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**RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE**

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**Questions**

1. [Is there any general information on tang-yang-xi and their situation in PRC particularly in relation to their rights?](#)
2. [Is there any general information about the Women’s Federation?](#)
3. [Is there any information about the ‘women’s movement’ in PRC but particularly in Fuqing or Fujian province?](#)
4. [What is the government’s attitude \(both national and provincial\) to the ‘women’s movement’?](#)

**RESPONSE**

1. **Is there any general information on tang-yang-xi and their situation in PRC particularly in relation to their rights?**

The Chinese practice of selling or giving a young female to another family to be raised as a future daughter-in-law is also known as *t’ung yang hsi*, *tong yang xi*, *tongyangxi*, adopted daughter-in-law, daughter-in-law marriage, child daughter-in-law and foster daughter-in-law amongst others. A number of sources report that the practice is illegal and rare in China. No further information on the rights of *tongyangxi* was found amongst the English language sources consulted.

David Buxbaum of the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning provides the following information on *t’ung yang hsi* in his 1968 book entitled *Family Law and Customary Law in Asia: A Contemporary Legal Perspective*:

Another curious custom which has prevailed in China and which has a much wider application, especially in the villages, than “*chien t’iao*,” is the practice of “*t’ung yang hsi*”

(foster daughter-in-law) or the practice of fostering the future daughter-in-law from childhood.

To call “*t’ung yang hsi*” “child betrothal” is just as incorrect as to describe it as “child bride”; for, while to some extent it partakes of the characteristics of both, it differs in substance and purpose from each. The system is primarily economic and thrives best under conditions where tillers of the soil are hard-pressed for helpers in general chores in the home, or in the field. A “*t’ung yang hsi*” is neither a bride nor a betrothed for the simple reason that there is neither a betrothal nor a wedding when she is taken into household. She is a member of the family (a future daughter-in-law fostered from childhood) and becomes a bride only when marriage ceremonies are performed after the boy of the family (her future husband) has reached the marriageable age (Buxbaum, D.C. 1968, *Family Law and Customary Law in Asia: A Contemporary Legal Perspective*, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, Google Books website, p.49 <http://books.google.com/books?id=Y5gOwLE24boC&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22Family+Law+And+Customary+Law+in+Asia%22> – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 1).

Kay Ann Johnson’s 1985 book entitled *Women, the Family, and Peasant Revolution in China* provides the following information on *t’ung-yang-hsi*:

Probably the most common deviation from the major form of marriage was the minor marriage, the practice of taking a “little foster daughter-in-law” (*t’ung-yang-hsi*). Under a minor marriage a girl was transferred to her future husband’s family at a very young age, sometimes in infancy. She was then raised by her in-laws and, after physical maturity, became the wife or her “foster brother.” Although in-laws bore the expense of raising their own daughter-in-law, they gained early control over her labor and avoided the greater ceremonial and bride price expenses of a major wedding. The minor marriage also had the advantage of avoiding the potential disruption of ongoing family relationships which a new adult daughter-in-law might bring. The incidence of *t’ung-yang-hsi* seems to have varied widely through-out China, ranging from being virtually nonexistent to being the preferred form of marriage. In parts of China, this practice seems to have been most often found among the very poor who could not afford the expense of a major marriage and it apparently increased during hard times. In other places, however, the minor marriage appears to have been the preferred practice, not merely one forced by difficult circumstances.

For the “little foster daughter-in-law” the practice could be particularly brutal. Although she avoided the difficult period of being an outsider in a strange family and village, the ill treatment of these girls was notorious. They were sometimes viewed as little more than family slaves and frequently denied the affectionate relationships which a natural daughter could expect with her parents. Indeed, the bitter conditions of these poor girls sometimes were reflected substantially higher mortality rates than for either sons or natural daughters.

Regardless of the way a woman was married, she was considered the property of the patrilineal family, to be used to perpetuate and serve its paramount ends (Johnson, Kay Ann 1985, *Women, the Family, and Peasant Revolution in China*, University of Chicago Press, Google Books website, pp.12-13 [http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=G9BjZX5B5joC&dq=%22women,+the+family,+and+peasant+revolution%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=2i4jSIySTb&sig=YnsUfNtC2o8zoPXkfiA\\_N1rxew8&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=4&ct=result#PPA13,M1](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=G9BjZX5B5joC&dq=%22women,+the+family,+and+peasant+revolution%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=2i4jSIySTb&sig=YnsUfNtC2o8zoPXkfiA_N1rxew8&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=4&ct=result#PPA13,M1) – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 2).

The 1989 book entitled *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850-1950* provides information on adopting a daughter-in-law:

One solution for the shortage of women was the custom of adopting a daughter-in-law. At a low cost, a bride could be provided for a son by adopting a future daughter-in-law while she was still a child. In Shanxi province the price was set according to the girls' age: the older she was, the higher the market price. Adoption of a daughter-in-law served two purposes at once. The girl's parents were spared the expense of her board, plus they received a small sum from her sale. Meanwhile, the groom's parents could ensure that their son would have a bride as well as cut-down on the marriage expenses.

The daughter-in-law so purchased were frequently older than the boys for who they were intended. This was done so the family could get at least some useful labor from the girl early on. There were cases throughout China in which a girl carried her future husband on her back and washed his diapers, a laughable situation had it not been so tragic.

...Thus, purchased daughter-in-law worked hard, endured the torment of their mothers-in-law, and were often nursemaids to their infant husbands. It was marriage in name only.

...Research conducted in 1936 by Fei Xiaotong in Kaixiangong, a village south of Lake Tai in Jiangsu province, showed that 17 percent of married women and 39 percent of unmarried women were adopted daughters-in-law; there was on average one adopted daughter-in-law for every 2.7 households. The high proportion of adopted daughters-in-law among unmarried women reflects the economic depression of the 1930's. The more difficult the times, the greater the likelihood the girls would be sold into adoption in this way. Of course, some adopted daughters-in-law had less objectionable marital relationships than others; if a young woman was lucky, she might have a kind husband or mother-in-law.

