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## Christian-Inspired Groups in the People's Republic of China after 1978: Reaction of State and Party Authorities

*Starting in 1978, the spiritual and religious life of China has shown a strong and diverse awakening due in large part to the weakening ideological and organizational control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Christian-inspired groups which combine organizational and doctrinal elements of Christian, as well as Chinese folk religious tradition, have a special appeal for the "losers" of China's modernization process in the countryside. Since the Ming dynasty, spiritual-religious groups have been perceived as an indicator of socio-economic instability and potential political unrest, and, therefore, pose an ideological and organizational threat to the Chinese State. With a still unchanged repressive policy towards spiritual-religious groups, the CCP has not been very successful in stopping the spread of spiritual-religious groups. Finding a more comprehensive approach to religion and to the interlinked socio-economic problems is one of the great challenges for the future of the Communist regime.*

**Key words:** CCP and religion · China · Chinese religion · Christianity · religious policy · spiritual-religious groups

*Depuis 1978, la vie spirituelle et religieuse en Chine a connu un essor important et diversifié dû, pour une large part, à l'affaiblissement du contrôle idéologique et organisationnel du Parti communiste chinois (PCC). Les groupes d'inspiration chrétienne, qui mêlent des éléments structurels et doctrinaux issus des traditions religieuses chrétiennes et chinoises, exercent un attrait particulier sur les "perdants" de la modernisation chinoise, notamment dans les campagnes. Depuis la dynastie des Ming, les groupes spirituels et religieux sont perçus comme des signes possibles d'une instabilité socio-économique et de troubles politiques, raison pour laquelle ils constituent une menace idéologique et organisationnelle pour l'Etat chinois. Doté d'une politique répressive inchangée à ce jour, le PCC a beaucoup de mal à exercer sa répression à l'égard des petits groupes religieux. L'élaboration d'une approche plus globale de la religion et des problèmes socio-économiques qui y sont liés constitue l'un des grands défis de demain pour le régime communiste.*

**Mot-clé:** Chine · christianisme · groupes de spiritualité · Parti Communiste Chinois et religion · politique religieuse · religion chinoise

## Introduction

Since 1978, the spiritual and religious life of China has shown a strong and diverse awakening due in large part to the weakening ideological and organizational control of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Various Protestant denominations, which sprang up in the People's Republic of China in the 1920s and 1930s and mix aspects of both western charismatic revival and Pentecostal movements, are drawing millions of followers (Hunter and Chan, 1993: 81ff.). Traditional folk practices, such as fortune telling or *Feng-shui* have enjoyed enormous popularity, even with party cadres (*Newsweek International*, 9 August 1999; Renmin ribao [RMRB], 20 January 2001). *Qigong* masters have commanded cult status and riches as "miracle doctors". Characterized by a charismatic leader, a complex organizational structure, and teachings of healing and salvation, groups like the "Teachings of the Eastern Lightning" (*Dongfangshandianjiao*)<sup>1</sup> or the "Society of Disciples" (*Mentuhui*) have had a special appeal to the country people, especially since the beginning of the 1980s.

In the view of the CCP, these groups are often perceived as those groups continuing the long tradition of secret societies in China.<sup>2</sup> In the course of the consolidation of power which took place in the 1950s, the Communist regime fought a fierce nationwide battle against these secret societies. In the 1980s the government showed its increasing anxiety by classifying these societies as the "biggest counter-revolutionary group" (Gonganbu, 1985: 2).<sup>3</sup> Until now the Chinese authorities have not been able to ban or even control the rapid growth of unregistered Christian-inspired groups which are even attracting "inner circles" of members of the party and the government (The Center for Religious Freedom, 2002: 68).

This article focuses on the policy of state and party authorities towards Christian-inspired groups since 1978. The first section deals with the actual campaign against these groups. The second section presents defamatory concepts and categories as a traditional policy measure against "heretical teachings". The third section addresses the CCP's attempt to deal with "crimes" of these groups. The last section portrays the authorities' dilemma in dealing with these groups and spiritual-religious movements in general.<sup>4</sup>

## Perception and Reaction of the Chinese Authorities

### *The Campaign against Christian-Inspired Groups*

Not the *Falungong* (FLG) movement, but the spread of a Christian-inspired group named the "Shouters" (*Huhanpai*) initiated the "fight for the investigation and the banning of 'heretical teachings'" (*Chajin qudi xiejiao de douzheng*) by the Chinese leadership.

