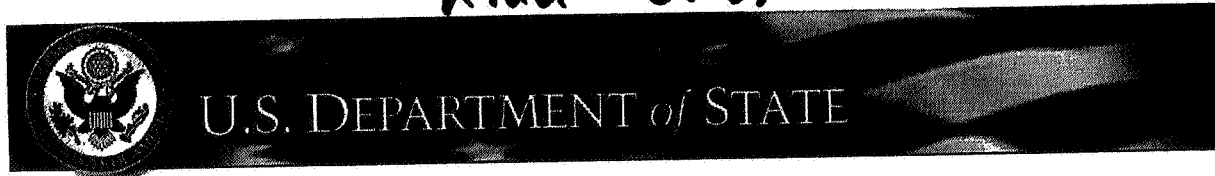


Kina (73)



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China (includes Hong Kong and Macau)

International Religious Freedom Report 2002

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Reports on Hong Kong and Macau are appended at the end of this Report.)

(Note: The Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) is discussed in a separate annex at the end of this report.)

The Constitution provides for freedom of religious belief and the freedom not to believe; however, the Government seeks to restrict religious practice to government-sanctioned organizations and registered places of worship and to control the growth and scope of the activity of religious groups. The Government tries to control and regulate religious groups to prevent the rise of groups that could constitute sources of authority outside of the control of the Government and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and it cracks down on groups that it perceives to pose a threat. Despite these efforts at government control, membership in many faiths is growing rapidly.

During the period covered by this report, the Government's respect for freedom of religion and freedom of conscience remained poor, especially for many unregistered religious groups and spiritual movements such as the Falun Gong. The Government continued its crackdown on unregistered churches, temples, and mosques. In general unregistered religious groups continued to experience varying degrees of official interference, harassment, and repression. Members of some unregistered religious groups, including Protestant and Catholic groups, were subjected to increased restrictions, including, in some cases, intimidation, harassment, and detention; however, the degree of restrictions varied significantly from region to region. In some localities, "underground" religious leaders reported increased pressure either to register with the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) and to be affiliated with and supervised by official party organizations linked to the legally recognized churches or to close their facilities. In other localities, officials worked closely with Buddhist, Catholic, and Protestant groups building schools, medical facilities, and retirement centers for poor communities. In the latter cases, local officials frequently encouraged Western religious groups to work in their communities to provide much needed social services, provided that the groups did not proselytize openly. Many religious adherents report that they are able to practice their faith in officially registered places of worship and to maintain contacts with coreligionists in other parts of the world without interference from the authorities. Official sources, religious professionals, and persons who attend services at both officially sanctioned and underground places of worship all report that the numbers of believers in the country continued to grow.

The communities of the five official religions--Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, Catholicism, and Protestantism--coexist without significant friction; however, in some parts of the country, relations between registered and unregistered Christian churches are tense.

The Government continued its repression of groups that it determined to be "cults" in general and of the Falun Gong in particular. Various sources report that thousands of Falun Gong adherents have been arrested, detained, and imprisoned, and that several hundred or more Falun Gong adherents have died in detention since 1999.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The Department of State, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, and the U.S. Consulates General in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai, and Shenyang made concerted efforts to encourage religious freedom. In Washington and in Beijing, in public and in private, U.S. officials repeatedly urged the Government to respect citizens' rights to religious freedom. U.S. officials protested and asked for further information about numerous individual cases of abuse. The issue of religious freedom also was raised during the official U.S.-China dialog in October 2001. In October 2001, the Secretary of State designated China a country of particular concern under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom. The country also was so designated in 1999 and 2000.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has a total area of 3.5 million square miles, and its population is approximately 1.3 billion. According to an April 2002 government white paper, there are more than 200 million religious adherents, representing a great variety of beliefs and practices. According to this official publication, the country has more than 100,000 sites for religious activities, 300,000 clergy, more than 3,000 religious organizations, and 74 training centers for clergy. Most religious adherents profess eastern faiths, but tens of millions adhere to Christianity or Islam. Approximately 8 percent of the population are Buddhist, approximately

1.4 percent are Muslim, an estimated 0.4 percent belong to the official Catholic Church, an estimated 0.4 to 0.8 percent belong to the unofficial Vatican-affiliated Catholic Church, an estimated 0.8 to 1.2 percent are registered Protestants, and an estimated 2.4 to 6.5 percent worship in Protestant house churches that are independent of government control. There are no available estimates on the number of Taoists; however, according to a 1997 government publication, there are more than 10,000 Taoist monks and nuns and more than 1,000 Taoist temples.

Traditional folk religions (worship of local gods, heroes, and ancestors) have been revived, are practiced by hundreds of millions of citizens, and are tolerated to varying degrees as loose affiliates of Taoism, Buddhism, or ethnic minority cultural practices.

Buddhists make up the largest body of organized religious believers. The Government estimates that there are more than 100 million Buddhists, most of whom are from the dominant Han ethnic group. However, it is difficult to estimate accurately the number of Buddhists because they do not have congregational memberships and often do not participate in public ceremonies. The Government reports that there are 16,000 Buddhist temples and monasteries and more than 320,000 nuns and monks.

According to government figures, there are 20 million Muslims, 35,000 Islamic places of worship, and more than 45,000 imams nationwide.

The unofficial, Vatican-affiliated Catholic Church claims a membership far larger than the 5 million persons registered with the official Catholic Church. Precise figures are impossible to determine, but Vatican officials have estimated that there are as many as 10 million adherents. According to official figures, the government-approved Catholic Church has 69 bishops, 5,000 clergy, and approximately 5,000 churches and meeting houses. There are thought to be some 37 bishops operating "underground," 10 to 15 of whom may be in prison or under house arrest.

The Government maintains that there are as many as 15 million registered Protestants, 20,000 clergy, more than 12,000 churches, and approximately 25,000 registered Protestant meeting places. According to foreign experts, approximately 30 million persons worship in Protestant house churches that are independent of government control.

Estimates of the number of Falun Gong (or Wheel of the Law, also known as Falun Dafa) practitioners have varied widely; the Government claimed that prior to its harsh crackdown on the Falun Gong beginning in 1999, there may have been as many as 2.1 million adherents of Falun Gong in the country. Followers of Falun Gong claim that there are more than 100 million adherents worldwide. Some experts estimated that the true number of Falun Gong adherents in the country before the crackdown was in the tens of millions. One credible source estimated that there were 1 million Falun Gong practitioners in the country during the period covered by this report. Falun Gong blends aspects of Taoism, Buddhism, and the meditation techniques and physical exercises of qigong (a traditional Chinese exercise discipline) with the teachings of Falun Gong leader Li Hongzhi (a native of the country who lives abroad). Despite the spiritual content of some of Li's teachings, Falun Gong does not consider itself a religion and has no clergy or places of worship.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religious belief and the freedom not to believe; however, the Government seeks to restrict religious practice to government-sanctioned organizations and registered places of worship, and to control the growth and scope of the activity of religious groups to prevent the rise of competing possible sources of authority outside of the control of the Government.

The Criminal Law states that government officials who deprive citizens of religious freedom may, in serious cases, be sentenced to up to 2 years in prison; however, there were no known cases of persons being punished under this statute.

The State reserves to itself the right to register and thus to allow to operate particular religious groups and spiritual movements. There are five officially recognized religions: Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Islam, and Taoism. For each faith there is a government-affiliated association that monitors and supervises its activities. The State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau is responsible for monitoring and judging the legitimacy of religious activity. The RAB and the CCP United Front Work Department (UFW), both of which are staffed by officials who rarely, if ever, are religious adherents, provide policy "guidance and supervision" on the implementation of government regulations on religious activity, including the role of foreigners in religious activity.

There are six requirements for the registration of "venues for religious activity:" possession of a physical site; citizens who are religious believers and who regularly take part in religious activity; an organized governing board; a minimum number of followers; a set of operating rules; and a legal source of income. The Government officially permits only those churches affiliated with either the Catholic Patriotic Association or the (Protestant) Three-Self Patriotic Movement/Chinese Christian Council to operate legally. Some groups register voluntarily, some register under pressure, and the authorities refuse to register others. Some religious groups have been reluctant to comply with the regulations out of principled opposition to state control of religion or due to fear of adverse consequences if they reveal, as required, the names and addresses of church leaders. Unregistered groups also frequently claim that

theological compromises, lack of doctrinal freedom, and stricter control over sermons by the RAB result from registration, which is why they do not register with the Government. Unofficial groups claimed that authorities often refused them registration without explanation. The Government contended that these refusals mainly were the result of these groups' lack of adequate facilities.

In February 2002, Freedom House published secret documents purportedly issued by the Government between 1999 and 2001. The documents outlined the Government's intent to repress religious expression outside of government control, and to use harsh criminal penalties in a systematic effort to eliminate unregistered religious groups.

The Government has banned all groups that it has determined to be "cults," including the Falun Gong and the Zhong Gong movements (Zhong Gong is a qigong discipline with some mystical tenets). After the revised Criminal Law came into effect in 1997, offenses related to membership in unapproved cults and religious groups were classified as crimes of disturbing the social order. Most experts attribute the subsequent sharp rise in trials for this category of crimes to the new classification.

The Government took some steps during the period covered by this report to show respect for the country's Muslims, including by offering congratulations on major Islamic holidays. The Government permits, and in some cases subsidizes, Muslim citizens who make the Hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca. According to official government statistics, more than 45,000 Muslims have made the trip to Mecca through neighboring countries, especially Pakistan, in the past several years; 5,000 made the Hajj in 1998, the last year for which such statistics are available. There have been nongovernmental reports that fewer persons participated in 1999 and 2000; according to some estimates, less than 2,500 persons made the Hajj in each of those years. According to some reports, the major limiting factors for participation in the Hajj were the cost and controls on passport issuance.

During the period covered by this report, local officials destroyed several unregistered places of worship around the country; however, there were no reports of the widespread razing of churches in the eastern part of the country, as there were in the period covered by the previous report (particularly in the coastal city of Wenzhou). However, the Government also has restored or rebuilt churches, temples, mosques, and monasteries damaged or destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, and allowed the reopening of some seminaries, although the pace and scope of restoration activity has varied from locality to locality. Nonetheless, there are far fewer temples, churches, or mosques than existed 35 years ago.