...Whether bought as a sex object, as labor power, or as a machine for producing sons, a woman was regarded as a thing, not a person (Ono, Kazuko & Fogel, Joshua A. 1989, *Chinese Women in a Century of Revolution, 1850-1950*, Stanford University Press, Google Books website, pp.143-145 [http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=o-L1ctqjxNgC&dq=%22chinese+women+in+a+century%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=UReeZcxQqh&sig=Vy3Hxww0EjSMBOP5F51PZXd8QcY&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=4&ct=result](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=o-L1ctqjxNgC&dq=%22chinese+women+in+a+century%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=UReeZcxQqh&sig=Vy3Hxww0EjSMBOP5F51PZXd8QcY&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=4&ct=result) – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 3).

Helen Praeger Young in her 2001 book entitled *Choosing Revolution: Chinese Women Soldiers on the Long March* provides information on some of the women who participated in the Long March or the Red Army's 6,000-mile "retreat to victory" before the advancing Nationalist Army in the mid 1930's. Some of these women were *tongyangxi*:

Another term left untranslated is *tongyangxi*, used to describe girls who were given or sold by their birth parents into another family before puberty. *Tongyangxi* is variously translated "child bride," "small daughter-in-law," or "affianced daughter-in-law." Although the status and arrangements for *tongyangxi* varied from place to place and family to family, and the variations often are described by different Chinese words, I have chosen to use *tongyangxi*, which was the expression used by the interviewees. Some *tongyangxi* were sent to other families in infancy, some after they were six years old. Those we interviewed who were sold as babies generally fared well. They were brought up as part of the family; the ones who went as older children, however, were more often treated – and mistreated – as servants. Only one of the *tongyangxi* we interviewed actually married a son in her "in-law" family. The other *tongyangxi* for whom there was a prospective husband in the family were considered sisters and comrades rather than fiancés by their revolutionary betrothed. For the others, there was no one in the family for them to marry.

...In many parts of China at the time, families unable to raise all of their children often sold or sent their daughters to other families as *tongyangxi*. Sometimes this happened in infancy,

sometimes when a girl was older. In the worst cases, the little girls were virtually slaves. At best, they were lowest-ranked members of the family (Young, Helen Praeger 2001, *Choosing Revolution: Chinese Women Soldiers on the Long March*, University of Illinois Press, Google Books website, pp.15 & 63

<http://books.google.com/books?id=jtCXbkVV6SgC&printsec=frontcover&dq=%22choosing+revolution%22+helen+young#PPR7,M1> – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 4).

The 2001 book entitled *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700-2000* provides the following information on the little-daughter-in-law marriage:

Far more common, at least among poor people and at least in some regions, were alternative “minor” marriages such as little-daughter-in-law marriage and levirate, both of which produced brides without the costs associated with major marriage. In little daughter-in-law marriage (*tongyangxi*), a woman was adopted as a child, normally before the age of 10, and brought up as a future daughter-in-law. Most parents resorted to such a form of marriage for economic reasons: on the bride’s side to avoid having to raise a daughter, and on the groom’s side to avoid the high cost of bride price and wedding expenses. Some also found such marriages a convenient way of ensuring that daughters-in-law would be particularly well integrated into their families.

...They also appear to have been common elsewhere in China, at least during the late imperial period, although the documented proportion of little-daughter-in-law marriages in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century are low, perhaps because of the earlier decline in female infanticide and the greater availability of brides. According to the national land utilization survey conducted around 1930, 5-10 percent of all marriages in the Middle Yangzi and perhaps 0.5-1 percent of all marriages in the northern China were little-daughter-in-law marriages (A. Wolf and Huang 1980, 329). While these proportions are low, scattered evidence suggest the greater prevalence of such marriages, even in northern and north-eastern China, for specific populations (Lee, James Z., Wang, Feng & Feng, Wang 2001, *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700-2000*, Harvard University Press, Google Books website, pp.76-78 arrangements “are too small for us to conduct a serious study.”

The 2001 book entitled

*One* [http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=qXGITMjbPAAC&dq=%22one+quarter+of+humanity%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=MM3kj098mv&sig=xMcUYVZ-bNr3m24HS0EapAPWxP0&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=3&ct=result](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=qXGITMjbPAAC&dq=%22one+quarter+of+humanity%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=MM3kj098mv&sig=xMcUYVZ-bNr3m24HS0EapAPWxP0&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=3&ct=result) – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 5).

According to Weiguo Zhang of the University of Toronto, in “1950, the Chinese government promulgated the first marriage law that, among other things, prohibited parents from adopting infant girls for the purpose of marrying them to their sons.” Zhang notes that “[m]any women who had been child brides sought divorces after the marriage law came into effect (Diamant, 2000).” According to Philip Huang of the University of California, the application of court mediation in divorce proceedings “was rather loose in the early 1950s during the movement to put an end to old-style “feudal” marriages” such as “*tongyangxi* (i.e., the practice of bringing a young girl into the home to be raised as a prospective daughter-in-law)”. Huang notes that a “petitioner could circumvent court-imposed mediation if he or she could convince the court that his or her marriage fell into one of those officially proscribed categories. By the close of the 1950s, however, since these specific forms of marriage were thought to have been largely done away with, divorce petitioners could no longer pursue that avenue” (Zhang, Weiguo 2006, ‘Child Adoption in Contemporary Rural China’, *Journal of Family issues*, Vol. 27, No. 3, March, p.307 – Attachment 6; and Huang, Philip C.C. 2005, ‘Divorce Law Practices and the Origins, Myths, and Realities of Judicial “Mediation” in

China', *Modern China*, Vol. 31, No. 2 April, School of Agricultural Economics and Rural Development website, p.5  
[http://sard.ruc.edu.cn/huang/attachment/1226297781\\_38687e70.pdf](http://sard.ruc.edu.cn/huang/attachment/1226297781_38687e70.pdf) – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 7).

