

# Reasons for the Breeding of Cults in China during the Economic Transition Period

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**Abstract:** At present, China is in a critical period of development, and the economic transformation has triggered a “domino” effect. Market economy not only brings well-being to modern society, but also exposes the shortcomings in the development process. The uneven distribution of benefits, the imperfect social security system, and the lack of reasonable demands give heresy an opportunity. As spiritual opium parasitic on society in the process of human civilization, cults have become one of the public hazards in the international community and threatened the safety of society. Exploring the reasons for the breeding of cults is conducive to the establishment of an early warning mechanism and a preventive mechanism against cults. Punishment of evil cults by thinking of the rules of law, cracking down on evil cults and crimes, and building a harmonious society.

## 1. Introduction

With the transformation of social economy in China, profound changes have taken place in the social structure and the pattern of interests has been greatly adjusted. People's beliefs are also changing quietly. Social change, while bringing political benefits and economic dividends to the public, has also caused new problems and challenges. The huge contrast between the reality and psychological needs has hurt people's inherent psychological prayers, shaken people's inherent beliefs, and all kinds of non-mainstream values have sprayed out. It is against the background of the shaking of people's thoughts that some non-legal persons with ulterior motives use the negative psychology of people with fragile beliefs to publicize an invisible totem with mysterious power everywhere, to exaggerate and make use of it, to take various means to attract people's hearts and deceive people into groups, and then to form a fixed one. We must resolutely punish cult organizations, which are against the trend of the times, and whose rumors confuse people and seriously disrupt the normal social order. It is important to explore the reasons for its growth.

## 2. The Objective Motivation of Evil Religion

The emergence of anything must go through a long cumulative process, and the emergence of cults is not achieved overnight. Marxism holds that the emergence of any new thing must be influenced by both internal and external factors. Although internal factors play a decisive role, the role of external factors can not be underestimated, which can play or delay or accelerate the development of things. Marx and Engels pointed out that “the products of all forms of consciousness can not be eliminated by spiritual criticism, nor can they be eliminated by melting them into”self-consciousness” or transforming them into”ghosts”,”ghosts”,”fantasies”and so on, but only by actually overthrowing this.

Only by the realistic social relations generated by idealistic fallacies can they be eliminated.[1] The exposition of the revolutionary mentors undoubtedly points out the direction for us to recognize, analyze and criticize cults. That is, only by recognizing the social root of cults can we fundamentally eliminate the emergence of cults and inhibit their spread.

### 2.1 ”Concussion” Caused by Market Economy

Economic transformation, on the one hand, promotes social development and progress. With the rapid development of China's socialist market economy, people's material living standards have

been greatly enriched. People's needs range from the initial solution of the problem of food and clothing to the improvement of the quality of life, the improvement of living environment and the realization of the beautiful Chinese dream. With the rapid development of economy and the improvement of people's living standards, there are diversification of material and cultural needs, diversification of demand subjects, differentiation of demand content, and enrichment of means. On the other hand, the transformation of the economy has brought about institutional changes, breaking the original intrinsic pattern of interests. While bringing general welfare to the society, the reform also leads to the gradation of interests among the public. While satisfying the people's interests vision, the reform also stimulates the public's greater interest expectation and pursuit. Young people look forward to a well-paid and comfortable environment; the elderly look forward to stronger physical health protection; laid-off workers are eager to achieve re-employment and improve the plight of life; remote rural areas hope to enjoy the advantages of social resources created by economic transformation, just like cities. However, because our country is still in and will remain in the initial stage of socialism for a long time, and is not sufficiently developed for social production and huge population demand, the means of production and livelihood per capita are relatively poor, and there is still a large gap in income distribution, which is far from meeting people's actual needs and ideal expectations. It leads to a huge gap between the ideal expectation and the cruelty of reality. Market economy is a double-edged sword. It not only injects strong agent into the development of social economy and brings strong vitality, but also brings new problems and serious challenges. Driven by the pursuit of maximizing personal interests, people often take risks to take actions against the mainstream values and realize their irrational needs. Environmental pollution, improper competition, corruption and other crimes seriously affect the harmonious social order, pollute people's hearts, blur people's senses, and intensify social contradictions. However, market economy has only eternal interests and no eternal friendship. It is against this background that an invisible totem with "mysterious power" has been quietly sublimated and generalized and utilized by the illegal elements, thus forming a cult. And cults are taking advantage of people's special psychological requirements to prevail, which can not be stopped. For example, the Falungong cult organization founded by Li Hongzhi at the end of last century created a so-called "invisible totem" of "truth, goodness and tolerance", which catered to the pursuit of ideal society by many believers. This so-called "ideal society" can not be realized under the background of imperfect market economic system.