The CCP Central Committee held a national religion work conference in Beijing from December 10 to 12, 2001. All senior members of the Party and senior government officials attended, and both President Jiang Zemin and Premier Zhu Rongji gave speeches. Many religious adherents hoped that the conference would result in a loosening of the registration requirements for underground places of worship. However, in late March 2002, RAB Deputy Director Wang Zuoan told reporters that, although the Government was prepared to introduce administrative measures that would enable mainstream religions to operate more smoothly, such changes might be ready only in "1 or 2 years." Some academics who attended believed that, as a result of the conference, the authorities might loosen registration requirements gradually for more mainstream religious groups while intensifying efforts to destroy "cults." No progress had been noted regarding the loosening of registration requirements by the end of the period covered by this report. However, following the conference, there was significant debate within the Party over the role religion should play in society, and some Party members criticized the traditional Marxist concept of opposing religion.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

During the period covered by this report, the Government's respect for religious freedom and freedom of conscience remained poor, especially for members of some unregistered religious groups and spiritual movements such as the Falun Gong. The Government officially permits only those churches affiliated with either the Catholic Patriotic Association or the (Protestant) Three-Self Patriotic Movement/Chinese Christian Council to operate legally. The Government tends to perceive unregulated religious gatherings or groups as a potential challenge to its authority, and it attempts to control and regulate religious groups to prevent the rise of groups or sources of authority outside the control of Government and the CCP. During the period covered by this report, the Government continued its general crackdown on unregistered churches, temples, and mosques. Police closed underground mosques, temples, and seminaries, as well as some Catholic churches and Protestant "house churches," many with significant memberships, properties, financial resources, and networks, and banned groups that it considered to be "cults." Several unregistered church leaders reported growing pressure by local authorities to register after the December 2001 work conference on religion. Despite these efforts at control, official sources, religious professionals, and members of both officially sanctioned and underground places of worship all report that the number of religious adherents in the country continued to grow. The Government also makes demands on the clergy or leadership of registered groups, for example requiring that they publicly endorse government policies or denounce Falun Gong. The Government continued its repression of the Falun Gong spiritual movement and of cults in general. As in past years, the Government moved against houses of worship outside its control that grew too large or espoused beliefs that it considered threatening to "state security." Overall, the basic policy of permitting religious activity to take place relatively unfettered in government-approved sites and under government control remained unchanged.

Official tolerance for religions considered to be traditionally Chinese, such as Buddhism and Taoism, has been greater than that for Christianity, and these faiths often face fewer restrictions than the other recognized religions. However, as these non-Western faiths have grown rapidly in recent years, there were signs of greater government concern and new restrictions, especially on syncretic groups that blend tenets from a number of religious beliefs.

In 1995 the State Council and the CCP's Central Committee issued a circular labeling a number of religious organizations "cults" and making them illegal. Among these were the "Shouters" (founded in the United States in 1962), Eastern Lightning, the Society of Disciples (Mentu Hui), the Full Scope Church, the Spirit Sect, the New Testament Church, and the Guan Yin (also known as Guanyin Famin, or the Way of the Goddess of Mercy). Subsequent orders in later years also banned the Lord God Sect, the Established King Church, the Unification Church, the Family of Love, the Dami Mission, and other groups.

In 1999 the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress adopted a decision to ban all groups the Government determined to be cults, including the Falun Gong, under Article 300 of the Criminal Law. The Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate also provided "explanations" on applying existing criminal law to the Falun Gong. The law, as applied following these actions, specifies prison terms of 3 to 7 years for "cult" members who "disrupt public order" or distribute publications. Under the law, cult leaders and recruiters may be sentenced to 7 years or more in prison.

During the period covered by this report, government repression of the Falun Gong spiritual movement continued. There have been thousands of cases of individuals receiving criminal, administrative, and extrajudicial punishment for engaging in Falun Gong practices, admitting that they believed in Falun Gong, or simply refusing to criticize the organization or its founder. The authorities and experts also wrote many articles characterizing the rise of religious groups that failed to register and cults such as Falun Gong as part of a plot by the West to undermine Chinese authority.

The authorities also continued their general crackdown on other groups considered to be "cults," such as the Xiang Gong, Guo Gong, and Zhong Gong qigong groups, some of which reportedly had a following comparable to that of the Falun Gong. In August 2001, police in Jiangsu arrested Shen Chang, the leader of a qigong group, and charged him with organizing gatherings aimed at disturbing social order and tax evasion.

The Government continued, and in some places intensified, a national campaign to enforce 1994 State Council regulations and subsequent provincial regulations that require all places of religious activity to register with government religious affairs bureaus and come under the supervision of official, "patriotic" religious organizations. There was a great deal of variation in how local authorities handled unregistered religious groups. In certain regions, government supervision of religious activity was minimal, and registered and unregistered churches existed openly side by side and were treated similarly by the authorities. In such areas, many congregants worshipped in both types of churches. In other regions, local implementing regulations call for strict government oversight of religion, and authorities cracked down on unregistered churches and their members. For example, Zhejiang province has restrictive religious affairs regulations that stipulate that "illegal" property and income would be confiscated from those who: "1) preside over or organize religious activities at places other than those for religious activities or at places not approved by a religious affairs department; 2) do missionary work outside the premises of a place of religious activity; and 3) sponsor religious training activities without obtaining the approval of a religious affairs department at or above the county level." Implementing regulations, provincial work reports, and other government and Party documents continued to exhort officials to enforce vigorously government policy regarding unregistered churches.

There are reports that, despite the rapidly growing religious population, it is difficult to register new places of worship even for the five officially recognized faiths.

Many house churches, which generally are made up of family members and friends, conduct activities similar to those of home Bible study groups, and were tolerated by the authorities as long as they remained small and unobtrusive. House churches reportedly encounter difficulties when their membership grows, when they arrange for the regular use of facilities for the specific purpose of conducting religious activities, or when they forge links with other unregistered groups.

In some areas, there were reports of harassment of churches by local RAB, attributed, at least in part, to financial issues. For example, although regulations require local authorities to provide land to registered church groups, some local officials were said to try to avoid doing so by denying registration. Official churches in some cases also face harassment if local authorities wish to acquire the land on which a church is located. In addition to refusing to register churches, there also were reports that RAB officials have requested illegal "donations" from churches in their jurisdictions as a means of raising extra revenue or that they sometimes appropriate a percentage of funds raised at local churches.

During the period covered by this report, local officials destroyed several unregistered places of worship around the country; however, there were no reports of the widespread razing of churches, as there were in the period covered by the previous report (particularly in the coastal city of Wenzhou). Folk religions have been labeled as "feudal superstition" and sometimes are repressed; local authorities have destroyed thousands of local shrines. In early 2002, according to the Guangzhou-based Southern Metropolis Daily newspaper, a squad of 90 policemen demolished a small Taoist temple in a central residential area of Guangzhou. The temple, which had escaped official notice for 20 years, was branded a "center of superstitious activity." In April 2001, the police demolished a partially constructed Catholic church in Hebei province for not having a proper building permit. Christian leaders in several parts of the country reported that local officials have been reluctant to return church property that was confiscated after the 1949 Communist revolution. Some observers cite the lack of adequate meeting space in registered churches as an explanation for the rapid rise in attendance at house churches and underground churches.

Both official and unofficial Christian churches have problems training adequate numbers of clergy to meet the needs of their growing congregations. Due to the restrictions on religion between 1955 and 1985, no priests or other clergy in the official churches were ordained during that period; most priests and pastors were trained either before 1955 or after 1985, resulting in a shortage of trained clerics between the ages of 35 and 65. Thus, as senior clerics over the age of 65 retire, there are relatively few experienced clerics to replace them. The Government permits registered religions to train clergy and allows limited numbers of Catholic and Protestant seminarians, Muslim clerics, and Buddhist clergy to go abroad for additional religious studies, but some religious students have had difficulty in obtaining approval to study abroad. In most cases, foreign organizations provide funding for such training programs. Some Catholic clerics also have complained that they were forced to bribe local RAB officials before being allowed to enter seminaries. Due to government prohibitions, unofficial or underground churches have particularly significant problems training clergy and many clergy receive only limited and inadequate preparation.

Most religious institutions depend upon their own resources to cover operating costs. Contributions from church members are common among both Catholics and Protestants. Frequently, religious institutions run side businesses selling religious items. Some run strictly commercial businesses such as restaurants. Sometimes the Government funds repairs for temples or shrines that have cultural or historic significance; however, there were reports that these funds were allocated only to registered churches, depending upon how cooperative with local authorities they were perceived to be.

The law does not prohibit religious believers explicitly from holding public office; however, Party membership is required for almost all high level positions in government and state-owned businesses and organizations, and Communist Party officials state that Party membership and religious belief are incompatible. This has a disproportionate effect in such minority-inhabited areas as Xinjiang and Tibet. The CCP reportedly has issued two circulars since 1995 ordering Party members not to adhere to religious beliefs and ordering the expulsion of Party members who belong to religious organizations, whether open or clandestine. High-ranking Communist Party officials, including President and CCP Party Secretary Jiang Zemin, also have stated that Party members cannot be religious adherents. Muslims allegedly have been fired from government posts for praying during working hours. The "Routine Service Regulations" of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) state explicitly that servicemen "may not take part in religious or superstitious activities." Party and PLA military personnel have been expelled for adhering to the Falun Gong spiritual movement.

However, according to government sources, up to 20 to 25 percent of Communist Party officials in certain localities engage in some kind of religious activity. Most officials who practice a religion are Buddhist or practice a form of folk religion. Religious figures who are not members of the CCP are included in national and local government organizations, usually to represent their constituency on cultural and educational matters. The National People's Congress (NPC) includes several religious leaders, including Pagbalha Geleg Namgyai, a Tibetan "living Buddha," who is a vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC. Religious groups also are represented in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, a forum for "multiparty" cooperation and consultation led by the CCP, which advises the Government on policy.

In 1999 the Party's Central Committee issued a document directing the authorities to tighten control over the official Catholic Church and to eliminate the underground Catholic Church if it did not bend to government control. There has been increasing pressure by the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association on underground Catholic bishops to join the official church, and the authorities have reorganized dioceses without consulting church leaders. The Government has not established diplomatic relations with the Holy See, and there is no Vatican representative on the mainland. The Government's refusal to allow the official Catholic church to recognize the authority of the Papacy in many fundamental matters of faith and morals has led many Catholics to reject joining the official Catholic church on the grounds that this denies one of the fundamental tenets of their faith. The Government insists that Catholic Patriotic Association officials, clergy, and believers be "patriotic" and "law abiding." When government policy and Papal authority conflict—as they do, for example, on abortion or birth control—state policy takes precedence, leaving priests with the dilemma of how to advise their practitioners.

