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China Exchange

Columban Mission Institute
Centre for Promoting Communion with
the Church in China

Editor: Fr P McGee
c/- ACU Locked Bag 2002
Strathfield NSW 2135
Tel (02) 9352 8000
Fax (02) 9746 8033
E-mail: cmi@columban.org.au

June 2007, Number 27

EDITORIAL

History is an important way of looking at life. The life of individuals. The life of societies. Quite often from a historical perspective, we can see that there is 'nothing new under the sun.' Patterns of behaviour, sequences of events seem to appear again and again in our collective, ongoing experience of the life of humankind.

This is particularly true of Church history. From seemingly small beginnings, the Church grew. A persecuted minority in the Jewish nation. Seventy years later, the nation had disintegrated. The young Church continued to flourish. Later under Constantine it became the official religion of the then Roman Empire.

This persisted for centuries – and eventually there appeared the principle of separation of Church and State. Although separation of Church and State has become something of an institution in 'western' democracy, the last few years have shown up some extraordinary distortions with the so called 'war on terror' claiming to have God on both sides – if indeed there be only two sides to such a complicated situation.

The recent death in Beijing of Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan highlights the question of separation of Church and State – at least for China.

The late bishop has been very highly regarded by the government of China holding senior positions in both church and state, while at the same time, people who freely choose to worship God, according to their conscience are hounded and persecuted what their government professes to be their right.



Bishop Fu Tieshan's Funeral in Beijing

There are many ways of looking at a situation of course, and the Catholic people of China will solve this difficulty in their own way. In many places in China there is positive and significant cooperation by the two sections of the Catholic Church – that recognized by the government and the section of those who choose to serve God, independently of government interference.

While we support our Catholic people in China, and are mindful of their difficulties,

it is not right or fitting for us to judge 'who is right' or 'who is wrong'. All are under stress and both individuals and communities are giving their witness to the truth.

Not long ago, I attended a Liturgy of Evening Prayer with a Chinese community. A wonderful experience. Praise and worship being offered to God in the name of so many to whom God is not known. Which brings to mind something that Cardinal Zen said recently on a visit to North America. "I would ask the faithful to pray," he said, "because that is the only thing which can make miracles happen." ♦

Rev Paul McGee, ssc

**BIRTHDAY GREETINGS FOR THE POPE
FROM CHINA**
(AsiaNews – www.asianews.it) 04/16/2007

A 25-year-old Catholic from the underground Chinese Church in Hebei sent an enthusiastic message. Citing ancient Chinese poets and drawing on his country's old similes, the young man called the Pontiff the Elder Man, which is a token of honour in the Confucian tradition, wishing the Pope the longevity of a stork. He also mentioned the many priests and lay people who have "shed blood" to remain loyal to the Pope and the Holy See, saying that every Catholic in China is waiting in prayer for the letter that Benedict XVI promised to address to the Chinese Church.

Here is his message (translated from the Italian by AsiaNews):

April 25 is the birthday of our Holy Father, Benedict XVI. The poet Du Fung, who lived at the time of the Tang dynasty, melancholically wrote that 'from ancient times it has been rare to reach 70,' but 80 years means 80 years of storms and trials, 80 years of lifetime struggles. The marks of time have appeared, numerous, on the Holy Father's head, imperceptibly whitening the hair of the elderly Pope. The hearts of Chinese Catholics go out to our elderly Pope as does mine.

Chinese Catholics are waiting for the Holy Father's pastoral letter. For some time he has urged Chinese Catholics to accept sacrifices, read the Bible more, and recite the rosary in order to prepare for his letter. Let us invoke the Spirit of the Lord to protect our Father and make him an effective sign of the faith's unity so as to strengthen the faith of Chinese Catholics.

In the past 50 years, many priests and lay people have shed their blood to remain loyal to the Holy Father, maintaining the Catholic tradition alive in China. I and my contemporaries are the Church's new generation in China. We, too, want to reinforce the unity with the Pope. We want to be in communion with the Universal Church and nothing can prevent us from doing so.

"Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light for my path," (Ps. 119, 105). Holy Father, your words are imprinted in our hearts and we shall never forget them. When I was a teenager I recited from memory the 'Ode to the Great Pope'. We still often sing it today. Great Holy Father we love you; dear Holy Father we back and support you. You are Christ's representative, the sun of the truth that educates the people of God and leads to the Kingdom of God.