A paper by Ginger Z. Jin and Lixin Colin Xu of the University of Maryland uses data that was collected by the Population Institute of Chinese Academy of Social Science and the Population Council of United Nations in 1991. 10,370 couples from Shanghai, Guangdong, Sichuan, Jilin, Shandong, Shanxi, and Ningxia were interviewed and asked questions about their marriage amongst other things. 0.7% of the non-missing sample were *tong-yang-xi*. (“4.1% of observations have missing value in matchmaking means”). Jin and Xu note that the incidence of the *tong-yang-xi Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700-2000* reports that although little daughter-in-law marriages are now illegal in China “they continue to be practiced at least occasionally among poor peasants (Yan Xunxiang 1992).” An article dated 1 January 2002 in *The Law & Society Review* reports that research by Kay Johnston, Research Professor of Asian Studies and Political Science at Hampshire College “confirms that adoption of girls as tongyangxi is now rare” in China (Lee, James Z., Wang, Feng & Feng, Wang 2001, *One Quarter of Humanity: Malthusian Mythology and Chinese Realities, 1700-2000*, Harvard University Press, Google Books website, p.78

[http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=qXGIjMjbPAAC&dq=%22one+quarter+of+humanity%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=MM3kj098mv&sig=xMcUYVZ-bNr3m24HS0EapAPWxP0&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=3&ct=result](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=qXGIjMjbPAAC&dq=%22one+quarter+of+humanity%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=MM3kj098mv&sig=xMcUYVZ-bNr3m24HS0EapAPWxP0&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=3&ct=result) – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 5; Johnson, Kay 2002, ‘Politics of international and domestic adoption in China’, *Law & Society Review*, 1 January, BNET website  
[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_qa3757/is\\_200201/ai\\_n9059033/print](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3757/is_200201/ai_n9059033/print) – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 8; and Jin, Ginger Z. & Xu, Lixin Colin 2006, ‘Matchmaking Means and Marriage Quality: Evidence from China’, University of Maryland website, 1 September, p.23 <http://terpconnect.umd.edu/~ginger/research/jin-xu-0906.pdf> – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 9).

## 2. Is there any general information about the Women’s Federation?

The URL of the All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF) is <http://www.womenofchina.cn/>.

According to Article 5 of the *Law Safeguarding Women’s Rights and Interests of the People’s Republic of China 1992*, the role of the ACWF is to “protect women’s rights and interests” in China:

Article 5 Representing and safeguarding the interests of women of all ethnic origins and from all walks of life, the All-China Women’s Federation, as well as all levels of women’s federation, should protect women’s rights and interests (*Law Safeguarding Women’s Rights and Interests of the People’s Republic of China 1992* – Attachment 10).

The ACWF was founded on 3 April 1949 “to further the emancipation of women.” The ACWF provides the following information:

Founded on April 3, 1949, the All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF) is a social group, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, which unites women from various ethnic backgrounds and circles. It works toward the further emancipation of women. It is the bridge and link between the Party and the Government and women, as well as the important

pillar of the State power. Its basic function is to represent and safeguard women's rights and interests, and promote gender equality.

Other goals are as follows:

- \* To unite and mobilize women to engage in China's reform and opening up program, in the country's socialist modernization and in promoting economic development and social well-being.

- \* To educate and offer guidance to women to strengthen their self-esteem, self-confidence, self-reliance and self-improvement, to enhance their comprehensive competence and to enable them to develop in all areas.

- \* To represent women through participation in the democratic decision-making, management and supervision of State and public affairs and in the formulation of laws, decrees, regulations and policies concerning women and children, to push forward the implementation of the national programs for women's and children's development, and to safeguard their legitimate rights and interests.

- \* To render services to women and children by strengthening connection and coordination with all sectors of society and urge them to work in the best interests of women and children.

To consolidate unity among women of all ethnic groups in China, to develop friendly relations with women and women's organizations in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, and with Chinese women all over the world, to promote China's reunification. Also, to actively develop friendly exchanges with women and women's organizations of other countries so as to enhance better understanding, friendship and cooperation, and to safeguard world peace ('Goals and Missions' 2007, All-China Women's Federation website, 23 October <http://www.womenofchina.cn/aboutus/GoalandMission/19729.jsp> – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 11).

Maria Jaschok, Research Associate at the Oxford University and Deputy Director of the Centre of Cross-Cultural Research on Women, Cecilia Milwertz, Senior Research Fellow at the Nordic Institute of Asian Studies and Ping-Chan Hsiung, Sociologist at the University of Toronto and Co-Chair of the Chinese Society for Women's Studies write that the ACWF has the dual role of disseminating party policy to China's female population as well as representing women in policy decisions and programmes at all levels of the Chinese administration:

The ACWF was set up and funded by the party-state. On the one hand, its mandate is to disseminate party policy to its constituency, the entirety of China's female population, from its headquarters in Beijing (*Qunaguo fulian*). On the other hand, it represents women in policy decisions and programmes at all levels of administration (*fulian*): provincial Women's Federations (*sheng fulian*) to local Women's Federation (*defang fulian* and *funuhui*, see Lexicon). This twofold identity is expressed in its dual role as government institution (*Zhonghua quanguo funu lianhehui*) and federation of women's organizations (*Zhonghua quanguo funu lianhehui*). The ACWF has a historical mission of transmitting party-state policies to women in all sectors of society. For example, it plays an important role in implementing the government's population policy. However, it also represents a more dynamic organizational identity in its advocacy of women's interests, lobbying for policy change and improvement of women's lives in response to needs expressed at local level (Jaschok, Maria, Milwertz, Cecilia & Hsiung, Ping-Chan 2001, 'Introduction', *Chinese Women Organizing Cadres, Feminists, Muslims, Queers*, Berg, Oxford, p.9 – Attachment 12).

Jude Howell of the University of Sussex writes that the “ACWF is the best placed of all women’s organizations to influence policy making” in China as it is located within the Communist Party:

By using its positions on governmental committees, its personal connections with Party and government leaders, its extensive media and campaign network, the ACWF has been able both to introduce policy and legislative changes of benefit to women and to prevent the implementation of policies detrimental to women, thus making a difference for women. However, its lack of ministerial status and its subsequent dependence on personal connections set limits on its capacity to influence policy (Howell, Jude 2003, ‘Women’s Organizations and Civil Society in China Making a Difference’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2, July, pp.207-208 – Attachment 13).

Liu Bohong, Senior Research Fellow and Deputy Director of the Women’s Studies Institute of China and Co-ordinator of the Chinese Women’s Health Network writes that “the Women’s Federation extends to 52,807 branches at various provincial, regional, county and village levels (Ma Yanjun 1999). Grass-roots representatives in cities and villages total 830,869 women, and 68,000 women’s committees are active at provincial level or above, present in the Party, in government, in private organs, or in work units in science, education, culture, and health” (Bohong, Liu 2001, ‘The ACWF and Women’s NGOs’, *Chinese Women Organizing Cadres, Feminists, Muslims, Queers*, Berg, Oxford, p.149 – Attachment 12).