Tensions between the Vatican and the Government have caused leadership problems within the official Catholic Church in the country due to the friction between some bishops who have been consecrated with secret Vatican approval (or who obtained such secret approval after their consecration) and others consecrated without such approval. While both Chinese and Vatican authorities state that they would welcome an agreement to normalize relations, problems concerning the role of the Pope in selecting bishops and the status of underground Catholic clerics have frustrated efforts to reach this goal. Most underground Catholic priests have indicated they are unwilling to accept the authority of bishops consecrated without Vatican approval. Newly nominated bishops seeking secret Papal approval frequently find themselves at odds with other church leaders who are sympathetic to the central Government, and who insist that consecrations of new bishops be conducted by bishops not recognized by the Vatican.

Priests or bishops who served in seminaries were disciplined if they did not overtly support official criticism of the Pope's October 1, 2000, canonization of 120 saints with ties to the country, many of whom had been killed during the Boxer Rebellion. The canonization, which occurred on the anniversary of the founding of the PRC, was seen by the Government as an affront. As disagreements between the Government and the Vatican intensified in 2000, there were reliable reports that the official Catholic seminary in Beijing forced most of its students to attend political training courses in lieu of theology courses. A number of Catholic seminarians who sided with the Vatican in the dispute resigned in

opposition. In addition, foreign teachers at the official Catholic seminary in Xian were forced to leave the country after the head of the seminary criticized the Government's position in its dispute with the Vatican. However, many Catholic teachers at other sites continued to work as teachers.

There was evidence that the official Protestant seminary's "theological reconstruction campaign," during which fundamentalists were purged from the Nanjing Seminary, ended. There were no reports that seminary professors or of Protestant preachers were purged for holding theological perspectives that differed from those held by Bishop Ding Guangxun, national leader of the official Protestant church. Foreign teachers were invited to teach at both Catholic and Protestant seminaries during 2001 and 2002.

There are thriving Muslim communities in many areas, but government sensitivity to these communities varied widely. In areas where ethnic unrest has occurred, especially among the Uighurs in Xinjiang, officials continued to restrict the building of mosques and prohibited the teaching of Islam to children. In 2001 the authorities in Kashgar reportedly limited the traditional post-Ramadan celebration of rozi bayram, which usually lasts a number of days, to 2 days, and security was heavy during the celebrations. In addition to the restrictions on practicing religion seen throughout the country on Party members and government officials, in Xinjiang teachers, professors, and university students are not allowed openly to practice religion. However, in other areas, particularly in areas populated by the Hui ethnic group, there was substantial mosque construction and renovation, and apparent freedom to worship. After a series of violent incidents in Xinjiang beginning in 1997 and continuing into 2002, including reported bombings in Xinjiang and other parts of the country attributed to Uighur separatists, police cracked down on Muslim religious activity and places of worship accused of supporting separatism in the Xinjiang Autonomous Region. Because the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region government regularly lists together those involved in "ethnic separatism, illegal religious activities, and violent terrorism," it often was unclear whether particular raids, detentions, arrests, or judicial punishments targeted those seeking to worship, those peacefully seeking their political goals, or those engaged in violence. Some Uighurs and other Muslims have accused the Government of using the ongoing war against terrorism as an excuse to intensify the repression of religious activity in Xinjiang.

Xinjiang provincial-level Communist Party and Government officials repeatedly called for stronger management of religious affairs and for the separation of religion from administrative matters. For example, on March 6, 2002, State Councilor Ismail Amat (an ethnic Uighur) told a delegation of National People's Congress delegates that, "while enjoying the rights of religious freedom, the citizens who have religious beliefs must place the basic interests of the State and the people before everything else," and that "we must not use the freedom of religious belief as an excuse to abandon or to dodge the management of religious affairs by the State." The official Xinjiang Legal Daily newspaper reported that in recent years a township in Bay (Baicheng) County had found cases of "religious interference" in judicial, marriage, and family planning matters. In response, the authorities began conducting monthly political study sessions for religious personnel and the authorities began to implement more vigorously restrictions on the religious education of youths under the age of 18. In addition, they required every mosque to record the numbers and names of those attending each day's activities. In 2000 the official Xinjiang Daily newspaper reported that Yining County had reviewed the activities of 420 mosques and had implemented a system of linking ethnic minority cadres to mosques in order to improve vigilance against "illegal religious activities." The authorities also initiated a campaign to discourage overt religious attire such as veils and to discourage religious marriage ceremonies. There were numerous official media reports that the authorities confiscated "illegal religious publications" in Xinjiang.

Abbots and monks in predominantly Tibetan areas outside of the Tibetan Autonomous Region report that they have greater freedom to worship and conduct religious training than their coreligionists within the TAR. Diplomats have seen pictures of a number of Tibetan religious figures, including the Dalai Lama, openly displayed in parts of Sichuan, Qinghai, and Gansu provinces. However, beginning in June 2001, the Government ordered thousands of monks and nuns to leave the Serthar Tibetan Buddhist Institute (also known as Larung Gar), located in the Ganze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province. The Government maintained that the facility was reduced in size for sanitation and hygiene reasons. Critics argued that the authorities were concerned that many of the students at Serthar were ethnic Han Chinese who might become sympathetic to Tibetan issues. At its peak, it housed as many as 7,000 monks and nuns, including 1,000 Han Chinese, making it the largest concentration of monks and nuns in the country. Following the expulsions, the population dropped to approximately 1,400; by the end of the period covered by this report, the population had risen to approximately 4,000 monks and nuns. The authorities also destroyed the residences of many of the monks and nuns who had been at Serthar. Foreign observers believed that the authorities moved against the Institute because of its size and the influence of its charismatic founder, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok. Officials continued to monitor the activities of Larung Gar, but Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok was able to return to Larung Gar by the end of the period covered by this report. According to the Tibet Information Network (TIN), the authorities carried out a similar campaign at Yachen Gar in Baiyul county, another major monastic encampment in Sichuan province. The authorities reportedly ordered more than 800 monks and nuns of the 6,000 to 7,000 total to leave the encampment by mid-October 2001. Hundreds of students from throughout China and from abroad reportedly had been studying at Yachen Gar prior to this action; foreign students reportedly were ordered to leave in 2001. In February 2002 a young Buddhist monk reportedly was arrested in Aba City, Sichuan for protest activity (handing out pictures of the Dalai Lama, posting pro-democracy leaflets, and distributing info on China's human rights violations). He reportedly did not advocate Tibetan independence. (A discussion of government restrictions on Tibetan Buddhism in the TAR can be found in the Tibet annex to this report.)

In a growing number of areas, the authorities have displayed increasing tolerance of religious practice by foreigners. Weekly services of the foreign Jewish community in Beijing have been held uninterrupted since 1995, and High Holy Day observances have been allowed for more than 15 years. The Shanghai

Jewish community has received permission from authorities to hold services on several occasions in an historic Shanghai synagogue, which was restored as a museum in 1998. Local authorities remain committed to allowing the use of the synagogue on a case-by-case basis for major holidays. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons) meets regularly in a number of cities, but its membership is limited strictly to the expatriate community.

The authorities permit officially sanctioned religious organizations to maintain international contacts that do not involve "foreign control." What constitutes "control" is not defined. Regulations enacted in 1994, and expanded in 2000, codified many existing rules involving foreigners, including a ban on proselytizing. However, for the most part, the authorities allowed foreign nationals to preach to other foreigners, to bring in religious materials for personal use, and to preach to Chinese citizens at churches, mosques, and temples at the invitation of registered religious organizations. Foreigners legally are barred from conducting missionary activities; however, foreign Christians teaching English and other languages on college campuses openly profess their faith with minimum interference from the authorities, as long as their proselytizing is low key. Many Christian groups throughout the country have developed close ties with local officials, in some cases operating schools and homes for the care of the aged. In addition, Buddhist-run private schools and orphanages in the central part of the country also offer training to teenagers and young adults. However, the Hong Kong Catholic Church's contacts with its mainland counterparts in the official Catholic Church remained on hold due to restrictions on religious groups imposed by the Government.

The increase in the number of Christians in the country has resulted in a corresponding increase in the demand for Bibles. One printing company, a joint venture with an overseas Christian organization, has printed 25 million Bibles since its founding in 1987, including Bibles in Braille and minority languages, such as Korean, Jingbo, Lisu, Lahu, Miao, and Yao. Although Bibles can be purchased at some bookstores, they cannot be ordered directly from publishing houses by individuals. However, they were available for purchase at most officially recognized churches, at which many house church members buy their Bibles without incident. Nonetheless, some underground Christians hesitated to buy Bibles at official churches because such transactions sometimes involve receipts that identify the purchaser. Foreign experts confirm reports of chronic shortages of Bibles in rural areas, mostly due to logistical problems in dissemination. The situation has improved due to improved distribution channels, including to house churches. Customs officials continued to monitor for the "smuggling" of Bibles and other religious materials into the country. On January 28, 2002, Hong Kong resident Li Guangqiang (Lai Kwong-keung) was sentenced to 2 years in prison for smuggling annotated versions of the Bible onto the mainland. Li had been detained in May 2001 and was released in early February 2002 on medical parole after Christian groups and political leaders around the world expressed concern over his detention. Two mainland colleagues of Li's, Lin Xifu and Yu Zhudi, were arrested along with him and remained in prison at the end of the period covered by this report. There have been credible reports that the authorities sometimes confiscate Bibles in raids on house churches.

The Government teaches atheism in schools. The participation of minors in religious education is prohibited by regulation, but enforcement varies widely from region to region. In some Muslim areas, minors attend religious schools in addition to state-run schools. In some areas, large numbers of young persons attend religious services at both registered and unregistered places of worship. Official religious organizations administer local Bible schools, 54 Catholic and Protestant seminaries, 9 institutes to train imams and Islamic scholars, and institutes to train Buddhist monks. Students who attend these institutes must demonstrate "political reliability," and all graduates must pass an examination on their theological and political knowledge to qualify for the clergy. The Government has stated that there are 10 colleges conducting Islamic higher education and 2 other Islamic schools in Xinjiang operating with government support. Some young Muslims study outside of the country in Muslim religious schools.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

During the period covered by this report, unapproved religious and spiritual groups remained under scrutiny and, in some cases, harsh repression. Although there was no significant change in the central Government's official policy toward religious freedom, the unremitting campaign against Falun Gong and other "heretical cults," plus frequent statements by senior leaders on the need to "strengthen religious work" (or increase supervision of religious groups by the RAB), had an inevitable spillover effect.

During the period covered by this report, there were numerous credible reports of abuse and even killings of Falun Gong practitioners by the police and other security personnel.

