

Xi Jinping's Religious Freedom Policy vs Human Rights

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Abstract

The People's Republic of China has signed to accept the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which include freedom in religious expression. Yet the control and suppression of religion has been carried on all the same since Mao Zedong to Xi Jinping according to the political climate. This paper aims at discussing the paradigm shift of religious freedom from the universal understanding to the "Chinese characteristics" under Xi Jinping's rule with his launching of regulations and laws on tightening the control of religions in the name of national security.

Keywords: *religious freedom, Religious Freedom Policy, human rights, national security, United Front Policy, religious suppression, control of religions*

1. Introduction

Human right has been a universal value in the modern West. Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.¹ Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the General Assembly in 1945 and 1948, are international laws on protecting human rights. The People's Republic of China (PRC) is one of the 5 permanent members of the Security Council, and it has the obligation to observe the UN's Charter on human rights in which freedom of religion is an important element concerning freedom of expression. However, beginning from the Maoist Era up to Xi Jinping (习近平)'s rule, "religious freedom policy" has been employed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) for more than half a century accompanied by various degrees of controlling of religions according to the current political climate. Today religious control has been tightened up, yet China declares to the world in its white paper (2018) "White Paper on China's Protection of Religious Freedom Policy and Implementation"² that religious freedom prevails. This paper provides ample examples to prove that Xi Jinping's reign on the one hand declares religious freedom policy while on the other hand tightens up the control of religions.

2. Religious Freedom Policy: The Foundation of Religious Policy of Communist China

As early as in the 1950s, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) first came to power, its head of United Front (*tongyi zhanxian* / 統一戰線),

Li Weihai (李維漢) proposed the Religious Freedom Policy to Mao Zedong (毛澤東).³

In 1958 Li Weihai presented a sophisticated and comprehensive interpretation of the Religious Freedom Policy which has been carried on for the last few decades until today with continuity within the Party from Mao to Xi Jinping but with some changes and variety in implementations and applications depending on the socio-political landscape of that time. Thus forms the basis of the CCP approach to religious matters from 1950s until today, the interpretation of the policy resulting in relaxing or tightening up of the control depends on the political climate of various periods of time.⁴ The definitions of the Religious Freedom Policy of Li Weihai were as follows:

Every citizen has the freedom to believe in religion, and also the freedom not to believe in religion. Within a particular religion, every citizen has the freedom to believe in this sect or that sect. A person who was previously a non-believer has the freedom to become a religious believer, and one who has been a religious believer has the freedom to become a non-believer.⁵

China under the United Front Policy has to show to the world that freedom of religion prevails. On the surface, it looks like as if this policy has little difference from religious policy in the West which allows freedom in every aspect of religion. However with the implementation of this religious policy as a slogan launched by the CCP its final goal as expressed clearly by Li Weihai to its cadres within the Party was the extinction or disappearance of religion.⁶ He remarked:

The religious freedom policy is a revolutionary slogan ... If we thoroughly implement this slogan, believers will gradually change

from believing in religion towards non-believing. In short, the religious freedom policy is our Party's basic policy towards religion. We can adopt only this policy, not any other policy.⁷

In Mao's era, the purges of religion amidst various political campaigns aimed at the immediate extinction of religion, according to Li's religious freedom policy. However, in the post-Mao period with the relaxation of social control for the sake of modernization and nation-building, religions began to revive. Thus the director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs (1995-2009), Ye Xiaowen (葉小文), issued some documents to re-interpret the Religious Freedom Policy. These documents that followed the Party line closely also aimed at the elimination of religious influence within the socialistic regime and the gradual withering of religion⁸.

In fact this so called "Religious Freedom Policy" offers tremendous difference in standard of freedom in religious matters comparing to that of the Western world. The CCP and the state with skilful interpretations of this policy could monitor religions under Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought while channelling religions to serve the Party's purpose according to the current policy of the United Front (Leung, 2005).

