

Cultural and Religious State of the Mongols in China

SMHRIC



Legal Basis for Cultural and Religious Freedom

- Constitution of the People's Republic of China
 - Article 4 → *All nationalities in the People's Republic of China are equal The people of all nationalities have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages, and to preserve or reform their own ways and customs.*
 - Article 36 → *... No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion...*
- Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law of the People's Republic of China
 - Article 10 → *...autonomous agencies in ethnic autonomous areas guarantee the freedom of the nationalities in these areas to use and develop the own spoken and written languages and their freedom to preserve or reform their own folkways and customs ...*
 - Article 11 → *... [f]reedom of religious belief to citizens of the various nationalities ...*
- China's 2005 White Paper reiterates these rights

Cultural State of the Mongols in China

- Population Transfer under the slogan of “development”:
 - China’s 2005 Census shows Mongol population in IMAR as only 17.65%
 - Model for Han population transfer to Tibet and East Turkystan.
- Ecological Destruction by the Chinese:
 - Farming practice of the Chinese migrant farmers ...major cause of land deterioration
 - Sandstorms and droughts increased
- Government Policy on Ecological Degradation:
 - Blame placed on Mongol herders
 - “Ecological Migration” forces Mongols to abandon traditional lifestyle

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- Mongolian Language Status in Inner Mongolia:
 - Increasing number of Mongolian schools either eliminated or merged with Chinese schools
 - Nearly all Mongolian elementary schools eliminated at Gachaa (village) level
 - Most Mongolian middle schools merged with Chinese schools at Sum (township) level
 - Postal authorities refuse to deliver mail with addresses written in Mongolian
 - Numerous Mongolian forums and chat-rooms shutdown for using Mongolian language, some accused of “advocating Inner Mongolian independence”
 - Nutuge.com, ehoron.com, munhgal.com, and mglzaluus.com/bbs shutdown for posting “separatist contents” and “discussing Mongol identities”

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- Assaults to Mongolian Culture and Tradition:
 - Auction of Chinggis Khan Mausoleum to Chinese businessman

[Photo: the shrine was subjected to demolition and reconstruction by the Chinese]
 - Arrest and trial of Mongolian physician Naguunbilig and his wife Daguulaa for practicing Mongolian medicine

[Photo: Mr. Naguunbilig in his traditional Mongolian *deel*]
 - Strict control over Mongolian language publications and distribution



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- Mongols persecuted for protecting and promoting their culture. Hada is serving a 15 year jail term for organizing “Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance”

[Photo: Hada in Inner Mongolian Jail No.4 in Chifeng City]



Religious State of the Mongols in China

- Buddhism in Mongol Regions in China:
 - Mongols are traditionally Buddhists
 - Interview with Ajia Rinpoche who is a Mongol and was the abbot of Kumbum Monastery of Khukhnuur (or Amdo in Tibetan)

[Photo: Ajia Rinpoche (right) with H.H.Dalai Lama]



Religious State of the Mongols in China

- Buddhism introduced to the Mongols in 16th century and kept intact until 1947 when the CCP took control over Inner Mongolia
- During Cultural Revolution, all temples destroyed and all monks dispersed
- Currently almost 40% of Mongols in Inner Mongolia are Buddhists

[Photo: Ih-Zuu Temple of Hohhot, built in 16th Century, was destroyed during Cultural Revolution and rebuilt later for mainly tourism]



Religious State of the Mongols in China

- Government Control Over Buddhism:
 - Buddhists persecuted in Inner Mongolia under various pretexts including “disturbing public order”, “organizing an illegal gathering,” or “advocating superstitious beliefs” etc.
 - Recognition of reincarnate lamas prohibited in Inner Mongolia
 - Two bureaucracies, Religious Affairs Bureau and CCP United Front, tightly control all religious affairs in China
 - Buddhist publications are strictly controlled:
 - > during Cultural Revolution (1966 -76), publishing Buddhist publications was a crime;
 - > during 1980s, partially allowed if a non-religious reason expressed;
 - > since 1990s, publication is allowed but circulation is limited within temples;
 - Large religious gatherings are considered a threat to the government
 - “Inter-province Religious Activities” (*kua di qu xing zong jiao huo dong*) are prohibited
 - Private donations to temples are strictly monitored by the government
 - Temples must report about their activities regularly to the authorities
 - Lamas must sign a contract to pledge loyalty to the Party and government

Conclusion

- Systematic erosion of traditional cultural and religion;
- Autonomy as promised by the Chinese Constitution is not translated into meaningful policy;
- With Mongolians already minority on their own land and policies in place to erase Mongolian culture and tradition, time is not on their side.