



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

China

China – CHN38219 – Fujian Province –
Dalian Island – Underground Christians –
Underground churches – Official churches
– Land resumption

28 February 2011

1. Is there such a place as Dalian island in Fujian province?

Yes, Dalian Island (Daliandao or Dalian Dao) is a part of Pingtan county, Fujian province. The village of Yuxian is identified on the map below.



Map 1. Yuxian, Dalian Island¹

¹ 'Yuxian, Dalian Island, Pingtan, Fuzhou, Fujian, China' 2011, Google maps website
http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E7%A6%8F%E5%BB%BA%E7%9C%81%E7%A6%8F%E5%B7%9E%E5%B8%82%E5%B9%B3%E6%BD%AD%E5%8E%BF%E6%B8%94%E9%99%90%E6%9D%91&sll=-25.335448,135.745076&ssp=41.4653,54.84375&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=China+Fujian+Fuzhou+Pingtan%E6%B8%94%E9%99%90%E6%9D%91&ll=25.64555,119.689007&spn=0.041086,0.053558&z=14 – Accessed 28 February 2011 – Attachment 26



Map 2. Dalian Island, Pingtan county, Fujian province²

2. Is there any country information that the people who live on Dalian Island are all Christians who belong to underground Christian churches?

No information about the religious background of Dalian Island’s population was located. However, two reports were found that include information on the number of Christians in Pingtan.³ These two reports give very different estimates of Christian numbers in Pingtan but both assess underground Christians to account for roughly 7.5 per cent of the population (about 30 000 out of a population of over 400 000).

In the 2006 edition of *China’s Christian Millions*, Tony Lambert – a former British diplomat to Beijing – estimates that there are 60 000 Christians in Pingtan, making up 15 per cent of the island’s population. Of this figure, half are reported to belong to underground churches.⁴ Lambert acknowledges that as his country-wide survey is based mainly on estimates from

² ‘Dalian Island, Pingtan, Fuzhou, Fujian, China’ 2011, Google maps website http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Dalian+Island,+Pingtan+county,+Fujian+province&aq=&sll=25.644583,119.68287&sspn=0.020543,0.043044&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Daliandao&ll=25.54492,119.734497&spn=0.328966,0.688705&z=11 – Accessed 28 February 2011 – Attachment 27

³ Asia Harvest 2011, “A summary of Christians in each province – Fujian” <http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/Christians%20in%20China/Provinces/Fujian.htm> – Accessed 17 February 2011 – Attachment 1

⁴ Lambert, Tony 2006, *China’s Christian Millions*, Monarch Books, Oxford pp240-241 – Attachment 2

official Three-Self Patriotic Movement pastors it “may not include unregistered Christians and [is] therefore likely to be conservative in most instances”.⁵

A 2011 survey by Christian ministry group, Asia Harvest, estimates that there are around 190 000 Christians in Pingtan (nearly 50 per cent of the population). Of the Christian population, Asia Harvest estimates that just under 27 000 belonging to house churches.⁶ According to the report’s author Paul Hattaway, this country-wide survey is based on over 2000 published sources as well as interviews with local home church leaders.⁷ Hattaway, like Lambert, recognises that his report suffers from incomplete information.

On Fujian in general, reports indicate the province has a relatively large Christian population. Lambert reports that Fujian was one of the first provinces to be evangelised and “has a thriving and rapidly growing Christian community”.⁸ The relative size of the underground Christian population is less clear as the illegal nature of unregistered churches obscures reporting. According to the Catholic news website *Asia News*, the Christian community in Fujian has a strong unofficial element that refuses to be registered.⁹

3. Is there any country information that from 2008 underground Christian churches on that island were demolished for the purpose of real estate development or for any purpose?

