



May 13 marked the first celebration of World Falun Dafa Day - see page 2 for coverage

Human Rights Update

The Crackdown  
Against Falun Gong  
in China

You may have heard about the brutal crackdown by the Chinese government against Falun Gong in China. Since July, 1999, the Chinese government has detained and harassed thousands of Falun Gong practitioners who simply made peaceful, legal appeals for their right to practice their faith.

Practitioners have been forced from their homes, sentenced to harsh jail terms, sent to forced labor camps without trials, beaten, and tortured.

The Chinese government, an officially atheist regime, refuses to acknowledge its citizens' basic rights to freedom of belief, and continues to ignore requests for an open dialogue to resolve the situation.

In the last year, at least 22 Falun Gong practitioners have died while in the custody of the Chinese police. Below are some suggestions on how concerned U.S. citizens can help.

What can you do to help?

The best way you can help is to let people around you know what Falun Gong is. Let them know that it is a practice based on ancient philosophy that helps people gain better health and peace of mind.

China's most insidious weapon against all spiritual practices is to call them "cults." The derogatory connotations of that word is often enough to put

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East Meets West

*Falun Dafa - A science for life*

*Jingduan Yang, MD, LicAc, with John Nania*

Falun Dafa, also called Falun Gong, is a powerful mind/body cultivation system originating in prehistoric China. Surveys strongly attest to Falun Dafa's efficacy as a way of healing those who practice it, in many cases resolving conditions that other forms of healing could not. Here we look at three major healing traditions, each with its own scientific paradigms.

A science for disease

Western medicine is created and developed by people like you and me. It is based on what we can see and touch. Therefore, a patient

has to be sick enough to be diagnosed and treated. If biochemical means or imaging techniques or pathological methods cannot detect any abnormality, Western doctors do not know what to do. They watch and wait.

Unfortunately, all fatal diseases develop long before we can detect them with current technology. Oftentimes, it is too late to treat when we are able to detect a sign of abnormality. Consequently, despite fancy medical technological development, the mortality and morbidity of many diseases have not changed much. The quality of medical care today

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Why This Newsletter?

The Falun Dafa Reader comes to you from practitioners of Falun Dafa (Falun Gong) here in America. Practitioners are people who actually do the exercises, work on improving their inner selves, and gladly introduce this beneficial practice to other people. You will find in these pages the stories and observations of people telling you their personal experiences with Falun Dafa, as well as some articles from other sources reporting about practitioners.

Falun Dafa is a powerful practice that can and does transform people in positive ways. This practice enhances the lives of people from all walks of life. Practitioners have consciously chosen a path of self-improvement in their minds and bodies, and they may live or work near you. They are everyday people who have chosen an extraordinary path, and we invite you to listen to their stories.

Falun Dafa: A Brief Introduction

Falun Dafa is a form of what the Chinese call qigong (pronounced "chee-gong"), a system of exercises and teachings that deeply transform the mind and body. Like tai-chi, qigong is a vital part of many people's lives in Asia; almost every Chinese park is brimming by the break of dawn with people from all walks of life practicing these arts.

Owing much to its effectiveness in improving health and its profound principles, Falun Gong has proved immensely popular throughout the entire world. Since being introduced to the general public in 1992 by its founder, Mr. Li Hongzhi, Falun Dafa has attracted millions of people in over 30 nations.

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Inside Falun Dafa: Some personal views on the practice

*A New York Yankees fan tells why he chooses to practice Falun Dafa*

*By Levi Browde*

To begin with, let me introduce myself. My name is Jonathan (Levi) Browde. I am an American, born and raised in the southwestern United States. Currently, I live in Manhattan. I work in the computer software industry and have a fairly wide circle of friends. I am a New York Yankees fan, have musical interests ranging from Bob Marley to Bach, and am a sucker for deep pan Pizza. And, of course, I am a Falun Dafa practitioner.

So, why was I attracted to Falun Dafa and what has it done for me?

Falun Dafa incorporates five "exercises" that span from slow-moving standing postures and stretches to sitting in meditation. On the surface, yes, it may look similar to Tai Chi or Yoga, but it is actually much different. The system of movements is very easy to learn and doesn't involve any breathing techniques, mental exercises, strenuous motion or complex postures. It makes me feel better than anything else I've ever tried.