## **2.2 Infiltration of foreign hostile forces**

After the drastic changes in Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union, hegemonism and power politics still exist and become more and more intense in the world. The current Sino-US trade war provoked by the United States is an example. The trade bullying practiced by the United States has seriously affected the healthy development of the world economy and the steady establishment of a world peace order. Meanwhile, under the banner of so-called "democracy, freedom and human rights", the western countries led by the United States are vigorously pursuing the construction of ideas and models that are beneficial to the West in the global scope, and constantly infiltrating and destroying our country. By virtue of this trend of thought and mode, we can support the emergence and development of cults in other countries, interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and realize our own political and economic interests. This intervention force is mainly manifested in three aspects: first, providing the so-called "political asylum" for the leaders of cult organizations; second, secretly planning and supporting the activities of domestic cult organizations; third, facilitating the activities of overseas cult organizations. [2] In the second half of the twentieth century, the world's cults surged. Western cults not only have frequent activities in China, but also show a trend of internationalization. Against the background of the internationalization of cults, foreign hostile forces and separatists have been making greater use of religion to infiltrate and split our country politically. Especially with the increasing frequency of international exchanges, the illegal and criminal activities of foreign forces using religion to infringe on our national security and the safety of citizens' lives are also on the rise.

Under the guise of spreading religious doctrines, they make full use of religion to infiltrate and destroy activities. Overseas hostile religious forces use broadcasting to carry out “aerial missionary” and send personnel to smuggle religious propaganda materials into our country; use the opportunity of visiting relatives and traveling to China to preach, use money to attract our religious groups, incite religious fanaticism, and attack our socialist system and the leadership of the Party. [3] As the above activities are often carried out in the name of religion, to a considerable extent, they conceal their true purpose, deceive and attract some believers, thus accelerating the spread of cults.

### **2.3 The weakening of social control mechanism**

According to the theory of social control, strong and correct social control can guide and restrict values and social behavior, prevent and prevent abnormal phenomena that destroy social order; weak and wrong social control will give abnormal phenomena a chance to breed and overflow. The spread of heresy in the period of economic transformation is closely related to the maladjustment or weakening of social control. The weakening of social control gives heresy a living space. During the period of social transformation, while vigorously developing the market economy, new problems and contradictions are constantly emerging. Due to the lack of existing models to follow, we need to move forward in the exploration. During the period of economic transition, the state put forward the development strategy of “taking economic construction as the center”. Because the personnel of some government departments and grass-roots organizations lacked a correct understanding of the state's policy implementation, they unilaterally emphasized “economic centralism” in their practical work, neglected the ideological and political work of maintaining the communication between the government and the people, and appeared “one-handed”. Hard-handed, soft-handed”, indulged in the breeding of some unhealthy trends of thought. In addition, the inadequate working methods of some Party members and cadres have intensified the relationship between the Party and the masses, between cadres and the masses, severely weakened the cohesion of the government, and prompted some people to leave the government for other groups or organizations, which provided a mass basis for the emergence of cults. At the same time, the emergence of “normative vacuum” provides institutional gap for the emergence of cults. Faced with the “new way of behavior”, we lack the corresponding clear management norms and can not impose sanctions according to the provisions of the law. It was not until the amendment of the new Criminal Law in 1997 that the cult was clearly regulated, and even later the amendment of the Criminal Law and the interpretation of the “two highs” in 2017 made a more standardized and authoritative interpretation of the cult from the legal point of view. As for this kind of “new behavior” before, due to the lack of clear regulations, we can not take effective measures to punish it, resulting in management loopholes. Even if a cult is found, as long as it is not openly engaged in classifying the state, openly attacking government organs, and carrying out acts that endanger national security, it will not attract the attention of the management departments, let it go, and eventually lead to the gradual fermentation of cults, endless spread, erosion of the social body, and maiming the people.

