

Falun Gong in California

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A Challenge to People's Conscience Everywhere

From newspaper articles, human rights documents, and speeches by world, national, and community leaders, we learn that the first and most difficult step in eradicating human right violations is to expose the criminal acts.

In the past two months, Falun Gong practitioners in China, at great risk, have sent out information revealing 45 murders of their fellow practitioners.

In fact, Falun Gong practitioners have been taking this first, most difficult step for the past three and half years, and reminding the world that the confirmed death toll of the Chinese government's state terrorism against Falun Gong has risen to 557.

Where are the ensuing steps? More importantly, what is impeding those steps?

Forcing people to act against their conscience is a trademark of communist ruling. The communist government has many terrorizing methods at its disposal in China. The brutal persecution of Falun Gong is just its newest campaign against people's conscious choice.

The Chinese government does not have as many options outside China, and has to use more subtle ways. The objective, however, remains the same. The self-censorship in China-related reporting imposed by several media conglomerates, such as Murdoch's New Corporation and Yahoo, is an example. News media represent public trust, and self-censorship amounts to a betrayal of public trust. Yet, when the Chinese government demanded this censorship in exchange for entry into China's market, some have caved. There is no doubt that ignoring the first step by Falun Gong practitioners is among the Chinese government's top demands. (C page 2)



Practitioners practicing in front of the Chinese Consulate in San Francisco and expressing their grief due to the recent deaths of Falun Gong practitioners in China

California's Story

Please Help to Rescue Our Loved Ones"

-----San Jose Software Engineer Leads Efforts to Rescue His Brothers from Brutal Torture

When Hu Zhihua introduced a new mind-body meditation to his brothers, he did not expect them to be thrown in jail for practicing it. However, the story of Hu's once harmonious family being torn apart is disturbingly common.



Hu Zhiming, Zhihua's brother, was sentenced to four years in a Labor Camp

"My innocent brothers have been tortured in China's labor camps," says Hu, "I hope the U.S. government can help get them out."

When Hu learned Falun Gong, he was so excited about the exercises and profound teachings of Truthfulness, Compassion and Tolerance that he quickly introduced the practice to his two younger brothers. Before long, Hu's entire family joined the morning exercises in the park.

Hu continued to enjoy the benefit of Falun Gong practice in the U.S. The rest of his family, however, has suffered immensely because of a brutal persecution ordered in July 1999 by China's top leader Jiang Zemin.

"My parents was forced to stop practicing," Hu says sadly, "the pressure was too great." His two brothers refused to give in, and were consequently fired by China's Air Force, for which they had worked for.

Hu's brother, Hu Zhiqiang, was discharged from the military because he refused to give up his belief in Falun Gong. In October 2000, when he learned his fellow practitioners had been tortured and killed, he went to the State Appeal Office to submit a petition. For exercising his right to appeal, which is guaranteed by Chinese law, Zhiqiang was arrested and sent to a labor camp in Liaoning Province. In January 2002, he was sentenced, without trial to an additional three years in the labor camp. (Continue on page 2)

San Jose Resident Pleads for His Brothers

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Hu's youngest brother, Zhiming, was the technical director for his unit and was well respected by his supervisors. He explained to them that he would not give up his Falun Gong practice, and that he did not have any political objectives. His co-workers tried to protect him, but as the pressure from the central government grew, he was discharged as well.

A few months later, the police arrested Zhiming in Shanghai, without any warrant. They sentenced him, without any legal procedure, to four years in a forced labor camp. Since then, Hu's family has not received any news about him, and has not been allowed to visit him.



Hu Zhiqiang was sentenced 3 years jail term at Dandong Labor Camp

Like so many Falun Gong practitioners outside China, Hu has been working hard to let the world know the truth about China's persecution of Falun Gong. Inspired by recent stories of the Canadian government responding to and helping family members of Canadian practitioners to get released and get to safety, Hu and others organized the "Family Rescue" project in the US. "I hope the US government can be as responsive and helpful to its citizens as the Canadian government has been," says Hu, "and that soon, our loved ones can be released."