Holy, elderly Pope, let me offer you my congratulations. Happy Birthday! May the Lord always bless you; may the grace of the Holy Spirit always be with you. Like the stork, may you always remain young, never age. Always renewing your venerable experience of life, may you always be happy. ♦

BEIJING BISHOP DIES
BEIJING (CNS/SE) Sunday Examiner 29 April 2007

Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan of Beijing, the top ranking person in the official Church community in China, died at 8.08 pm on April 20, after a long battle with cancer. His death was announced in Beijing by *Xinhua* news agency.

Seventy-five year old Bishop Fu was ordained to the episcopacy in the national capital in 1979, the year after China adopted its economic reform and open-door policy. He was the first "self-elected and self-ordained" bishop in the Chinese Church and did not have papal approval. The Vatican never recognized him as bishop of Beijing and officially the see has been vacant since the death on Christmas Eve 2001, of Bishop Matthew Pei Shangde, who was secretly ordained to the



The Late Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan

episcopacy in 1989.

At the time of his death, Bishop Fu was chairperson of the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA) and acting president of the government-recognised Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China.

Speaking to the *Sunday Examiner* on April 23, Anthony Lam Sui-ki, of the Holy Spirit Study Centre in Hong Kong, observed that Bishop Fu's death would not have "any significant impact on the life of the official Church or the CCPA as he had never been on the administrative frontline."

Lam said that Bishop Fu, despite holding the chair of the CCPA, was not the one "in power," pointing instead

to Anthony Liu Bainian, the vice-chairperson of the CCPA, who is not a member of the Church hierarchy. He said, "the government will have a problem choosing a successor, who is acceptable to all sides –political and religious – to serve as the symbol of the China Church. He would also need to have good political experience."

Liu told *UCA News* on April 19 that Bishop Fu wanted to "see his priests, whom he hasn't met for a long time" because of his long illness. Bishop Fu's last public appearance was at the March 4 preparatory meeting for the annual session of the National People's Congress (China's parliament), of which he had been a vice chairperson since 2003. People holding positions of vice-chairperson or above are ranked as state leaders. The bishop's illness kept him away from the March 5 to 16

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"As a bishop in a country where Church and state are not clearly separated, and the state religion is atheism, it is difficult to render to Caesar and to God, as it can be hard to determine who is who."

(Fr Bernardo Cervellera - Avvenire, 2002)

nual session.

Father Peter Zhao Jianmin, one of his two assistants, said on April 20 that Bishop Fu had received the sacrament of the sick. Father Matthew Zhen Xuebin, his other assistant and rector of the Beijing seminary, said the diocese had asked all Catholics to pray for the bishop after he became seriously ill. Both priests said that the matter of succession has not been discussed.

Liu Bainian said the Beijing diocese had not held any election for a bishop candidate, because it required the consent of the local government. He said the matter of who will succeed Bishop Fu as chairperson of the CCPA will be discussed at a later date in a committee meeting.

Bishop Fu was born in 1931, ordained a priest in 1956 and a bishop in 1979 at the age of 48.

In March a Church source in Beijing said that although he was not recognized as a bishop by the Holy See, that "in his mind" he was in communion with the Pope. Describing the bishop as a profoundly "kind person", the source emphasized that the situation in Beijing was complicated and people did what they could to work within the system.

The former director of *Fides* news agency, Father Bernardo Cervellera, wrote in *Avvenire*, the newspaper of the Italian Bishops' conference, in 2002, that "one cannot blame Bishop Fu for following the party line so religiously." He said that for a bishop in a country where Church and state are not clearly separated, and the state religion is atheism, it is difficult to render to Caesar and to God, as it can be hard to determine who is who. ♦

**BISHOP ZEN VISITS CHINESE COMMUNITY
IN SAN FRANCISCO**
(CNS – Sunday Examiner, 27 May 2007)

Cardinal Zen Ze-kiun, the bishop of Hong Kong, visited San Francisco from May 11 to 14 in one of several stops planned to Chinese Catholic communities in the United States of America and Canada.

While in the Bay Area, the bishop had a private meeting with San Francisco Archbishop George H. Niederauer and auxiliary Bishop Ignatius C. Wang, a native of Beijing and the first Chinese Catholic bishop to be ordained in North America. The bishop, a Salesian, also concelebrated at the May 13 Chinese - language Mass at San Francisco's Ss. Peter and Paul parish, which is staffed by Salesians.

Bishop Zen urged San Francisco Catholics to pray for a resolution of tensions between the Vatican and the government-controlled Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CCPA). He also said that in Hong Kong, the government is stepping up control of the administration of Catholic schools. Bishop Wang mentioned that the Church in Hong Kong has fought unsuccessfully in court against governmental management of Catholic schools in Hong Kong.