### **2.4 Lack of supervision of cultural market**

The transformation from planned economy to market economy has caused fundamental changes in a series of systems, modes and systems. The construction of material civilization and spiritual civilization must proceed simultaneously and advance in coordination. “Both hands should be grasped and both hands should be hard” should become the usual style of government. The implementation of a good system requires supervision in place, norms, patterns and imbalances. While people share the enormous material benefits brought by market economy, people's spiritual needs are also diversified. With the implementation of the policy of opening to the outside world, the opening of the “national gate” has led to the influx of various ideologies, which are mixed in good and bad. This requires the corresponding management departments to give full play to the power of wisdom, formulate operable codes of conduct, so that bad behavior and unhealthy thinking are closely related to the cage of the system. In the process of reform and opening up, some functional departments only emphasize the development of economy and neglect the supervision of

cultural market because they can not correctly understand the essence of market economy. The phenomenon of laziness in management, laziness in management, indulgence in management and incompetence in management appears. It is the confusion of cultural market management that gives some decadent and declining ideas in the West a chance to bring “food and cure wounds” to those people who are spiritually empty. Various social ugliness phenomena have become rampant for a time. Yellow, gambling and poisoning are prevalent, theft, robbery and fraud are rampant, and corruption are frequent. A large number of superstition, pseudoscience and cult propaganda are publicly carried out, even published in official national publications and published in the market. The circulation of books that propagate superstition, pseudoscience, facial expression and geomancy provides a feasible way for cults to propagate their teachings, and also creates a convenient channel for cults to carry out their teachings. In order to pursue the so-called “ideal heaven”, “blissful world” and “paradise on earth”, some people lose their reason, are completely confused by lies and can not extricate themselves, and eventually slip into the mire which runs counter to the mainstream culture, and fall into the heretical organization and can not extricate themselves.

### **3. The Subjective Motivation of Evil Religion**

Materialistic dialectics holds that in the development process of things, internal factors play a decisive and key role, affecting the direction and nature of things. The emergence of heresy and external factors play a catalytic and accelerating role, but certain subjective needs and ideological understanding of the root causes, all affect people's will and motivation, interfere with people's identification and judgment of things, determine people's behavior patterns.

#### **3.1 Believe in “religion” because of the “lack of demand” attempt**

According to Abraham Maslow, the main initiator and theorist of humanistic psychology in the West, human needs have a certain level, which can be divided into order and level. Needs and satisfaction at each level will determine the development realm and degree of individual personality, as well as the motivation and mode of individual behavior. Economic transformation, social progress and scientific development have brought more and more unknown areas to people. People's needs are not decreasing, but more and more diversified. However, due to the limitations of the current scientific level, it is difficult to meet the psychological needs of human beings to the greatest extent. Because of the inherent “greed” of human beings, they always adopt various ways of behavior to satisfy their endless desires. These modes of behavior mainly include “scientific, religious and heretical ways”. Among them, the scientific way is the most rational, reasonable, legal and highly respected way to obtain personal needs. In this way, the behavior individual adjusts the life goal, carries on the psychological and spiritual treatment, changes the idea, adapts to the society; the religious way is a negative, reasonable and legal way. In this way, the behavior individual seeks spiritual comfort and relief by changing beliefs or joining traditional religious organizations, while the cult way is a path that is abandoned by society, contrary to values, and contrary to legal norms. In this way, the individual often goes astray without knowing the truth or being deceived. Due to the limitations of various conditions in reality, people's needs can not be met, such as lack of psychological needs, lack of security needs, lack of respect for needs [4]. Faced with individual needs can not be met in time, he or she will seek temporary spiritual satisfaction and tend to superstitious religion, and even some will slip into the mire of cults and embark on the road of crime. Facing the boost of this mysterious force in life, helping oneself realize the desire that can not be realized in reality, believing in heresy and joining heretical organizations, it is logical and natural to come to fruition.