Jin Yihong, Director of the Women’s Studies Centre at the Jiangsu Academy of Social Sciences provides the following information on the structure of the ACWF. Please note that a structure chart of the ACWF can be found at page 126 of Attachment 12:

The structure of the ACWF is similar to that of other national organizations. Like the All China Federation of Trade Unions..., All China Youth Federation, Association of Science and Technology..., or Disabled Person’s Federation..., it runs from national level down to provincial, municipal, county, district, town and village levels, forming a hierarchical, tree-like network. But again, like many other Chinese organizations, this structure only functions as a ‘nominal hierarchical system’...because the upper-level Federation does not have real administrative power over its subordinate. Instead, every level of the Women’s Federation is under the direct leadership and financial sponsorship of the Party organizations at the level above. Furthermore, the hiring, promotion, demotion, and dismissal of the Federations’ personnel are decided by Party officials. The upper level of the Federation has the right to recommend on cadres of a lower level, but it has no power to offer appointment, nor does it supply any financial resources directly. In this sense, the Women’s Federation is within the Party system where a ‘substantive hierarchical system’...is in place. Although the relationship between upper and lower levels of the Federation is only one of supervision and being supervised, for a long time, local and regional levels of the Federations have been compliant and obedient to instruction and orders from the upper level, taking orders from the upper levels as if they held direct leadership power over them. In this sense, the Federation is under dual leadership, one from the party and the other from its superior Federation (Yihong, Jin 2001, ‘The ACWF: Challenges and Trends’, *Chinese Women Organizing Cadres, Feminists, Muslims, Queers*, Berg, Oxford, pp.125–126 – Attachment 12).

For information on ACWF leaders please see Attachment 14 (‘About Us’ 2007, All-China Women’s Federation website <http://www.womenofchina.cn/aboutus/> – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 14). The functional departments of the ACWF are as follows:

- General Office;
- Human Resources and Liaison Department;

- Women's Development Department;
- Publicity Department;
- Legal Department;
- International Liaison Department; and
- Children's Welfare Department ('About Us' 2007, All-China Women's Federation website <http://www.womenofchina.cn/aboutus/> – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 14).

For information on ACWF projects and campaigns please see [http://www.womenofchina.cn/Projects\\_Campaigns/Projects/](http://www.womenofchina.cn/Projects_Campaigns/Projects/) and [http://www.womenofchina.cn/Projects\\_Campaigns/Campaigns/](http://www.womenofchina.cn/Projects_Campaigns/Campaigns/).

According to the US Congressional-Executive Commission on China, the “ACWF works with the Chinese government to support women's rights, implement programs for disadvantaged women, and provide a limited measure of legal counselling and training for women.” The Commission notes that the ACWF is a Chinese Communist Party organisation and therefore the “ACWF does not promote women's interests when such interests conflict with Party policies that limit women's rights.” The report continues:

For example, in 2005, an ACWF representative in Yunnan province refused to allow a leading women's rights activist to represent over 500 women in Yunnan in seeking redress for lost land, on the grounds that such interference could “influence stability.” In addition, the ACWF has been silent about the abuses of Chinese government population planning policies and remains complicit in the coercive enforcement of birth limits (US Congressional-Executive Commission on China 2007, *Annual Report 2007*, 10 October, p.119 – Attachment 15).

China expert Thomas Weyrauch notes that the influence of the ACWF “is limited by the local authorities”, and while women can ask the ACWF for help the “outcome depends on the power of the local leader and on how good the contacts of the Women's Federation to other levels within the party hierarchy are.” Weyrauch continues:

There is a very active group for women: the All China Women's Federation that is part of the Communist Party (<http://www.women.org.cn/english/index.htm>). They do a lot for the benefit of women in general, especially for women forced into marriage, forced into prostitution, etc. But their influence is limited by the local authorities, if the latter abuse their power. If there is, for instance, a party leader of a village, who wants to have a woman for his pleasure, then he will get her. This woman may complain, and ask the All China Women's Federation for help. But whether the complaint might be successful, or whether the Federation can help, depends on the local situation. In some village they might not be able to help. In another village the party leader might even lose his job. The outcome depends on the power of the local leader and on how good the contacts of the Women's Federation to other levels within the party hierarchy are.

It is difficult to say whether this organisation is present everywhere in the PRC. But in principle it has the same structure as the CCP [Chinese Communist Party], so it is probably present in every district (not in every town) (Weyrauch, Thomas 2006, 'Important Aspects on Human Rights in the People's Republic of China', *10<sup>th</sup> European Country of Origin Seminar 1-2 December 2005, Budapest Report*, European Country of Origin Information Network website, 17 March, Section 3.2, p.17 – Attachment 16).

Yihong writes that the ACWF faces pressure from the Communist Party on the one hand “which expect the Federation to help protect, and ensure the stability of, the social system in the middle of social changes”, and women’s groups on the other, “who want the Federation to be a real representative of their interests”:

Before China began its reforms, there was only one clear, definite role for the Women’s Federation: as an assistant. Thus, it carried out work on women in line with the Party’s central work. Its role as a representative and protector of women’s interests was vague and never defined until the 1980s. Since then it has become a tricky question as to how the tension between these two roles should be handled. At present, the Women’s Federation faces pressure from two sources. The first one comes from higher levels of the Party, which expect the Federation to help protect, and ensure the stability of, the social system in the middle of social changes, rather than doing anything else. But there are also pressures from women’s groups, who want the Federation to be a real representative of their interests, and to speak for them, strongly and powerfully. The former would have bearing on the Federation’s legitimacy, while the latter has to do with its representative authority.

...With the general trend in China of decentralization and localization, grass-roots levels of the Women’s Federations have to observe the interests of the local Party and stay in line with the Party’s central work, they cannot just focus on tasks assigned by their high-level Women’s Federation. And when tasks from both authorities ‘flood-in’, the lower-level Women’s Federation tends to accomplish mandatory duties from the Party level above it first and leave those from the high-level Women’s Federation aside – as much as possible (Yihong, Jin 2001, ‘The ACWF: Challenges and Trends’, *Chinese Women Organizing Cadres, Feminists, Muslims, Queers*, Berg, Oxford, p.127 & 129 – Attachment 12).

