

Country Advice China

China – CHN36903 – Falun Gong – 25 April 1999 – Human organ trade 25 June 2010

1. Information available from Falun Gong itself, suggests there was absolutely no problem at a demonstration by Falun Gong practitioners in Beijing on 25 April 1999 – no violence and no arrests. Can you confirm?

No violence or arrests at the demonstration by Falun Gong practitioners in Beijing on 25 April 1999 have been reported. In addition to Falun Gong sources, non-Falun Gong sources have also indicated that the demonstration was quiet and peaceful. Although the police were represented in force, they were said to be polite and low-key.

A Falun Gong website, falundafa.org, stated that the demonstration on 25 April 1999 in Beijing was "peaceful and orderly". ¹

Jennifer Zeng, a Falun Gong practitioner at the 25 April 1999 demonstration, in her book *Witnessing History: One Woman's Fight for Freedom and Falun Gong*, published in 2005, described the actions of the police in the following terms:

There were some police cars and police officers around throughout the morning, but buses and pedestrians went about their business. Some people just hurried by but others stopped to ask what we were doing. As the afternoon wore on, the police presence increased and the officers were constantly on their walkie-talkies to each other. The atmosphere grew a little tense as pedestrian and bus traffic ceased and we guessed that the police had sealed the street off at both ends. I was amused to see the police rushing up and down in a lather while we stood quite still and calm.

About three o'clock the police passed a circular among the crowd. It had a red seal on it and apparently emanated from the Beijing Bureau of Public Security. The gist of it was that we should not heed rumours, we should leave quickly, we should maintain public order, and so on. However, there was not a word about the arrest and beating of the Tianjin Falun Gong practitioners².

We read the notice but not a single person left. No further notices were issued, and a number of police were stationed across the road to watch us.

We stood or sat quietly, chatting among ourselves or reading. From time to time somebody would emerge from the crowd with a plastic bag and collect empty mineral water bottles and disposable food containers, picking up the rubbish and cigarette butts discarded by passers-by and the police.³

¹ 'Answers to commonly asked questions about Falun Gong/Falun Dafa' 1999, Falun Dafa website http://www.falundafa.org/eng/faq.htm – Accessed 23 June 2004 – Attachment 1.

² The 25 April 1999 demonstration was triggered by the arrest of Falun Gong practitioners in Tianjin earlier in the month ('Answers to commonly asked questions about Falun Gong/Falun Dafa' 1999, Falun Dafa website http://www.falundafa.org/eng/faq.htm — Accessed 23 June 2004 — Attachment 1; Ownby, David 2008, *Falun Gong and the Future of China*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p.171 — Attachment 2.

³ Zeng, Jennifer 2005, *Witnessing History: One Woman's Fight for Freedom and Falun Gong*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest NSW., p.32 – Attachment 3.

Non-Falun Gong sources such as David Ownby, a Professor of History at the University of Montreal, Dr. Benjamin Penny, an academic at the Australian National University, and the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board reported on the peacefulness and the nonviolence of the 25 April 1999 demonstration.

David Ownby, in his book Falun Gong and the Future of China published in 2008, wrote that the demonstration was peaceful and non-violent:

...On the morning of 25 April, some 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners in the capital "spontaneously" gathered outside one of the western gates to Zhongnanhai in an impressive and largely silent demonstration. As in the case of other Falun Gong protests, this one was completely peaceful and nonviolent; the thousands of practitioners collectively limited their consumption of food and drink over the course of the sixteen or so hours of their protest, so as not to overwhelm the capacity of the public toilets, an act of civic conscience rarely witnessed in China – or elsewhere, for that matter.4

...most of the thousands of Falun Gong practitioners waited patiently and quietly all day long – and much of the evening. The fact that they were allowed to do so – that they were not harassed or dispersed – suggests a cautious response on the part of China's senior leadership, surely reflecting their indecision about what course to take. This indecision was soon to come to an abrupt end.⁵

Dr. Benjamin Penny, in outlining the events of 25 April 1999 to the Refugee Review Tribunal in August 2003 did not mention any violence or arrests occurring on that day. The demonstrators were said to be quiet and the police polite and low-key. Dr. Penny stated:

Thus, a couple of days later, on Sunday April 25, 1999 more than ten thousand practitioners congregated outside Zhongnanhai, the compound in the centre of Beijing that houses the highest officials of the Chinese government and the Communist Party. The first protesters arrived late on the evening of the 24th and by the early hours of the morning groups started gathering at the northern and western gates of the compound. By eight o'clock the protesters formed a line stretching more than two kilometres around the north and west walls of Zhongnanhai, in some places eight deep. Some also gathered at the southern entrance on Changan Boulevard, one of Beijing's major eastwest thoroughfares. The Public Security Bureau sealed the streets around about for the duration of the protest and Changan Boulevard adjacent to Tiananmen Square was also closed – necessitating long traffic detours. The entrances to Zhongnanhai were guarded by groups of policemen and police vehicles patrolled constantly; the protesters were corralled onto the western footpath over the road from the entrances to Zhongnanhai and were guarded by police – "one policeman for every meter," according to one Hong Kong journalist who also reported that "pedestrians were barred from approaching or joining the protest."

