



Second Testimony

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Operations and Human Rights
of the House Committee of International Relations of the
United States Congress**



Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify before this subcommittee again on the issue of the freedom of religion and its ongoing persecution in China.

My testimony is limited to the Roman Catholic Church. I know that other religious communities also suffered greatly under the Chinese Communist Government. Their situations, I understand, will be covered by other guests.

Mr. Chairman, the "freedom of religion" is not open to the free choice and conscience of an individual in China; rather, it must be submitted according to the Government's choice. In the case of the Catholic Church, the government's choice is "The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association", which, in accordance with the basic doctrine of the Catholic faith, cannot be regarded as Catholic. The real Roman Catholic Church is

declared illegal by the Chinese government. There are 965 million Roman Catholics worldwide. Refusing to legalize this universally recognized religion is tantamount to an admission by the Chinese Government that there is no "freedom of religion" in China.

The persecution of the Catholic Church is limited only to the loyal Roman Catholic Church, not to the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association. To understand such compulsion, we need to review their background, some of which will be reintroduced from my testimony two years ago on March 9, 1994.

The current persecution of the Roman Catholic Church in China started 46 years ago when the communist government came to power. Its aim was to stamp out the Roman Catholic faith. Failing to do so, the Chinese government created in 1957 the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association so that this organization can be entirely controlled by the government and be independent from any foreign influence or control. Communists are atheists. It was never the mission of a communist government to promote religion. The primary goal of establishing the Patriotic Association was therefore to replace the Roman Catholic Church. They failed again. Hence the continuous persecution.

To better understand the impetus behind these activities, I will briefly review the basic differences between the two organizations.

- The Patriotic Association takes instruction from the National Congress of the so-called Catholic Representatives while the Roman Catholic church is governed by the Pope.
- The Patriotic Association rejects the authority of the Pope. Roman Catholics recognize the authority of the Pope.
- The Patriotic Association appoints its own bishops and ordains them without the permission from the Pope. All the Roman Catholic bishops are appointed by the Pope and ordained accordingly.
- The Patriotic Association is legal in China and has official status recognized by the government while the Roman Catholic Church is illegal and is unofficial.

Since the Patriotic Association is both legal and official, its members suffer no persecution. They also receive political and financial support from the Chinese government.

In accordance with the Roman Catholic's basic faith, a Roman Catholic must accept the authority of the Pope who, we believe, is Christ's representative on earth and the successor of St. Peter. Under no circumstance can a Roman Catholic accept just any other church as a substitute without abandoning his faith and status as a Roman Catholic. Roman Catholics in China, therefore, cannot concurrently keep their faith and

follow their government's instruction to reject the Pope's supreme legislative, executive, and judicial authority in the Church in spite of the risk of persecution.

His Eminence Cardinal Kung Pinmei, the bishop of Shanghai, said on the eve of his trial in 1960: "I am a Roman Catholic Bishop. If I denounce the Holy Father, not only would I not be a Bishop, I would not even be a Catholic." As the Pope said on January 14, 1995 in his message broadcast to China: "A Catholic who wishes to remain such and to be recognized as such cannot reject the principle of communion with the successor of Peter." By remaining loyal to the Pope as mandated by the Catholic faith, the Roman Catholic Church is outlawed in China and is known as the unofficial Church.

There is no religious freedom when a person cannot worship according to his conscience. For choosing their conscience and faith, tens of thousands of Catholics including many from the Legion of Mary, a lay Catholic organization, were incarcerated nationwide. Thousands gave their lives for their religious faith. Many of them were executed in public. Cardinal Kung was imprisoned for thirty years. His Excellency the late Archbishop Dominic Tang, S.J., Archbishop of Canton, for 22 years. His Excellency the late Bishop Peter Joseph Fan, bishop of Baoding, for 34 years. The list goes on and on.

