

The China's Experience of Playing a Positive Role of Religion in the Prevention and Control of Major Epidemics

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Abstract

In December 2019, novel Coronavirus epidemic occurred in Wuhan. China's religious circles moved quickly to give play to the role of religious groups and religious figures in accordance with the unified arrangements of the government. China's religious circles have taken an active part in philanthropic and public welfare undertakings, adhered to correct guidance of public opinion, and provided support for social harmony and stability with religious harmony, thus forming China's experience in playing a positive role in the prevention and control of major diseases.

Keywords

Chinese Religion; The Positive Role of Religion; Epidemic Prevention and Control; China's Experience.

1. Introduction

In December 2019, novel Coronavirus epidemic occurred in Wuhan. In the face of major diseases, China has decisively launched a war against the epidemic. The Chinese government gives top priority to the safety and health of its people and, with firm courage and determination, has taken the most comprehensive, strictest and thorough measures to effectively stop the transmission chain of the virus. The international community is highly concerned about the intensive measures taken by the Chinese government to prevent and control the epidemic. The WORLD Health Organization and many other countries have spoken highly of China's epidemic prevention and control measures. China's firm determination and positive measures to combat the epidemic have provided valuable experience for other countries to respond to public health emergencies.

Epidemic prevention and control is not just a medical and health issue, because it involves a wide range of risks, uncertainties and social risks. It often requires strict deployment and coordination, and all efforts should be supported to win the battle against the epidemic. The fight against the epidemic is an all-out war, which also tests the "unconventional governance capacity" of religions. China's religious circles moved quickly to give play to the role of religious groups and religious figures in accordance with the unified arrangements of the government. China's religious circles have taken an active part in philanthropic and public welfare undertakings, adhered to correct guidance of public opinion, and provided support for social harmony and stability with religious harmony, thus forming China's experience in playing a positive role in the prevention and control of major diseases.

2. The Foundation for Religious Work in the Prevention and Control of Major Epidemic

China has transformed its institutional advantages into the collective consciousness of national unity, thus mobilizing all positive factors, including religious circles, to form an important force for rallying the fight against the epidemic.

China's religious circles have resolutely implemented the unified deployment of the government, suspended the opening of religious venues, suspended collective religious activities, and postponed the opening of religious colleges and universities, which has played a positive role in winning the battle against epidemic prevention and control and maintaining social harmony and stability. The State administers religious affairs in accordance with the law and guides the religious circles to serve the national war of fighting against the epidemic situation. Fundamentally speaking, it is to persist in taking the people as the center and insisting that the interests of the people are above everything else. The people are the most extensive foundation and the most powerful force in fighting the epidemic. The anti epidemic work of religious circles is not only to protect the life safety and health of the people, including the religious believers, but also depends on the mobilization and active participation of all parties in the religious circles to achieve the final victory. Religious affairs departments and civil servants are the strong guarantee to transform the advantages of the system into the governance ability. They are on the front line of epidemic prevention, serving as guides, volunteers and security guards, caring for religious people, guiding the work of epidemic prevention, solving practical difficulties, and closely uniting the masses of religious believers in the work of epidemic prevention.

Without a set of effective religious work mechanism, without a quality of religious work team, this work is impossible to achieve. Religious believers are at the grass-roots level of the society, and the focus of religious work is also at the grass-roots level. Governments and civil servants at all levels have gone to the front lines of religious work, formed an impregnable fortress, strengthened the prevention and control system in the religious field, mobilized religious forces for prevention and control, and resolutely implemented prevention and control measures. This is a demonstration of the superiority of the system.

3. Religious Charity: The Social Responsibility of Religious Circles

One of the important characteristics of Chinese religious charity is that it is not for missionary purposes. The starting point of the thought and theory of the mobilization and organization of religious believers is to educate the religious believers and practice the religious creed with charity and charity. The ultimate goal is to take social responsibility as a citizen. It is a vigorous patriotic education for the whole country to make concerted efforts to fight against the epidemic, and the extensive participation of China's religious charities is exactly the hymn of the era of patriotism and love of religion in the new era.

Since the 2008 Wenchuan earthquake, China has stepped into the era of great development of philanthropy. In 2012, China issued the opinions on encouraging and regulating religious circles to engage in charity activities, supporting religious circles to carry out charitable and public welfare activities.

Religious charity has made great progress in mobilization capacity, charity scale, operation and implementation, and social impact. To encourage and regulate the religious community to engage in public charity activities is an important way to guide religion to adapt to the socialist society and adhere to the road of Chinese development, an important way to give full play to the positive role of religious personages and believers, and also a beneficial supplement to promote the healthy development of China's public charity.

4. The Experience of Peaceful Coexistence of Various Religions in China

At the critical moment when epidemic prevention and control is most critical, the 12th meeting of the National Joint Conference of religious groups was held in the special way of video conference. The five major national religious organizations reached consensus on important work arrangements, such as further improving the prevention and control of epidemic situation

in the religious field, effectively carrying out publicity and education guidance work, striving to maintain normal order in the religious field, and carrying out charitable donation activities in accordance with the law. The joint conference of religious groups is a mode of religious dialogue with Chinese characteristics. This mode not only points out the direction of prevention and control work, but also respects the right of religious circles to handle internal affairs. At the same time, it not only condenses the collective wisdom of major religions, but also enhances mutual understanding and friendship.

