Chinese state-religion framework. In conclusion, because of its rich historical evidence and support of Durkheim's theory, it can be said that Yang's theory provides a good framework of the Chinese state-religion relationship.

II. Modern State-Religion Relationship

It is necessary to ask whether Yang's theory of the Chinese state-religion relationship can be applied to the conflict between the Chinese government and Chinese house churches in modern China. The state-religion relationship Yang addresses is based on the history of ancient Chinese dynasties whose political institution is based on the absolutism of Emperors. However, the People's Republic of China of the 21st century is not ruled by absolutism of Emperors any longer. The absolutism of ancient dynasties was alleviated through the *Xinhai Revolution* (辛亥革命) in 1911. The People's Republic of China was built through the socialist revolution of 1949. The framework of the state-religion relationship needs to be re-examined due to the drastically different political systems between the Chinese states of ancient and modern times. It must be determined whether the framework is still valid in 21st century China.

Prior to re-examining the state-religion relationship, Yang's theory requires two adjustments. The first is the replacement of the term "rebellious." The term "rebellious" is very appropriate terminology used to describe characteristics of Buddhism and Daoism because Buddhism and Daoism actually attempted rebellions to overthrow the political

powers of the dynasties. However, in modern Chinese society, the term ‘rebellious’ is no longer appropriate to describe the function of religion because in modern society because modern religions do not attempt to overthrow the government through armed insurrection and violence unlike ancient Buddhism and Daoism. Durkheim’s term “social change” can be used to replace the term “rebellious” as it describes the religious function of social transformation.

The second adjustment is the omission of ‘communal’ from the ‘control-communal-rebellious’ framework of the state-religion relationship. TSPM (Three-Self Patriotic Movement) can be regarded as a communal religion in modern China because TSPM plays its stabilizing role in Chinese society as Confucianism and the Classic Religion did. However, the ‘communal’ aspect of the state-religion relationship is beyond the scope of this research. Therefore, the Chinese state-religion relationship will be described as the frame of ‘control-social change (rebellious)’ without the ‘communal’ element.

A. CCP’s Control on CHCs

The religious policy of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) can be understood through two of the CCP’s documents from two different time periods, “Document No. 19” and “Document No. 426: Regulations on Religious Affairs.” The CCP directed Document No. 19 from the Central Committee to the CCP, and government cadres promulgated it in 1982. It has been the backbone of the Chinese government's religious policy since Deng Xiaoping’s “reform and opening” policy. Document No. 426 was adopted at the 57th Executive Meeting of the State Council on July 7, 2004. It was

promulgated and became effective as of March 1, 2005 and demonstrates the current religious policy of the Chinese government.

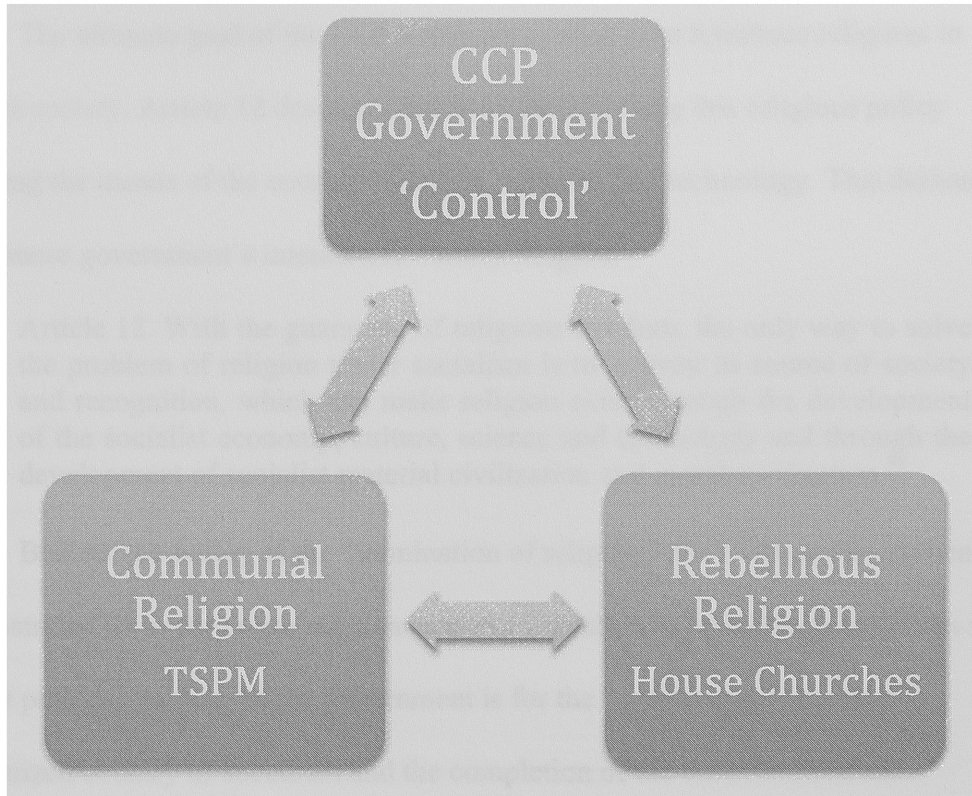


Figure 2. Modern Chinese State-Religion Relationship

a. Document No. 19

Document No.19 very clearly demonstrates its intent for the Chinese government's control of religion. The religious view of the Chinese government is for the "termination of religion," according to a historical socialist view. The Chinese government believes religion will be terminated in human history and has settled on the termination of religions as its goal in the first article of Document No. 19.

Article 1. Religion of mankind will be eventually destroyed in history. After long-term development of socialism, and after objective conditions are established, religion will naturally be destroyed.⁴⁷

The ultimate goal of the CCP's religious policy is to terminate religions in Chinese society. Article 12 describes methods for achieving this religious policy including the means of the economy, culture, science, and technology. This demonstrates the Chinese government's intention to control religion.

Article 12. With the guarantee of religious freedom, the only way to solve the problem of religion under socialism is to destroy its source of society and recognition, which can make religion exist, through the development of the socialist economy, culture, science and technology and through the development of socialist material civilization and moral civilization.⁴⁸

Besides the policy of the "termination of religion," the Chinese government has demonstrated its intent to use religion as a tool for achieving political purposes in Article 3. The political purpose of the government is for the "construction of a strong modernized country of socialism and the completion of the unification of the motherland."⁴⁹ As tyrannical dynasties sought to maintain social stability and political power through religion, the Chinese government is also pursuing its political and social stability through the control of religion.

Article 3. The primary mission of the Party and the government to the religion in the history of the new era is not only for the construction of a strong, modernized, socialist country, but also the completion of the unification of the motherland with the policy of religious freedom.⁵⁰

The Chinese government formed "patriotic religious organizations" as a mean of controlling religions. The eight patriotic religious organizations, which were founded by

47 David Mun, *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches* (Seoul: Si Nim Institution for Church, 2012), 312.

48 Ibid., 313.

49 Ibid., 312.

50 Ibid., 312.

the government, became the major measure of controlling religions. Article 7 defines the foundation of the patriotic religious organizations.

Article 7. The function of patriotic religious organizations, built for the normalization of religious activities, should be utilized in order to ensure the religious policy of the government. There are eight national patriotic religious organizations: Patriotic Buddhist Association, Patriotic Taoist Association, Catholic Association, Three-self Patriotic Movement, Chinese Christian Council, etc.⁵¹

In addition to patriotic religious organizations, another primary and effective means of the government controlling religions is the government's control over religious leaders. In Article 5, the government puts an emphasis on the education and unity of religious leaders under socialism. Article 8 declares the purpose of any religious school is to "train young religious leaders, who love the country and advocate the socialist system with religious knowledge."⁵²

Article 5. One of the most important religious policies is to make religious leaders educated and united under socialism. It is a very important precondition of the government's policy enforcement.⁵³

Article 8. The purpose of religious seminary training is to educate and to train young religious leaders, who love the country and advocate the socialist system with religious knowledge.⁵⁴

In summary, Document No. 19 displays the Chinese government's intention of controlling religion. The final goal of the government's religious policy is eternal termination of religions in Chinese society. The government regards religion as a tool for achieving its political goals. To achieve its goals, the government established religious

51 Ibid., 313.

52 Ibid., 313.

53 Ibid., 312.

54 Ibid., 313.

policies such as the establishment of patriotic religious organizations, training religious leaders through seminary training, etc.

b. Regulations on Religious Affairs

Document No. 426 is also known as “Regulations on Religious Affairs.” It was adopted at the Executive Meeting of the State Council on July 7, 2004 and was promulgated on March 1, 2005. This is the Chinese government’s current policy on religious affairs. Document No. 426 exhibits many changes and developments compared to Document No. 19, which was promulgated in 1982.

The biggest difference between two documents is that Document No. 426 no longer promotes the “termination of religions,” which is the final stage of the development of socialist history. With the adoption of Document No. 426, the government guaranteed the freedom of religious belief to its people in Article 1 and 2. Article 1 defines that “these regulations are formulated for the purposes of ensuring citizen’s freedom of religious belief.”⁵⁵ Article 2 is described below.

Citizens enjoy freedom of religious belief. Religious citizens and non-religious citizens shall respect each other and co-exist in harmony, and so shall citizens who believe in different religions.⁵⁶

According to Articles 1 and 2, it seems the Chinese government’s law protect the right of religious freedom and religious activities. It appears the government no longer is concerned with controlling religions.

⁵⁵ Kim-kwong Chan and Eric R. Carlson, *Religious Freedom in China: Policy, Administration, and Regulation* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for Culture, Commerce, and Religion, 2005), 79.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 79.

However, the Chinese government does not intend to give up control over religion. It is not difficult to find the government's religious policy on controlling religion. Its intent of controlling religion can be found in Article 3 of Document No. 426.

Article 3. The state, in accordance with the law, protects normal religious activities, and safe guards the law's rights and interests of religious bodies, sites for religious activities and religious citizens.

No organization or individual may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair health of citizens or interfere with educational system of the state, or in other activities that harm state or public interests, or citizens' lawful rights and interests.

It seems Article 3 has no problem to protect religious freedom and guarantee religious activities. However, emphasis should be put on the term "normal." Inbora, a Korean scholar of Chinese house churches, defines "normal religious activities" in his article. According to him, "normal religious activities" are limited to the religious activities of the eight patriotic religious organizations, which are established and authorized by the government. In addition, normal religious activities have to be performed in restricted areas, at appointed times, and by a person designated by the government. According to Article 3, the government protects only "normal religious activities." In the same way, it means the government can control and persecute "abnormal religious activities" because they are not deemed "normal."

First, the State demonstrates control of religious activities through its restriction on religious sites. Article 12 and 13 illustrate the State's restriction on religious sites.

Article 12. Collective religious activities of religious citizens shall, in general, be held at registered sites for religious activities (i.e. Buddhist monasteries, Taoist temples, mosques, churches and other fixed premises for religious activities), organized by the sites for religious activities or religious bodies, and presided over by religious personnel or other persons who are qualified under the prescription of the religion concerned, and the

process of such activities shall be in compliance with religious doctrines and canons.⁵⁷

Article 13. For the preparation of establishing a site for religious activities, a religious body shall make an application to the religious affairs department of the people's government at the county level of the place where such a site is to be located... Autonomous region or municipality directly under the Central Government for examination and approval and for the establishment of other fixed premises for religious activities, it shall make a decision of approval or disapproval...⁵⁸

According to Article 12, religious activities have to be held at registered sites, and according to Article 13, the Religious Affairs Department of the people's government at the county level make the decision of approval or disapproval for religious sites. The state can control religious activities through its right to approve religious sites and can legally ban and repress religious activities. Due to Article 12 and 13, the Chinese government defined Chinese house churches as illegal religious activity, repressing and prohibiting them. The state's restriction on religious sites demonstrates its intent of controlling religion.

Second, the regulations on religious personnel are another example of the State's intent to control religion. It can be witnessed in Article 27 and 28.

Article 27. Religious personnel who are determined qualified as such by a religious body and reported for the record to the religious affairs department of the people's government at or above the county level may engage in professional religious activities. The succession of living Buddha in Tibetan Buddhism shall be conducted under the guidance of Buddhist bodies and in accordance with the religious rites and rituals and historical conventions, and be reported for approval to the religious affairs department of the people's government at or above the level of a city divided into districts. With respect to Catholic bishops, the matter shall be reported for the record by the national religious body of the Catholic Church to the religious affairs department of the State Council.⁵⁹

57 Ibid., 316.

58 Ibid., 316.

59 Ibid., 319.

Article 28. Where religious personnel are to assume or leave the chief religious posts of a site for religious activities, the matter shall, upon consent by the religious body if the religion concerned, be reported to the religious affair department of the people's government at or above the county level for the record.⁶⁰

According to Article 27, if a person wants to be religious clergy, he or she has to be qualified by a religious body and reported for the record to the Religious Affairs Department. A religious body indicates the eight patriotic religious organizations, which are established by the state. Article 27 can be said the government has the right to appoint religious personnel. The commission of priests, pastors, and monks requires permission from the state. Article 28 also defines that a religious personnel has to "report" to the government when he or she leaves a post at a religious site. Although Article 28 describes it as "report to," the religious personnel must get permission from the government to leave a position. In one word, the state's control of religious leaders not only infringes on the freedom of religious belief, but also demonstrates the state's intent to control religion.

Third, the regulation of religious property clearly illustrates the state's intent to control religions. Article 30 states:

Article 30. The land legally used by a religious body or a site for religious activities, the house, structures and facilities legally owned or used by such body or site, and its other legal property and proceeds thereof, are protected by law.

No organization or individual may encroach upon, loot, privately drive up, damage, destroy, or, illegally seal up, impound, freeze, confiscate or dispose of the legal property of a religious body or a site for religious activities, nor damage or destroy cultural relics possessed or used by a religious body or a site for religious activities.⁶¹

Article 30 defines the state will protect "legally used" property of religious bodies or sites. Although it seems the government has no intent to control religion, it protects

60 Ibid., 319.

61 Ibid., 319.

religious property and respects religious freedom. However, the regulations for religious property play a role in controlling religion through the repression of religious freedom and the oppression of religious activities. Regardless of Article 30's seemingly positive role, it can also be understood alternatively as having the right to infringe on "illegally used" property of a religious body. Article 30 provides the government a legal basis of restricting religious property. Article 43 defines the right to infringe on illegal religious property.

Article 43. Where a site for religious activities is established without approval, or a site originally for religious activities continues to carry out religious activities after its registration as such has been cancelled, or an institute for religious education is established without approval, the religious affair department shall ban such site or institute and confiscate the illegal gains; the illegal house or structures, if any, shall be disposed of by the competent construction department according to law. If any act in violation of public security administration is committed, an administrative penalty for public security shall be imposed according to law.⁶²

According to Article 43, the government has authority to cancel and confiscate the so-called illegal religious property, which is generally focused on Chinese house churches. The government's infringement on religious property can be a very effective tool of controlling religions.

In summary, the Chinese government has the authority to limit religious sites, appoint religious leaders, and administer religious property through the Regulations on Religious Affairs. Document No. 19 and 426 demonstrate the state's intent to control religions through the ordinance. Regarding the state's control of religion, Daniel H. Bays notes:

Religious monitoring and regulation by the state in the recent past and present is not only a "Chinese communist" phenomenon but also a "Chinese state" one. Attitudes of suspicion and systematic policies of

62 Ibid., 321.

regulation or suppression toward grassroots religion have characterized the mind-set of all Chinese political regimes. One might argue that if the present Chinese state is capable of adapting to international regimes such as the World Trade Organization. It is certainly capable of adopting international standards of religious freedom. However, the situation will not easily change. The state's suspicion and interference on religion is not only a short-term policy driven by Marxist ideology, but also a long established practice measured in centuries or even millenniums. One rehearsed countless times by Emperors and their bureaucrats long before the actions of today's cadres.⁶³

In conclusion, Yang's theory is still applicable to the current Chinese government because the state's control of religion in China is a tradition of centuries or even millennia.

B. Social Change of CHCs

After research on the state's control of religion, it is necessary to examine the function of the "social change," which was described as "rebellious," of the modern Chinese religions to prove Yang's theory. The function of social change can be easily found in the activities of Chinese house churches.

a. Opposition to the Policy

Chinese house churches, which are treated as illegal religious activities by the state, demonstrate much opposition to the government's religious policy. This can be seen in the house churches' public document, "Chinese house churches' Announcement to the Government's Religious Policy and Three-Self Patriotic Church." This announcement was declared by the Chinese Gospel Association (中國福音聯合) and the *Fangcheng*

63 Jason Kindopp and Carol Lee Hamrin, *God and Caesar in China: Policy Implications of Church-State Tensions* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2004), 36.

Coalition (方城聯合) in 1998. The two groups are regarded as major members in the Chinese house churches Movement. Representative leaders of CHCs such as *Shen Yiping*, *Zhang Rongliang*, and *Wang Chulu* participated in the announcement of the document. It has great value because it revealed, for the first time, CHCs' position toward the government's religious policy and the Three-self Patriotic Movement. CHCs asked for an end of persecution and a guarantee of religious freedom. CHCs provided five reasons for opposition of the government's policy and for CHCs' unwillingness to register with the government.

First, CHCs opposed the state's restriction on religious sites. According to Article 12 of Document No. 426, religious activities have to be held on registered sites designated for religious activities. CHCs have been categorized as illegal religious activities because they gather to worship, have Bible study, and conduct prayer meetings in houses. It is why they are called "house churches." CHCs declared, in reference to Matthew 18:20: "Wherever Christians gather in the name of the Lord, the Lord is with us."⁶⁴ CHCs opposed the state's policy because of their religious beliefs, rather than for social or political reasons.

Second, CHCs opposed the state's policy on religious leaders. The religious policy of the government declared the only person eligible to preach and lead religious activities at religious sites must be authorized by the Religious Affairs Department. It is more likely an unauthorized person would preach and lead house churches worship. CHCs also oppose the policy of restriction on religious leaders because of biblical beliefs.

⁶⁴ David Mun, *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*, 349.

CHCs announced, “Anyone, who is called by God and recognized by the church, can preach and declare God’s Word.”⁶⁵

Third, CHCs opposed the policy concerning religious sites and locations. According to the religious policy, religious leaders cannot preach outside designated areas. The government restricted the spread of the gospel through the restrictive policy concerning religious areas. CHCs have a biblical reason for opposing this policy. They believe “the Bible teaches Christians to spread the gospel and build God’s church to the ends of the earth.”⁶⁶

The fourth reason for an opposition to the religious policy is the ban of the evangelism and baptism of children and youth. In Document No. 19 Article 4, the government does not allow converting or baptizing anyone under the age of 18. CHCs opposed this policy because it contrasts Jesus’ teachings. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” (Luke 18:16).

The fifth identifiable reason for CHCs opposition to the government’s policy is the disallowance of exchange with overseas churches. The government has banned CHCs from fellowship and exchange with foreign churches. CHCs has responded,

Christ, our Lord has redeemed His people from all the nations. In Him there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. Like this, there is no distinction between foreign and Chinese Christians because they have a same Savior. Therefore, Chinese and foreign Christians should love each other and communicate with each other.⁶⁷

CHCs opposed religious policies of the government due to religious beliefs. An announcement from CHCs declared, “Because the government’s regulations on religious

65 Ibid., 349.

66 Ibid., 349.

67 Ibid., 349.

affairs conflict with the principles of the Bible, they have to oppose them.”⁶⁸ CHC stands its ground and opposes the existing orders of the society rather than adapts itself to the demands of the current society. It is obvious CHCs serves the role in the ‘social change’ or rebellious with clear religious beliefs rather than function in the stability of Chinese society.

b. Social and Political Implication

Buddhism and Daoism, as voluntary religions, provided new hope for the social transformation of society, which exhibited social, economic, and political problems through rebellious religious movements. It is necessary to examine the kinds of social and political implications of CHCs’ opposition to the government.

It is necessary to understand problems within modern Chinese society. H.H. Lai defines modern Chinese society as a “state and society under totalitarianism.”⁶⁹ Totalitarianism is defined as “the form of government that theoretically permits no individual freedom and that seeks to subordinate all aspects of the individual’s life to the authority of the government.”⁷⁰ Italian fascism, Japanese militarism, and German Nazism can be traditional examples of totalitarianism, which infringed and controlled individuals’ lives through strong national authority. Lai described modern Chinese society in this way.

The communist state is a totalitarian regime. The party-state-controls two sets of political tools, soft (ideology) and hard (bureaucracy, policy, and army), and polices all aspects of social life. It is essentially hostile to organized religions and co-opts and subjugates them. The Chinese state is

68 Ibid., 349.

69 H.H. Lai, *Religious Policies in Post-Totalitarian China: Maintaining political Monopoly over a Reviving Society*. (Journal of Chinese Political Science, vol.11, no.1, Spring 2006), 2.

http://jcps.sfsu.edu/past%20issues/JCPS2006a/4%20Religious%20policy%20in%20China_Lai.pdf

70 <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/600435/totalitarianism>

probably no exception even in the era of reform. Nevertheless, this image of strict totalitarianism fell short of realization in fact. Unfortunately, there is no civil society in China.⁷¹

Kenneth Dean and Yanqi Tong also deny the rise of civil society, but admit Chinese society is under a totalitarian regime. Gordon White, who has been attentive to the changes of Chinese society since the 1990s, acknowledges the formation of “partial and patchy civil society” in China.⁷² Chinese society, although it has experienced rapid economic development, is still being controlled under the totalitarian regime. Chinese society longs for freedom, human rights, and various social needs because it is under the control of totalitarianism.

CHCs’ opposition to the state and request for religious freedom reflect the need of a modern Chinese society. CHCs opposition to the religious policy of the state could function as “social change” in Chinese society, just as Buddhism and Daoism had played this role previously in Chinese society. CHCs observe its religious beliefs without compromising, which has resulted in conflicts with the state. A manifestation of religious beliefs provides an answer to social problems and a chance for transformation in society.

C. Anticipation to Post-Totalitarianism

Lai defines Chinese society as a “society under totalitarianism,” which is controlled by a strong regime without civil societies. It is crucial to understand that modern Chinese society is still under the control of a totalitarian regime in applying Yang’s theory because it proves the state’s control of religion. On the contrary, if China develops beyond a totalitarian society into a civil society, which pursues human rights

71 H.H. Lai, *Religious Policies in Post-Totalitarian China: Maintaining political Monopoly over a Reviving Society*, 2.

72 *Ibid.*, 2.

and freedom, the state's control of religion will diminish in Chinese society. Lai, in his writing, not only defines Chinese society as totalitarian, but also foretells the coming of post-totalitarianism.

In the years following the Tiananmen crackdown in 1989, the regime has undergone similar changes – the Party courts intellectuals, the state's capacity to control society declines, while the society remains “fragmented and fragmenting.” The civil society approach rightly points to increased space for social groups and activities.⁷³

Lai senses the weakening of the state's control on society and the rise of civil society. He says “the post-totalitarianism is the most able to describe the state-religion relationships” in describing the future.⁷⁴ In this case, Yang's theory, the framework of “control-social change” of the state-religion relationship, cannot apply to Chinese society any longer. In post-totalitarian society, there will be no control of religion by the state. Totalitarian control of Chinese society is the precondition of the framework of “control-social change” in the state-religion relationship.

III. Conclusion

C.K. Yang defines the Chinese state-religion relationship as the framework of “control-communal-rebellious” through his research on the history of Chinese dynasties. The framework is constituted as the state's control of religion, communal religions' (Confucianism and the Classic Religion) support and stability, and voluntary religions' (Buddhism and Daoism) rebellion to society.

⁷³ Ibid., 2.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 3.

The framework of the state-religion relationship can be applied to modern Chinese society as the framework of “control-social change.” Document No. 19 and No. 426 prove the state’s control of religions in modern China. The announcement of CHCs in 1989 demonstrates how CHCs function as agents of social change in Chinese society through opposition of the state’s prohibitive religious policies.

In conclusion, Yang’s theory, the framework of “control-social change (rebellious)” can be applicable to modern Chinese society. Yang’s theory should be the basic premise in researching the conflict between CHCs and the state in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 3.

THREE PRINCIPLES OF EAST JIN'S BUDDHISM

Buddhism, which has successfully rooted itself within Chinese society, experienced conflict with dynasties since it entered China. Buddhism, as a foreign religion, has undergone persecution and seemingly endless attacks from indigenous religions and political power. It would be helpful for CHCs, which are currently under persecution and in conflict with the government, to research and understand the history of Buddhism. Buddhist history in China demonstrates how Buddhists defended religious rights and how they struggled with governmental powers.

In this chapter, the prostration debate, which occurred between Buddhists and the East Jin Dynasty in the 3rd century A.D., will be examined in order to understand the Buddhists' strategies for engaging the conflicting secular political power. This research of the Buddhist history in China will conclude with three principles Buddhism was successful in defending the conflict with the East Jin government.

I. Historical Background

A. History of East Jin Dynasty

The Huns, Xianbi, Gal, Zhe, and Gang, nomadic tribes of Northern China, were forced to migrate to the region's massive and rich areas of Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Gansu between 265 AD and 460 AD. Particularly, at the end of the West Jin Dynasty, the Huns invaded and conquered the capital of West Jin through the Eight King Rebellion. Due to the collapse of West Jin, the Han Chinese moved to Southern China and built a new

country, East Jin, in 301 AD. *Sima Rui*, a remnant of West Jin, founded Eastern Jin in 317 AD at *Jiankang* (健康). Eastern Jin lasted from 317 AD to 420 AD, with its territory stretching across most of today's southern China. As descendants of Han Chinese culture, East Jin followed and developed Chinese culture in Southern China.

The Emperors of Eastern Jin had limited power with most of it concentrated in the royal family's hands. However, military powers were mostly wielded by non-royal clans (*tuzu*, 土族). The clans were powerful families and generally opposed the Emperor. In many cases, instead of being ruled by Emperors, the *Tuzu* ruled East Jin as regents. Ambitious military troop (*fangzhen*, 方鎮), which is another name for the *Tuzu*, began revolting, like the rebellions of Wang Dun, Su Jun, and the dictatorship of Huan Wen (桓溫). Military crises, such as the rebellions of Generals Wang Dun and Su Jun, plagued Eastern Jin throughout its 104 years of existence.⁷⁵ Emperor Gong abdicated in 420 AD in favor of Liu Yu, ushering in the Liu Song Dynasty as the first of the Southern Dynasties. The Jin Dynasty came to an end in 420.

B. Development of East Jin's Buddhism

Indeed, Buddhism rapidly developed during the East Jin period, which may have opened a new era of Buddhism in Chinese history. Before East Jin, Buddhism was only a minor, foreign religion compared to Confucianism and Daoism. However, Buddhism successfully penetrated into the heart of the Chinese people throughout the East Jin era. There are a variety of factors involved in Buddhism's growth in East Jin.

⁷⁵ Kenneth K.S. Chen, *Chinese Buddhism* (Seoul: Minjok Press, 1991), 92.

First, the rapid growth in the number of Buddhist temples and monks supported the development of Buddhism in East Jin. West Jin only included about 180 temples, while there were 1,768 temples in East Jin.⁷⁶ It demonstrates a nearly 10-fold increase in the number of temples. Among them, *Waguan* temple (瓦官寺) and *Anle* temple (安乐寺) of *Jiankang* (健康) were representative temples. These two temples were built for the royal family of the Emperor in the capital of East Jin between 363 and 364 AD. Additionally during that period, the number of monks also increased from 3,700 to 24,000, more than seven times the number of monks in the West Jin Dynasty.