Bishop Zen also visited the graves of the late Archbishop Dominic Tang Yee-ming of Guangzhou, and Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-mei of Shanghai, at the Jesuit cemetery at Santa Clara on May 12. Both bishops had spent many years in Chinese prisons.

In Los Angeles on May 9, the first day of his three-week North American tour, the Bishop told *The Tidings*, newspaper of the Los Angeles archdiocese, that people are in "danger of having wrong information" about Catholicism in China. He observed that "one kind of wrong information is this general impression that now China is open so you may think that it is open for religious freedom. It is not true."

Bishop Zen also pointed to the misconception that members of the CCPA are "bad people" saying, "It is not true. They are also being persecuted. Some may be weak and may be giving in to pressure (to join the CCPA), but the real bad people are very few."

Asked if the Chinese government will take steps towards advancing religious freedom in the near future Bishop Zen shrugged and replied: "We hope, but we are not sure. It seems that there are forces against such normalization. There are people who have gained power and obtained advantages from the situation, so they don't want to see any change. But, I think for the good of the Church and for the country, surely they have to change.

He added that "I would ask the faithful to pray, because that's the only things which can make miracles happen." ♦

ZHOUSHI BISHOP STILL MISSING
HONG KONG (UCAN) Sunday Examiner 29 April 2007.

The freedom of Bishop Joseph Wu Qinjing of Zhouzhi, Shaanxi province, has been restricted since government officials sent him to a “a learning class” for about three days on March 18, local Catholics, who fear for his safety, told *UCA News*.

The bishop, who is recognised as a priest in the official Church, does not have recognition as a bishop as he was clandestinely ordained, without approval of government authorities but with a Holy See mandate, as the sixth bishop of Zhouzhi by the late Bishop Li Du’an of Xi’an on 22 May 2006.

One local person, who asked not to be named, said people in the diocese initially thought that the government wanted to prevent the bishop from celebrating the feast of his patron, St. Joseph, on March 19, as well as attending a memorial of the third death anniversary of a priest on the following day.

However, he said that “until today, the bishop is still out of reach,” adding that many people are now worried about his safety.

Others said they could not contact the 39-year-old bishop on his mobile phone, but had heard that he is being detained in Lintong district near Xi’an, the provincial capital. They also said they heard that government officials pressured the bishop to discontinue his Episcopal ministry and tried to make him leave his diocese.

On Easter Sunday, April 8, a source said a message from the bishop was relayed “to his beloved Catholics,” asking for their prayers regarding “the restriction of his freedom, when Jesus Christ had died, suffered and resurrected in glory today.”



Bishop Joseph Wu Qinjing

The source said, “We all wept when we heard this,” adding that “even in such circumstances, the bishop still encouraged us to have faith in God, and still remembers his flock.” He continued, “We beg the merciful God to protect him, that he may hold fast to his faith and not yield to pressure. We also hope that he can return home soon.”

Last September 11, the bishop was taken away by plainclothes security officers, who broke into the Immaculate Heart of Mary Cathedral compound. Following his release five days later, he was hospitalized and treated for concussion (*Sunday Examiner, 24 September, 1 October, 2006*).

While he was being detained, Bishop Wu was forced to write a statement “admitting” that his Episcopal status was illegal, as he had been ordained without an election, and that his management of the diocese and his presiding over Church activities as a bishop violated the Chinese government’s religious affairs regulations.

The source also said that earlier this year, the bishop was falsely accused of sending out a message critical of the government to all his parishes. ♦

**UCAN: 6/1/2007
WORK WITH VATICAN
TO FILL VACANT BISHOP'S POST,
CARDINAL URGES CHINA OFFICIALS**

In a letter to the Chinese government, a Vietnamese cardinal has suggested, among other things, that to fill the vacant bishop's post in Beijing, candidates could be nominated from among the mainland bishops.

Cardinal Jean Baptiste Pham Minh Man of Ho Chi Minh City sent a letter dated May 22 to two officials from China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA). Church sources said the officials led a seven-member delegation that visited the cardinal-archbishop at his official residence in early March and engaged in a closed-door meeting.

The 73-year-old cardinal said in his letter that the visit from Liu Haixing, deputy director-general of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Department of European Affairs, and Wang Zuo'an, SARA deputy director, left him with very good impressions.