No information was found on the demolition of underground churches on Dalian Island for real estate development or any other purpose. However, in 2006 a case was reported of government officials demolishing an unregistered church on Pingtan Island. According to *Asia News*, in September 2006, about 500 police and local officials destroyed an unregistered Catholic church in Yutouchang, Pingtan.¹⁰ An older report was located of underground churches being destroyed in other areas of Fujian. A 2000 article by *ZENIT* news, a Catholic news agency based in Rome, claims that in 1999, 13 underground churches were destroyed in Fuzhou.¹¹

Demolition of churches outside Fujian

Reports indicate that Christian churches in China – both official and unofficial – are demolished to enable urban development. In November 2010, an official Three-Self Patriotic Movement church in Jiangsu was demolished to make way for commercial and residential buildings.¹² According to Christian organisation *China Aid*, in August 2009, local authorities

⁵ Lambert, Tony 2006, *China’s Christian Millions*, Monarch Books, Oxford pp240-241 – Attachment 2

⁶ Asia Harvest 2011, “A summary of Christians in each province – Fujian”

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/Christians%20in%20China/Provinces/Fujian.htm> – Accessed 17 February 2011 – Attachment 1

⁷ Paul Hattaway 2010 “How many Christians are there in China” Asia Harvest website

<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/Christians%20in%20China/How%20Many%20Christians%20are%20There%20in%20China.pdf> – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 3

⁸ Lambert, Tony 2006, *China’s Christian Millions*, Monarch Books, Oxford pp240-241 – Attachment 2

⁹ “Church destroyed in Fujian, another to follow shortly” 2006, *Asia News*, 4 September

<http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=7112#> - Accessed 6 December 2007 – Attachment 4

¹⁰ “Church destroyed in Fujian, another to follow shortly” 2006, *Asia News*, 4 September

<http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=7112#> - Accessed 6 December 2007 – Attachment 4

¹¹ “Persecution of Catholics in China”, 2000, *ZENIT*, 31 January

<http://catholiceducation.org/articles/persecution/pch0010.html> – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 5

¹² Congress Executive Commission on China 2011 “State-Sanctioned Church in Jiangsu Province Demolished”, January 20

attempted to seize an unregistered church and arrested two church leaders in Henan.¹³ The report claims that the church had operated since 1987 but “village officials began working with real estate developers to build a highway that would go through the location of the church property”.¹⁴

Rapid development in the Pingtan

In light of reports that churches have been demolished in China to enable development, it is of note that in 2009, the Government made Pingtan County a special economic zone and as a result the area is undergoing significant development.¹⁵ This has created a rapid increase in real estate prices, according to news reports.¹⁶ A report by *China Daily* said “[a]s news of the zone has spread, property prices rocketed from 3,000 Yuan to 7,000 Yuan per square meter”.¹⁷ Several real estate projects have been approved. *China Daily* reported that one street on Pingtan Island “boasts more than 20 newly built budget hotels”.¹⁸ According to news sources, the government has approved a US\$100 million holiday village and signed a US\$234 million contract for the development of new five-star hotels and tourist services.¹⁹

4. Is there any country information that the underground church in Yuxian village was demolished in December 2009?

No reports were found regarding a 2009 demolition of an underground church in Yuxian. For more general information, please see question three.

<http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.php?showsingle=152065&PHPSESSID=68605ad35dd06fcc8b3e2950c816130c> – Accessed 24 February – Attachment 6; China Aid 2010, “Chengnan Church Demolished by Local Authorities”, 22 November <http://www.chinaaid.org/2010/11/chengnan-church-demolished-by-local.html> – Accessed 24 February – Attachment 7

¹³ China Aid 2009, “Village Officials Threaten to Forcibly Seize and Demolish Church Property in Henan”, 8 June <http://www.chinaaid.org/2009/06/village-officials-threaten-to-forcibly.html> – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 8

¹⁴ China Aid 2009, “Village Officials Threaten to Forcibly Seize and Demolish Church Property in Henan”, 8 June <http://www.chinaaid.org/2009/06/village-officials-threaten-to-forcibly.html> – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 8

¹⁵ “Pingtan Island, a before and after story in the making”, 2010, *Whats on Xiamen*, 28 September <http://www.whatsonxiamen.com/news14842.html> – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 10

¹⁶ “From the “Island military exercise” to “Taiwan Special Administrative Region” 2011, *Chinese Stock*, 8 January <http://dengruo.info/201101/from-the-island-military-exercise-to-taiwan-special-administrative-region/> – Accessed 24 February – Attachment 11

¹⁷ Yining, P and Meidong, H. 2011, “Cross-sea bridge offers a route to prosperity”, *China Daily*, 05 January http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/usa/2011-01/05/content_11796929.htm – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 12