Through participating in joint initiatives, joint mobilization and joint donation, the religious circles in China actively play their advantages, share prevention and control experience, and jointly create a good atmosphere of patriotism, love of religion, and benefit the country and people. At the same time, various religions also carry out mutual help and overcome difficulties, which effectively promotes the harmonious development of religious relations.

Chinese religions have a tradition of peaceful coexistence, which is not only because of the peaceful elements in Chinese culture, but also because the successive dynasties have a set of effective experience in the management of religious affairs. Different religions in contemporary China respect each other, learn from each other, carry out dialogue and exchange, and create a new realm of religious harmony and unity. Under the promotion of religious affairs departments, China's five major religions have jointly launched a national "religious charity week" to help poor areas and tell Chinese religious stories. The harmonious development of society is inseparable from the harmonious development of religious relations. The more important the period is, the more Chinese religious circles can embody the fine traditions of patriotism and love of religion, unity and progress, social service, harmony and inclusiveness.

5. Sticking to the Position of Public Opinion: Creating a Harmonious and Good Atmosphere of Public Opinion in Religious Work

The power of public opinion can not be ignored in the development of any cause. It should be pointed out that if China wins the series of campaigns for epidemic prevention and control, great importance should be attached to the guidance of public opinion.

5.1. The Change of Mainstream Media Attitude

Different from the past, the media take a more positive, direct and considerable attitude towards the religious news reports. The state-level media have successively launched important reports, introducing in detail the Chinese religious community's response to the call of the state, the rapid implementation of prevention and control deployment, and active charity donation activities.

Local media have also reported the effectiveness of measures including religious participation in the prevention and control of the epidemic, introduced the outstanding deeds of the religious community, and demonstrated the unity and solidarity of all Chinese people, including religious circles and religious believers.

This has not only had a positive impact on the religious community, but also given positive comments in the society at home and abroad. This not only reflects China's harmonious religious relations, but also reflects the Chinese society's attitude towards religious tolerance, openness and respect.

5.2. New Media: Power that cannot be Ignored

The number of Internet users in China is very large. It has become the habit of most Chinese to learn about the world and China through the Internet. And new media is an important means to obtain information. Compared with the traditional media, the propaganda and guidance function of new media is more and more prominent. Through the Internet, religious groups,

religious circles and religious scholars from all over the world are interpreters of prevention and control deployment, disseminators of mainstream public opinion, propagandists of patriotism and commentators of scientific epidemic prevention.

The religious websites and official account were updated in a timely manner, and a large number of religious believers were involved in the specific deployment, effective experience and moving deeds of epidemic prevention and control. Religious charity organizations have reported the epidemic situation, charitable donations, and scientific epidemic prevention in a timely, open and transparent manner, focusing the attention of religious believers on such topics as strengthening epidemic prevention deployment, strictly preventing the spread of the epidemic, praying and practicing at home, and being enthusiastic about social donations.

6. Religion and Major Epidemic Prevention and Control Mechanism

Epidemic prevention and control is a practical test of national governance system and governance capacity. The Chinese government pointed out that the experience in the face of the epidemic situation is to take a long-term view, sum up experience and draw lessons, improve the major epidemic prevention and control system and mechanism, and improve the national public health emergency management system. Major epidemic prevention and control work and religious work are important parts of the national governance system. It is an "interdisciplinary field" to integrate religious work into major epidemic prevention and control system and mechanism. Its research and practice experience is of great significance for China and even other countries to cope with public health emergencies.

6.1. Establishment of Epidemic Prevention and Control Mechanism in Religious Field

Religious affairs departments, religious organizations and religious places should put public health emergencies in an important position to deal with all kinds of emergencies. Government departments and religious organizations should strengthen the risk assessment and situation judgment of possible epidemic situation in religious areas, formulate emergency plans with both principle guidance and detailed measures and strong operability, organize drills, and do a good job in daily storage and management of important protective materials in religious places. It should be pointed out that the government should pay attention to prevent the possibility of religious sites and religious activities as the original places of the epidemic, and strengthen the epidemic prevention work for major religious activities, scenic spots and religious places in densely populated urban areas. The education and training of religious people and believers should include public health, disease prevention and control, and disposal of health emergencies, so as to improve the awareness and ability of scientific publicity and scientific protection, and consolidate the mass basis for emergency management of public health emergencies.

6.2. The Development Direction of Religious Charity

This major epidemic situation not only shows the positive role of China's religious charity, but also points out a new direction for its future development, and puts forward new requirements for the cultural cultivation, system guarantee, social mobilization and international exchange of religious charity. China's religious circles should adhere to the rule of law as the basis, integrate the charity ideas into the construction of modern charity ideas, integrate religious charity into the flood of modern social public welfare undertakings, and give full play to the advantages and roles of religion in the field of charity.

Religious charity organizations should establish a religious charity response mechanism for public health emergencies, and have a clear understanding of what the society needs, what the religious community can do, how to raise emergency materials, how to implement accurately,

and how to standardize the operation. Only in this way, can the charitable resources and charity mobilization ability be transformed into the maximum efficiency, scientific and rational, professional and efficient, targeted charity public welfare activities.

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