

# The Abuse of Psychiatry in China

## Media Report:

### New York Times:

Jailed in China: Confront the Abuse (03/27/01)

To the Editor:

Re "Contortions of Psychiatry in China"  
(Editorial, March 25):

During the last year, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) has made multiple inquiries to the leadership of the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) about psychiatric abuse of political prisoners in China.

The WPA Committee on the Use and Abuse of Psychiatry has moved too slowly in the face of serious accusations about psychiatric imprisonment of Falun Gong members, union and student leaders, and others who are diagnosed as "political maniacs" and subjected to shock therapy and psycho-tropic medications.

The WPA must move with alacrity as it did at American, British and Australian insistence when psychiatry was used in the intimidation and torture of Soviet dissidents.

DANIEL B. BORENSTEIN, M.D.  
President  
American Psychiatric Association

Los Angeles  
March 25, 2001

### New York Times: Contortions of Psychiatry in China

<http://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/25/opinion/25SUN2.html?searchpv=nytToday>

The abuse of psychiatry to intimidate and torture dissidents in the Soviet Union was well documented and loudly deplored by the West. The practice in China has received less comment, but Beijing, too, imprisons nonconformists as mentally ill — a policy that deserves worldwide attention and forceful condemnation from foreign governments, including the United States.

During the Cultural Revolution, the genuinely mentally ill were routinely "treated" with political re-education, and healthy people who did not hew to the prevailing political line were often imprisoned in psychiatric hospitals. ...Today, however, the abuse of psychiatry once again appears to be increasing in China. The government has forcibly imprisoned members of Falun Gong in psychiatric hospitals. ...Movement leaders claim that some 600 members have been forcibly detained in mental hospitals. This number is impossible to verify, but journalists and human rights researchers have documented numerous cases of Falun Gong members being taken to psychiatric institutions and drugged, physically restrained, isolated or given electric shocks.

Robin Munro, a senior researcher at the University of London, explores some of these cases in an article published last month in *The Columbia Journal of Asian Law*. Mr. Munro, who has also worked for Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch investigating abuses in China, estimates that at least 3,000 people have been sent to mental hospitals for expressing political views in the past two decades, not including Falun Gong members.

Chinese mental hospitals use various inhuman "treatments" on Falun Dafa practitioners, including physical torture, relentless psychological abuse and the illegal administration of sedatives and antipsychotic drugs. The police usually place the practitioners into the hospitals by force, although sometimes trickery is used, and do not notify the family members of these incarcerations. The length of detention has so far ranged from seven days to a year and one-half. The brutal torture that has taken place there has severely disabled many practitioners both physically and mentally.

— Sunny Lu, MD "Detention and Abuse of Falun Gong Practitioners in Psychiatric Facilities in China," -Report at 2001 Geneva "Mental Health And Human Rights" Discussion.

Another alarming development is the network of new police psychiatric hospitals — called Ankangs, which means "peace and happiness" — built since 1987. Chinese law includes "political harm to society" as legally dangerous mentally ill behavior. Police are instructed to take into psychiatric custody "political maniacs," defined as people who make anti-government speeches, write reactionary letters or "express opinions on important domestic and international affairs." Erik Eckholm of *The Times* has reported that at least one labor leader was detained and given shock therapy in a psychiatric hospital. There are currently 20 Ankangs, and the government plans to build many more.

... Psychiatric imprisonment is not a widespread phenomenon compared with the Chinese government's use of prisons and labor camps for dissidents. But it is a particularly noxious practice, and one that deserves more attention and criticism than it has so far received.

*Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is an ancient spiritual practice that benefits body-mind-spirit and is guided by the universal principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance. It has five sets of gentle movements that are good for all ages. Since Master Li Hongzhi introduced it to the public in May 1992 in China, Falun Gong has benefited over 100 million people in 40 countries worldwide.*

## Tortured to Death

### Yang Weidong

A 54 year-old medical inspector  
Weifang City Medical Inspection Center.

Mr. Yang was admitted to the Psychiatric Department of Kangfu Hospital in Weifang, Shandong Province on December 8, 1999. At the time of admission he was already in critical condition because of the severe torture he had suffered at a detention center. He was denied medical care and was monitored as a "psychiatric patient" and kept guard. When doctors in the hospital realized that he was dying, they asked his family to take him home. Yang passed away on the evening of December 25th, 2000 - 5 or 6 days after his release.

### Su Gang

A 32-year-old computer engineer  
QiLu Oil Chemical Company, Zibo, Shandong Province

Mr. Su's family stated that he was in good health and had no mental illness. He had been repeatedly detained by the security department of his workplace for refusing to renounce Falun Gong.

The *Washington Post* reported: "After traveling to Beijing on April 25th to protest the ban on Falun Gong, he was arrested again; on May 23rd, his employer, a state-run petrochemical company, approved commitment papers that authorized the police to admit him to a mental hospital. According to Mr. Su's father, the doctors injected Mr. Su twice a day with an unknown substance. When Mr. Su emerged a week later, he could not eat or move his limbs normally." He could not remember what had happened to him in the hospital, and he stopped speaking. On June 10th, the previously healthy young man died.



### Shi Bei

49 year-old practitioner

According to her daughter, Ms. Shi had no mental illness. She was nevertheless involuntarily admitted to the Seventh Hospital of Hangzhou City (a psychiatric hospital) in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province. According to her daughter, Ms. Shi had no mental

illness. She was nevertheless involuntarily admitted to Seventh Hospital of Hangzhou City (a psychiatric hospital) in Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province.

In May of 2000, the Police Department of Fuyang forcefully sent Ms. Shi to the Seventh Hospital because she did not want to give up practicing Falun Gong. Under pressure from the police, the staff members at the hospital were forced to give her large doses of sedatives. They stopped giving Shi any food for a whole week in order to prevent her from talking. In the end, she starved to death. Officials from the hospital refused to comment on her case.

# Torture in Mental Hospitals

## Electric shock treatment

Because Sun Weidong, Li Shanbin, and Zhang Ping continued to practice Falun Gong after they were released from a detention center, they were placed in Linyi Psychiatric Hospital in Shandong Province without consent. For a month, they were administered drug injections and electric shock treatment. If they didn't cooperate, they would be shocked with electricity so they could be injected while they were unconscious. Yet all of them were perfectly normal people, exemplary employees at their companies. Both Sun Weidong and Li Shanbin hold bachelor's degrees.

