

Study on Current "Religious Fever" Phenomenon of China¹

ÉTUDE SUR LE PHÉNOMÈNE ACTUEL DE "FIÈVRE RELIGIEUSE" DE LA CHINE

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Abstract: This paper details the concrete manifestation of current "religious fever" phenomenon in China; explores the underlying causes of its formation from social roots, understanding roots, psychological roots and religious secularization the four aspects; proposes to make a rational response to religious revival, implement the basic principle of the party's religious work, develop science and education, have people form scientific world outlook, while strengthening the socialist spiritual civilization.

Key words: Religious fever; Performance; Reason; Response

Résumé: Cet article expose la manifestation du phénomène courant de "fièvre religieuse" en Chine; explore les causes sous-jacentes de sa constitution à partir des quatre aspects: les racines sociales, les racines de compréhension, les racines psychologiques et la sécularisation religieuse; propose d'apporter une réponse rationnelle à un redressement religieux, met en œuvre le principe élémentaire du travail religieux du parti, développe la science et l'éducation, aide les gens à former une vision du monde scientifique, tout en renforçant la civilisation spirituelle socialiste.

Mots clés: Fièvre religieuse; Performance; Raison; Réponse

Late of the 20th century, especially after the age of 70, a powerful religious revival sweeps the world: the traditional religious revive and the new religions rise, popular mysticism culture gets popular. And with the deepening of globalization, the increasingly open China has become more wrapped in the religious upsurge. In recent years, from the developing forces of the prairie of Christ and Catholic, from the clamor and confusion to the public of the Falun Gong elements, from the Tibetan separatist, East Turkistan separatist and other ethnic and religious events, China's "religious fever" phenomenon once again become the main object of attention.

1. THE CONCRETE PERFORMANCE OF CHINA'S CURRENT "RELIGIOUS FEVER"

1.1 The gradual rise in the number of believers

After China's reform and opening up, especially in recent years, with the implementation of the policy of religious freedom, religious activities have been suppressed from the underground to the ground; the number of people of all kinds of religions is increasing. At present, apart from Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism, Christianity, five major religions, there are a small number of Orthodox Christians and many folk beliefs of minority faith traditions in our country.

According to the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee and the Chinese Christian Association, the number of Christian believers is 1600 million, and has doubled comparing with 800 million in the early 90s, while the actual number of Christians are much larger; there are 550 million Catholics (including the underground Catholic forces);

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the population of Islamic minority is about 21 million, has increased 4 million than 17 million in the early 90s of last century; in the early 90s of last century, China's Buddhism has already get 100 million people, accounting for 8.3% of the total population, of which about 168,000 monks and nuns; Taoism with deep cultural roots has deeply potential too (State Council Information Office of China, 1997, p11).

In 1993, the government announced that the number of believers in China is more than 30 million, in 1997, this figure surpassed 100 million, now China's current total population of religious believers is estimated more than 300 million (JIN Ze and QIU Yonghui, 2008, p3) it reflects that the growth trend of the religious number is beyond doubt. In addition, the opening up venues for religious activities approval by the government has more than 8.5 million, the religious schools and colleges run by religious groups for doing a training of clerical personnel has also reach 74, there has been about 4,000 religious organizations at all levels.

1.2 Subtle changes in belief structure

Religious belief structure means the composition of believers, the geographical distribution of different religious believers and so on. The composition of believers performs as "five more" features, namely: more women, more elderly people, more farmers, more people with low educational level, more ethnic minorities and remote areas people. After the reforms, "five more" features turn digestion progressively. In the age, in addition to the performance of "closing to religion" phenomenon of the elderly, the majority of the young change "religion drift" to "religion return", the number of young believers is growing. According to estimates, there are 100 million religious believers in China, and 1 / 3 are youth. (LI Suju and LIU Qifei, 2000, p19)

This is obviously not a small figure. As the cultural level of young believers are significantly higher than the elder, and the scope of occupations of young people is more extensive, including not only farmers, workers, but also artists, doctors, university professors, engineers and other high income and high quality persons. Therefore, the composition of economic and cultural level of believers gets the corresponding diversification. the "a sink" pattern in the distribution of urban and rural believers is also being broken. The geographical distribution of different religions is experiencing the same pattern of evolution, every religions break through the constraints of "border", while maintaining the original "territories", promote there "spiritual home" by efforts simultaneously, and get national nature, appear "Islam South and West", "Tibetan East" and "Gospel West" phenomenon.