Conscience

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Such demands work even in the US. The mayors of Los Angeles and San Francisco, along with those of Seattle, Baltimore and several others, under the pressure from the Chinese government agent, have rescinded their proclamations for Falun Gong. The tactics of these by Chinese agents is simple: you will not be allow to China's market unless you comply.

We Americans like to think we know what is right and how to make the most ethical choice. We may not realize that when the Chinese government forces us to make a choice, it is in effect trying to force us to act against our conscience.

It is a matter of necessity for the Chinese government to silence world opinion against its brutal persecution of Falun Gong. It is therefore true that its crime against conscience in China is actually a challenge to conscience everywhere.

International Campaign Rescues Twin Sister

-Canadian Learns of Her Twin Sister's Release on Christmas Eve

TORONTO, December 31, After months of appealing throughout the country, Helen Peng could not have wished for a more fitting Christmas gift.



Helen Peng (right) received news on Christmas Eve that her twin sister Tianxiong (left) was released from a labor camp in China

When the Canadian called China to wish her family a happy holiday, she discovered that her twin sister, Tianxiong, was no longer a prisoner of conscience.

"It is not because the labor camp is compassionate that she was released, but because the GlobalRescue Campaign and Canadian Government exerted pressure on China," said Helen Peng this week from Toronto.

Of the six Falun Gong practitioners rescued in recent months, Tianxiong is the fifth with family members in Canada..

Article 23

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U.S. State Department Concerned

"... The United States government has joined others in the international community in expressing our concerns over Article 23, and we have a recognized interest in doing so. Hong Kong, as you may or may not know, has over 50,000 American residents living there. We have combined fixed assets in Hong Kong of something like 29 billion dollars."

- Mr. J. Scott Carpenter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State from the U.S. State Department

Bay Area Groups Submit Letter to Hong Kong SAR Government

The letter represents the "view points from many organizations that care for the future of Hong Kong as well as the general public opinions we received during the signature collection events. The local medias reported the signature collecting events and the letter's submission.



Signature Collection at San Francisco China Town

California Practitioners Joined Global Coalition in Opposition to Article 23

-----Proposed article threatens business, freedom of belief and expression

When Great Britain returned Hong Kong to China in 1997, the Beijing government promised the people of Hong Kong and World they would continue to enjoy all of their freedoms under the new "One Country, Two Systems" status.

At that time, the U.S government told Hong Kong that as the leader of the democratic world, it would ensure the promise was kept. Five years later, the Hong Kong people are crying for help.

Under Article 23, any group that Jiang Zemin and his cronies label as "subversive", may be similarly targeted in Hong Kong: Catholics would be jailed for carrying a Bible; reporters would be sentenced for questioning a policy; human rights organizations will be charged with "leaking state secrets"; and hundreds of Falun Gong practitioners would be put in labor camps.

One of the biggest concerns voiced by the international community is that foreign visitors, who are used to speaking freely, may accidentally find themselves jailed for life on charges of treason, even though they are not Chinese.

What Does Article 23 Have to Do With Falun Gong?

While the persecution of Falun Gong has flared in Mainland China, Hong Kong has been a symbol of freedom and hope for the entire region. Under the Chinese flag, Hong Kong residents practice Falun Gong peacefully and openly. Under Article 23, hundreds of innocent Falun Gong practitioners currently living a normal life in Hong Kong would find themselves being tortured in labor camps.



Tens of thousands of Hong Kong People Marched Into the Streets to Protest the Proposed Enactment of Article 23

Hong Kong People Oppose Article 23

The Hong Kong's Apple Daily reported that a survey conducted by the Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong showed that nearly 70% of Hong Kong citizens oppose enactment of Article 23. Hong Kong's Bar Association, Catholic Church, Teachers' Union, and Journalists Association are just a few of the dozens of organizations who are busily opposing the legislation.