In the post-Mao era, in 1982 the Document No. 19 (hereafter the Document 19), a comprehensive religious document, was issued according to the existesting situation of the reform era. This became the new guideline for the religious freedom policy in Deng Xiaoping's era. Its intention was similar to that which underlay Li Weihan's formulation 30 years previously: "The basic policy of the Party towards religion is a long-term policy and one which must be carried out until religion totally disappears." (MacInnis, 1989: 19-26) In this document, guidance in managing religious organization, worshipping place, religious personnel, as well as the formation of religious personnel, the return of religious

property, the relationship between religion and the state were outlined. It seemed that religions began to rejuvenate within the orbit set by the CCP. In Jiang Zemin (江澤民) era, some religious rules and regulations were added to eliminate the religious activities of foreigners and their links with local religious groups while keeping under surveillance grassroots religious activities by demanding religious churches and temples to be registered.⁹

3. Three Sets of Documents Concerning religion in Xi Jinping Era

In Hu Jintao (胡錦濤) period when China experienced vigorous economic growth and complexity of social problems, the government felt the need of formulating a set of more comprehensive religious laws other than the Document 19 to manage religious activities by law. This was with the intention to follow closely the Party's religious freedom policy in the new period with more international contacts and socio-economic transactions. The aim of setting up a new religious law was to offer a systematic but detailed rules to manage every aspect of religious life with legal bindings. Thus the States Council on 30 November 2004 passed Law no. 426 which was a set of laws on religious affairs called *zongjiao shiwu tiaoli* (宗教事務條例, Religious Law 2004). After launching this religious law for less than 10 years, amendment was considered due to new situations and new socio-political environment of Xi Jinping era. Thus, the State Council in its 176th Meeting on 14 June 2017 launched the revised version of the Religious Affairs Regulations (*xiuding zongjiao shiwu tiaoli* / 修訂宗教事務條例, revised Religious Law 2017). The revised version was based on the Religious Law 2004 but with more sophisticated control and monitor to the very detailed degree. Through the revised Religious Law the Party sets a smaller frame for religious activities while it extends its firmer control into

religious matters.

On 6 May 2014, the Chinese government launched a report on national security called “The Blue Paper on National Security: A report on the National Security 2014” (中國國家安全研究報告, *Blue Book of National Security*)¹⁰. In this report the government admitted that the national security has been encountering great challenge, and the security in religious matters should be included into ideological security which comes under national security. Thus in the same report suggestions were made to impose more control on religious matters to assure national security (*Blue Book of National Security 2014*, pp. 2-5). This report on national security offered extra reasons for Xi Jinping’s administration to impose tighter control on Islam, Tibetan Buddhism, Protestant and Catholic Church and Daoism, the five sectors of religions which have government approval with a tradition to be managed by the government with religious bureaux under the Bureau of Religious Affairs of the State Council (國務院宗教事務局). Later in the 19th Party Congress, in October 2017, Xi announced a new policy of emphasising the leadership of the Communist Party in the political life of China. Thus, the Religious Affairs Bureau was transferred to the United Front Department of the Communist Party which means that the atheist CCP would directly manage religious affairs in the future.¹¹

On 3 April 2018, the Press Office of the State Council issued the third document which was the “White Paper on China’s Protection of Religious Freedom Policy and Implementation” (*Zhongguo baozhang zongjiao xinyang ziyou de zhengce he shijian* / 《中国保障宗教信仰自由的政策和实践》).¹² When religious questions have been uplifted to the national security level it is understandable to have tight control on religions, their activities and personnel. However to comply with the United Front Policy the CCP had to launch the White Paper which aimed at whitewashing the religious freedom in Xi’s era. The main readership

of the White Paper is mainly the outsiders whose interpretation of religious freedom is different from that of the CCP and who have little information on the persecution of religion within the Chinese boundary when religious issues were not allowed to be reported in the media. That is why even political commentators in Hong Kong had strong criticism on the White Paper when it took control and monitor on religious affairs as religious management. In the whole document twisted reasons were employed to beautify religious control as offering protection to religion. In the White Paper it stated that the idea of religious freedom prevails in China but in reality no religious freedom exists under the pretext of state security. With sinicization as the state policy, the Paper whitewashes the state policy by demanding idealism of religious belief to function for the interest of atheist Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought.¹³