In 1983, the "Group of the Shouters", founded in the United States and spread via Taiwan and Hong Kong to Mainland China in 1979, had obviously reached a level perceived as alarming by the Chinese authorities. According to a document issued by the Ministry of Public Security, the

"Shouters" had spread to 360 counties and cities in 20 provinces and autonomous regions, with up to 200,000 followers (The Center, 2002: 17). After initial success the "Shouters" came to life again in several provinces in 1987. At the beginning of the 1990s, several groups mushroomed and spread through the whole country, leading the central authorities to intensify and coordinate regional activities (Li, 2000: 227–229). In November 1995, the General Office of the Central Committee of the CCP and the General Office of the State Council issued an "Order concerning forwarding of an Opinion of the Ministry of Public Security on the situation and operations concerning the investigation and banning of the 'Group of the Shouters' and other heretical teachings" (He, 2001: 243). This document initiated broader and more organized actions against "heretical teachings" at a national level. In the second half of the 1990s, some spectacular arrests took place: the cases involving the group of the "Established King" (*Beiliwang*) (arrest of the leader in January 1995) and the "Teachings of the Lord" (arrest of the leader in June 1998) attracted much attention. The leaders were sentenced to death because of "raping of several women and children under age" (Wang, 1998: 164, 182). However, several documents published by local party and state authorities reveal that new groups sprang up and "several activities of heretical teachings and private meeting points did not stop even after repeated prohibition".<sup>5</sup>

After the banning of the *FLG* movement on the 21 July 1999, Christian-inspired groups as well as several other Qigong and Buddhist-influenced groups quickly became the targets of a full-scale campaign against "heretical teachings".<sup>6</sup> Both a "decision" by the National People's Congress (NPC) on 30 October 1999 (Quanguo, 1999) and two "explanations" by the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate (issued on 9 October 1999 and 5 May 2001, respectively; see Zui gao 1999, 2000) not only mention *FLG*, but "heretical teachings" in general. Both documents are based on existing legislation, but in fact legitimize a politically motivated crackdown on all "heretical teachings". The chairman of the NPC International and Judicial Affairs Committee stated that the decision provided "a legal system to ensure the efforts of banning heretical organizations, preventing and punishing heretical activities, safeguarding social stability, protecting people's interests and guaranteeing the smooth progress of reform, opening up and socialist modernization".<sup>7</sup>

The two explanations specify activities which are punished under the Criminal Law, especially Articles 300 and 114/115 (for details see Table 1). They clearly underline the authorities' attempt to build up a legal base for their repressive policy towards heretical teachings (Zui gao, 1999, 2001).

The "notice" of the Ministry of Public Security issued on 30 April 2000 refers to the earlier mentioned documents. But it discloses some information concerning the organizational responsibility of the campaign against "heretical teachings". It states that "those organizations which engage in their activities in a certain province shall be identified [as heretical teachings] by the Public Security Bureau (PSB) of that province . . . those groups that carry on their work across the province . . . shall be identified by the Ministry of Public Security" (The Center, 2002: 13). However, most unregistered

house churches as well as Christian-inspired groups operate across many provinces, therefore the central and top organ of security has to deal with such cases.

An attachment to the document of the Ministry of Public Security shows that the General Office of the Central Committee of CCP and the General Office of the State Council also identified groups as “heretical teachings” and therefore hint at certain institutional responsibilities within the state as well as the party apparatus. In September 2000 an office for “the prevention and handling of heretical teachings” was established under the State Council. The office is assigned with the prevention of heretical teachings, coordination of efforts to fight heretical teachings, exchange of experience with foreign countries, and further development of a system of “re-education” (Malek, 2001). Within the CCP, a “Central Leading Group on Dealing with the FLG” under the leadership of Li Lanqing, then a member of the Standing Committee of Politburo and acting Vice-Premier, was set up on 10 June 1999 (Tong, 2002: 810ff.). Whether or not this group was later also entrusted with handling matters of “heretical teachings” in general remains unclear. But statements by Hu Jintao, then a member of the Standing Committee of the Politburo and Vice-Chairman, as well as by Luo Gan, then Secretary of the Central Legal and Political Affairs Committee as well as the Central Social Order Unified Management Committee, concerning the “Teachings of the Eastern Lightning” indicate that highest levels of the party are occupied with the ongoing campaign against “heretical teachings” (The Center, 2002: 65).

