# April 25 Peaceful Appeal

Police spray Falun Gong practitioners with a high-pressure water hose.

Police use loudspeakers to interfere with Falun Gong practitioners' practice.

## The Beginnings of Persecution

An article in the June 17, 1996, issue of the state-controlled *Guangming Daily* accused Falun Gong of being pseudo-science and promoting superstition, and called Falun Gong practitioners "fools."

In early 1997, the Ministry of Public Security ordered all police departments in China to investigate Falun Gong, claiming it was an illegal sect. Although local sports organizations consistently reported that "Falun Gong is an activity that improves health and cures illnesses and doesn't conduct any illegal religious activity," the Ministry of Public Security insisted on scrutinizing Falun Gong.

On July 21, 1998, the government issued a document entitled "About Conducting Investigation on Falun Gong." After the document was issued, many police departments declared that Falun Gong practitioners were holding illegal gatherings and forcibly dispelled them. Police illegally arrested, detained, and beat practitioners. They also fined practitioners and confiscated personal belongings. Practitioners appealed to the government through various legal means, but to no avail.

## Peaceful Appeal

In April 1999, Luo Gan's brother-in-law (He Zuoxiu) published a slanderous article in *Youth Science*, a magazine published by the Tianjin Education Institute. In the article, he planted lies claiming that Falun Gong caused insanity and implying that practitioners would overthrow the government. Practitioners in Tianjin went to the publisher to explain the practice and request that a correction be published. However, more than 300 military police suddenly appeared and began arresting the practitioners. The next day, on April 23, more police arrived and beat the practitioners, illegally arresting 45 of them and ransacking their homes.

As Tianjin police refused to release those arrested, practitioners went to Beijing to state their case and appeal on behalf of Falun Gong. On April 25, 1999, around 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners voluntarily went to the Appeals Office near Zhongnanhai, the central government compound. However, when they arrived, they found all major roads blocked, except the street that leads to Zhongnanhai. Eyewitnesses reported that police separated practitioners into two groups and led them around the compound. Practitioners had no slogans, no signs, didn't block traffic, and followed police orders. After standing quietly for more than ten hours, they left shortly after learning the issue had been resolved when Premier Zhu Rongji met with representative practitioners. Before leaving, the group cleaned the entire area. Thus the April 25 Appeal concluded peacefully. Yet government propaganda twisted this activity into the erroneous accusation that practitioners "besieged Zhongnanhai."

Falun Gong practitioners did not have slogans or signs and did not block traffic.

# Lives Risked to Call for Justice and Conscience

**Falun Gong practitioners holding an international press conference in Beijing**

On October 28, 1999, practitioners organized a ground-breaking international press conference in Beijing. It broke the news blockade imposed by the government, and for the first time, the Western media had a chance to listen to Falun Gong practitioners' own stories. Foreign reporters who attended were deeply moved by the undaunted spirit of the practitioners, and filed a factual report of events happening in China instead of relying on the state-controlled media.

All of these practitioners were eventually tracked down, arrested, and imprisoned. Many well-known practitioners like Ding Yan were tortured to death.

## Changchun Cable TV Broadcasts Surprise Falun Gong Programs

On March 5, 2002, Falun Gong practitioners were able to broadcast truth-clarifying programs on eight cable channels in Changchun. Millions of people learned about the truth behind the three-year persecution from the 40-minute broadcast. This incident sent shock waves throughout Mainland China. Furious officials arrested 5,000 practitioners and massacred over a hundred to discourage further such exposure.

**The first Falun Gong conference held in Guangzhou since persecution began**

**Walking thousands of miles to appeal in Beijing**

An old farmer from Xinjiang Province walked thousands of miles to Beijing to appeal. When he was arrested, he opened his backpack and took out a dozen threadbare straw sandals. He showed these to the policeman and said, "I walked so far just to get here, just to say a few words from my heart. Falun Gong is good! The government made a mistake!"

On November 19, 1999, seventeen practitioners from China, Australia, United States, Sweden, and other countries, gathered in Guangzhou Province to hold a private experience-sharing conference. On November 25, police broke into their room at 3 a.m. to arrest them. Yet facing the menacing policemen, practitioners calmly posed for a group photo in front of Master Li's picture. With a composed smile, Ding Yan surveyed the room full of police and said to all the practitioners, "Before the policemen take me away, let me read to everyone the experience-sharing article that I wrote for this conference." All the practitioners swarmed around Ding Yan. Then with flowing tears she read her article, "Let Life Display Its Brilliance in Fa Rectification." All wept; even the policemen shed tears.

# The Undaunted Spirit of Justice on Tiananmen Square

The National Office of Appeal has become a place where Falun Gong practitioners are routinely arrested. Lawyers have been told that they could only handle cases related to Falun Gong after the approval of "certain" departments. Under the circumstances, where all crimes are covered up and all channels for appeal are manipulated, many Falun Gong practitioners still head for Tiananmen Square. They go there to urge for the immediate release of all imprisoned practitioners and to publicize the suppressed truth to people around the world. It is an urgent appeal for Truth, Compassion, and Tolerance, and for justice.

One can easily imagine the brutal tortures they face. But even more deplorable is the fact that they are maligned and accused of "stirring up commotion" on Tiananmen Square. Worse still is the fact that they become victims of the propaganda manipulated by the state-controlled media to incite public hatred.

Unfurling "Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance" banners on Tiananmen Square (AP)

In ancient China, when there was injustice, one could beat the drums (in front of a court) and cry "injustice!" Today, however, courageous individuals who appeal to the government at the risk of losing their lives are being vilified. For three years, the appeals on Tiananmen Square have never stopped, for this is an unprecedented injustice, an unheard-of brutal persecution — and an unprecedented peaceful appeal and unshaken resolve.

