

104. How to regularly speak candidly with religious figures?

Speaking regularly with religious figures is an important task of work teams and should be approached from four aspects.

1: Strengthen the study and grasp of policy and religious knowledge. Attentively study and grasp the Party's ethnic and religious policies, "Two Documents One Rule", basic religious common knowledge, relevant knowledge such as the harm of religious extremist thought, and the customs and habits of each ethnic group. Flexibly grasp and use the "Five Keys," and unceasingly raise the standard of theory and policy in religious work.

2: Meticulously prepare and draft up outlines of discussion. Prepare meticulously for talks with religious figures, strengthen communication with township united-front officers and village religious coordinators, grasp recent developments in religious fields, and build an account of basic information. Have an understanding of basic information about every member of the mosque management committee so as to have a good idea about them. Every time in discussion key points should be defined clearly; careful consideration must be made according to the key points: draw up an outline of discussion, clarify with whom to talk and what must be spoken first and next.

3: Persevere in the direction of a question and be adept at finding the problem. Pursue a question by asking lots of whys. For example, during every quarterly assessment of religious venues, is the satisfaction rate of religious people roughly around 85%? If it falls suddenly, is it because the members of the mosque management committee are not united or that there is a malign hidden hand causing incitement or bewitchment? Are over 85% of those who attend morning prayers over 60 years-old? Of those who attend the service for Juma (Friday noon) prayer, is roughly 30% under 35 years-old? If the proportion of young people at mosques is relatively big, could it be that the religious figures have not recited and interpreted the scripture according to requirements, and that they have relatively extremist rhetoric and views?¹ Furthermore, during prayer who are the ones standing in the front row and wearing turbans? What do these people do? What was the content of last week's Quran recitation, and did it correspond to the interpretation as issued by the Islamic Association of China? What was the income of this quarter and where that money has been used? From whom did the large donations to the Mosque come from, what professions do they do, and why did they donate to this Mosque and not to another? Recently, what are the topics most discussed by religious people? With these questions, one can discover abnormal situations in advance and eliminate security flaws and hidden threats.²

¹ This insistence that the vast majority of mosque attendees be over the age of 60, and that a minority of mosque attendees for Friday noon teachings, corresponds with classified police documents that were obtained by *The Intercept*. In one of those documents, police and other state workers report that the only mosque attendees are elderly and that Muslims within the neighborhood have been warned that attending the mosque more than 200 times would result in being sent to "education" (the euphemism used for the reeducation camp system), (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/20466261-document-24>).

² These questions point to the way mosque activity is frequently characterised as a site of organised crime in Xinjiang and how financial support for religious activity has been criminalised as a "sign of

4: Pay attention to work methods and the art of discussion. Communicate and share exchanges with a levelled and candid temperament. When in talks, one must both pay attention to government policy and be measured; one must both have a clear-cut stance, be bold and confident as well as sincere; and be able to combine nuance with force. The education and transformation (*jiaoyu zhuanhua* 教育转化)³ of religious leaders should focus more on facts, reason, and harm, and less on criticism and blame.

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extremism.” See for example numbers 53 - 55 in the official list of “Seventy-five Signs of Extremism,” (<https://xinjiang.sppga.ubc.ca/chinese-sources/online-sources/identifying-religious-extremism/>).

³ “*Jiaoyu zhuanghua* is the Party’s title for its “de-radicalization” work geared towards maintaining social stability or *weiwén* (维稳). Following a 2017 knife-attack near Hotan led by three Uyghur perpetrators, the XUAR Department of Justice issued a directive (<https://www.prcleader.org/leibold>) ordering the establishment of concentrated transformation centers (教育转化培训中心 or 教培中心) throughout Xinjiang focused on removing the ‘malignant tumour’ of religious extremism” (<https://xinjiang.sppga.ubc.ca/glossary/>).