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The Facts About the Activities of the Heterodox Sect ‘The Established King’

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Since the 1980s, following on the implementation of the policy of freedom of religious belief, religious activities began to increase; the broad mass of religious believers were very satisfied, and in each locality the churches began to revive. This was especially true of Christianity, which experienced tremendous growth. However, while this was happening, heretical beliefs and heterodox activities also became widespread in certain places. Some people, paying no regard to diligent workers, used the banner of religion while twisting religious doctrines to set themselves up as kings, taking advantage of the trust of religious believers to instigate illegal and disruptive activity. The 'Established King' is an important example of this kind of deceptive heretical sect which is a mutation of Christianity within the borders of China.

1 What is the 'Established King'?

'The Established King' is both the name of a heterodox sect and the self-styled title of its leader. The sect was established in 1988 by Wu Yangming with Wu Yangming as its leader, who also styled himself as a 'King', an 'Established King'.

Wu Yangming is a native of the hamlet of Xiaohe in the village of Daxie in Chendian prefecture, Qingshang county, Anhui province, born in 1945 and educated to Elementary School level. In 1979 he converted to Christianity and in 1983 became a member of the 'Shouters' sect in Henan province, actively recruiting converts in his home prefecture, disseminating certain superstitious and reactionary teachings and organising secret religious activities. He was once interrogated by the Public Security Bureau, but showed no sign of mending his ways, and in September 1987 he was dealt with according to the law and served a sentence of one year in prison.

When he was released in 1988, Wu Yangming discovered that his position within the 'Shouters' sect had already been taken over by other people and therefore decided to set up a new sect, setting himself up as King, to organise a new religion. Relying heavily on the saying of Li Changshou, the leader of the 'Shouters' sect, that 'Now that we do not have Jesus, the Spirit leads people to preach the gospel', and further twisting the revelation in the 'Gospel of Luke' arrogantly to claim that he is the 'Established King' and with Fuyang as his stronghold, he evangelised and recruited converts in Qingshang, Lixing, and Su counties.

Wu Yangming announced that 'Jesus has already died, there is now only the "Established King" (meaning Wu Yangming himself) who is the unique true God, the Lord of Heaven'. He further said that the name Jesus 'is of no significance, it goes in one ear and out the other; he is a fish hung on a tree, completely dead' and also says 'When Jesus died and rose again, the "Established King" came into being to come down among human beings, so the Kingdom of Heaven is not in heaven, but on earth'. Wu Yangming and his core leaders altered the Bible to replace every occurrence of 'Jesus' with 'the Established King' to show that he himself had replaced Jesus.

Wu Yangming was sentenced to three years 'Reform through Labour' in 1989, but at the end of 1990 he took advantage of a visit home to escape. Since then, under the banner of Christianity he has travelled widely, deceiving believers, expanding his organisation, and leaving behind him everywhere he goes a trail of misdeeds.

2 Propaganda concerning the 'change of dynasty' at the end of the world

The 'Established King' does not have any structured doctrinal system. Wu Yangming has preached many things in the course of his missionary activity, particularly concerning the imminent coming of the end of the world, which is also a common characteristic of other sects. This is the 'theoretical basis' of their opposition to society.

The 'Established King' undertakes missionary activity primarily in rural areas, where the economic conditions are backward, where people's living standards are comparatively low, scientific culture and hygiene programmes are undeveloped, where many people lead hard lives, where insight and understanding are severely limited and knowledge lacking. People want to change their circumstances, and place their hope in spiritual matters, looking forward to a day when the regime will change and at which point their lives will also change.

Wu Yangming has seized hold of these people's hearts, and at meetings he and his collaborators push the teaching that 'the end of the world is nigh', saying that the earth is going to be destroyed, that many people will be taken from the earth, and that within two years 70% of the earth's population will die. These terrifying messages have grabbed the attention of certain ignorant and ill-informed people, and simple and honest people into thinking that they are disciples who will ascend to heaven. They believe Wu Yangming when he says that 'those who do not believe in the 'Established King' are all going to die, and only those who believe in him will be saved' and so one after another they join the 'Established King' organisation.