After elaborating on the steps taken against Christian-inspired groups in a general and chronological way, two special characteristics of the campaign will be analysed.

### *Defamatory Practices Towards and Categorizing of Christian-inspired Groups*

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, the Chinese State was already actively defaming religious groups with the help of certain *labels*<sup>8</sup> that referred to “religious” as well as “criminal” aspects. Common terms include “bandit-like teachings” (*feijiao*), “magical teachings” (*yaojiao*), “dark teachings” (*yinjiao*), “heretical teachings” (*xiejiao*) or whole phrases such as “meet in the night, disperse in the morning” (*ye ju xiao san*) and “licentious mixing of men and women” (*nannü hunza*) (ter Haar, 1992: 45; Weggel, 1993: 921). Other than sending an ideological and moral signal to the population, labelling also served to justify stricter legislation (Anthony, 1993: 190–203; Overmyer, 1976: 20–39; Weggel, 1993: 92ff.).

The traditional term “heretical teachings” was taken up once again in the mid-1990s by several Chinese newspapers and magazines. At the higher state levels, the term was not fully utilized until the campaign against the FLG movement. Before then, Christian-inspired groups were simply classified as “illegal or non-religious” (*feif[fa] zongjiao*) (*China heute*, XVI, 5 (93): 130–131). The category “heretical teachings” was already included in the revised penal legislation of 1997 (see Table 1): the explanation of the Supreme

People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate defined heretical teachings as those teachings carried out by "illegal groups which were founded falsely under the name of religion or *Qigong*, mystify their core members, mislead and betray people with the help of invented propagated rumours and other measures, recruit and control followers, and harm the society" (Zui gao, 1999: 3). These rather vague criteria can be easily used to ban virtually any religious organization. Most house churches or meeting points can thus be falsely labelled as "heretical teachings" because they are not registered and/or are influenced by some form of Western charismatic, revivalist or pentecostal movements which are known for a more emotional and vigorous form of preaching and worship (Xu, 2002: 2).<sup>9</sup>

A more recent trend concerning the categorizing of "heretical teachings" points to an internationalization of the debate within China. In November 2001 an international symposium on "Questions of Heretical Teachings" was held in Beijing (Shehui wenti, 2001). The official English title was "International Symposium on *Destructive Cults*" (my emphasis). The bulk of the text published after the symposium deals with conceptual clarifications and definitions regarding the examination of the transferability of Western concepts. Soon afterwards, on 13 November 2000, the "China Anti-Cult Association" (CACA) (*Zhongguo fan xiejiao xiehui*), was established under the administration of the Institute for Science and Technology. Its members are mostly natural scientists, with the exception of two delegates from the State Catholic and Buddhist association. In the spring of 2001, regional branches of the CACA were founded in Fujian, Sichuan, Gansu, Shanghai and Tianjin and many other places.<sup>10</sup> Whether this inclusion in the international debate is more than a tactical measure to serve as an excuse for the repression of "heretical teachings" and will allow a non-politically motivated discussion on the phenomena of "new religious movements" has yet to be seen.

### **Criminalization of Christian-Inspired Groups**

To defame the congregations and to justify the ban and arrests of the members, state authorities legitimize their actions with the following four reasons: (1) endangering health; (2) rape; (3) financial fraud; and (4) "subversive activities". These terms refer to possible acts to be punished under penal legislation (see Table 1).

Concerning the plausibility of the accusations, two points must be taken into consideration: on the one hand, state organs during the Ming and Qing dynasties as well as in the PRC repeatedly have used such accusations to justify repression against religious communities. On the other hand, these claims cannot be completely disregarded or rejected. Reports from former members (Wei, 2000: 9–12) and Chinese Christians (Letters, 2001), and experiences with Western new religious movements, could well justify such accusations.<sup>11</sup>

For this reason an assessment of the state-raised accusations must be based on four questions:

**TABLE 1**  
**Important penal legislative sections concerning the criminalization of Christian-inspired groups**

Type of crime	Section	Punishment (imprisonment or worse)
Endangering national security: . . . . . . particularly serious harm (some cases) . . . for ringleaders (or grave crime) . . . for active participants (or minor crimes)	§ 102–113	possible death sentence not less than 10 years of fixed-term imprisonment 3 to 10 years of fixed-term imprisonment
Through organizing heretical teachings, secret societies and other evil religious organization or utilizing superstition to <sup>a</sup> :	§ 300	three to seven years of fixed-term imprisonment; serious offence: <sup>b</sup> over seven years
(a) sabotage the implementation of the state's laws and executive regulations	same as above	same as above
(b) intentionally killing, causing death or suicide, intentionally injuring	§ 232–234	up to 10 years of fixed-term imprisonment; major offence: <sup>c</sup> 10 years or death penalty
(c) causing or instructing self-burning or self-explosion ( <i>zibao</i> )	like § 114, 115	(endangers public security) three to 10 years imprisonment, serious consequences: <sup>d</sup> 10 years imprisonment or death penalty

(d) raping women or girls under age	§ 236	three to 10 years imprisonment, some circumstances; <sup>e</sup> 10 years or death penalty
(e) defrauding money or property	§ 266	maximum penalty: life sentence (serious cases)
(f) distribution of propaganda material of "evil religious groups" in order to	like §300	same as above
1. undermine national unification or subvert the socialist system	§ 103, 105	same as above
2. slander others	§ 246	up to three years imprisonment
3. divulge state secrets or intelligence	§ 111, 282, 398	up to seven years imprisonment
(g) obstruct state personnel	§ 277	up to three years imprisonment

Source: Chen and Dai (1999: 241–44); Zuigao (1999); Zui gao (2001).

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Notes:

- <sup>a</sup> The explanation of the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate gives the following facts for defining "organizing and utilizing 'heretical teachings'"; encirclement and disturbance of the order of official institutions; illegal gatherings; disobedience of orders from authorities; resumption of forbidden activities; disturbances; fraud, and publication of materials propagating the teachings (Zui gao, 1999: 4).
- <sup>b</sup> The gravity of the crime depends on the size and scope of the group, participation of foreign groups or persons, amount of published materials, and injuries or deaths of members (Zui gao, 1999: 5).
- <sup>c</sup> The crime is considered a major offence if (1) more than three people die or (2) the crime results in "a lot of heavy injuries" (*duo ren zhong shang*) or (3) previous conviction exists or (4) the crime had other "especially grave" (*tebie jianzhong*) effects (Zui gao, 1999: 5).
- <sup>d</sup> No exact definition (Zui gao, 2001).
- <sup>e</sup> These circumstances include "odious circumstances", raping several victims, rape in public places, raping in turn with another person, or causing the victim serious injury, death, or other serious consequences (§ 236, Passage 3) (Zui gao, 2001).

- Do the accusations refer directly to the teachings of the groups?<sup>12</sup>
- How far are accusations supported by details or figures?
- Do the accusations concerning the activities of the groups have a penal or an interpretive character?
- How far are accusations supported by other than official sources?

The accusation that groups murder their members by either refusing medical treatment or promising a possible “ascent to heaven” seems to be the gravest. This corresponds with reports—based on Chinese publications—on teachings of salvation and healing. In the case of the “Teachings of the Lord”, four people are said to have committed suicide and 13 people to have died because of lack of medical treatment (Wang, 2000: 182). A newspaper in a village in Henan province reported that members suffered major injuries as a result of punches to “exorcise illnesses” carried out by the “Teachings of the Eastern Lightning” group (Jinfang, 2000: 24).

If one considers the “advice” of the leaders to their members about “sacrificing” or “investing” their possessions in order to face the end of the world, charges of money fraud are not completely unconvincing. Related quantitative information is remarkably precise, although the sums are well below the amount of money normally found in smuggling or corruption scandals in the PRC (Li, 2000: 188).

A third accusation refers to obscene practices and rape of women. This issue is particularly explosive because these crimes may be punished by the death penalty. The “Established King” as well as the “Lord” and probably the head of the “Group of Everything for Common Use” (*Fanwu gongyong pai*) were sentenced to death for raping women and children under age (Wang, 1998: 164). The reports support such accusations not only with first-hand accounts but also with references to the teachings and concepts of the communities. The leader of the “Teachings of the Lord” said after his arrest that he and his assistants “called on” (*mengzhao*) young women to come to their bed but that nobody was forced against his or her will. A former member, however, claims there were threats from the “Goddesses” of the group: “If you don’t obey, a catastrophe will come down on you. If you agree to the ‘call’ of the ‘Supreme God’ you have to keep silent or the punishment of God will strike you” (AP, 18 October 1999). The “Group of Everything for Common Use” refers to Bible passages concerning their teachings which include strange definitions of the family and the life of David (Li, 2000: 30).