Second, one of the many significant characteristics of the development of Buddhism in East Jin, is the presence of famous, prominent monks and their various writings. The most famous monk is *Huiyuan* (慧遠). He had a deep understanding of Confucianism and Daoism at a very young age. However, he did not find truth in the classics of Daoism and Confucianism. When he heard the teachings of *Daoan* (道安), another great monk during that era, he realized the truth of Buddhism. *Huiyuan* used a unique way of preaching by using the familiar teachings of classic Daoism to explain the meanings of Buddhist classics. This successfully helped people understand Buddhist teachings. His translations followed the way of *Buddhabhadra*, which means translator, and his practice of asceticism made great contributions to the development of Buddhism. Besides *Huiyuan* (慧遠), other significant monks of this era who made great contributions to the development of Buddhism include: *Juexian* (覺賢), *Faljing* (法淨), *Faling* (法領), and *Zhimeng* (智猛).

⁷⁶ Ibid., 88.

Third, the prominent, high-level monks of East Jin translated many Buddhist classics from Sanskrit to the Chinese language. For example, *Zhiyan* (智嚴) translated *Lalitavistara* into *Puyaojing* (普曜經) in the Shandong province.⁷⁷ *Puyun* (普雲) translated *Sutra of Buddha's Fundamental Deeds* into *Fubenjingben* (佛本行經), which described and praised the life of Buddha.⁷⁸ *Juexian* (覺賢) translated *Dharmatara dhyāna-sūtra* into *Damoduoluoshenjing* (達摩多羅禪經) and sixty books of the *Avatamska Sutra* into *Huayanjing* (華嚴經), which describes the enlightenment of Buddha.⁷⁹ Through these translations, the influence of Indian Buddhism became a driving force for the development of Chinese Buddhism.

Fourth, the development of monastic institutions (*Seng Tuan*, 僧團) is another characteristic of the growth of East Jin's Buddhism. The increasing number of temples and monks naturally led to the establishment of monastic institutions. *Seng Tuan* (僧團) is the term used for Buddhist organizations. This is similar to the concept of denominations in Christianity. Monks and their followers, with different faiths and religious orders, joined various *Seng Tuan*. For example, *Fotudeng* (佛圖澄), founded by the monk *Fotudeng*, used magical skills and sorcery, such as controlling ghosts, making louts flowers out of water, and drawing water out of dry wells. In 402 AD, *Huiyuan* (慧遠) organized a group of monks and lay people into a Mahayana sect known as "Pure Land Buddhism" (*Bailiansi*, 白蓮寺). "Pure Land" describes the western paradise of *Buddha Amitabha*. It viewed the practice of meditation and the practice of reciting

⁷⁷ Mizhada Loushu, *The History of Chinese Buddhism* (Seoul: Wuri Press, 1996), 55.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 56.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 55.

Amitābha Buddha's name as complementary and even analogous methods for achieving enlightenment. Recitation was viewed as a meditation method used to concentrate the mind and purify thoughts.

An interesting component of the monastic institutions' development is the relationship with East Jin Dynasty's secular authority. In India, *Seng Tuan* (僧團) was regarded as superior over secular authority, which was governed by the law of self-government. Chinese monks also asked for the self-governance of the *Seng Tuan* (僧團), to be an autonomous community beyond the control of a secular authority. It was natural that *Seng Tuan* (僧團), which claimed extraterritorial rights beyond secular authority, caused conflicts with the political power of the secular government.

C. Relationship between State and Buddhism

Buddhists of East Jin had a close relationship with the secular government. The nobility serves as prime evidence of Buddhism's friendly relationship with the government. Many Buddhist monks of East Jin came from noble or royal families. As nobles or members of the ruling class, monks used social and religious connections to participate in state affairs. Some monks, at the invitation of the royal family, became political consultants or mentors to the Emperor.

The intermingling of the nobility and Buddhist Monks provided political protection that increased the rapid growth of Buddhism. For example, *Wangdao* (王道) of the *Wang* Family, was a strong political force in early years of East Jin and was a great supporter of Buddhism and *Seng Tuan* (僧團), the monastic institutions. Since the middle of the 4th century, the *He* family (何氏), whose leader was *Hechong* (何充), became

patrons of Buddhism. *Hechong* (何充) ruled the country as Regent since 345 AD, in place of the Emperor. Using his political power as Regent, he began to promote and support Buddhism. Through *Hechong's* (何充) support and promotion, Buddhism began to play an increasingly important role in East Jin. The royal family invited *Zhudaopian* (竺道潛) and *Zhidun* (支遁) to preach Buddhist teachings in the Imperial Palace. Emperor *Jian Wen* (簡文帝, 371-373 AD) used magical powers and sorcery to prevent the disaster of an ominous star.⁸⁰ Buddhism of East Jin reached its peak in the era of Emperor *Xiaowu* (孝武帝, 373-396 AD). In 381 AD, Emperor *Xiaowu* accepted the teachings of Buddha and formally converted. He built temples in his palace and monks lived in the royal palace.

However, Buddhism, whose influence and power overtook secular authority, aroused criticism by secular authorities. As Buddhism was closely intertwined with political power and popularized in society, Buddhists' moral decadence and immorality were exposed. Heavy criticism arose over immoral behavior and the extravagant costs of building large and luxurious temples, that the people of East Jin did not feel Buddhism returned equivalent benefits.

The strongest criticism centered on the monks' interference with the political affairs of the secular government. For example, when Emperor *Xiao Wu* (孝武帝) was inaugurated at 10 years old, his mother controlled and governed his country as a regent. She was a pious Buddhist and staunch supporter of Buddhism. Emperor *Xiao Wu* (孝武帝) became a Buddhist under his mother's influence. As he got older, he was enticed by

80 Kenneth K.S. Chen, *Chinese Buddhism*, 87.

the pleasures and enjoyment of this world. He delegated the affairs of the nation to Buddhist monks. This situation continued through the era of Emperor *An* (安帝, 397-418 AD). Bribery, corruption, and bad judgment were rampant while the people raised appeals to the monks on a large scale.

The existence of *Seng Tuan* (僧團) reflected the tension between secular authority and Buddhism. In India, *Seng Tuan* (僧團) was regarded as a higher authority, which was beyond the control of secular authority. In China, *Seng Tuan* (僧團), which could have existed alongside the secular power, immediately conflicted with the Emperor's bureaucracy, which formed in accordance Confucianism. According to Confucianism, the Emperor is the sovereign ruler who governs and controls all citizens politically and socially. Confucianism promotes the belief that the Emperor ascends to his seat as a mandate of Heaven. He is given religious authority as a child of Heaven (天子). The influx of monastic organizations, which claimed extraterritorial rights, inevitably raised suspicion and caused opposition in this Confucian society. The controversy of *Seng Tuan* (僧團) sets the background for the prostration debate (行禮), the main issue in this chapter.

II. Prostration Debate (行禮爭論)

The confrontation between monastic monks and the government came to a head with the specific problem of convention concerning whether monks should bow down (prostration) and worship the Emperor or not. In the Confucian society of East Jin, when people met the Emperor, they were expected to bow down and worship him in accordance with manners of the imperial court. However, only Buddhist monks had been

recognized as an exception to this etiquette until Confucian bureaucrats required monks to follow the customs of the royal court. The controversy arose twice. The first debate took place between *Hechong* (何充) and *Yubing* (庾冰) in 340 AD. The second debate took place between *Wangmi* (王謐) and *Huanxuan* (桓玄) in 403 AD.

A. First Debate between *Hechong* (何充) and *Yubing* (庾冰)

Prostration before the Emperor was prevalent in East Jin. However, Buddhist monks asserted they should be exempt from prostration to the Emperor based on their beliefs. The rule prohibited monks from prostration to secular people because monks did not consider themselves as secular people any longer. However, *Yubing* (庾冰), father-in-law of *Emperor Sheng Di* (成帝), raised this issue with the first debate. As Regent of the Imperial Family, *Yubing* asserted Buddhist monks should also be required to express veneration to the Emperor as required by other officials. *Dazhengzang* (大正藏), the history book of Chinese Buddhism, described it like this:

In the sixth year of Emperor *Sheng Di* (成帝), *Yubing* (庾冰) raised the appeal to the Emperor, which required monks' prostration to the Emperor. Monks, even those who belong to monastic organizations, should demonstrate their loyalty and respect by their prostration to the Emperor. Some scholars said monks did not need to prostrate before the Emperor. However, officials of the royal court supported *Yubing's* (庾冰) appeal and they required monks to bow to the Emperor.⁸¹

As a patron of Buddhism, *Hechong* (何充) raised another appeal, which opposed the monks' prostration in order to protect Buddhism and his political group. He argued his position from a historical perspective.

81 Xiaoyaexianmiao (小野玄妙), *Dazhengzang* (大正藏), No. 2102 *Hongmingji* 《弘明集》 (vol. 12) T52, 79b.

Our nation, from the time of the first Emperor, *Simayan* (司馬炎), has not asked monks to bow to the Emperor. In addition, the ascetic practices of Buddhists have not changed. Traditions and attitudes toward Buddhism have not changed in the history East Jin. Therefore, in accordance with historical tradition, monks should not prostrate to the Emperor.⁸²

Yubing adopted a Confucian idea for his argument, the *three-relationship theory* (*zaisanzhiyi*, 在三之义), in order to prove his position. The three-relationship theory was a widespread Confucian theory at the time. The theory focuses on the three relationships: king and subject, parent and child, and teacher and student.

It is very hard to know whether Buddha exists or not when we examine the way of Buddha. If the Buddha exists, we need to know more about Buddhism and martial relationship will be stronger by the influence of Buddhism. Why do you refuse to express your loyalty and honor to the dynasty and Emperor? You will be misunderstood by the former Emperors, who suspended the responsibility of prostration. This should be seen through the actions of human beings. The relationship between ruler and subject is the same as the relationship between parents and children. It is right to express our loyalty and respect to the Emperor in the same way as we would toward parents. If Buddha does not exist, it cannot be justified that Buddhist clergy do not bow down to the Emperor. If Buddha existed and you still asserted to waive your duty to the Emperor, it will demonstrate that the teachings of Buddha are against human reason. If you still maintained this foolish argument, Buddhism will be rejected by society and will disappear because the teachings of Buddha do not fulfill the amenities of our society.⁸³

In the passage above, *Yubing's* second appeal refuted *Hechong* through two modes of defense. First, *Yubing* questioned whether Buddha's teaching could be proven or not. Secondly, he used Confucian beliefs about relationships, which were universally accepted in East Jin society at the time. This theme of mutuality is prevalent in Chinese culture. According to the three-relationship theory (*zaisanzhiyi*, 在三之义), it is very natural to bow down to a ruler, parents, or teachers, who have the same value or status in

82 Ibid., T52, 79b.

83 Ibid., T52, 79b-c.

the society. *Yubing* believed Buddhism would be rejected and disappear from East Jin society.

In contrast to *Yubing*'s criticism, *Hechong* did not try to prove the existence of Buddha. Instead of a religious debate about the existence of Buddha, he made a counterargument to *Yubing* through an idea from *Jiaohua* (教化). *Jiaohua* (教化) can be translated as the social role of Buddhism or its contribution to society. He asserted Buddhism is helpful to the governance of the country.

I will not discuss the presence of the Buddha. Regardless of the existence of Buddha, Buddhists keep the five Buddhist commandments (*wujie*, 五戒).⁸⁴ Therefore, it can be said that Buddhism, in fact, can help the reign of the Emperor (*wanghua*, 王化) by providing support for the observance of the law. It is one of the many reasons Buddhism can support society. Buddhists put an emphasis on the cultivation of the inner mind, not on the reputation of the outer person. Buddhist monks leave their homes and join the Buddhist priesthood to enter nirvana. They forget their previous lives and devote themselves to performing meditations and participating in asceticism. Despite the ups and downs in Buddhism since the Han Dynasty, Buddhism has never been regarded as an evil religion. When the final dynasties ignored Buddhism, they suffered. However, as dynasties supported Buddhism, they received benefits from the religion. It would be detrimental to ignore the principles of Buddhism in regards to Buddhist clergy bowing to Emperor. In addition, this could bring conflict between supporters and opponents of Buddhism because it may destabilize the support of Buddhism. Chinese history proves that it does no harm to the Emperor to give more freedom to Buddhist clergy. Therefore, Buddhist monks should not be required to bow to the Emperor.⁸⁵

Hechong (何充), in his second appeal, put an emphasis on Buddhism's contribution to society. His main point is that the development of Buddhism is beneficial to the reign of the Emperor and the development of the country. Regarding this, *Yubing* (庾冰) did not accept *Hechong*'s (何充) argument. Rather, he continued his argument

84 Five Commandments mean against murder, theft, adultery, falsehood, and intemperance.

85 Xiaoyaexianmiao (小野玄妙), *Dazhengzang* (大正藏), 79c-80a.

through his third appeal. In the third appeal, he claimed the contradiction of the law concerning church and state, and the superiority of the secular law.

Although *Hechong* (何充) claims the Buddhist monks keep the five Buddhist commandments, they differ from the secular law. The reign of the Emperor (*wangjiao*, 王教) cannot remain under both laws, religious and secular. If there were two kinds of laws, society would be in chaos. Buddhists assert the existence and observance of Buddhist laws. However, secular and religious law cannot be separated from social influence. Prostration to the Emperor symbolizes the Emperor's authority and his sovereignty over the country. If people do not express proper propriety to the Emperor, how can we prove the Emperor as the supreme ruler? There must be a difference between the secular law and the Buddhist law. However, if there was any contradiction between the two, the secular law (*wangfa*, 王法) should have greater authority than the Buddhist law (*fofa*, 佛法). The secular law should be the only authority to rule the country.⁸⁶

Yubing (庾冰) preserved the superior status of the national law over the religious law. He believed the basis of the government was the Confucian system. A law not enforced in the Confucian system would cause the entire system of government to collapse. To preserve the entire system of government, *Yubing* asked Buddhist clergy to participate in prostration to the Emperor. If monastic organizations had an independent and equal status with the secular government, he believed the mostly Confucian society of East Jin would fall into confusion and disorder. For the order and harmony of the country, the Emperor should be recognized as a higher status than any religious institution.

In contrast to *Yubing* (庾冰), *Hechong* (何充) continued to plead his position in his third appeal as a supporter of Buddhism. He asserted Buddhist monks expressed their loyalty and respect to the Emperor through Buddhism, by prayers of meditation and burning incense.

86 Ibid., T52, 80a.

The monks follow Buddhist law, which is more stringent than secular law. Therefore, they already meet the expectations of the king's law. In addition, when they burn incense in prayer, they pray for peace and blessings for the Emperor and kingdom. Although monks did not worship the Emperor as the world does, they truly have reverent respect and demonstrate obedience to the Emperor. Thus, because of the ascetic practices of monks, forms of propriety to the Emperor can be simplified. Monks did not cause any damage to the reign of Emperor, Emperors of Han (漢) and Qin (秦) dynasties never asked for prostration from the monks. When our country gives religious freedom to monks, they will follow their religious law. This can play a positive role in our society. Buddhism will be able to compensate for the lack of enlightenment and edification concerning the secular law.⁸⁷

On the basis of Confucian philosophy, it was natural for *Yubing* (庾冰) to expect Buddhist monks to represent their loyalty and respect for the Emperor through prostration. He believed in the supremacy of the secular state and the highest authority of the secular law. However, *Hechong* (何充) did not agree with *Yubing*. He believed Buddhism to be helpful for the governance of the country because monks did not kill, steal, lie, drink wine, or fornicate. He asserted that the “Five Commandments” (*wujie*, 五戒) of Buddhism and the ascetic life of monks could be helpful for morality in society. Furthermore, he believed monks represented their loyalty and respect to the Emperor because they prayed for the welfare and peace of the king through meditation and burning incense.

In conclusion, the Emperor accepted *Hechong*'s opinion rather than *Yubing*'s argument. It is written in *Dazhengzang* (大正藏) that the Emperor did not accept *Yubing*'s appeal.⁸⁸ In the first religious and political debate in the

87 Ibid., T52, 80a-b.

88 Ibid., T52, 80a-b.

history of China between Buddhism and Confucianism, the winner was Buddhism.

B. Second Debate between *Wangmi* (王謐) and *Huanxuan* (桓玄)

In 403 AD, the debate between Buddhists and Confucians took place again after sixty years. This time, the issue was raised by *Huanxuan* (桓玄). He had exclusive power in the government of East Jin as an Emperor and Prime Minister. When he had exclusive political power as Prime Minister, he asked the Buddhist monks to demonstrate their loyalty and respect by prostration in order to strengthen his throne. *Huanxuan* (桓玄), as the Emperor of East Jin, raised this issue through his writing, “the greatest grace of the Emperor” (*enshengujing*, 恩深故敬).

It is too difficult to understand Buddhist enlightenment. And it is too far away from people’s lives. However, practicing good manners and demonstrating respect to authority are fundamental in human life. Lao-tzu said, the Emperor is one with Truth (*Dao*, 道), Heaven (*Tian*, 天), and Earth (*Di*, 地). The Emperor is the same as the world and with all things. The Emperor is as important as the heavens and the earth. Therefore, Buddhist monks should respect the Emperor with proper politesse. They must demonstrate their respect not only in their minds, but also through physical acts. The existence of the monks is due to the grace of the Emperor. Therefore, we should not forget to practice good manners toward the Emperor.⁸⁹

The second debate is more advanced than the first. *Huanxuan* quoted the teaching of Lao-tzu, founder of Daoism, to strengthen the royal authority of the Emperor. Prime Minister *Huanxuan* asked Buddhist monks not only for prayer and incense burning, but also physical acts to demonstrate their respect to the Emperor. To achieve his goal, he not only used the ideas of Lao-tzu, but also the ideas of Confucius.

89 Ibid., T52, 80b.

It is necessary for Buddhist monks to demonstrate their respect not only in the way of internal prayer, but also external action. The Buddhist ceremony of repentance and respect to the master can be good examples. In this manner, monks express their respect not only with their hearts, but also through external actions. They bow down to their masters to demonstrate respect. However, they refused to bow down to the Emperor. Why did they refuse to bow down to the Emperor? Additionally, the relationship between the Emperor and retainer is more important than the relationship between the master and student. The relationship between the Emperor and subject is a fundamental relationship because it was determined by the will of Heaven. We should follow the three-relationship principle (*zaisanzhiyi*, 在三之义).⁹⁰

Huanxuan believed the monks violated the teachings of Confucius if they bowed down to their master, but not to the Emperor. Since the three relationships have the same value according to the “three relationship principle” (*zaisanzhiyi*, 在三之义),⁹¹ it was natural for *Huanxuan* to expect the same behavior toward one’s master and the Emperor.

In opposition to *Huanxuan*’s logic, “the greatest grace of the Emperor,” *Wangmi* (王謚), a supporter of Buddhism, developed his new logic as being “too great to bow down to the grace of the Emperor” (*enshenwangxie*, 恩深忘谢).

I agree with the three-relationship principle (在三之义). I believe the royal authority of the Emperor is the biggest authority in the country. There can be no limit to the royal authority of the Emperor. The more the royal authority of the Emperor is emphasized, the more the authority of the people is decreased. The kingship is the most basic, fundamental, and highest authority in the country. Bowing down to the Emperor as the manner of prostration is not enough to demonstrate our respect and honor to the grace of the Emperor. We do not know how to adequately express our respect to the Emperor because his grace is too big.⁹²

90 Ibid., T52, 80c.

91 “Three Relationship Principle” (在三之义) means the three kinds of relationships (father-son relationship, a mentor-pupil relationship, and Emperor-subject relationship) have the same value as a fundamental relationship to sustain society.

92 Xiaoyaexianmiao (小野玄妙), *Dazhengzang* (大正藏), 80c.

While *Wangmi* (王謚) could not deny the Confucian principle of the three-relationship principle, he tried to avoid bowing down to the Emperor in a paradoxical way. He maximized the grace of the Emperor rather than denying it. He tried to deliver the authenticity of respect to the Emperor by using his logic, “grace too great to express.” His contention is that the grace of the Emperor is too great, so monks cannot use the same manner, which is used to masters and parents, to the Emperor.

On the other hand, *Wangmi* deployed a new logic to counter *Huanxuan*’s logic. He emphasized the transcendence of Buddhism beyond the boundaries of the country in order to achieve independence for Buddhism. *Wangmi* advocated for the autonomy of the monastic system, which was called *Seng Tuan* (僧團), in his writing. He also emphasized ways Buddhism helped the reign of the Emperor.

The teaching of Buddhism is hard to understand because it is different from the teaching of the world and has depth to its teaching. However, it is not in conflict with the reign of the Emperor. The monk does not bow to the Emperor because they have deep inner respect in their heart. The inner respect of the mind is more important than external behavior. Although Buddhist monks live in a country ruled by the Emperor, Buddhists actually transcend national boundaries. Emperors of other countries demonstrate respect and honor to Buddhist monks.⁹³

Conflict between the Buddhist worldview and the Confucian worldview exists. From the perspective of the Buddhist worldview, Buddhism is not just confined to East Jin. Buddhism is a religion of universal truth beyond the boundaries of a country. *Wangmi* believed the Emperor should respect Buddhist monks because they seek universal truth and reach enlightenment through *nirvana* (perfect peace).

However, *Huanxuan*, who had a Confucian worldview, could not accept the transcendence of Buddhism beyond the boundaries of East Jin. He was not willing to

93 *Ibid.*, T52, 81a-b.

tolerate monks who refused to bow down to the Emperor, one chosen by the mandate of Heaven from his Confucian perspective. He could not understand *Wangmi*'s claim, which accepted monks could bow down to masters and Buddha but not the Emperor. *Huanxuan* refuted *Wangmi* again.

In your opinion, because the virtue of the Emperor is too great, it is not enough to bow down to the Emperor. Monks just forget everything and do nothing because the grace of the Emperor is too great. If you are right, why do monks bow down to Buddha? Does it mean the virtue of Buddha is smaller than the virtue of the Emperor? If the virtue of Buddha is smaller than the virtue of the Emperor, it means the teaching of Buddha is not great enough. Then, you cannot deny bowing down to the Emperor using the teaching of Buddha, which is not great enough. Inversely, if the virtue of Buddha is great, why do monks bow down to Buddha and not the Emperor? In addition, he does not apply his principle, "too great to use the same manner to the Emperor," (恩深忘谢) to monks and ordinary people. It is unacceptable that they still deny bowing down to the Emperor although they bow down to their masters and Buddha.⁹⁴

Huanxuan developed his point well by dissecting *Wangmi*'s logic. However, the outcome of this debate was hard to determine because of the similar strengths of both parties. In the end, this debate concluded with the treatises of a monk.

C. *Huiyan* (慧遠)'s Treatises and Conclusion

The end of this debate came from *Huiyan* (慧遠), who had major social influence as the highest monk in East Jin society. He was a Chinese Buddhist teacher who founded the Donglin Temple on Mount Lushan in the Jiangxi province. He organized a group of monks and lay people into a Mahayana sect known as Pure Land Buddhism. It was because of the lay people in the sect that allowed him to have a strong influence on East Jin society.

94 Ibid., T52, 81b-82a.

In 404 AD, he wrote five treatises “*On Why Monks Do Not Bow Down Before Kings*” (沙門不敬王者論). His treaties symbolized his efforts to assert the political independence of Buddhist clergy from the courts of monarchic rulers. At the same time, it was a religious and political text that attempted to convince the monarchs and Confucian-minded ministers of the state that Buddhists were not subversive. He pointed out two main points in his treatises.

First, he emphasized the independence and transcendence of Buddhism from the Buddhist perspective. He wrote, “Monks, who already left his or her secular lives, have nothing to do with the secular world. They already live in a transcendent and isolated world, the monastery. Therefore, a monk cannot be governed by the secular law.”⁹⁵

His second point was that Buddhism should not conflict with the order of secular government. He argued Buddhists could make good subjects in a kingdom due to their beliefs in the retribution of karma and the desire to be reborn in paradise. Despite Buddhists’ reputation of leaving their family behind for a monastic life, he stated, “those who rejoice in the Way of the Buddha invariably first serve their parents and obey their lords.”⁹⁶

The conclusion of the second debate was the same as the first; that monks did not need to bow down to the Emperor. After 60 years of debate, the outcome was the proof of increasing strength of Buddhism’s transcendence and independence in East Jin.

III. Three Perspectives for Analysis

95 Patricia Buckley Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 97. (Huiyuan, “*On Why Monks Do Not Bow Down Before Kings*” 沙門不敬王者論).

96 Ebrey, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*, 97.

The previous section provided background information about the first and second prostration debates of East Jin that took place during the 3rd and 4th centuries. To understand and analyze this historical debate, it is necessary to have the proper perspective to understand it. There are three different perspectives for understanding and analyzing this debate.

A. The Political Conflict Perspective

The prostration debate was an issue between religion and the state. However, it also reflects the political struggles between the Confucian bureaucrats and Royalty, including the family of the Emperor, and local nobles, who are supportive of Buddhism. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, East Jin was built by a coalition between Northern Han tribes and Southern indigenous tribes. Throughout the history of East Jin there has been political tension and conflict between the Northern and Southern forces. Along with *Hechong* and *Yubing* of the first debate, *Huanxuan* and *Wangmi* of the second debate were political opponents of one another. It is interesting to see the prostration debate within the context of this political struggle. *Yubing* was the regent and father-in-law of the Emperor; he governed the country instead of the Emperor. As a member of the royal family, he endeavored to weaken the political power of local nobility and strengthen the royal authority.⁹⁷ It was natural and inevitable to confront Buddhist forces, which were deeply involved in the affairs of the government. In the second debate, *Huanxuan* took charge of state affairs as the Prime Minister and had to confront the Buddhists, who did

⁹⁷ Kenneth K.S. Chen, *Chinese Buddhism*, 89.

not follow secular law, but had a religious organization (*Seng Tuan*, 僧團) and followed their own rules.

On the other hand, *Hechong* and *Wangmi* were representative figures of Southern indigenous noble families. They were sponsored by the *Seng Tuan*, (僧團) who promoted and enhanced their political power by leveraging the power of Buddhism and trying to limit royal authority.

In conclusion, the prostration debate of East Jin can be seen as a political struggle between a royal family, who tried to strengthen the political power of the Emperor through Confucianism, and local nobles, who tried to strengthen their political position through Buddhism.

B. The Religious Conflict Perspective

Every religion has a belief system that defines and explains various phenomena of the world. These belief systems provide a unique worldview for each religion. People, who belong to a religion, see the world and evaluate everything through their worldview.

James W. Sire defines a worldview as:

A commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic construction of reality, and that provides the foundation on which we live and move and have our being. We should all think in terms of worldviews, that is, with a consciousness not only of our own way of thought but also that of other people, so that we can first understand and then genuinely communicate with others in our pluralistic society.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, (USA: Library of Congress, 1997), 16.

Within this perspective, the prostration debate can be understood as the collision between Confucian and Buddhist worldviews. Buddhism was viewed as a heathen religion with a different worldview and arrived in China from India in 217 BC.⁹⁹ It was inevitable that these two religions with different worldviews would collide in East Jin society. It is necessary to understand Buddhists' worldview and the traditional Chinese worldview.

According to C.K. Yang, Chinese people traditionally worshiped Heaven. Yang defined this belief as "the classic religion." He described the belief of Heaven:

It is familiar that many of the religious influences in Chinese people stemmed from the basic concept of Heaven and its subordinate system of deities as supernatural forces that predetermined the course of all events in the universe, including political events. Of central importance to this importance was the idea of the Mandate of Heaven, the symbol of legitimacy claimed by every dynastic power and widely accepted by the common people.¹⁰⁰

The Mandate of Heaven was first used by the *Zhou* (周) Dynasty to justify its overthrow of the *Shang* (商) Dynasty in 1046 BC and would be used by many succeeding dynasties in the same way. The Duke of *Zhou* (周公) explained to the people of *Shang* that "if their king had not misused his power, his Mandate would not have been taken away."¹⁰¹

Eventually, as Chinese political ideas developed further, the Mandate was linked to the notion of the dynastic cycle. The Mandate of Heaven is based on four leading ideas:

- 1) The right to rule China is granted by Heaven.
- 2) There can be only one legitimate ruler of China.
- 3) The right to rule is based on the virtue of the ruler and his good performance as a steward for Heaven.
- 4) The right to rule may be passed down from father to son, but only on the

⁹⁹ Kenneth J. Saunders, "*Buddhism in China: A Historical Sketch*", *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 3.2, (The University of Chicago Press, 1923), 159.