"This could be regarded as a bridge of communication between me and the Catholic Church in your country," Cardinal Man wrote.

A church source in Vietnam told UCA News in late May that the letter written in both Chinese and Vietnamese, was sent to Beijing through the Chinese consulate in Ho Chi Minh City. However, as of May 31, there has been no reply from the Chinese government, the source said.

According to a copy of the letter that UCA News obtained on May 28, Cardinal Man said he wished to visit China. He said he had originally hoped to lead some priests, religious sisters and laypeople to make a courtesy visit to the two Chinese officials as well as ailing bishops in Beijing and Shanghai in early April.

"It is a pity that I could not visit the Beijing Bishop before he died," he said, referring to Bishop Michael Fu Tieshan of Beijing, who died April 20 of lung cancer at the age of 76.

The church source, who spoke on condition of anonymity, told UCA News on May 28 that the Chinese consul general had expressed hope the cardinal could visit China as a guest, but said "that would require an invitation" from a person or an organization on the mainland.

Though the cardinal has suggested an invitation from the Bishops' Conference of the Catholic Church in China (BCCCC) and has exchanged letters with Bishop Aloysius Jin Luxian of Shanghai, he still has had no reply from the BCCCC, the source said.

A sense of what transpired in the March meeting between the cardinal and the Chinese officials can be gleaned from the cardinals' letter, in which he offers some suggestions for the good of the Chinese people,

the Catholic Church in China and the "glorious relations" between China and the Holy see.

The prelate suggested that the best way to solve the leadership succession issue in the Beijing Diocese is for the BCCCC, "not any other organization," to call a meeting of all mainland bishops and have them nominate candidates chosen from bishops who are presently in office. This can be done, he said, after bishops reflect, pray, discuss and understand more about each other.

The Holy See will submit a list, from among these candidates, to the Chinese government for its opinions. Once the Chinese government gives its consent, the Holy See would appoint the new Beijing bishop, he continued.

The cardinal said he believed that if the Chinese bishops could "pray quietly and freely, exchange views, and face no pressure, threat of domination or control," they would be able to make decisions in the long-term interest of the Chinese people and the Catholic Church in China.

"With enough confidence in the people and the Catholic Church, the Chinese government can create favourable conditions for harmony among Chinese people, communion with the China Church, and exchanges with the Vatican and every organization in the world," he wrote. And these would contribute to the country's long-term social progress and stable development, the cardinal added.

Meanwhile, Bishop Jin of Shanghai told UCA News on June 1 that Cardinal Man had indeed written to him and proposed to visit China in October. "I sincerely hope he will come. I will give him a warm welcome and hope he can share with us his experience of the Vietnam Church," the 91-year-old prelate said. ♦

CARDINAL ZEN – TIANANMEN MASSACRE

--www.asianews.it 06/05/2007

Hong Kong (AsiaNews) – The bishop of Hong Kong, Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kiun, yesterday expressed his desire to see the authorities of continental China "wash away the filth" produced 18 years ago with the Tiananmen massacre.

The prelate led a prayer meeting for democracy on Chinese soil in the lead up to the great vigil which was held in memory of the anti-corruption, pro-democracy movement yesterday evening in Victoria Park. An estimated 500 Catholics were present.

Cardinal Zen recently returned from a trip to North America, added: "Many Chinese emigrants currently living in the west are experiencing the freedom that it entails. I ask myself when the Chinese people living in the homeland shall be able to enjoy such a blessing. I hope that Beijing may find the courage to face up to what it did 18 years ago." ♦

**MORE, YOUNG, EDUCATED PEOPLE BAPTISED
IN MAINLAND CHURCH AT EASTER**
UCA News – www.ucanews.com – April 13, 2007

Catholic dioceses in mainland China saw a surge in baptisms this Easter, with young and educated people comprising a significant proportion of new Catholics.

Song Yun, editor of the Shijiazhuang-based *Faith 10-Day* Catholic newspaper, told UCA News on April 12 that at least 6,000 baptisms took place in 26 dioceses and 41 major parishes in China. Mainland China has close to 100 dioceses. The newspaper had contacted various dioceses and prominent parishes for the information.

Song estimated that the total number of Easter baptisms on the mainland exceeded 10,000 and revealed that 80% of the newly baptized in major Chinese cities have tertiary education.

“It’s hard to account for all the baptisms, as parishes are numerous, and some dioceses have the baptisms at Pentecost, the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or at Christmas,” he said.