On 22-23 April 2016 a conference on religion was held in Beijing. The meeting was attended by nearly all the high officials in the Steering Committee of Politburo including Yu Zhengsheng (俞正聲), Liu Yunshan (劉雲山) and Wang Qishan (王岐山), except Zhang Dejiang (張德江) who was travelling abroad. Chinese premier Li Keqiang (李克強) presided over the two-day meeting. It reflected the importance of the conference in which the President's speech would be the main focus of attention of the whole event. Xi Jinping addressed the meeting by calling for the improvement of religious work. He followed the CCP's traditional policy of religious freedom with new emphasis. He called for managing religious affairs in line with laws, to retain the principle of religious independence and self-administration, and to help religions adapt to the socialist society. Religious groups, meanwhile, must adhere to the leadership of the CCP, and support the socialist system and socialism with Chinese characteristics.¹⁴ Xi also reminded that one of the important aspects of religious work is to block the foreign infiltration in religious matters.¹⁵ In the same speech Xi reminded the

participants that religious leaders must merge religious doctrines with Chinese culture, abide by Chinese laws and regulations, and devote themselves to China's reform and opening up drive and socialist modernization in order to contribute to the realization of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation.¹⁶ On the next day (24 April 2016), the editorial of *People's Daily* echoed Xi's policy by mobilizing religion for national and Party development, and the importance of national monitoring of religions to achieve the objective of religious management with Chinese characteristics.¹⁷

On 1st February 2018, the Religious Affair Bureau issued a document titled *Zongjiao shiwu bufen xingzheng xuke xiangmu shishi banfa* (《宗教事務部分行政許可項目實施辦法》, “Methods of implementing some items in Religious Law 2017”)¹⁸ (Implementing Religious Laws) to launch the ways and means of implementing some items listed in the Religious Law 2017. In fact all the regulations listed in the document are the set-ups and activities which need the approval from the Party/government to be in practice. In the process of implementation, it means every aspect of religious life is under the surveillance of the Party whose approval or rejection would be given along the party line of eliminating the influence of religion in the socialistic regime.¹⁹ Take section II for example. This section concerns the “approval of religious education”. Not only the venue of religious education needs to get approval, but also the teaching staff have to be approved and the Religious Affair Bureau has the final say or the veto power on inviting teaching staff both locally or from abroad. In section III, building big religious statues within the religious compound but in open air has to go through application to the civil authorities under strict regulations. The approval would be given after a study report made by the civil authorities and the residents of that area. Section V is on the approval of holding large-scale religious activities. Application should

be made 30 days before to the Public Security Office and details should be given such as number of participants, venue, number of clergy, duration, and nature of the activities. Nearly all the activities listed in the document need state approval before operation can go ahead. To obtain approval from the civil authority means the latter can exercise final control on the launching of religious activities.

After the 19th Party Congress, the Religious Affairs Bureau has been transferred from the state system (the State Council) to the Party system under the leadership of the United Front Department. All the religious affairs including administration and activities have to be supervised and approved by atheists with Marxist-Leninist plus Mao Zedong Thought. One can anticipate that the control of religions would be tightened more than before.

In the July 2017 issue of *Qiushi* (《求是》), the CCP's official magazine, the director of the National Bureau of Religious Affairs Wang Zuohan (王作安) wrote an article, "Zuohao zongjiao gongzuo bixu jiang zhengzhi" (〈做好宗教工作必須講政治〉) [politics is indispensable in good work on religions], as the strategical directive to implement the new state policy on religious affairs announced by Xi Jinping in April 2016 (Wang, 2017). Politics was not only the undertone of Xi's speech on religious matters as expressed in the religious conference held on 22-23 April 2016. On the other occasion, Xi told the government officials that politics is the assurance of the health of CCP. The high-ranking cadres had to uplift their political capacity, affirm the political ideal and correctly gear the political direction, observe the political rule, and to coincide with the Party Central. He also requested high-ranking cadres to resolve thorny questions as the cutting edge.²⁰

As the high-ranking cadre in Xi's bureaucracy, Wang Zuohan, the new director of religious Affairs Bureau after Ye Xiaowen, has to realize Xi Jinping's orientation in public administration on political issues;

naturally he tries to echo Xi's new outlook on religion by stating that that politics is the central theme of religious work. In the whole article written by Wang in discussing religious matters in the context of politics within four aspects, he takes political consciousness as the first step to remind people that religion is a political issue when foreigners intensively make use of religion to infiltrate China, and religious extremism prevails in some areas within the boundary. Religious networks challenges religious regulations of the state. The second aspect in Wang's discussion is religious rules. Wang insists on the implementation of religious policy of the Central Government without excuses. All the religious practices should not step on the red line and challenge the Party/government. The third aspect is religious orientation/direction which directly points at Xi's sinicization of religion. He suggests that religion should adjust itself to the orientation of socialism. The last aspect is the political responsibility which requests the cadre to attack and resolve thorny religious issues as a cutting edge to enable the further step marching towards religious freedom policy. (Xing, 2018: 7-22)