¹⁸ Yining, P and Meidong, H. 2011, “Cross-sea bridge offers a route to prosperity”, *China Daily*, 05 January http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/usa/2011-01/05/content_11796929.htm – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 12

¹⁹ Quanlin, Q and Hao, T. 2009 ‘Pingtan county economic zone will invite Taiwan investments’, *China Daily*, 26 October http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/bw/2009-10/26/content_8846027.htm – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 13; “CIFIT boost transport network of Pingtan Island in Fujian”, 2011, *WOXnews.com*, 6 January, <http://www.chinafair.org.cn/english/News/315530.html> – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 14

5. Are there any official Chinese Christian churches on that island?

No official Christian churches were located on Dalian Island but five registered churches were found on neighbouring Pingtan Island. The following churches on Pingtan Island were located using Google translation and Google Maps (see Map 3):²⁰

- A) Pingtan County Christian Church a Chengguan (平潭县基督教城关教堂一堂)
- B) Pingtan County Christian Church two Chengguan (平潭县基督教城关教堂二堂)
- C) Pingtan County Christian Church three Chengguan (平潭县基督教城关教堂三堂)
- D) Pingtan Suao Christian Church (平潭县苏澳基督教堂)
- E) Long after the House Village Christian Church (龙南村后楼基督教堂)



Map 3. Official Christian churches on Pingtan Island²¹

²⁰ Please note, Google translations is often poor and can contain errors.

²¹ 'Official Christian churches on Pingtan Island' 2011, Google maps website

http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=%E5%9F%BA%E7%9D%A3%E6%95%99&aq=&sl=25.533148,119.767456&sspn=0.328998,0.688705&ie=UTF8&hq=%E5%9F%BA%E7%9D%A3%E6%95%99&hnear=&z=11 – Accessed 28 February 2011 – Attachment 28

6. How does the Chinese government treat Christians in underground churches on that island? Are they able to practice their religion?

No information was located on government's treatment of underground Christians on Dalian Island. Reports were found of attacks on underground churches on Pingtan Island and other areas of Fujian but the scale of government harassment is unclear.

Treatment in Pingtan

No recent reports were located of government harassment of underground Christians in Pingtan; however, several older news reports were found.²² In addition to the 2006 demolition of a Pingtan church raised in question three, reports were found of underground Christians in Pingtan being arrested and violently assaulted.²³ According to a 2000 article by Belgian based human rights group, Human Rights Without Frontiers, in "Pingtan county, police destroyed the altar of the Yutou Church and chased and beat worshippers when they attempted to flee".²⁴ Christian human rights advocacy group, Christian Solidarity Worldwide and *Asia News* reported that in July 2005 Chinese authorities arrested an underground Catholic priest and ten others in Pingtan.²⁵ Christian Solidarity Worldwide reported:

On 25 July 2005, at about 8 pm, Chinese security personnel arrested the underground Catholic priest Father Lin Daixian, 40, of the Pingtan Parish of Fuzhou Diocese, Fujian Province. A seminarian and nine of his parishioners were arrested alongside him. The arrests occurred during the celebration of a private Holy Mass held at a private home in Pingtan, attended by around 50 parishioners. The security personnel violently assaulted parishioners who sought to prevent the arrest of Father Lin, leaving them with severe injuries, including broken bones, broken teeth and head injuries that caused severe swelling and fainting. The house where the meeting took place was ransacked, causing significant damage. Father Lin and others were detained in the Pingtan Detention Centre. This is the fourth time Father Lin has been arrested.²⁶

Treatment in Fujian

There is conflicting information about the treatment of underground Christians in Fujian. Unregistered Christian churches in Fujian, like elsewhere in China are illegal; however, some reports suggest that underground churches in Fujian are generally tolerated by

²² Human Rights Without Frontiers 2000 "Catholic bishop held, worshippers beaten in China, foundation says", 17 September <http://www.hrwf.net/religiousfreedom/news/china2000.html> – Accessed 7 March 2008 – Attachment 15; Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2005 "China: Current Developments and Cases of Concern", November <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/country.asp?s=id&urn=China> – Accessed 15 October 2008 – Attachment 16

²³ "Church destroyed in Fujian, another to follow shortly" 2006, *Asia News*, 4 September <http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=7112#> - Accessed 6 December 2007 – Attachment 4