At times, the 'Established King' is like a plague, springing up in very many poor areas. In the space of a few short years, its influence has reached into twenty different provinces and municipalities. In the suburbs of Shanghai alone, there are more than ten centres of 'Established King' activity, with more than three hundred people taking part.

In the eyes of his followers, those who do not believe in the 'Established King' are demons, evil people, who are going to hell. Followers are not allowed to go to church, are not allowed to take part in worship services, not allowed to sing hymns and are permitted only to 'pray wholeheartedly to the name of the "Established King".'

Three times Wu Yangming has attacked the TSPM as the great whore, and wants patriotic Christians and non-believers to 'abandon evil and follow good', to follow 'the Established King'. When they gather together, they use catchy and easy to sing local tunes to accompany songs of praise to Wu Yangming, and to compose hymns, even setting the tune of 'The East is Red' to new and different words. Followers are required to sing and to memorise the words, and when some illiterate older people are not able to sing or recite them from memory, they are punished both kneeling and standing, and the punishment does not stop until they are able to sing and recite the words from memory.

The 'Established King' preaches that the end of the world is nigh in order to stir up the people, to provide an opportunity to recruit new members. They also want to stir up dissatisfaction with society among the masses and say that when the world is destroyed, it will be a day when dynasties will change, when the Communist Party will fall and the 'Established King' will emerge to seize power and become King. In July 1997, there was a conjunction of the 'wisdom star' and the 'wood star'. This rare astrological sight is a natural phenomenon, but the core leadership of the 'Established King' took advantage of it to stir up trouble by saying that 'this is an omen of the coming destruction of the world', and wanted followers to step up their missionary efforts, to save souls and encouraged their followers 'to overthrow Satan's rule' (meaning to overthrow the

government of the Communist Party), and 'to build a Kingdom of God of a new heaven and a new earth'. Of course, at this time the 'Established King' used certain muddle-headed people to distribute a so-called 'open letter' throughout the country which said that 'first of all recognise the sign, that the end of the world is beginning', encouraging the government, the patriotic churches and the broad masses 'to abandon wickedness and return to following God'. This kind of illegal activity was of course met with opposition from the masses and with punishment from the law.

3 Secret missionary activity, activities under cover of darkness.

The organisational structure of the 'Established King' is highly secretive, with different levels of authority from top to bottom. Wu Yangming is the supreme leader, the self-styled 'Established King', and below him there are the 'Lord Mothers', 'Lords', Principal and Deputy 'Envoys' (that is, core activists who are sent out travelling to engage in missionary activity), Principal and Deputy 'Authorities' (that is, people appointed by the Envoys to have responsibility within a local area).

The sect preserves within itself a very strong feudal appearance, with strictly defined levels of authority from top to bottom. If someone of a lower level wants to see someone from a higher level, they must kneel down and confess their failings. According to a report from a village in southern China, two young women once came to their village saying that they had been sent as evangelists by Wu Yangming. They organised secret meetings, at each of which they had a table placed in the centre of the simple meeting place, on which they then had placed a chair draped in red cloth. At the meetings, the women believers entered the room first, followed by the men, and everyone sat down and waited, while one of the young women sat high up on the chair and everyone else had to make obeisance towards her then afterwards listen very respectfully to her preaching.

In order to escape from the notice of other people, the 'Established King' sect chooses out of the way places for their meetings, which all take place in the evening. At meetings members of the sect are not allowed to hear each other's names, and those who join the sect are required to conceal their real names and addresses. The evangelists choose a 'spiritual name' for them instead, which they have to use during their activities, and they are not allowed to contact one another freely outside of the sect's activities. Wu Yangming imposed a regulation, that within the sect the only thing that mattered was the distinction between the different ranks, that they were to become like orphans, and that they were to have no dealings with non-believers (called 'outsiders'), even if they were friends, relatives or loved-ones.