**Three practitioners**, teachers from Xinjiang, were arrested in Beijing last July when they went to appeal for Falun Gong. Local policemen escorted them home. After arriving back in Xinjiang, the three practitioners were sent to a mental hospital where they were mistreated in various ways. They were tied to beds, forced to take medicine, and injected with very harmful medications. In order to stop the practitioners from struggling when they were tied up, **the doctors put electrodes in their ears and shocked them with electricity.** These three practitioners were **tortured until they were all half-dead and in agony from the extreme pain.** Because one practitioner refused to take medicine, the doctors used an iron bar to pry her mouth open. When the practitioner bent the iron bar with her teeth, the doctors tried to force a tube into her nostril to force-feed her. Her nostril bled heavily. The doctors injected powerful sedatives into her body, which would make the average person sleep for days.

## Nerve-damaging drugs mixed in food

*Cheng Shuping*, politics and security section chief, and Zhang Yuanting (Doctor Zhang), vice director of the Detention Center of Anqiu City's Public Security Bureau, subjected Dafa practitioners to daily persecution. They forcibly fed practitioners a **mixture of three teaspoons of milk powder, a handful of salt and a handful of drug tablets.** After mixing this concoction, the milk powder turns green. Having this mishmash administered causes one to have stomach contractions, numbness of the hands and feet, cramps and even vomiting. When some

practitioners did vomit, the persecutors would cram the vomit down their throats again. Sometimes, one force-feeding and cramming session would last five hours.

*The guards mix nerve-damaging drugs into a practitioner's food. After the practitioner eats the food and demonstrate unusual behavior, the guards declare that the practitioner has mental problems and then detain him/her as a patient at the mental hospital.*

## Forced drugs and injections

After he was released, **Sun Minghao** went to Beijing again to appeal. As a result, he was arrested and escorted back again. After 15 days of detention, his work unit forcefully sent him to the 6<sup>th</sup> Ward of Yantai Psychiatric Rehabilitation Center.

In the hospital, they were forcefully given large doses of injection and force-fed medicines for mental patients. The daily dosage increased from 3 pills to 5, then to 7. After being given 7 pills a day, the pain throughout Sun Minghao's body became unbearable. Meanwhile, no family members were allowed to visit him.

On the third day, Sun Minghao fell into a coma for a whole day and night. He was released only after his family and work unit personnel came for him two days later. The hospital forced both him and his family to promise that he would not go to Beijing again.

**Physical torture of practitioners in mental health facilities is also commonplace. Various brutal tortures are applied to the practitioners. Just as the practitioners are treated in Chinese jails and prisons, they are tortured by being bound tightly with ropes in very painful positions, beaten and shocked with electric batons, deprived of food, not allowed to sleep, force fed through gastric tubing, and shocked with high voltage through acupuncture needles**

— Sunny Lu, MD "Detention and Abuse of Falun Gong Practitioners in Psychiatric Facilities in China," -Report at 2001 Geneva "Mental Health And Human Rights" Discussion.

## Ye Hongfang

female, 31  
from Heyuan City of Guangdong Province

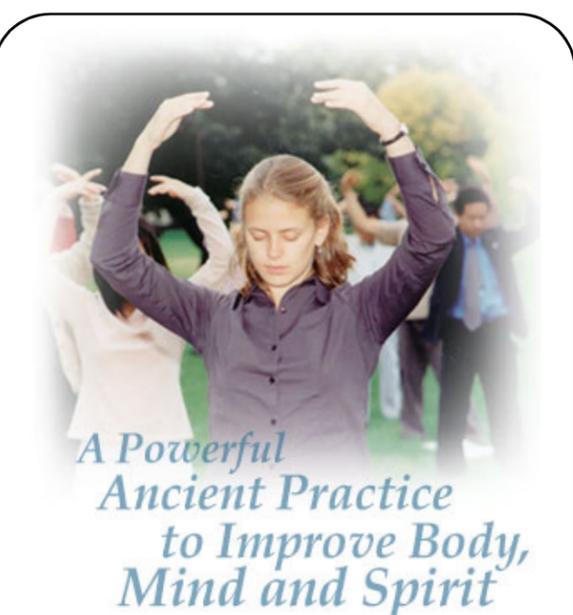
Ye Hongfang was sent to the Huizhou Mental Hospital by the Heyuan Police Department and her work unit, Heyuan Electric Power Bureau, for appealing for Falun Gong. She was tied with ropes and forcefully given injections of medication for mental patients. The doctors in the mental hospital told her that, **if she persisted in practicing Falun Gong, they would give her injections every day.** The daily forced injections and other medication made her feel very tired and weak. After about one month, Ye Hongfang's husband bailed her. During her detention in the mental hospital, **she had been injected with 26 bottles of narcotics.**

In late January 2000, because Ye Hongfang went to a neighboring county to visit a fellow practitioner, the Heyuan Police decided to send her to the mental hospital again. She refused to go with them, so the police pushed her onto a bed and injected her with a drug. After a short while, she felt weak, muddle-headed, sleepy and itchy all over. Then, they forced her into the vehicle and took her to the mental hospital again. **Doctor Luo gave her injections of narcotics, and forced her to take pills. If she refused, she was shocked with electric batons.** This time, the side effects from the medication were even worse. **She suffered cramps all over her body, loss of feeling in her arms and legs, blurred vision, lack of strength, stuffiness and her menstrual periods were disrupted.** By sometime around March 10th, she felt disabled and nearly collapsed mentally.

## Cao Jing

Female from Beijing

Arrested for distributing Falun Dafa flyers, Cao Jin was later sent to Qinglongqiao Mental Hospital, Haidian District, Beijing. She was forcibly injected and fed overdoses of drugs damaging her central nervous system on a daily basis. After 49 days of persecution, Cao Jing had almost lost her eyesight. Her bowel and her bladder activity became abnormal. Her limbs were stiff and weak, and her whole body was exhausted.



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## Why China suppresses Falun Gong

- Falun Gong teaches Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance which the Chinese government thinks is not consistent with Communism.
- Because the number of practitioners is more than that of the Communist Party, the Chinese government feels "threatened."