In his address on August 19, 1995, the Pope said: "the great majority of Chinese Catholics, precisely in order to live this fidelity in fullness, have chosen the path of suffering and silence. With deep affection our hearts turn to these brothers and sisters of ours who suffer great hardship, thankful for their generous and heroic example."

Mr. Chairman, the persecution of Roman Catholics is not ancient history. That is why we are all here today. The persecution continues and gets worse at a time when China is given much freedom in business and finance, at a time when China is making significant economic progress, at a time when China is working hard to claim its status as an important member of the international community. Certainly, the policy of the United States Government to separate human rights and trade under the policy of the current administration must bear some responsibility for this ongoing religious persecution.

As soon as the Patriotic Association was established, all properties of the Roman Catholic Church were confiscated. Later, as China opened up, many of the church buildings and other properties were transferred to the Patriotic Association, leaving the loyal Roman Catholic homeless and penniless.

Many foreign visitors have seen these reopened churches. They appear Catholic. The priests dress like Catholic priests. Even their prayers sound Catholic. But, they are not Catholic. They all belong to the Patriotic Association.

Behind the seemingly serene and pious scenes in these churches are the continuous suppression, often brutal persecution, of the eight million Roman Catholics loyal to the Pope.

Persecution is much more widespread than merely targeting those who have been singled-out as "ringleaders". Many others, ordinary citizens and simple villagers, suffer serious routine harassment for their faith in the hands of the public security bureau. This includes intimidation, short-term detention, beatings, physical abuse, lack of medical treatment during confinement and heavy fines which I would characterize as ransom.

Lacking a place to worship, Roman Catholics, particularly in the countryside, often build their own simple houses of worship on private property. A few of these structures survived, but most of them have been destroyed by the government.

In the last two years, we had reports that four churches were destroyed. Many more probably met with the same fate.

In 1994, for instance, the faithful in a remote village in Jilin Province collected 20,000 JMP (US \$ 2,500). They mobilized the whole village including children to build a tiny chapel. They completed the structure quickly, only in five and a half days, hoping to escape the notice of the local authorities. They hoped that once the chapel was built, the Government might just tolerate it. They were wrong.

The Security Bureau of the government had the intelligence. More than one hundred army vehicles with several hundred soldiers came. They ordered the villagers to tear down the building themselves. Instead, the faithful gathered in their newly built chapel and prayed in unison. The soldiers grabbed all praying villagers and threw them out of the chapel. Using a high pressure water hose, the soldiers dispersed all the villagers. During the late night of July 22, 1994 the soldiers returned. While the villagers slept, the chapel was torn down. Next morning, the villagers gathered at the debris of the destroyed church. They prayed. They wept.

Exactly sixteen months later on November 22, 1995, more than 40 police vehicles with about 150 public security officers destroyed another newly-built church near Dong Lu in the diocese of Baoding in Hebei. The officers severely beat the Catholic construction workers, resulting in five injured workers. Seven Catholics were detained. Two days later, a Holy Mass was offered at the site of the destroyed church. Thousands came.

Between these two incidents during the 16 month period, two more churches, both located in Baoding, were destroyed.

Mr. Sun Guofu from a small village in Hebei was arrested on February 23, 1995 for organizing a retreat for the Roman Catholic laity and for listening to a catechism audio tape.

Mr. Sun was badly tortured. When he passed out, he was placed outdoors in the cold. The family of Mr. Sun was notified by the local government that in order to secure his release, he must give a banquet to the security personnel, and pay a fine of Chinese yen \$ 5,000 which is equivalent to almost 2 years of a villager's income. As there was no way for Mr. Sun to raise the fine, or ransom, he remains in jail.

Rev Chi Huitian of Hebei Province was arrested on April 17, 1995 for his refusal to obey the order from the Security Bureau to cancel his Easter Mass. He stayed in jail about 6 months. He now suffers from a brain concussion which resulted from severe torture while in jail.

Rev. Liao Haiqing of Jiangxi Province, age 68, was arrested many times. The latest rearrest was on August 4, 1995. He has a heart condition and high blood pressure. In the beginning of this detention, Rev. Liao was not allowed to receive medication from his family. We do not know what his current condition is.