1.3 Hold religious and cultural activities frequently

Since 80s of the 20th century, Christianity in China each year restores and builds new churches about 600; to the end of 1996, the total number of "Bible" issued is more than 1800 million; from 1983 China Christian Council have been published and distributed 800 million "Hymn" copies. Over the past decade, the Chinese Catholic has cultured 900 young ordained priests. More than 3,000 participants attend Sunday service each week at Chongwenmen Church in Beijing. There are 4 masses each week in Beijing South Catholic Church, 2,000 participants, of which is English mass designed for foreigners in Beijing. The Buddhist Institutes continue to exchange and learn with international agencies extensively for improving the cultural quality of the monks. Moreover, the religious tourism heat derived from "religious fever" is also increasingly becoming a religious representative branch. (LUO Zhufeng, 1995, p132)

As the number of believers increasing, religious demand continues to expand, to meet the needs of faith of the majority believers, and promote the development of religion, religious activities become frequent, such as Buddhism, the opening ceremony, prayer worship activities at scenic area of the Nanshan Sanya etc. The religions always has the fine tradition of saving and distressing the world, and organize community charitable affairs and returns society actively, when the public in China in calamity. Before the major natural disasters in the country, the religious has always donated money and material and win a good social reputation.

1.4 Religious conflicts become increasingly prominent

China is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious country, religious conflicts occur inevitably. In the process of social transformation in China, religious conflicts and other conflicts are jagged and complex. The first is the contradiction between the different religions themselves. As both Chinese nationals and members and the Catholic, Church members are often in an awkward situation because of his own identity. In Islam, a lot of sects, frequent disputes, construction chaos, the comparisons, Comparisons wind; tens of thousands of pilgrims gather, make inter-provincial activity, and often conflict with the road toll and law enforcement. In Buddhism and Taoism, there are excessive pursuit of worldly interests and serious commercialization. Second, there are conflicts that initiated by domestic and foreign forces using religious contradictions.

On the one hand, the inside and outside ethnic separatist forces undertake sabotage to split the country under the cover of religion; the most prominent is the Dalai clique and the "East Turkistan" separatist forces. On the other hand is the

penetration of foreign forces and religious activities. This refers to the subversion of the PRC power and the socialist system; undermine the reunification of the motherland, not for religious purposes of friendly exchanges.

The third is related to the religious rights and interests of religious organizations. On the one hand, after the Cultural Revolution, the problem of church property has not completely been solved that gives rise to contradictions. On the other hand is the distribution of ticket sales between Buddhist and Taoist temples and tourist management.

Moreover, the spread of mass mysticism the rise of new religion, scholars' increasing focus on religion, are also present important performance of religious fever.

2. THE ANALYSIS OF "RELIGIOUS FEVER"

The previous survey data and instances witnessed the phenomenon of religious fever in China, then what kind of deep-seated reasons that is hidden behind this religious hot phenomenon.

2.1 The social roots

It is inevitable that religion hot appears in the social transition. In the Social transition, the market economy gets rapid development, various systems and social security is not perfect, at the same time, class differentiation is obvious, a variety of social problems and injustices can not be resolved timely.

Turmoil and great change of modern society often make people feel that they can not dominate themselves and their surroundings, feel themselves small, helpless, confusing, lack of security with some misgivings. In this state, they are eager to find a power that can control social change beyond there own strength, and acquire asylum, giving and comfort, a sense of security, balance of psychological, and religion just meets their demands. (HOU Jie and FAN Lizhu, 2001, P150)

Just as the German theologian Kong Hans said, "Ordinary people have not given up aspirations on security, peace, wealth and health. If these fundamental issues remain unresolved, then searching help of supernatural authority is only right and proper." Meanwhile, during this period, the old social order has been destroyed, yet the new one has not been effectively established, the ideal of religious "other world" provide sustenance for people.

In the other side of the religious world, there exists a non-discriminatory and perfect God, which meets the requirements of people for fairness, creates an "illusion" of a fair social order, and attracts most people. (HOU Jie and FAN Lizhu, 2001, P190) Furthermore, the lack of grass-roots organizations in the current period of social transition is an important cause that leads the religious fever. The emergence of religious fever in China, it is largely related with the current general lack of effective social organizations and even the appearance of vacuum organizations in urban and rural communities.

2.2 The understanding root

The typical expression of Marxism religious natural conception is the paragraph from Engels' "Anti-Turin": "All religions are nothing but the reflection of illusion in people's minds from the external forces that dominate the daily life of people, in this reflection, Shared power takes the form of super-human strength." (Marx and Engels, 1995, P666-P667) That is to say, because people can not understand nature, human society, human illness, death and suffering, they produce a kind of hope and Sustenance to supernatural, super-human external forces.

The first generation of religious ideas reflects the primitive mystery of natural phenomena in the case of extremely low productivity levels. In class society, The most profound source of religious existence and development is that people are dominated by the blind alien force of the society and can not get rid of it, is that the tremendous fear and despair of workers caused by the system of exploitation, is that the exploiting classes need to use religion as an important means to paralysis and crowd control.