THE ACWF is involved in the promotion and implementation of the one-child policy in China. For information on the ACWF and family planning please see Question 2 of *Research Response CHN17646* dated 3 November 2005. Susan H. Perry writes in the 2001 book *Eye to Eye – Women Practising Development Across Cultures* that a “great deal – particularly rural – resistance to ACWF is due to its crucial logistical role in the promotion and implementation of the One-Child campaign.” Perry continues:

The All-China Women’s Federation, founded on 3 April 1949, is the mother of all Chinese women’s NGOs, a monolithic organization designed to mobilize women to contribute to socialist construction under the banner of the Chinese Communist Party. ...The All-China Women’s Federation has, since its inception, been a mouthpiece for Party propaganda and has been associated with both positive and negative government policies, such as the promotion of more liberal marriage laws versus the draconian measures used to enforce the One-Child Campaign, designed to limit each couple to only one child. Yet, there is increasing evidence that the ACWF is currently undergoing a subtle transformation; as women intellectuals and activists began agitating under the influence of the preparations for the 1995 UN Conference on Women, the ACWF appeared to realign its priorities more firmly alongside those of its constituents.

...Scholar Jude Howell emphasized that the main constraint on the pace and extent of change within the ACWF is its complex relationship with the Chinese Communist Party (Howell 1999). As local branches of the Federation gain autonomy, much effort is spent avoiding tasks that are viewed as an exercise in ‘collecting resources for the top’ (Jin 1999). A great deal – particularly rural – resistance to ACWF is due to its crucial logistical role in the promotion and implementation of the One-Child policy campaign (Perry, Susan H. 2001, ‘Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Women’s Organizations in China’, *Eye to Eye – Women Practising Development Across Cultures*, Zed Books, London, pp.93-95 – Attachment 17).

### 3. Is there any information about the ‘women’s movement’ in PRC but particularly in Fuqing or Fujian province?

No information was found amongst the English language sources consulted on the women’s movement outside of the ACWF in Fuqing or Fujian province. Sources report that the women’s movement in China is dominated by the ACWF.

Shen Hongmei in her 2007 paper on the ACWF refers to Li and Zhang who observed, “If you go to China today, you may not recognize any signs of a women’s movement.” The paper continues:

As Li and Zhang (1994) observed, If you go to China today, you may not recognize any signs of a woman’s movement. There are no demonstrations on the streets or in the schools; no women are loudly declaring their resistance to men and society; no such words as women’s movement even appear in the media. Women’s study groups and activities, however, are quietly permeating people’s lives. Without statements, slogans, and other radical actions, the women’s movement in contemporary China is emerging, and its influence is felt not less but more than any women’s movement yet in Chinese history (p. 151). The Chinese women’s movement differs from the Western ones in terms of its origin, nature, participants, and problems, and so forth. However, it also shares common bonds with the Western women’s movement, and has applied some Western feminism theories in its battle for gender equality. The need for drawing on transnational experiences is growing as both the ACWF and the women’s movement in general are exploring new directions in the future (Hongmei, Shen 2007, ‘All-China Women’s Federation: A Party Representative or Feminist Organization? – Its Role in Chinese Women’s Movement’, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, 23 May, All Academic Inc website [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/1/7/0/4/8/pages170486/p170486-1.php](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/1/7/0/4/8/pages170486/p170486-1.php) – Accessed 28 January 2009 – Attachment 18).

An article dated 24 November 2006 by *Xinhua News Agency* reports that there are more than 10,000 NGOs in China working to protect women’s rights:

A Chinese human rights researcher said Thursday that there are more than 10,000 non-governmental organizations in China working to protect the rights of women.

“Their influence on policy making and legislation is increasing steadily,” said Zhang Xiaoling, director of the human rights research center of the Party School of the Communist Party of China Central Committee.

Speaking at an international symposium on human rights, Zhang said non-governmental women’s organizations have made big efforts to protect women’s rights (‘Over 10,000 NGOs Working for Women’s Rights in China’ 2006, *Xinhua News Agency*, 24 November, China.org.cn website <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/cw/190069.htm> – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 19).

The US Congressional-Executive Commission on China reports that women’s organisations in China “have been particularly active in the last few years, although these groups advocate on behalf of women’s rights within the confines of government and Party policy.” Bohong notes that under the ACWF’s “umbrella belong women’s NGOs which have gained legitimacy, rights and protection by giving recognition to ACWF rules and regulations, by performing their duties and responsibilities, by accepting ACWF instructions, and by preserving a close relationship with it.” Bohong reports that “As long as NGOs adhere to the

aforesaid principles and set up their organizations in accordance with the [proper legislation](#) relating to their establishment...then their existence is reasonable and legitimate.”

Perry notes that, “A glance through the current ‘official’ Directory of Chinese Women’s NGOs reveals that every single entry is affiliated in one way or another with the government or, more specifically, with the ACWF” (Bohong, Liu 2001, ‘The ACWF and Women’s NGOs’, *Chinese Women Organizing Cadres, Feminists, Muslims, Queers*, Berg, Oxford, p.147 – Attachment 12; Perry, Susan H. 2001, ‘Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Women’s Organizations in China’, *Eye to Eye – Women Practising Development Across Cultures*, Zed Books, London, pp.94– Attachment 17; and US Congressional-Executive Commission on China 2007, *Annual Report 2007*, 10 October, p.119 – Attachment 15).

The following are affiliated institutions of the ACWF:

- Women’s Studies Institute of China;
- Women of China Magazine Publishing House;
- China National Children’s Centre;
- China Women’s Publishing House;
- China Women’s News;
- Women’s Foreign Language Publications of China;
- China Women’s University;
- China Women’s Activity Centre;
- Developing and Training Center for Talented Women of the ACWF;
- Legal Assistance Center of the ACWF;
- Marriage and Family Magazine;
- China Children and Teenagers’ Fund;
- China Women’s Development Foundation; and
- Chinese Women’s Travel Service (‘About Us’ 2007, All-China Women’s Federation website <http://www.womenofchina.cn/aboutus/> – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 14).