# Central Nervous System Damaged

## Wang Xingying

*Female, employee of Sanhuan Lock Manufactory Corp, Shandong Province.*

My name is Wang Xingying. Because I went to Beijing to appeal, and refused to renounce Dafa, my company sent me to the Laiyang Psychiatric Recovery Hospital on March 2, 2000. However, previously, on February 20, 2000, my company took me from the South Street Police Station to that mental hospital for a check-up. The results showed that I had no abnormalities.

The hospital had many sections, which detained several dozen Dafa practitioners from places like Yantai and Laiyang City. I was put in No. 2 ward. Starting from the second day, the staff tied me to the bed and forced **one IV injection and two needle injections upon me daily. I received a total of 20 bottles of IV injection and 40 needle injections. Everyday I have to take twelve pills**, ten of which I suspect were sleeping pills; I did not know what the other two were. The doctor would not tell me either. Two nurses would watch me taking the pills; they told me to show my tongue to verify that the pills were in my mouth, and to show my tongue again afterwards to make sure I had swallowed the pills. At that time, there were six Dafa practitioners like me held captive in ward No. 2.

At one time the **practitioners were restrained and shocked on the head with electric needles**. If we practiced the exercises, we would be tied to our beds. Practitioners were kept in separate rooms to be watched and real mental patients in those rooms were instructed to report on them to the doctors. When I recited Falun Gong articles, my roommates came forward and hit me. When we hid in the bathroom to practice, they beat us when they found out. After the mistreatment in the hospital, I **could not eat, my whole body was fatigued, both legs were bent crookedly and could not be straightened, my eyelids drooped so much that my eyes only opened halfway, my jaw**

**Due to the heavy dose given of medications like Perphenazine, Chlorpromazine, Fluphenazine, Fluorohydroxypiperidine and other unknown substances, many practitioners suffer tremendously from toxic effects such as: loss of memory, severe headache, fainting, extreme weakness, muscle stiffness and rigidity, protrusion of the tongue and other dystonic reactions, uncontrollable tremors, nausea, vomiting, seizures, loss of consciousness, etc. Some of the severe cases resemble Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome.**

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**lost muscle strength** so I could only close my mouth halfway; and I became *constipated*. The worst part was I couldn't sleep because my **feet jerked uncontrollably**; sitting and standing were very hard, and **my legs would always shake me off my feet**.

On March 30, when my husband came to pick me up, the director would not release me. Seeing my tortured and badly emaciated body, my husband insisted on taking me home. Despite my condition, the director still **required my husband to buy 5 bottles of sleeping pills to force me to take at home**. Four days after I got home, my whole body turned yellow, my eyes became yellowish green, and I vomited. The emergency examination at a hospital showed **my liver to be seriously poisoned by the drugs forced upon me. My ammonium transferase level was 40 times higher** than normal after my imprisonment in the mental hospital. When my fellow practitioners finally saw me, they were all shocked. The staff of the mental hospital caused me severe damage: **my eyes stared blankly, my eyelids could not open fully, my chin sagged, and I had lost much hair**.

I was forced to stay at the mental hospital from March 2 - 30, 2000. My husband and I had to pay for all the expenses of my stay there.

## Tan Guihua

*Female, 42 years old*

On September 12, 1999, Tan went back home after appealing for Falun Gong in Beijing. Before she could even sit down, some officers from her work unit and the Politics and Law Commission broke into her home and dragged her to the mental hospital.

When they arrived at the hospital, a large dose of injection was waiting for her. Tan refused to take the injection. Then a tall nurse went out and brought back eight mental patients. They held her down and gave her an injection. Within a few seconds, she **felt faint and sick** and her **heart was beating extremely fast**. She had to press her head against the wall and hold the ground firmly with both hands. While in great pain, she tightly bit the corner of the comforter in her mouth and tried not to make any noise. Her mouth bled from the biting. Then she **lost consciousness**.

Each day a female doctor would ask her whether she continued to practice Falun Gong or not. To an answer of 'yes', the **doctor would shock her with electrical needles**. She was **shocked for a total of seven times**. For two months, Ms. Tan was **forced with medicines and given injections three times a day**.

Later, that lady doctor asked a nurse to give her another kind of injection. It was said to be a kind of imported medicine, and the drug effect would last for over one month. After the injection, Tan's period stopped coming. Her **eyeballs could not move and her reflexes slowed down**. A few days later, they added another drug to the injection. After that shot, Tan's body **shook violently all over and could not even hold a bowl**. The **torture continued for 20 days**. By the time her family picked her up, Tan was so muddleheaded she could not see things clearly. Her head was totally blank and she could not recall much at all. Her whole body was puffy, her **eyes looked dull**, and her reflexes were slow. It took a long time for her to say a word.

## Qiu Liying, Duan Jingjing, He Jing & Zhao Shuying

*Forcibly sent to Tangshan City Mental Hospital, Hebei Province, they were diagnosed with "Crankiness Psychosis". The reason for the punishment is simply that they did not give up practicing Falun Gong. The four went on a hunger strike to protest the illegal detention.*

In the mental hospital, they were tied to beds, pricked with electric needles, and force-fed medications that destroy the central nervous system. **After 12 hours, Duan Jingjing**, a young lady, **was not able to put her tongue back in her mouth** after she had been force-fed drugs. Her **face turned purple** and she tossed back and forth in her bed. The people in the hospital were scared. They asked a director of the labor camp for instruction, but the director said, "It's nothing. Continue to give her the medicine." It was discovered that the hospital did this to her to make money. Afterwards the staff feared that the practitioners might die from this and therefore quietly stopped the medicine.

**Recently, the abuse of medications has been expanded to the prisons or labor camps, where even more powerful medications are used to control the practitioners' minds.**

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## He Xianggu & Zhang Xiaomei

*Nurses at the Health Center for Women and Children in Hunan Province*

Ms He and Ms Zhang were detained for 15 days after they came back from appealing in Beijing. Led by Wu Shifan, secretary of the Party Committee of the health center, several officials tied up the two nurses and sent them to the Hunan Mental Hospital (the brain hospital of Hunan province) at the beginning of this year. In the mental hospital, the practitioners were injected with **fluorohydroxypiperidine, a long-term retardant to the nervous system**. This is the most potent drug used to treat schizophrenia and it is usually for very severe cases. While injecting the drug, the doctor claimed that it was for protecting the brain. The long-lasting toxic injections caused the practitioners physical and psychological disorders to various degrees.