¹⁰⁰ C. K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social role of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (Illinois: Waveland Press, 1991), 127.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 129.

conditions established above. Once the Mandate is lost, the will of Heaven towards a successor will only be known by the working out of the imponderable force of events in human history.¹⁰²

According to the Mandate of Heaven, the political power of the Emperor is a divine commission from Heaven. Chinese people regarded Emperors as Heaven and Earth. As a result, Chinese people were very respectful and loyal to the Emperors chosen by Heaven. Moreover, the concept of the Mandate of Heaven, in combination with Confucianism, resulted in stronger royal authority. The Mandate of Heaven meant Emperors were regarded with a divine right, which demanded respect and worship.

Confucianism protected and strengthened the royal authority of the Emperor. Confucianism, with its core value of humanism, pursues relationships between people for the unity of human society. Confucius defined the “Three Bonds and Five Relationships” (三綱五輪), which can sustain society. The five relationships are the ruler to the ruled, father to son, husband to wife, elder brother to younger brother, and friend to friend. Confucius described the relationship between the ruler and the ruled in his writing.

The Emperor is the Heaven but the people are the Earth. The ruled is noble and high, but the ruled are humble and lowly. It is natural for the noble king to force lowly people to work for him. It is reasonable for the humble ruled to serve the noble ruler. It is the order of nature for the subject to serve the royal kingship. Therefore, the king should make decisions by the Mandate of the Heaven as the ruler. The subject should prevent putting evil mind in the heart of the king and help him to achieve great things for the people.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Paul Halsall, *Chinese Cultural Studies: Selections from the Shu Jing: The Classic of History (6th Cent. BCE)*. <http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/shu-jing.html>.

¹⁰³ Confucius, *the Analects of Confucius (論語)*

<http://osj1952.com.ne.kr/interpretation/dongmogsunsop/dl/1-03.htm>

君臣天地之分。尊且貴焉。尊且貴焉。卑且賤焉。尊貴之使卑賤。卑賤之事尊貴。天地之常經。古今之通義。是故君者體元而發號施令者也。臣者調元而陣善閉邪者也。

Thus, Confucianism protected and strengthened the authority of the Emperor by heightening the position of the kingship and giving religious authority to the Emperor. East Jin society is explained well by the three-bonds principle (*zaisanzhiyi*, 在三之义). The three-bonds principle was a very popular and dominant notion to East Jin society as a Confucian tradition in the 3rd century. It means the three major relationships, which are parents-children, master-student, and the ruler-ruled, have the same value. The people of East Jin generally accepted this notion. Due to its popularity and absolute value, *Wangmi* (王謚) could not help but reject the three-bonds principle in the second prostration debate. According to the principle, the relationship between the Emperor and people had the same value as the relationship of parents-children and master-students. It was unacceptable for people, who followed Confucianism, to reject prostrating before the Emperor and who believed in an equal or higher value for parents and masters.

Contrary to Confucianism, Buddhism has an entirely different worldview as a foreign religion. Buddhism originated and was developed in India. The teachings on *The Four Noble Truths* are regarded as central to the teachings of Buddhism, and provide a conceptual framework for Buddhist thought. These four truths explain the nature of *dukkha* (suffering, anxiety, dissatisfaction), its causes, and how it can be overcome. In Buddhism, the human experiences suffering (*dukkha*) forever within the cycle of birth and death (*samsara*). Humans need to escape from the suffering (*dukkha*) and endless circles of birth and death (*samsara*). The only way to get liberation from *dukkha* and *samsara* is *nirvana* or enlightenment through practicing the “Noble Eightfold Path.” *Nirvana* is the cessation or extinction of craving and ignorance and, therefore, suffering and the cycle of involuntary rebirths. It is also known as “awakening” or

“enlightenment.” In conclusion, from the Buddhist worldview, the world is a place full of suffering and evil because of humanity’s greed and stupidity. In the same way, human beings need rehabilitation and enlightenment through the Buddha’s teachings and practices.

From the Buddhist perspective, the Emperor is one of many creatures who suffer from the endless cycle of *samsara*. The Emperor needs to practice Buddhist teachings to reach enlightenment for his salvation. In Buddhism, the Emperor is not viewed as a divine character chosen by the Mandate of the Heaven. Rather, he is a poor suffering creature who needs salvation or *nirvana* along with others. To reach enlightenment, every creature needs to practice the “Noble Eightfold Path,” which is a representative practice of Buddhism. Buddhist monks practice the Buddhist way to achieve enlightenment and help other people with their own awakening. Buddhist monks contribute to people’s enlightenment and are respected and honored for this work. Unlike China, the Emperor of India honored and respected Buddhist monks.

Becoming a Buddhist monk requires cutting off every relationship from one’s secular life. They no longer belong to any part of their former life and must leave their family, relatives, and community. Monks abandon their former names and lives for their new religious lives. They have a new name, new life style, new community, and new identity in the monastic institution. For them, the secular world is the place of suffering in the endless circle of life and death, and they leave through their enlightenment. Monks devote themselves to monastic living and asceticism for enlightenment. Monks no longer consider themselves as people limited by the world. In the monastery, they do not observe secular law, but observe their monastic order. From the perspective of Buddhist

monks, it is reasonable to reject bowing down to the Emperor because they regard it as a secular ceremony. A monk, who has left the secular world and is cut off from every relationship from his or her former life, does not desire to observe this secular, prostration tradition.

The religious conflict perspective provides a very important insight for understanding the prostration debate between Buddhism and the government of East Jin. At its core, the prostration debate occurred between two religious groups. One group attempted to strengthen the royal authority of the Emperor through the belief of “the Mandate of Heaven” and Confucianism. The other tried to weaken the power of the Emperor through the religious role of Buddhism.

C. The State and Religion Conflict Perspective

The final perspective for understanding the prostration debate is a state-religion conflict perspective. This perspective recognizes the reason for the prostration debate is the conflict between religion, which seeks to enrich religious freedom and independence, and the authority of the state, which governs the secular world. This state-religion conflict perspective also provides useful insight to understand the debate from a socio-political perspective.

There were three reasons for the conflict between Buddhism and the state. First, the monastic system of Buddhism (*Seng Tuan*, 僧團) was outside of the control of the state. There were 1,768 temples and 24,000 monks in East Jin.¹⁰⁴ Based on popularity and growth, *Seng Tuan*, (僧團) exercised extraterritoriality within the state. The monks were

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth K.S. Chen, *Chinese Buddhism*, 88.

governed by Buddhist rules, not by the secular law of the government. Temples were also exempt from tax. Furthermore, monks did not have to bow down to the Emperor.

The second reason for the conflict between the state and Buddhism was Buddhism's involvement in secular politics. It can be seen in the era of Emperor *Xiaowu* (孝武帝, 373-396 AD) when he sat on the throne at 10 years old. His mother and sister, pious Buddhists, delegated the affairs of the government to Buddhist monks. When the monks monopolized state affairs, government officials had more doubts and felt the necessity to control Buddhism.

Third, moral corruption and waste of resources became another reason for conflict with the state. With 1,786 temples and 24,000 monks in East Jin, these large-scale forces and the political power of Buddhism led the government into severe moral depravity. Furthermore, there were two large-scale constructions of the *Waguan* Temple (瓦官寺) and the *Anle* Temple (安乐寺) of *Jiankang* (健康). The two temples were built for the royal family in the capital in 363 and 364 AD. The massive number of monks and temples resulted in a high level of misuse of the national treasury. Buddhism faced criticism because of moral corruption and the waste of the national treasury. In conclusion, the more Buddhism gained popularity, political power, corruption, and waste, the more it became necessary to control Buddhism.

The expansion of Buddhist forces pressured those who had political power based on royal authority. Anti-Buddhist forces were raised to oppose Buddhism. *Hechong* (何充) and *Huanxuan* (桓玄) were representative figures of the anti-Buddhist group. They attempted to control and manage religions with Confucian philosophy. The prostration debate also happened to control the Buddhist influences of East Jin. Buddhist monks

were asked to show their respect and loyalty to the Emperor through the prostration ceremony. The Confucian, anti-Buddhist forces believed a religion should be under the control of the government and contribute to governing the country and society.

On the contrary, the pre-Buddhist forces argued for the implementation and guarantee of religious freedom and independence from the control of the government. Within the Buddhist worldview, the monks had left worldly lives and devoted themselves to monastery lives for religious salvation (enlightenment). They had no reason to obey the secular law or put themselves under the control of the government. Therefore, it was natural for them to seek and pursue religious freedom and independence found in the monastic system to maintain religious beliefs. Because of this desire for religious freedom, monks refused to participate in the prostration ceremony to the Emperor. If a monk bowed to the Emperor, they regarded it as putting oneself under the control of the secular world and secular order.

The state-religion conflict perspective has something in common with C.K. Yang's "Control and Rebellion Theory," which was described in Chapter Two. According to Yang's theory, Chinese dynasties traditionally sought to control religions through political power and oppression, using religions as a means of "Control" over the people. For example, Chinese dynasties traditionally controlled the number of temples and monks and decided the types of religious ceremonies performed. A dynasty increased control of religions as a way to strengthen the social stability of the dynasty. *Yubing* (庾冰) and *Huanxuan* (桓玄), representative of the Confucian and anti-Buddhist force, can be understood as typical figures in the "State Control on Religions" from the perspective of Yang's theory.

On the other hand, “Rebellion,” which opposes the “State Control on Religions,” is another aspect of C.K. Yang’s theory. Religious freedom and independence from the state was a primary factor in changing Chinese society. In Yang’s theory, social transformation was needed in order to obtain religious freedom. He claimed Buddhism and Daoism were rebellious religions and functioned as change agents within Chinese society in Chinese history.

Hechong, *Huanxuan* (桓玄), and *Huiyan* (慧遠) fought to keep their religious beliefs and freedom. However, their efforts were plagued with conflict, contradictions, and economic difficulties. After the era of Emperor *Xiaowu* (孝武), there were frequent peasant rebellions. *Huanxuan* (桓玄), a major contributor to the second debate, came into power as a regent because of the peasant revolt. When he suppressed the peasant revolt as a General, he took political power that even surpassed the Emperor’s power. As a result of these serious internal contradictions, East Jin society was destroyed within 100 years. *Hechong*, *Huanxuan* (桓玄), and *Huiyan* (慧遠)’s refusal to perform the prostration ceremony can be understood as a cry for social reform. Although motivated by religious beliefs, it can also be seen as a rebellion against the power of royal authority.

D. Conclusion

In this chapter, the three perspectives for understanding the prostration debate (political conflict, religious conflict, state-religion conflict) are described. All three views have value and can compliment each another. In this dissertation, however, I will employ the third perspective: the State-Religion Conflict perspective. This perspective shows how East Jin’s Buddhists dealt with secular power in the midst of state-religion conflict.

The following will describe the three strategies used by Buddhism for dealing with the secular East Jin Dynasty.

IV. Three Strategies of East Jin's Buddhism

When the prostration debate is viewed with the state-religion conflict perspective, the conflict between Buddhism and the political power of East Jin provides valuable historical lessons. The lessons describe how a religion confronts a secular power in China. Buddhism, the first successful indigenized religion in China, had a victory in the conflict with the secular power. This attitude is valuable and meaningful for Chinese House Churches who still pursue religious freedom from the control of the state. The Buddhism of East Jin was mainly used to defend religious autonomy and independence in the conflict between the monastic organizations and state power. In this chapter, the three strategies of East Jin's Buddhism can be found in the two debates of 340 AD and 403 AD.

A. Collaborative Relationship

To understand Buddhism's strategy to win the debate against the secular power, it is necessary to understand how pre-Buddhist groups set their relationship with the anti-Buddhist secular government in the conflict. It is easy and natural for a religion to set up a confrontational relationship with the state power when the religion is persecuted by it. However, East Jin's Buddhism maintained a collaborative and patriotic relationship with the state power. It is important to understand how they maintained their cooperative and patriotic relationship while pursuing religious freedom and independence.

In the first debate, *Yubing* (庾冰) asked monks to participate in the prostration ceremony through the three-bonds principle (*zaisanzhiyi*, 在三之义), a Confucian idea. It was a crucial moment for Buddhism when they had to decide their attitude toward the government. It would have been easy to be confrontational in challenging the state power. However, when *Hechong* (何充) responded to this challenge, he did not reject the three-bonds principle (*zaisanzhiyi*, 在三之义) but he could not fully accept it as a Buddhist monk because it came from Confucianism. The three-bonds principle was generally accepted by East Jin society; therefore, rejection of this principle would mean Buddhism would face tremendous attacks from East Jin's society and the government. *Hechong* could not accept or reject it and instead emphasized two points to avoid controversy and attacks, and to maintain a cooperative relationship with the government.

First, *Hechong* (何充) emphasized showing respect and loyalty for the Emperor and maintaining a cooperative and patriotic relationship with the state. He said “when they burn incense in prayer, they pray peace and blessings for Emperor and kingdom. Although monks did not worship the Emperor as the ways of the world, they truly have reverent respect and obedience to the Emperor from the heart.”¹⁰⁵ By showing respect and obedience to the Emperor, they avoided challenging the three-bonds principle.

Second, *Hechong* (何充) emphasized Buddhists should obey secular law and order. He said, “The monks are following Buddhist law, which is more stringent than secular law. Therefore, they already meet the needs of the king's law.”¹⁰⁶ He tried to suggest that Buddhism is not anti-social or anti-government because Buddhist monks

¹⁰⁵ Xiaoyaexianmiao (小野玄妙), *Dazhengzang* (大正藏), T52, 80a-b.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, T52, 80a-b.

obey social norms. His response helped East Jin's Buddhists to avoid confrontation with the state and maintained a cooperative relationship with it.

In the second debate, *Wangmi* (王謐) showed a more positive attitude than *Hechong* (何充) in having a cooperative and patriotic relationship with the government. As described above, *Huanxuan* (桓玄) asked monks to bow down to the Emperor through his logic “the greatest grace of the Emperor” (*enshengujing*, 恩深故敬), which came from the three-bonds principle. When he was challenged, he did not respond by weakening or denying the authority of the Emperor. If he had responded in such a way, Buddhism would have faced a confrontation with the government. On the contrary, he emphasized Buddhism's patriotic and cooperative attitude by exalting the grace of the Emperor in his writing, “too great to bow down to the grace of the Emperor” (*enshenwangxie*, 恩深忘谢).

I do agree with the three-bonds principle (*zaisanzhiyi*, 在三之义). I believe royal authority of the Emperor is the biggest authority in the country. There can be no limit to the royal authority of the Emperor. The more the royal authority of the Emperor is emphasized, the more the authority of people decreases. The kingship is the most basic, fundamental and highest authority in the country. So, it is not proper to use the same manner, which is bowing down, to the Emperor. The manner of prostration is not enough to show our respect and honor to the grace of the Emperor. We do not know how to express our respect to the Emperor because his grace is too big. The grace of the Emperor is too great to simply bow down.¹⁰⁷

Wangmi's (王謐) paradoxical idea not only avoided confrontation with the secular power but also succeeded in maintaining religious beliefs. Buddhists of East Jin continued with a patriotic and cooperative attitude toward the government in spite of the challenges from the anti-Buddhist forces. It is easy to be confrontational when a religion is attacked by a

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., T52, 80c.

political power. However, East Jin's Buddhists successfully resisted this temptation. If East Jin's Buddhists had confronted the government, it could not have deepened their religious belief and freedom. However, East Jin's Buddhists successfully kept their social position and religious freedom by sustaining a cooperative and patriotic relationship with the government.

B. Social role

The second way East Jin's Buddhism deepened its religious freedom was through strengthening its social role. In the first debate, *Yubing* (庾冰) said Buddhism should be rejected and abandoned because it did not meet social needs.

This should be seen through the way of human beings. The relationship between ruler and subject is the same as the relationship between parents and children. It is right to express our loyalty and respect to the Emperor the same way one would toward parents. If Buddha does not exist, it cannot be justified that Buddhist clergy do not bow down to the Emperor. If Buddha existed and you still asserted to waive your duty to the Emperor, it would show that the teaching of Buddha is against the reason of human beings. If you still maintained this foolish argument, Buddhism will be rejected by society and will disappear because the teaching of Buddha does not fulfill the amenities of our society.¹⁰⁸

According to the three-bonds principle (*zaisanzhiyi*, 在三之义), it is natural for one to show equal respect to parents, masters, and the ruler. However, if Buddhists refuse to show respect and loyalty to the Emperor, they could be viewed as being an anti-social religion that does not observe social norms or follow a proper social role. *Hechong's* (何充) response was critical to prevent further conflict with the state. His counterargument to *Yubing* (庾冰) through

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., T52, 79b-c.

Buddhism's function of edification, which put emphasis on its social role and contribution to society, was successful.

I will not discuss the presence of the Buddha. Regardless of the existence of Buddha, Buddhists keep the five Buddhist commandments (*wujie*, 五戒). Therefore, it can be said that Buddhism, in fact, helps the reign of the Emperor (*wanghua*, 王化) by providing the notion of observance of the law. It is one of the many reasons Buddhism can receive support from society.¹⁰⁹

Hechong (何充) asserted Buddhism played a positive role in society. First, Buddhism provided people with the notion of observance of the law through observing the five Buddhist commandments. He believed it was helpful to the social stability and even to the reign of the Emperor. He believed Buddhism is able to compensate for the lack of enlightenment and edification of the secular law. Therefore, he argued that because of its contribution to society and reign of the Emperor, Buddhism is not evil or an anti-social religion. He believed the development of Buddhism is also beneficial to the development of the state power.

Hechong explained Buddhism's contribution to the reign of dynasties in the history of China.

Because monks did not cause any damage to the reign of the Emperor, the Emperors of Han (漢) and Qin (秦) dynasties never asked for prostration from the monks. When our country gives religious freedom to monks, they will follow their religious law with their religious freedom. It can play a positive role in our society. Buddhism will be able to compensate for the lack of enlightenment and edification of the secular law.¹¹⁰

Hechong believed Buddhism did not harm previous dynasties, but was advantageous. He was convinced the development of Buddhism was helpful to the

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, T52, 79c-80a.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, T52, 80a-b.

reign of dynasties and society and firmly believed in the positive social role of Buddhism in East Jin.

When a religion is under the suppression of a secular power, it tends to lose its social role in order to maintain its doctrine, religious beliefs, and freedom. However, the Buddhists of East Jin maintained their social role and emphasized it. Buddhism was helpful to the reign of the Emperor because Buddhism observed social norms and uplifted the morality of society. The message agreed with the purpose of the royal authority, which preserved social stability through the control of religion. Buddhism's position was strengthened and was given the upper hand in the prostration debate.

C. Active Communication

The third strategy of East Jin's Buddhism was an active conversation with the secular, anti-Buddhist group. *Yubing* (庾冰) raised appeals to the Emperor three times to attack Buddhism in the first debate; *Hechong* (何充) also refuted *Yubing's* (庾冰) appeal three times. *Hechong* (何充) actively developed his logic to defend Buddhism rather than being passive. In the second debate, *Wangmi* (王謐) actively defended the stance of Buddhism against *Huanxuan's* (桓玄) challenge. Against *Huanxuan's* (桓玄) logic of "the greatest grace of the Emperor" (*enshengujing*, 恩深故敬), *Wangmi* (王謐) developed his logic, "too great to bow down to the grace of the Emperor" (*enshenwangxie*, 恩深忘谢) and responded to *Huanxuan* (桓玄).

Besides written appeals and public debates, Buddhists were also successful in defending and informing this stance through publications. When the debate between Buddhism and the secular powers came to a standstill, *Huiyuan* (慧遠), who had major social influence as a high priest, published five treatises “*On Why Monks Do Not Bow Down Before Kings*” (*shamenbujingwangzhelun*, 沙門不敬王者論) in 403 AD. The publication of these little treatises played a crucial role in changing public opinion on the issue of prostration. People could better understand the position of Buddhism relating to this issue, thus public sentiment toward Buddhism changed more favorably. Only through the use of logic and active dialogue with opponents were the East Jin Buddhists able to protect their religious freedom and independence.

Buddhism of East Jin maintained three strategies when interacting with the secular government in its sixty-year debate: a cooperative relationship, a social role, and active conversation. The three strategies were effective and powerful in the conflict with the government, resulting in Buddhism’s victory in the debates. In conclusion, because of Buddhism’s effectiveness and indigenoussness, the three strategies can be applied to the conflict between the Chinese House Churches and the Communist Party in modern day China.

V. Social Science’s Support

The three principles of East Jin’s Buddhism occurred within a specific historical context, East Jin society in the 3rd century. The historicity has value because of the historical realism. However, in order to apply the three principles to the conflict between

Chinese House Churches and the Chinese government, historicity and universality are both required. In this section, in order to expand on the universality of the three principles, they will be contrasted with ideas from modern social sciences including religious studies, sociology, and communication sciences.

A. Cooperative Relationship

Robert L. Montgomery, a religionist, develops his social scientific theory on how religions spread in his book, *The Spread of Religions*. To build this theory, he researched the history of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam. In his research of the three religions, he argued that the relationship between religion and state power is a crucial aspect in regards to the propagation of religion. He asserted that:

The spread of new religions can be greatly accelerated or blocked by governmental power, depending on whether governments seek a new religion or already have an established alliance with a new religion.¹¹¹

Montgomery notes several examples in the history of these religions to prove his theory. For example, at the time of the Maurya Dynasty of India in 4 BC, Buddhism was a distinctive religion. Emperor Asoka officially favored Buddhist teachings. The king was the protector of Buddhism. There is an intimate relationship between the Indian state and Buddhism. Under the protection of the Maurya Dynasty, Buddhism spread throughout India, overtaking Hinduism. As another example, China, Korea, Vietnam, and Japan welcomed Confucianism because Confucianism emphasized deference toward authority and national unity. The governments of East Asia used Confucianism as their

¹¹¹ Robert L. Montgomery, *The Spread of Religions: A Social Scientific Theory Based on the Spread of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam*. 254.

state religion. Montgomery asserted that the government tolerates the spread of a new religion when the new religion does not threaten the existing political power.

When the prostration debate is viewed through Montgomery's theory, it is a wise strategy for the Buddhism of East Jin to maintain a cooperative relationship with the government. Montgomery's theory supports the first principle of East Jin's Buddhism. A cooperative relationship with the government is helpful in spreading Buddhism in East Jin. The growth of Buddhism played a crucial role in the debate with the government.

B. Social role

Emile Durkheim, French sociologist, asserted religion was not divinely or supernaturally inspired and was, in fact, a product of society. He said, "If religion has given birth to all that is essential in society, it is because the idea of society is the soul of religion."¹¹² He regarded religion as the worship of society, not as worship of a deity. Durkheim asserted religions have social roles because they have origins in the society. The five social roles of religions, according to Durkheim, are: 1) emotional support and security for believers, 2) social control through religious norms and values, 3) prophetic function as mechanisms for social change, 4) contribute to individuals' identities, and 5) direct the individual's life-course such as adulthood, marriages, and funerals.

The morality of religion is an important element of the social roles of a religion equivalent to Durkheim's second social role of religion, which is social control through religious norms and values. Robert L. Montgomery argues the moral function of religion acts as a positive element in the propagation of a religion in his book, *The Spread of*

¹¹² Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 191.

Religions. Regarding morality, he wrote, “To spread widely religions must offer moral guidance and moral energy.”¹¹³ He provides Buddhism's moral energy and moral guidance as an example. Buddhism’s moral motivation through the practice of the Noble Eightfold Path facilitated the propagation of Buddhism.

The Noble Eightfold Path would need to be considered. I am only noting that Buddhism found a pervasive place throughout Asia because it contributed to moral guidance, but particularly moral energy, to diverse societies having their own moralities. Buddhism provided a spiritual source for morality in its doctrines of salvation for all and compassion toward all life.¹¹⁴

As mentioned above, Buddhists of East Jin kept the five Buddhist commandments (*wujie*, 五戒) and put an emphasis on Buddhism’s function of edification within society. Keeping the five commandments and emphasizing the function of edification can correspond to morality. The morality of East Jin’s Buddhism helps the reign of the Emperor and stabilization of the society by providing the notion of observance of the law.

According to Durkheim’s theory, the morality of East Jin’s Buddhism is one of the social roles of religions. From the perspective of Montgomery’s theory, social roles of East Jin’s Buddhism can be equivalent to the morality of religions. The morality or social role of East Jin’s Buddhism promoted the spread of Buddhism in East Jin society. It strengthened the forces of Buddhism and positively impacted Buddhism, which struggled with the government. In short, Durkheim and Montgomery’s theories support the second principle of East Jin’s Buddhism that the social role of Buddhism can be advantageous to the conflict with the government.

¹¹³ Robert L. Montgomery, 253.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

C. Active Communication

Communication is helpful to the resolution of conflicts. Robert M. Krauss and Ezequiel Morsella, sociologists, demonstrate how communication affects the resolution of conflicts in their article, “Communication and Conflict.”¹¹⁵ Krauss and Morsella provide four communication paradigms in the article. The four paradigms of communication are the “Encoding-Decoding Paradigm, Intentionalist Paradigm, Perspective-Taking Paradigm, and Dialogic Paradigm.”¹¹⁶ These four paradigms put a focus on different parts of communication. First, the encoding-decoding paradigm emphasizes the content of the message. The Intentionalist Paradigm puts an emphasis on the speaker's intention. The Perspective-Taking paradigm stresses different worldviews and experiences between the speaker and the auditor. Finally, the Dialogic Paradigm takes seriously the view of the social environment of communication in order to resolve conflicts. The prostration debate is also a process of communication between two parties in conflict. It is useful to examine the prostration debate by Krauss and Morsella’s communication paradigms in order to understand how the communication or the debate resolved the conflict. From the four paradigms, the Dialogic Paradigm shows how the prostration debate resolved the conflict between the state and Buddhism in the 3rd century.

In the Dialogic Paradigm, various cooperative behaviors happen between two speakers in order to resolve the conflict. The Dialogic Paradigm emphasizes the social consensus, which is achieving its communicative goal. It also focuses on its social environment as the background of the conflict and communication. The ultimate goal of

¹¹⁵ Robert M. Krauss and Ezequiel Morsella, *Communication and Conflict* (Columbia University), 1. <http://www.columbia.edu/~rmk7/PDF/Confl.pdf>

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

the two speakers, who live in the same society, is to achieve the communicative goal to resolve the conflict. Therefore, both speakers use a variety of communication methods, including conversation, to achieve the goal and resolve the conflict. In conclusion, because Krauss and Morsella put focus on the social environment of the conflict, they argue the two speakers of conflict will make a common agreement for their mutual interest and social stability.

The Dialogic Paradigm can be applicable to the communication between Buddhism and the government of East Jin. Although the two forces conflict with different messages, they finally came to a social consensus for the common goal of social stability. The Buddhist monks were exempt from worshipping the Emperor, but agreed to the conditions of praying for the wellbeing of the Emperor, having loyalty for the country, and continuing the social role of establishing morality and the edification of society.