The following NGOs are listed on the ACWF’s website:

- All-China Women’s Federation;
- National Committee of Young Women’s Christian Associations of China;
- Talented Women Working Committee of the China Society for the Research of Talented People;
- China Association of Women Entrepreneurs;
- Soong Ching Ling Foundation;
- Women’s Committee of Western Returned Scholars Association;
- Chinese Women Geological Workers’ Committee of the Geological Association of China;
- Women Worker’s Committee of the All-China Federation of Trade Unions;
- Women Mayors Chapter of China Association of Mayors;
- Women’s Committee of the Society for the Advancement of Revolutionary Base Areas;
- China Women Scientific and Technological Workers Association;
- China Women Tourism Committee of the China Tourism Association;
- Committee of Chinese Women City Planners of the Chinese City Planners Association;
- China Women Judges Association;
- China Women Procurators Association;
- China Women Photographers Association;

- China Women's Chamber of Commerce of the All-China Federation of Industry and Commerce;
- China Medical Women's Association;
- China Women's Development Foundation;
- Center for Women's Law & Legal Services of Peking University;
- Maple Women's Psychological Counseling Center;
- Asia Women's Development Association
- Shem Women's Group;
- Women Journalists Association of Capital, China;
- Women's Capacity Building and Community Development Committee in Yunnan;
- Beijing Friendship Association for Women from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan ('Non-Governmental Organizations' 2007, All-China Women's Federation website [http://www.womenofchina.cn/Agencies\\_Organizations/NGOs/](http://www.womenofchina.cn/Agencies_Organizations/NGOs/) – Accessed 27 January 2009 – Attachment 20).

Cecilia Nathansen Milwertz in her 2002 book entitled *Beijing Women Organizing for Change: A New Wave of the Chinese Women's Movement* writes that the ACWF “is indisputably the main organizer and representative of women in China”, with “Federation policy and attitudes towards organizing from below outside of its domain have been complex, ranging from cooperation to conflict”. Nathansen Milwertz continues:

Since the 1980s a new historical phase of the women's liberation movement in China has developed. An important aspect of this evolution has been the rise and activity of various popular women's organizations (Liu Jinxiu 1991: 106). These organizations emerged when women began to organize again on their own initiative to support vulnerable social groups, to create social change and to challenge gender-based inequalities in society. For many years prior to this development, ‘there was a top-down women's movement in China, initiated by the Party-led ACWF. It was sarcastically dubbed a “move women movement” instead of a “women's movement” (Feng Yuan 2000: 1).

...Gordan White, Jude Howell and Shang Xiaoyuan state in their study of civil society in China that

As these organizations meet only intermittently and face financial constraints in organizing activities, their capacity to become fora to articulate women's interests and increase their participation in society is limited. As with other associations in the ‘incorporated’ sector, most of these women's organizations also reflect an attempt by the state to keep control of newly emerging interests and channel them into a body that can be monitored and constrained. *For those looking for the development of a genuine feminist movement in China, with grass roots, voluntary women's groups, the wait is clearly going to be long.* (White, Howell and Shang 1996: 96, emphasis added)

...Despite the establishment of other organizations within recent years, the Federation is indisputably the main organizer and representative of women in China. Federation policy and attitudes towards organizing from below outside of its domain have been complex, ranging from cooperation to conflict. Since its revival, the Federation has made attempts to transfer its main loyalties from the party to its constituency, to reform its methods and to become more autonomous. In this context, it is extremely sensitive to challenge to its near-exclusive position as the representative of Chinese Women's interests (White, Howell and Shang 1996, Howell 1997b; see also Wang Zheng 1997 on the changing role of the ACWF). Although the organization constitutes an extensive multi-level system reaching out to all parts of the

country, the mere size and outreach of the ACWF has apparently not been sufficient for the national level organization to feel secure in its position and able to cooperate magnanimously with new initiatives set up outside its purview. In 1988, when its role as more or less exclusive representative of women began to be challenged, the ACWF included a total of 98,589 cadres (party functionaries) working at 68,355 branches at all administrative levels of the country from the provinces to rural villages and urban street committees (Zhonghua quanguo...1991: 576-577. By comparison, the new organizations...are minute in terms of number of staff, members and volunteers (Nathansen Milwertz, Cecilia 2002, *Beijing Women Organizing for Change: A New Wave of the Chinese Women's Movement*, NIAS Press, Google Books, pp.1, 3 & 22 [http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=UO\\_fXP7CCxcC&dq=%22beijing+women+organizing+for+change%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=pcH9oyTF1V&sig=iBoF-6ANu7LzPYVzn4rXsQeZxwI&sa=X&oi=book\\_result&resnum=1&ct=result](http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&id=UO_fXP7CCxcC&dq=%22beijing+women+organizing+for+change%22&printsec=frontcover&source=web&ots=pcH9oyTF1V&sig=iBoF-6ANu7LzPYVzn4rXsQeZxwI&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=1&ct=result) – Accessed 28 January 2009 – Attachment 21).

Powell in his 2003 paper in *The International Feminist Journal of Politics* provides information on women's organisations in China including their differing levels of independence from the ACWF. Powell writes that the "approach of the ACWF to new women's organizations has been ambivalent, sometimes actively supporting some groups, while at other times dismissing their work and any implicit claims they may appear to have to represent women." Powell reports that "women's organizations, like most other social organizations, tend either to work with or keep a quiet distance from the Party-state, rather than directly oppose it." Powell continues:

In practice most of the new women's organizations focus on women's immediate, practical rather than long-term strategic interests, thus providing services such as counselling and legal advice for women rather than mobilizing women to challenge male-dominated structures, practices and policies. Very few describe themselves as 'feminist' organizations, seeking to undermine male domination. This reflects not only the alien connotations of the concept but also a reluctance to invite the disapproval of the ACWF or other parts of the state. Apart from some gender researchers, most women writers and women's organizations do not take feminism as their starting-point (Yang 1999: 57). In doing so new women's organizations and some women researchers thus continue to reproduce the notion that women are a special group needing protection, a conceptualization that also deeply pervades the work of the ACWF.

...Compared with the ACWF the new, more independent women's organizations do not wield the same direct influence upon policy, legislation and regulatory change. On the one hand many of the new women's organizations focus on service delivery and do not aim to influence policy. On the other hand those groups that seek some influence on policy, in addition to their other goals, are small in scale, without local branch networks and lack legitimacy in the eyes of the Party-state. At most their influence is one step removed when compared to the ACWF. The sixteen group members of the ACWF are unusual compared to other new women's organizations in that some of them are executive members of the annual ACWF congress and, as such, have potential to promote certain issues within the ACWF.

To influence policy they are strategically compelled to ally with the ACWF, which has the authority, institutional and personal connections and resources to mobilize opinion nationally and to participate in gender-specific policy and legislative processes. As a cadre in the ACWF explained: 'The ACWF is the largest women's organizations and has connections with the Government. So if these women's groups link up with the ACWF, they can get some advantages'. If the ACWF is consulted on policy and legislative changes, or itself initiates such as a process, then it may in turn consult with local women's organizations. How effectively the ACWF and new women's organizations can work together to influence policy

and legislation depends in turn upon the nature of their relationship. The approach of the ACWF to new women's organizations has been ambivalent, sometimes actively supporting some groups, while at other times dismissing their work and any implicit claims they may appear to have to represent women. The ACWF tends to prioritize its relations to its group member above other women's organizations and also limits the range of organizations that can become group members.