# Forced into Mental Institutions

## Zhao Xinli

has been detained in the 261 Mental Hospital of Liberation Army since the end of February of 2000. According to information sources, he has already been tortured to the point of disfiguration. The doctor would either beat up him or abuse him verbally. He was shocked with electrical probe and given injections that made him become extremely weak. A guard even said things such as, "Now he can not run away!"



According to an AFP news report on June 28, "He (Zhao Xinli) was placed in a PLA mental hospital in Beijing and injected daily with a drug which harmed his nervous system, leaving him physically weak and muddled, the center said."

"Five other PLA members and Falungong believers are also incarcerated at the hospital, the center quoted sources saying."

After the case of Zhao Xinli was reported by western medias, in order to avoid criticisms, the authorities have secretly transferred Zhao Xinli. Zhao's whereabouts is unknown now.

**All the practitioners were mentally normal and stable when they were first taken to the psychiatric facilities. The 1,000 cases that we know about include physicians, nurses, an associate professor, a judge, military personnel, police officers, teachers, a computer engineer, etc., all of whom were known to have functioned at a high level in society prior to their incarceration.**

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**Zhang Bangrun** was detained for going to Beijing to appeal. Zuo Jin (the deputy general secretary of the towns local Communist Party, and the person in charge of dealing with the Falun Gong problem) and his subordinates sent her to the Chongqing No. 1 Mental Hospital against her will. She was injected with drugs and locked into a dark, windowless room with no food or water. Her family was not allowed to see her. The head doctor told her relatives: She does not have any mental problems. She is simply being persecuted for being a Falun Gong practitioner. She is suffering so much and I feel so sorry for her. Five witnesses can testify the mistreatments. When they were finally allowed to see her, she was in such bad condition that they could hardly recognize her.

All Falun Dafa activities are open to the public and free of charge. To find a practice location near you, call the number or visit the website below:

**1 (877) FALUN99 (toll free)**  
**www.faluninfo.net**  
**www.falundafa.org**

The history of medicine in the 20th century is darkened by the downfall of the German medical profession. Fifty years ago in Nuremberg, twenty-three German doctors guilty of appalling human rights abuses were prosecuted for their crimes against humanity. Most received sentences that ranged from short imprisonment to death. There is no reason to believe that the events that took place under Hitler were unique and will never happen again. Those atrocities could happen again. And they are happening now in China.

## PRESS-STATEMENT ON POLITICAL ABUSE OF PSYCHIATRY IN CHINA April 10, 2001

### Geneva Initiative on Psychiatry

**There is strong evidence that the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) is using psychiatry as a means of repression against its citizens. This has most recently come to light because of the persecution of members of the Falun Gong group. However, this practice by no means started with this particular group.**

A number of individuals have documented this practice in China but the most notable one, to date, has been Mr. Robin Munro, Senior Research Fellow at the Law Department and Centre of Chinese Studies at the University of London. Prior to returning to his native U.K., Mr. Munro served as China Researcher and Director of the Hong Kong Office of Human Rights Watch.

Geneva Initiative on Psychiatry, while having no previous involvement in China, believes that it is imperative to speak out against these abuses as we did against the use of psychiatry for political purposes in the former USSR. Our Statutes and ByLaws mandate our involvement in working against psychiatric abuse wherever it may occur – and, thus, this initiative. We are aware that there are many good and caring psychiatrists in China, just as there were in the former USSR. China physicians have had the benefit of more contact with the West in the last 20 years than was the case in the days of the USSR. We don't want to see our ethical Chinese colleagues have to stand alone in this fight against the use of the profession for political purposes. Thus, we feel compelled to assist whenever and wherever we can.

### The Issue of Political Abuse in China

As in Soviet times, the political abuse of psychiatry has been used in China for dissidents, religious believers, persistent petitioners, and whistle-blowers. This practice seemed to have begun in China in the 1950's or early 1960's and was used in unique and very widespread ways during the Cultural Revolution. From 1978 onwards, it appears that more classic Soviet-style psychiatric abuse has been employed. There is a wealth of documentary evidence as to psychiatric abuse in China, much of it published in Chinese journals. According to official sources approximately 15% of all forensic psychiatric cases during the 1980s were political. More recently, figures from the *Chinese Journal of Psychiatry* and other journals suggest that the level of such abuse had fallen below five percent in the early 1990s. However, there has been a major resurgence of psychiatric abuse in China since July 1999, with hundreds of members of the Falun Gong religious group having been forcibly sent to mental asylums by the police as part of a wider government crackdown against the group.

Until 1987, it appears that China didn't have much in terms of secure mental hospitals – since then, mental illness has increased, serious crime is on the rise and now an entire, secretive network of forensic psychiatric hospitals have been established...called the "Ankang" system which translates to mean "Peace and Health." There are approximately 20 Ankang Institutes and the staff there is employed by the Ministry of Public Security, similar to the Special Psychiatric Hospitals in the USSR. Psychiatrists who work there wear white coats over their military uniforms. The Chinese government aims to eventually have one Ankang Hospital in every Chinese city of more than 1 million people.

There is no organization other than Geneva Initiative on Psychiatry that is working to mobilize the international community in the fight against all abuses of psychiatry for political purposes and, certainly, no other group with the proven record of success in this area. It is imperative to move ahead rapidly in order to save lives and to take advantage of political and non-political events in the near future where advocacy activities can be highlighted.

The objective of the Geneva Initiative campaign is to terminate the political abuse of psychiatry in the People's Republic of China. In order to achieve that goal the following objectives need to be reached:

- a. to inform the general public of the ongoing abuse of psychiatry for political purposes in China;

## Responses of International Psychiatric Communities

### APA Committee Calls for Investigation Of Chinese Psychiatric Abuses

**The media and human rights groups have reported on recent psychiatric abuses of Falun Gong practitioners in China by the government. An APA committee wants the World Psychiatric Association to investigate the matter.**

APA's Committee on the Abuse of Psychiatry and Psychiatrists passed a resolution last month at APA's annual meeting in Chicago recommending that the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) investigate the alleged wrongful detention of Falun Gong practitioners in psychiatric hospitals.