I'm sure most Americans are familiar with the feeling you get after a "really good work-out." The body



feels good; the mind is clear, etc. After practicing the Falun Dafa exercises, the body feels light, healthy and strong. The mind is clear, calm and focused.

I was always an active athlete in school and continued a regular workout schedule, combining stair-master exercise, free weights, nautilus machines, etc. However,

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## World Falun Dafa Day - A Child's Perspective

May 13th, 2000 was the first World Falun Dafa Day, marking the eighth anniversary of the introduction of Falun Dafa to the public. In over 30 cities around the globe, practitioners held colorful celebrations and demonstrated the exercises in parks. Here, one young girl writes to her friend about the day's activities in New York City.

By Lun, age 11

Dear John,

I just came back from New York City. My mom brought me there for World Falun Dafa Day. Falun Dafa is a special cultivation practice from China. My mom is a practitioner of Falun Dafa. It mainly helps people become better and nicer. The motto is Zhen (Truthfulness), Shan (Kindness) and Ren (Tolerance).

Bryant Park was breathtaking! The organizers had put up huge flags that said: Falun Dafa, World Falun Dafa Day. These red and yellow flags were floating in the air held by huge round balloons, and all around the park, many smaller balloons were tied to the green colored chairs.

Inside the park, hundreds of people were standing, sitting and talking, or exchanging experiences. These people came from all over the country to show the world how great Falun Dafa is, and how many people have gained better health, as well as improved their inner character from practicing it. One family drove all the way from Oregon (2000 miles), across the country just to attend this great cer-



emony! My mom read from the Internet that today, 30 cities held a World Falun Dafa Day celebration similar to the one there in New York.

After we had lunch, I helped a Korean girl, age 15, distribute newspapers and fliers about Falun Dafa and where you can take lessons. Hundreds and hundreds of people came into the park when they noticed the huge balloons and flags drifting in midair. The two of us worked almost four hours handing out fliers to everyone who wanted them. The Korean girl said we must have given out at least 1,000 fliers. We were both happy and feeling good inside that we were helping more people learn about Falun Dafa and become better people.

Towards the end of the ceremony, we spotted two elderly men sitting on the bench together doing hardly anything. We went over to them and handed them a flier and a newsletter. They smiled and took them. Seeing it was about Falun Dafa, one of the men broke into a large grin and told us, "I've always been very interested in Falun Dafa. Once as I watched some practitioners,

my heart started beating faster, and I had this peculiar feeling inside. Ever since, I knew it was something I couldn't refuse. I always wanted to learn, but never could find a person to help me." I thought a little and said, "Over there," and pointed to a group of men and women. "That's where you can learn more and try the exercises." The man looked as if he could hug us, but he just eagerly grabbed the other man's hand and ran towards the teaching site. We were both happy that we could help the two men who had always wanted a chance to learn Falun Dafa. And there they are now, on their way to a cultivation career! Anyway, I really enjoyed my visit to NYC.

- Lun



People learning the exercises on World Falun Dafa Day

## Inside Falun Dafa: Some personal views on the practice

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my physical health and mental clarity never even came close to the level I have achieved from practicing Falun Dafa. The exercises of Falun Dafa have made me far more fit than any workout regimen I have ever tried. After all, Falun Dafa has very ancient roots and is based on principles that are quite profound. Consequently, it is not so surprising that it has the power to cleanse and uplift one's body to such an extent. I have met many other practitioners who have also experienced this effect.

So, is Falun Dafa primarily a set of exercises? I view the set of exercises as merely one component of Falun Dafa.

Mr. Li Hongzhi (pronounced Lee-Hong-Jer), the man who first brought Falun Dafa to the public, has written a book called *Zhuan Falun*, which is the most complete work of Falun Dafa, laying out the principles and foundations of Falun Dafa. He has also written a second book called *Falun Gong*, which is more of an introduction to the principles and practice of Falun Dafa as well as a demonstration of the exercises.

To me, the books explain the principles of life, science and the human condition more clearly and in-depth than anything else I have ever read, studied, or come across. Additionally, these books have done something quite remarkable - they actually play a guiding role for me on a daily basis, which is something that no other book, be it spiritual, religious, philosophical, self-help, etc. has been able to do before.