As long as there is alien power that constraint and suppress people's minds, human beings will seek to a fantasy force, which provides the possibility of the existence of religion. In the socialist society, with the elimination of exploitation system and exploiting class, the class root of the existence of religion has basically disappeared. However, still inevitably retains some social alien force, although today's society is a highly developed technological society, but people still faces many problems that can not be solved.

2.3 The psychological roots

As everyone knows, people's psychological need is the important reasons of religion. Today, science and technology develop highly, when people meet the need of great material life, people's psychological needs are not well met in the secular world, people today are still looking for a conversion of mind, seeking a pure Land of mind outside of the debauchery.

Religion meets the need of the human mind. Under market economy, fierce competition has made the relationship between people indifferent increasingly, rely increasingly weakened, but the religion can provide Almighty God that can rely on. Under the glory and love of God, believers can have an effective "tonic" to face various difficulties in life. Religion meets the people's need of groups communication, provides a channel for emotional catharsis. People, who live in social life, have the need and desire to interact with others.

Religion can provide believers the way of group interaction. Believers can express their pain through prayer, penance, meditation, conversation, reflection, etc. and alleviate their mental pain and anger. Religious art meets people's aesthetic needs. Religious music, dance, painting, sculpture, religious churches, temples, Taoist temples, mosques, tombs, etc., all give human the enjoyment of beauty, create a sacred atmosphere. The religious concepts of the Soul promote that what has died is only the body, the soul as the spiritual essence of is immortal, thus reduces the human fear of death.

2.4 The impact of secularization of religion

Historical materialism says: social being determines social consciousness, social consciousness changes with the social development. This is the objective law of the development of human society. Religion is a social ideology, but also restricted by social economic relations, religion in addition to their dependence on economic relations, and its formation is bound to exist in the reality of the secular society, in order to adapt to society, religion constantly adjusts itself to make it easier to be accepted by the society.

Secularization of Religion weakens the religious values and the religious sanctity, turn from out to in the world, from the other side back to the shore, from the pursuit of eternal heaven and the afterlife fantasy, turn into reality and present social life. Chinese religion has been affected to concern more about the reality, take emphasis on the temporal interests. Most people do not just pursue the afterlife and the other side, but focus more on reality, in order to win the material wealth to improve the temporal life; they take their faith as a secular individual spiritual pursuit apart from secular life. Thus, the expansion of religious influence and religious secular are inseparable.

3. RATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE "RELIGIOUS FEVER"

Marx once said: "Only when the process of social life, that the shape of the process of material production as the product of free association of people, under the control of person's conscious and planned, it - religion, will tear off its own mystery veil. "However, this requires a certain degree of social material basis or a series of material living conditions, and these conditions itself is the natural product of the development of a long painful history. From this discussion we can see that the demise of religion is a long process, so we should remain an objective and calm attitude to the religious heat, and take reasonable and appropriate response.

3.1 Rationally understand religious fever

To address the current status of the religious heat, form a correct understanding of the current status of the religious heat and its coming developing trend in China. From the general trend, the current religion in our country do have "warming", but will not have a more rapid development in short term, and will not lead to the emergence of religious fanaticism, and will not affect the overall situation. Overall, the religious is relatively stable and law-abiding, but the problems should be vigilant, keep a clear head, so-called "religion is no small matter."

Some people have religion as "opium of the people", "narcotic", take religious people as "ignorant", "backward" avatar, which in fact is the "leftist" performance to treat religious issues, Religion has its occurrence, development and destruction, we should not use administrative power to eliminate it or develop it; at the same time we should also recognize that religion has its backwardness in the bones, and is incompatible with the Marxist historical materialism, and so for the religion can not be laissez-fair, unregulated.

3.2 Fully implement the basic principle of religious work

To response to the current religious heat, we should firmly implement the Party's basic principle of religious work. In the 17th congress, the party's basic principle of religious work not only was written in the report, what's more, was loaded in the newly revised Party Constitution master. Summing up, it includes the following four aspects:

3.2.1 Fully implement the Party's policy of religious freedom

Respecting and protecting religious freedom is a long-term basic policy that the Chinese government treats religious issues. Every citizen has the freedom of religious belief, has the freedom of no religious belief; has the freedom of this religious faith and the freedom of another faith; in the same religion, has the freedom to believe this sect, and also has the freedom to believe that one; has the freedom of believing now but not in the past, and has the freedom of believing in the past but not now. Under socialist conditions, the difference in ideology is secondary between religious people; the

fundamental interests in politics and economy are the same. We must adhere to the principle of "political unity and cooperation, belief mutual respect".