Communication is the exchange of messages and information. Thomas Luckman, a sociologist, said “communication has come to mean all things to all men.”¹¹⁷ The communication between Buddhism and the government also played a positive role in the process of resolving conflicts between the two forces. The Buddhists’ effort of active communication contributed to resolve conflict and achieve communicative goals with the opponent. In conclusion, Krauss and Morsella’s communication theory proves Buddhists’ active communication was effective in resolving conflicts and helped reach a social consensus in the state-religion conflict.

VI. Three Strategies in the Early Church

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 1.

In the previous section, it is clear the religious, communicative, and sociological theories of the social sciences support the three principles of East Jin Buddhism. In this section, the history of the early church of the New Testament era will be examined to determine whether the early church used the three principles or not. If the three principles were found in the history of the early church, they could be regarded as biblical and universal principles. Therefore, the New Testament, especially Paul's theology and the history of the early church, will be examined in this part, searching for the three principles in order to secure the universality of them.

A. Historical Background

The early church was in conflict with the Roman Empire. Persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire began during the ministry of Jesus and continued intermittently over a period of about three centuries until the time of Constantine when Christianity was legalized. As Christianity spread to the entire Roman Empire, rulers of the Roman Empire turned attention to this new religious movement. It is obvious the monotheism of Christianity clashed with Rome's polytheism, especially with the tradition of Emperor worship. Christians suffered imprisonment and even martyrdom throughout the Roman Empire. Over three centuries, several Emperors of the Roman Empire severely persecuted and suppressed the early church. Under the persecution of the Roman Empire, Christians tried to keep their faith and religious freedom by worshipping underground, in places called the catacombs. In the era of Emperor Constantine, the early church finally was authorized to worship freely, which ended the severe persecution by the secular government.

B. A Cooperative Relationship

Despite the severe suppression of the Roman Empire, the early church did not demonstrate an anti-social or anti-government trend during the three centuries of persecution. Rather, the early church maintained a cooperative and even patriotic attitude toward its secular power. The Epistle of Paul to the Romans clearly establishes this attitude. In the Epistle to the Romans, the authority of the secular government was legitimized by the Apostle Paul.

Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those, which are established by God. Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not causes of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same; for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practices evil.¹¹⁸

Paul not only admits the divine authority of the secular government, but also teaches Christians to fear and respect the authority of rulers. He claims the secular government is necessary for social stability. He also encourages Christians to actively participate in tax obligations.

For because of this you also pay taxes, for [rulers] are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax [is due;] custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.¹¹⁹

Paul claims that Christians should respect the authority of the Roman Empire and obey tax obligations as citizens of the Roman Empire. This shows how the early church

¹¹⁸ Romans 13:1-4 (NASB)

¹¹⁹ Romans 13:6-7 (NASB)

pursued a cooperative relationship with the government. In addition, Paul asks Christians to pray for the rulers of the government and their society because he believes the stability of the government and the society is important for the mission of the church.

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties [and] prayers, petitions [and] thanksgivings, be made on behalf of all men, for kings and all who are in authority, in order that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity. This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.¹²⁰

Besides Apostle Paul, who works for the Gentiles, Apostle Peter, who bears responsibility for the Jewish ministry, also shows a cooperative attitude toward the Roman Empire. Although Peter suffered severe persecution from the Roman Empire, he did not show an anti-government attitude, but demonstrated a cooperative attitude toward the secular government. He also taught Christians to respect social orders and fear rulers of the government.

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. [Act] as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but [use it] as bondslaves of God. Honor all men; love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.¹²¹

Peter instructed to “submit yourselves to every human institution, to a king or governors.” Peter admits the positive function of the government by preserving order in the society. The early church held a positive attitude toward the secular power. Similarly, Peter and Paul acknowledged the authority of the government and sought to have a collaborative relationship with it even while under the persecution of the government.

120 1 Timothy 2:1-4 (NASB)

121 1 Peter 2:13-17 (NASB)

Christians believed they must commit themselves to the Lord, and also to obey the rulers of their country.

In conclusion, the early church and the Buddhism of East Jin show the similarity of maintaining a cooperative relationship with their government even when in conflict with the secular authority.

C. Social role

After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Jerusalem church was under persecution from Jewish society and the Roman Empire. John and Peter stood before the Sanhedrin, the administrative council of the Jews. They were interrogated and threatened with imprisonment. Although the Jerusalem church was under persecution by the society and the government, the Jerusalem church continued to emphasize its social role. Christians of the early church remembered the teaching of Jesus about being the “salt and light” of the world.¹²²

The first example of the early church’s social role is the relief and aid found within the Jerusalem church. It is written, “And all those who had believed were together, and had all things in common; and they [began] selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need.”¹²³ When Christians sold their possessions and shared them with others, their behavior strengthened their position in the Jewish society by providing relief. It is written that they were “praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was adding to their number day by day

¹²² Matthew 5:13 (NASB)

¹²³ Acts 2:44-45 (NASB)

those who were being saved.”¹²⁴ Jerusalem church’s social role, the economic relief, raised the reputation of the early church in Jewish society. It also played a positive role in the spread of the gospel.

Second, the early church’s compliance with the law and social norms serve as an example of its social role. Peter put an emphasis on obeying the law and social norms in his first epistle. He wrote about obeying the law.

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.¹²⁵

Peter’s words to “submit yourselves to every human institution” shows the early church was adaptive to society and not antisocial. The phrase “for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right” demonstrates how the early church provided moral energy and moral guidance to the society. The moral guidance and instructions for obeying the law can be regarded as an effort of the early church to establish a social role.

In summary, the early church provided the social role of relief, acknowledging social institutions, providing moral energy, and obeying the social norms. These are additional commonalities between the early church and the Buddhism of East Jin concerning the state-religion relationship.

D. Active Dialogue

The early church endeavored to actively communicate with the state. With the many trials of Christians under persecution, there were various opportunities for dialogue

¹²⁴ Acts 2:47 (NASB)

¹²⁵ 1 Peter 2:13-14 (NASB)

between Christians of the early church and the state as they were interrogated in courtrooms. The trials were used to protect themselves and spread the gospel.

The first example can be found in Acts 4:5-22. The passage describes how Peter and John were interrogated in the Sanhedrin. It is written that “Annas the high priest [was there,] and Caiaphas and John and Alexander, and all who were of high-priestly descent. And when they had placed them in the center, they [began to] inquire, ‘By what power, or in what name, have you done this?’”¹²⁶ When Peter and John were interrogated, they responded to the interrogation boldly and actively. It is described: “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them...”¹²⁷ During the trial, Peter delivered his message to the rulers and elders. He defended the message that Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, is the Son of God. He clearly delivered there is salvation in no one else, but Jesus Christ the Nazarene. Due to his clear and bold speech, the rulers and elders had nothing to say in reply. Peter and John were threatened not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus and then they were released. Peter and John used the trial as a way to communicate with the rulers.

Second, it is easy to find active dialogue with the council, the state power, and its rulers in Apostle Paul’s life. When Paul was captured in Jerusalem, he said to the commander of the Roman cohort, “I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no insignificant city; and I beg you, allow me to speak to the people.”¹²⁸ Even in a very dangerous situation, Paul actively pursued communication with the Jewish people. He also actively defended his position and delivered the message of Christianity in the trial with the Sanhedrin.¹²⁹ Rulers of the Jewish people, including Governor Felix, King

¹²⁶ Acts 4:6-7 (NASB)

¹²⁷ Acts 4:8 (NASB)

¹²⁸ Acts 21:39 (NASB)

¹²⁹ Acts 22:30-21:10 (NASB)

Agrippa, and Festus, interrogated him. However, the communication between Paul and rulers seemed less like a trial and more like a religious testimony of his belief.¹³⁰ It appeared Paul preached the gospel as his defense during his trial. Paul finally appealed to Caesar, the Roman Emperor. It is written: “But on the night [immediately] following, the Lord stood at his side and said, ‘Take courage; for as you have solemnly witnessed to my cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.’”¹³¹ Paul used the trial as a way of communicating the gospel with the rulers of the government. He delivered the gospel, even to Caesar through his trial.

It can be said the early church was actively involved in communication with the government, the council, and its rulers, even the Emperor. Communication still occurred in harsh conditions during the interrogations and trials of the early Christians.

VII. Conclusion

The prostration debate, which was the conflict between the state power and Buddhism in the 3rd century China, can be understood as a state-religion conflict. The government of East Jin sought to control Buddhism for the sake of social stability and Buddhism desired to protect its religious freedom. Buddhists finally overcame and defended its religious freedom because of its wise strategies for engaging the state power. The three principles in the strategy included maintaining a cooperative relationship with the government, an emphasis on the social role of the religion, and keeping an active dialogue with the rulers of the government and the people of the society. The three principles of East Jin Buddhism were proven as useful and effective in the state-religion conflict through the history of East Jin. The three principles were not only proven by

¹³⁰ Acts 26:1-29 (NASB)

¹³¹ Acts 23:11 (NASB)

history, but also supported by social science. The first and second principles are supported by Robert Montgomery's theory. Montgomery provided an academic basis for the first two principles (a cooperative relationship and social role) in his book, *The Spread of Religions*. He proves the two of the principles are critical to the development of a religion through his sociological research. Krauss and Morsella's communication and conflict theory provides an academic basis for the third principles. The three principles of East Jin Buddhism can also be found in the early church of the New Testament. They also have a biblical basis. The three principles of East Jin Buddhism have a historical, academic, and biblical basis, which can be applied to the conflict between the Chinese government and Chinese House Churches in modern China.

CHAPTER 4

FOUR POSITIONS FOR THE REGISTRATION ISSUE

CHCs do not have a common opinion on the registration issue. It demonstrates various opinions depending on their social, historical, and theological backgrounds. *Sun Mingyi*'s three classifications will be used in this dissertation. He classifies three positions such as 'Separation Position (*Fenlipai*, 分离派), Human Rights Position (*Weiquanpai*, 维权派), and Dialogue Position (*Duihuapai*, 对话派).' It provides different opinions of each position and reasonable explanations about why each party has different opinions. In this chapter, the historical, social, and theological backgrounds of the three positions are described. In addition to the three positions another position exists in CHCs. The fourth position is called the 'TSPM Registration Position.' There is controversy about whether this group should be considered a CHC. In the end of this chapter, it is explained additionally.

I. Separation Position

A. Position on Registration

The Separation Position demonstrates the most conservative stance on the registration issue. It refuses both 'Independent Registration' and 'TSPM Registration.' It represents the traditional CHCs' attitude to the government. The origin of the Separation Position can be traced from *Wang Mingdao* (王明道). After the establishment of People's Republic of China, Chinese Christians were asked to cooperate in the socialist reconstruction of the nation. However, he refused to cooperate with Communist

government in China. Under the guidance of, and supported by the Communist Party, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) was organized to direct the nationwide Christian church. However, Wang Mingdao refused to join TSPM. In Mar 13. 1951, he refused an invitation to the National Christian Council stating:

TSPM should not invite me 'National Christian Council.' Even if they invite me, I will not attend the meeting. The government should not involve in religious affairs and Christian affairs. If the government asks Christian leaders to attend the meeting, it means the government interferes in religions. I won't attend the meeting.

The Separation Position inherited the conservative fundamentalism as its theological background from the traditional house churches. It put emphasis on the separation of the state and church from the perspective of fundamentalism. He believed that the state and church should be separated. People of the Separation Position believe that the Christian church should not register under the government. They believe that a church's registration under the state is an evil compromise with the secular world. They believe the compromise can make the church leave the path of Truth, who is Jesus Christ.

In addition, another reason to refuse registration is its concern about restriction on religious freedom. Human Right Watch described the registration as follow:

By Registering, congregations agree to certain limitations on their independence including control over selection of clergy, supervision of financial affairs, veto power over building programs and religious materials and restriction on activities such as education and social welfare projects.¹³²

Brother Li, who is a leader of a house church, agrees with Human Right Watch. He regards registration as the governmental control and restriction of religious freedom.

132 Human Rights Watch / Asia, China: State Control of Religion, 18.

There is no true religious freedom in TSPM churches. Religious freedom of TSPM churches is restricted and controlled by the government. What does joining TSPM mean? Joining TSPM means its recognition and approval of the state's control on the church. The head of church is Jesus Christ alone. The government cannot be the head of the church. In addition, when house churches attempt to register to the government, it could be misunderstood as another opposition by the government. The *Shouwang* church incident is the representative example for this. Although the *Shouwang* church tried to register in accordance with the current regulations, their attempt was failed and the church faced severe pressure. The Chinese government regards house churches' attempt to register as its opposition or challenge to the state.¹³³

To sum up, the Separation Position opposed all contacts with the state and attempts of registration. It came from their deep distrust of the government. To understand its absolute rejection to the state, it is necessary to understand its historical and social background.

B. Social Backgrounds

a. Social Marginality

The Separation Position is based on traditional house churches. *Xing Fuzeng* (邢福增) defines the traditional house churches as 'Four-Plenty' phenomena. He explains 'Four Plenty' as follows.

Traditional house churches are based in rural areas. Traditionally, China is an agricultural country. Before urbanization, 80 percent of population lived in rural area. Most Christians of traditional churches are engaged in agriculture. Most Christians are female and aged people in traditional house churches. They are mostly low educated people. China has conducted a nine-year compulsory education system. According to statistics of 1996, 52 percent of the population attended the 9-year compulsory education. 73 percent of counties completed the abolishment of illiteracy. However, the illiteracy rate of the population is still 11

¹³³ Li, Interview.

percent. Most believers of rural churches are elementary education level.
134

The 'Four Plenty' of traditional house churches can be defined as 'rural area, low education, female, and old age.' In other words, the 'Four Plenty' can be defined as their social marginality. The house churches movement has developed from its social marginality.

Its marginality gives influence to its passive and negative view to the government. It is natural that low educated, aged, female Christians of rural area cannot actively respond to the religious policy of the state. It can be contrasted with the positive and active attitude of urban house churches' educated Christians. They actively request their religious freedom and respond to the state unlike uneducated Christians of rural area.

For example, in 2004 a minister of a local CHC was put into prison by the local government. He was accused that he performed an illegal religious activity in an unauthorized place. The minister of a CHC did not know how to respond to the local government and how to claim his legal rights. He was a pious Christian leader of a local house church with his elementary education level. He was lack of legal information for human rights and religious freedom. In the meanwhile, Wang, a Christian lawyer, was asked to help this case. Because of Wang's active legal defense, the minister was released from the jail. Wang told that he has involved in CHC's legalization since this lawsuit. It

134 Xing Fuzeng (邢福增), *Social Characteristics of Chinese House Churches* [中國基督徒的社會面貌], 2. <http://www.docin.com/p-248334645.html>

seems that lower education level of rural CHCs can be a reason of rural CHCs' passive response and involvement to their legalization.¹³⁵

b. Suffering Experience

Another reason for the Separation Position's extreme distrust of the government is because they were severely persecuted in the past. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chinese house churches have suffered persecution by the government. In 1950, CCP persecuted churches with the United Front and Re-Education policy of the government. From 1966 to 1976, underground churches were severely oppressed during the Cultural Revolution. In spite of severe persecution, members of CHCs did not publicly responded to the government.

In 1998, the Chinese Gospel Association (CGA, 中國福音聯合) and Fangcheng Coalition (FCC, 方城聯合) declared their announcement to the government. The title of document is 'CHC's Announcement to CCP's Religious Policy and TSPM.' The Announcement of CGA and FCC demonstrates CCP's persecution and their asking to stop persecution like below;

Article 2. We ask the Chinese government to stop its persecutions such as beating, house search, fines, detention, and putting into labor camp, etc. Then, we ask the government to permit true religious freedom to house churches.

Article 3. We ask the Chinese government to release Christians, who interrogated and put into jail and labor camp because of their faith and religious activities, as soon as possible.¹³⁶

The Communist Party repressed, including beating, house searches, fines, detention, and detainment in labor camps, the house churches with the goal of demolition of

135 Li, Interview.

136 David Mun, *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church*. 352.

religions. However, in spite of severe persecution, house churches did not become anti-state, instead silently enduring continued hardship because they believe that this hardship is God's will. Christians of CHCs are obedient to the governmental policy. They intercede and bless their government in accordance with the Biblical teaching, such as Roman 13: 1-2.¹³⁷ The Announcement of 1988 defines their attitude to the state like this.

Article 1. We love not only our Lord Jesus Christ, but also Chinese people and our country, People's Republic of China. We support national unity and people's union under the government.

Article 2. We support the Constitution and the leaders of the People's Republic of China. We admit God choose the governmental leaders and establish the Chinese government.

Article 3. Although we are suffered with the government, we won't do anti-governmental and anti-social activity.¹³⁸

Christians of CHCs had silently endured the hardships without anti-government attitude in accordance with the biblical teaching. However, its severe wound forms its deep distrust and passive attitude toward the government. It is natural for the Separation Position, who experienced severe persecution, to refuse to register themselves under the government.

C. Theoretical Framework

Besides social and historical reasons, the Separation Position has its theological reasons to reject registration to the government. It has three fundamental theological beliefs supporting the rejection of registration.

a. Absolute Sovereignty of God

¹³⁷ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resists the powers, resists the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. (KJV)

¹³⁸ Ibid., 353

The first theological reason of the Separation Position is its belief in God's absolute sovereignty. Fang, who is a leader of a house church, describe this belief as follows.

The human history is in God's hand. The development of Chinese society is also in God's control. We do not need to talk with the government. We should not try to register under the government. The legitimacy of house churches is not necessary until now. Because God reign the world, we should not rush. We, Christians, should wait His time with our faith to His absolute sovereignty.¹³⁹

Fang's interview demonstrates their faith in God's absolute sovereignty. Fang responds to the registration issue with his religious belief rather than realistic thinking. Lin, in another interview, also supports this perspective.

We should not seek to change the religious policy of the government. If there is any need to change the government, God will change the government by Himself. It is God's will to remain house churches under suffering without changes of the government. When house churches remain in persecution, they can make pure and faithful Christians.¹⁴⁰

Fang and Lin's interviews demonstrate that the Separation Position follows the theological tradition of Calvinism or fundamentalism. It is clear that the belief in God's absolute sovereignty is biblical teaching. Calvinism centers on the supreme sovereignty of God. Calvinists believes that God's sovereignty is unconditional, unlimited, and absolute. All things are predetermined by the good pleasure of God's will. However, free will is also another Biblical teaching. Scripture portrays humans as having minds and wills of their own.

Beginning in the Garden of Eden in which God creates Adam and Eve with the ability to obey or disobey him, and continuing on throughout the Bible through the New Testament where life and death are portrayed as depending on peoples' acceptance or rejection of the Savior, the Bible

139 Fang, Interview.

140 Lin, Interview.

portrays people as generating their own activity and creating their own destinies by the decisions they make. God's will is unequivocally for all to choose to obey him: to choose life and not death. But, sadly, many freely reject God to their own destruction. Creating creatures with wills of their own is risky, even for God.¹⁴¹

It seems that over emphasis on God's absolute sovereignty will bring theological error to weaken human responsibility and efforts. Arminian theologians criticize Calvinism that no human's freedom and response in the human salvation can be a serious theological error. It seems that theological balance is needed between God's absolute sovereignty and human free will.

It seems have lost their balance between their belief in God's absolute sovereignty and human responsibility. Their belief in God's absolute sovereignty prevents them from resolving the registration issue. Their interviews demonstrate that they respond to a social issue with a passive and negative attitude, instead of an active and positive attitude. Their passive and negative attitude comes from their belief in God's absolute sovereignty. They do not have any reason to act for social issues and CHCs' legalization because God will control everything.

b. Superior Ecclesiology

The conservative theological tradition of the Separation Position demonstrates not only the absolute sovereignty of God, but also its Christ-centered ecclesiology. They believe the church is the body of Christ, who is the creator of the world and the church is superior than the secular government. Therefore, they believe the church should be

¹⁴¹ John Sanders, *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*.
<http://reknew.org/2008/01/what-is-the-biblical-basis-of-free-will/#sthash.m2D8VIcg.dpuf>

beyond the reign of the secular government. *Sung Mingyi* explains its Christ-centered ecclesiology like this.

The Church is the body of Christ. The Church is constituted with God's people, who are called by God. Christ is the head of the Church. Every authority of the Church such as ministry, calling His people, evangelism, visions, and using resources, comes from God. The Church has its sovereign right and legislative autonomy because the Church is body of Christ. Therefore, the Church does not need to register under the government. The legitimacy of the Church directly comes from Christ. Because the Church belongs to God, the secular government has no authority to give its legislation.¹⁴²

The Separation Position believes the legislation of the Church comes from Christ, who created heaven and earth. They believe that the secular government is under the reign of God as one of God's creatures. Therefore, the Holy Church of God Almighty is superior to the state and cannot be under the control of the secular government. The Christ-centered ecclesiology of the Separation Position rejects authority from the state, which causes tension and conflict between the two.

c. Separation of State and Religion

The superior ecclesiology of the Separation Position reinforces its belief in the absolute separation of the state and the church as explained by *Yuan Xiangshen* (袁相攬).

Our Lord, Christ is the head of the Church and the Church belongs to Christ. Because the Church belongs to Christ, the Church cannot be combined with the secular world. The Church should be absolutely separated with the politic. As Jesus said, give to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's. The two areas should be separated. The politic should not use the Church for its interest and the Church should not rely on the politic for its ministry.¹⁴³

142 Sun Mingyi (孫明義), *Theological Reflection to CHC's effort for Registration* [對家庭教會尋求登記的神學反思], *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church*. 283.

143 Jiang Dengxing (江登興), *Emerging Urban House Church's Tradition and Renewal* [中國城市家庭教會的傳承與更新], 147.

Regarding to the separation of the state and the church, Jesus said “give to Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and to God the things which are God's.”¹⁴⁴ It is the basis of their belief in the absolute separation of church and state.

With the belief of the absolute separation of church and state, people of the Separation Position believe that the state shall not involved in internal life and faith of individuals, but can involve in public aspects of individuals. In other words, they believe that not only the state should not support or involve in religious activities and religious organizations, but also, religious organizations should not support a certain political power. The belief in the separation of state and religion is not only the proclamation of their church’s independence, but also the their request for the religious freedom.

D. Strengths and Weakness

The Separation Position is based on the traditional house churches of rural areas. The traditional house churches in rural areas can be characterized as the ‘Four Plenty’ (rural area, low education, female, and old age.) They have suffered persecution by the government because they do not have legal social status. However, in spite of severe persecution and its harsh environment, they have maintained their pure belief. They have not become anti-state or anti-social. They just have endured the suffering silently in accordance with the biblical teaching. They believe in God’s absolute sovereignty, superior ecclesiology, and the separation of state and church. Their pure and noble attitude for faith, which overcame severe suffering, should be respected and esteemed.

¹⁴⁴ Luke 20: 25 (NASB)

However, besides its strength for pure and strong faith to overcome sufferings, the Separation Position demonstrates three weaknesses. First, their belief in God's absolute sovereignty makes them insensitive to social changes. It also makes them forget human effort and responsibility. Because God controls everything, they have no reason to make effort to change. Because of its belief in God's sovereignty, they keep negative and passive attitude toward social changes.

Second, if the Separation Position continues to refuse to register and keep its illegal status, the Separation Position can be isolated in Chinese society. Its illegal status has been an obstacle to its evangelism and ministry efforts. Because of its illegal status, house churches within the Separation Position cannot buy religious properties, nor have bank accounts. If they refuse to change this situation, it could make house churches isolated and weaken its ministry and evangelism to its society.

II. Human Rights Position

A. Civil Human Right Movement

It is helpful to understand the civil rights movement in China, which heavily influences the goals of the Human Rights Position. The representative figure of Chinese civil right movement is Liu Xiaobo (刘晓波), who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2010. The civil human right movement can be understood through him.

He was a Chinese literary critic, writer, and professor before the Tiananmen Square Protest in 1989. When the Tiananmen Square Protest broke out, he joined the protest and was arrested and put into jail for twenty months. He became a human rights activist. In 1996, he was put into jail again for three years because he demanded the

restoration of the honor of the victims of Tiananmen Protest. In Dec 2008, he declared ‘Charter 08’ with 303 Chinese intellectuals and human right activists. The ‘Charter 08’ is a manifesto calling for political reforms, the end of communist single-party rule, and the practice of democracy. On 08 December 2008, Liu was detained because of his participation with the ‘Charter 08’ manifesto. He was sentenced to eleven years imprisonment and has been in jail since 23 June 2009. During his imprisonment, he was awarded the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize for "his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China."¹⁴⁵

The ‘Charter 08’ consists of a number of basic concepts and demands. The two fundamental demands are “Democracy and Modernization of China.”¹⁴⁶ There are six basic concepts: freedom, human rights, equality, republicanism, democracy, and constitutionalism.¹⁴⁷ The specific demands are; amending the Constitution, separation of powers, legislative democracy, an independent judiciary, public control of public servants, guarantee of human rights, election of public officials, abolition of *Hukou* (戶口) system¹⁴⁸, freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion. Liu Xiaobo seeks the political reform and development of Chinese society as described in ‘Charter 08.’

China, as a great nation of the world, one of the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, and a member of the Human Rights Council, ought to make its own contribution to peace for humankind and progress in human rights. Regrettably, however, of all the

145 Nobel Prize, The Nobel Peace Prize 2010 - Prize Announcement, 8 October 2010
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2010/announcement.html

146 Human Rights in China (中國人權), <http://www.hrichina.org/content/238>

147 Ibid., 238

141 A *Hukou* is a record in the system of household registration required by law in the People's Republic of China. A household registration record officially identifies a person as a resident of an area and includes identifying information such as name, parents, spouse, and date of birth. It restricts the freedom of residence.

great nations of the world today, China alone still clings to an authoritarian way of life and has, as a result, created an unbroken chain of human rights disasters and social crises, held back the development of the Chinese people, and hindered the progress of human civilization. This situation must change! We cannot put off political democratization reforms any longer. Therefore, in the civic spirit of daring to take action, we are issuing *Charter 08*. We hope that all Chinese citizens who share this sense of crisis, responsibility, and mission, whether officials or common people and regardless of social background, will put aside our differences to seek common ground and come to take an active part in this citizens' movement, to promote the great transformation of Chinese society together, so that we can soon establish a free, democratic, and constitutional nation, fulfilling the aspirations and dreams that our countrymen have been pursuing tirelessly for more than a hundred years.¹⁴⁹

B. Position on Registration

The Human Rights Position claims 'Independent Registration' as a useful strategy for acquiring house churches' legitimacy without joining TSPM or CCC. It means that house churches register themselves directly to the Civil Affairs Bureau (CAB), not Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB), as civil organizations without joining TSPM or CCC. From the Human Rights Position perspective, independent registration allows some administrative control by the government but limits excessive ideological control and retains religious freedom. Liu Tongsu (劉同蘇) explains Independent Registration like this.

There is a fundamental difference between register to the Civil Affairs Bureau (CAB) and Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB). CAB is a government department to manage social organizations. CAB can only provide administrative management to the external behavior of the church, not inner religious content. However, RAB can control inner religious contents through TSPM, which is a governmental religious organization. For example, offices of CAB cannot screen ministers' sermons because they have no legal basis for it. Independent Registration means the church accept the government's authority to administrate the external behaviors of

149 Ibid., 238

the church, not inner faith in reasonable range. Therefore, Independent Registration can be a symbol of the democratization of the government.¹⁵⁰

The biggest feature of the Human Rights Position is that it considers CHCs' registration as a legal and human rights problem. Wang Yi (王怡) defines "registration process of house churches is not a process of compromise with the government, but a process of defending human right and interests."¹⁵¹ The Human Rights Position believes that all individuals have the basic rights of freedom of religion, freedom of association, freedom of the press, etc. the belief of human rights is Western thoughts. They basically agree human rights, which is the result of the civil rights movement. However, the Human Rights Position believes that the government violated the basic human rights of Christians of CHCs. It is the violation of human right for the government to enforce CHCs to join TSPM and restrict CHCs' legitimacy.

