

China Care and Compassion Society – UPR submission
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VIEWS ON FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF IN CHINA

China Care and Compassion Society (CCCS)

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1. **China Care and Compassion Society(CCCS)** is constituted by public figures from all circles of China, such as science and technology, social sciences, religion, law, press, culture, sports, medical cure and hygiene; and shall carry forward the spirit of science and humanity; care for people's physical and mental health; concern for social vulnerable groups; dedicate to creating harmonious communities and families through training, educating, and consulting; promote sustainable and coordinated

social development.

2. As a NGO in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, United Nations, **CCCS Main course of action are:** (1) Uphold the principles of *The Charter of the United Nations* and *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, launches activities for education, popularization of human right concept and knowledge to facilitate healthy and stability of the society in China. (2) Organize public activities about science, culture, sports, hygiene and health cares, strengthen exchange and cooperation. (3) Concern the issues of family and community developments; carry out research and investigation on human development on all aspects and put forward comments and suggestions to the government and related institutions.

3. CCCS respects the freedom of religious belief and is concerned about constitutionally protected freedom and rights of all citizens, including religious and nonreligious people, and their right to participate and enjoy economic and social development.

4. CCCS considers that it is the best time now for China to implement the right to freedom of religious belief set forth by the *Constitution* and the relevant religious policies formulated by the Chinese government. With economic and social development, the number of various religious groups and people has increased sharply. In general, it is an obvious fact that all religious groups, religious believers and nonbelievers get along well with each other, understand and forgive each other. With progress of its modernization, pluralism of its economic structure and diversification of its spiritual culture, China has provided more loose space for the development of various religions cultures.

5. **Direct various religious cultures to build a harmonious society.** To build a harmonious society is a major strategic arrangement in Chinese modernization. A

harmonious modern society is also a pluralistic society. With pluralism of social productive forces, the living style and spiritual culture are also increasingly diversified. Various religious cultures are also important constituent elements of cultural diversification. Religious culture is taking a larger share in the “market” of religious and folk beliefs. This will long be a real fact.

6. It is a major task requiring the joint efforts from the Chinese government and civil society including NGOs to conduct various religious cultures to play a positive role in building a harmonious socialist culture so as to promote economic and social development.

7. The data provided by the research personnel from Institute of World Religions of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences show that the religious development in modern China is among the hot topics in the academic circle. According to the paper submitted by Professor Christopher March from Baylor University, U.S. at the “International Symposium on Religion and Rule of Law: the Legal System and Religion in a Harmonious Society” in Beijing, held in May 30-June 1, 2008, most Chinese people nowadays believe that religion could make contribution to building a harmonious society in various positive ways. This research team carried out questionnaire to over 7000 Chinese citizens in several provinces in 2007. According to the survey, 19% of the interviewees consider that religion has positive significance in social harmony and 87% hold that religion has no negative effect on society. All interviewees generally hold a positive or neutral attitude towards religions and their social effect. Therefore, Professor Christopher March holds that the Chinese society did fairly well in respecting and tolerating religions.

8. Be concerned about social security of all citizens including people from religious circles. As citizens, clergy should also be included in the social security systems, such as medical insurance and endowment insurance, etc. However, due to traditional customs and conception, few clergy are actually included in the social

security system, especially those who work at rural and remote areas. Their rights and interests have not been properly protected. Members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference from religious circles have put forward the comments and suggestions in this respect to the government.

9. Be concerned about religious followers' religious demand and feelings. In some occasion the local governments and officials may hurt the feelings of religious followers and infringe on their legitimate rights and interests when formulating and implementing laws and policies because they do not understand or respect religions and their customs, or overlook religious followers' religious demand and feelings. CCCS suggests that the government should pay more attention to the spiritual demand of various groups of people during the period of social transformation, and address some practical problems. For example, the practice that "Put up the religious stage, Sings the economic opera (making economic profits by use of religion)" by some local governments should be changed; famous Buddhist and Taoist sacred mountains should be prevented from over exploitation; favorable conditions should be provided for religious followers to religious sites; and over interference by nonreligious factors to religious sites that may result in difficulty in management should be avoided.

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