In some areas, security authorities used threats, demolition of unregistered property, extortion of "fines," interrogation, detention, and at times beatings and torture to harass unofficial religious figures and followers.

Offenses related to membership in unapproved religious groups are classified as crimes of disturbing the social order. According to the Law Yearbook of China, arrests for disturbing the social order increased from 76,500 persons to more than 90,000 persons between 1998 and 1999, the most recent figures available. Most experts agree that this increase primarily was due to the Government's crackdown, begun in mid-1999, on spiritual groups like Falun Gong, the Society of Disciples (Mentu Hui), evangelical Christian groups, and localized Buddhist groups such as the Guan Yin (also known as Guanyin Famin, or the Way of the Goddess of Mercy), Protestant house churches, and the underground Roman Catholic Church. Leaders of unauthorized groups in particular often are the targets of harassment, interrogations, detention, and physical abuse (including torture). Members of these groups also may be subject to such treatment. Religious groups that preach beliefs outside the bounds of officially approved doctrine (such

as imminent coming of the Apocalypse, or holy war) or that have charismatic leaders often are singled out for particularly severe harassment. Some observers have attributed the unorthodox beliefs of some of these groups to undertrained clergy. Others acknowledge that some individuals may be exploiting the reemergence of interest in religion for personal gain.

Many religious leaders and adherents have been arrested and sentenced to prison terms. On February 5, 2002, a Xiamen court sentenced Huang Aiping, Li Wulong, and Ji Qingjun to 7 years in prison for "using a cult organization to violate the law." The three were members of the Blood and Water Holy Spirit Full Gospel Preaching Team, which was founded in Taiwan and banned on the mainland in 1996 as an "illegal infiltration organization." In December 2001, Gong Shengliang, founder of the South China Church, and his niece Li Ying were sentenced to death on a wide range of criminal charges, including rape, arson, and assault. Both remained in detention at the end of the period covered by this report while appealing their sentences. Two members of the South China Church claimed that police tortured them until they agreed to sign statements claiming that they had been raped by Gong. Other persons arrested along with Gong and his niece were sentenced to prison for periods varying between 2 years and life. There was an unconfirmed report that at least 14 persons were arrested while authorities sought Pastor Gong, many of whom allegedly were beaten and tortured. A group of Protestants in Liaoning continue to contest the November 2000 arrest of local house church leader Li Baozhi, who allegedly continues to be held for association with the banned Full Scope Church. Li reportedly was sentenced to 2 years of reeducation through labor; two other persons were sentenced to 1 year of reeducation through labor for association with the Full Scope Church. Liaoning Christians have visited Li in prison, petitioned local officials for his release, and published their complaints on the Internet. They have stated that Li and his church are not affiliated with the Full Scope Church.

Local authorities also use an administrative process to punish members of unregistered religious groups. Citizens may be sentenced by a nonjudicial panel of police and local authorities to up to 3 years in prison-like facilities called reeducation-through-labor camps. Many religious detainees and prisoners were held in such facilities during the period covered by this report. In December 2001, Shui Xinlong, Wang Maochen, and other leaders of the Society of Disciples (Mentu Hui) were sentenced to reeducation-through-labor in Lintao City, Gansu province. Qin Baocai and Mu Sheng, colleagues of Protestant house church leader Xu Yongze, continue to serve reeducation-through-labor sentences. The Government's 1997 white paper on Religious Freedom stated that Xu had promoted a cult, preaching that the Apocalypse was near and asking worshipers to wait in public spaces for several consecutive days. Group members deny these allegations.

In Hebei where an estimated half of the country's Catholics reside, friction between unofficial Catholics and local authorities continued. Hebei authorities have been known to force many underground priests and believers to choose between joining the official Church or facing punishment such as fines, job loss, periodic detentions, and, in some cases, having their children barred from school. Some Catholics have been forced into hiding. Again in 2002, the authorities detained Catholic underground Bishop Jia Zhiguo of Hebei for several days before the start of Holy Week, allegedly in an attempt to pressure him to join the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. The whereabouts of underground Catholic Bishop Su Zhimin, whose followers reported that he was arrested in 1997, remained unclear, despite repeated inquiries from the international community on his status. Underground Catholic sources in Hebei claimed that he still was in detention, while the Government denied having taken "any coercive measures" against him. Reliable sources reported that Bishop An Shuxin, Bishop Zhang Weizhu, Father Cui Xing, and Father Wang Quanjun remained under detention in Hebei. According to several nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), a number of Catholic priests and lay leaders were beaten or otherwise abused during the period covered by this report. Underground Catholic Bishop Joseph Fan Zhongliang of Shanghai remained under surveillance and often had his movements restricted. Roman Catholic Bishop Zeng Jingmu, released from a labor camp in 1998, reportedly was arrested in Jiangxi in September 2000, although the Government denied those reports. The authorities detained underground bishop Shi Enxiang on Palm Sunday 2001 in Beijing, although they later claimed that he had been released. In February 2000, in Fuzhou, Fujian province, a large group of police arrested underground Catholic Bishop Yang Shudao. The Government denied that the elderly Bishop was being detained; in response to official inquiries, they stated that he was receiving medical treatment. By the end of the period covered by this report, there was no new information on his whereabouts or physical condition.

Fujian Province clerics reported that, while there had been no recent signs of a general crackdown against underground Catholics as was seen in 1999 and 2000, the April 2001 detention of two underground priests led to a generalized fear that other detentions might follow. Protestant church members in some parts of the country complained that central government support for local crackdowns on Fujian-based Shouters and Hubei's South China Church had created a sense of intimidation in their communities. Some underground Catholic and Protestant leaders reported increased pressure to register their congregations after the December 2001 Central Committee Work Conference on Religion.

Since the Government banned the Falun Gong in 1999 and began a comprehensive nationwide repression of the movement, the practice of Falun Gong or possession of its literature has been sufficient grounds for practitioners to receive punishments ranging from loss of employment and educational opportunities to imprisonment. Some Falun Gong members have been tortured in custody and there have been reports that several hundred or more Falun Gong adherents have died in detention since 1999. Falun Gong members who "disrupt public order" or distribute publications may be sentenced to 3 to 7 years in prison, and Falun Gong leaders may be sentenced to up to 7 years or more in prison.

According to some reports, the Government intensified its harsh and comprehensive campaign against the Falun Gong during the early spring of 2001. After the January 2001 self-immolations of five individuals claiming to be Falun Gong practitioners in Tiananmen Square, the Government initiated a comprehensive effort to round up practitioners not already in custody, and sanctioned the use of high

pressure indoctrination tactics against such individuals in an effort to force them to renounce Falun Gong. Neighborhood committees, state institutions (including universities), and companies reportedly were ordered to send all known Falun Gong practitioners to intensive anti-Falun Gong study sessions. Even practitioners who had not protested or made other public demonstrations of belief were forced to attend such classes. Those who refused to recant their beliefs after weeks of intensive anti-Falun Gong instruction reportedly were sent to reeducation-through-labor camps, where, in some cases, beatings and torture were used to force them to recant their beliefs. These tactics reportedly resulted in large numbers of practitioners pledging to renounce the movement. Perhaps due to the decreased number of practitioners in those regions, the campaign against Falun Gong seemed to have abated in the eastern and southern parts of the country by mid-2002.

Police often used excessive force when detaining peaceful Falun Gong protesters. During the period covered by this report, there were numerous credible reports that police and security force personnel abused, tortured, and even killed Falun Gong practitioners. In February 2002, Chengdu University associate professor Zhang Chuansheng, a longtime Falun Gong practitioner, was arrested in his hometown and taken to Chengdu's main prison, where he died 3 days later. His family, who saw Zhang's body after his death, claimed that he had been beaten severely. Prison authorities claimed that he died of a heart attack.

According to the Falun Gong, hundreds of its practitioners have been confined to psychiatric institutions and forced to take medications or undergo electric shock treatment against their will.

Although more than a dozen Falun Gong practitioners have been sentenced to prison for up to 18 years for the crime of "endangering state security," most Falun Gong members convicted of crimes by courts since 1999 have been sentenced to prison for "organizing or using a sect to undermine the implementation of the law," a less serious offense. In addition, many thousands of Falun Gong practitioners are serving extrajudicial administrative sentences in reeducation-through-labor camps.

The number of protests by individuals or small groups of practitioners at Tiananmen Square and around the country decreased considerably during the period covered by this report. Many attributed the decrease to the public outcry following the January 2001 self-immolation of five Falun Gong adherents on Tiananmen Square. Others attribute the decline to the success of the Government crackdown on Falun Gong, which, by the end of 2001, essentially had eliminated public manifestations of the movement. In August 2001, four persons who allegedly organized the self-immolations were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 7 years to life. The authorities briefly detained foreign practitioners who attempted to unfurl Falun Gong banners in Tiananmen Square or pass out Falun Gong leaflets, generally deporting them after 1 or 2 days. Some foreign Falun Gong practitioners credibly reported being mistreated while in custody.

The tactic used most frequently by the central Government against Falun Gong practitioners has been to make local officials, family members, and employers of known practitioners responsible for preventing Falun Gong activities by individuals. In many cases, practitioners are subject to close scrutiny by local security personnel and their personal mobility is restricted tightly, particularly on days when the Government believes that public protests are likely.

Officials acknowledged arresting 18 Falun Gong members who hacked into a Changchun, Jilin province cable television station on March 5, 2002 and aired Falun Gong videos on the channel for approximately 45 minutes. Those arrested in connection with this incident were charged with damaging cable transmission lines, using a cult to hamper social order, and "interfering in the masses' normal lives," and could face prison sentences of 15 years or more. According to foreign media reports, Falun Gong practitioners interfered with cable television signals on several other occasions during the first half of 2002.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

The communities of the five official religions--Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, Catholicism, and Protestantism--coexist without significant friction. However, in some parts of the country, there is a tense relationship between registered and unregistered Christian churches. There were reports of divisions within both the official Protestant church and the house church movement over issues of doctrine; in both the registered and unregistered Protestant churches there are conservative and more liberal groups. In other areas, the two groups coexist without problems. In general the majority of the population shows little interest in the affairs of the religious minority beyond visiting temples during festivals or churches on Christmas Eve or Easter. Religious/ethnic minority groups, such as Tibetans and Uighurs, experience societal discrimination, but this is not based solely upon their religious beliefs. Traditionally there also has been occasional tension between the Han and the Hui, a Muslim ethnic group.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The Department of State, U.S. officials in Beijing, and the Consulates General in Chengdu, Guangzhou,

Shanghai, and Shenyang make a concerted effort to encourage greater religious freedom in the country, using both focused external pressure on abuses and support for positive trends within the country. In exchanges with the Government, including with religious affairs officials, diplomatic personnel consistently urge both central and local authorities to respect citizens' rights to religious freedom. U.S. officials protest vigorously whenever there are credible reports of religious harassment or discrimination in violation of international laws and standards, and request information in cases of alleged mistreatment in which the facts are incomplete or contradictory. At the same time, U.S. officials make the case to the country's leaders that freedom of religion can strengthen, not harm, the country. In February 2002, President Bush gave a speech at Tsinghua University in Beijing that was broadcast nationwide, during which he called upon the Government to show more religious tolerance. The U.S. Embassy and Consulates also collect information about abuses and maintain contacts with a wide spectrum of religious leaders within the country's religious communities, including with bishops, priests, ministers of the official Christian churches, and Taoist, Muslim, and Buddhist leaders. U.S. officials also meet with leaders and members of the unofficial Christian churches. The Department of State's nongovernmental contacts include experts on religion in China, human rights organizations, and religious groups in the United States. The Department of State has sent a number of Chinese religious leaders and scholars to the United States on international visitor programs to see firsthand the role that religion plays in U.S. society. The Embassy also brings experts on religion from the United States to the country to speak about the role of religion in American life and public policy.