3.2.2 Manage religious affairs according to law

In recent years, domestic and foreign hostile forces have always had the idea to kill us die, they are engaging in subversive activities of people's power as the outlaw opportunity of religious hot. Quite a few hostile elements, in the name of religion banner, vigorously do feudal superstitious activities, disturb social order, and drive a wedge between ethnic relations. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen legal management of religious affairs, strictly distinct between religion and cult, prevent cult to endanger society and affect social stability and people's lives.

On one hand, coordinate the interests of Religious and all parties concerned, according to implementing the party and the government's religious policy and religious laws, protect the legitimate rights and interests of religious groups and Taoist, Temple and Church, protect religious personnel to perform normal religious activities, protect the normal religious activities of religious people; on the other hand, restrict abnormal religious activities, and prevent lawless using religion to do illegal and criminal activities, resist foreign hostile to infiltrate with religion.

3.2.3 Adhere to the principle of independence and self

The principle of independence and self refers to the Chinese government supporting China's independence and self-cause in accordance with the Constitution and laws. China's religious cause is implemented by various religious bodies, their clergy and religious people, China's religious affairs and religious groups are against foreign domination.

The independence and self policy being carried out by Chinese religion, is the historic choice made by the Chinese religious believers of their own in the struggle against colonialism and imperialist aggression and enslavement. Adhering to the principle of independence and self, both based on the history that China have suffered imperialist aggression and plunder for a long time, some religions were controlled by imperialist, and also based on the continuous infiltration of foreign religious forces, and try again to control the reality of religion in China.

China's religions insist on independence and self, at the same time carry out active exchanges and contacts with religious organizations of the world on the basis of equality and friendship with other countries. China's door is always open to foreign religious organizations and individuals who respect China's sovereignty, respect for Chinese religious independence and self-cause.

3.2.4 Actively guide religions to adapt to socialist society

Long-term existence of religion requires us to do a good job to guide religion to adapt to socialist society. In economy, the religion should actively promote the economic, serve for society, meanwhile encourage the majority of Christians and religious believers to actively participate in the socialist modernization drive, strive to make more contributions for the comprehensive well society. In Politics, the construction of socialism with Chinese characteristics and striving for the comprehensive well-off, is the common political basis of all people, is the fundamental interests of people including religious people of all nationalities.

To guide all religious organizations and believers who love the motherland, support the socialist system, support the party's leadership and support China's socialist modernization. In the cultural and social life, should see "law of the nation is greater than religion, religion law conforms to law of the nation" as the guiding principle, at the same time draw some positive factors from a religious world view, guide and promote religion to adapt with the socialist society, encourage believers do "in" career with "out" spirit, make them care about "religious paradise", and also be concerned about the "paradise", and is willing to establish such a "paradise" with tireless efforts.

3.3 Develop science and education, and make people form a scientific world view

We must vigorously develop science and culture cause, make scientific popular education, correct the understanding of the masses to religion from the ideological roots. Deeply make patriotism, collectivism, socialism and the ideals beliefs education to the people, make the relevant natural phenomena, social evolution, the human illness and death, good and bad fortune, and other scientific and cultural knowledge education.

Reiterating to people the importance of education for scientific atheism should be specially emphasized, criticize idealism (including theism) with Marxist philosophy, emphasize basic theory of Marxism publicity and education, make healthy and civilization replace backwardness and ignorance, thus guide people out of the unreal religion, and guide them establish a scientific world outlook and a right outlook on life, expand materialism and atheism position, dilute the negative impact of religious consciousness.

3.4 Strengthen the building of socialist spiritual civilization

In recent years China appears "religious fever", a very important reason is the crisis of spiritual beliefs of the masses. Corruption, greed, lacking of sincerity good and beauty, the prevalence of ugliness evil and false in real life, and the blankness of moral law and art, make the religion enter. People should have spiritual pursuits, or be captured by no scientific spiritual beliefs without the spirit of science.

Religious moral Contains a number of negative factors, some religious morals have been completely out of date from content to form, and is incompatible with the demands of socialist spiritual civilization, seriously affected and hindered the building of socialist spiritual civilization, such as the preaching in Christianity, Catholicism and Buddhism that "the more physical pain, the more happiness of the soul " and the asceticism of "all are emptiness, devoid of all human desires"; the discrimination against women in Christianity and Islam, those negative Masquerade in Buddhism, "disillusioned" moral psychology and behavior. Therefore, we should further strengthen the building of spiritual civilizations; scientifically treat the phenomenon of religion and "religious fever".

All in all, facing the present "religious fever" phenomenon, on the one hand we have no need to be panic, understand our religious freedom policy, belief in religion is a basic human right as citizens. At the same time, we will take the necessary measures to monitor the situation of religious development, and actively guide religions to adapt to socialist society, guide the broad masses of religious believers to join in the great cause of socialism with Chinese characteristics, develop science and culture, armed people's mind with the scientific worldview, develop cultural undertakings, so that more people join in to fight for earthly happiness.

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