#### **3.2 Believe in “teaching” because of unbalanced psychological needs**

Psychological research shows that human psychological development depends on the social relations established at different stages of life, and special problems will be encountered at each stage. These problems must be solved. A good solution will produce good results. On the contrary,

if the solution is not good, it will have adverse consequences. [5] During the period of social transformation, the economic structure has changed from the original single economy to the coexistence of various economic components. All the economic elements conducive to the development of socialist economy are necessary and beneficial supplements to the public ownership economy and are protected by law. With the deepening of reform and opening up, new directions and trends will inevitably emerge in social contradictions. Some people's local interests will inevitably be impacted. Market economy is competitive economy. The survival of the fittest is the law of the development of market economy. Social phenomena such as broken iron rice bowl, laid-off, the gap between rich and poor will inevitably impact some people's lives to varying degrees. They will lose their balance and their feelings of loss will increase sharply. They hope to seek a mysterious force beyond reality to comfort their "injured" hearts.

In recent years, the phenomenon of corruption has spread. Some Party members and cadres illegally use their power to seek personal gains by power, which seriously damages the good image of the Party and the government among the public. As a result, some people can not correctly view these corruption phenomena and bad social atmosphere, lose confidence in socialism and lose trust in the Party and the government. In this case, it is possible to find another way to achieve psychological balance. [6] The evil religion just grasps the people's misanthropy and deliberately defames and exaggerates some negative phenomena in today's society, which makes the people who are deeply disappointed in the pursuit of social justice and fairness have a strong "resonance" with the evil religion, and provides a broad mass basis for the breeding and development of the evil religion.

### **3.3 Believing in "Religion" because of the incompatibility of spiritual beliefs**

The adjustment of social structure in the transitional period has also brought about the diversification of economic structure pattern. "Diversified economic pattern produces diversified interest groups, which will inevitably lead to diversified cultural phenomena" [7]. During the period of social transformation, there exist coexistence of traditional culture and modern culture, positive culture and negative culture, advanced culture and backward culture in China. The coexistence and conflict of multi-cultures make people confused, lose their direction, and fail to correctly identify the errors of cults, thus providing a living space for the breeding of cults. Cultural diversity will inevitably lead to the diversification of values. For a time, materialism, hedonism, egoism and extreme individualism, which deviate from the mainstream values, have emerged, seriously disturbing people's spiritual beliefs and confusing people's value orientation. Some spiritual beliefs of empty individuals, lost the direction of life, lost the power of life. Psychologist Le Pen once said that the power of belief is the most amazing power that human beings can control. It can arouse an indestructible force in the individual soul and make a person become a slave of his own dreams. Faced with the subjective attempt and objective impossibility required by individuals in the real society, they tend to gradually develop from anxiety and pain to pessimism and disappointment, and then try to find a suitable way to eliminate psychological discontent and pain. The heresy is just what it likes to be, and it boasts that it can "purify the soul" and achieve a lofty spiritual realm, which can meet all human needs. It is under the control of this unorthodox spiritual belief that some people are confused by the heretical claims of "the world of bliss" and "heaven" and are obsessed with the heretical religion.

### **3.4 Believe in "religion" because of the imprisonment of "mind control"**

But believers who join cults for various reasons are not always devout worshippers. Just as some pyramid salesmen joined pyramid salesmen in reality, they were deceived and mistakenly entered pyramid salesmen from the beginning to recognize their true features and wait for an opportunity to break away from the control of pyramid salesmen and return to reality. After some sober-minded believers joined the cult organizations, they gradually recognized the true aims of the cult against humanity, society, government, science and religion through their own personal experience and the behavior of the cult organizations, and tried to get rid of the control of the cult organizations. However, by means of "spiritual control", cult organizations make cult followers unable to stop.