*"To me, the books explain the principles of life, science and the human condition more clearly and in-depth than anything else I have ever read"*

I have read many great books before, which I felt changed my life or opened my eyes to new vistas (from Jack Kerouac to Shakespeare and from Stephen King to Lao-Tzu). Yet, did they really change me? Did they really provide me with a way to fundamentally become a better, healthier person - to truly rise above the fears, anxieties, self-doubt, selfishness, etc. associated with daily life? Not really. *Zhuan Falun*, however, has played such a role; studying the principles laid out in the book has helped me to rise above these things again and again, constantly moving to higher levels. What is more, the books are free to download over the Internet ([www.falundafa.org](http://www.falundafa.org): although they can also be purchased from the major bookstores if you prefer to have a real book in your hands while reading).

So, that's it? Practicing the exercises and reading from the book?

Well, yes, that is primarily what we do as practitioners. Additionally, you can do these things in your own way and according to your own schedule.

Some practitioners do the exercises and read by themselves in the privacy of their own homes. Others do so in a group setting. Some do the exercises in the morning, others in the evening, and still others whenever they have time to fit it into their busy schedules. I know practitioners who are busy pursuing Ph.D. degrees, while others are performance artists and they come from all walks of life and strata of society. However you choose to practice is really up to you.

All content in this newsletter represents practitioners' personal experiences or related media reports. By no means can it represent the original teachings of Falun Dafa. To truly understand Falun Dafa's teaching of "Truthfulness, Benevolence, and Forbearance," please read one of Mr. Li Hongzhi's books about the practice: *Zhuan Falun*, or the introductory text, *Falun Gong*.

## Reaching Out to Troubled Teens

*Falun Gong brings smiles, removes headaches for students learning the exercises*

Nadine Leichter

We have been giving a "Falun Dafa introduction night" at the local YWCA, twice a month. Recently, a teacher attended our introduction. She invited us to show the exercises to her class of troubled teens and young adults, between 16 and 21 years old. Her class prepares them to pass the GED, or "high school equivalency exam," so they can obtain a high school diploma and be more successful in the job market. None of her students finished high school due to personal problems, trouble with the law, or had simply dropped out. I told her we would be happy to come and visit her class.

When my friend and I arrived at the classroom, there were about twelve students who looked bored and skeptical. Some were even sleeping. They looked like really tough kids. I was surprised to discover that two of the girls were from my neighborhood and lived next door to me! They also looked very surprised to see me and tried to look away so I wouldn't recognize them.

My friend and I gave a brief and simple description of the practice of Falun Gong. We discussed how living by the principles of Truthfulness, Kindness and Tolerance (Zhen-Shan-Ren) and trying to be a better person can help your life.

*"Both of the girls wanted to know when we would come back again to their class and they said they really enjoyed our visit. The toughest girl even smiled at me for the first time since I moved into the neighborhood."*

We also talked about what an "attachment" is and what it means to give them up. Most of the students understood this part and nodded in agreement when we said that having lots of unhealthy attachments does not improve your life. They began to look a little more interested.

We also shared the experience of a practitioner who is a musician and who gave up drugs after learning Falun Gong. Then we proceeded to show them the introduction video and every student watched with interest. After the video we offered to show the exercises to the whole

class.

Most of the kids wanted to learn the exercises but they were also embarrassed and started making jokes, and teasing each other. Although they had a difficult time settling down and concentrating, we went forward anyway and began teaching the first exercise set. After learning the first exercise, all of them seemed surprised and wanted to continue on and learn the other exercises.

One girl who was very tough and noisy, kept teasing and making fun of the practitioner who was helping her learn the exercises. Although this student was disrespectful, the practitioner continued to be kind and encouraging towards her while also helping her to correctly hold the positions. After a while, the girl calmed

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## Human Rights Update

### The Crackdown Against Falun Gong in China

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people on the defensive, and in the case of Falun Gong, it is a label that is completely inaccurate. Practitioners lead normal lives and participate actively in their communities. The practice is an individual choice and is centered on the improvement of one's self. There are no obligations, and everyone is free to come and go as they



choose. Falun Gong is more accurately thought of as a "cultivation practice," which is a concept that may be somewhat new to us in the West. Many other self-cultivation practices similar to Falun Gong have been practiced in China for many centuries, as they have provided health, wisdom, and peace of mind to

countless generations. As these arts become more familiar in the West, our vocabulary for them will expand.

You can also let people know what is happening to Falun Dafa practitioners in China. Get copies of the two-part video "Falun Gong: The Real Story" from your local volunteers and invite your friends and colleagues to screenings. Write to your government representatives so they know that their constituents are concerned about the human rights situation in China.