In July in the annual meeting of Chinese Bishops Conference and the annual meeting of Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, an agenda was prepared on the evaluation of the curriculum and pedagogy of Catholic education in theologates and seminaries that have to be compatible with the demand of the government. Therefore criticism aroused that the Chinese Catholic Church had been subjected to meddling by the CCP and had been poisoned by it.²¹

With tightening control on non-conformists, ideologies including religious matters are totally controlled even though most of the actions are against human rights. Due to the economic success of PRC, China does not care about international criticism in its violation of human rights such as the persecution of the blind lawyer Chen Guangcheng

(陳光誠) who specialized on human right cases. The inhuman treatment of the Nobel Prize Winner Liu Xiaobo (劉曉波) in prison and the house arrest of his wife Liu Xia (劉霞) were criticized by international communities but Beijing had turned a deaf ear to it. On 9 July 2015, China arrested more than 200 human right lawyers who specialized in protecting the rights of suppressed sectors such as migrant workers, victims of land snatch, underground Christians, and people who have been abused by China's party-dominated legal system, and imposed heavy punishment on many of them. In the whole country there are about 300 of this kind of human right lawyers (Lam, 2018). Within one week 2/3 of them who had defended sensitive cases related to religion and politics were put behind bars. It was because with the purpose to warn the monkey by killing the rooster indirectly warning the rest of lawyers to keep human right cases at an arm's length.²² Since the launching of Open Door Policy, the Women's Legal Counseling and Service Center in Beijing had been functioning for the last 20 years. This is an NGO institute. In January 2016 this legal service centre was asked to close and terminate its business. The staff of this legal service centre believed that the closing decision was made by the top leaders of Beijing.²³

In the West, people are eager to have trading relations with China, therefore in meetings of high officials and even top leaders the issue of human rights is seldom in the agenda for discussion. For example, in the first meeting of President Donald Trump with Xi Jinping the issue of human rights was not in the agenda.

In religious arena, the demolition of more than one thousand crosses on top of buildings in Zhejiang Province starting in 2013, even with international criticism the demolition was not only carrying on in that province but spread to other provinces including Jiangxi and Shandong, as well as the city of Xiamen (廈門). Starting from 2014 the demolition

of the churches which were not registered was reported. Some of them were pulled down with explosives.²⁴ In 2015 in Zhejiang Province the religious persecution against Christians (both Catholics and Protestants) were so intensified beyond people first thought of.²⁵

The government not only pays no attention to the international criticism on demolition of crosses on housetops, on the contrary it awarded Xia Baolong (夏寶龍), the Zhejiang Province Party Secretary for his three years' successful endeavor in cross-demolition. In 2017 Xia was promoted to be the vice-director of the Committee of Resources and Environmental Protection in the National People's Congress. In 2018, he was further promoted to be the Secretary General of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). This is a very important post which allows the post-holder to play the role of a big steward overseeing the comprehensive deployment of the CPPCC.²⁶ This is a very typical example of affirming the deeds of a cadre who successfully implemented the central government's Religious Freedom Policy according to the Party's interpretation.

In the northwest region, Christians are asked to take down the image of Jesus Christ and replace it with the image of Xi Jinping by the order of cadres who tell the people that Jesus is not the saviour but Xi Jinping is.²⁷ To honour Xi Jinping as the only saviour is a further step of placing religion and other ideological affairs under the Party control. This move is aimed to honour the top political leader as the supreme leader of a dictatorial regime.

Under the Xi Jinping administration, the intensification of religious restriction was launched in many areas. For example, in Document 19 it is stated that "We Communists are atheists. We must be unremitting in propagating atheism ... It will be absolutely forbidden to force anyone to become a member of a church or to go to temples and monasteries to study scripture especially if they are under 18 of age." (Document 19

Section IV) Since the promulgation of this major document on religion in 1982 to deal with religious affairs in the modernization period of Deng Xiaoping, even though relaxation of control of religions was uplifted, yet some strategies were still firmly held by the CCP. Many religious believers just ignored the above regulations listed in Document 19, following the subculture of ignoring the unreasonable rules or commands and having ways to counter the policy from above: *shang you zhengce, xia you duice* (上有政策, 下有對策). In Xi's time, these practices have been vigorously eliminated to the very extreme degree. For example, an official warning was given to all cadres of all levels that they were not allowed to be religious believers. In Ningxia province a notice was given to the public asking them to observe national regulations on religious life; otherwise there will be serious consequences. Identity cards were issued to priests of the open sector of the Christian churches to allow them to say the Holy Mass in public. Those priests and pastors in the underground church and family churches without identity card were arrested with legal reasons, if they dare to say mass even in private houses.

