

**Refugee Review Tribunal
AUSTRALIA**

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

- 1. Any significant incidents related to FG in Shandong province up to Oct 2006 that the Tribunal could expect the applicant to be aware of?**
- 2. Anything else of relevance?**

RESPONSE

A note on Falun Gong and Chinese government sources

Dr. Benjamin Penny, from the Australian National University, has advised the Tribunal that:

...There are two main sources of information on Falun gong: Falun gong itself and the Chinese government. Currently, as I'm sure you are aware, these two entities are not well disposed towards each other and their information services are resolute in their respective condemnations. In these circumstances, one has to be reasonably careful in taking any claim from either source at face value (Penny, Benjamin 2001, *The Past, Present and Future of Falun gong*, Paper presented to a seminar at the Refugee Review Tribunal in Sydney, Australia, 4 May, p.1 – Attachment 1).

He continued in another advice to the Tribunal that, in his opinion, "neither the story told about Falun Gong by the Chinese Government, nor that told by the Falun Gong organization, can be regarded as reliable" (Penny, Benjamin 2003, 'Falun Gong: What was it? and what is it now?', Talk for the Refugee Review Tribunal National Members' Conference, 29 August, p.2 – Attachment 2).

1. Any significant incidents related to Falun Gong in Shandong province up to Oct 2006 that the Tribunal could expect the applicant to be aware of?

Country information indicates a number of incidents relating to the Falun Gong in Shandong province up to October 2006. There are reports on demonstrations in support of detained Falun Gong leaders and members interrupting television broadcasts in Yantai. The Chinese government reportedly carried out an anti-Falun Gong campaign in rural Shandong. Other sources report the arrest and mistreatment of practitioners in the province. A Falun Gong source noted that a Falun Gong conference was held in Shandong and a Yantai Falun Dafa Day was established.

Demonstrations

The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada sourced information to *Tai Yang Pao* that more than 100,000 Falun Gong members staged protests on 21 July 1999 in over 30 cities in 12 provinces including Shandong. The protests were reportedly in response to an earlier roundup of Falun Gong leaders resulting in the arrest of “‘over 10,000 protestors’ of whom ‘most ... were released the same day’” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2002, *CHN40180.E – China: Demonstrations by Falun Gong practitioners in Yantai, Shandong province, July and August 1999 and/or August 2001*, 22 November – Attachment 3).

Also, the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), in a chronological listing of events for the Falun Gong, sourced to the Associated Press a report that in July 1999 about 5,000 Falun Gong practitioners gathered outside government offices in Weifang city, Shandong. The demonstration protested against articles in a local scientific magazine that described the group as superstitious, its founder, Li Hongzhi, as a “‘swindler’” and its followers as “‘fools’” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1999, *CHN3325.EX – China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong, Falungong) update; update to CHN33180.EX of 26 November 1999; update to CHN33002.EX of 8 October 1999 regarding Falun Dafa in Fujian province; existence of any documentation associated with Falun Dafa practice*, 3 December – Attachment 4).

Television broadcasts

In June 2002 television broadcasts in Yantai city and Laiyang county in Shandong were interrupted. In Yantai, a blurred image reportedly appeared on television screens for 10-12 seconds with the message “‘Falun Dafa (Falungong) is good’”. A Falun Gong follower was detained on suspicion of planning illicit broadcasts in Yantai and other Shandong cities (‘Falungong launches series of TV network hijackings in China’ 2002, *Agence France-Presse*, 26 June – Attachment 5; Armitage, Catherine 2002, ‘Breaking news – Falun Gong’s on TV’, *The Australian*, 29 June – Attachment 6; ‘China holds Falun Gong follower suspected of planning illicit broadcasts’ 2002, *Associated Press Newswires*, 30 September – Attachment 7).

Anti-Falun Gong campaigns

In April 2004 the Xinhua News Agency reported that an anti-Falun Gong campaign in the rural areas of Shandong, including Yantai city had been successful (‘Chinese agency reports anti-Falun Gong campaign in rural Shandong’ 2004, *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, source: Xinhua news agency, 22 April – Attachment 8).

The INS chronological listing on the Falun Gong sourced to the Xinhua News Agency a report that in July 1999 the government destroyed over 2 million Falun Gong publications – over 80,000 publications in Shandong including about 30,000 books and 28,000 video cassettes (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1999, *CHN3325.EX – China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong, Falungong) update; update to CHN33180.EX of 26 November 1999; update to CHN33002.EX of 8 October 1999 regarding Falun Dafa in Fujian province; existence of any documentation associated with Falun Dafa practice*, 3 December – Attachment 4).

According to the Canadian Immigration and Refugee Board the Xinhua News Agency reported in October 1999 that Falun Gong practitioners had been accused of stealing state secrets. The article is said to have described cases in Shandong, and other provinces, where practitioners were alleged to have illegally obtained and distributed documents related to the government's campaign against Falun Dafa (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2000, *CHN33627.E – China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong; Falungong); treatment of ordinary practitioners as compared to treatment of alleged leaders and other prominent practitioners; Update to CHN33255.EX of 15 December 1999 regarding Falun Dafa in Fujian province, treatment of practitioners*, 21 January – Attachment 9).