The financial support of the 'Established King' comes from members' 'offerings'. Wu Yangming ruled that members of the sect must hand over one tenth of their income to the church, which is called a 'tithe'. Believers in poor regions, basically those whose family circumstances are very poor, must still prove their sincerity by economising on food and clothing. There are even some believers who go so far as to sell their private family property, to make themselves completely destitute. In this way Wu Yangming and his core leadership in each region know that the money earned by these people's hard toil is conscientiously handed over for them to use in any way they see fit. In 1994, when the police were investigating Wu Yangming, they found that he had two cars and more than 200,000 RMB in cash.

4 Who wrecked their family home?

For many people, after becoming members of the 'Established King', it has been like hitting a more sinister stage. Peasants have lost their land, workers have abandoned their labours, students have ceased their studies to devote themselves whole-time to religious activities. Some

people from poor family backgrounds, once they become believers, have even less interest in working, which results in a substantial drop in their income, and if both husband and wife convert, the family becomes completely destitute. The 'Established King' exhort their members to go out and evangelise, and some believers abandon their homes and families, to 'evangelise or reclaim waste ground' all over the country, seeking new converts. Amongst the core activists in the 'Established King', there are many young and middleaged women who have abandoned parents, husbands and children in order to go out evangelising, which has resulted in much conflict within families.

Teacher Huang of the No.2 Middle School in Dongpu township in Heyuan city, Guangdong province previously had a very happy home with a loving wife and well-behaved children. However, since the arrival of the 'Established King', all this has changed, and his wife, son, daughter and daughter in law have become members of this religious sect, destroying his home in the process. Driven beyond his limits of endurance, he wrote his daughter, Huang Tianmei, a letter to cut off all contact. This letter was published in the *Shanghai Youth Newspaper: Lifestyle Weekly*:

'Tianmei,

It is with a very heavy heart that I am writing this letter to cut off all contact with you, and I do not care if after reading this you come to hate me even more. Ever since that unique religious sect entered our household, you have taken completely against me, since the 'gospel' you preach makes no distinction between senior and junior; that is, it makes no distinction between parents and children, only recognising a distinction between 'brothers and sisters'. According to what you have told me previously, you and your fellow believers are one family, not seeing yourselves as belonging to any other family; now you can realise your hope. I should have stopped you before this, but now it is too late. Before this I thought that you had all been educated, and that religious faith could improve relations between family members, and could bring about a good and harmonious environment in the home. Now the exact opposite of my hopes has been the result: you have all already spoken your feelings plainly, that you and all those others are members of one family so that now husband and wife have been split up. How can there possibly be a happy and loving family home? Because you certainly do not recognise your relatives, I certainly no longer have a family. I am going to leave you all for ever, because there no longer exists any connection between us. From this day forth I do not want to see you again. I am going to stop raising someone else's child so that from now on I can get some sleep and live out my last years in peace.'

(Dated April 22, 1995)

A destroyed family is certainly not an experience unique to Mr Huang. Public Security personnel in areas where the 'Established King' have been active often receive petitions and appeals for help.

One woman who became a member of the sect no longer wanted to do the household tasks, and no longer took care of her two children. What is even worse is that after she had been baptised, she could not bear to sleep in the same bed with her husband, and often went out in the late evenings to attend meetings and her young baby would cry incessantly. She looked on her mother in law, who helped her with the housework, as a stranger, completely ignoring her. She thought that she would leave home to become a travelling evangelist, and there was total uproar in the household which ended up with her being tied up, but her mind was already made up. Villager Cai's three daughters became converts and ran away from home with two other girls from the same village; their families searched everywhere for them, but they were nowhere to be

found. Villager Li's son became ill and developed a high fever, and his daughter-in-law, who was a member of the 'Established King' took the child up the mountain to a meeting of the sect so that they could pray over him, with the result that he received no medical attention and died. Mr Wu, a worker at a petrol station, had a wife who, after she became a member of the sect, paid no attention to the housework, and who went twice in three days to the house of the leader of the local meeting of the sect. Mr Wu suspected that there was something irregular about their relationship, and after days of quarrelling, they began divorce proceedings.

There are too many examples of this kind of behaviour, too numerous to mention individually. Everywhere the 'Established King' has reached it has disrupted regular social order, wrecking peaceful homes, rousing indignation among the people, and has been met with opposition from the masses.