The Bible in the previous years could not be found in bookstores on the high streets such as Xinhua Book Store, but it could be purchased in churches and in popular on-line shops like Amazon and Taobao (淘寶). Since recently, the Bible is not to be sold in China with the pretext that the Bible has not obtained the International Standard Book Number, ISBN²⁸. It is taken by China with the excuse that it is an illegal publication and should be banned. However, it was reported that the Protestant Church received order from the government to compile new annotations of the Bible according to the state policy of sinicization of religion.²⁹ The Catholic Church received the same order of annotating the Bible. For the Chinese Catholic the work is not difficult. It was because in the 1980s in Latin America the Pastoral Bible was annotated

according to the Liberation Theology which has been coloured with the Marxist approach of socialism. The translation of the Chinese Pastoral Bible, known as *Muling Shengjing* (牧靈聖經) was successfully achieved.

The first version of *Muling Shengjing* was published in Hong Kong in 1998. It aroused criticism because of its socialist annotations and problematic translation of some of the text. Two years later it was also printed in Mainland China, with simplified characters. This translation was based on the Spanish *La Biblia Latinoamericana*, by Father Bernardo Hurault and published in the 1970s in South America. The aim of this Spanish version was that of writing an accessible text for the less educated faithful with pastoral notes to make the biblical contents easier to understand but with socialist if not Marxist approach in annotations. It went to the public in the Latin America after the Liberation Theology was banned with the hope to rescue the mass Catholic transference to other denomination of Christianity.

The 1998 edition of the Chinese Pastoral Bible was soon revised to be republished due to negative criticism, but in 2006 a completely new translation project was undertaken. However the Pastoral Bible does not attract readers in Hong Kong, Macau and among the oversea Chinese. However, this was accomplished in 2014 when the volume of the New Testament was published by the Claretian Press (樂仁出版社) in Macau.

The stock of translated Chinese version of the Pastoral Bible was in the warehouse because it was not popular among Chinese Catholics outside China. The Hong Kong Catholics opposed this version of the Bible strongly partly because they were not used to the multiple versions of translation of the Holy Bible. Secondly the Marxist annotation was not the cup of tea for them. With some pro-China missionaries working in Beijing, the Chinese version of the Pastoral Bible with the Marxist

annotation can easily be promoted.³⁰

According to *People's Daily*, Beijing plans to demolish 40 million square metres of “illegal” structures in the city. Many are the homes and shops of low-income migrants who are engaged in the difficult, dirty and sometimes dangerous work that the city's permanent resident will not do. These migrant workers, having fueled their nation's dramatic economic rise, toiling in jobs far from home, are now finding themselves increasingly unwelcome as authorities try to cap the population explosions in key cities.³¹ The eviction revealed some clandestine pastoral work in this cohort of low-profile internal migrants, some of whom are Christians and Catholics. They have migrated to Beijing from their Catholic villages in Hebei Province and other provinces to work as manual labour in constructing high buildings of the city and domestic workers in the middle-class households. Urban industries like construction, domestic work and sanitation are mostly staffed by them. They are isolated from the local people but stay with their countrymen in the slum areas. The Catholic priests from their own villages came to Beijing and offered pastoral care in terms of religious service as well as social service by organizing this cohort of Catholic internal migrants in Beijing as if they were in their own parish churches in their home towns. Due to isolation and loneliness from the city culture of Beijing, a metropolitan city, the clandestine Catholic activities were very much welcomed by these workers with low income. Priests were sent to serve these internal migrants by different Catholic villages of Hebei and Shaanxi Province to serve their own countrymen working in a city which has a world of differences from their home villages. However, after the demolition of the low-cost houses to force them to go back to their home villages, the clandestine Christian communities disappeared.³²

In China, starting from January 2018, foreigners' visas were not easily to be renewed. Even for those foreigners who are employed as

professionals, their connection of close friendship with Protestant or Catholic leaders has become the obstacle to getting their visas renewed.³³