...While new women's organizations do not face the ideological and bureaucratic constraints of the ACWF, they are heavily dependent on international donor agencies for financial support, thus running the risk of increasingly shaping their research to the priorities of donors. Their reliance on volunteers for some of their work limits the scope of their activities and the degree of continuity. Furthermore, their small scale and lack of foothold in the Party-state not only curb their potential influence on policy making but also require them to work through the ACWF and/or supervisory unit responsible for them to influence policy.

...Third, new women's organizations differ to other social organizations emerging in the 1980s and 1990s in that they face a large, authoritative institution already representing women, namely, the ACWF. Hence the relationship between women's organizations and the Party-state is even more complex, with organizations varying considerably in their degree of autonomy from the Party-state. Using origins of an organization, the composition of the leading council, the determination of agenda and activities and self regulation as key indicators, we can identify different degrees of autonomy among women's organizations. At one end of the scale is the ACWF, which is the least autonomous of all women's organizations due to its structural position in the Party political system. Next along the continuum are those organizations initiated from above by the ACWF such as the China Women's Science and Technical Workers Federation. More autonomous than these are the semi-governmental women's trades and professional associations, which on the one hand fall under the general trades and professional associations and on the other hand have leading councils with positions partly occupied by governmental officials. Next are the popular women's organizations such as the Jinglun Family Centre, the Female Migrant Workers' Club and the Maple Leaf Women's Psychological Counselling Centre. Enjoying the most autonomy are those women's organizations that are not registered, either because they have not sought to do so, such as salons, some networks and discussion groups, or because they cannot meet the registration requirements, such as the Women's Teahouse, which disbanded in 1996 for want of a supervisory unit and adequate funding.

However, while the degree of autonomy is axiomatically taken as a measure of the strength of and validity of civil society, and essentially defines the space of civil society, in state-dominant contexts such as China, the relations between civil society and the state are complex. Not only are the boundaries porous and blurred, with state officials often working in civil society organizations, but civil society organizations often, but not always, positively seek a relationship with the state so as to seek access to resources, legitimacy and authority (White et al. 1996). This is true also of women's organizations, some of which seek proximity to the state so as to access funds, contacts and protection. However, some women's organizations prefer to operate at arm's length for fear that proximity to the state will translate into interference.

...The complex relations between women's organizations and the Party-state point to the continuing dominance of the Party-state in economic and social life. As a result women's organizations, like most other social organizations, tend either to work with or keep a quiet distance from the Party-state, rather than directly oppose it. The emergence of unregistered networks linking groups and individuals across the country as well as the formation of associations and centres several levels below a formally registered association or work-unit highlights also the limits on the capacity of the Party-state to control the expanding sphere of non-governmental organizational life and the concomitant ability of different societal interests

to circumvent government regulations. Despite the recent growth of cross regional linkages, the new women's organizations remain small in scale, fragmented and local. It is not clear that they add up to more than the sum of their parts, nor whether they could be said to constitute a women's movement, steered by common analyses and objectives (Howell, Jude 2003, 'Women's Organizations and Civil Society in China Making a Difference', *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2, July, pp.198, 202-207 – Attachment 13).

Bohong provides the following information on challenges faced by new forms of women's NGOs in China:

As regards the challenges faced by new forms of women's non-governmental organizations, most of them have to do with 'survival':

1. Society's limited understanding means that it is used to organizational modes and operations characteristic of official institutions only; it is still not mentally prepared to accept new, popular organizations. That is why NGOs often attract attention and are taken to be 'sensitive'.
2. The lack of protection from existing social mechanisms means that legal status, management, functions, roles, financial resources and other necessary institutional devices required in public affairs have to be defined by policy, legislation and regulations. In the course of this development, some popular women's organizations feel besieged, feel that there are too many constraints, that their work is becoming an obstacle ride. All this is related to the lack of forceful laws and mechanisms that could protect popular organizations.
3. Then there is a lack of funding. At present, organizations under discussion here do not receive material support from the State. Some women's NGOs get foreign funding, but are limited by conditions attached to sponsorship; they also suffer from structural instability and the often transitory nature of their (subsidized) project.
4. Another issue is personnel. Society does not protect the livelihood of people who devote themselves to public causes. The enormous pressure that comes from doing this kind of work also acts as a deterrent. Moreover, people's mentality in today's China is beset by conflicts between ideals and pragmatism, between sacrifice and acquisition, and often reflects differing levels of awareness of public interest.

The appearance of women's NGOs in Chinese society is part of an inevitable trend of social development and progress, challenging the work of government. Although the government offers NGOs the space to co-exist, although it recognizes, to a certain extent, the functions of NGOs, it has not granted sufficient conditions for NGOs to develop (Bohong, Liu 2001, 'The ACWF and Women's NGOs', *Chinese Women Organizing Cadres, Feminists, Muslims, Queers*, Berg, Oxford, pp.154-155 – Attachment 12).

#### **4. What is the government's attitude (both national and provincial) to the 'women's movement'?**

According to Perry, "For the past fifty years, Chinese law has made it illegal for women to associate independently of the State." All non-profit social organisations in China are required to register with the government. Perry notes that the "vagueness of the language used in the clauses of the new regulations, combined with the number of administrative steps necessary to procure official permission to operate, render the development of any real non-governmental activity in China all but impossible." Perry continues:

For the past fifty years, Chinese law has made it illegal for women to associate independently of the state. Under the auspices of the one-party state, women are encouraged to join one of the eight officially sponsored organizations for the masses, each organization with a membership running well into the tens of millions. These mammoth entities not only assist those who join in navigating their way through the on-party system, they also carefully monitor individual behaviour and ensure that all members adhere to central government policy. Consequently, according to the women interviewed for this essay, most Chinese women today avoid joining government-sponsored women's organizations altogether. Those who do join are faced with the dilemma of conforming to national policy as dictated to their organizations, or subtly seeking to reform their officially sponsored NGO from within. A few intrepid souls have formed independent organizations that operate either underground, or in twilight zone of associations receiving foreign funding. Yet according to our interviewees, none of these choices is entirely satisfactory.

