

**Prepared Statement of James W. Tong, UCLA
For the Hearing on the Falun Gong at the
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My testimony will focus on three issues.¹ First, how serious is the Falun Gong as a law enforcement problem for the Chinese government in recent years? Second, what kind of activities does the Falun Gong community engage in inside China in the same period? Third, how does the Falun Gong community inside China communicate with each other and with the global Falun Gong community? I will begin, however, with the birthday celebration of the Falun Gong this year.

On May 13, 2012, the Falun Gong celebrated its 20th anniversary. Its head office was overwhelmed by well wishes and greetings. There were new proclamations of a Falun Gong Day in Baltimore, Charlotte, Denver and Milwaukee, a Falun Gong week from Detroit and a Falun Gong month from Edmonton. But what is interesting were unique computer-generated greeting cards and hand-drawn paintings, many with classic Chinese poems, sent by 2,788 practitioners from all seven administrative regions in China, in addition to those of more than a dozen occupational groups from steel-workers to law-enforcement inside China. What is just as note-worthy is the absence of reports of acts of overt defiance. There was no report of protest rallies in Beijing, or of Falun Gong groups staging collective meditation exercises in provincial capitals, or of unfurling Falun Gong banners in public places. The celebration of the Falun Gong

¹ For data source of the testimony below, see James Tong, “Banding after the Ban: the Underground Falungong in China, 1999-2011,” *Journal of Contemporary China*, vol. 21, no. 78 (November, 2012), pp. 1045-1062, where much of the contents of the testimony are drawn from.

as a congregational festival and not an act of political defiance leads us to the three issues referred to earlier.

I. Gradual Reduction of the Temporal-spatial Scope of Falun Gong Defiance

First, there has been a gradual but steady reduction of reported Falun Gong defiance in the past twelve years. The overall trend was a precipitous decline of such activities from 2000-2002, a sharp rebound in 2003, then a steady decline from 2004 thereafter. The trend can be observed from three official sources. Table-1 presents references to the Falun Gong in the annual report of the Chief Procurator, the equivalent of the U.S. Attorney-General. Every year, the top law-enforcement official of China delivered a report to the National People’s Congress. The report reviews the main law-enforcement tasks of the nation in the preceding year, addresses major law and order issues facing the country, and states the priority procuratorial tasks in the year ahead. As shown in Table-1, the Falun Gong was named as a notable law-enforcement problem from 1999 to 2003, but was dropped from the annual report from 2004 through 2011. At least at the national level, the Falun Gong appears to remain a public security risk in the first five years after the government ban in 1999, but declines in relative importance from 2004 on.

**Table-1:
Reference to Falun Gong as a Law-Enforcement Problem in the Annual Chief Procuracy Report to the National People’s Congress, 1999-2011**

1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Zhongguo jiancha nianjian, annual issues from 2000 to 2010, and news.xinhuanet.com/politics/.c_111672904.htm, access on April, 2012.

Note: since the procuracy report of a given year provides law-enforcement data of the preceding year, data in the table refers to the law-enforcement calendar year and not the year when the report is delivered.

At the next administrative level, provincial procuracy reports offer a similar view of the issue. Similar to its central government counterpart, the provincial procuracy report is also an annual ritual delivered to the provincial legislature, covering the same subject scope and written in the same format. As shown in Table-2, provincial trends largely mirror the national trend, where the Falun Gong was depicted as a major law-enforcement problem from 1999-2003, but faded out in significance thereafter.

**Table-2:
Reference to Falun Gong as Local Enforcement Problem in the Annual Procuracy
Report to Provincial People’s Congress, 1999-2011**

Province	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Beijing	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Tianjin	X	X	X	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hebei	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shanxi	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Neimonggu	X	X	-	-	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	-
Liaoning	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jilin	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-
Heilongjiang	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-
Shanghai	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Jiangsu	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Zhejiang	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	-
Anhui	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Fujian	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	X	-	-	-
Jiangxi	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shandong	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-
Henan	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	-	-
Hubei	X	X	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hunan	X	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-	-
Guangdong	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guangxi	X	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hainan	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sichuan	X	X	X	-	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Guizhou	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	-	-
Yunnan	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Xizhang	X	-	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shaanxi	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-

Gansu	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	X	-	-	-
Qinghai	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	-
Ningxia	X	X	X	-	-	X	X	X	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
Xinjiang		X	-	-	X	-	-	-	-	NA	NA	NA	NA
Chongqing	X	X	X	-	X	X	X	X	-	-	-	-	-
Total no. of Provincial reports with ref. to FLG	29	28	21	4	12	7	6	5	4	2	0	0	0

Source: See source note on Table-1. Full Chinese texts of provincial procuracy reports for 2009-2011 are obtained from internet searches. “NA” denotes provinces where the latter has not yielded any such documents for given years using the subject keyword and searching for the websites of the Provincial Government, the Provincial Legislature and the Provincial Procuracy.