This was easily the largest protest that the Chinese capital had seen since the 1989 Tiananmen protests – and it took place only a little over a month short of the tenth anniversary of their violent suppression. Unlike 1989, however, these demonstrators were neither young nor overtly political. Journalists reported that they were largely middle aged or elderly and did not shout slogans, hold banners or hand out leaflets. Instead, they stood or sat quietly, many in the lotus position and most of them, apparently, were reluctant to discuss the purpose of their demonstration with curious members of the press. While most of these Falun Gong adherents were from Beijing,

⁴ Ownby, David 2008, Falun Gong and the Future of China, Oxford University Press, Oxford, p.171 – Attachment 2.

⁵ Ownby, David 2008, Falun Gong and the Future of China, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp.172-173 – Attachment 2.

many others had come from Tianjin or Hebei with a small representation from more distant provinces north and south. By nine that night, the locals had quietly made their way home and those from outside Beijing had been taken by bus to the railway station and given tickets home. By all accounts the police were polite and low-key, even if they were represented in force. Apparently the protesters collected their litter before they left. Bus drivers reported that the roads around Tiananmen were only reopened at 11.30 that night.⁶

A report by the Canadian Immigration and Refugee also commented on the quietness of the demonstrators and the police restraint:

... The 10,000 protesters in Beijing reportedly came from all over China and stood or meditated in silence, carrying no banners, in a two kilometre line around the north and west boundaries of the Zhongnanhai compound, "the seat of power of China's central government" (AFP 25 Apr. 1999). The police were restrained in their response to the Beijing protestors and "politely asked them to disperse" (ibid.; see also BBC 26 Apr. 1999)...⁷

2. In November 2009, did big police vans pick people up off the street, at work, and subject them to a battery of tests, over a number of hours, in order to check out their organs – on the basis they were known Falun Gong practitioners in the past. The Kilgour/Matas claims, even if true, do not support this method of organ harvesting - they refer to Falun Gong people sentenced to death and various institutions. Any reliable reports of this type of police activity?

No information was found on this type of police activity, that is a police van being used to pick up a person off the street and carry out tests to check out the person's organs on the basis of being a known Falun Gong practitioner. There are reports of police being involved in trading human organs from executed prisoners, including the use of "execution vans".

⁶ Penny, Benjamin 2003, Falun Gong: What was it? and what is it now? A talk for the Refugee Review Tribunal National Members' Conference, 29 August, p.5 – Attachment 4.

⁷ Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1999, *CHN33180.EX – China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong, Falungong); history, details of practice, organizational structures; treatment of practitioners; laws and practice regarding other non-recognized practices and religions*, 26 November – Attachment 5.

⁸ Malone, Andrew 2009, 'The Death Mobile', *Daily Mail*, 28 March – Attachment 6; Magnier, Mark and Zarembo, Alan 2006, 'China admits to organ market', *Chicago Tribune*, 18 November http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2006-11-18/news/0611180201_1_transplanted-kidneys-and-livers-organ-market – Accessed 25 June 2010 – Attachment 7; MacLeod, Calum 2006, 'China makes ultimate punishment mobile', *USA Today*, 15 June http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-06-14-death-van_x.htm – Accessed 23 June 2010 – Attachment 8.

Attachments

- 'Answers to commonly asked questions about Falun Gong/Falun Dafa' 1999, Falun Dafa website http://www.falundafa.org/eng/faq.htm Accessed 23 June 2004. (CISNET China CX97729)
- 2. Ownby, David 2008, *Falun Gong and the Future of China*, Oxford University Press, Oxford. (MRT-RRT Library
- 3. Zeng, Jennifer 2005, Witnessing History: One Woman's Fight for Freedom and Falun Gong, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest NSW. (MRT-RRT Library
- 4. Penny, Benjamin 2003, Falun Gong: What was it? and what is it now? A talk for the Refugee Review Tribunal National Members' Conference, 29 August.
- 5. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1999, *CHN33180.EX China: Falun Dafa* (*Falun Gong, Falungong*); history, details of practice, organizational structures; treatment of practitioners; laws and practice regarding other non-recognized practices and religions, 26 November.
- 6. Malone, Andrew 2009, 'The Death Mobile', Daily Mail, 28 March. (FACTIVA)
- 7. Magnier, Mark and Zarembo, Alan 2006, 'China admits to organ market', *Chicago Tribune*, 18 November http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2006-11-
 http://articles.chicagotribune.com/2006-11-
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- 8. MacLeod, Calum 2006, 'China makes ultimate punishment mobile', *USA Today*, 15 June http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2006-06-14-death-van_x.htm Accessed 23 June 2010.