Mistreatment of practitioners

In October 1999 it was reported that a Falun Gong practitioner, Zhao Jinhua, died at a police station in Zhangzong, Shandong. Other deaths in Shandong in 1999 were also reported by Amnesty International (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1999, *CHN3325.EX – China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong, Falungong) update; update to CHN33180.EX of 26 November 1999; update to CHN33002.EX of 8 October 1999 regarding Falun Dafa in Fujian province; existence of any documentation associated with Falun Dafa practice*, 3 December – Attachment 4; Amnesty International 2000, *People's Republic of China. the Crackdown on Falun Gong and Other So-Called "Heretical Organizations"*, 23 March, ASA 17/11/00, Sect.10 – Attachment 10).

According to Amnesty International, in September 1999, several Falun Gong practitioners from Jiaozhou city, Shandong were reportedly detained in a mental hospital together with mental patients (Amnesty International 2000, *People's Republic of China. the Crackdown on Falun Gong and Other So-Called "Heretical Organizations"*, 23 March, ASA 17/11/00, Sect.8 – Attachment 10).

Amnesty International stated that four practitioners from Zhaoyuan county, Shandong were detained in November 1999 for disclosing the details of the death of Zhao Jinhua. It was reported that two of the practitioners received 3 years of "re-education through labour" (Amnesty International 2000, *People's Republic of China. the Crackdown on Falun Gong and Other So-Called "Heretical Organizations"*, 23 March, ASA 17/11/00, Sect.7 – Attachment 10; Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2000, *CHN33627.E – China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong; Falungong); treatment of ordinary practitioners as compared to treatment of alleged leaders and other prominent practitioners; Update to CHN33255.EX of 15 December 1999 regarding Falun Dafa in Fujian province, treatment of practitioners*, 21 January – Attachment 9).

A typical Falun Gong report which includes information on the mistreatment and deaths of Falun Gong practitioners in Shandong is: Falun Dafa Information Center 2001, *A Serial Report Regarding The Arbitrary Detention Against The Falun Gong Practitioners In The People's Republic Of China*, 11 January – Attachment 11.

Other events

Information accessed from a Falun Gong website states that, on 19 November 2000, practitioners in Shandong held the “2000 Shandong Falun Dafa Experience Sharing Conference”. It continued “Several tens of Falun Gong practitioners from nine different areas attended the conference” (‘A Chronicle of Major Events of Falun Dafa’ (undated), Clearwisdom website <http://www.w.clearwisdom.net/emh/articles/2004/8/27/chronicle.html> – Accessed 6 March 2007 – Attachment 12).

The same Falun Gong chronology also mentioned that a “‘Yantai City Falun Dafa Day’”/ “‘Yantai Falun Dafa Day’” was established. The source gave the establishment dates as 11 February 2002 and 6 March 2002 respectively (‘A Chronicle of Major Events of Falun Dafa’ (undated), Clearwisdom website <http://www.w.clearwisdom.net/emh/articles/2004/8/27/chronicle.html> – Accessed 6 March 2007 – Attachment 12).

2. Anything else of relevance?

No information was found in the sources consulted on Hauxinjiayuan or Zhiliq.

List of Sources Consulted

Internet Sources:

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

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

Chang, Maria Hsia 2004, *Falun Gong: The End of Days*, Yale University Press, New Haven

List of Attachments

1. Penny, Benjamin 2001, The Past, Present and Future of Falun gong, Paper presented to a seminar at the Refugee Review Tribunal in Sydney, Australia, 4 May, p.1.
2. Penny, Benjamin 2003, 'Falun Gong: What was it? and what is it now?', Talk for the Refugee Review Tribunal National Members' Conference, 29 August, p.2.
3. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2002, *CHN40180.E – China: Demonstrations by Falun Gong practitioners in Yantai, Shandong province, July and August 1999 and/or August 2001*, 22 November. (REFINFO)
4. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1999, *CHN3325.EX – China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong, Falungong) update; update to CHN33180.EX of 26 November 1999; update to CHN33002.EX of 8 October 1999 regarding Falun Dafa in Fujian province; existence of any documentation associated with Falun Dafa practice*, 3 December. (REFINFO)
5. 'Falungong launches series of TV network hijackings in China' 2002, *Agence France-Presse*, 26 June. (FACTIVA)
6. Armitage, Catherine 2002, 'Breaking news – Falun Gong's on TV', *The Australian*, 29 June. (FACTIVA)
7. 'China holds Falun Gong follower suspected of planning illicit broadcasts' 2002, *Associated Press Newswires*, 30 September. (FACTIVA)
8. 'Chinese agency reports anti-Falun Gong campaign in rural Shandong' 2004, *BBC Monitoring Asia Pacific*, source: Xinhua news agency, 22 April. (FACTIVA)
9. Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2000, *CHN33627.E – China: Falun Dafa (Falun Gong; Falungong); treatment of ordinary practitioners as compared to treatment of alleged leaders and other prominent practitioners; Update to CHN33255.EX of 15 December 1999 regarding Falun Dafa in Fujian province, treatment of practitioners*, 21 January. (REFINFO)
10. Amnesty International 2000, *People's Republic of China. the Crackdown on Falun Gong and Other So-Called "Heretical Organizations"*, 23 March, ASA 17/11/00, Sects.7-8,10.
11. Falun Dafa Information Center 2001, *A Serial Report Regarding The Arbitrary Detention Against The Falun Gong Practitioners In The People's Republic Of China*, 11 January.
12. 'A Chronicle of Major Events of Falun Dafa' (undated), Clearwisdom website <http://www.w.clearwisdom.net/emh/articles/2004/8/27/chronicle.html> – Accessed 6 March 2007.