

**RELIGIONS AND CHINESE SOCIALISM:
CHINA'S RELIGIOUS POLICIES
SINCE THE 1990s**

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Executive Summary

1. China lifted its more than a decade ban on religion in 1979. It subsequently made numerous efforts to politically rehabilitate religious leaders, allowing freedom of beliefs, and returning properties to religious associations.
2. In the 1990s three key elements of religious policy in China spelled out by Premier Li Peng, President Jiang Zemin, and in the No. 6 Document of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in 1991 took shape.
3. First, cadres and religious communities were asked to “adapt religions to socialism in China” (使宗教同社会主义社会相适应). Religious communities were required to support the socialist motherland and promote only the positive elements of religions.
4. Second, the state and religious leaders are to “manage religious affairs according to law” (依法对宗教事务进行管理). In the 1990s the state formulated a set of regulations regarding registration of religious associations and religious sites, as well as religious activities of foreigners.
5. Third, religious associations are expected to practice “self reliance in and self management of religious affairs” (独立自主自办宗教事务). Religious communities are required to remain independent from foreign influence in governance, finance, and preaching.
6. The state has urged religious communities to resist commercialization, act ethically and establish a clean and responsible image. It has given religious associations greater political space in performing charitable work.
7. Tibet and Xinjiang are the two provinces where religious activities have posed tremendous threat to the state. In Tibet, Beijing (or the national government) is

constantly at odds with the Dalai Lama, the most influential leader of Tibetan Buddhism.

8. Beijing has tried to limit the Dalai Lama's influence by appointing loyal clerics to head monasteries, screening out pro-Dalai Lama monks and nuns, and closely supervising religious leaders called "living Buddhas" in Tibet.
9. In Xinjiang radicalized Islamic groups have staged violent clashes against the government. To fight these movements, Beijing has sought international cooperation from the United Nations and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It has introduced tight security measures after violence broke out in Xinjiang in the recent years.
10. Religions will continue to attract huge followings in China. The state will have to prevent commercialization from degrading religious associations, clergy and activities; supervise religious programs; and cope with radicalized movements led by Falun Gong, pro-Dalai Lama Tibetan Buddhists, and pro-independence and radicalized Muslims in Xinjiang.