Rev. Vincent Qin, a Jesuit priest of Qinghai Province, was also repeatedly arrested. His latest rearrest was on November 3, 1994 while he was working in a brick factory. He was sentenced to three years for performing his apostolic work.

Rev. Xu Delu of Jiangsu Province was arrested on October 8, 1995 after he had offered a Holy Mass in a private home. There is no further news regarding his condition.

Rev. Guo Baile of Jiangsu Province, known as a "fisherman's priest", was arrested on November 1, 1995 after he offered a Holy Mass on a 40-ton cement boat. Arrested with him were two female Catholics who were beaten with an electric baton. Again, there is no further news of their fate and condition.

During the women's conference in Beijing, while the United States' first lady and the world's delegates were in China, many bishops, priests and faithful were detained in an effort to stop any attempts of the underground church from contacting the foreigners. I know of a number of young people who are still in hiding because they were discovered sneaking out of their village to go to Beijing. Their intent was to meet with certain foreigners in an attempt to reveal their struggles to the world via the international media. They never succeeded.

On each major Catholic feastday, many foreign visitors in China would be impressed with the attendance, music and prayers in the reopened cathedrals of the Patriotic

Association. But, behind these peaceful and prayerful scenes, the underground Roman Catholics would attend Holy Masses and prayer service, secretly, in private homes and in desolated fields, even in the inclement weather.

As an example, in Yu Jiang of Jiangxi Province, the Roman Catholics, who have no church buildings, would congregate by the thousands on top of a desolate mountain to pray and to celebrate the Holy Mass on each important Catholic feastday. The Chinese Government tried its best to suppress these services. We know of two tragedies during the prayer service in the last two years.

August 15 is the Feast of Assumption, an important date on the Catholic calendar. It is a Holy Day of Obligation on which Catholics must attend Mass. In 1994, there was a preemptive action by the Chinese Government to prevent the prayer service on the mountain.

On August 13 & 14, 1994, about a dozen Catholic leaders in Yu Jiang and elsewhere were arrested. Many homes suspected to house out of town Catholics were searched. As a result, many faithful attempted to escape by jumping out of the windows on the upper floors. Many sustained injuries. Others hid in the bushes all night.

On August 14, roads leading to the mountain were blocked, and public transportation including ferries to and from this site were forbidden for people suspected to be Roman Catholics heading for the mountain.

Several thousand security personnel - many of them were hired temporarily - and soldiers lined the routes leading to the mountain. They tried to prevent those who filtered through the blockade from reaching the mountain.

Several thousand faithful, risking imprisonment, torture and fines, walked through chest-deep river and little known paths to reach the mountain, but were stopped by the government forces who used batons (some electrically charged) to beat the faithful, injuring scores and arresting dozens.

Despite these atrocities, two thousand faithful broke through the police line and reached the top of the mountain. There, they prayed and sang hymns. There were no bishop and priests to pray and sing with them, because the clergy was all arrested.

Subsequent to the above incidents, many Catholic families were searched. Holy pictures and bibles were destroyed. They were warned that if they kept practicing Roman Catholicism, they would be fined up to JMP \$ 500. If they harbored out of town Catholics, they would be fined JMP \$ 2,000. Moreover, they were told that if they

wanted to practice the Catholic faith, they must join the Patriotic Association which is schismatic and is not recognized by the Pope.

A similar incident occurred during the 1995 Easter season. Approximately 30-40 Catholics were arrested separately before and after the Easter Sunday, again in Yu Jiang. Among them was a 60 year old blind person. Fourteen of them were fined JMP 900 each, equivalent to their three months income and released. Four persons were sentenced to 2 to 5 years imprisonment. They are Pan Kunming (5 years), Rao Yanping (4 years), Yu Shuishen (3 years), Yu Qixiang (2 years). Others were let go after a short detention.