²⁴ Human Rights Without Frontiers 2000 "Catholic bishop held, worshippers beaten in China, foundation says", 17 September <http://www.hrwf.net/religiousfreedom/news/china2000.html> – Accessed 7 March 2008 – Attachment 15

²⁵ Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2005 "China: Current Developments and Cases of Concern", November <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/country.asp?s=id&urn=China> – Accessed 15 October 2008 – Attachment 16

²⁶ Christian Solidarity Worldwide 2005 "China: Current Developments and Cases of Concern", November <http://dynamic.csw.org.uk/country.asp?s=id&urn=China> – Accessed 15 October 2008 – Attachment 16

authorities. Other reports highlight that local authorities in Fujian continue to harass underground Christians.

Several recent reports were located that claim local officials in Fujian generally allow underground Christians to practice their religion. In 2009, a Global Chinese Ministries newsletter said “[i]n general, local government in Fujian seems fairly tolerant of unregistered believers”.²⁷ The 2005 Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB) report recorded the Executive Secretary of the Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC), a grouping of Hong Kong Christian churches and organisations, as saying that Fujian has “the most liberal policy on religion in China, especially Christianity.”²⁸ In the 2010 IRB report, the HKCC Executive Secretary commented that officials in Fujian province “allowed non official bishops to operate openly”.²⁹ By the same token, during 2005 field research in Fujian Professor Joseph Lee of Pace University, New York, observed that “many unregistered Christians such as the Local Church, the True Jesus Church and the Seventh-Day Adventists had no difficulty of practicing their religion”.³⁰

Although officials in Fujian appear more tolerant of underground Christians, acts of harassment continue to occur. As noted by Lambert, the official religious policy is “applied relatively liberally in Fujian”, but “there have been occasional crackdowns on house churches and underground Catholics”.³¹ Similarly, in June 2010 the President of China Aid said that “east coast provinces are generally “more open” with fewer incidents involving Christians reported”.³² However, separately, he cautioned that “house churches in Fujian and Guangdong, like all of China, face the constant and fearful risk of being closed and its members punished”.³³ This argument is supported by recent cases of government harassment. In October 2010, *China Aid*, reported that Chinese authorities detained a worker and sealed three unofficial churches in Fujian.³⁴ According to *Asia News*, in March 2010 an underground Catholic priest from Mindong in Fujian was arrested for

²⁷ Global Chinese Ministries 2009, “The Protestant Church in Fujian Province”, Overseas Missionary Fellowship website, April

http://www.omf.org/omf/us/resources_1/newsletters/global_chinese_ministries/gcm_newsletter_2009/global_chinese_ministries_apr_09/the_protestant_church_in_fujian_province – Accessed 2 November 2009 – Attachment 17

²⁸ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *CHN100387.E – China: Situation of Protestants and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2001-2005)*, 7 September

http://www.ecoi.net/local_link/27741/262163_de.html – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 18

²⁹ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *CHN103501.E – China: Situation of Catholics and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2005 – 2010)*, 6 July http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453030&l=e – Accessed 24 February 2011 – Attachment 19

³⁰ RRT Information Request 2008, *E-mail message reply by Professor Lee – CHN33901*, 25 July – Attachment 20

³¹ Lambert, Tony 2006, *China’s Christian Millions*, Monarch Books, Oxford pp240-241 – Attachment 2

³² Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *CHN103500.E – China: Situation of Protestants and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2005 – May 2010)*, 30 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453033&l=e – Accessed 26 July 2010 – Attachment 24

³³ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *CHN103500.E – China: Situation of Protestants and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2005 – May 2010)*, 30 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453033&l=e – Accessed 26 July 2010 – Attachment 24

³⁴ China Aid Association 2010, *Abduction and Building Closures in Fujian*, 19 October, http://www.chinaaid.org/gry/page.taf?id=105&function=detail&sbtblct_uid1=1582&nc=8e483cd76c2e159254f7a7430ec53b24 – Accessed 14 October 2010 – Attachment 21

organising a Christian camp for university students.³⁵ No further information was located on the status of either case.