In July 2001, the Government agreed to resume the official U.S.-China bilateral human rights dialog, which had been suspended since 1999. The dialog was held in October 2001 and religious freedom was a key agenda item.

Government officials occasionally have refused to grant meetings to U.S. Embassy officials who intended to raise religious freedom or other human rights issues. In April 2002, Religious Affairs Bureau officials refused to meet with the Department of State's Undersecretary for Global Affairs.

U.S. officials in Washington and Beijing have continued to protest individual incidents of abuse. On numerous occasions, both the Department of State and the Embassy in Beijing protested government actions to curb freedom of religion and freedom of conscience, including the arrests of Falun Gong followers, the crackdowns on Tibetan Buddhists and on Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang, and the arrests of Christian ministers and believers.

In October 2001, the Secretary of State designated China a country of particular concern under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom. The country also was so designated in 1999 and 2000.

Tibet

(The United States recognizes the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)—hereinafter referred to as "Tibet"—to be part of the People's Republic of China. The preservation and development of Tibet's unique religious, cultural, and linguistic heritage and protection of its people's fundamental human rights continue to be of concern.)

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China provides for freedom of religious belief and the freedom not to believe; however, the Government maintains tight controls on religious practices and places of worship in Tibet. Although the authorities permit many traditional religious practices and public manifestations of belief, they promptly and forcibly suppress those activities viewed as vehicles for political dissent, such as religious activities that are perceived as advocating Tibetan independence or any form of separatism (which the Chinese Government views as "splittist").

The Government strictly controls access to and information about Tibet, and it is difficult to determine accurately the scope of religious freedom violations. Religious practice faced ongoing restrictions during the period covered by this report, but overall enforcement of such restrictions was less strict than in the period covered by the previous report. Nonetheless, the level of religious repression in Tibet remained high, and the Government's record of respect for religious freedom remained poor.

Although the "patriotic education" campaign begun in the mid-1990's officially has concluded, patriotic education activities continued at a lower level of intensity. Core requirements of "patriotic education," such as the renunciation of the Dalai Lama and the acceptance of Tibet as a part of China, continue to engender resentment on the part of Tibetan Buddhists. Many monks and nuns continue to serve prison terms for their resistance to "patriotic education." There were reports of the death of religious prisoners, as well as the imprisonment and abuse or torture of monks and nuns accused of political activism.

Although the Christian population in Tibet is extremely small, some converts reportedly are subject to social pressure and some reportedly have been disinherited by family members who practice Buddhism.

The U.S. Government continued to encourage greater religious freedom in Tibet by urging the central government and local authorities to respect religious freedom, by protesting credible reports of religious persecution or discrimination, by discussing specific cases with the authorities, and by requesting information about specific incidents.

Section I. Religious Demography

The TAR has a total area of 471,700 square miles, and according to the 2000 census, its official population is approximately 2.6 million. Most ethnic Tibetans practice Tibetan Buddhism. Many ethnic Tibetan government officials and some ethnic Tibetan Communist Party members quietly practice Tibetan Buddhism. While officials state that there is no Falun Gong activity in the TAR, reports indicate there are small numbers of practitioners among the ethnic Han population. Small numbers of Tibetan and Han Muslims and Christians also live in the region.

Chinese officials state that Tibet has more than 46,000 Buddhist monks and nuns and more than 1,700 monasteries, temples, and religious sites. Officials have cited these same figures since 1996, although since then the numbers of monks and nuns have dropped significantly at many sites as a result of the "patriotic education" campaign and the expulsion from monasteries and nunneries of many monks and nuns who refused to denounce the Dalai Lama or who were found to be "politically unqualified" to belong to religious orders. These numbers represent only the TAR; more than 100,000 monks and nuns live in other Tibetan areas of China, including parts of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai provinces.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution of the People's Republic of China provides for freedom of religious belief and the freedom not to believe; however, the Government seeks to restrict religious practice to government-sanctioned organizations and registered places of worship and to control the growth and scope of the activity of religious groups. The Government maintains tight controls on religious practices and places of worship in Tibet. Although the authorities permit many traditional religious practices and public manifestations of belief, they promptly and forcibly suppress those activities viewed as vehicles for political dissent, such as religious activities that are perceived as advocating Tibetan independence or any form of separatism (which the Government describes as "splittist"). The authorities also regularly require monks and nuns to make statements overtly supporting government or party policies on religion and history, to pledge themselves to support officially approved religious leaders and reincarnations, and to denounce the Dalai Lama.

The Government continued its harsh rhetorical campaign against the Dalai Lama and his leadership of a "government-in-exile." The official press continued to criticize vehemently the "Dalai clique," and in an attempt to undermine the credibility of his religious authority, repeatedly described the Dalai Lama as a "criminal" determined to split China. Both the central government and local officials often insist that dialog with the Dalai Lama essentially is impossible, and claim that his actions belie his repeated public assurances that he does not advocate independence for Tibet. Nonetheless, the Government asserts that the door to dialog and negotiation is open provided that the Dalai Lama publicly affirms that Tibet is an inseparable part of China. Since 1998 the Government also has required the Dalai Lama to affirm publicly that Taiwan is a province of China. The Government remains suspicious of Tibetan Buddhism in general due to its links to the Dalai Lama; this suspicion also applies to Tibetan Buddhist religious adherents who do not demonstrate explicitly their loyalty to the State.

The Government claims that since 1976 it has contributed sums in excess of \$40 million (approximately 300 to 400 million RMB) toward the restoration of tens of thousands of Buddhist sites, which were destroyed before and during the Cultural Revolution. Government funding of restoration efforts ostensibly was done to support the practice of religion, but also was done in part to promote the development of tourism in Tibet. Most recent restoration efforts were funded privately, although a few religious sites also were receiving government support for reconstruction projects at the end of the period covered by this report.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Buddhist monasteries and pro-independence activism are associated closely in Tibet, and the Government has moved to curb the proliferation of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, which it charges are a drain on local resources and a conduit for political infiltration by the Tibetan exile community. The Government states that there are no limits on the number of monks in major monasteries, and that each monastery's Democratic Management Committee (DMC) decides on its own how many monks the monastery can support. However, these committees are government-controlled, and in practice, the authorities impose strict limits on the number of monks in major monasteries. The Government has the right to disapprove any individual's application to take up religious orders, although these restrictions are not always enforced.

Although by regulation monks are not permitted to register and formally join a monastery prior to the age of 18, many younger boys in fact continue the tradition of entering monastic life. Young novices, who traditionally served as attendants to older monks while receiving a basic monastic education and awaiting formal ordination, continue to be admitted to some TAR monasteries. However, monasteries require government approval to admit trainee monks, and some monasteries have been unable to secure such approval. In some large monasteries young novices have been expelled in the past for being underage. Because these novices were not regular, registered members of the monasteries, the authorities denied that there was a significant decline in the numbers of monks at such sites. However, there were no reports of such expulsions during the period covered by this report.

Beginning in June 2001, Chinese authorities ordered thousands of monks and nuns to leave the Serthar

Tibetan Buddhist Institute located in the Ganze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Sichuan Province (also known as the Larung Gar monastic encampment). The authorities also destroyed the residences of many of the monks and nuns who had been at Serthar. Foreign observers believed that the authorities moved against the Institute because of its size and the influence of its charismatic founder, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok. According to the Tibet Information Network (TIN), the authorities carried out a similar campaign at Yachen Gar in Baiyul county, another major monastic encampment in Sichuan province. The authorities reportedly ordered more than 800 of the 6,000 to 7,000 resident monks and nuns to leave the encampment by mid-October 2001. (see also Section II of the China International Religious Freedom Report for information on these incidents).

The Government continued to oversee the daily operations of major monasteries. The Government, which does not contribute to monasteries' operational funds, retains management control of the monasteries through the DMC's and the local religious affairs bureaus. In many areas, regulations restrict leadership of the DMC's to "patriotic and devoted" monks and nuns and specify that the Government must approve all members of the committees. At some major monasteries, government officials also sit on the committees.

With the advent of DMC responsibility for management of all monastery funds generated by entrance tickets or donated by pilgrims, funds no longer are made available to partially support monks engaged in full time study. Such "scholar monks" now must engage in income-generating activities at least part of the time. Experts are concerned that fewer monks will be qualified to serve as teachers in the future as a result. The erosion of the quality of religious teaching in the TAR continues to be a focus of concern. The quality and availability of high-level religious teachers in the TAR is inadequate, as many now are in exile, and older teachers are not being replaced.

Government officials state that the "patriotic education campaign," which began in the mid-1990's and dispatched work teams to conduct intensive mandatory political training sessions for nuns and monks at religious sites, is completed. Officials acknowledge, however, that "patriotic education" for monks and nuns continues on a regular basis at religious sites and that monks and nuns continue to undergo mandatory political training or "patriotic education." Training sessions are aimed at enforcing compliance with government regulations, and either cowing or weeding out monks and nuns who refuse to adopt the Party line and who remain sympathetic to the Dalai Lama. Sessions are conducted on topics such as relations between Tibetans and Han Chinese, Tibet's historical status as part of China, and the role of the Dalai Lama in attempting to "split" the country. Monks and nuns often are required to demonstrate their patriotism by signing a declaration agreeing to reject independence for Tibet; to reject Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the boy recognized by the Dalai Lama as the 11th reincarnation of the Panchen Lama; to reject and denounce the Dalai Lama; to recognize the unity of China and Tibet; and not to listen to the Voice of America or Radio Free Asia. Some non-compliant monks and nuns have been expelled from religious sites. Yet others departed "voluntarily" rather than denounce the Dalai Lama. Despite, and in some cases because of, these efforts to control the Buddhist clergy and monasteries, antigovernment sentiment remains strong.