The Bishop of this diocese, Most Rev. Zeng Jingmu was arrested many times. He was rearrested on November 22, 1995 and is still in jail. We are most concerned as he has been in bad health.

These repeated and intermittent arrests without going through the proper court procedures are commonly referred to as "administrative detention". This terrorizing method has become notoriously prevalent in China as a weapon against the clergy and lay Catholic leaders. Not coincidentally, this methodology also makes it more difficult for international human rights groups to obtain timely information, or to lobby for their victims.

There is every evidence that the persecution is stepping up.

On December 22, 1995, the "religious bureau" in Shanghai announced 63 rules and regulations to further control the religious activities. The effective date of enforcement begins on March 1, 1996. We believe that other municipalities will follow suit. In essence, every religious group must be registered. Each religious' activities must be preregistered and approved. No missionary activity from foreign countries is allowed. For unregistered religious groups like the Roman Catholic Church, no assembly of religious activities is allowed, no church is allowed to be built, and no stipends or donations are allowed. These new regulations appear to be a rigorous enforcement of decrees # 144 and 145 signed by Premier Li Pang on January 31, 1994. Failure to observe the above will result in various punishments.

The loyal Roman Catholic Church is not legal and has never registered with the Government. Registering with the Chinese government under the current law would identify the Roman Catholic Church's memberships, activities, finances and locations of worship. They are all regarded by the Chinese government as illegal activities. The Roman Catholic community in China is already feeling the pressure from this new announcement.

Many faithful know that they cannot follow the Patriotic Association without abandoning their faith. They feel helpless except to prepare for the worst eventualities. They are now under close watch by the local authorities. Just as in the 1950's, they have packed their small bags and are ready to be arrested en masse once again.

Bishop Joseph Fan, S.J. of Shanghai, the auxiliary Bishop of Cardinal Kung, is taking charge of the diocese. He has been watched very closely by the Shanghai authorities for the past few years. His Eminence Cardinal Kung, appointed by the Holy Father, is the recognized true Bishop of Shanghai and the Apostolic Administrator of Soochow and Nanking. At present, Bishop Fan's every movement is monitored by security officers.

Bishop Joseph Fan and another loyal priest of Shanghai have announced that no longer can they offer Holy Mass in their houses to loyal Roman Catholics pursuant to the oppressive regulations effective March 1, 1996. They were given to understand that if the priests were to be caught offering Mass in their house with Catholics in attendance, they would be fined JMP 1,000 each and the members of the faithful JMP 500 each. The fine will be doubled if they are caught a second or third time. In the event they are caught the fourth time, they would be expelled to the countryside with reduced living quarters. It appears that something very awful and dreadful will happen soon to the loyal Roman Catholic church in China.

Recently, Bishop Su Chimin, Bishop of Boading, and his auxiliary Bishop, Bishop An Shuxin have also been under very strict surveillance. A security person watches them at all times. Two years ago, Bishop Su met with the U.S. delegation led by you, Mr. Chairman.

The arrests I reported above are just a cross section of our findings, representing the tip of an iceberg. The persecution covers a far wider area. Because of the close and constant surveillance and the dire consequences of being caught communicating with overseas parties on the persecution in China, receiving the latest news from China is most difficult. Only a small number of these atrocities reach the free world. We must have missed hundreds of such blatant human rights violations.

The communist Chinese government hopes that these repeated violations of freedom will intimidate the underground Roman Catholic bishops and faithful, thereby suppressing this loyal Roman Catholic church. The Chinese government hopes to accomplish this strategy without the awareness of the free world. Instead, increasing vocations and an increased Roman Catholic population from three million in 1950's to eight million now, characterized by their strong faith and persistence, have countered the strategy of the Chinese government to suppress the underground Roman Catholic Church. True faith and conscience cannot be smothered by persecution. The 46 years of continuous persecution have proven that fact. Timely reporting of these atrocities in the

West will not only reduce these unjust sufferings, but also put the Chinese Government on notice that they cannot be taken as a serious partner in international politics and trade if human rights violations continue.