The registration problem should be solved through the guarantee of fundamental human rights such as religious freedom and right of association, which are ensured in the Chinese Constitution. For the Human Rights Position, the registration of house churches reflects bigger issues, such as legalism and human rights in Chinese society. Therefore, they believe that the registration issue can be solved only through the building of a civil society, which guarantees human right and legalism.

The Human Rights Position's relationship with the government is different than the others. Their strategy is to apply pressure to the government in order to affect political change in the hopes of improving civil society. In order to limit state power, they

150 Liu Tongsu (劉同蘇), *Regarding to the Issue of House Churches' Registration* [關於家庭教會的登記問題], 290.

151 Wang Yi (王怡), *My Position to House Churches' Registration* [我對中國家庭教會登記的立場], *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church*. 272.

prefer strategies that pressure the government rather than engage in direct dialogue with the government. One strategy is massive civil disobedience movements to try and pressure the state into resolving the registration issue. Liu Tongsu describes his strategy as follows:

First, house churches should inform the necessity of registration in written and oral way to members of the National People's Congress. Second, it is possible for house churches to submit the formal written request for its registration to the National People's Congress. Third, house churches can present the necessity of registration through the mass media or other public means to the society. Finally, violent means such as demonstration or protest marching can be considered to give pressure to the government.¹⁵²

Even though the Human Rights Position advocates civil disobedience, they do not utilize radical or violent strategies. Liu Tongsu offers his perspective on nonviolence.

What house churches ask to change is not to change all registration system or legal system of religions. But, what they want is to fix unconstitutional part of the registration system. There is no way to fix the legal system, but to ask the government to fix it. Radical methods such as revolution, violence, or overthrowing the government, can be considered for this change.¹⁵³

In conclusion, the Human Rights Position perceives the registration issue of house churches as a legal and human rights issue. It tries to protect its basic human rights from the government through a civil disobedience movement. In contrast to the Separation Position, the Human Rights Position approach is not based on theological goals but political goals.

C. Social Background

152 Liu Tongsu (劉同蘇), *Regarding to the Issue of house Churches' Registration*, 299.

153 *Ibid.*, 294.

Members of the Human Rights Position have very different social backgrounds than other parties. Huang Jianpo (黃劍波) describes the social background of the Human Rights Position like this.

The Human Rights Position is only a minor group in the house churches movement. Although it is not the main stream in its number, it has strong influence to the entire Chinese society including house churches through the mass media's special intention to it. There are two main groups in the Human Rights Position. The first is the lawyer and legal scholar group such as Fan Yapeng (範亞峰) and Wang Yi (王怡). The second group is the writer and artist group such as Yu Jie (余杰), which is centered on 'North Village (*Beicun*, 北村).'

¹⁵⁴

The first group of the Human Rights Position is the lawyer group. Many lawyers are involved in the Human Rights Position because of the contradiction that exists between the Chinese Constitution, which guarantees religious freedom, and the current religious law, which does not guarantee religious freedom. In other words, this phenomenon demonstrates that the Chinese government does not observe the Chinese Constitution.

For example, Wang is a Christian lawyer. When he defended Christians of house churches from persecution, he raised his voice to religious freedom and legal legitimacy of house churches. Fan Yapeng (範亞峰) was a professor of law in Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Then, he dedicated himself to be a minister of a local house churches. During his ministry, he understood its severe situation and the violation of religious freedom. He constantly asks the Chinese government to guarantee human rights in accordance with the Chinese Constitution.

154 Huang Jianpo (黃劍波), *The Current Situation of Chinese Christianity and the Administration of Chinese Christianity*, [中國基督教現況與宗教管理問題].” Changing China, Changing Chinese Church. 239.

The second group consists of writers, artists, and other intellectuals. Yu Jie (余杰) is an intellectual writer, who graduated from the Beijing University. He wrote many blogs calling for political reform, democracy, and religious freedom. Many other Chinese intellectuals put their articles and discuss political and social reform of Chinese society in his blog.¹⁵⁵ As a result, he was expelled by the Chinese government and moved to United States in 2012. He continues his efforts to legalize house churches and improve human rights while overseas. Bob Fu (*Fu Xiqiu*, 付希秋) is another leader who works for political and social reform of Chinese society. He urges the promotion of human rights and the rule of law in China through his NGO, *China Aid*.¹⁵⁶

The Separation Position is based in rural house churches and the Dialogue Position is based in urban house churches. However, unlike these, the Human Rights Position does not have common social and geographical backgrounds. Social activists, lawyers, pastors, human rights activists, artists, and lawyers are members of the Human Rights Position. The Human Rights Position is a minority based on numbers. The Human Rights Position is a group of intellectuals, who accepted Western ideas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. However, it seems that the Chinese people are not accustomed to the Western ideas such as human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. It is the reason why the Human Rights Position has limited influence in Chinese society. However, mass media, Chinese government, and various social organizations pay attention to voices of the Human Rights Position. It has strong influence to its society.

D. Theoretical Framework

155 <http://www.shengshan.org> (*shengshanwang*, 聖山網)

156 <http://www.chinaaid.net>

The Separation Position and the Dialogue Position have theological reasons for rejecting the registration requirement. In contrast, the Human Rights Position' theoretical framework is not related to theology or Christian beliefs. It has its theoretical framework from the outside of Christian belief. These are human rights, rule of law, and its unique ecclesiology.

a. Human Right

Human rights are the first reason for their asking for 'Independent Registration.' They perceive the registration of house churches as human right issue. They believe that the Chinese government violates basic human rights such as freedom of faith, freedom of association, freedom of thought, and freedom of speech when the government does not permit house churches' Independent Registration. Liu Tongsu explains it as follows.

The illegal status of house churches is the violation of human right. Therefore, the movement for its legal legitimacy can be a kind of human right movement. The basic human rights come from God. If the government oppresses or violates human rights, the government exceeds its authority and confronts against God.¹⁵⁷

Its theoretical basis is a belief in Natural Rights. Natural Rights can be defined as "human being has its freedom and equality from its birth. Human beings have the right to pursue happiness."¹⁵⁸ The belief in Natural Rights was developed with European philosophers of the Enlightenment in 18th century. Philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as Jacques Rousseau and John Locke, believed human rights should not be violated by the state

157 Liu Tongsu (劉同蘇), *Boundary between God and Caesar: A Message to New Generation of Chinese house churches*, [上帝與凱撒的疆界: 獻給新時代中國家庭教會] (San Francisco: Tongsu Liu, 2008), 33.

158 Britannica Online Encyclopedia, Natural Rights and Natural Law.

power. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was proclaimed by the General Assembly of United Nations in 1948, describes it well.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.¹⁵⁹

The Human Rights Position believes that natural rights of CHCs' Christians was violated by the government. Therefore, they ask the government to guarantee their natural rights by admitting their legal status and registration.

In addition, Li Fan (李凡) puts a new social meaning on the Human Rights Position's asking the government to guarantee human rights.

In the process of the politic development in China, the civil right movement is emerged by civil organizations from below. The civil right movement is pursuing the freedom and human right of Chinese civil people. Religious freedom is an important part of the civil right movement. Whether house churches intended or not, they are already involved in the Chinese politic. Actually they joined civil right movement of Chinese society.¹⁶⁰

b. The Rule of Law

The Human Rights Position's emphasis on human right is connected with legalism. Legalism means the rule of law. The Human Rights Position asserts house churches should be ruled with the law. Liu Tongsu says "House Churches' registration is

159 THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

160 Li Fan (李凡), *Christianity and the Development of Chinese Politic*, [基督教和中國政治發展]. Changing China, Changing Chinese Church, 15.

the implementation of freedom of association and constitutional right of individuals.”¹⁶¹

The Constitution of the People’s Republic of China guarantees human rights for registration, such as freedom of association and religions, in the article 35 and 36.

Article 35. Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, of procession and of demonstration.

Article 36. Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state.

Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination.¹⁶²

In spite of the Constitution, basic human rights are not guaranteed in Chinese society. Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA), which is the current law of Chinese government, violates human rights established by the Chinese Constitution. The lower law, which is RRA, contradicts the higher law, the Constitution. In other words, the Chinese government does not follow its own Constitution. Liu Tongsu defines this situation as ‘self-contradiction.’ Regarding the contradiction between the Constitution and the lower law, Sun Mingyi wants to observe the Constitution, not RRA.

I oppose that house churches register in accordance with the RRA. It is because Regulations on Religious Affairs contradicts with the Constitution. If house churches register to the government in accordance with the RRA, it means house churches admit the validity of RRA and violate human rights of the Constitution.¹⁶³

161 Liu Tongsu (劉同蘇), *Regarding the Registration Issue*, 288.

162 Constitution of the People’s Republic of China
<http://english.people.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>

163 Sun Mingyi (孫明義), *The Understanding of Chinese Urban House Churches*, [認識中國城市家庭教會]. Changing China, Changing Chinese Church, 52.

Sun Mingyi suggests solving ‘self-contradiction’ issues by legalism or the rule of law. He asks the government to observe its law as one of human organizations.

The rules should know they live in the order of God. In other word, the government is same with other human organizations in society. There is nothing special for the government. The government should be under the control of the law. The government also should be ruled with the law.¹⁶⁴

To sum up, the Human Rights Position perceives house churches’ illegal status as a legal problem. They believe the registration issue of house churches came from the ‘self-contradiction’ between the Constitution and RRA. The Human Rights Position believes the ‘self-contradiction’ should be solved with the rule of the law. In other word, when the government observes the Constitution, the problem can be solved.

c. NGO Ecclesiology

Another theoretical basis of the Human Rights Position is its unique ecclesiology. The Human Rights Position defines God’s church as nongovernmental organization (NGO) or social organization, rather than God’s divine institution. It can be seen in the NGO principle of Wangyi (王怡). He asserts that house churches should register themselves to the government as NGO to prevent the government’s control on house churches. He believes house churches should be registered and treated as NGOs to protect their religious freedom.

The government has no authority to control religious affairs of house churches. The government only has its administrative authority on religious organizations just like NGOs. To prevent the government’s control on house churches, house churches should register themselves to

164 Sun Mingyi (孫明義), *Theological Reflection to House Churches’ Registration*, Changing China, Changing Chinese Church, 282.

the Civil Affairs Bureau (CAB), not Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB), as NGOs.¹⁶⁵

The NGO ecclesiology can be clearly seen in Lifan (李凡)'s article. He regards house churches as important social organizations in Chinese society.

In fact, house churches are kinds of NGOs in Chinese society and play important roles in the development of the civil society. House churches are the biggest, the best equipped and the best organized civil organizations because NGO are not fully developed in Chinese society. No doubt that house churches will give huge impact to the development of Chinese politic.¹⁶⁶

Because of the NGO ecclesiology of the Human Rights Position, the Human Rights Position put more emphasis on social role of house churches. Wangyi explains churches' social role like this.

Christianity has formed new kinds of social organizations and has played its social role through its organizations. Ministries and evangelism of Christianity brought new social service system in Chinese society. Its social service system includes education, health care, sanitation, and other public service system, which the government fails to provide.¹⁶⁷

The Human Rights Position expects that Christianity will provide social welfare activity, but their emphasis is on how these activities further their political goals. They expect house churches to contribute to the improvement of human rights and emergence of a civil society in China.

However, the Separation Position criticizes the NGO ecclesiology of the Human Rights Position. Fang demonstrates his concern about the NGO ecclesiology as follows:

The Christian Church is God's divine institution and the body of Christ. However, the NGO ecclesiology lost its identity as God's divine institution and the body of Christ. I do agree that the Christian Church involve in human right movement and do its social responsibility.

165 Wangyi (王怡), *My Position to House Churches' Registration*, 272.

166 Li Fan (李凡), *Christianity and the Development of Chinese Politic*, 44.

167 Ibid., 44.

However, the Church cannot forget its priority as God's divine institution. The Kingdom of God should be the first priority of the Christian Church. When the Church put priority on social responsibility, the Church could face its danger because it loses its substance.¹⁶⁸

As Fang says, traditional conservative Christians express their worry and concern about the NGO ecclesiology of the Human Rights Position. In spite of these criticisms, it cannot be denied that the contribution from the Human Rights Position reminds traditional churches about their social responsibility.

E. Strengths and Weakness

a. Remind Social role to the Church

The Human Rights Position advocates for human rights and rule of law within Chinese society. Because of this, members are often actively involved in social issues. This is the biggest contribution of the Human Rights Position to Chinese society. Sun Mingyi explains it as follows:

Since fifty years, house churches have been under the persecution and suppression of the government. Because of the suppression, Christians of house churches are controlled by psychological subconscious. It can be called as 'Politic Phobias.' Because of the fear for the state's oppression, they regard themselves as non-mainstream group and conceal themselves in Chinese society. House churches should overcome the 'Politic Phobias' and should play their role in the society. House churches should realize their identity not only as God's divine institution but also social organization in the society.¹⁶⁹

Sun Mingyi asserts that house churches should be actively involved in social issues and play a social role. They should overcome fear of suppression by realizing their true identity. The Human Rights Position has made significant contributions to the

168 Fang, Interview.

169 Sun Mingyi (孫明義), *Theological Reflection to House Churches' Registration*, 276.

development of civil society in China, although it remains a minority in Chinese society and house churches. However, it has huge influences in Chinese society and in international society.

b. Conflict with the State

The Human Rights Position uses a strategy of ‘giving pressure’ to change the government. This pressure toward the government can often produce severe conflicts between members and government officials. As a result, many members of the Human Rights Position are expelled from China or put under house arrest. One negative outcome of this pressure is the more suspicious of these house churches and keeps more control over them. This pressure can also cause unnecessary tension and conflict with the government, with no visible change in the government's political power.

c. Limit of Political Approach

According to Sun Mingyi, the Human Rights Position has more substantial problem than the increasing of the conflict with the state. He asserts that the conflict between house churches and the state cannot be solved by a political approach.

It will definitely make the problem complicated to combine the religious affairs of house churches and political affairs of the Chinese government. It will give more complicate troubles to house churches. Who has the ability to solve the problem in political way? Don't people understand that it cannot be solved in political way in spite of the past sixty years oppression?¹⁷⁰

d. Danger of Loss its Identity as a Christian Church

170 Mingyi Sun, *The Understanding of Chinese Urban house churches*, Changing China, Changing Chinese Church, 138.

The main reason of criticism for the Human Rights Position is not the increasing conflict or its problem-solving skills. Rather, the main reason is their concern that the Human Rights Position access beyond the substance of the Church as God's divine institution through its legal and political approach. Sun Mingyi warns the danger of losing its substance for the Human Rights Position like below.

The Human Rights Position tries to connect religious freedom of the church and the human right. It attempts to solve the problem of house churches through the legalism and the human right. Therefore, I oppose the Human Rights Position's way of registration because their approach is legalistic, theological.¹⁷¹

Sun Mingyi criticizes that the Human Rights Position's political and legalistic approach is formatted to protect its interest and rights. He criticizes that the Human Rights Position does not truly understand the substance and responsibility of God's Church.

It is very clear that the Church also has social status. The NGO ecclesiology of the Human Rights Position contributes to remind its social responsibility of the Church. However, the NGO ecclesiology cannot provide theological explanation of the spiritual identity and role as God's divine institution. The church, which loses its biblical and theological identity, cannot be true God's church. Lin Gang concerns the danger of the loss of biblical ecclesiology in the NGO ecclesiology like this.

A local church is definitely one of social organizations in Chinese society. However, a local church is not a political organization and should not pursue the political act as its main purpose. The main duty of the church is to deliver the cross of Jesus Christ, Our Lord to all people. Today, house churches must be cautious to be involved in the politic. Many house churches do not realize that they fell into the trap of anti-government political forces at home and abroad without understanding of its biblical identity.¹⁷²

171 Ibid., 130.

172 Lin Gang (林剛), *House Churches' Understanding of TSPM, the Government, and Itself*

Lin Gang concerns that the Church lose its direction and fall into the trap with the NGO ecclesiology. He agrees that the human right and legalism are precious values. However, he asserts that the Church should put its priority in delivering the cross of Jesus Christ. When the church forgets its fundamental identity and pursues different values, the church will be transformed into a social and political force.

III. Dialogue Position

A. Position on Registration

CHCs' third response to registration issue is the Dialogue Position. The Dialogue Position has its position to solve the illegal status and registration of house churches through communication with the government. Sun Mingyi defines the Dialogue Position like below.

The process of registration is the process of dialogue with the government. House churches' registration will not go smoothly and it could be a long process. Furthermore, the Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA), which is the current religious law of Chinese government, do not guarantee religious freedom, which the Chinese Constitution granted. However, the Regulations on Religious Affairs (RRA) can be a starting point of constructive dialogue with the government. I believe that Chinese house churches can build and reach constructive relationship with the government through dialogue in the future.¹⁷³

Comparing the Separation and the Human Rights Position, the most distinctive feature of the Dialogue Position is its attitude and relationship toward the government. The Separation and the Human Rights Position demonstrate negative attitudes to the government. The Separation Position refuses any kinds of dialogue and contacts with the

[家庭教會對“三自”，政府及自身的認識], 216.

173 Mingyi Sun, *Understanding of Emerging Urban House Churches in China*, 131.

government and rejects to register itself under the government because of its experience of severe persecution. The separatist demonstrates the loss of trust of the government. The Human Rights Position does not pursue dialogue with the government. Rather, it tries to restrict the power of the government through putting pressure of the civil society. However, the Dialogue Position believes the registration issue and illegal status of house churches can be solved through the communication with the state. It means the Dialogue Position trusts the government as its partner to communicate. The Dialogue Position refuses to use violence to the government because of its trust to the government. Its trust toward the government can be understood through understanding its historical and social background.

The Dialogue Position seeks the Independent Registration, not TSPM Registration. It is same with the Human Rights Position. The Dialogue Position does not hold a common opinion on whether to register with CAB (Civil Affairs) or RAB (Religious Affairs Bureau). Some prefer to register with CAB because they believe registration CAB can provide more religious freedom than registration with RAB. However, others still prefer to register with RAB because they believe CHCs are religious organizations, not social organizations. Regardless of which group they register with, they believe the Independence Registration process can protect house churches' independence and religious freedom from the government.

Lin Gang (林剛) proposes three pre-conditions for the Independence Registration of house churches.

House churches should actively apply registration of our churches. However, the registration absolutely should not enslave our churches under the government or TSPM. House church should not be a cat's paw of the government through the registration. The registration should be

performed as a civil organization. House churches should acquire the legitimacy as religious organizations through the registration. First, the church should not deny the sovereignty of God. The registration cannot violate the fact that Jesus Christ is the head of the church. Second, the church should not compromise the biblical truth. The church should not give up doctrine, theology, biblical teaching, and ordination. Third, the registration should not damage its legitimate right for ruling internal affairs of the church. The government should not control and intervene internal affairs and management of house churches through the registration.¹⁷⁴

Lin Gang's three pre-conditions of the registration are the sovereignty of God, no compromises for the biblical truth, and guarantee for right of ruling internal affairs of the church. The three pre-conditions can be the answer to the Separation Position's critic to the Dialogue Position. The Separation Position believes that any kinds of contacts and dialogue with the government are unnecessary and incorrect. So, the Separation Position regards the Dialogue Position's attempt for constructive dialogue with the state as a compromise for the purity of house churches. However, Lin Gang's three pre-conditions for the registration resolve the Separation Position's doubt for the house churches' independency. Sun Mingyi depends that the Dialogue Position is not a religious compromise with the government like below.

The registration does not mean compromising or giving up our purity and independency. It is because we have pre-conditions for the registration. The pre-condition is to protect and guarantee the church's independency, not to be enforced to join their religious associations, and not to be intervened the internal affairs by the government.¹⁷⁵

The Dialogue Position not only seeks to resolve house churches' illegitimacy through the registration, but also not compromise its independency and religious purity. The Dialogue

174 Lin Gang (林剛), *House churches' Understanding of TSPM, the Government, and Itself*, 217.

175 Sun Mingyi (孫明義), *Understanding of Chinese Urban House Churches*, 131.

Position denies the two extremes of the Separation and the Human Rights Position as the intermediate position. The Dialogue Position tries to acquire the legal status for house churches through peaceful means of dialogue with respect and trust to the government.

B. An Exceptional Case of Independent Registration

It is believed that TSPM Churches are the only legitimate churches in China. As such, there is no way for churches to get legitimacy without joining TSPM. However, an exceptional case of independent registration was found during the field research. The T churches of Y area acquired their legitimacy through registration with RAB of local government without joining TSPM in 1980s. Independent registered churches have existed in China since the 1980s. As registered churches, they enjoyed religious freedom, such as no restrictions on their religious activities, and the right to own their own church buildings.

Brother Z, who is a minister of a T church, shared the process of their independent registration:

Our church group has a firm belief in the separation of church and state. Because of our belief in the separation of church and state, we rejected any kinds of governmental controls. During 1960s and 1970s, our church members had experienced conflicts and persecutions with the government. In 1980s, which is the peak of conflict between TSPM and T churches, we were sued to the central government. Officials of the central government treated our church with local political leaders. Our members refused to join TSPM and did not afraid of imprisonment. Through severe discussion, we were permitted to register our church on the local RAB without joining TSPM. Until now, we report our annual report to RAB. The RAB of our city does not give any kinds of influence to destroy our autonomy.¹⁷⁶

The case of K church is a good example of a successful implementation of the Dialogue

¹⁷⁶ Z, Interview.

Party's position. On the surface T Church appears exceptional, but in fact it is still unknown as to whether other independent registered churches exist or not in other areas. The future of more independent registrations is also unknown. However, the case of T churches demonstrates that the independent registration of the Dialogue Position can be realized.

C. Social Background

The emerging urban house churches (EUHC) are the background of the Dialogue Position's development. Since the reform and open policy performed, the Chinese society has experienced rapid urbanization. Large populations of rural area have moved to urban areas. Since 1990s, urban house churches have formed and developed with the rapid urbanization. Zeng Muhang (鄭慕行) describes the emergence and development of urban house churches like below.

Urban house churches are different with traditional house churches and TSPM churches. During the last 15 years, because of the rapid urbanization and the development of urban economy, there is the emergence of new kinds of churches of young Christians. The urban house churches have emerged in each metropolitan area in nationwide. These churches are everywhere in Beijing area. This type of churches has experienced rapid growth in number. The population of urban house churches exceeds the population of TSPM churches.¹⁷⁷

Zheng Muhang (鄭慕行) asserts that the urban house churches are larger than TSPM churches in population. However, it is impossible to have the statistics to prove it.

Although it is impossible to prove through the statistic, most experts of Chinese house churches agree and recognize the wide range of development of the urban house churches

¹⁷⁷ Yu Jianrong (于建嵘), *The Development of Christianity and Social Stability of Chinese Society* [基督教的發展與中國社會穩定], 63.

in nationwide. Liu Tongsu asserts “Chinese house churches has been on the periphery of Chinese society for a long time. However, house churches finally succeed to enter into the mainstream of Chinese society through the breakthrough development of urban house churches.”¹⁷⁸ The development of urban house churches is an undeniable reality in the development of Christianity in China.

The urban house churches demonstrate different characteristics with the traditional urban house churches. The unique features of urban house churches give effects to its relationship with the government. The first feature of urban house churches is its high portion of young generations in their churches. Liu Tongsu researched 46 local urban house churches in Beijing area in 2007. He describes the age distribution of urban house churches like below.

Urban house churches in Beijing are churches of young people, by young people and for young people. 86.7 percent of all churches have more than 50 percent of young population, which is 35 years old and below. 28.9 percent of whole churches have 90 percent or over 90 percent of young population, which is 36 years below.¹⁷⁹

It seems that emerging urban house churches (EUHC) is very young church with its high portion of young population. Its high portion of young population has special meaning to its relationship with the state. Young generations of urban house churches took birth after 1970s. They have not experience severe persecution and suffering of the government unlike Christians of rural house churches. They also do not have any grudge and hatred to TSPM church. They were born and raised in relatively free social atmosphere under the reform and open policy. They never experienced the strict social atmosphere and fierce persecution of the Cultural Revolution in 1970s. Their lack of

178 Liu Tongsu (劉同蘇), *Research for Urban house churches in Beijing Area*, 192.

179 Ibid., 189.

fierce persecution becomes a positive factor to make a positive attitude to the government.

The second feature of urban house churches is its high level of education. In general, the education level of urban house churches is relatively high compared to other house churches. In addition, many intellectuals of Chinese society attend urban house churches. Liu Tongsu's research demonstrates its educational level like below.

57.14 percent of urban house churches' ministers in Beijing area have college education level and even higher education level. 60 or 70 percent of members are high school and college graduated people in 41.3 percent of all churches. In addition, there are 'student churches' in University town. The 'student church' is 17.3 percent in urban house churches. In student churches, 90 percent are college students or higher education level. In spite of higher education level in Beijing, it is very unusual that 76 percent of members have high education level.¹⁸⁰

Liu Tongsu said "the high education level of urban house churches is one of the important signs to demonstrate that house churches enter into the mainstream of Chinese society."¹⁸¹ The high education level of urban house churches explains why the Dialogue Position maintains a positive attitude toward the government and their desire to have constructive dialogue with the state. Zheng Muhang (鄭慕行) believes that the high education level plays a positive role in its dialogue with the government. He told it like below.

Young generations of urban house churches, comparing to older generations, are relatively knowledgeable about law, literature, sociology, and other specialized areas. In the realm of thought, they are relatively open-minded unlike their older generations. They love to talk with intellectuals, governmental officials and various figures of Chinese

180 Ibid., 190.

181 Ibid., 190.

society. However, it does not mean that they are easy to give up their own thoughts.¹⁸²

To sum up, the Dialogue Position has developed on the basis of emerging urban house churches since 1990s. Younger generations lack experience with severe suffering compared to older generations of rural house churches. Younger generations' high education contributes to their ideological freedom and openness to different thoughts. These features make young generations to try to have conversation with the government to build constructive relationship.

D. Theoretical Framework

a. Double Ecclesiology

The Separation Position refuses to register itself under the government emphasizing its independency from the state. The Human Rights Position seeks *the Independence Registration* with the government emphasizing the social nature of the church. The Dialogue Position embraces two different positions at the same time. The Dialogue Position not only asks the independency and religious freedom of the church, but also tries to register itself under the government at the same time. The double faces of the Dialogue Position can be understood through its *Double Ecclesiology*. The Dialogue Position believes that the church has two identities not only as the 'Body of Christ,' but also as social organizations of human society. Sun Mingyi defines the *Double Ecclesiology* and its divine identity of the 'Body of Christ' like below.

The Church on the earth has double identities (ecclesiology). First, the Church is the 'Body of Christ.' The Church consists of believers who are called from God. And Christ is the master and the head of the church. The

182 Yu Jianrong (于建嵘), *The Development of Christianity and Social Stability of Chinese Society*, 63.

Church is built on the foundation of Christ and God. In this sense, the Church does not need to register under the state. The legitimacy of the Church comes from Christ. The Church is holy, sacred, and divine institution of God. Therefore, the secular government has no authority to judge or determine the existence of the Church of Christ. In this sense, the Church of God is totally different with other social groups in the world.¹⁸³

The Dialogue Position recognizes the Church as God's divine institution. The Dialogue Position's ecclesiology is same with the Separation Position's ecclesiology. Because the Church is God's divine institution, the Church's the legitimacy comes from God, not the secular government. The Dialogue Position has no reason to register itself under the government. If the Dialogue Position's ecclesiology stops on this point, it is exactly same with the Separation Position. However, the Dialogue Position's ecclesiology does not stop on this point. Rather, it recognizes the Church as social organization in the secular world.