Dioceses that saw an increase in Easter baptisms included Linyi in Shandong province, eastern China, which welcomed 600 new Catholics - an increase from 200 at Easter 2006, to 600 this year. Bishop Johan Fang Xingyao of Linyi told UCA News, on April 11, that he credited the laypeople for actively evangelizing their relatives and friends, and priests and nuns for spreading the Good News.

He also noted that those baptized in the 1990s were mainly children, women and elderly people, but now half of those recently baptized are high school and university students, who “came to the Church themselves and asked if they could become Catholics.”

Other dioceses that also recorded many baptisms were Handan, Cangzhou (Xianxian) and Hengshui, all in Hebei province, which saw more than 500, 400 and 300 baptisms respectively.

In Hengshui, Wang, a cathedral worker, told UCA News on April 10, that 80% of the 95 new Catholics were

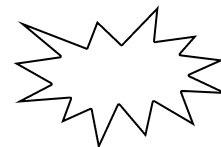
baptized at the cathedral were young or middle-aged people, with the rest being elderly and children. Most of them were peasants, students, workers and retired civil servants, he said. Father Luo Limin of Hengshui cathedral attributed the increase to the *yangko* (a rural folk dance) approach to evangelization. Over the past two years, 70- person teams have visited dozens of villages, putting on cultural performances that include colourful costumes, lively music, drums and dances. The team then distributes religious materials and invites those interested to attend catechism classes, Father Luo told UCA News on April 10.

He hopes that the newly baptized young people will inject more vitality into the parish. More importantly, he said, their entry into the Church “will gradually change the general misconception that religion is a matter solely for the retirees, who may have more time for Church activities. Hengshui diocese has about 20,000 Catholics, mainly rural dwellers.

The cathedral of Anyang (Weihui diocese), in Henan province in the north, and the diocese of Urumqi, in the Muslim- dominated Xinjiang Uygur autonomous Region, saw about 100 baptisms each.

In Henan province, the 2,000 parishioners of Anyang Cathedral welcomed 85 new members of whom 20 were men.

Cathedral parish priest, Father Joseph Zhang Yinlin told UCA News on April 11 that his diocese baptized 100 people, including 40 from Urumqi itself. All those recently baptized were ethnic Han, the principal ethnic group of China. About one third of the new Catholics are male, compared with one fifth in the past years, said Bishop Xie, who is recognized by the government only as a priest. It was charitable acts that attracted the newly baptized to Catholicism, he said. He added that each layperson is encouraged to introduce two or three friends and relatives who are not Catholics to the faith every year. ♦



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**NEWLY BAPTISED SHARE CONVERSION
EXPERIENCES – WANT OTEHRS TO KNOW GOD**
UCA news – www.ucanews.com - April 25, 2007

The friendly attitude of priests and laypeople made a lasting impression on Maria Zhou Lirong when she first stepped into a Catholic church near her home in Hebei province, northern China.

Zhou, a 58-year-old retired teacher, recalls being touched by their sincerity and welcoming demeanor, so different from the behaviour of her fellow mahjong players, who she says spouted many vulgarities. Mahjong is a Chinese game played with tiles, often as a form of gambling.

This Easter, Zhou was one of 95 people who received Baptism in the Cathedral of Hengshui diocese. She told UCA News that before she retired a couple of years ago she had no time to think about her spiritual needs. Even so, she “felt something missing,” in her life, she said. Zhou now prefers to spend more time reading the Bible and religious books than playing mahjong, though the church does not forbid gambling.

As she tells it, she now realizes that God is the source of her life. And she is enthusiastic about spreading the Gospel and telling people that Catholicism “promotes harmony, much needed in today’s families and society.”

For example, she helps distribute religious books and video discs to people who are not Christians, invites them to parish gatherings and prays for them. Her husband, a retired civil servant, as well as his parents and siblings are communists, but this does not deter Zhou. “I’ll try to spread the Gospel to them,” she said.

Her story echoes those of many mainlanders who entered the Church at Easter. A survey by *Faith 10-Day*, a catholic newspaper in Hebei province, recorded nearly 8,000 baptisms in 22 dioceses as a whole and 107 parishes of other dioceses. Mainland China has close to 100 dioceses.