Even more alarming is the fact that these arrests are not isolated incidences. They show a pattern of organized assault on the loyal but "illegal" Roman Catholic Church. They happen both in large cities and in small villages. They cannot happen without the direct endorsement of the central government. They are not isolated abuses of some junior local officials who happened to abuse their power.

We hope that the U.S. Government would appeal to the Chinese Government to release all these prisoners of conscience immediately and to grant Roman Catholics equal rights to practice their faith. As Pope John Paul II once said, there is no conflict between being a good citizen and being a good Catholic.

As a member of the United Nations, China must abide by and uphold the United Nations' Charter to guarantee freedom of religion for all citizens, not just for those members who belong to the government established Patriotic Association. The United States government and other freedom loving countries must not ignore such repeated and blatant violations of human rights.

The U. S. Government has used its influences to secure freedom for citizens of many other lands such as South Africa, Haiti, and Bosnia. We find it anomalous indeed to observe that the United States was willing to impose a trade embargo on South Africa so long as the situation of apartheid continued, that for a long time it has been imposing trade sanctions against the repressive regime in Communist Cuba, but the United States has accorded to the Peoples' Republic of China most favored nation trade status. The question remains: Is the United States truly prepared to sacrifice some possible monetary loss to its business interests in order to send a strong message to a nation which has no regard for basic human rights and is violating them on a daily basis? It is important to keep in mind that a country which violates this basic right of its citizens is most unlikely to honor its promises to other nations.

United States of America was founded because our forefathers suffered, fought, and worked hard to gain this God given right of freedom. On behalf of the faithful in the loyal Roman Catholic Church in China, I urge the United States government to help the Chinese citizens to regain their right of religious freedom. The United States government and all freedom loving countries must press Beijing to stop these assaults on religious freedom and to challenge the Beijing government to demonstrate that it can be a responsible member of the international community.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Addendum to Joseph Kung's Testimony on February 15, 1996 Before the Subcommittee on International Operations and Human Rights.

In Baoding and its neighboring towns in Hebei Province:

1. An almost 80 year old Roman Catholic pastor, Rev. Zhao Tingbin, was visited by local authorities daily ostensibly to investigate the property rights of his church and seminary. The villagers are afraid that this disturbance could be the prelude of the government's decision to destroy Rev. Zhao's church.

In the meantime, the authority proceeded to investigate every resident's status, dispersed all religious in the seminaries and convents. Several nuns were arrested. In the meantime, Catholic doctrine is not allowed to be taught in the church.

In the local schools, every student and teacher's background were investigated. When Catholics were identified, they were ordered to join the Patriotic Association and were not allowed to wear the Holy Medals. If refused, they would be dismissed from the school system. Several persons were subsequently dismissed. Concurrently, the authority promised that teachers who renounced their Catholic faith would be promoted from private school teacher to that of national status.

In order to prevent Roman Catholic students from attending Mass on Sundays, the school system declared Sunday a school day and Friday a free day.

2. December 21, 1995 was the first anniversary of the death of Bishop Zheng Jianzhang, the late Bishop of Baoding. In order to prevent the estimated 10,000 Catholics mourners to pray at Bishop Zheng's grave site, the government sealed off the area and prohibited the bishops and priests to offer Mass there. Residences were searched. Out of town Catholics were arrested. Rev. Liu Fumin, Rev. Hu Fun, Rev. Huang Quanlu, two nuns and seven Catholic lay persons were arrested. More than 150 police vehicles were used. Those who succeeded in getting through the police blockade were arrested on their return and transferred to their local authorities.
3. More than four hundred security personnel from the local authorities are now stationed in Baoding and its neighboring towns to enforce the laws regarding "illegal" religious activities. They even started a branch of a public security office in Dong Lu which is the site of the annual Marian pilgrimage in May with total attendance well over 100,000 from all over the country. To add insult to injury, the villagers must provide room and board to all the government's security personnel!