A similar pattern on the decline of the Falun Gong threat can also be seen in the number of articles on the Falun Gong published in the *Renmin ribao*, the major national newspaper in China and the official organ of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party. These are articles that either refer to the Falun Gong in the title or name the Falun Gong in the text. Table-3 presents the monthly total of such articles from July, 1999 through December, 2011. It can be seen that except for 2000, the annual aggregates have been on a monotonic decline, registering 609, 325, 534, 198, 54, 17 from 1999 through 2004, and in the single digits thereafter. Monthly totals also show a similar pattern. In 1999, they range from 41 (October) to 196 (August), 10 to 63 in 2000, 6 to 66 in 2001, 1 to 28 in 2002, 2 to 9 in 2003, 1 to 4 in 2004, and 1 to 2 in 2005 through 2011. Data from both the annual central and provincial procuracy reports, as well as *Renmin ribao* articles then, point to a sharp reduction of both sets of indexes since 2003, followed by a steady decline thereafter, with a hard-core remnant that had survived and continued to defy official suppression efforts through at least 2008. In combination, they show that the Falun Gong has been emasculated in China but not eradicated.

**Table 3:
Articles on Falun Gong in *RMRB*, 1999-2011**

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1999							170	196	25	41	104	73	609
2000	52	25	63	38	23	34	25	10	14	10	10	21	325
2001	59	66	20	46	25	28	34	6	15	10	12	23	534
2002	20	11	22	24	26	10	25	7	28	17	1	7	198
2003	5	2	9	2	5	2	2	4	4	3	5	3	54
2004	4	1	1	3	1		2	2			1	2	17
2005	2	1	1			2	1				2		9
2006	1		2		2							1	6
2007											1		1
2008											1	1	2
2009	1									1		2	4
2010			1		1								2
2011	1	1		1		1			1				5
Grand Total													1767

Source: *Renmin ribao*, 1946-2011, CD-ROM edition.

II. New Forms of Organized Underground Falun Gong Activities

If the Falun Gong has not been engaging in overt acts of defiance inside China in recent years, what has it been doing? There are two main forms of organized Falun Gong activities. Both meet in unstructured small groups or in larger assemblies.

Small Study groups and Fa Conferences

In the Fa Study Group, small cells of two or more engage in common spiritual cultivation, at fixed or irregular intervals, usually in a private residence like Christian house fellowships, about

once or twice a week. There is no formal structure, and no fixed meeting schedule, format, size, and organization. Fa Conferences are larger gatherings of Falun Gong practitioners, generally meeting also in private homes, of around 10 people. At least some were convened on major Falun Gong anniversaries, such as April 25th when the Falun Gong staged their historic protest rally in Beijing's Zhongnanhai, or on May 13, the foundation day of the congregation, or on July 20th, the date commemorated by many Falun Gong groups as the anniversary of the ban on the Falun Gong.

A detailed report shows one Fa conference had a make-shift altar set up with a Falun Gong plaque placed at its center, on top of a Falun Gong table-cloth, beneath two Buddhist or Li Hongzhi portraits. A candle stand was placed in the middle of the altar in front of the plaque, itself flanked by a plate of fruits or buns as tributary articles, surrounded by silk floral arrangements on each side of the altar. Practitioners sat on the floor with their legs crossed in a standard Falun Gong exercise posture.