The second identity of the *Double Ecclesiology* is the identity as 'Social Organization.' The Church exists as a part of the secular society in secular world. The Church is one of many social organizations. The Church exists under the natural and social order. Therefore, the Church is also under the state power like other social organizations. However, the power of the secular government should exist on the basis of the public law.¹⁸⁴

The Dialogue Position recognizes the Church as not only the God's divine institution, but also a social organization in secular world. Because the Church is a social organization, the Church is obliged to comply the law of the secular government. Further, the Church should register itself under the government because the *Dual Ecclesiology*. The Dialogue Position believes that the Church should respect the authority of the secular government because of its identity as a social organization. Sun Mingyi defines the meaning and significance of registration like below.

183 Sun Mingyi (孫明義), *Theological Reflection to CHC's effort for Registration*, 283.
184 Ibid., 283.

The reason for the Church's registration is not to acquire the government's approval for the existence of the Church. Rather, the Church should register itself under the government because the registration is its right and obligation as a social institution. The registration should be executed under the premise of the Church's independency and religious freedom. The Church should register itself in order to guarantee its social rights and fulfill its social duties properly. Rights and duties of social organizations should be ensured through the law of the government. In this sense, the Church's registration and the principle, the separation of church and state, do not contradict each other.¹⁸⁵

The Dialogue Position believes house churches should register under the government in order not to acquire the legitimacy. The Dialogue Position believes the registration is their duty and right as a social organization. The Separation Position forgets the Church's social duties and obligations when they only emphasize the divine ecclesiology as 'the Body of Christ.' On the contrary, the Human Rights Position forgets the preaching of the Gospel as God's divine institution when it put too much emphasis on the 'Social Organization' ecclesiology. However, the *Double Ecclesiology* of the Dialogue Position can embrace the both positions of the Separation and the Human Rights Position. The *Double Ecclesiology* can make the Church not also enable to keep its independency from the state, but also to defend its rights and duties in society.

b. *Self-Legalization* Experience

Besides the *Double Ecclesiology*, the Dialogue Position has another reason to be active to the conversation with the government. It is called as the *Self-Legalization* experience of house churches. It means the awakening or self-awareness for their role and identity as the Church of God. It starts with self-awakening its legalized spiritual

185 Ibid., 283.

identity as the ‘Body of Christ.’ Sun Mingyi defines the *Self-Legalization* experience like below.

Every house churches should have the *Self-Legalization* experience regardless they succeed to register to the government or not. The *Self-Legalization* does not mean to acquire its legitimacy from the government through registration. From the theological point of view, the legitimacy and its authority of the Church comes from ‘the Head of the Church’ Jesus Christ, and the Word of God, which is revealed to us through Jesus Christ. Therefore, when churches truly proclaim the Word of God and perform the sacraments rightly, they all will gain authority and legitimacy from Christ.¹⁸⁶

When a church realizes its true identity as God’s Church, the church will experience true freedom. The church’s experience for true freedom is the *Self-Legalization* experience. The *Self-Legalization* experience makes churches get rid of their closed, fearful, and negative attitudes as non-mainstreamers of Chinese society. Instead, they can display a positive attitude and confidence within society.

Since half a century, Chinese house churches have dominated by fear driven, self-closed, and marginal sub-consciousness. They have been afraid to be controlled by the government. They have closed down themselves as a marginal group of the society. However, the *Self-Legalization* experience makes house churches to overcome their fear driven, self-closed, and marginal sub-consciousness. The fear of house churches is called as ‘political phobias.’ When people face the ‘political phobias,’ there are two extreme reactions for this. One is to hide itself to avoid conflicts. The other is to oppose it directly. However, I am very happy to find that house churches finally overcome fear driven, self-closed, and marginal sub-consciousness through the *Self-Legalization* experience. Chinese house churches become mature and free when they realize their true identity in God.¹⁸⁷

The *Self-Legalization* experience is an expression of self-confidence of house churches. When house churches realize their true Biblical identity, they overcome their fear and strength their social roles and duties as a part of Chinese society. In this sense, the

186 Mingyi Sun, *Understanding of Emerging Urban house churches in China*, 133, 134.

187 Ibid., 134.

Dialogue Position contradicts the Separation Position, which rejects any kinds of communication with the government and does not realize its social roles and duties for the Chinese society. Further, the Dialogue Position is also definitely different with the Human Rights Position, which forgets its spiritual identity as God's church and claims to give pressure to the government to protect their rights of NGOs. The *Self-Legalization* experience makes house churches to overcome the internal fear and to seek a constructive dialogue with the government by empowering house churches.

E. Strengths and Weakness

a. Minimize Conflicts with the State

The Separation Position refuses any kinds of dialogue with the state. It asserts the separation of church and state strictly. The disconnection of house churches and the government can increase the tension and raise conflicts between the state and house churches. The Human Rights Position tries to give pressure to the government to protect its religious freedom and independency. Its method of giving pressure to the government can bring unnecessary tension and conflicts between the state and house churches.

On the contrary, the Dialogue Position has totally different approach to the government. It tries to resolve the illegal status of house churches through communication. It admits the government as dialogue partner. It believes that they can build constructive relationship each other. The communication of the state and house churches can decrease tension and increase mutual understanding. The Dialogue Position can minimize the tension and conflict with the government unlike the Separation and the Human Rights Position.

b. Embraces for Two Extremes

The Separation Position put too much emphasis on its ecclesiology as God's divine institution. Because of over emphasis on spiritual ecclesiology, it forgets church's social identity and its social role in worldly human society. It weakens its social role of the church. Because the church is not social organization, the church does not need to register under the government. Then, the church has no reason to communicate with the government. The Separation Position believes that the church should insist the separation and independency with the secular government as the 'Body of Christ.' It totally forgets its social identity and function in the secular world.

On the contrary, the Human Rights Position demonstrates totally opposite features to the Separation Position. It recognizes the church as social organization. It totally forgets the spiritual identity of the church as God's divine institution. It believes that the church should play its social roles for the social development as a social organization. It asserts that the church should give pressure to the secular government to limit its political power and build the civil society. It totally forgets spiritual ecclesiology of the church as God's divine institution.

The Dialogue Position embraces the two extremes of the Separation and the Human Rights Position through its '*Double Ecclesiology*.' The '*Double Ecclesiology*' can embrace two extremes of house churches. It admits not only the spiritual identity of the church as God's divine institution, but also its social identity as social organization. It seeks evangelism and social role of the church at the same time. The Dialogue Position admits the Separation of state and church and its independency from the secular

government. At the same time, it does not forget its social role and roles of the church as social organization. It is the biggest strength of the Dialogue Position that it can embrace two extreme opinions of house churches in its structure.

Sun Mingyi evaluates the Dialogue Position, which embraces two extremes, like below.

The Dialogue Position bears its responsibility as God's divine church and social organization. They demonstrate mature, reasonable, and practice attitude to the illegitimacy of house churches. At the same time, they are not too ideal to this issue.¹⁸⁸

I agree Sun Ming's evaluation for the Dialogue Position as 'mature, reasonable, and practical, but not too ideal.' It is because the Dialogue Position not only avoids two extremes, but also embraces two extremes.

IV. The Fourth Position

A. Position on Registration

Until now, this dissertation summarizes the three positions of Chinese house churches to the registration to the government according to Sun Mingyi's theory. However, there is one more position in addition to the Separation, the Human Rights, and the Dialogue Position. The Fourth Position is TSPM Registration Position. Basically its position is same with the government and TSPM. It asserts house churches should register under the government through joining TSPM. In fact, some churches decided to join TSPM and acquired their legitimacy through registration under TSPM.

These churches are no longer house churches, but became TSPM churches by joining TSPM. However, because they are able to internally regulate themselves, they

188 Sun Mingyi (孫明義), *Understanding of Chinese Urban house churches*. 132.

are different than other TSPM churches. Unlike other TSPM churches, they are autonomous internally, having the right of administration and the right to choose the senior pastor. These churches achieved these rights through much struggle during the era of house churches.

B. Social Background

The churches of TSPM Registration Position can be found in various areas such as Zhejiang, Jiangxi, and nationwide. The ‘Bu San Bu Si’ (不三不四) church of Wenzhou is the representative church of TSPM Registration Position. ‘Bu San Bu Si’ (不三不四) literally means ‘not three, not four.’ This name points out its ambiguous identity between TSPM and CHCs. However, there are no specific social common backgrounds of these churches.

C. Characteristics as an Inter-mediator

The Fourth Position can be situated between the CHCs and TSPM. The Fourth Position shows two kinds of traditions of CHC and TSPM as an inter-mediator of the two.

a. CHC Tradition / Seeking Religious Freedom

The churches within the Fourth Position were previously CHCs. They joined TSPM later. Before they joined TSPM, they enjoyed their religious freedom without any control of the state. Thus, they have been very sensitive and cautious to protect their religious freedom even though they are under TSPM. The interview with Brother Chen, whose church joined TSPM in 1980s, demonstrates how his church had been struggling

to protect their religious freedom and autonomy.

Our church joined TSPM in the early 1980s. The elder of our church decided to join TSPM and our members respected his decision. After we joined TSPM, the local TSPM Committee tried to infringe the autonomy of our church. For example, we could not decide our senior pastor by ourselves. Children's Sunday school has been banned because of the regulation. However, we overcame restrictions of TSPM Committee and succeed to protect our autonomy. We, now, can decide our senior pastor by ourselves and open Children's Sunday school for Christian education. We even planted a new church in another province.¹⁸⁹

The case of Brother Chen's church demonstrates that the Fourth Party still has religious freedom, which is CHCs' tradition, even though the Fourth Party joined TSPM.

b. TSPM Tradition

The Fourth Party, which exists between the CHCs and TSPM, follows not only the CHCs tradition, but also TSPM tradition. The Fourth Party exhibits two prominent TSPM characteristics.

The first is that the Fourth Position follows *qiu-tong-cun-yi* (求同存異) theology, which is the traditional and the most representative theology of TSPM. Philip L. Wickeri defines *qiu-tong-cun-yi* (求同存異) as such:

The Slogan that best summarizes the ideal of the United Front as it has been understood since 1949 is *qiu tong cun yi*, meaning "seeking the common ground, while reserving difference." With regard to religious policy, the common ground (*tong*) is that of patriotism, socialist reconstruction or modernization, while the differences (*yi*) are differences in ideological or religious belief and in worldview. The idea of *qiu tong cun yi*, however, has much broader implications, both within the united front and outside of it.¹⁹⁰

189 Chen, Interview.

190 Philip L. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front*. xxi.

The idea of *qiu-tong-cun-yi* (求同存異) means the recognition of each other's differences and the pursuit of similarities of each other. Through the attitude of *qiu-tong-cun-yi* (求同存異), TSPM sought the co-existence between Christianity and Communism, which is based on materialism. In fact, TSPM has played a role in protecting Christian Churches under the Communist Government by minimizing the differences between the two.

The Fourth Position demonstrates the attitude of “seeking the common ground, while preserving difference (*qiu-tong-cun-yi*, 求同存異).” The Fourth Position, as an intermediary position of TSPM and CHCs, not only preserves differences but also seeks the common ground within them. An example of preserving differences, the Fourth Position not only pursues religious freedom of CHCs and but also shows patriotic attitude to the State like TSPM. The common ground between the two are their biblical beliefs, such as monotheism, Trinity, salvation, and Christology, or Chinese cultural identity. Because of its attitude of *qiu-tong-cun-yi*, the Fourth Position can play the role of “the Third Way,” which reduces differences and release tensions between TSPM and CHCs as TSPM reduces tension between CCP and Chinese Christianity.

The second is that the Fourth Position shows the attitude of ‘mutual respect’ of TSPM. This idea of ‘mutual respect’ is a basic theological consideration for TSPM. H. H. Tsui defines the importance of this spirit:

The most distinctive feature of our unity is that it is based on the principle of mutual respect in matters of faith. We are all aware that although there are many different schools of theology within Christianity, our faith is yet fundamentally the same. The reason we must have mutual respect, therefore, is that Christians, the knowledge, understanding and experience of this similarity in matters of faith varies in intensity, in depth, and in emphasis. Put in another way, this means that the faith of each denomination or group preserves “small differences” within a “great

unity.”¹⁹¹

The spirit of mutual respect had a profound effect on protecting Christian Churches from CCP through dialogue with the government.

The Fourth Position shows the attitude of mutual respect just as TSPM did. On the one hand, the Fourth Position follows and respects the religious freedoms of CHCs. At the same time, the Fourth Position also respects its obligation and responsibility to the State as a member of TSPM. The mutual respect of the Fourth Position can play a positive role in diminishing the differences between the TSPM (or the state) and CHCs.

D. Positive Evaluations

There are positive evaluations for them. People, who have positive evaluation for TSPM Registration Position, call it as ‘the third way (第三條路線).’ It describes the intermediate position between house churches and TSPM church. It contains the positive meaning to pursue the reconciliation between house churches and TSPM churches.

Chui, a leader of CHC in Beijing area, expressed his opinion toward TSPM Registration Position:

We need to evaluate TSPM Registration Position. They did a great achievement within TSPM. When they registered themselves under TSPM, they did not just follow instructions of CCP and TSPM. Rather, they struggled to defend their religious freedom. Through their struggle and protest, they defended their religious freedom and independency for internal affairs. For example, they can choose their ministers by themselves, not by TSPM. I heard that a church of TSPM Registration planted a new church in other province. TSPM Registration Position can be a reasonable solution for CHCs, because it not only acquires legitimacy

191 H. H. Tsui, “We must Consolidate and Expand Our Unity,” TF 464 (May 16, 1955) p 346.

of CHCs, but also successfully depends its independency and religious freedom for its internal affairs.¹⁹²

Liu Tongsu describes TSPM Registration Position like this:

Nobody can define them as surrenders or them as apostates because of their registration and joining TSPM. The principle is black and white. But, the tree of life is always green. A thing should be defined as white or black by its principle. However, life is rich, colorful and complicated. The glory of the life cannot be measured by principle of black and white. We cannot and should not judge confusing and complicated specific circumstances of each region in a word or simple radical slogans. China is rapidly changing now in its social structure. It can be regarded as a brave attempt of house churches to solve the problem in rapid changes of Chinese society. I believe that everything gives mutual benefits each other.¹⁹³

Liu Tongsu rejects the notion that members of TSPM Registration Position have surrendered. Further, Zang, who is a house churches leader in B area, demonstrates his great hope about it by suggesting this approach as ‘the third way.’ He believes that it can be the solution to the conflict between the state and house churches, “the third way can provide the new way for reconciliation between TSPM and house churches.”¹⁹⁴

E. Negative Evaluations

Contrast to positive evaluations, there are various critiques for TSPM Registration Position. Some regard them as an apostasy group, which gave up the purity of the faith for the benefit of the reality. Liang Jialing suggests that a major problem with TSPM Registration is the lack of assurance regarding independence and freedom for internal affairs of the church.

When a house churches register to the government through joining TSPM, it means that the church lose its right of finance, ordination of clergy, and

181 Chui, Interview.

193 Ibid., 292.

194 Zang, Interview.

personnel management for its senior pastor. It means that the house churches admit the control of the government in internal affairs of the church. Registration through TSPM cannot guarantee its independency from the government and its religious freedom for internal affairs.¹⁹⁵

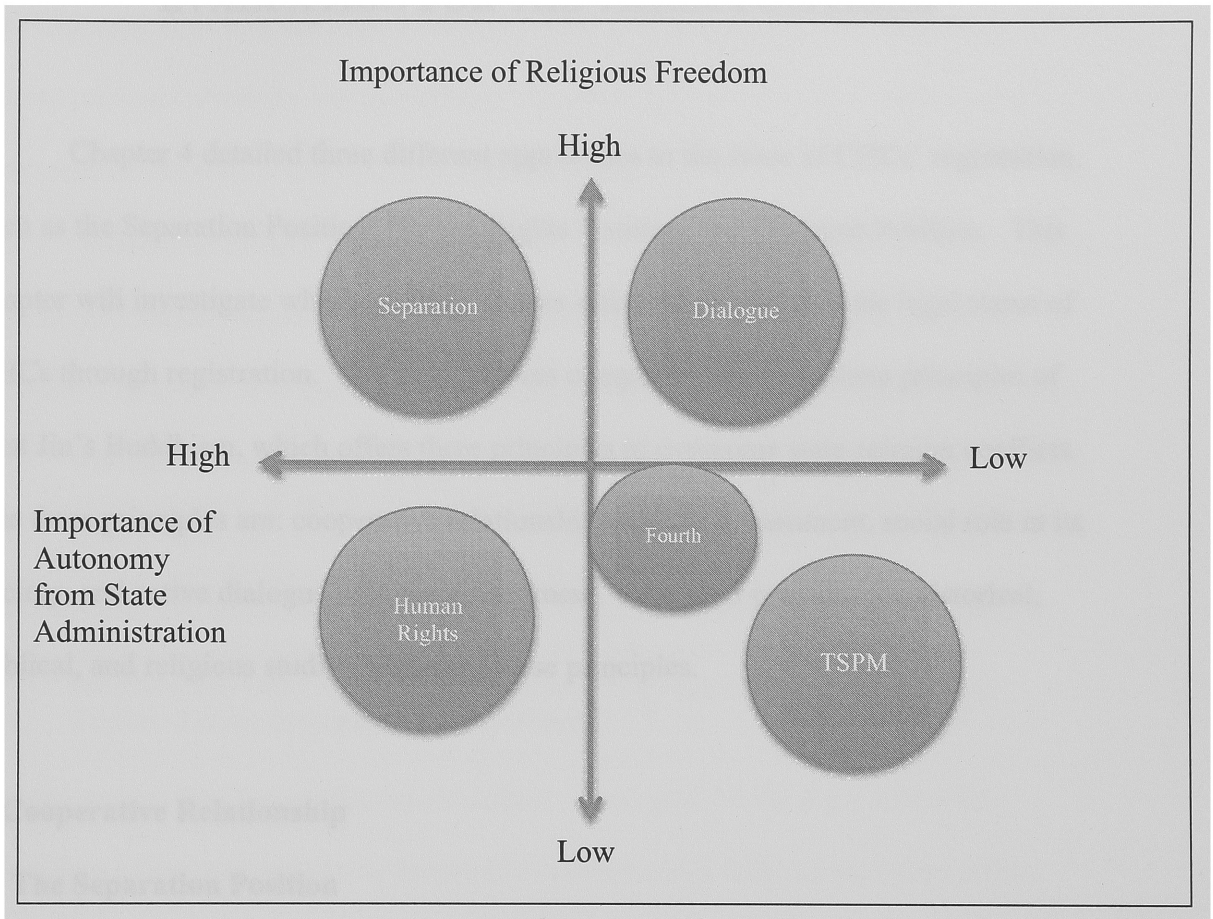
According to Jialing, after registering with TSPM a house churches 'is submissive to the government and put under the full control of the government.'¹⁹⁶ This could be considered surrenders to governmental authority. TSPM Registration Parties unwillingness to express their position on Registration might be a result of these and other critiques.

F. Conclusion

There are two different (negative and positive) evaluations for TSPM Registration Position. Leaders of TSPM Registration Position have been criticized for joining TSPM. However, at the same time, some acknowledge the positive outcomes resulting from their struggle for independence and pursuit of new paths for solving the existing conflict.

In conclusion, TSPM Registration Position cannot be considered a reasonable solution for CHCs' legitimacy. It is because most CHCs believe that the Registration Party crossed insurmountable line as a CHC. Most Christians of CHCs regard them as apostasy group and lost its identity as a CHC. It is why TSPM Registration Position is excluded in Sun Mingyi's three positions.

195 Tongsu Liu (劉同蘇), *Regarding to the Registration of Chinese house churches*, 291.
196 Ibid., 291.

Figure 3. Various Positions of Chinese Churches

CHAPTER 5

EVALUATION FOR THE THREE POSITIONS

Chapter 4 detailed three different approaches to the issue of CHCs' registration, such as the Separation Position, Human Rights Position, and Dialogue Position. This chapter will investigate which position is more effective at resolving the legal status of CHCs through registration. This analysis was completed using the three principles of East Jin's Buddhism, which offers three principles to overcome state-religion conflicts. The three principles are: cooperative relationship with the government, social role in its society, and active dialogue with the government. Chapter 3 provides the historical, Biblical, and religious studies' values of these principles.

I. Cooperative Relationship

A. The Separation Position

The relationship between the Separation Position and CCP can be defined in three ways. First, their attitude to the government is 'limited obedience.' Although they have been persecuted severely by the government, they have demonstrated their love and respect of authority for the state by maintaining their attitude of obedience to the ruling power. Fang, who is a leader of a rural area's CHCs, describes 'limited obedience' like this.

Chinese Christians love our country. Our Patriotism is not coming from nationalism or socialism. Our love to China is coming from our God. God loves the world. Our love to the country is based on the love of God. However, our love for the country only exists in the love of God.

Therefore, if the policy of the country is conflict with our belief, we cannot follow the policy of the government.¹⁹⁷

As Fang says, CHCs' patriotism is based on a love of God. Because of this, their patriotism is not absolute, but conditional. In other words, the Separation Position's obedience to the state is subservient to the command of God.

Within this context, it is important to note that the Separation Position is not anti-state or anti-social. Despite persecution and suffering, members of the Separation Position continue to love and respect to their country. During an interview, Liang says:

No matter how the church is persecuted, the church should not be anti-governmental. Even if the church is broken and Christians are beaten, the church must take the role of being the salt and light of the world. The church should demonstrate its love, kindness, serving attitude and friendship to the state and its society. The Early Church also was not anti-governmental in the Roman Empire, which gave its cruel persecution to the Early Church. The Early Church could be legalized because the Early Church did not become anti-governmental.¹⁹⁸

The Separation Position continued obedience and respect for the state, offers the possibility of success in forming cooperative relationships with the state except the religious freedom.

However, despite the Separation Position's limited obedience, members are also extremely distrustful of the state. During an interview, Lin exhibits this deep distrust by saying:

Some day, a Chinese policeman told me "it is absolutely impossible for the Chinese Communist Party to trust underground Churches and give freedom to them." I totally agree with his opinion. It is because CCP believes that the reason of the destruction of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe's Communism in 1990s is their failing to control the religious forces' (such as the Catholic and Orthodox) social influence to their society. The Chinese government has been controlling religion for the

197 Fang, Interview.

198 Liang, Interview.

past 60 years with its all capabilities. The government will try to control religion thoroughly in order to maintain their political system and interests.¹⁹⁹

Lin firmly believes that the government won't change its strict control policy toward CHCs easily and won't give religious freedom to CHCs in the near future. The deep distrust of the Separation Position toward the state originated from 60 years of suffering. Because of Biblical teaching, they obey and respect the state, however, they do not have any intention of building cooperative relationships with the state.

The third aspect of the Separation Position is its passivity toward the state. Fang and Lin describe the underground churches' passivity toward the local government as follows:

Chinese house churches always have been under the government's persecution. When persecution comes, we not only did not go away but also did not protest to the state. When the officials of the state catch us, we are caught without any protest. When they imprison us, we are just put into jail. We believe in the sovereignty of God. We know that we are in the hands of God. Therefore, we do not rely on anyone, but God. There is no need to change the relationship with the government. God has His time schedule. God will change it in His time.²⁰⁰

God reign all parts of Chinese society such as social, economic, political, and religions etc. I believe that it is God's will that house churches still remain in persecution and contradiction without solving the registration. Through persecution and suffering, house churches can maintain its purity and provide pure Christians to God. Chinese house churches are not supposed to try to change its relationship with the government.²⁰¹

The interviews with Fang and Lin demonstrate well their passivity about the relationship with the state. They do not have any intention to actively improve or develop the relationship with the state. This passivity can be explained, in part, by their Calvinistic beliefs in the absolute sovereignty of God. The absolute sovereignty of God is

199 Lin, Interview.

200 Fang, Interview.

201 Lin, Interview.

Biblical teaching. However, when people put too much emphasis on the absolute sovereignty of God, there is the risk of weakening the efforts and duties of the Church and Christians to society.

In summary, the relationship between the state and the Separation Position can be defined as limited obedience, deep distrust, and extreme passivity. It is very important that the Separation Position does not demonstrate anti-state or anti-society tendency despite the severe sustaining persecution of the government. However, the deep distrust and passivity of the Separation Position limits the formation of cooperative relationships between CHCs and the state.

B. Human Rights Position

In contrast, the Human Rights Position actively pursues a cooperative relationship with the state. Members of the Human Rights Position declare, “Christians certainly should obey the government and should respect social order and public interests with its cooperative relationship with the state” in their booklet, ‘Guidance for Christians’ Human Right.’²⁰²

However, the relationship between the state and Human Rights Position can also be defined as a relationship of tension, not only one of cooperation and obedience. This tension arises because of their view that the state needs to be reformed in order to preserve basic human rights. They believe that the authoritative government does not protect human rights nor ensure ‘the rule of law.’ They believe that because CCP does not observe the law and violates human rights, Christians of CHCs suffer with their illegal status. The Human Rights Position tries to build a civil society in Chinese society

202 Fan Li (李凡), “Christianity and the Development of Chinese Politic,” 46.

by limiting the power of the authoritative government. Zeng, who is a member of the Human Rights Position, describes the relationship between Human Rights Position and the government like this.

We do not use the term, 'patriotism.' We can admit the patriotism in a large scale. However, we cannot admit the patriotism in the sense of forcing people to support the state system uncritically. We should keep our critical attitude to the government. We should raise our voices to the state such as preserving the value of the Constitution, changing laws, and improving the policies for people.²⁰³

They believe that they should put pressure on the government to ensure the human rights and religious freedom established by the constitution. However, this pressure does not advocate overthrowing the government through violence. They seek to change the policy of the state through a 'non-violent disobedience movement.' They believe that a non-violent disobedience movement, such as the Non-violent Independence Movement of Gandhi and the Civil Rights Movement of Martin Luther King Jr, can make changes in governmental policy.

In conclusion, the Human Rights Position also struggles to build cooperative relationships with the state because they hope, through political pressure, they can achieve their political goals. Because of this, the relationship between the state and the Human Rights Position can be seen as one of conflict rather than collaboration.

C. The Dialogue Position

The Dialogue Position seems to have more faith in the government than either the Separation Position or the Human Rights Position. They believe that a 'constructive

203 Zeng, Interview.

relationship' with the state is achievable. Chiu describes this constructive relationship between the state and Dialogue Position as such:

The cooperative and constructive relationship can be built between the state and house churches. The separation of religion and politics has not occurred yet in China. However, even United States had the process of separation of church and state for 200 to 300 years. The relationship of state-religion should be developed through mutual exchanges and cooperation on an equal basis. The church is a part of the society. The government should give religious freedom to Christianity and should not interfere with it. If Christians contribute to maintain the social order and be obedient to the state as a part of the society, the separation of state-religion is going to be happened in the future.²⁰⁴

Chiu firmly believes in the formation of a cooperative relationship with the state. He regards equality, mutual cooperation, and mutual exchanges as the nature of a cooperative relationship with the state. He also believes that equality, mutual cooperation, and mutual exchanges can happen only through the separation of religion and the state. He admits that the separation of religion and the state has been achieved in Chinese society. However, he believes that the separation of religion and the state has begun and is achievable in the near future.

Li explains their faith of the formation of the cooperative relationship with the government through the historical development of CCP's views on religions.