The resolution will be reviewed by the Council on Professional Values and Human Dignity at the fall component meetings, according to committee member Abraham Halpern, M.D.

The resolution is the latest step by APA members to draw attention to alleged psychiatric abuses of some Falun Gong practitioners. Falun Gong, also known as Falun Dafa, is described by practitioners as a meditative discipline that benefits the mind, body, and spirit. Falun Gong's Appeal has spread to numerous countries including the United States. Practitioners assert that it is not a religion or an organization.

The Chinese government, however, declared last July that Falun Gong is a religious cult and outlawed the practice. Since then, an estimated 35,000 Falun Gong practitioners were arrested, and 5,000 were sent to labor camps without trials, according to Erping Zhang, a Falun Gong spokesperson who testified in March before the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom.

A 1999-2000 report on human rights violations compiled by Falun Gong practitioners documents more than 200 arrests, detentions in mental hospitals, and forced injections of harmful drugs.

Halpern commented to Psychiatric News that the Chinese government wants to discredit Falun Gong practitioners by labeling them as mentally ill and dangerous. He said that reporters for the New York Times in China have interviewed practitioners detained in psychiatric hospitals who confirmed the abuse of psychiatry.

Halpern also wrote WPA Secretary General Juan Mezzich, M.D., in February asking the WPA to investigate allegations of forced detentions of Falun Gong practitioners in psychiatric hospitals. Mezzich told Halpern last month that he had forwarded the letter to WPA's executive committee for action.

Halpern also wrote to Allan Tasman, M.D., who was then APA president, and Jeffrey Geller, M.D., who was then chair of APA's Council on International Affairs, suggesting they raise concerns about alleged

### The World Psychiatric Association Intends to Investigate China's Mental Hospital's Role in the Abuse and Persecution of Falun Gong Practitioners

From September 30 to October 4, 2001, the International Conference of the World Psychiatric Association was held in Madrid, Spain. Members from Asia, Europe, South America and North America participated in the conference.

During the conference, delegates had a special discussion on China's abuse of psychiatric treatment in the persecution of its so-called "dissidents," especially Falun Gong practitioners. Dr. Von Veren, the acting chairman of the Psychiatric Treatment Abuse Prevention Organization, based in Geneva, presided over the discussion.

The former chairman of the British Psychiatric Association, Dr. Jim Berley, and an American Psychiatric Association member both made speeches in which they expressed their concern and denounced China's use of psychiatric institutions to persecute dissidents, people with religious beliefs, and especially a large number of peaceful Falun Gong practitioners over the past two years. They appealed to the World Psychiatric Association (WPA) to launch a three-sided probe and to stop the acts that violate the International Human Rights Pact and professional morality. The chairman of the Investigation Committee of the WPA, Dr. Kastrup, was also invited to deliver a speech representing the WPA.

Dr. Kastrup pointed out that the WPA had clarified the norms and regulations that every member should observe and disallowed any acts of psychiatric abuse since the Hawaii Declaration and later, the Madrid Declaration. China, as a member of the WPA, should strictly observe these norms and regulations. She said, "The committee has sent a letter of concern to the Chinese Psychiatric Association to ask them to cooperate with the investigation." She also said, "The committee will organize an investigative team consisting of international experts and Chinese psychiatric doctors as soon as possible and provide training on issues related to the norms and regulations of the World Psychiatric Association."

Prof. Cox, the current chairman of British Royal Psychiatric Association, also spoke at the conference. He required that the investigation committee implement a resolution, which was passed by an overwhelming majority in July by the European branch of the association. According to the resolution, an investigative team should be sent to China, and China's membership in the WPA will be reconsidered if any acts of abuse are found.

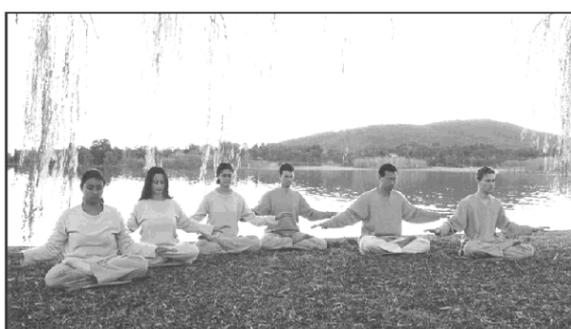
Dr. Robin Munro, an expert in the issue of Psychiatry abuse in China, a senior researcher from University of London, also spoke at the discussion. He had given detail accounts of cases of psychiatry abuse for the past twenty years in China by reviewing published official Chinese literatures and documents.

Falun Gong practitioners distributed materials about the persecution to every participant at the conference and effectively exposed the evil of the Jiang Zemin regime's persecution of Falun Gong.

mistreatment of Falun Gong practitioners at the second annual Sino-American meeting in Beijing in April.

APA members and Falun Gong practitioners Sunny Lu, M.D., and Viviana Galli, M.D., also wrote to Tasman and Mezzich in February asking them to express concerns about their Chinese colleagues' actions.

Galli and Lu attended the Sino-American meeting in Beijing and participated in an informal discussion with Chinese psychiatrists about alleged abuses of Falun Gong practitioners, as did Tasman, Geller, APA Trustee Herbert Peyser, M.D., and Jose de La Gandara, M.D., chair of APA's Committee on the Abuse of Psychiatry and Psychiatrists.



### The Royal College of Psychiatrists in the U.K. Pass Resolution to Investigate Psychiatric Abuse in China

The Royal College of Psychiatrists held its annual meeting in London from 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> July 2001. This event was also combined with the World Psychiatric Association's (WPA) European Regional Meeting.

The Royal College's members passed a resolution on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2001 without opposition to investigate psychiatric abuse in China.

The WPA Ethical Committee's Chair spoke of the Association's concern about the treatment of Falun Gong practitioners in China. Many eminent psychiatrists spoke strongly about the widespread political abuse of psychiatry against all citizens including Falun Gong practitioners. One well-known psychiatrist said that if they did not make a stand, it would be as if they were collaborating with such behavior. Another spoke with great compassion urging the members to vote in favor of the motion.