The congregation was called to order at 8 a.m. The meeting consisted of four segments each punctuated by ten-minute meditation sessions on the hour where practitioners were called on to join the universal Falun Gong congregation to send forth righteous thoughts. In the first session, two short videos were played, the first on "Remembrance", where photographs of Falun Gong practitioners who reportedly died in official custody were shown on the screen. This was followed by another short video on "The Flying Revolving Wheel" on developments in the Falun Gong. The second session was the main part of the conference where practitioners discussed the recent articles of Li Hongzhi, who instructed all practitioners to perform the three tasks of

Studying the Falun Method, Sending forth Righteous Thoughts, and Clarifying the Truth. Before the discussion of the third task, a musical video entitled “Coming for You” was played. It was about 36 European Falun Gong practitioners who went to Beijing on November 20, 2001 and displayed a Falun Gong banner in the Tiananmen Square. Returning to Europe, they composed the title song and formed a “Coming for You European Choir” made up of over 80 singers from 13 European nations that performed in London, Paris, New York and Hong Kong, singing separately in Mandarin, Swede, French, Italian and in four voice parts. In the Fa Conference, both the musical CD, as well as the commemorative video elicited strong emotions from sobbing participants. As the last item of the conference, the host mentioned two specific projects to which participants were called on to contribute their efforts. The first was to collect documentary evidence for official persecution, including the Indictment, Sentencing, and Ruling Statements, Detention Notices, Summons to appear in labor reform institutions, as well as official receipts for fines and Falun Gong material confiscated by the authorities, which would be sent to Falun Gong media organizations overseas for documenting official repression. The second was to locate and assist the orphans of Falun Gong practitioners who perished in official custody. The conference adjourned at noon.

Propagation Activities to Clarify the Truth

The second set of organized activities was “Clarifying the Truth”, a direct instruction from Li Hongzhi to his adherents that all should do their part in letting the public know about the true Falun Gong doctrine and practice, and the plight practitioners suffer under the repressive regime, repeated in many of his written messages and public speeches. These are done both in passive

and active ways, and both in their work units and residence as well as outside their place of employment and domicile.

Passive ways of Clarifying the Truth entail drop-and-run tactics of leaving Falun Gong materials in target sites -- at the door of houses in rural villages, or in buses, shopping malls, restaurants, post offices, public phone booths, benches in public parks, bicycle shopping baskets, the door handle of autos, and outside shop windows. Some left leaflets on bus depot, underground walkways, trains, electric wire poles, telephone booths, and street walls. Additional drop-off points included postal boxes, milk delivery containers, newspaper holders outside doors, shelves in supermarkets, suit pockets on racks of clothing stores.

These non-invasive tactics contrast with the more interactive methods of other bolder practitioners who engaged their targets, including speaking to the elderly in nursing homes, talking to store cashiers, peasants waiting in fields for the harvester to arrive. Not all acts of clarifying the truth were, however, done by lone operators. Some travelled in groups on bicycles or in two cars, bringing food and water for their own consumption to distant mountain communities. Along the way, they put up Falun Gong posters on electric wire poles, trees, and hung Falun Gong banners, traveling over 100 li (50 km. or 31 miles) one-way, speaking to villagers as well as residents of forest lands and dropped off pamphlets to rural households, putting up posters in every house.

III. Communicating with the Global Falun Gong Community

Thanks to the internet, the underground cellular Falun Gong community is connected with each other and with the universal Falun Gong congregation in the diaspora, which has organizations in 114 countries and regions in the world, including groups in 45 of the 50 states in the U.S. Falun Gong practitioners inside China can thus tap into the vast resources of its universal community. On one end of this cyber link is the elaborate Falun Gong telecommunications network composed of two news agencies, three television stations, two radio stations, a newspaper, and the worldwide web *Minghui.org* with global electronic footprint. On the other are the “Material Centers” established by the underground Falun Gong community inside China that reproduce Falun Gong global communications, create local content, and distribute these to other local Falun Gong practitioners.

The Falun Gong Cyber Community

Falun Gong practitioners in China can get their daily bread from the *Minghui.org* website, which publishes around 40 daily news items on developments relating to the Falun Gong in China. In addition to information on the Falun Gong survivors in China, what practitioners in China may find particularly useful are up-to-date intelligence, like when some public security bureau was planning a systematic inspection of computers, that some taxicab operators in the city were government agents, or some cities were installing electronic surveillance systems in the residential compound or in street walls.