5 Criminal behaviour which justice cannot tolerate

In 1994, a young woman student laid charges with the Public Security Bureau that she had been raped by Wu Yangming, at which point the Public Security Agencies began to attack the 'Established King'.

Wu Yangming had made a rule that married women, once they became members, should cease to have sexual relations with their husbands, and that unmarried women should not be allowed to marry. However, the reincarnation of Jesus, or 'Established King', as Wu called himself, claimed that his body was a 'spiritual body' and that only if women believers had relations with this 'spiritual body' could they 'by grace' achieve salvation, saying that this was 'God's salvation for ordinary people'.

Normally, Wu Yangming would be surreptitious in his movements, coming and going like a shadow. Very many believers would travel thousands of miles out of admiration in order to take part in the worship of the 'Father King'. He was not the least interested in male followers, sending word to them to return to their homes. Young and pretty women, however, he had remain by his side, so that in due course they could receive 'grace'. Over the course of several years, as Wu Yangming came and went, he always had several young women by his side. According to the court case that followed, what Wu Yangming meant by 'grace' was in fact rape, and that he had behaved in this obscene manner towards more than one hundred women, many of them young women who had been forcibly seized by Wu. In order to satisfy his animal desires, Wu often sent 'envoys' out to different areas to look for women, to trick them into offering up their virginity to the 'Father King'. It is such a pity that these pure and innocent young women were deceived by the sweet honeyed mirage, abandoning their education and leaving home, thinking Wu's 'grace' to be an honour.

One sixteen-year-old from southern China regrettably received 'grace' in this way: 'I met my fourth sister at the home of my eldest sister (a believer), and my fourth sister explained to me the advantages of belonging to the 'Established King', and after this I went along with them as they evangelised. In August 1993, I went along with my fourth sister and with 'Changqing' and 'Cifu', altogether four people, on the bus from Dawan to Yingde railway station. First of all we went to Nanjing, and then from Nanjing to Xuzhou by train, a journey that took two days and two nights. At Xuzhou, I slept with 'Father King' once, and there was another, older, girl in the bed with me. At that time I slept on the lefthand side, and 'Father King' had sexual relations with me, which was the first time I had done this. At that time I knew nothing, as I was only fourteen years old. The only thing I remember was that it was an evening sometime in the middle of August, and that 'Changqing' called me in to see 'Father King', that she led me to 'Father King's' room. When

I went, the other girl hadn't arrived, and when she came in, she first took off all her clothes and got onto the bed. ... About ten days later, I was sent with 'Kanqing' to Guangxi, then to Guizhou, and then back to Guangxi again. I didn't return home until Spring Festival. After I came home, I didn't want to go away again, it was too hard, but they called for me again, and said that if I didn't go, then a month later there would be a big disaster. I was very afraid, so I went again for another month. The people above said that after I came back someone would take me to Xuzhou, and that when I brought along a girl from a neighbouring village, then I could go back. I am really sorry, I hate my fourth sister, I want to go back to school, now I don't have face to look at other people. ...'

Towards women who were unwilling to follow him, Wu Yanming used violence to perpetrate crimes against them both physically and spiritually. This young woman who brought charges against him woke up to the reality after she had been harmed by him, and courageously approached the relevant authorities. However, there are many more people who have been harmed who are not able to do anything to alleviate their suffering, who do not understand how to use the force of the law to protect themselves.

In order to rescue more people who were being harmed, to prevent the further growth of these heterodox religious sects within China, and to protect social stability, after ten days of careful and secret investigation and preparation, the Public Security Bureau of Fengfu city in Anhui province carried out a dawn raid on a secret base of operations which Wu Yangming had established in Zhanggong village, Changqing prefecture, within that municipality, in which Wu was arrested and eighteen young female victims of his were rescued.

On December 29 that same year, the Middle People's Court of Fengfu municipality held a public trial which sentenced Wu Yangming to death for the crimes of rape, and which deprived him of his political rights for the rest of his life. His core activists were all sentenced to prison terms. Although Wu Yangming is dead, his poison has not been fully excised. Good people must remain on the alert, and must not allow themselves to be deceived by these religious sects which appear good but are in fact evil.