Peaceful practicing on Tiananmen Square

A "red plum blossom" on Tiananmen Square (AP )

# Peaceful Appeals Around the World

Paris, France

Germany

Washington, D.C.

Geneva, Switzerland (2000)

Geneva, Switzerland ( 2001)

# Global Rescue Practitioners Under Persecution

Governments Take Action, Some Lives Rescued

In late October, 2002, Canadian Members of Parliament unanimously passed the first Private Motion on Falun Gong to rescue 12 imprisoned practitioners who have close family ties to Canada.

Pressure from the United States, Ireland, and other nations has also resulted in practitioners of Falun Gong being freed from detention centers and forced-labor camps.

According to reports from China, pressure from the international community has also had a significant impact upon the lives of detained Falun Gong practitioners. Some have experienced improved living conditions and improved treatment.

Chinese Falun Gong practitioner Yuzhi Wang had fled to the United Arab Emirates after suffering severe torture in the Wanjia Labor Camp in northeast China, but faced deportation back to China when Chinese consulate officials pressured the local police to hand her over. With the help of the Canadian government, she was successfully rescued to Canada.

## Every Voice Counts

Australian citizen and artist Zhang Cuiying returned to Sydney after eight months of being detained in China.

She had painted these words on her T-shirt:

Because of the truth I said
Falun Dafa is righteous
I was imprisoned for 8 months
I went through the hardship
just to attain justice
I am not afraid of bleeding or
other sacrifice
My righteous mind was
shown in the prison
China suppresses Falun Gong
which is unforgivable

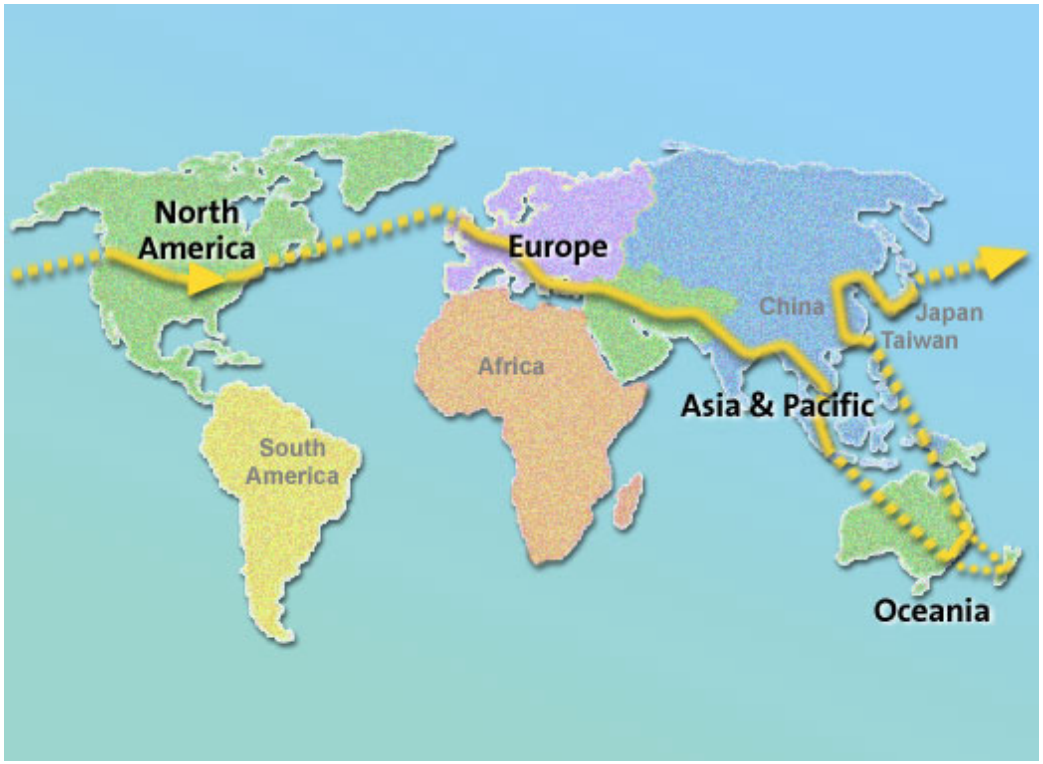
Zhao Ming, a graduate student at Trinity College in Dublin (TCD), Ireland, was detained by Chinese authorities when he went home during the holiday break in December 1999. He was imprisoned in forced-labor camps and tortured severely.

Thanks to the unceasing efforts of his friends and colleagues, the TCD Student Union, the Graduate Student Union, members of Parliament, Lord Moyne (UK) and his wife Suzy Taylor, Amnesty International, and supporters all over the world, Zhao Ming was finally released in March 2002—and returned to his studies at Trinity College.

Canadian Professor Zhang Kunlun was brutally tortured and jailed without trial just for doing exercises in a park. He was sentenced to three years, but was released after two months due to the efforts of the Canadian government, Department of Foreign Affairs, Members of Parliament, Senators, Amnesty International and other human rights organizations, the media, Attorney Irwin Cotler, and all kindhearted people.

**Left: His daughter appeals for help.** **Right: Professor Zhang returns to Canada.**

Lin Shenli, a Falun Gong practitioner and husband of a Canadian citizen, was finally freed on Jan 23, 2002, after being imprisoned for over two years in China. He was released and reunited with his wife with the help of the Canadian Foreign Ministry, Members of Canadian Parliament, Amnesty International, and many kind Canadians.



# SOS! Global RescueWalk

## URGENT: Rescue the Falun Gong Practitioners Persecuted in China

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