On average, approximately 2,500 Tibetans enter Nepal each year seeking refugee status to escape conditions in Tibet, according to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The UNHCR reported that 1,381 Tibetan refugees transited Nepal in 2001; significantly fewer than in previous years. The decline was due in part to the ongoing Maoist insurgency in Nepal. It is difficult for Tibetans to travel to India for religious purposes. Nevertheless, many Tibetans, including monks and nuns, visited India via third countries and returned to the TAR after temporary stays. Tibetans can return from exile to the TAR, although the approval process is cumbersome.

After the Karmapa, the leader of Tibetan Buddhism's Karma Kargyu school and one of the most influential religious figures in Tibetan Buddhism, secretly left his home monastery and traveled to India in December 1999, the authorities increased efforts to exert control over the process for finding and educating reincarnated lamas. In January 2000, the Government approved the selection of 2-year-old Sonam Phuntsog as the 7th reincarnation of the Reting Rinpoche. However, the Dalai Lama, who normally must approve the selection of important religious figures such as the Reting Rinpoche, did not recognize the choice. Many of the monks at Reting Monastery reportedly did not accept the child as the Reting Rinpoche, and he lives with his family under heavy guard in his residence near the monastery; the authorities tightly controlled access to the area. Another young reincarnate lama, Pawo Rinpoche, who was recognized by the Karmapa in 1994 as the reincarnation of an important Karma Kargyu lineage, and is approximately 8 years of age, has been denied access to his religious tutors, and the authorities reportedly require him to attend a regular Chinese school. The Government continued to insist that Gyaltsen Norbu, the boy it selected in 1995, is the Panchen Lama's 11th reincarnation rather than Gendun Choekyi Nyima, who was selected by the Dalai Lama. The authorities tightly control all aspects of his life, and he has appeared publicly in Beijing and Tibet only on rare occasions. These public appearances were marked by a heavy security presence. At all other times, the authorities strictly limited access to the boy. The Panchen Lama is Tibetan Buddhism's second most prominent figure, after the Dalai Lama.

Government officials maintain that possessing or displaying pictures of the Dalai Lama is not illegal. Currently, possession of pictures of the Dalai Lama appears to be on the rise, and many Tibetan Buddhists discreetly display them in private. However, in at least one prefecture, possession of such pictures resulted in arrest during the period covered by this report. A ban on these pictures is enforced sporadically, and Tibetans are cautious about displaying them. Pictures of the Dalai Lama may not be purchased openly in the TAR.

The Government continued to ban pictures of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the boy recognized by the Dalai Lama as the Panchen Lama. However, government authorities at both the regional and city levels have had pictures of Gyaltzen Norbu, the "official" Panchen Lama, printed for use in public and private religious displays, although very few photos of him are on display.

Some 1,000 religious figures hold positions in local people's congresses and committees of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. However, the Government continues to insist that Communist Party members and senior government employees adhere to the Party's code of atheism. A 1999 campaign to promote atheism and science in government offices and schools appears to have wound down, although regular political training for government cadres continues to promote atheism. The campaign also was launched in part to stem "the Dalai clique's reactionary infiltration." The authorities threatened to terminate the employment of government employees whose children are studying in India, usually in schools run by the Tibetan refugee community, if they did not bring the children back to Tibet. Government officials stated that all Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) officers are members of the Communist Party and that Party members are required to be atheists. However, some lower level RAB officials practice Buddhism.

Repression of religious freedom reached severe levels in Tibet in the summer of 2000. Communist Party officials and government workers (including such groups as teachers and medical workers) were forbidden to visit religious sites or practice religion at home. In some areas, private citizens were not permitted to change prayer flags on their homes, burn incense, participate in religious activities during the Tibetan New Year (Losar), or make the traditional "lingkor" (pilgrimage circuit around the sacred sites of Lhasa). These measures no longer were enforced strictly by the end of 2000. In February 2002, New Year celebrations were more open than those of the previous 2 years. Lhasa's major monasteries held large, active prayer festivals attended by pilgrims and Lhasa residents, although security reportedly was tight. The Sagadawa Festival in May 2002 was marked by similar lively celebrations and participation by pilgrims and city dwellers alike. However, in the past few years Tibetans have been forbidden to celebrate actively the Dalai Lama's birthday on July 6.

Travel restrictions were reported during the period covered by this report. Restrictions on the issuance of passports increased in early 2002. There were many reports of increased difficulty in obtaining internal travel permits for pilgrimages, and many travelers were unable to travel to the holy site of Mt. Kailash during 2001. Pilgrimages to Mt. Kailash have particular religious significance during 2002, and restrictions on internal travel permits, at least to Mt. Kailash, appear to have eased during the spring of 2002. The Government tightly controlled visits by foreign officials to religious sites and official foreign delegations had few opportunities to meet monks and nuns not previously approved by the local authorities.

Abuses of Religious Freedom

The Government strictly controls access to and information about Tibet, making it difficult to determine accurately the scope of religious freedom violations. Religious practice faced ongoing restrictions in 2001, but overall these restrictions were less harshly enforced than during the previous year. However, the level of repression in Tibet remained high and the Government's record of respect for religious freedom remained poor during the period covered by this report.

According to the TIN, at least 29 monks and nuns have died while in detention since 1987, of whom at least 17 had been held in Lhasa's Drapchi Prison. During the period covered by this report, there were additional accounts of prisoner deaths while in detention or soon after release. The TIN reported that a young monk, Kelsang Gyatso, died in August 2001 after a brief period of detention in Lhasa. Kelsang Gyatso was reportedly detained with a group of monks from Qinghai Province, who were attempting to travel to India via Nepal. Ngawang Lochoe (also known as Dondrub Drolma), a 28-year-old nun at Sandrup Dolma Lhakang temple, reportedly died in February 2001 after serving 9 years of a 10-year sentence for participating in "counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement". She died the same day that she was moved to a hospital from Drapchi Prison, reportedly from respiratory and heart failure.

According to statistics from the TIN, as many as 120 Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns were detained in China, a majority of whom were imprisoned in the TAR. In May 2002, the Deputy Director of the TAR Prison Administration Bureau stated that there were approximately 110 prisoners in the TAR incarcerated for "endangering state security." The majority of these persons are monks and nuns. Five of these prisoners subsequently were released. There were reports of imprisonment and abuse or torture of monks and nuns accused of political activism. Prisoners who resisted political reeducation imposed by prison authorities reportedly were beaten severely. Nun Ngawang Sangdrol is reported to suffer from the long-term effects of repeated severe beatings. Her prison sentence was extended for a third time in 1998 to a total of 28 years for taking part in demonstrations in prison. According to credible reports, her health is extremely poor and deteriorating. Government officials assert that she is in good health. Nun Phuntsog Nyidrol, who was sentenced in 1989 for counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement, also continues to be in poor health. According to credible reports, she has been beaten severely during her incarceration in Drapchi prison. In 2001 her sentence was reduced by 1 year, and her release date is set for March 2005.

The Government continued to control the movements of Gendun Choekyi Nyima, whom the Dalai Lama recognized in 1995 as the 11th Panchen Lama (when he was 6 years old), along with his family. Government officials have claimed that the boy is under government supervision for his own protection and that he attends classes in Tibet as a "normal schoolboy." The actual location of Gendun Choekyi

Nyima and his family remains unknown. All requests from the international community for access to the boy to confirm his whereabouts and his well being have been refused. In October 2000, government officials showed members of a foreign delegation two photographs that purportedly depicted the boy. Although the overwhelming majority of Tibetan Buddhists recognize the boy identified by the Dalai Lama as the Panchen Lama, Tibetan monks have claimed that they were forced to sign statements pledging allegiance to the boy the Government selected. The Communist Party also urged its members to support the "official" Panchen Lama.

Chadrel Rinpoche, the lama who was accused by the Government of betraying state secrets while helping the Dalai Lama choose the incarnation of the 11th Panchen Lama, was released from prison in January 2002, according to officials. While his 6-year sentence was expected to expire in May 2001, officials maintain that his January 2002 release was in accordance with his formal sentence. There are reports that Chadrel Rinpoche is being held under house arrest near Shigatse, but officials have not confirmed his whereabouts. They have stated that Chadrel Rinpoche is studying scriptures in seclusion. Nun Ngawang Choezom was released from prison on June 21, 2002, 9 months before the end of her sentence. She was detained in 1992 for advocating a free Tibet and sentenced to 5 years in prison, but in 1993 her sentence was extended to 11 years after a group of nuns, including Ngawang Choezom, secretly recorded songs about Tibetan independence. After prison protests in 1998, Ngawang Choezom reportedly was beaten severely and placed in solitary confinement. In addition, during the period covered by this report, three other nuns, Tenzin Thubten, Ngawang Choekji, and Gyaltsen Drolkar, were released prior to the expiration of their sentences.

Following the December 1999 flight of the Karmapa, Urgyen Trinley Dorje, to India, authorities restricted access to the Tsurphu Monastery, the seat of the Karmapa, and reportedly increased "patriotic education" activities there. The Karmapa stated that he left because of controls on his movements and the refusal either to allow him to go to India to be trained by his spiritual mentors or to allow his mentors to come to him. Following his flight, the TIN reported that at least two Tsurphu monks were arrested and that the Karmapa's parents were placed under surveillance. Government officials denied that there were any arrests or that the Karmapa's parents have faced restrictions of any kind. Nonetheless, in January 2001, the TIN reported that conditions at Tsurphu remain tense, with a permanent police presence and intensified restrictions on monks that appear to be aimed at discouraging them from following their spiritual teacher into exile. The TIN also reported that no new monks are being permitted to enter the monastery.

Since Falun Gong was banned in July 1999, there have been reports of detentions of Falun Gong practitioners in Tibet. The number of practicing Falun Gong practitioners in Tibet is believed to be small.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

Most Tibetans practice Tibetan Buddhism. Although the Christian population in Tibet is extremely small, some ethnic Tibetan converts reportedly are subject to social pressure and some reportedly have been disinherited by Buddhist family members.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, and the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu made a concerted effort to encourage greater religious freedom in Tibet. In regular exchanges with the Government, including with religious affairs officials, U.S. diplomatic personnel consistently urged both central government and local authorities to respect religious freedom in Tibet. Embassy officials protested and sought further information on cases whenever there were credible reports of religious persecution or discrimination. On numerous occasions, the U.S. Embassy, including the Ambassador and other senior officers, raised the cases of religious prisoners and reports of religious persecution with government officials. U.S. diplomatic personnel stationed in the country also regularly traveled to Tibet to monitor conditions, including the status of religious freedom. U.S. officials maintain contacts with a wide spectrum of religious figures, and the U.S. Department of State's nongovernmental contacts include experts on religion in Tibet and religious groups in the United States.