From 1950s through 1970s, the Chinese government's view on religions is the perspective of 'Opium.' Religions were evil and should be gotten rid of from the society. However, from 1980s to 200s, the Chinese government changed its religious view into the perspective of 'United Front.' In this time, religion did not disappear, rather increased its influence to the society. Then, the government decided to use religions in the direction of contributing the society and the country. From 2010s to 2040s, the religious view of the government shall be changed into the perspective of 'Civilization.' In order to be a leader in the international society, China has to solve the conflict of state-religion in near future.²⁰⁵

204 Chiu, Interview.

205 Li, Interview.

Lin asserts that the government's perspective on religion is developed from 'Opium' to "United Front,' and from 'United Front' to 'Civilization.' At first, the state tried to annihilate religions in China because religions were regarded as opium. However, CCP relaxed that stance because they needed cooperation with religious believers to assist with the construction of socialism. Li believes that the state will recognize the benefits of religion further in the future. The Dialogue Position believes in the formation of cooperative and constructive relationships because of the development of the state's perspective on religions.

The Dialogue Position's faith in the formation of cooperative and equal relationship with the state was derived from its historical experience. The Dialogue Position is based on 'Emerging Urban house churches (EUHC).' Because EUHC has formed since 1990s, EUHC had never experienced the harsh persecutions of previous times, like during the Cultural Revolution. EUHC's lack of severe persecution, compared with traditional house churches in rural areas, makes it more confident about the separation of state and religion, and the viability of building cooperative and constructive relationship with the state.

D. Conclusion

East Jin's Buddhism did not display anti-state or anti-social tendencies even when it was under severe persecution by the East Jin dynasty. Rather, they demonstrated they were loyal and faithful to the state and the Emperor. They emphasized that monks prayed and blessed the Emperor everyday. The efforts of the East Jin's Buddhism to build

cooperative relationships with the reigning dynasty contributed to the resolution of the conflict between the state and Buddhism.

The Separation Position also does not demonstrate anti-state tendency. However, it demonstrates deep distrust and passivity by utilizing a strategy of limited obedience toward the state. The Human Rights Position considers the state as a barrier that needs to be overcome and wants to restrict governmental power in order to improve civil society and ensure protection of human rights in Chinese society. The Human Rights Position distrusts the state because they believe that the state fails to protect human right. Because of its distrust of the state, the state regards the Human Rights Position as a force of social instability.

On the contrary, the Dialogue Position demonstrates more confidence than the Separation and the Human Rights Position. It believes in the formation of an equal and constructive relationship with the state. Because of its short history, lack of severe persecution, and support of changes in the state's religious policies, the Dialogue Position has faith in the formation of a constructive and cooperative relationship with the state. In conclusion, it seems that the Dialogue Position demonstrates the most similar position with the East Jin's Buddhism for the formation of a cooperative relationship with the state compared to the Separation and Human Rights Parties.

II. Active Dialogue

A. The Separation Position

The Separation Position demonstrates two opinions about having dialogue with the state, which is the second principle of East Jin's Buddhism. The first opinion is that

dialogue with the state is unnecessary, particularly related to the registration issue.

Members of the Separation Position believe that it is impossible to change the government through dialogue. Fang, who supports the Separation Position, expresses his opinion about this issue as follows.

It is useless for house churches to talk with the government. The dialogue with the state does not solve the problem. But, it rather makes troubles by irritating the government. It is impossible for us to have a constructive dialogue with the government because of the lack of trust between the state and house churches. Light cannot coexist with darkness.²⁰⁶

Fang's remark demonstrates the Separation Position's distrust and negative view of the state. One of the consequences of years of persecution by the government is a deep distrust that prevents simple dialogue as a viable method for resolving this issue. In fact, there is a belief that dialogue with the state only brings more difficulties for CHCs members.

Another reason the Separation Position rejects the use of dialogue as a strategy is based in theology. Members of the Separation Position believe in absolute sovereignty of God. Fang provides more details in the following excerpt from a recent interview. .

God reign all areas of China including the government. Why the legitimacy is not given to house churches? Why God, our Lord does not give us the legitimacy? It is because it is better for house churches to remain illegitimacy in God's plan. Everything is under God's control. Therefore, we do not need to actively have dialogue with the government. God will give us the legitimacy in His time.²⁰⁷

While the absolute sovereignty of God, based on Calvinistic theology, is firmly a biblical theology, some suggest that it undermines human effort and responsibility because failures and lack of action can be attributed to God's will. For example, a critique of the

²⁰⁶ Fang, Interview.

²⁰⁷ Fang, Interview.

Separation Position is that it fails to engage in dialogue with the state because of an overemphasis on the sovereignty of God.

The second opinion of the Separation Position is its passive and reactionary dialogue with the state. Fang describes it as follows.

When we have a conversation with a subject, we should consider our social position comparing to the subject. We should decide the degree of dialogue in compliance with the social position. The dialogue should be different depending on the positions such as equal, superior, or inferior between two dialoguers. Chinese house churches definitely do not have equal position with the government. Therefore, house churches cannot actively attempt to dialogue with the state. We are in a position to answer the questions of the government passively. The purpose of our dialogue should be expressing our faith and solving misunderstandings of the state as responds of the state's questions.²⁰⁸

Fang asserts that the relationship between the state and CCP is not equal, but reflects the superiority of the state. Within this hierarchy, CHCs' belief in the sovereignty of God prevents it from actively engaging with the state. Instead, interaction is passive and in reaction to situations that are necessary for member's safety. A typical example of reactionary dialogue occurs during trials of CHCs' members. Lin offers the following examples.

A pastor of house churches in my area was accused and imprisoned by the government because of its illegal gathering for religious activity. Then, a Christian lawyer of our area defended the pastor against the government in the trial. In the trial, when the pastor was accused, the lawyer explained the situation of CHCs and tried to make the judge understand it to depend him. It is a dialogue with the state.²⁰⁹

To sum up, the Separation Position asserts the uselessness of the dialogue with the state. This belief that dialogue is not necessary is based on; the inequality between the state and CHCs; its experience of persecution; and its belief in the absolute sovereignty of

208 Fang, Interview.

209 Lin, Interview.

God's strength. When necessary, the Separation Position does engage in dialogue with the state, but only when necessary for member's safety. In general, the Separation Position rejects the notion that dialogue is a viable strategy to resolve the legitimacy problem of CHCs.

B. Human Rights Position

In contrast, the Human Rights Position does not reject the dialogue with the state, but affirms it actively. However, the Human Rights Position's dialogue with the state does not disperse the tension between the state and CHCs, but rather increases it. This relationship is unique, because of the objectives of the Human Rights Position, which are the legalization of CHCs and the protection of human rights.

When a house churches is persecuted, the priority of the Human Rights Position is to protect the human rights and religious freedom of the members. Li Fan (李凡) describes the protection of human rights as follows.

We, Christians, must submit to the government and cooperate with the government to defend the social order and public interest. However, when the government restricts the freedom of the Christian faith in violation of the Constitution or laws, we should take the right of religious freedom in using various rights of the Constitution and laws. It is our un-negotiable right to worship and serve our God.²¹⁰

The Human Rights Position regards dialogue with the state as a mean of achieving their goals of religious freedom and human rights. They engage in active discussions with the state as a means of putting pressure on the state in order to attain their goal. The Human Rights Position aims to change government policy through this pressure. Liu Tongsu describes using dialogue as a tool of pressure.

210 Fan Li (李凡), *Christianity and the Development of Chinese Politic*, 46.

In order to complete the legalization of house churches, we have to not only appeal to men of power of the state, but also make a statement to the legislature. It can be making a petition for legislation or submitting the draft of legislative proposal to the General Convention of Chinese Communist Party. We should notify the need of legislation for house churches public through the mass media or other means. It can be a very effective for giving pressure on the state to change its policy. Demonstration parade also can be another way to giving pressure on the state.²¹¹

To the Human Rights Position, dialogue is a way to protect its legitimate rights under the Constitution. Its intent is not to use dialogue as a means of mutual understanding and conflict resolution, instead viewing it as a means of changing governmental policy. This approach also raises tension and conflict between the state and CHCs.

C. The Dialogue Position

The Dialogue Position believes that the illegitimacy of CHCs should be solved through constructive dialogue with the state. They have faith in building a constructive relationship with the state and having trustful communication with the state. According to Li this is necessary.

The Church should communicate with the government. Suspicion between the state and house churches shall be increased without the dialogue. In the absence of communication, the state can see house churches as a threat to them. Dialogue can promote mutual understanding and defuse tensions between the government and house churches. We, Christians, should broaden exchanges and understanding through formal and informal meetings with Police, Civil Affairs Bureau (CAB), and United Front Bureau (UFB).²¹²

Jin's critique of the Dialogue Position's is this belief is too optimistic, stressing the impossibility of meaningful dialogue with the state.

211 Tongsu Liu (劉同蘇), *Regarding to the Registration of Chinese house churches*, 229

212 Li, Interview.

It is impossible to have constructive dialogue with the state. There is no dialogue, but only monologue between the state and house churches. It is true that house churches want to communicate with the government officials. However, they do not want to have communication with house churches leaders. Sometimes, there are communications with lower-level officials. However, these cannot be regarded as true communication. In fact, communication with high-level official, which can create changes of policy, does not exist.²¹³

Jin asserts that the current dialogue is only conducted with lower-level officials.

Therefore, it is not meaningful dialogue that will bring changes in governmental policy because of this limitation. In spite of this criticism, the usefulness of dialogue is still supported by the Dialogue Position. Li believes that CHCs' effort of consistent dialogue is an important key in solving the registration problem in the future.

House churches are now coming out from underground to public. House churches cannot change the government's policy through a few conversations in short time. However, governmental officials are changing mind to house churches and Christians of house churches also are changing their mind to governmental officials through the dialogue. The dialogue with the government also can broaden social space for house churches. We should keep efforts in communication with the state. If house churches kept its growth and did not stop its communication with the state, the registration problem will be solved in the future.²¹⁴

The Dialogue Position asserts various ways of communication with the state not only direct dialogue, but also indirect dialogue. First, the Dialogue Position believes that academic conferences could be considered indirect dialogue with the state. For example, the Universal Academy of Social Sciences held 'the 'Beijing University Summit Conference for Religion and Society' to discuss the illegal status of CHCs and the issue of registration at the Beijing University 2008. Leaders of CHCs, scholars, and officials of the government attended the summit conference. Fifteen scholars and church leaders

213 Jin, Interview.

214 Li, Interview.

released twenty opinion papers from the conference. Li regards academic conference as a way of indirect communication.

Academic conference can be a way of communication between house churches and the government. Articles and resources of conference can help governmental officials to understand the real situation of house churches. If governmental officials have a chance to hear house churches leaders' opinion through academic conference, it can be very helpful to build the constructive relationship of state-church.²¹⁵

Second, Li suggests that incidents and conflicts, which happen between the government and CHCs members, are another way of indirect dialogue. Incident and conflicts can deliver messages between two.

The *Shouwang* church incident is a dialogue between the government and house churches. I think that dialogue means delivering my messages to the subject. House churches give a message to the state through the *Shouwang* church incident. Its message is that the *Shouwang* church tried to observe regulations and rules of the state. They applied registration in accordance with the law and they failed to register. In this situation, they did not use violence, but just secure their freedom to worship. Its message is that the purpose of house churches is not opposing the government, but just pursuing their freedom to worship. Through incidents, house churches can deliver its message to the state.²¹⁶

The government and CHCs are in an unequal relationship. Direct dialogue is difficult in unequal relationships. Incidents and conflicts offer an efficient way of communication under in this situation.

D. Conclusion

The Separation Position asserts that direct dialogue with the government is useless based on a deep distrust formed from years of persecution and suffering. Even though they engage in communication with the government, their dialogue is passive and

²¹⁵ Li, Interview.

²¹⁶ Li, Interview.

reactionary to the state's inquiry. This passivity can result in mutual misunderstanding. Both can feel more suspicion and threats each other. The absence of communication between the two can hinder a resolution to the state-CHCs' conflict. It seems that the Separation Position's passive and negative attitude toward dialogue does not follow East Jin Buddhism's active dialogue with East Jin dynasty.

The Human Rights Position aggressively engages in active dialogue with the government through various methods. It actively demonstrates its opinion to the government and society through published booklets, such as 'Guidance for Christian's Human Rights,' legislative petitions, mass media and demonstrations. However, the purpose of this dialogue is not mutual understanding and lower of tensions between the two groups. Instead, the purpose is to put pressure on the government in order to change religious and human rights policies. The result will be increased suspicions, tension and conflict between the state and CHCs, not mutual understanding and resolution of the conflict. It seems that the Human Rights Position's dialogue also does not follow the second principal of East Jin Buddhism because of this anti-state tendency.

The Dialogue Position asserts the possibility of building a constructive relationship, and constructive dialogue, with the government. They communicate with the government through not only direct dialogue, but also indirect dialogue such as academic conferences and various incidents. They believe that dialogue can increase mutual understanding and broaden their social space in Chinese society. The Dialogue Position does not demonstrate anti-state tendencies. It seems that the Dialogue Position's strategy of active dialogue is similar to strategies used by East Jin Buddhists during the East Jin Era.

III. Social role

A. The Separation Position

While the Separation Position holds a negative stance on the churches' participation in society and social role, it does not totally reject the social role of the church. However, Lin believes this participation in society should be limited to an individual level.

God commend us to be the salt and light to the world. We, Christians, should not only preach the gospel, but also play the role as the salt and light in our society. However, it is personal calling to be the salt and light. God give it to individual Christians, not the church. If house churches involve in a social issue to be the salt and the light, the government will misunderstand the intent of the house churches and mistreat it.²¹⁷

The Separation Position does not deny God's commandment to be the salt and the light for the society. However, it denies the church's social role and participation in social issues as a social organization. Rather, it argues Christians can contribute to their society in a personal dimension by obeying God's command. When the church's social participation is limited to individual level, it is clear that the social role of the church is weakened.

There are two reasons why the Separation Position limits the church's social role to an individual level. The first is 'Spiritual Ecclesiology' of the Separation Position. It does not identify the Church as a social organization within society. It only recognizes the Church as the 'body of Christ', thus it is a divine institution. As a result, the church's responsibility is to preach the gospel, not engage in activities within society. The

²¹⁷ Lin, Interview.

‘Spiritual Ecclesiology’ weakens the Church’s social responsibility, but strengthens its spiritual responsibility.

The second reason is based from experience of the Separation Position members. Most churches and Christians of the Separation Position have experienced long periods of persecution and suffering. They are forced to gather and worship secretly as an unregistered illegal religious community. In this situation, they have to focus on their survival, not on the social role of the church. This severe persecution hinders their ability to fulfill their social role.

In conclusion, the Separation Position limits the Church’s social role and social participation to an individual level. It emphasizes the preaching of the gospel as the Church’s spiritual responsibility. However, it overlooks the churches' social responsibilities, which is another commandment of Christ. The weakening of the Church’s social role has a negative impact on the state-CHCs conflict.

B. Human Rights Position

The Human Rights Position displays the most active attitude toward the social role of the Church. The Human Rights Position does not focus on social services and charity of the Church, but focuses on political goals such as protecting human rights and building a civil society. Their goal is the construction of a civil society through social transformation. Because of this goal, Yejie (余杰) suggests that the political tasks, such as a human rights movement and promoting democracy, can be considered as part of its social role.

Christians are not only people of the Heaven, but also citizens of the earthly country. Christians should learn the lifestyle of democracy in the

Church. Chinese Christianity is the most important element in the democratization and the construction of the Civil Society in China.²¹⁸

Christian intellectuals' role is important to the development of Chinese society. Their role and serving should not be limited only inside the Church. Christianity should involve in social issues and contribute to the public interest of the society. The values of Christian faith should be exposed more and more in public life and activities.²¹⁹

Li Fan (李凡) defines the house churches movement as a 'bottoms-up voluntary civil right movement.'²²⁰ He believes that CHCs' pursuit of religious freedom contributes to the political development of Chinese society through the protection of human rights.

In the process of political development in Chinese society, there is an emergence of the bottom-up voluntary civil right movement. It is the unregistered house churches movement. Religious freedom is a part of human rights. So, house churches' pursuit for religious freedom is already a part of the civil right movement. Whether they wish or not, whether they are positive or negative, they are already involved in the civil right movement. When they pursue their religious freedom, they, in fact, join the civil right movement for the reformation of Chinese society.²²¹

The Human Rights Position's emphasis on social services leads to criticism of conservative traditional house churches. Jin criticized the lack of social participation of other house churches like following.

Christians should raise a transformation in Chinese society for its development. However, current Chinese Christians fell into quietism and mysticism as European Christians did in 17th and 18th century. They remain cautious and discreet to social issues. They do nothing for the social development, while they only worry their safety and comfort.²²²

218 Yujie (余杰), *Dialogue of Yujie and Wangyi for the house churches's Openness*, Christ Daily Paper, 1. “余杰與王怡談中國家庭教會公開化趨勢” 基督日報. 2009-11-06, 1.

http://www.gospelherald.ca/template/news_view.htm?code=soc&id=1073#.UNMmGqXj5UQ
219 Ibid, 2.

220 Fan Li (李凡), *Christianity and the Development of Chinese Politic*, 39.

221 Ibid., 39.

222 Jin, Interview.

As stated, the goal of the Human Rights Position is improvement, from a political perspective, of human rights, democracy, and civil society. This goal places members in conflict with governmental goals, potentially increasing incidents of severe persecution and conflict with the government. Because of their radical approach to political issues and potential for conflict with the state, traditional house churches members like Chui and Li from the Dialogue Position, criticize the Human Rights Position.

Human right is a byproduct of the Gospel. If we pursue the Gospel, the human right will be given to us. Christians' priority is preaching the Gospel to unbelievers. Definitely, we have to face and solve the illegal status of house churches and conflict with the government. However, it is not our priority to do. The first thing to do is preaching the Gospel.²²³

House churches should keep away from the Human Rights Position. The Church is not civil organization for the human right. The Church should be Gospel-centered. The cultural mission cannot be ahead of the gospel mission. The Church can influence the society through its spiritual functions such as prayer, worship, and the Word of God. If house churches are connected with the civil movement, house churches will be attacked from the government. We have duty to protect God's church.²²⁴

Li summarizes the majority of conservative house churches criticism of the Human Rights Position. First, he states that the Human Rights Position puts more emphasis on social participation and function than the Gospel. As a result, he suggests that party members have lost the priority of the Gospel. Second, the government's attack and persecution of CHCs is connected with the civil right movement. The Chinese government has taken a hard line against civil rights activists. Lin believes that CHCs members should not be endangered because of non-intrinsic activities by the church such as the civil right movement and political development. The majority of house churches

223 Jin, Interview.

224 Li, Interview.

are conservative. The Human Rights Position members are a minority within CHCs. Most conservative house churches are concerned about the Human Rights Position.

However, positive opinions about the Human Rights Position's social participation still exists among some of the house churches leaders, although it is the minority view. Jin, who is a minister of CHCs, evaluated the civil right movement as follows.

What has Chinese Church done for the development of the human rights? Chinese did nothing for the development of Chinese society. Obviously, it is unsuitable for ministers to lead the civil right movement in front of the Chinese society. However, I believe that Chinese Church should embrace and support the civil right movement. Who can do this except Chinese Church?²²⁵

In conclusion, the Human Rights Position demonstrates the most positive attitude toward the Church's social role and participation in society. Its goal of social participation is to improve the development of Chinese politic. It is apparent that both negative and positive opinions coexist inside house churches.

C. The Dialogue Position

The Dialogue Position asserts that CHCs should actively participate in social issues and play a function in society. They believe that CHCs should respond to diverse social needs. Jin explains it as follows.

Christian church should involve in specific diverse social issues. For example, birth control policy, failure of moralism, spread of mammonism, and problems of urban labors should be responded by house churches. Chinese society is now suffering due to the destruction of the community. The church should put efforts on the recovery of community, the value of human and family, and raising human responsibility. This is the value of

²²⁵ Jin, Interview.

the Church's existence. The church should be the blessing for the society.²²⁶

The Dialogue Position differs from the Human Rights Position in how this social participation should occur. The Human Rights Position focuses on the political aspects, such as the protection of human right, democracy and construction of the civil society, where as the Dialogue Position emphasizes social services, such as a morality movement, charity campaign, and community services. From the perspective of urban house churches, Li describes the church's diverse social services.

The church should be the salt and the light of the world. In the rapid urbanization process in China, a lot of social problems have been caused. The church should respond to these social problems with its social mission. The church can serve its community with diverse services and activities such as sport activities, art class, computer class, legal consultation, and classes for the old. It also can be the way of delivering the Gospel to them. In other way, the church can celebrate Christmas with its community together. Through these, we should defeat the darkness, and bring the light in our city.²²⁷

In addition, Li asserts that disaster relief projects are another example of the church's social participation. He introduces 'Love Action' (愛心行動) as a representative disaster relief project. The 'Love Action' project was the Christian non-governmental organization (NGO) rescue activities during the 2008 Sichuan earthquake.

House churches raised 'Love Action' movement in 2008 Sichuan earthquake. It demonstrates the future direction, which house churches should go. It is our duty to comfort and serve our society when our society fell into crisis.²²⁸

The Great Sichuan Earthquake was a deadly earthquake that measured at 8.0 degree intensity. It occurred at 02:28:01 PM on Monday, May 12, 2008 in Sichuan province of

226 Jin, Interview.

227 Li, Interview.

228 Li, Interview.

China. An estimated 68,000 people were killed, 374,000 were wounded, and 18,000 were lost.²²⁹ During this emergency situation, Chinese Christians of house churches, such as Huang Rei (黄磊), formally established the Christian NGO, 'Love Action' for emergency disaster relief in May 17, 2008. When they contacted the local government, they did not hide their identity as Christian NGO. They started their voluntary relief activities in cooperation with the local government. At first, seven volunteers worked for emergency rescue, medical support, and support for the People's Liberation Army. Afterward, the 'Love Action' was broadly supported by house churches nationwide. Countless volunteers joined Love Action from house churches. Love Action collected 673,760,44 RMB from house churches members for disaster relief.²³⁰ The wide range of disaster relief project of 'Love Action' touched the heart of local people and the local government in spite of its identity as a Christian NGO. Because of its massive effort, the local government, (*Anxian*, 安縣政府) signed the 'Mutual Cooperation Agreement' with Love Action in Aug 29, 2008. It is the first agreement of CHCs with the Chinese government.²³¹

This effort cannot be attributed to the Dialogue Position alone, because 'Love Action' was supported from house churches nationwide. There was no distinction during the disaster relief project in the Separation Position, the Human Rights Position, and the Dialogue Position. The Dialogue Position because they believe the model of social

229 Edward Wong, "Si Chuan Earthquake," *The New York Times*, May 6, 2009.
http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/science/topics/earthquakes/sichuan_province_china/index.html

230 Lili Xiao, *Research on the Function of Christian Background Civil Society Organizations in Disaster Management: A Case Study of "Love Action,"* (Beijing: Underground Theological Seminary, 2010), 37.

231 *Ibid.*, 40

services such as ‘Love Action’ should be the future direction of CHCs, in contrast to the Separation Position and the Human Rights Position.

Another characteristic of the Dialogue Position’s social role is its balance of the social mission and the gospel mission. The Dialogue Position regards its social role as not only social services itself but also a way of delivering the Gospel. This comes from the Dialogue Position’s ecclesiology. The Dialogue Position believes that the Christian Church has a dual identity as a divine institution and a social organization. *Sun Mingyi* (孫明義) describes this belief:

Christian Church has dual identities as God’s divine institution for Heavenly life and social organization in the earthly life. The dual identities of the church bring dual responsibilities to the church. God’s Church has responsibilities to preach its gospel to unbelievers as the divine institution and to serve the world as civil organization. It is exactly same with what *the Lausanne Covenant* says about Christian Social Responsibility in 1974. It says that “Here too we express penitence both for our neglect and for having sometimes regarded evangelism and social concern as mutually exclusive. Although reconciliation with other people is not reconciliation with God, nor is social action evangelism, nor is political liberation salvation, nevertheless we affirm that evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbor and our obedience to Jesus Christ.”^{232 233}

In this the Dialogue Position is following the tradition of Lausanne Covenant. It seeks a balance between evangelism and social concern in accordance with the Lausanne Covenant. Because of this balance, it can be said that the Dialogue Position embraces goals from both of the Separation Position and the Human Rights Position, evangelism of the Separation Position and social concern of the Human Rights Position.

232 Mingyi Sun, *The Understanding of Emerging Urban house churches in China*, 138

233 Lausanne Covenant. 5. Christian Social Responsibility

<http://www.lausanne.org/en/documents/lausanne-covenant.html>

D. Conclusion

The Separation Position does not acknowledge the Church's social role as its responsibility. Christians of the Separation Position only want social role and participation on individual level because of their ecclesiology. They regard the church as only God's divine institution, not a civil organization. In addition, because of previous suffering, they are uninterested in engaging in social welfare activities, instead they are focusing on survival. The social awareness exhibited by the East Jin Buddhists is not found in the Separation Position.

The Human Rights Position focuses on political issues, such as democracy and civil right movement, and its social role, neglecting social welfare activities. They believe that house churches should commit themselves to the development of the Chinese Politic and the construction of a civil society. They also believe that the political power of the authoritarian government should be restricted to civil society. Because of their radical opinion on political issues, the state recognizes the Human Rights Position as anti-social or an anti-state force. This raises tensions and can cause conflict between the state and CHCs. In contrast, Buddhists of East Jin tried to be recognized as a stabilizing force in East Jin society through its efforts of social welfare. Therefore, the Human Rights Position's radical social agenda within the Chinese politic is different then the East Jin Buddhists social agenda.

The Dialogue Position believes that house churches should be involved in diverse social issues and meet the social needs of people such as charity, education for youth, publication for family, moral movement, and problems of urbanization. The social role of the Dialogue Position could be recognized as a stabilizing force within civil society by

the state. The ministry of ‘Love Action’ can be the representative example for this perspective. Because the local government and the local people agreed this effort had a stabilizing effect, they were willing to sign the ‘Mutual Cooperation Agreement’ with members from ‘Love Action.’ There are similarities between the social role of the East Jin Buddhists and the social role of the Dialogue Position.

Table 1. The Main Points of Four Positions

	Position to Registration	Collaborative Relationship	Social Role	Communication
Separation Position	No Registration	No Contacts	Only on Personal Level	No Communication
Human Rights Position	Independent Registration to CAB	No Pursuing Collaborative/ Give Pressure to Change the Government	Active on Social Role and Social Reform	Using Communication as a Tool of Pressure to the state
Dialogue Position	Independent Registration to RAB	Pursing Constructive Relationship	Active on Social Role	Active on Consistent Communication
Fourth Position	Registration through TSPM	Patriotic	Basically Active (need further study)	Basically Active (need further study)

IV. Conclusive Evaluation for the Three positions

The three positions should be criticized besides the three principles of East Jin Buddhism. In this part, author will evaluate and criticize the three positions conclusively.

A. The Separation Position

In the near future, the Separation Position will no longer be the dominate CHCs which undermines its ability to solve the state-CHCs conflict. Two reasons factor into this issue.

First, because of rapid urbanization, the Separation Position is losing membership. In 1978, which was the first year of reform, the population residing in urban areas was 17.9 %. By 2012, 20 million people a year (1.3% per year) move to into urban areas, leaving the rural areas devoid of potential members and political power.²³⁴

Second, the Separation Position is not keeping pace with social development. The Separation Position's continued rejection of dialogue with the government reflects a lack of understanding of the social role of the church and the changing nature of Chinese society. This is a failing because Christian churches must deliver the Gospel while also serving the needs of society. To accomplish this, CHCs must move from the underground to legitimate status.

B. The Human Rights Position

The Human Rights Position also has difficulty solving the state-CHS conflict because it puts human rights issues before its mission to deliver the Gospel. The first priority of a Christian Church should be the spread of the Gospel according to Biblical teaching. No other values cannot be take priority over the Gospel. However, the Human Rights Position values more secular concepts, such as human right, rule of law, democracy, and the coming of civil society and uses the power of the church to achieve

²³⁴ http://china.joins.com/portal/article.do?method=detail&total_id=10844937

these secular goals. Even though these goals are precious and important values, this contradicts the priorities of most CHCs, who value teaching the Gospel over secular goals.