For further information and resources regarding the situation in China, visit [www.minghui.ca](http://www.minghui.ca) or [www.amnestyintl.org](http://www.amnestyintl.org). ■

*"The detention of tens of thousands of adherents of Falun Gong and other spiritual movements, simply for peaceably manifesting their beliefs, and the harsh sentencing of others constitutes an unmistakable violation of universal human rights."*

- Harold Koh, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor

*"[China's] ...progress is still being held back by the government's response to those who test the limits of freedom. A troubling example, of course, is the detention by Chinese authorities, of adherents of the Falun Gong movement. Its targets are not political dissidents... But the principle still, surely, must be the same: freedom of conscience, and freedom of association."*

- President Clinton

## Falun Dafa: A Brief Introduction

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### The Books and the Exercises

The practice of Falun Dafa is simple, yet profound and effective. It consists primarily of two components: self-improvement through study of the principles of Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance (Zhen-Shan-Ren), and of Mr. Li's teachings (as articulated in two books, *Falun Gong* and *Zhuan Falun*, both translated into English) and doing Falun Dafa's five gentle exercises. The exercises, which include a sitting meditation, are easy to learn, enjoyable, and at the same time both relaxing and energizing.

Many students of Falun Gong enjoy practicing in groups, as they find themselves benefiting from one another's practice. Most major US cities and universities have such groups. They are comprised of people from all walks of life, as Falun Dafa transcends cultural boundaries.

### The Principles of the Practice

The benefits of practicing Falun Dafa are numerous and varied, ranging from improved health and newfound energy to mental clarity, stress relief and peace of mind.

However, Falun Dafa differentiates itself from most other Qigong practices in that it goes beyond the pursuit of health and fitness to the goal of greater wisdom and enlightenment. Key to the practice are the universal principles of truthfulness, compassion and forbearance. Through a combination of studying the books and performing the exercises, practitioners endeavor to become better people by gradually assimilating themselves to these principles.

### Where do I Start?

Millions of people all over the world have chosen to make the practice of Falun Dafa a part of

their daily lives. Simply put, they find it a worthy and enjoyable investment in health, happiness, and meaningful living. Everyone is welcome, as Falun Dafa is apolitical, informal, and completely free of charge (even its books are available for free download from the internet).

We invite you to give this wonderful practice a try. For starters, you can visit the main webpage: [www.falundafa.org](http://www.falundafa.org), or call 1-877-FALUN-99. Hope to see you at our next practice! ■



## East Meets West

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is far below our expectations. Let's look at some of the figures.

Every year in the United States, 400,000 to 500,000 people die of Coronary Artery Disease (CAD). One million suffer an Acute Myocardial Infarction (AMI). There are 170,000 new cases of lung cancer diagnosed each year in the United States, with about 150,000



deaths. Most lung cancers occur among smokers. There are an estimated 140,000 new cases of colorectal cancer diagnosed each year, with about 55,000 deaths. About 12 percent of women will develop breast cancer and 3.5 percent will die from it.

There are about 10 million Type II diabetes cases. There are an estimated eight to 12 million cases of sexually transmitted disease (STDs) each year. And let's not even mention drug abuse, alcoholism, depression, and hundreds of other illnesses people are suffering and dying from.

We do not know the causes of most of these illnesses, but recognize that lifestyle (poor diet, drinking, sexual conduct, stress, and lack of exercise) contributes to a lot of health problems. As a society, we teach little about harm reduction or prevention. And the cost of treatments in modern medicine is expensive. Patients totally depend on external help: Doctors, medical instruments, drugs. Thus, we will call modern medicine only a "science for disease."

### A science for health

Chinese medicine can do better in diagnosing and treating illnesses at their early stages if we follow the traditional principles. Chinese medicine is based on a system we cannot see—an energetic network connecting all parts of the body, called meridians. With knowledge of this system, any illness can manifest as symptoms or signs and be treated through its points on the body's surface. Chinese medicine emphasizes prevention. It believes that the best physicians are those who treat people when they are not ill. It can effectively treat many illnesses, particularly when there are no pathological changes that can be detected by biomedicine.

The cost of treatment in traditional Chinese medicine is substantially lower than that of Western medicine, with fewer side effects and often greater effectiveness. But ultimately, patients have to take responsibility for a healthier lifestyle. So

we call Chinese medicine a "science for health."