Forty-five-year-old Maria Guan Yuling, who was baptized in Jiangmen diocese, southern China, during the Easter Vigil on April 7, says she has become a happier person after studying the Bible and Church teachings. ♦

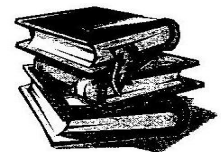
*Mooring at the Maple Bridge
for the Night - Zhang Ji*

*The Moon goes down,
a raven cries,
frost fills the sky;
River maples fishing lanterns
-facing sadness I lie.
Outside of Gusu City
the Han Shan temple;
At midnight a bell rings - it
reaches the traveler's boat.*



BOOK NOTICE

Elmer Wurth MM: (compiler)
Holy Spirit Study Centre, Hong Kong 2006
xii + 436 pages



It is more than twenty years since Elmer Wurth published his compilation of *Papal Documents Related to the New China 1937-1984*. This extended compilation is even more useful than the original, as interest in China continues to grow. The documents from the long pontificate of John Paul II are so numerous, that Fr. Wurth has classified them under seven headings - “Messages to China and the Chinese”, “Messages to Taiwan and Asian Bishops”, “In Praise of Matteo Ricci”, “Greetings to Individual Bishops”, “Honouring China’s Saints and Martyrs”, “Addressing the Holy See’s Diplomatic Corps”, and *Miscellaneous and Lesser Documents*.

The compilation will be essential for any student of the situation of Catholics in China. Readers will be grateful to Fr. Wurth for assembling these materials in English, and even more grateful to the Holy Spirit Study Centre for their work of editing and publishing these materials. I can only hope that an equivalent Chinese-language publication is also available. Such a publication would provide a rich resource for Catholic people in China. It would also be a useful guide for the Chinese government officials, especially at the local level, who so often misunderstand the Catholic Church.

- Roderick O’Brien (Adelaide)

06/05/2007 13:13
CHINA

**Keeping Beijing under pressure is the path to democracy,
says Bao Tong**

In an essay commemorating the Tiananmen massacre, former Communist Party Central Committee member Bao Tong (a friend to former party secretary Zhao Ziyang) slams the country's current leadership for being "incapable of becoming reformed characters". The anniversary of the repression is commemorated by the Mothers of Tiananmen and a Chengdu paper.



Beijing (AsiaNews) – The 18th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square bloodbath was commemorated across China. On the one hand, there were those who commemorated the victims of the bloody government repression; on the other, there was the government itself forced to tighten its control over the population and the media.

And yet despite tighter controls, the Communist regime seemed to have loosened up a bit over the years. For the first time the president of the "Mothers of Tiananmen" was allowed to place flowers and a candle on the spot where her son died, whilst in Chengdu a local paper published an announcement that saluted "with respect" the relatives of the victims. As one might expect the announcement did not stay long on the paper and the mother who placed flowers in Tiananmen Square was followed by plain-clothes policemen.

Police were deployed around the square and, as attested by many human rights activists, tens of political dissidents were forced under house arrest. The government in fact has used such "preventive" measures as a matter of course ahead of certain sensitive dates to prevent potential popular protest.

According to Bao Tong, a former member of the Communist Party central Committee and personal secretary and friend to former Party Secretary Zhao Zhiyang, the "pressure exerted by the Chinese people is indeed a good thing; its vice-like grip gives us the best available tool with which to reform an authoritarian, one-party state."

Bao, 74, was one of the main aides to the former leader of the Communist Party and the highest ranking official arrested as a result of the June 4, 1989, crackdown, because of his and Zhao's opposition to sending in the army and tanks to crush the students. Before falling into disgrace and spending seven years in prison he had closely worked with current premier, Wen Jiabao.

In a memorial essay written for the 18th anniversary of the June 4 crackdown on the Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement, Bao hit out at those who "are prepared to sell their own souls, who in the past 18 years have praised the massacre perpetrated by that butcher [i.e. Deng Xiaoping] as providing a firm basis for prosperity, because he broke the will of the people with his iron fist."

"This chairman gave the order to the People's Liberation Army to shoulder their assault weapons and drive tanks in a move that crushed and strafed" demonstrators, Bao said. The net result was that the "number of injured went beyond the capacity of emergency rooms in the capital to handle. The dead were piled up in the morgues." In the end the "rest of the world witnessed the bloodbath in China's capital via satellite television."

For Bao the current leadership is not much better than the old patriarch, Deng. In his view "today's leaders are incapable of becoming reformed characters, but they should at least say one sincere thing, utter a note of responsibility, if they wish to rule in a constitutional way, to give China at least some kind of footing on which to begin its long march to democracy."

He concludes his essay with a warning, saying that an "utterly repressive society leads to an utterly corrupt prosperity. Repression has split China down the middle, into a paradise for corrupt officials and a purgatory for those with no power." ♦