In July 2001, the Government agreed to resume the official U.S.-China bilateral human rights dialog, which had been suspended since 1999. The dialog was held in October 2001 and religious freedom was an agenda item.

In October 2001, the Secretary of State designated China a country of particular concern under the International Religious Freedom Act for particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

HONG KONG

The Basic Law (Hong Kong's mini-constitution) provides for freedom of religion, Hong Kong's Bill of Rights Ordinance prohibits religious discrimination, and the Government generally respects these

provisions in practice. After its July 1, 1997 reversion to the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China (PRC), Hong Kong retained autonomy through its designation as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of China.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion. The main area of concern during the period covered by this report was the authorities' approach to adherents of the spiritual movement Falun Gong, who were unable to secure permission to rent a public facility for an annual international conference, were not allowed to demonstrate directly in front of the entrance to the Central People's Government Liaison Office, and had banners confiscated on one occasion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom. Six of the largest religious groups long have collaborated in a collegium on community affairs and make up a joint conference of religious leaders.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Consulate General officers meet regularly with religious leaders.

Section I. Religious Demography

The HKSAR occupies 422 square miles on more than 200 islands and the mainland, and its population is approximately 6.8 million. Approximately 43 percent of the population participate in some form of religious practice. The two largest religions are Buddhism and Taoism. Approximately 4 percent of the population are Protestant, 3 percent are Roman Catholic, and 1 percent are Muslim. There also are small numbers of Hindus, Sikhs, and Jews. Representatives of the spiritual movement Falun Gong state that their practitioners number approximately 500, although HKSAR government officials claim that the number is lower.

There are 1,300 Protestant congregations representing 50 denominations. The largest Protestant denomination is the Baptist Church, followed by the Lutheran Church. Other major denominations include Seventh-Day Adventists, Anglicans, Christian and Missionary Alliance groups, the Church of Christ in China, Methodists, Pentecostals, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons).

There are approximately 600 Buddhist and Taoist temples, approximately 800 Christian churches and chapels, 4 mosques, a Hindu temple, a Sikh temple, and a synagogue. The Catholic population is served by 310 priests, 60 monks, and 525 nuns with traditional links to the Pope. More than 278,000 children are enrolled in 314 Catholic schools and kindergartens. The Assistant Secretary General of the Federation of Asian Bishops' conference has his office in the HKSAR. Protestant churches run 3 colleges and more than 700 schools. Religious leaders tend to focus primarily on local spiritual, educational, social, and medical needs. However, some religious leaders and communities maintain active contacts with their mainland and international counterparts. Catholic and Protestant clergy have been invited to give seminars on the mainland, to teach classes there, and to develop two-way student exchanges. Numerous foreign missionary groups operate in and out of the HKSAR.

There has been marked growth in the number of independent churches since the 1970's.

A wide range of faiths is represented in the HKSAR Government, the judiciary, and the civil service. A large number of influential non-Christians receive a Christian education.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Basic Law, the HKSAR's mini-constitution, provides for freedom of religion, the Bill of Rights Ordinance prohibits religious discrimination by the HKSAR Government, and the HKSAR Government generally respects these provisions in practice. The HKSAR Government at all levels generally protects religious freedom in full, and does not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. Although a part of the PRC since July 1, 1997, the HKSAR maintains autonomy in the area of religious freedom under the "one country, two systems" concept that defines the HKSAR's relationship to the mainland. The HKSAR Government does not recognize a state religion, and a wide range of faiths is represented in the HKSAR Government, the judiciary, and the civil service.

Religious groups are not required to register with the HKSAR Government and are exempted specifically from the Societies Ordinance, which requires the registration of nongovernmental organizations (NGO's). Catholics in the HKSAR recognize the Pope as the head of the Catholic Church. The spiritual movement widely known as Falun Gong, which does not consider itself a religion, is registered, practices freely, and holds regular public demonstrations against Central People's Government policies. However, in March 2002, 16 Falun Gong practitioners were arrested and later convicted of obstruction of public space and minor assault outside the Central People's Government Liaison Office. The case was pending appeal at the end of the period covered by this report. Falun Gong practitioners held an international conference in a government-owned facility in January 2001, held a number of public protests during President Jiang Zemin's visit in May 2001, and regularly organized public demonstration outside PRC offices. In addition,

In July 2000, a publisher of Falun Gong publications reserved prominent space at the annual Hong Kong International Book Fair, but decided to leave the space vacant. Other qigong groups, including Zhong Gong (which was banned in the mainland in late 1999), Xiang Gong, and Yan Xin Qigong, also are registered and practice freely in the HKSAR. The Taiwan-based Guan Yin Method, another group listed as an "evil cult" by the Central People's Government, is registered legally and practices freely in the HKSAR as well.

The Home Affairs Bureau is responsible for religion-related policy, but functions as a liaison between religious groups and the HKSAR Government. If a religious group wishes to purchase a site to construct a school or hospital, it works with the Lands Department; otherwise, church-affiliated schools work with the Education and Manpower Bureau and church-affiliated hospitals work with the Health and Welfare Bureau. The HKSAR Government has taken no action on draft educational reforms (which would have affected all schools, including religiously sponsored schools) that were proposed more than 2 years ago.

Representatives of 6 of the largest religious groups (Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian, Roman Catholic, Muslim, and Anglican) comprise 40 members of the 800-member Election Committee, which chooses the HKSAR's Chief Executive and a number of Legislative Council members.

The HKSAR Government grants public holidays to mark numerous special days on the traditional Chinese and Christian calendars, as well as Buddha's birthday.

Religious groups have a long history of cooperating with the HKSAR Government on social welfare projects. For example, the HKSAR Government often funds the operating costs of schools and hospitals built by religious groups.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Under the Basic Law the Central People's Government does not govern religious practices in the HKSAR, mainland Government leaders, the Central People's Government's official representatives in the HKSAR, and the two mainland-owned newspapers in the HKSAR have criticized some HKSAR religious and spiritual groups and individuals. In December 2000 in Macau, Central People's Government President Jiang Zemin stated that the HKSAR Government should not allow anyone to stage any activities in Macau against the Central People's Government or to split the country in any way; in his speech he made it clear that his comments applied equally to both Hong Kong and Macau.

One Basic Law provision calls for ties between HKSAR religious organizations and their mainland counterparts to be based on "nonsubordination, noninterference, and mutual respect." HKSAR religious leaders have noted that this provision could be used to limit such ties. In April 2000, central authorities reportedly accused a HKSAR religious leader of violating this noninterference clause by criticizing Central People's Government religious policies; since then, that leader has not sought permission from Central People's Government authorities to visit the mainland. However, the traditional ties of the HKSAR Catholic Church to the Vatican have not precluded its contacts with the official Catholic Church on the mainland. In September 2000, HKSAR-based Central People's Government officials urged HKSAR's Catholic Church to keep "low key" its celebrations of the October 1 canonization by the Pope of 120 foreign missionaries and Chinese Catholics who had been martyred in China. However, the HKSAR Catholic Church did not alter its extensive plans to mark the occasion.

Although the spiritual group Falun Gong remains free to practice, organize, and conduct public demonstrations, concern increased about pressure from Central People's Government authorities and their supporters to limit the group's activities during the period covered by this report. After intense expressions of local and international concern, the HKSAR Government announced in July 2001 that it had no plans to pursue anti-cult legislation. The number of Falun Gong practitioners in the HKSAR is reported to have dropped from approximately 1,000 to about 500 since the crackdown on the mainland began in mid-1999, although HKSAR government officials claim that the number is lower for both periods. After some HKSAR publishing houses declined to publish Falun Gong materials, the Falun Gong shifted the majority of its publishing to companies based elsewhere. One bookstore owned by a Falun Gong practitioner carried Falun Gong books. Some other bookstores refused to carry Falun Gong books, although this could be due to lack of demand. In December 2000, four newspapers printed Falun Gong advertisements protesting Central People's Government repression of its members. Three other newspapers, however, refused to print the advertisement; one based its refusal on the grounds that the advertisement was "defamatory of the Central People's Government," and under HKSAR law there are legal penalties for defamatory material. Following intense criticism of the HKSAR Government by pro-mainland organizations for allowing the Falun Gong to hold its annual conference in an HKSAR Government-run facility in January 2001, Falun Gong organizers have not been able to host a followup conference. The group's applications to rent both government administered and privately owned facilities repeatedly have been turned down.

Especially during the period prior to President Jiang Zemin's visit in May 2001, senior HKSAR officials made remarks critical of the Falun Gong, even stating that the group was an "evil cult," but senior leaders did not repeat such comments during the period covered by this report. Falun Gong practitioners have been able to demonstrate and to gain publicity for their movement during the period covered by this report.

In 2001, the HKSAR Government barred entry into Hong Kong of approximately 100 Falun Gong practitioners, most of whom were seeking to enter the HKSAR from the United States, Australia, the United Kingdom, and Taiwan. The HKSAR Government cited undefined "security reasons" for entry bans

of Falun Gong practitioners and denied that its actions were based on the individuals' religious beliefs or membership in any particular organization. Nonetheless, several hundred local and foreign resident Falun Gong practitioners were allowed to demonstrate freely on numerous occasions and at numerous venues during President Jiang's May 2001 visit.

In March 2002, police arrested 16 Falun Gong practitioners, including 4 Swiss citizens, who were demonstrating in front of the Liaison Office; the criminal trial of the practitioners on charges of obstruction and minor assault began in June 2002 and had not concluded by the end of the period covered by this report. According to press reports, in June 2002, the HKSAR Government refused entry to approximately 100 Falun Gong practitioners who had come from Asia and Europe to join local demonstrations during celebrations to commemorate the HKSAR's return to mainland sovereignty. In June 2002 the HKSAR government barred an American Falun Gong practitioner from entering Hong Kong for "security" reasons. In November 2001, police confiscated Falun Gong protesters' placards and banners on the grounds of public obstruction. Although the protesters were warned of additional confiscation if they persisted, the protests continued through the end of the year with no further police action.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

Relations among the various religious communities are amicable; however, a few HKSAR Buddhist leaders and one evangelical Christian leader have issued statements critical of Falun Gong and warned against the danger of "cults."