## True Story from the Persecuted

### Experiences I Suffered While Inside a Mental Hospital

*Written by a female practitioner from China: Wang Huifan*

My name is Wang Huifan (alias). I am a retired female, and I used to suffer from tachycardia, rheumatism, as well as other diseases, which made my life miserable.

In early 1996, I began practicing Falun Gong. Three months of practice marked the end of my diseases and suffering. I was truly healthy.

Since July 20, 1999, Jiang Zemin and his regime have abused their power to violently persecute Falun Gong and its practitioners. During the 2000 Spring Festival, we went to the Square in the city where we usually held our group practice. That morning the Square was covered with police, and their vans. Plainclothes policemen arrested some of us. They threw me to the ground and dragged me for over ten meters. Then I was sent to the drug rehabilitation center to be brainwashed. After going on hunger strike for only two days, they force-fed me.

One day, several people from my workplace came to visit me. They said they would help free me. Instead, they took me to an army hospital. After they brought me up to an office on the second floor, I could hear them talking. I didn't know what they were discussing, but I felt they might do something harmful, so I went downstairs. As I approached the door, five or six big men would not let me pass. I shouted angrily, "Why did you deceive me and bring me to this place?" I caught hold of the iron door and did not let go. Five or six of them tried desperately to drag me away. They dragged me to the mental disease section on the third floor. They forcefully

changed me into a patient's clothes. I shouted loudly: "I don't have any illness!" The nurse forcibly injected me with an unknown drug. Shortly afterwards I lost consciousness. I could faintly tell I was being persecuted, but I was hallucinating. After the medicine started losing its effect, I became more clearly minded. I found my mouth was very stiff, and it couldn't do what I wanted it to. I couldn't speak clearly even if I wanted to. Suddenly I was force-fed with more medicine. I spent the whole day unconscious. When the meal was ready, a person asked me if I wanted to eat. Both of my legs were weak, and I fell to the ground. The nurse escorted me back to the room. She asked me to stay on the bed while I ate. My hands wouldn't do what I wanted them to and I could not pick up my vegetables. I felt very dizzy, so I lay down on the bed without a meal. They injected me with medicine once every morning and evening, and force-fed me twice a day with some other medicine.

Every day the director on duty would come and check on me. The director asked me how I felt and if I would continue to practice, and why did I refused to go along with the country's decision.

I said, "The people in authority do not represent the country. They are committing crimes for their own selfish interests."

He said, "How do you think now? Do you think that you are being persecuted here?"

I did not know what his intention was, so I

did not answer him directly. I only said: "I haven't thought about it yet."

He said: "you should thoroughly think about it now." He increased my dosage from three tablets to five tablets. The next day when I told him my real thoughts, he added more tablets. Finally my dosage was a handful of tablets, three times the amount everyone else was taking. At the same time every Friday I was asked to go to the pharmacy room by myself to take two big tablets of yellow medicine, and I had to open my mouth for them to check.

As Result, my entire body became bloated. My face was swollen like a bubble. My complexion was also very bad. Everyone who saw me said I was in bad shape. I could not read or do the exercises in this place, and was forced to live among mentally ill patients. At one moment in time I felt like I was going to have a mental breakdown. I felt like I was losing my mind. I tried hard to calm myself down, and thought, "I should not turn insane. I should never become insane inside this place.

The difficult days went by one after another. A batch of patients left, and another batch came to replace them. We were told if we didn't give up our practice of Falun Gong, we would have to stay here permanently. However, I think our righteous way moved the ordinary persons in the hospital. They all knew we were normal good people. Even the director asked our workplaces to take us back as soon as possible. Urged by the director, I was finally taken home after more than three months of torture. Before I left, I said goodbye to the director. He watched me go out the front door. The expression on his face showed his regret.

### Index on Censorship: Is Falun Gong going crazy?

*By Danny Schechter*

China gives a new lease of life to the old Soviet practice of silencing dissidents by certifying them

Throughout the history of protest and resistance movements, people in power have denigrated their opponents with hostile language and repressive reactions that demonised their image, damaged their credibility and misrepresented their motives. In the USSR, they first declared their dissidents 'insane' and then locked them up in asylums to silence their voices.

China is currently reinstating the practice. Falun Gong practitioners are being castigated as crazy and tossed into mental hospitals. Borrowing the old Soviet practice, Beijing is upping the ante with a far higher number of people falsely diagnosed as mentally ill. There were protests worldwide when the USSR resorted to this attack on its dissidents, largely because prominent writers and well-known critics were involved, and some were released (p92).

The Falun Gong practitioners are less well known and any intervention on their behalf is conditioned by the West's policy towards China; this is driven by economic issues, not ideological divisions. As a result,

governments have said little about China's treatment of the Falun Gong out of a desire not to antagonise China at a time when its economy is growing while that of the US' and Europe is contracting. US secretary of state Colin Powell did not raise the issue during his 29 July visit to Beijing.

One reason for the lack of protest is undoubtedly the lack of media attention. While Falun Gong protests get more coverage now than earlier, there is a lack of investigative reporting by Western media organisations. One journalist who did such work, Ian Johnson of the Wall Street Journal, won the prestigious Pulitzer Prize for his efforts but he was quickly transferred out of Beijing. Few if any of his colleagues took up his muckraking interest in the story.

In the US, besides the practitioners themselves, there is only one lonely but credible voice being raised in protest. Dr Abraham Halpern, a professor emeritus at New York Medical College and one-time civil rights worker who worked with Martin Luther King in Alabama in 1965, has taken the lead. He told me he believes 'the [Chinese] government needs to hospitalise wrongfully dissidents who are not mentally ill because this will help them in their effort to paint the Falun Gong

practitioners as not being against government policy but as mentally ill. Even if they were to hospitalise only a small number, word would soon spread that Falun Gong practitioners were crazy.

'Deliberate hospitalisation, wrongful hospitalisation, is only part of the problem. They then make it very difficult for the practitioners to get out of the hospital by demanding that their families pay exorbitant amounts of money for their "treatment" in the hospital. There's no question that this government-sanctioned conduct is a serious violation of human rights. And we'd like to stop it before large numbers of dissidents are incarcerated in hospitals as they were in the Soviet Union.'

Halpern is lobbying professional organisations. The Committee on Misuse and Abuse in Psychiatry passed a resolution asking the American Psychiatric Association leadership to ask the World Psychiatric Association to investigate this problem as it did in the USSR in the 1970s and 80s.