Available accounts rarely give any concrete evidence for planned activities or protests against the government or party organizations. Descriptions tend to be very general in nature: groups would use the “crazy mood” (as a result of the activities mentioned above) of their members to encourage them to make trouble (*naoshi*), to demonstrate, and to attack the government (Jiang, 2001: 374). Just how many of the activities of the communities are motivated by the aim of gaining worldly political power remains unclear. Li (2000: 192) emphasizes a hostile attitude and acts of “sabotage” by many groups against the “Three-Self Movement”, the officially sanctioned Protestant organization. This attitude also exists within some house church



congregations. The “Teachings of the Eastern Lightning” deny any religious legitimacy to the “Three-Self Movement” (Hua zai, 641).

In the context of three specific groups, however, accounts do give more concrete evidence for activities that oppose state organizations: the “Group of the Shouters” is said to have founded the “Mainland China Administrative Base” (*Zhonghua dalu xingzheng zhishizhan*) in Anhui and issued the slogan “fight for the state power, establish the power of the king, conquer the power of Satan”. They were also known to have shouted at meetings: “the Church faces three big enemies, first, the ‘Three-Self Movement’, second, the Communist party, and, third, the government” and “we will kill the one who listens to the government” (Li, 2000: 192). Members of the “Teachings of the Lord” are said to have held their first “national congress” in Hunan province in April 1996 in order to broaden their organizational structure. The “Teachings of the Eastern Lightning” group is reputed to have tried extremely hard to recruit local administration officials and pastors from registered communities to infiltrate the officially accepted churches (Tan and Kong, 2001: 370).

The “Eastern Lightning” group is the only case in which non-official Chinese sources also give strong evidence for certain crimes by the community. Chinese Christians from various parts of the country report on the seductive tactics of the “Eastern Lightning”. They include “sexual and monetary enticement” as well as violence, even murder (Hattaway, 2002: 6ff.; Letters, 2002). In April 2001 34 members of the China Gospel Fellowship in Henan province were lured away for “biblical training sessions” to six different cities in China. On arrival, members of the “Eastern Lightning” group locked them up and tried to force them to convert to their faith. It was not until the middle of June that all the Gospel Fellowship members were able to escape or were set free. Reports by the victims paint a picture of a very well-organized and aggressive community (Testimony, 2002).

It seems problematic, however, that the government has branded every group under the same framework with the above-mentioned accusations. The tendency to generalize contributes to this problem. Failure to collect sufficient evidence concerning criminal activities is compensated for with vague declarations: “the Society of Disciples conducted no destructive activities in Minqin County, Gansu Province, although they did have an effect on political and social stability and on the productive life of the masses” (*Fazhi Dabao*, 12.6.1998, cited according to AI, 2000: 10). A thorough and critical analysis of this problem is necessary.

### **Outlook: The Anachronistic Character of State Religious Policy**

The policy of state and party authorities against “heretical teachings”, and against Christian-inspired groups, has proved to be increasingly anachronistic and shows the degree of the structural dilemma facing the party. It is noteworthy that many of the above-described communities, if one compares the dates of their foundation and of the first arrests, were obviously active for a number of years prior to the state’s action against them (Ming, 1995: 55).

Whether they managed to simply remain unnoticed, or the local authorities tolerated them at that time, remains unclear. Certainly, the practice of legislation and the classification of spiritual-religious groups vary both regionally and within the responsible administrative authorities (Lambert, 1998: 8).<sup>13</sup> Some groups have proved to be very resistant to state repression: the “Teachings of the Soul” (*Linlingjiao*), the “Society of Disciples”, and the “Teachings of the Eastern Lightning” have been in existence for more than 10 years; and although the government repeatedly arrests their members, the groups are still active.

There are several factors involved in the repressive policy of the state: on the one hand, there exists a historically traumatic fear of secret societies, especially given their strong presence at the end of several dynasties, and an “obsession” with the threat of “foreign infiltration and separation”. On the other hand, the government worries about rising social tensions and deficits which increase the attraction of spiritual-religious communities. In addition, a strictly restrictive, almost destructive, strategy as well as diverse established working relations between the local authorities and the religious communities may well result in increasingly opaque spiritual-religious activities. A more tolerant policy, however, involves the danger of a rise in autonomous groups which may challenge the position of the government.