Two ecumenical bodies facilitate cooperative work among the Protestant churches and encourage local Christians to play an active part in society. Six of the largest religious groups (Buddhist, Taoist, Confucian, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Muslim) long have collaborated in a collegium on community affairs and make up the joint conference of religious leaders.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the HKSAR Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Consulate General officers at all levels have made clear U.S. Government interests in the full protection and maintenance of freedom of religion, conscience, expression, and association. Consulate General officers meet regularly with religious leaders and community representatives.

MACAU

On December 20, 1999, Macau reverted from Portuguese to Chinese administration (the handover) and became the Macau Special Administrative Region (MSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC) with a high degree of autonomy. Both the Basic Law (mini-constitution) and the Religious Freedom Ordinance provide for freedom of religion and prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious practice, and the MSAR Government generally respects these rights in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion. However, while in general the Government does not interfere with the practices of Falun Gong, a spiritual movement that does not consider itself a religion, police at times photographed and took some practitioners to the police station to check their identification during the period covered by this report.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Officers at the U.S. Consulate General in Hong Kong also are responsible for Macau, and meet regularly with Macau religious leaders.

Section I. Religious Demography

Macau has a total area of 13 square miles, and its population is approximately 450,000. According to 1996 census figures, of the more than 355,000 persons surveyed, 60.9 percent had no religious affiliation, 16.8 percent were Buddhist, 13.9 percent were "other" (followers of a combination of Buddhist, Taoist, and Confucian beliefs), 6.7 percent were Roman Catholic, and 1.7 percent were Protestant. The number of active Falun Gong practitioners declined from approximately 100 persons to approximately 20 after the movement was banned in mainland China in July 1999.

Members of the Government, the judiciary, and the civil service belong to a wide range of faiths.

Missionaries are active in the MSAR, and represent a wide range of faiths; the majority are Catholic.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

On December 20, 1999, Macau reverted from Portuguese to Chinese sovereignty and became the Macau Special Administrative region of the PRC. The Basic Law—the mini-constitution—provides for freedom of conscience, freedom of religious belief, freedom to preach, and freedom to conduct and participate in religious activities. The Freedom of Religion Ordinance, which remained in effect after the handover, provides for freedom of religion, privacy of religious belief, freedom of religious assembly, freedom to hold religious processions, and freedom of religious education. The MSAR Government generally respects these rights in practice; however, there was at least one incident of police detention of Falun Gong demonstrators.

There is no state religion.

The Religious Freedom Ordinance requires religious organizations to register with the MSAR's Identification Services Office. There have been no reports of discrimination in the registration process.

Missionaries are free to conduct missionary activities and are active in the MSAR. More than 30,000 children are enrolled in Catholic schools, and a large number of influential non-Christians have received a Christian education. Religious entities may use electronic media to preach.

The Freedom of Religion Ordinance stipulates that religious groups may maintain and develop relations with religious groups abroad. The Catholic Church in the MSAR recognizes the Pope as the head of the Church. In April 2001, the Holy See appointed a Coadjutor Bishop for the MSAR diocese. Editorials in the local Catholic newspaper cited the appointment as an example of the MSAR Government's independence and respect for religious freedom as provided for in the Basic Law.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Practitioners of Falun Gong have not applied for registration with the Identification Services Office because a lawyer advised them that their group's application for registration would not be approved, as the Falun Gong was banned in mainland China in July 1999. The Identification Services Office has not issued any instructions regarding the Falun Gong, and senior MSAR government officials have reaffirmed that local practitioners of Falun Gong may continue their legal activities without government interference.

According to Falun Gong practitioners, the group's materials, once available for sale in two stores, were removed from shelves by store management after Falun Gong was banned on the mainland. However, the Government has taken no action to limit the availability of such materials.

During the period covered by this report, Falun Gong practitioners continued their daily exercises in public parks; however, in September 2001, one group that had demonstrated outside the Central People's Government Liaison Office was photographed by the police and taken to a nearby police station. The group had demonstrated in support of fellow Falun Gong members on the mainland. The police questioned members of the group and checked their identification; no one was charged.

During the second anniversary celebration of the MSAR's handover, in December 2001, there were no reports of any police harassment of local Falun Gong members. PRC officials did not attend the event, unlike the previous year's celebration, during which PRC President Jiang Zemin's visit to the MSAR was marked by the barring of entry to the MSAR of dozens of foreign Falun Gong practitioners and democracy activists and the detention of 20 practitioners at a park near the celebration. The authorities claimed that the entry of the foreign practitioners and activists into the MSAR in December 2000 was barred on the basis that nonresident foreigners do not have the right to assemble and demonstrate in the MSAR. In April 2001, a female Falun Gong practitioner from Hong Kong was barred from entering Macau despite statements by the Chief Executive that there was no political blacklist of persons from Hong Kong. The police continue to keep a list of unwelcome persons who have criminal records and persons whom they believe have criminal intentions. However, Falun Gong activists reported that they have traveled to Macau at times without interference.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

Relations among the various religious communities are amicable. Citizens generally are very tolerant of other religious views and practices. Public ceremonies and dedications often include prayers by both Christian and Buddhist groups.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the MSAR Government in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. Officers from the Consulate General in Hong Kong meet regularly with Macau religious leaders.

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International Religious Freedom Report Home Page



China (includes Taiwan only)

International Religious Freedom Report 2002

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the authorities generally respect this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and the authorities' policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The American Institute in Taiwan discusses religious freedom issues with the authorities in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

Taiwan is a group of islands located in the Western Pacific Ocean off the east coast of mainland China, with a total area of approximately 13,800 square miles and a population of approximately 23 million. While the authorities do not maintain separate official statistics on religious affiliation, registration statistics suggest that of the total population, approximately 5,486,000 (23.9 percent) are Buddhist; 4,546,000 (19.8 percent) are Taoist; 887,000 (3.9 percent) follow I Kuan Tao; 605,000 (2.6 percent) are Protestant; 298,000 (1.3 percent) are Roman Catholic; 260,000 (1.1 percent) follow Tien Ti Chiao (Heaven Emperor Religion); 200,000 (0.9 percent) follow Tien Te Chiao (Heaven Virtue Religion); 187,000 (0.8 percent) follow Li-ism; 150,000 (0.7 percent) follow Hsuan Yuan Chiao (Yellow Emperor Religion); 100,000 (0.4 percent) follow Maitraya Great Tao; 96,000 (0.4 percent) follow the Chinese Holy Religion; 53,000 (0.2 percent) are Sunni Muslim; 31,500 (0.1 percent) follow Hai Tzu Tao (Innocent Child Religion); and 30,000 (0.1 percent) follow Tien Li Chiao (Heaven Reason Religion). In addition approximately 16,000 persons are adherents of the Baha'i Faith; 12,500 follow Confucianism; 3,200 follow the Maitraya Emperor Religion; 1,000 follow Ta I Chiao (Great Changes Religion); and 1,000 are adherents of the Mahikari Religion. The non-Catholic Christian denominations include: Presbyterians, True Jesus, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormons), Baptists, Lutherans, Seventh-Day Adventists, Episcopalians, and Jehovah's Witnesses. There also are a small number of adherents of Judaism. More than 70 percent of the indigenous population (Aborigines) are Christian. The majority of religious adherents either are Buddhist or Taoist, but a large percentage consider themselves both Buddhist and Taoist. Approximately 50 percent of the population regularly participate in some form of organized religious practice. Almost 14 percent of the population are believed to be atheist.

In addition to practicing another religion, many persons also follow a collection of beliefs that are deeply ingrained in Chinese culture, and that can be referred to as "traditional Chinese folk religion." These beliefs include, but are not limited to, shamanism, ancestor worship, magic, ghosts and other spirits, and aspects of animism. Such folk religion may overlap with an individual's belief in Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, or other traditional Chinese religions. There also may be an overlap between practitioners of such religions as Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, and practitioners of Falun Gong, whose numbers have grown rapidly in recent years to as many as 100,000. Observers have estimated that as much as 80 percent of the population believes in some form of traditional folk religion.

Religious beliefs cross political and geographical lines. Members of the political leadership practice various faiths. Officials from across the political spectrum were among the thousands of persons who visited an exhibition of a sacred Buddhist relic on loan from the Chinese Buddhist Association in Beijing, which was on tour in Taiwan from February to March 2002 under the auspices of a Buddhist temple in Foguangshan, Kaosiung County. However, some pro-independence elements criticized the loan of the relic by the Beijing association as politically motivated.

Foreign missionary groups are active in Taiwan, including the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the authorities generally respect this right in

practice. The authorities at all levels strive to protect this right in full, and do not tolerate its abuse, either by the authorities or private actors. There is no state religion.

Although registration is not mandatory, 19 religious organizations have registered with the Ministry of the Interior. Religious organizations may register with the central authorities through their island-wide associations under the Temple Management Law, the Civic Organizations Law, or the chapter of the Civil Code that governs foundations and associations. While individual places of worship may register with local authorities, many choose not to register, and operate as the personal property of their leaders. Registered organizations operate on a tax-free basis and are required to make annual reports of their financial operations. In the past, concern over abuse of tax-free privileges or other financial misdeeds occasionally prompted the authorities to deny registration to new religions whose doctrines were not clear; however, there were no reports that the authorities sought to deny registration to new religions during the period covered by this report.

Religious instruction is not permitted at the elementary, middle, or high school levels in public or private schools that have been accredited by the Ministry of Education. Religious organizations are permitted to operate schools, but religious instruction is not permitted in those schools if they have been accredited by the Ministry of Education. If the schools are not accredited formally by the Ministry of Education, they may provide religious instruction. High schools may provide general courses in religious studies, and universities and research institutions have religious studies departments. Religious organizations operate theological seminaries.

Foreign missionary groups operate freely.

The Ministry of the Interior promotes interfaith understanding among religious groups by sponsoring symposiums, or helping to defray the expenses of privately sponsored symposiums on religious issues.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

The authorities' policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

Relations among the various religious communities are generally amicable. The Taiwan Council for Religion and Peace, the China Religious Believers Association, and the Taiwan Religious Association are private organizations that promote greater understanding and tolerance among adherents of different religions. These associations and various religious groups occasionally sponsor symposiums to promote mutual understanding.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The American Institute in Taiwan discusses religious freedom issues with the authorities in the context of its overall dialog and policy of promoting human rights. The American Institute is in frequent contact with representatives of human rights organizations and occasionally meets with leaders of various religious communities.

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