The cases that follow are selected from those compiled in a report published by the Falun Gong Information Center on 27 April 2001 covering cases from September 1999 to April 2001

(Cases omitted by the editor)

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*Index on Censorship, page 7*

## Facts and Call

### Facts & Call for Action

#### On Psychiatric Abuse in China

May 2001

#### Highlights of Psychiatric Abuse in China\*:

- UNDER ORDERS FROM POLICE, PSYCHIATRISTS TORTURE NON-MENTALLY ILL DETAINEES WITH ANTIPSYCHOTIC MEDICATIONS IN HIGH DOSAGE, HIGH-VOLTAGE ELECTRIC SHOCKS, AND OTHER HARKENING METHODS IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT THE CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY'S BRUTAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS.
- AT LEAST 90 PSYCHIATRIC INSTITUTIONS HAVE ENGAGED IN PSYCHIATRIC ABUSE AND MALPRACTICE
- AT LEAST 20 "ANKANG" (PEACE AND HEALTH) INSTITUTIONS ARE OWNED AND ADMINISTERED BY THE CHINESE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SECURITY; THIS IS THE EQUIVALENT OF THE SPECIAL PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS RUN BY THE INTERIOR MINISTRY OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION.
- TO DATE, THE NUMBER OF NORMAL, HEALTHY FALUN GONG PRACTITIONERS INCARCERATED AND ABUSED IN MENTAL HOSPITALS EXCEEDS 1,000, SIX RELATED DEATHS WERE REPORTED. IN FACT, THIS IS A FAR GREATER NUMBER OF CASES THAN THE WORLD PSYCHIATRY ASSOCIATION CITED IN ITS INVESTIGATION OF ASYLUMS IN COMMUNIST RUSSIA.

#### Drugs and Other Cruel Tactics Used to Abuse Falun Gong Practitioners\*:

Mental hospitals frequently administer heavy doses of medications like Perphenazine, Chlorpromazine, Fluphenazine, Fluorohydroxypiperidine and other unknown substances by force feeding patients or mixing drugs into practitioners' food. As a result, many practitioners suffer tremendously from toxic effects such as: loss of memory, severe headaches, fainting, extreme weakness, uncontrollable tremors, nausea, vomiting, seizures, and loss of consciousness. Some severe cases resemble Neuroleptic Malignant Syndrome. There is evidence that medications are being delivered at many times the therapeutic rate and thus often resulting in devastating and irreversible consequences.

In addition, mental hospitals apply other cruel and abusive tactics such as tying individuals to beds and force-feeding medications through nasal-gastric tubing; handcuffing or tying patients up in very painful postures for long periods of time; inserting acupuncture needles deep into the muscles and applying electric current to produce excruciating pain; and burning detainees' skin with electric batons.

#### Psychiatric Facilities--another form of Labor Camp?

In 1991, the United Nations established "Principles for the Protection of Persons with Mental Illness and for the Improvement of Mental Healthcare." According to Principle 4 of this document, "A determination of mental illness shall never be made on the basis of political, economic or social status, or membership in a cultural, racial or religious group, or for any other reason not directly relevant to mental health status."

No Falun Gong practitioners in other countries have so far been reported to be mentally insane due to the practice. According to the reports, some doctors in China have made clear statements indicating that Falun Gong practitioners are admitted not in relation to their health but for political reasons. Some medical staffs involved in the abuse even taunted practitioners, saying such things as-- "Aren't you practicing Falun Gong? Let's see which is stronger, Falun Gong or our medicines." Typically, practitioners meet the criteria for discharge only when they stop doing the Falun Gong exercises, if they sign a pledge to renounce their belief in Falun Gong. In more unfortunate cases, practitioners were discharged because they were close to dying from abuses. Some psychiatric hospitals rate themselves as being successful in converting Falun Gong practitioners. It is a sad truth that many hospitals in China can now be listed along with state prisons and forced labor camps as government facilities for persecution and torture. \*

#### Together Against Psychiatric Abuse:

Today, psychiatrists in China are forced to use psychiatric facilities to stifle and suppress freedom of thought, belief, and expression.

*Continued from page 4*

- to publish and distribute research and data which has been accumulated to date;
- to further document these abuses as they happen in order to provide the international community with the most up-to-date information and to assure the Chinese government that we will not rely on past allegations alone;
- to provide information which advocates worldwide can use in lobbying for action in their own countries – through governmental as well as non-governmental circles;
- to so expose these abuses that safeguards against future abuses may be put into place;
- to help protect and assist the victims of psychiatry abuse in China, as well as those individuals in the country who are engaging in the fight for good and ethical psychiatry;
- to assist in suggested models of rehabilitation of those subjected to these means of punishment, once the political setting is appropriate and possible for such work. Further understanding of the issues, as provided by GIP, can encourage groups in countries outside of China to take on some of the responsibility of this rehabilitation process.
- to produce and distribute Chinese-language translations of key documents and analyses on the political abuse of psychiatry in China, past and present, together with a Chinese translation of the GIP book "Collection of Documents on Human Rights and the Professional Responsibilities of Doctors" as well as the Soviet underground "Manual for Political Dissenters [undergoing psychiatric assessment]". The dissemination of such information on the domestic state of forensic psychiatry in China and, even more importantly, on international legal and ethical standards in this general area will be vital to the ongoing effort to end political psychiatry in China.

*Continued from page 6*

Danny Schechter is executive editor of Globalvisions Mediachannel.org and the author of the recently published News Dissector (Akashic Books) and the revised edition of Falun Gong's Challenge to China. The full version of Falun Gong practitioners who are detained and tortured in mental hospitals is available at [WWW.faluninfo.net](http://WWW.faluninfo.net) INDEX ON CENSORSHIP 4/2001

Falun Gong practitioners are being tortured simply for what they believe. We hope that the relevant professional bodies around the world would condemn this psychiatric abuse and initiate thorough legal investigation into these systemic abuses. It is the duty of psychiatrists around the world to do all in their power to bring this nightmare to an end. The misuse and manipulation of psychiatry in any part of the world threatens the integrity of psychiatrists everywhere. The World Psychiatric Association must speak out forcefully to let the Chinese government and the world know that such a perversion of psychiatry cannot be continued.