Further background information on the treatment of Christians in Fujian is provided by Country Advice *CHN37524* (26 October 2010).³⁶

Attachments

1. Asia Harvest 2011, “A summary of Christians in each province – Fujian”
<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/Christians%20in%20China/Provinces/Fujian.htm> – Accessed 17 February.
2. Lambert, T 2006, *China’s Christian Millions*, Monarch Books, Oxford, p.241.
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<http://www.asiaharvest.org/pages/Christians%20in%20China/How%20Many%20Christians%20are%20There%20in%20China.pdf> – Accessed 24 February 2011.
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<http://www.asianews.it/view.php?l=en&art=7112#> - Accessed 6 December 2007.
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<http://catholiceducation.org/articles/persecution/pch0010.html> – Accessed 24 February 2011.
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<http://www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.phpd?showsingle=152065&PHPSESSID=68605ad35dd06fcc8b3e2950c816130c> – Accessed 24 February.
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<http://www.chinaaid.org/2009/06/village-officials-threaten-to-forcibly.html> – Accessed 24 February 2011.
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<http://www.whatsonxiamen.com/news14842.html> – Accessed 24 February 2011.

³⁵ “Another underground priest arrested in Fujian” 2010, *Asia News*, 24 March
<http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Another-underground-priest-arrested-in-Fujian-17965.html#> – Accessed 20 April 2010 – Attachment 22.

³⁶ RRT Response 2010, *Research Response CHN37524* – Attachment 25

11. "From the "Island military exercise" to "Taiwan Special Administrative Region", 2011, *Chinese Stock*, 8 January <http://dengruo.info/201101/from-the-island-military-exercise-to-taiwan-special-administrative-region/> – Accessed 24 February.
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14. "CIFIT boost transport network of Pingtan Island in Fujian", 2011, *WOXnews.com*, 6 January, <http://www.chinafair.org.cn/english/News/315530.html> – Accessed 24 February 2011.
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19. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *CHN103501.E – China: Situation of Catholics and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2005 – 2010)*, 6 July http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453030&l=e – Accessed 24 February 2011.
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22. "Another underground priest arrested in Fujian" 2010, *Asia News*, 24 March <http://www.asianews.it/news-en/Another-underground-priest-arrested-in-Fujian-17965.html#> – Accessed 20 April 2010.

23. US Congressional-Executive Commission on China 2009, *Annual Report 2009*, 10 October.
24. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2010, *CHN103500.E – China: Situation of Protestants and treatment by authorities, particularly in Fujian and Guangdong (2005 – May 2010)*, 30 June http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca:8080/RIR_RDI/RIR_RDI.aspx?id=453033&l=e – Accessed 26 July 2010.
25. RRT Response 2010, *Research Response CHN37524*.
26. ‘Yuxian, Dalian Island, Pingtan, Fuzhou, Fujian, China’ 2011, Google maps website http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=%E4%B8%AD%E5%9B%BD%E7%A6%8F%E5%BB%BA%E7%9C%81%E7%A6%8F%E5%B7%9E%E5%B8%82%E5%B9%B3%E6%BD%AD%E5%8E%BF%E6%B8%94%E9%99%90%E6%9D%91&sll=-25.335448,135.745076&sspn=41.4653,54.84375&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=China+Fujian+Fuzhou+Pingtan%E6%B8%94%E9%99%90%E6%9D%91&ll=25.64555,119.689007&spn=0.041086,0.053558&z=14 – Accessed 28 February 2011.
27. ‘Dalian Island, Pingtan, Fuzhou, Fujian, China’ 2011, Google maps website http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=Dalian+Island,+Pingtan+county,+Fujian+province&aq=&sll=25.644583,119.68287&sspn=0.020543,0.043044&ie=UTF8&hq=&hnear=Daliandao&ll=25.54492,119.734497&spn=0.328966,0.688705&z=11 – Accessed 28 February 2011.
28. ‘Official Christian churches on Pingtan Island’ 2011, Google maps website http://maps.google.com.au/maps?f=q&source=s_q&hl=en&geocode=&q=%E5%9F%BA%E7%9D%A3%E6%95%99&aq=&sll=25.533148,119.767456&sspn=0.328998,0.688705&ie=UTF8&hq=%E5%9F%BA%E7%9D%A3%E6%95%99&hnear=&z=11 – Accessed 28 February 2011.