The *Minghui.org* website offers a whole spectrum of technical consulting on how to set up a Material Center, produce and distribute Falun Gong materials. In its section on Technical Reference, it lists informational entries on 11 topics including appropriate equipment and production processes for manufacturing CD's, DVD's, video-tapes, stick-on posters and banners; text and graphics editing; software debugging as well as computer and photocopier troubleshooting. It suggests ways to position the household satellite dish at different times of the day in China to get the best reception for television programs broadcast by the Falun Gong New Dynasty Station in the U.S. It warns against the most recent mail interception techniques of public security agents embedded in Chinese post offices, suggests ways to prevent electronic locating and eaves dropping by the authorities, and to circulate Falun Gong slogans widely by writing those slogans on currency bills.

In a special section entitled how to evade network blocking, the *Minghui.org* website publishes 67 entries ranging from the best anti-virus and data management software available in China, techniques to save documents and data when surfing in internet cafes, the latest technology by law-enforcement to erect firewalls and how to bypass these obstructions. To minimize the pernicious effects of official hacking and worming, it suggests that practitioners in the mainland should set up three email addresses, one for correspondence and the other two for storage, where Falun Gong documents and graphic data would be saved as attachments. To bypass official surveillance efforts, it offers step-by-step instructions on how to apply for free overseas email addresses, attaching the actual English-language electronic application form, highlighting the key entries that are to be filled, translating the terms in Chinese, and providing samples of responses in English.

Material Centers

To rebuild the communications system within China, a network of Material Centers was established by Falun Gong survivors to link Falun Gong practitioners inside China with each other as well as with its international media hub in the U.S. The “Home Material Centers” are operated by members of a single family in their own residence. The standard equipments are a computer, printer, photocopier, and CD-burners. The operations of the Material Centers involved three basic tasks. First, the master copy from the international *Minghui.org* website are downloaded, from which relevant items to produce a local edition of newsletter and posters are selected. Second, multiple copies of the local printed or electronic file are then made by photocopiers or CD burners, stapled and/or packaged for dissemination. Third, these end products are then distributed to fill local orders from other Falun Gong groups, or to their target locations in urban housing blocks or rural villages.

One report from Northeast China describes a large material centers that was equipped with a state-of-the-art photocopier, a high-volume, multifunctional machine capable of printing 100 pages per minute. The output in a busy day was 4-5 boxes of print-outs, or 40,000-50,000 sheets. Orders for printed products were placed by other Falun Gong groups in the city or surrounding urban places, in amounts of two to three thousand sheets per order, or one or two boxes (10-20,000 sheets). To replenish paper supply, the Material Center periodically purchased a truck-load of paper that was around 80 boxes. In the three-year lifetime of the Center, it moved and operated in three locations, produced Falun Gong materials printed on over 1,000 boxes of

paper, burnt over tens of thousands of CD's, plus a large volume of posters, Falun Gong exercise tapes, video, and CD's.

Conclusion

On the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the Falun Gong, one may well ponder why the authoritarian regime was able to emasculate but not eradicate what its top leader considered to be the most serious domestic political threat since the 1989 Democracy Movement. Has the regime that once crushed demonstrating students with tanks become mellow, second-guessing itself about the expected utility of nipping another domestic challenger? Is it a case of calculated inaction, where the price of the pyrrhic victory was considered too costly for China's newfound international status? Or is it rather that the Anti-Falun Gong Campaign had a limited objective in the first place, including only the liquidation of its national and provincial leadership, decimation of its organizational structure, purge of Falun Gong adherents who were inside the Communist Party, sanction for its collective actions that breached the law, but excluding grassroots practitioners who do breathing exercises and read Falun Gong mantra in the solitude of their homes, or even gather for piety and not for protest? And since the regime has delegated law-enforcement authority relating to the Falun Gong to local governments, should explanations for regional variations in repressive efficacy be sought not at the central but at the local levels, which differ significantly in their willingness and ability to deal with the outlawed sect? Or is it the case that China does not fall exception to the general rule that few governments can exterminate well-entrenched and committed ideologues, determined insurgents and underground churches, especially one that has metathesized and nourished by daily and easy international

contact with a well-established global community that enjoys international protection? Whatever the case, both the Falun Gong and the Chinese government have reasons to prefer the status-quo than the relentless campaign that suppressed the congregation in July, 1999. For Beijing, it gained social stability which it needs for economic development at home and a positive international image abroad. For the Falun Gong, it has survived the mortal wound inflicted by the Chinese government in a ruthless suppression, lived through its darkest night and rebuilt the movement for a better tomorrow.