"We are aware that there are many good and caring psychiatrists in China, just as there were in the former USSR. China physicians have had the benefit of more contact with the West in the last 20 years than was the case in the days of the USSR. We don't want to see our ethical Chinese colleagues have to stand alone in this fight against the use of the profession for political purposes. Thus, we feel compelled to assist whenever and wherever we can."

**We cannot hold faith in ourselves as physicians and continue to remain silent on this issue.**

Sunny Lu, MD,  
University of Cincinnati, Ohio, USA  
Viviana Galli, MD,  
Blanchfield Army Community Hospital, Kentucky, USA

\* Special Report: Psychiatric Abuse--Human Rights Abuses Against Falun Gong in People's Republic of China", April, 2001, available upon request. You may also visit and send request to: [www.faluninfo.net](http://www.faluninfo.net)

## Action Against The Abuse of Psychiatry

### China's Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes

Declan Lyons, MD,  
The Royal College of Psychiatrists of England

Psychiatry at various points in history has been accused of serving one important purpose and that is being an agent of social control. In this brief talk I will outline my concerns about how abuse of psychiatric practice can lead to suppression of political or social dissent focusing on the recent persecution of Falun Gong practitioners in China.

Concern has been growing since the July 1999 crackdown began about the large numbers of Falun Gong practitioners that have been forcibly incarcerated in psychiatric hospitals and assigned psychiatric treatment in an effort to make them renounce their beliefs. It has been claimed that between 600 to 1000 Falun Gong practitioners have been compulsorily detained to date. This could be a gross underestimate as Government reports themselves have readily admitted that increasing numbers of practitioners account for a growing proportion of admissions to institutions like the Beijing University of Medical Science. The treatment that has been administered seems to follow a pattern consisting of the administration of antipsychotic medication in injectable form, the use of physical as well as these chemical restraints and the placing of practitioners in solitary confinement. Electro-convulsive therapy has also been meted out in a singularly cruel fashion and is reminiscent of forced medical experiments conducted in Nazi concentration camps. At least three deaths have been reported as a direct consequence of this treatment.

To attempt to justify this behavior the Chinese Psychiatric establishment has identified a unique set of mental disorders including Qigong induced psychosis, which rather strangely, appears only to have become massively prevalent since the July 1999 crackdown. The often quoted "diagnosis" of "dysphrenia" also carries no diagnostic credibility whatsoever and has never been described in any internationally validated disease classification system.

The principal 4 of the 1991 UN document 'Principles for the protection of persons with mental illness and for the improvement of mental health care'. This states and I quote that "a determination of mental illness shall never be made on the basis of political, economic or social status, or membership in a cultural, racial or religious group, or for any other reason not directly relevant to mental health status." A further quote states that "family or professional conflict, or non-conformity with moral, social, cultural or political values or religious beliefs prevailing in a person's community, shall never be a determining factor in the diagnosis of mental illness."

China, as a full member of the World Psychiatric Association, is expected to adhere to the standards that I have partially outlined. Unfortunately the tendency of some forensic psychiatrists in China to diagnose dissident

### An Open Letter

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

We are writing to ask you to join us in forming an ad hoc Committee of Psychiatrists and other Mental Health Professionals Concerned with Human Rights in China.

Public attention has been drawn to this compelling matter by an editorial in The New York Times (March 25), repeated in The International Herald Tribune (March 28), based on the recent report by Robin Munro, published in the Columbia Journal of Asian Law. \* Exercising one's right to freedom of expression and association in China has led to a terrible abuse of psychiatry which runs counter to basic principles of human rights law and to the Hippocratic Oath. Munro has reviewed, translated and documented the forensic literature in China that permits growing numbers of religious and political dissidents to be incarcerated without trial or independent evaluation of their mental state. Mr. Munro also noted the recent escalation of the abuse cases due to suppression of Falun Gong movement. Among the abuses detailed are the use of disabling doses of psychopharmacologic agents, both orally and by injection, involuntary electroconvulsive shock therapy, withholding food, and acupuncture with electrified needles on Falun Gong practitioners.

The ad hoc Committee feels it would be extremely helpful for psychiatrists and other mental health professionals to appeal directly to Chinese Psychiatrists and the Chinese Government to stop this abuse. World attention is particularly important at this time. The appeal would take the form of a full-page ad in The International Herald Tribune. We need your contribution to place this ad. Human Rights Watch, a world-renowned non-profit organization, will help with this process. Your donation is tax-deductible.

Please join us--your colleagues and friends who are concerned about the abuse of Psychiatry in China.

We cannot ignore the evidence and stay silent.

Yours truly,

Hadassah Brooks Morgan, M.D.  
Psychoanalyst,  
New York City  
Telephone: (212) 876-7987

Abraham L. Halpern, M.D.,  
Professor Emeritus of Psychiatry, New York Medical College  
Past president, International Academy of Law and Mental Health  
Past president, American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law  
Tel: (914) 698-2136

Jack Drescher, M.D.  
Fellow and Trustee of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis  
Faculty Member and Supervisor, William Alanson White Institute  
Member of American Psychiatry Association  
Telephone: (212) 645-2232

\*[http://www.law.washington.edu/clnet/features/articles/judicial psych2001.pdt](http://www.law.washington.edu/clnet/features/articles/judicial%20psych2001.pdt)

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Please write "PSYCHIATRY IN CHINA" AT THE BOTTOM, LEFT-HAND CORNER OF YOUR CHECK AND ON THE ENVELOPE. Please forward this letter to other concerned colleagues and friends.

type individuals as "dangerously mentally ill" has as long a history as the Peoples Republic itself. The current practice by police of taking so called political maniacs into psychiatric custody will escalate rather than diminish despite the international outcry.

Powerful antipsychotic drugs, which originated in and have gained therapeutic currency in the west, are being widely employed in China to suppress dissent. At stake is the public confidence in psychiatric practice, which is already regarded with suspicion. We must be able to accurately define our diagnoses and

defend our patients by cultivating an ethos of caring and sensitivity.

I would thus call on the Chinese government to open the involved psychiatric hospitals to international scrutiny generally and to protect the rights of Chinese citizens to exercise religious freedoms without fear of psychiatric labeling or incarceration. (Excerpt from Dr. Lyons' speech at Geneva, April 2001)