Bay Area Chinese Oppose Article 23



A Parade in Chinatown, San Francisco

On December 25, 2002 the World Journal (prominent Chinese language newspaper) reported that a TV audience in the Bay area responded to Article 23 with mostly opposing comments. The Chinese audience in

San Jose pointed out that Article 23 contains obscure definitions, and would lead to the same abuses that take place in Mainland China against groups such as Falun Gong.

Southern California Falun Gong Practitioners Join Rally

The Hong Kong government's Article 23 "anti-subversion law" legislation has affected the overseas Chinese. The Los Angeles Chinese community has responded quickly. Eleven US-based Chinese groups with Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland backgrounds assembled on December 14th for a press conference to express their strong opposition to the Article 23 legislation.



A Press Conference in Chinatown, Los Angeles

Amnesty International - Potential for Abuse

On December 9, 2002, Amnesty International released a statement expressing its concern for Article 23: The current government proposals are vague and ill-defined, contrary to international law and standards... and may increase restrictions on fundamental human rights. There is a danger that those exercising these rights could be imprisoned as prisoners of conscience.

Young Christine's Story

My name is Christine Lin. I am 13 years old and live in San Francisco. I have been practicing Falun Dafa for three years. I had a rare skin condition that no doctor could cure. It started when I was 7 years old. First, my mother took me to all of the Chinese doctors. When that didn't work, she took me to all of the Western ones. From allergy shots to all kinds of uncommon medicine, and even dangerous herbs, I had tried it all and nothing worked. Just as we were about to hit rock bottom, we struck gold.

One day a friend of my mother's friends invited us over to her home. She used to have severe arthritis and had trouble sitting down. When she started practicing Falun Gong, her arthritis completely disappeared. She even demonstrated double lotus sitting to us.

We eagerly asked her the place to learn this exercise, and went there the very next morning. People there taught us the five sets of exercises and gave us a book, *Zhuan Falun*. We like Falun Dafa's principles: Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance. I started practicing the exercises and reading the book. Within a year, my skin condition completely cleared up. I also began doing better in school, and my relationships with my friends have greatly improved.

In the summer of 2000, my mom and I traveled to China to tour Beijing and visit my grandparents in another city. However, my vacation ended in jail. We were arrested while visiting a friend in Beijing, just because we are Falun Gong practitioners. The policemen took us into their van, and threw nine of us into a small dusty room. They interrogated us until midnight. They threatened me, saying my school would expel me. I didn't tell them that I'm from the U.S. because we still wanted to visit my grandparents.

That night we slept on the floor.

The next day was very hot. The only food for us was the bottles of water. They separated my mom and me. Later, I saw mom through the iron bar door. She was in handcuffs. That wasn't fair! My mom did nothing wrong. I felt like crying. Later that afternoon, it was boiling hot. Our small room filled with heat and the smell of cigarettes from other rooms. I felt horrible. I was dizzy and tired. Mom asked to send me to a hospital. After a while, they finally let us walk to a nearby clinic with a guard.

The police somehow found out that we were from the U.S. They forced us to return immediately to the U.S. So we returned to the United States with a cancelled passport.

Even though I was not born in China, it is my home country. Unfortunately, their government is so unreasonable and awful that I feel very disappointed. So I decided to write to President Bush. I told him about my trip to Beijing and my experiences as a young practitioner. I asked him to help end the persecution in China. I did this because I love Falun Dafa. It has changed all our lives and brought happiness to our families. I am forever grateful for Falun Dafa.



Christine meditating in front of San Francisco City Hall

What is Falun Gong?

Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is an ancient mind-body self-improvement meditation practice. Along with five gentle exercises, Li Hongzhi's teachings of Falun Gong emphasize the cultivation of one's moral character through following the universe's benevolent characteristic of:



Truthfulness

Compassion

Forbearance

Falun Gong Newsletter in California

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