But the challenges from spiritual-religious groups are more far-reaching for the government: in a period of socio-economic instability, radical changes, and increasing social disparity and atomization, the ideal of “community” represented by the Communist Party is missing. Not only for the “losers” of modernization but also for the disappointed party cadres and intellectuals, there exists an increasing wish for a spirit of community and a search for identity. By offering the opportunity to live in a commune or intimate group with strict moral guidelines, spiritual-religious groups provide the means to realize this aim. Taken as a whole, the revival and growth of religious activities after 1978 point to an increasing need for spiritual and religious support. Characterized by an arbitrary and changeable differentiation between “religion” and “superstition/heretical teachings”, the religious policy of the government points to a fundamental insecurity in the handling of religious activities that elude the rationality of the Communist Party. The elimination of groups which are perceived as a potential danger—an alternative organization or bearer of an alternative idealistic concept—is still the guiding principle of the Communist regime.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>. It is also called “Quannengshen” (Almighty Spirit). At a joint meeting organized by the Ministry of Public Security held on 7 August 2001, the “Eastern Lightning” group was described as “another evil force next to the cult Falun Gong in terms of the extent of its spread and the dangers it has created to the society . . . a cult with suspicious overseas connections and glaring political color and purpose” (The Center, 2002: 66). See the group’s website ([www.godword.org](http://www.godword.org)).

<sup>2</sup>. For an overview of secret societies in China see Chesneaux (1971/1972) and ter Haar (1992, 1998).

<sup>3</sup>. From the 1990s to the present, there have existed occasional reports about secret societies, also called "societies, ways, or school" (*Huidaomen*) after the foundation of the PRC. For example, the "Way of the All Pervading Principle" (*Yiguan-dao*), legalized in Taiwan in 1988, seems still to be active in Beijing, Tianjin, Yunnan and Fujian (Gu, 1996; World Tibet Network News, 11 June 1996; *South China Morning Post*, 31 May 1999).

<sup>4</sup>. The discussion concerning the policy of state and party authorities towards Christian-inspired groups must deal with two difficulties. First, primary as well as secondary sources are often contradictory not only towards one another but within each source. Second, concerning publications within the PRC, the origin of information often remains unclear, sources for quotes are rarely given.

<sup>5</sup>. Several documents, some of them printed in the CCP internal bulletin "Internal Reference" (*neibu cankao*), are published in *China and the Gospel* (*Zhongguo yu fuyin*), 20 (1997, 9–10: 23–30) and 25 (1998, 7–8: 17–20).

<sup>6</sup>. So far, 14 groups have been identified as promoting heretical teachings by the CCP and the State Council, in addition to *Falungong*. Of these, 12 are Christian-inspired, and two are Buddhist-inspired. Quantitative data on group members or geographic expansion of groups are based on rough estimations which can only be evaluated conditionally. Numbers of followers, however, range from thousands to several hundred thousand (The Center, 2002: 16–30). See Kupfer (2002a, 2002b) for an overview on Christian-inspired spiritual and religious groups.

<sup>7</sup>. Interview with Hou Zongbin, Xinhua News Agency, 7 December 1999, in Amnesty (2000: 19). For further details on the NPC resolution see Amnesty (2000: 19ff.) and Malek (1999).

<sup>8</sup>. "Labelling" refers, according to ter Haar (1992: 13), to:

those names or words, which are, or have been, used to denounce certain phenomena . . . The purpose of labelling, in the case of religion, is to help determine the course of action to be taken by the institution in control of ideology . . . Labels are therefore not used to analyze or describe.

<sup>9</sup>. Neither the Bureau of Religious Affairs nor any state organ nor the state-registered Christian religious associations have ever issued any document explaining what is orthodox and what is heterodox.

<sup>10</sup>. See the official homepage of the CACA [www.anticult.org](http://www.anticult.org).

<sup>11</sup>. Wei in his articles deals mainly with theological concepts of the "Teachings of the Eastern Lightning".

<sup>12</sup>. As stated above, data concerning the teachings of the groups are limited due to lack of material and must be treated very cautiously.

<sup>13</sup>. Some local authorities of the Christian Council seem to accept the "Society of Disciples" as an "uncommon but still orthodox Christian group" while the government continues to prosecute it.

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