Second, the Human Rights Position secular agenda is in direct conflict with the political agenda of the Chinese government. This has the potential to cause severe conflicts and social chaos Chinese society. The lack of support by Chinese intellectuals is also a problem. Changes in CCP's policy and goals for a civil society require the support of a solid and strong middle class with high education levels and economic power.

In conclusion, the Human Rights Position can not solve the tension between the state and CHCs because of their secular human rights agenda, their unwillingness to build a cooperative relationship with the government and problems with their theological underpinnings.

C. The Dialogue Position

Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China, the tension between the state and CHCs has weakened. This is reflected by recent changes in religious policies and regulations. In 1950s, Government document No. 19 advocated the termination of all religions in Chinese society. During the era of reform in the 1980s, the CCP allowed limited freedom of religion by reopening TSPM churches. This freedom has expanded even further in the 21st century with the publication of Document No. 426, "Regulations on Religious Affairs," which guarantees many more religious freedoms than previous regulations in 2004.

As tensions weaken, the Dialogue Position offers an effective and practical way to resolve the tension between the state and CHCs because of their willingness to engage in

active dialogue with the state, and their understanding of modern Chinese society, and their adherences to sound biblical ecclesiology.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARIES, CONCLUSIONS, MISSIOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS

I. Summaries

1. CHCs have been treated as illegal religious activities. The Chinese government has restricted religious freedom causing CHC to pursue religious freedom, which has raised conflict and tension against the state. CHC attempted to obtain legitimacy and solve the conflict with the state by registering itself under the proper governmental department.

2. The Chinese government asserts CHC should acquire legitimacy through joining TSPM. Although CHC seek to register in accordance with the Regulations on Religious Affairs, they cannot register without joining TSPM. This is shown through the *Showwang* Church incident. A small number of CHC agree with the need for registration under the umbrella of TSPM.

3. Contrary to the governmental policy for joining TSPM, most CHC refuse to register with the RAB (Religious Affairs Bureau) under TSPM. They prefer an “Independent Registration” to the “TSPM Registration.” Independent Registration would mean CHC should register with the CAB (Civil Affairs Bureau), rather than the RAB, as general social associations such as NGOs. Regarding Independent Registration, there are varying opinions from the Separation Position, the Human Rights Position, and the Dialogue Position about whether it is beneficial.

4. In order to understand the conflict between the Chinese government and CHC, it is necessary to understand the traditional relationship between the state and religion in China. The traditional structure of the Chinese state-religion relationship is “Control-Communal-Rebellious” (Prophetic Function). In the history of China, the separation of religion and the state never happened. Traditionally, the Chinese dynasties sought to control religions as a way of controlling the people. Chinese religions responded in two ways to the state’s attempt to control. First, communal religions, such as Confucianism and the Classic Religion, cooperated with the dynasties and served as a stabilizing force in Chinese society. Secondly, Buddhism and Daoism exhibited anti-government tendencies and were rebellious or demonstrated as transformational, change agents in the society.

5. There is no fundamental change for the traditional state-religion relationship during modern times. The modern relationship between the CCP and CHC can be described as the “Control-Prophetic Function” (Rebellious). The CCP has attempted to control CHC and restricted religious freedom, including all religions within the totalitarianism. It can be proven through Document No. 19 and No. 264 of the CCP. CHC have resisted the religious policy of the state in pursuit of religious freedom. Due to resistance, CHC have played a prophetic function for the social transformation of Chinese society.

6. There is still a positive and optimistic point of view for the development of religious freedom. In spite of the CCP’s control and restrictions on religions, no one can deny the development of religious policies and freedom in China when comparing the 1980s and 2010s. This is demonstrated when comparing Document No. 19 and No. 264.

Document No. 264 does not set a “termination of religions,” which was pursued in Document No. 19 as the final goal. With the development of the religious policy and growth of CHC, there is an optimistic viewpoint for the separation of religion and state, protection of religious freedom, and construction of a civil society with the post-totalitarian government.

7. There have been conflicts between dynasties and various religions for thousands of years of Chinese history. However, the Buddhism of East Jin in 3 AD can be an ideal example for the resolution of the state-religion conflict as an exceptional case in Chinese history. Buddhism of East Jin used three principles to overcome the control and pressures of the East Jin Dynasty. First, Buddhism maintained a cooperative relationship with the government rather than an anti-state or anti-social tendencies even under the state’s persecution. Second, East Jin Buddhism actively communicated with the dynasty and society through publications and appeals to the Emperor. Third, Buddhism performed a social function and emphasized its contribution to society. The three principles of East Jin Buddhism helped solve the conflict with the state and protected its religious freedom. The three principles can be applied to the conflict of the CCP and CHC in modern China.

8. CHCs held three positions regarding the issue of registration: the Separation Position, the Human Rights Position, and the Dialogue Position.

1) The Separation Position’s position is based on the traditional conservative house churches in rural area. They have experienced severe persecution and oppression from the state since the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s. Due to this suffering, they have a deep distrust of the government. They believe

the Church is God's divine institution, not a social organization as its ecclesiology. Since the Church is God's divine institution, the Separation Position believes they have no reason to register with the government.

2) The Human Rights Position consists of the intellectuals from Chinese society such as lawyer, artists, and writers. They set what the public values and are interested in, as well as maintaining goals for establishing the rule of law, human rights, and the construction of a civil society. Their goals are related to political issues. They define the Christian Church as a civil organization in human society, not a divine institute. This definition of the church causes them to put an emphasis on the social responsibility of the church for the development of Chinese society. They support the "Independent Registration" to acquire legitimacy and treat the registration issue as a human rights and legalism issue. The Human Rights Position believes CHC should register and acquire legal status for religious freedom and because the state has a responsibility to observe the law.

3) The Dialogue Position asserts the registration problem should be solved through constructive dialogue and by building a cooperative relationship between the state and CHC. The Dialogue Position has developed from the emerging urban house churches (EUHC) since the 1990s. They did not experience severe persecution as compared to traditional house churches in rural areas. Their experience allows them a higher level of trust toward the state compared to traditional house churches in rural areas. They are willing to accept the administrative authority of the state over house churches. They also recognize religious policies of the state as continuing to develop. Therefore, they believe

registration with the government through “Independent Registration” as an option. They do not expect to solve the registration problem in a short amount of time, but despite possible difficulties, they assert constructive dialogue between the state and CHC as a peaceful way to solve the conflict.

9. In addition to the Separation, the Human Rights, and the Dialogue Position perspective, there is a Fourth Position, the TSPM Registration Position. The TSPM and government position are not in conflict. The TSPM Party asserts that house churches should register under the government by joining TSPM. A fundamental problem with this perspective is the CHCs’ rejection of the TSPM Party has being part of the CCP. CHCs believe that the Registration Party, by fully cooperating with the government, can no longer identify itself as a CHC.

10. The Separation Position does not coincide with the three principles of East Jin Buddhism. First, regarding the cooperative relationship with the state, the Separation Position does not show anti-state or anti-social tendencies even in the midst of severe persecution. Christians of the Separation Position are obedient to the state in accordance with the teachings of the Bible. However, they show a deep distrust of the state because of the suffering they have experienced. They claim absolute separation is necessary between the church and the state by emphasizing the independence and transcendence of the church. Second, regarding dialogue, the Separation Position rejects any kind of dialogue with the state. They believe dialogue with the state will cause further conflict because of mutual misunderstandings and distrust. They are strictly passive concerning dialogue with the state. Third, regarding the social function, they deny the church’s social function and participation in society. The Separation Position admits and recognizes the

mission of delivering God's gospel as the church's mission but they believe social services are the responsibility of Christians on a personal level, not a community level. In summary, the Separation Position is not seeking a cooperative relationship or dialogue with the state, and is not concerned with serving a social function. Therefore, the Separation Position is not a suitable model to solve the state-CHC conflict.

11. Although the Separation Position is not the ideal model to solve the state-religion conflict, it contains value. For example, they preserve the purity of the church, unwilling to compromise, even in the midst of severe suffering. They keep the faith of the absolute sovereignty of God and independence of the church. The values of purity, faith, and independence should be transmitted to new generations of CHC.

12. Aspects of the Human Rights Position demonstrate the three principles of East Jin Buddhism, but not all. First, regarding the cooperative relationship with the state, there is a conflicted relationship instead of a cooperative relationship. The Human Rights Position regards the state as a subject to overcome for the protection of human rights, the realization of legalism, and the construction of a civil society in China. Second, the Party does not deny a dialogue with the state. However, the purpose for dialogue is not mutual understanding or relief of tensions between the state and CHC. It recognizes dialogue as a way of putting pressure on the state in order to change policies. Dialogue with the state raises tension rather than bringing relief of tension. Third, the Human Rights Position most strongly emphasizes the church's participation in society and as a social function. The church is recognized as a social organization in society. It is believed the church has a social responsibility to the society as a social organization. However, the social function focuses on political issues such as the protection of human rights. The Human Rights

Position's emphasis on political issues is another reason for the raised tension and conflict with the state. The conflicted relationship with the state, dialogue as a way of pressure, and an emphasis on political issues do not coincide with the three principles of East Jin Buddhism, therefore, the Human Rights Position is not an ideal model to solve the conflict with the state and registration problem.

13. The Human Rights Position is criticized by traditional conservative Christians of CHCs. Many conservative Christians express their worry and concern over their politically radical views, lack of the gospel mission, and excessive emphasis on the civil rights movement. However, the Party supports values traditional Christians do not. It recognizes the church as a social organization in an earthly society. This awakens the church's identity as a social organization and the social responsibility conservative Christians do not always recognize. In addition, the Human Rights Position contributes to the development of Chinese society through the civil movement for human rights and legalism. Intellectuals of Chinese society recognize and highly evaluate efforts for political reform and bravery against severe persecution from the state. This should be recognized as a huge contribution to the development of Chinese society.

14. The Dialogue Position coincides the most with the three principles of East Jin Buddhism. First, people of the Dialogue Position believe in the building of a constructive relationship with the state and seek a cooperative relationship with the state. They also accept the administrative authority of the state over churches. They have not experienced severe persecution because their churches have emerged rapidly in urban area since the 1990s. The lack of oppression has helped them trust the state. Second, they believe in having constructive dialogue with the state. The purpose of constructive dialogue is for

the relief of tension and conflict through mutual understanding. Third, the Dialogue Position asserts having an active social function and participation in social issues. It admits the dual identity of the church as a divine institute and social organization. The dual identity of the church accentuates the dual responsibilities for mission. The dual responsibilities of the church include social responsibility and its mission to deliver God's gospel to unbelievers. The Dialogue Position includes the Separation Position and the Human Rights Position in its dual ecclesiology and dual responsibilities. In conclusion, the Dialogue Position agrees most with the model of East Jin Buddhism because of the cooperative relationship, active dialogue with the state, and active social function. From the perspective of the three principles of East Jin Buddhism, the Dialogue Position is the most suitable model to solve the registration problem and relieve the conflict of the state and CHC.

15. The presupposition of this research is that the Chinese government has attempted to control religions with totalitarianism. If the state stops controlling religions with post-totalitarianism, this research will lose its presupposition. The civil society can be defined as rule by law, human rights, and separation of the state and religion. The coming of a civil society in Chinese society means the fundamental change in the state-religion relationship of China. It means invalidity of the 'control-communal-rebellious' structure in Chinese society. This research is available before the arrival of civil society in China.

16. There are two possible outcomes regarding the Civil Society Movement in China. First, a rejection of Civil Society which continues the status-quo of authoritarian governmental control. The second could be viewed as post-totalitarianism, where a Civil

Society develops within China.

1) Post-Totalitarianism

A post-totalitarian China requires the government to accept social and human rights reforms and a rejection of the old political system and the concept of 'the Mandate of Heaven,' by Chinese society.

With human rights reform, the government would guarantee the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. In this scenario, CHCs would gain legitimacy after registration. The second outcome is a functioning Constitution that provides access to the rule of law for the Chinese people. With the rule of law, comes the possibility of Democracy. The current One-Party system would be abandoned and a multiparty system could be introduced bringing free elections of political leaders.

There are also potentially negative outcomes to the development of a civil society in China. The realization of democracy and the sudden development of human right could lead to social chaos in Chinese society. Democracy requires a level of societal maturity and responsibility that cannot be attained immediately. When people do not understand their responsibilities, the freedom can become self-indulgence.

2) Totalitarianism

Given the challenges facing the development of a civil society in China, maintaining the status quo is more likely.

What happens if the status quo remains? Primarily, the goals of civil society movement may not be fully accomplished. Human rights would continue to be restricted under the Totalitarian regime.

However, the status-quo does not mean there couldn't be improvements. Chinese

democracy doesn't have to mimic Western democracy exactly. Instead, democracy could develop within China that meets the unique needs of Chinese society, providing improvements in human rights, rule of law, and religious freedom conducted gradually under the governmental control. This Chinese democracy would move forward with its slow tempo.

In this scenario, the Dialogue Position would gain power among the Chinese Christian community. The Dialogue Position will build constructive relationship with the government through the communication. CHCs will have more religious freedom step by step as increasing trust with CCP.

II. Conclusion

The title of this dissertation, 'Seeking a New Wineskin for the New Wine', incorporates two metaphors, 'a New Wineskin' and 'the New Wine.' 'The New Wine' represents Chinese Christianity and 'A Wineskin' represents the legitimacy or social status of CHCs.

While exact figures are unknown, it is estimated that CHCs have 45 million to 60 million members, approximately 3% to 5% of the Chinese population. Even in the face of severe persecution, CHC membership continues to grow. Undoubtedly, 'the Wine' exists in Chinese society.

Without legitimacy from the government, 'the Wineskin' for 'the Wine' cannot be acquired. This is why the resolution of the conflict between the state and CHCs is critical for the future of Christianity in China.

In seeking the New Wineskin, this dissertation suggests the Dialogue Position as the most effective and practical way of resolving the tension between the state and the CHCs. As the tension between the state and CHCs decrease, the Dialogue Position has the opportunity to build a constructive relationship with the state through active dialogue. The Dialogue Position understands its social identity and tries to meet the social needs of Chinese society. Through this social role, trust develops between the Dialogue Position and Chinese society and the state. Finally, the Dialogue Position has a sound biblical ecclesiology and theology for the Gospel, which satisfies their fundamental identity as a Christian church. In conclusion, the Dialogue Position is the most effective and practical way of resolving the tension between the state and CHCs.

III. Suggestions

1. It is important to build a cooperative relationship with the government to relieve the conflict. CHC should not show anti-state and anti-social tendencies. These tendencies would increase tension and conflict with the government. If CHC were recognized as a stabilizing force of society by the government, the government would be assured by the presence of CHC, allowing them more freedom for religious activities. CHC should put more of an effort to enhance its image as a stabilizing force in society by building a collaborative relationship with the government.

2. CHC should put more effort toward communicating with the government. Direct and indirect dialogue with the government is helpful for mutual understanding and relief of tension. If CHC refused to communicate with the government, it could increase misunderstandings resulting in tension and conflict. Dialogue potentially brings tension

and conflict and, therefore, requires patience. There may be no fundamental changes in the short-term. However, conversation with patience in long-term has the ability to bring fundamental changes in state-CHC relationship.

3. CHC should actively participate in social problems and play a social function to meet the needs of society. There are many social problems including crime, unemployment, education, mammonism (the pursuit of wealth), the gap between the rich and poor in the rapid urbanization, and economic development. CHC should respond to the various social problems and meet social needs. These efforts could strengthen evangelism ministry as CHC care for the Chinese society. For example, when “Love Action” got involved in disaster relief after the Sichuan (四川) earthquake by helping refugees, “Love Action” touched the hearts of the local people who opened their hearts to Christ. The church’s active participation in social problems and efforts to meet social needs opens its social space and plays a positive role in relieving tension and conflict with the government.

IV. Missiological Implications

The conflict of the state and CHC can only be solved by CHC’s registration with the government. If CHC can register with the state without joining TSPM and acquire legal status, there will be important missiological implications for Chinese Christianity and even world Christianity.

1. If CHCs acquire legal status through independent registration, it will be a significant contribution to the evangelism and growth of CHC. Illegitimacy of CHCs is a major obstacle for evangelism. CHC Christians are at risk when they profess their faith

because of CHC illegitimacy. Therefore, registration and legitimacy can remove CHC Christians' anxiety and will play a positive role in its mission.

2. Legal protection will be obtained when CHC acquire legal status through registration. Without registration, CHC cannot lease buildings, purchase land, open bank accounts, or receive tax deduction services. CHC mission has been restricted as well. Legal protection obtained with registration would be helpful to the evangelism and mission activities of CHC.

3. The legal status of CHC can strengthen its social mission. Illegal underground churches cannot respond to Chinese social issues such as natural disasters, urban problems, population problems, elderly issues, moral issues, etc. Once CHC acquire legal status, they can better respond to social problems and meet society's needs through their social function. Its social mission can gain recognition in Chinese society and promote revival and evangelism within China.

4. The legalization of CHC would likely promote overseas missionary works since illegal CHC cannot easily select, train, and send missionaries overseas. After legalization, CHC can build an infrastructure for overseas missions. For example, Christians from CHC could legally build a mission agency, lease a building as a training center, and send a remittance to overseas missionaries legally. The legalization would serve as an important element for CHC's overseas missions.

Appendix A

Interview for Chinese house churches' leaders to find out their positions to the house churches' registration under the state.

Date and Place of Interview:

1. Background of Interviewee:

1.1 Name of interviewee:

1.2 Name of the church:

1.3 Area in Urban or Rural:

1.4 Age:

1.5 Ministry experiences (Short or long term):

1.6 Education:

2. Questions

2.1 What is your opinion to house churches's registration?

2.1.1 Is house churches' registration under the government inevitable?

2.1.2 Is it helpful or unhelpful for house churches's future?

2.3 How many opinions exist in house churches to the registration?

2.3.1 Do you agree the three classification of Sun Mingyi?

2.3.2 Do you have other opinions?

2.4. From the three opinions, which one do you agree?

2.4.1 What are the theological, historical and social reasons for your opinion?

2.5 Do house churches maintain cooperative relationship with the government?

2.5.1 Do house churches have to observe the governmental law?

2.5.2 Is the cooperative helpful to solve the conflict with the state?

2.6. Do house churches have social obligation?

2.6. 1 What are social roles of house churches? What kinds of function do your church do for your society?

2.6.2 If house churches plays its social role, is it helpful to solve the registration issue?

2.7. Do house churches need to have communication with the state?

2.7.1 Does your church have communication with the state? How do you communicate with the government?

2.7.2 Is the communication helpful to solve registration issue?

2.8 Do you have any suggestions to solve registration issue?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Books

- Aikman, David. *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power*. Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2003.
- Allan, Kenneth D. *Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory: Seeing the Social World*. US: Pine Forge Press, 2005.
- Chan, Kim-kwong and Eric R. Carlson. *Religious Freedom in China: Policy, Administration, and Regulation*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong Institute for Culture, Commerce, and Religion, 2005.
- Chen, Kenneth K.S. *Chinese Buddhism*. Seoul: Minjok Press, 1991.
- De Groot, J.J.M. *The Religion of the Chinese: in the Chinese Text of Religious Persecution*. New York: Kessinger Publishing, 1910.
- Durkheim, Emile. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.
- Ebrey, Patricia Buckley. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of China*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Huiyuan [慧遠], *On Why Monks Do Not Bow Down Before Kings [沙門不敬王者論]*. AD 404. (Published in *Hongmingji* 《弘明集》 (vol. 5))
- Human Rights Watch / Asia. *China: State Control of Religion*. USA: Human Rights Watch, 1997.
- Kindopp, Jason and Carol Lee Hamrin. *God and Caesar in China: Policy Implications of Church-State Tensions*. Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2004.
- Li, Jieren. *In Search of the Via Media Between Christ and Marx: A Study of Bishop Ting Guangxun's Contextual Theology*. Spoleto, Lund: Lund University, 2008.
- Liu, Tongsu (劉同蘇). *Boundary between God and Caesar: A Message to New Generation of Chinese house churches [上帝與凱撒的疆界: 獻給新時代中國家庭教會]*. San Francisco: Tongsu Liu, 2008.
- Loushu, Mizhada. *The History of Chinese Buddhism [中國佛教歷史]*. Seoul: Wuri Press, 1996.

- Maclay, Robert Samuel. *Life among the Chinese: with characteristic sketches and incidents of missionary operations and prospects in China*. New York: Carlton & Porter, 1861.
- Montgomery, Robert L. *The Spread of Religions: A Social Scientific Theory Based on the Spread of Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam*. NJ: Long Dash Publishing, 2007.
- Mun, David. *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches* Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.
- Robson, Colin. *Real World Research*, 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002.
- Sire, James W. *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*. USA: Library of Congress, 1997.
- Ta-ching lu li cheng-hsiu t'ung-ts'uan chin-ch'eng: Revised Complete Edition of Fundamental and Supplementary Laws of the Ch'ing Dynasty*. Chuan 23. Shanghai, 1908.
- Tennent, Timothy C. *Invitation to World Missions: A Trinitarian Missiology for the Twenty-first Century*. Grand Rapid, MI: Kregel Publication, 2010.
- Wickeri, Philip L. *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1988.
- Xiao, Lili. *Research on the Function of Christian Background Civil Society Organizations in Disaster Management: A Case Study of "Love Action."* Beijing: Underground Theological Seminary, 2010.
- Xiaoyaexianmiao (小野玄妙), *Dazhengzang [大正藏]*, No. 2102 *Hongmingji 《弘明集》* (vol. 12). Japan: Japanese Buddhism Association, 1934.
(Originally written by Zeng You [僧祐]. 445~518)
- Xin, Yalin. *Inside China's House Church Network: The Word of Life Movement and Its Renewing Dynamic*. Lexington, KY: Library of Congress, 2009.
- Yang, C.K. *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social role of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors*. Illinois: Waveland Press, 1991.

II. Articles

- Huang, Jianpo (黃劍波). "The Current Situation of Chinese Christianity and the Administration of Chinese Christianity [中國基督教現況與宗教管理問題]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.

- Jiang, Dengxing [江登興]. "Emerging Urban House Churches' Tradition and Renewal [中國城市家庭教會的傳承與更新]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.
- Lai, H. H. "Religious Policies in Post-Totalitarian China: Maintaining political Monopoly over a Reviving Society." *The Journal of Chinese Political Science*, vol.11, no.1, Spring, 2006.
- Li, Fan [李凡]. "Christianity and the Development of Chinese Politic [基督教和中國政治發展]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.
- Liang, Jialing [梁家麟]. "Research for Chinese House Churches' Independent Registration [有關家庭教會獨立登記問題的深研]." Hong Kong: *The Journal of Jiandao [建道學刊]* 24, 2005.
- Lin Gang (林剛), "House Churches' Understanding of TSPM, the Government, and Itself [家庭教會對“三自”，政府及自身的認識]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.
- Liu, Tongsu [劉同蘇]. "Research for Urban House Churches in Beijing Area [北京本地家庭教會報告]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.
- _____. "Regarding to the Issue of House Churches' Registration [關於家庭教會的登記問題]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.
- Saunders, Kenneth J. "Buddhism in China: A Historical Sketch." Chicago: *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 3.2, The University of Chicago Press, 1923.
- Sun, Mingyi (孫明義). "Theological Reflection to CHCs' effort for Registration [對家庭教會尋求登記的神學反思]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.
- _____. "The Understanding of Chinese Urban House Churches [認識中國城市家庭教會]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.
- Tsui, H. H. "We must Consolidate and Expand Our Unity," TF 464, (May 16, 1955)

Wang, Yi (王怡). "My Position to House Churches' Registration [我對中國家庭教會登記的立場]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.

Yu, Jianrong (于建嶸). "The Development of Christianity and Social Stability of Chinese Society [基督教的發展與中國社會穩定]." In *Changing China, Changing Chinese Church: A Special Discussion on the Problems of Chinese house churches*. Seoul: Sinim Institution Press, 2012.

III. Online Articles

China Aid, "Beijing Continues Relentless Crackdown on *Shouwang* Church," *China Aid*, Nov 12, 2009.
<http://www.chinaaid.org/2009/11/beijing-continues-relentless-crackdown.html>

Durkheim, Emile. "On Morality and Society, Selected Writings," Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
<https://webdisk.ucalgary.ca/.../13%20The%20Sociology%20of%20R...>

Halsall, Paul. "Chinese Cultural Studies: Selections from the *Shu Jing: The Classic of History* (6th Cent. BCE)," <http://acc6.its.brooklyn.cuny.edu/~phalsall/texts/shu-jing.html>.

Krauss, Robert M. and Ezequiel Morsella. "Communication and Conflict," USA: Columbia University.
<http://www.columbia.edu/~rmk7/PDF/Confl.pdf>

Sanders, John. *The God Who Risks: A Theology of Providence*.
<http://reknew.org/2008/01/what-is-the-biblical-basis-of-free-will/#sthash.m2D8VIcg.dpuf>

Wang, Wenfeng (王文峰). "Where the Chinese Christianity goes in the 21st century!," *Dangdang News*, 2011.07.28.
<http://www.dangdangnews.com/news/quickViewArticleView.html?idxno=17607>

Xing, Fuzeng. (邢福增) "Social Characteristics of Chinese house churches [中國基督徒的社會面貌]" <http://www.docin.com/p-248334645.html>

IV. News Paper

Lee, Jinhe. "Over 23 million Christians in China, official survey shows"

Mission News, 2013-09-12
<http://www.missionnews.co.kr/lib/209173>

Hook, Leslie. "The China President Obama Didn't See: Dissident intellectuals have been attracted to Christianity," *Wall Street Journal*, Nov 19, 2009,
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704431804574539120649781240.html>

Mu, Xuequan. " Leaders elected for Chinese Christian groups," Xinhua, 2013-09-12
http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/china/2013-09/12/c_125371601.htm and

Yu. jie (余杰). "Dialogue of Yujie and Wangyi for the House Churches' Openness, [余杰,王怡談中國家庭教會公開化趨勢]." *Christ Daily Paper* [基督日報] 2009-11-06, 1.
http://www.gospelherald.ca/template/news_view.htm?code=soc&id=1073#.UNMmGqXj5UQ

Wong, Edward. "Si Chuan Earthquake," *The New York Times*, May 6, 2009.
http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/news/science/topics/earthquakes/sichuan_province_china/index.html

V. References

Constitution of the People's Republic of China
http://www.npc.gov.cn/englishnpc/Constitution/node_2825.htm
<http://english.people.com.cn/constitution/constitution.html>

Confucius, the Analects of Confucius (論語)
<http://osj1952.com.ne.kr/interpretation/dongmogsunsop/dl/1-03.htm>

Encyclopedia online Britannica, 15th ed.,
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/600435/totalitarianism>
<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/275840/human-rights/219321/Natural-law-transformed-into-natural-rights>

Human Rights in China [中國人權]. *Charter 08* [中國人權宣言 08]
<http://www.hrchina.org/content/238>

National Geographic.
<http://nationalgeographic.com/China>
<http://nationalgeographic.com/Europe>
<http://nationalgeographic.com/China&Europe>

Nobel Prize, The Nobel Peace Prize 2010 - Prize Announcement, 8 October 2010
http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2010/announcement.html

Ta-ching lu li cheng-hsiu t'ung-ts'uan chin-ch'eng: Revised Complete Edition of Fundamental and Supplementary Laws of the Ch'ing Dynasty. Chuan 8 & 23, Shanghai, 1908.

THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS/United Nations
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>