Chinese medicine particularly tells people that emotional distress is the key factor that causes internal dysfunction in the body and consequently, makes the body vulnerable to external pathogens. Therefore, it says that the Heart (the organ that is believed to house the mind) is an emperor, and if the emperor is not wise, it jeopardizes

the other 12 organs. And to live a long and healthy life, you have to have "a clean heart and few desires."

Before studying Falun Dafa, it was hard for me to understand this statement. I thought people were living only for the fulfillment of their desires at all levels - biological, psychological, and social. Even if we truly wanted to have "a clean heart and few desires," how do we do it?

Falun Dafa answered all these questions.

### A science for life

First, Falun Gong's founder, Mr. Li Hongzhi, tells us that Chinese medicine is from a prehistoric culture, and the meridians are a system existing in another dimension of our body. My understanding is that many diseases start from deeper dimensions that can be naturally reflected through the meridian system, which is why acupuncture can treat the early dysfunction of the body.

Second, Mr. Li tells us the ultimate purpose of our life is to go back to our true original self. Therefore, to get rid of attachments to this earthly world is the only way to upgrade our lives. Desires are not only attachments but are the causes of bad energy that can transform into all kinds of illnesses. It explains why today there are so many intractable diseases existing in this world, a world indulging desires. Modern technology is fighting diseases, but not fighting for our lives. How can technology change a person's life if this person himself does not change?

Third, Mr. Li points out that the cultivation of our xinxing (Heart nature, moral character) is the most important way to upgrade our lives. He also points out that the spirit and body is a unified system. When xinxing improves, one's energy potency increases. And one's body is healthier. I began to understand why people should have a "clean heart" to live a long and healthy life.

As Mr. Li points out, Falun Dafa is not to be used for treating illnesses of others. It is to enlighten people to treasure their lives and to

cultivate it themselves. As Mr. Li told Time Magazine, if one does not want to have an ordinary person's disease, the only way to prevent it is to become a non-ordinary person.

By practicing Falun Dafa, people are not approaching illness and death, they are approaching their real home of life. We call Falun Dafa a "science for life."

*Jingduan Yang, formerly a teacher and practitioner of Chinese medicine at the Minnesota Institute of Acupuncture and Herbal Studies (MIAHS), Currently is a psychiatry resident at Thomas Jefferson University Hospital.*

*John Nania is a Minneapolis writer and technology consultant. ■*

## Reaching Out to Troubled Teens

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down and seemed rather shy instead of tough.

The students learned all five sets of exercises. During our introduction we noticed that most of them were very weak and needed to rest in between each exercise. They all had difficulty keeping a tranquil mind. We were very sad to see how weak their bodies and spirits were for such young people. Those who were trying seriously to learn the exercises had to face much teasing and laughter from the others. From all of the jokes and teasing going on, we weren't sure if they really grasped the main points of Falun Gong.

A few days later, I saw the two girls from the class in front of my building. I suddenly realized that they were showing my building supervisor the Falun Gong stretching exercise! They turned, and, when they saw me walking up to my building, they looked surprised, too. Both of the girls wanted to know when we would come back again to their class. They said they really enjoyed our visit. The toughest girl even smiled at me for the first time since I moved into the neighborhood.

A week later we received thank you letters from the students. We were so surprised at their enthusiasm and how much they had understood. Here are some of their words.

From JS:

*Thank you, both of you, for teaching me that new Chinese exercise, "Falun Dafa" which was excellent. It made me feel so relaxed. The reason why I say that is because I had a headache, and it went away while I was exercising. It really loosened up my body. I had felt real tense, but while doing the exercise I was at ease. When I got home that day, I was trying some of the stuff there. My mother came into my room and asked me what was I practicing whether it was "Karate" or something. When I explained to her what it was, she asked me to teach it to her one day...*

From MT:

*Falun Dafa is really a stress relief exercise. While we were practicing it, I was kind of tired. After we finished, I felt like I was alive again...* ■

## Contact Us!

Do you have a story or experience you would like to have printed in the Falun Dafa Reader? Please send all submissions, including images, to:

submissions@newsreader.fldf.net.

Send letters, errors and omissions to:

editor@newsreader.fldf.net.

Please note that we cannot return or reply to all letters or e-mails.

## Learn Falun Dafa!

Falun Dafa is practiced in every major city and many small towns in the US and Canada alone. 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)**

**<http://www.falundafa.org>**