“Mental control” is actually “psychological control”, which refers to the process in which a group or individual system uses unconventional means to influence and control their psychological activities in a sober state and force them to obey the wishes of the manipulator. Including “thinking control, emotional control, information control and behavior control”. Among them, “thinking control” refers to the transformation of believers' thinking mode, thinking habits and thinking content, so as to make them adapt to the thinking mode of cults and lay a solid ideological foundation for the spread of cults. “Emotional control” refers to the control of the emotional range of believers, instilling guilt and fear, inducing believers to identify with cults emotionally, obeying the arrangements and acts of cult organizations, indifferent to other human emotions, and following the leaders of cults wholeheartedly. “Information control” means that cult organizations control their followers' access to information by means of concealing and distorting information, deceiving, controlling and minimizing the source of non-organizational information, distinguishing information between outside and inside people, leaders and members of the circle, and blocking their contacts and exchanges with the outside world, and accepting evil blindly. The information obtained by religious organizations through screening is conducive to the dissemination of cults. As the main means of spiritual control, “behavior control” refers to the establishment of strict discipline and internal regulations, the development of various civilized courses, meetings and ceremonies, the monitoring of the behavior of believers, the control of the material lifestyle of believers, to achieve a comprehensive control of believers' behavior. In short, no matter what kind of spiritual control the cult organizations adopt, its ultimate goal is to make the cult believers become the puppets and tools of the cult organizations or the cult masters, and they will never get lost. Strengthen the contingent of cults and enrich their strength. Its means are to publicize and eulogize heretical ideas, to meet people's needs, to assure believers that heretical religions can solve problems, meet people's needs and achieve the purpose of disseminating heretical religions.

#### **4. Conclusion**

The growth and spread of heresy can not be controlled independently by a single cause. The combined promotion of various factors eventually led to the rapid development of cults. Only by fully understanding the specific reasons for the emergence of cults, can we prescribe the right remedy, adopt effective strategies to control, eradicate the malignant tumors of cults, wash the mind, purify the environment, and build a harmonious and orderly society.

#### **5. Notes**

(1) The meaning of “normative vacuum” refers to certain acts that do not conform to laws and regulations, which can not be punished because of the lack of necessary and corresponding supporting laws and regulations. In view of the special social phenomenon of heresy, it was not until the promulgation of the new Criminal Law and the subsequent judicial interpretation that China gave a more comprehensive and scientific explanation of the exact meaning of heresy organizations.

(2) Ordinary people living in cities, faced with high housing prices, can only “look at the house and sigh” and live in a snail; in the face of rising prices and hard support. In the countryside, the quality of life is lower and the living environment is worse. Faced with the long-term pressure of life, people inevitably lose the ability to distinguish religion from cult. It is very easy to be confused by the lies and honey words of cult organizations, and gradually slip into the quagmire of cult and can not extricate itself.

(3) The operation of market economy, the intensification of competition, some injustices in social distribution system and some shortcomings in social security system lead to the widening gap between the rich and the poor, and the lack of effective protection of birth, old age, illness and death. Especially in rural remote areas and central and Western areas, a considerable number of farmers can not afford the growing medical costs, unwilling and unable to treat illness. Under the pretext of “prolonging life, eliminating disease and strengthening health”, cults cater to people's psychological

needs and tend to believe in cults and join cult organizations.

(4) In a materialistic social environment, the amount of wealth and status determine the social status of individuals, and restrict the probability of respect and respect. The “rich second generation” and “official second generation” have been paid more and more attention by the society, while the vulnerable groups can hardly get the attention they deserve and enjoy the fair treatment they deserve. Under the pretext of “big family” and “living together”, cults claim that they can bring “warmth” and “happiness” to the unfortunate people, cater to people's general mentality, and then join the cults without hesitation.

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