There were a lot of negative news coming from the grassroots Christians that children under the age of 18 were taken away from churches when they were attending church services with their parents. In fact, in the Document 19 (Document 19 Section IV) it is stated that people above the age of 18 should be given the freedom to choose religious belief. Yet it is a pretext to eliminate the maintaining of religious faith because in every religion, no matter it is Buddhism, Daosim or Christianity, religious faith came from family practices since early childhood when kids absorb religious atmosphere from the family and take it as a natural family practice. After the age of 18, it is not easy if not possible for them to take up a new belief system. It is true that since the Maoist era, religious belief/faith had been kept not by religious institutes, the church or temples but by the family itself alone.³⁴ For the last few decades since 1979 when churches were reopened Catholics and Christians had brought their children to go to church services all the same and the government had never prevented them from doing so. However, Xi Jinping's intensification of control of religions has begun to stop children to go to church services and caused great resentment among Christians. Preventing children from getting into contact with religion is a subtle way to eliminate the development of religion among the people. This is because when children grow into their adolescence religious sentiment would be greatly reduced.³⁵

Lastly, we have information that the arrest of Catholic bishops has been carrying on. Underground church's Bishop Shao Zhumin (邵祝敏) of Wenzhou (温州教區), Zhejiang Province, had been taken away 4 times over the last 3 years. Beijing insisted on the Vatican ordering the two underground bishops Bishop Zhuang Jianjian

(莊建堅) of Swatow (汕頭教區, *Dioecesis Scianteuvensis*, eastern Guangdong Province) and Bishop Guo Xijin (郭希錦) of Mindong (閩東教區, Diocese of Mindong, eastern Fujian Province) to resign to make way for the illicit Bishop Huang Bingzhang (黃炳章) and Bishop Zhan Silu (詹思祿). Recently Bishop Cui Tai (崔泰) of Xuanhua (宣化教區, *Dioecesis Siüenhoavensis*), Hebei Province, was arrested.³⁶

4. Human Rights and Religious Freedom: The Paradigm Shift in PRC

In the history of the development of human rights, starting from the 18th Century only the Western civilization with Christian heritage began to pay attention to that. The idea of equality of human beings is expressed in their rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status based on the dignity of man and the equality among themselves. This is the fundamental belief in the Christian heritage that hatches this idea that all men are equal because according to the Bible, they are the children of God, and are saved by God's Son. Thus, human being's dignity should be respected regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language and religion.

However, in the Confucian culture like that in China the social order prevails in the five relations as between parent and child, husband and wife, elder sibling and junior sibling, elder friend and junior friend, and ruler and subject. Each one in the society has his/her moral responsibility in their relationship based on “*ren*” (仁, love/charity). The idea of equality is absent. Moreover, when Mao came into power he wished to shake off everything from the colonial West, and worked towards the extinction of religion with the “Religious Freedom Policy” suggested by Li Weihai, the head of United Front Department. In the long years of

practicing Religious Freedom Policy, government leaders and officials of the PRC has two considerations. First, the CCP being atheists, they do not believe that human right is an inborn gift and human beings are children of God. In the Document 19 it is stated that religious freedom is granted by the CCP, therefore when the freedom will be granted, to what degree it will be granted, and when the freedom will be taken back are all decided by the Party. Secondly, the fluctuation of the degree of controlling religions depends on the political climate and China's foreign relations because religion is one of the elements to be mobilized to facilitate CCP's United Front Policy during different periods of political development.

5. Conclusion

In the context of the Chinese version of interpretation of "religious freedom policy", control on religions has been applied for more than 30 years, and the degree of control has fluctuated according to the political climate. When Xi Jinping tightened up government policy for control of religions according to the strategy of that period to serve the Party and to be guided by the Party, human rights have been out of his consideration. In the documents on religions issued by the Xi Jinping administration, it is revealed that religious security has been uplifted to the level of national security, asking religions to serve the needs of the Party and managing religions with strict rules and regulations. Without consideration on human rights, the political leader put all religious believers into a cage for controlling. To comply with the United Front Policy, the White Paper contains lies and twisted interpretations of religious suppression which beautify actions which are all against human rights with legal bindings. In short, the deeds of Xi's administration which are against human rights have been carried out all the same

without caring about international criticisms because in Xi Jinping's dictatorial regime human rights have to give in to the fulfilment of Xi's so-called "China Dream". Thus the degree of control on religions has gone back to the standard of Mao who adopted the "Religious Freedom Policy" aiming at the immediate extinction of religions. Under Xi's reign shift of the paradigm of religious freedom from the universal standard to the "Chinese characteristics" is most immanent. The policy is unpredictable but according to the wish of the political leader.

Notes

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