...Fifty years of dominance by the Party-sponsored All-China Women's Federation is now being challenged: some women appear to be returning to more traditional patterns of associative behaviour, such as sisterhoods or religious affiliations; while others are exploring newer organizational structures that resemble NGOs the world over. The diversification of organizations that negotiate women's concerns between the government and society at large in China is an important trend. As the women's movement gains momentum, the nation's leaders have been reluctant to permit a real burgeoning of women's associative behaviour, threatened by the possibility of a legitimate challenge to the Communist Party's control over China's political landscape.

### **The Law**

According to administrative regulations, all non-profit social organizations formed in China must register with the local and national authorities under the auspices of an official sponsor. ...These new regulations increase the number of legal, financial and administrative hurdles that must be overcome if such organizations are to remain within the strict confines of the law.

First and foremost, all persons wishing to associate as a non-profit 'social' organization (*shehui tuanti*) in China must first pre-register with the Ministry of Civil Affairs. The rules state clearly that any non-profit organization that begins activities before the registration process is completed will be considered illegal, and risk severe penalties. The actual registration process begins with the search for an official sponsor, preferably one of the 'big eight' Communist Party organizations for the masses which include the All-China Women's Federation. The sponsoring unit (*guakao danwei*) must agree to be responsible for the political orientation of the candidate; obviously, these government-funded organizations for the masses choose their protégés with care. Once a candidate has managed to find an official sponsor, it must then prove that it has 'legitimate' source of financing: from 30,000 yuan for a small, local organization up to 100,000 yuan for a group hoping to operate on a national scale. The use of the word 'legitimate' allows the Chinese government a wide margin for manoeuvre in its interpretation of this particular clause. Moreover, these financial imperatives appear excessive compared to the annual GNP per capita income of less than \$3,000 per year. Finally, the candidate must prove that its administrative officers are in full possession of their civil rights (*faren*) – an impossibility for former prisoners of conscience, for example. The declared purpose of any non-profit social organization wishing to register officially must be to adhere to the basic principles of Chinese law and the dictates of the Communist Party. Furthermore, the overlap of more than one group within a specific domain is strictly forbidden – a provision which severely limits pluralistic debate within a particular field (Woodman 1999).

The vagueness of the language used in the clauses of the new regulations, combined with the number of administrative steps necessary to procure official permission to operate, render the development of any real non-governmental activity in China all but impossible. ...According to one Chinese academic, the deciding factor in granting operational status to these new groups was the pressures of connections, or *guanxi*, that could be exercised on local or national Communist Party officials by those organizers who knew people in important Party positions (anonymous, July 2000) (Perry, Susan H. 2001, 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Women's Organizations in China', *Eye to Eye – Women Practising Development Across Cultures*, Zed Books, London, pp.90-93 – Attachment 17).

According to the most recent US Department of State's *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices 2007 – China*, Chinese law "provides for freedom of association, but the government restricted this right in practice." The government requires NGOs to register and follow government guidelines. According to the US Department of State, "Groups that disregarded guidelines and unregistered groups that continued to operate could face administrative punishment or criminal charges." The US Department of State continues:

CCP policy and government regulations require that all professional, social, and economic organizations officially register with, and be approved by, the government. In practice these regulations prevented the formation of truly autonomous political, human rights, religious, spiritual, labor, and other organizations that might challenge government authority.

The government maintained tight controls over civil society organizations and over the past three years increased measures aimed at supervising and controlling them. In 2005 authorities established a task force to increase scrutiny over NGOs, especially those with links overseas. Published reports stated the task force was aimed at blocking NGOs from fomenting political change. International foundations, NGOs involved in social and charitable activities, and groups dedicated to combating discrimination against women, persons with disabilities, and minorities were reportedly targets of the campaign, along with organizations that focused on human rights and labor issues.

To register, an NGO must find a government agency to serve as the NGO's organizational sponsor, have a registered office, and hold a minimum amount of funds. Organizations with social or educational purposes that previously had been registered as private or for-profit businesses reportedly were requested to find a government sponsor and reregister as NGOs during the year. Although the registered organizations all came under some degree of government control, some NGOs were still able to operate with some degree of independence.

Despite tight restrictions and regulations, the number of civil society organizations continued to grow. According to official statistics, by the end of 2006, there were 354,000 registered civil society organizations. The World Bank estimated that there were between 300,000 and 700,000 NGOs, a significant increase from 4,800 in 1988. Other experts estimated that, including both registered and unregistered groups, there were perhaps as many as eight million quasi-governmental organizations and NGOs. Civil society organizations existed under a variety of formal and informal guises, including national mass organizations created and funded by the CCP.

...A number of NGOs had support from foreign secular and religious NGOs, and several were able to undertake limited advocacy roles in public interest areas such as women's issues, the environment, health, and consumer rights. According to government guidelines, NGOs must not advocate nonparty rule, damage national unity, or upset ethnic harmony. Groups that disregarded guidelines and unregistered groups that continued to operate could face administrative punishment or criminal charges (US Department of State 2008, *Country*

*Reports on Human Rights Practices 2007 – China*, 11 March, Section 2b ‘Freedom of Association’ – Attachment 22).

Perry writes that “All the women interviewed for this essay considered the Chinese Communist Party’s dictatorship beneficial in that it can mobilize impressive resources to support a women’s rights agenda, and threatening in that it can snuff out any unauthorized organizational activity overnight” (Perry, Susan H. 2001, ‘Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Women’s Organizations in China’, *Eye to Eye – Women Practising Development Across Cultures*, Zed Books, London, p.100 – Attachment 17).

Howell notes that “organizing around gender is less threatening than labour issues, ethnicity or religion, women researchers taking aboard sensitive issues such as laid-off workers, migrant workers or HIV/AIDS, or lesbians seeking their own spaces and activities, still have to operate on the margins of tolerance and legality, under constant threat of repression” (Howell, Jude 2003, ‘Women’s Organizations and Civil Society in China Making a Difference’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2, July, pp.196, 198 202-204 – Attachment 13).

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#### **University Sites**

University of Sydney Library <http://www.library.usyd.edu.au/Home.html>

#### **Search Engines**

Google <http://www.google.com.au/>

Google Books <http://books.google.com/>

Google Scholar <http://scholar.google.com.au/>

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FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIAC Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

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