

# Collateral Damage






COMPILED BY STACY MOSHER

Little has been reported on how young people are affected by the Chinese government's crackdowns on political dissidents and religious believers. Anecdotal information indicates that some young people have been detained for their religious beliefs. There is less information on the indirect harm experienced by children of persecuted political and religious dissidents.




Following are some narratives that provide a glimpse of what life can be like for children caught up in religious and political repression in China.


Sources: Falun Gong, Committee for Investigation on Persecution of Religion in China, China Aid Organization, Cardinal Kung Foundation, Voice of the Martyrs, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

Abbreviations: RTL=Reeducation Through Labor

DATE	PLACE	DETAILS
17 May 1995	Tibet	 <p>On May 14, 1995, the Dalai Lama recognized 6-year-old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima as the reincarnation of the tenth Panchen Lama. The Chinese government declared the announcement invalid and illegal, and three days later the boy and his parents disappeared. A year later the government admitted holding Gedhun Choekyi Nyima "at the request of his parents" to avoid his being "kidnapped by separatists." At various times since 2000, Chinese authorities have told foreign delegations that the boy, now 15, is well and attending school, but he has not been seen by any outside parties since his disappearance.</p>
16 Aug. 1999	Jiamusi, Heilongjiang	 <p>Chen Ying, 17, was detained in Beijing while petitioning on behalf of Falun Gong. While police were escorting her by train to her home in Heilongjiang, Chen jumped out of a washroom window and subsequently died of her injuries.</p>
July–Aug. 2000	Beijing	 <p>Gao Jingyu, 8, a resident of Jiuxian Village, Changpin County, was diagnosed with leukemia on Mar. 5, 2000. After doctors determined that Jingyu's illness was incurable, her grandfather taught her Falun Gong exercises, and Jingyu's health appeared to improve. Jingyu's grandmother and parents also began practicing Falun Gong, and on July 20, 2000, police detained the Gao family and other practitioners. Jingyu saw police physically abuse her father, and was detained at the police station with the other practitioners for six hours before being allowed to return home with her mother. On July 24, police detained the Gao family again. Jingyu was released after an hour, but her health took a turn for the worse, and she died on Aug. 18.</p>
Oct.–Nov. 2000	Beijing	 <p>A native of Yantai City, Shandong Province, Wang Lixuan and her 8-month-old baby, Meng Hao, were detained while Wang was on her way to Beijing to petition on behalf of Falun Gong. Wang and Meng Hao died at Beijing's Tuanhe Forced Labor Dispatch Division on Nov. 7, 2000. A coroner's exam indicated that both had been tortured.</p>
Nov. 2000	Qingdao, Shandong	 <p>Zou Farong, known as Rongrong, was born in Nov. 1999 to parents who were Falun Gong practitioners. On Nov. 3, 2000, Rongrong's father, Zou Songtao, died at the Wangcun RTL Camp in Zibo City. Rongrong's mother, Zhang Yunhe, lost her accounting job in Qingdao because of her religious beliefs, and in May 2001 left home to avoid being detained, leaving Rongrong with her grandparents. Rongrong's grandmother died in Aug. 2001. Zhang Yunhe returned to Qingdao in Feb. 2002, only to be detained. She remains in detention to this day.</p>
Dec. 2000	Taiyuan, Shanxi	<p>Gao Lijun and her husband, Wang Jianrong, were detained after going to Beijing in Dec. 2000 to petition on behalf of Falun Gong. On Jan. 22, 2001, officials at the Taiyuan Detention Center notified Gao and Wang's family to pick them up at the hospital. Both were in critical condition. Under his family's care, Wang's health improved, at which point police returned him to the detention center. Gao died on Jan. 25. Their 16-year-old daughter was left on her own, and faced the possibility of dropping out of school.</p>
18 Dec. 2000	Suining, Sichuan	<p>On the morning of Dec. 18, a dozen Public Security police officers came to the home of Falun Gong practitioner Su Qionhua to carry out a search. When Su refused to admit them, two police officers lowered themselves from the roof to access her 6th floor apartment. Su was leaning out of her window at the time, and in a struggle with police she fell to her death. Su's 12-year-old daughter witnessed her death.</p>

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May-July 2001	Shuangyashan, Heilongjiang	 <p>Wu Lingxia, a Falun Gong practitioner, returned to her home town of Shuangyashan with her teenage son after the pressures of constant persecution by the authorities led to the breakup of her marriage. Police detained Wu in May 2001 and held her for a month at the Shuangyashan Detention Center before transferring her to the Xigemu RTL Camp in Jiamusi City. After a year of abusive treatment, Wu was released, only to die on July 27, 2002 of infirmities resulting from her detention.</p>
Summer 2001	Chongqing, Sichuan	Chen Si, 13, practiced Falun Gong along with her parents. During her summer vacation in 2001, Chen Si was detained while distributing Falun Gong materials. After being punched and kicked by police officers, Chen Si was sent to the Gele Mountain Brainwashing Center in Shapingba District.
23 Nov. 2001	Yongzhou, Hunan	Liu Xiaotian, born in Dec. 1985, was 16 when his parents began practicing Falun Gong in early 1999. On Nov. 23, 2001, police came to Xiaotian's school and told his teacher that his parents had been detained. Xiaotian fled and spent the night in a neighbor's storeroom, but when police threatened the neighbor, he gave Xiaotian some money, and Xiaotian took refuge with an uncle in Fujian. After a year of hiding in a warehouse to avoid detention, Xiaotian fled to Denmark with his uncle's assistance. Xiaotian later learned that his parents had died in detention in Apr. 2002.
July 2002	Lianjiang County, Fujian	Police detained 31 Catholics, including 26 aged under 18, during a catechism class in a private home in Dong'an Village, Guantou Township. All were taken to Lianjiang County Prison. The children and four adult chaperons were released after one day, but a nun, Chen Mei, remained in detention.
July 2002	Suileng County, Heilongjiang	Wang Lin, 17, wrote "Falun Dafa is good" in answer to a question on Falun Gong included in the political section of a high school entrance exam in July 2002. Officials came to her home to detain her, and Wang Lin fled. Her parents were later detained and beaten by anti-cult officials. In May 2003, Wang Lin was detained while working in Harbin. She remained in detention pending her 18th birthday, when she could be sentenced as an adult.
15 July 2002	Laiwu, Shandong	 <p>Wang Shujie, 4, died several days after an operation for a brain tumor on July 11, 2002. Beginning in July 2000, Shujie's parents had been repeatedly detained as practitioners of Falun Gong. In Dec. 2000, police took Shujie and her father to the police station, where a police officer struck Shujie's father in her presence. Shujie lost consciousness, and continued to suffer ill health over the next two years until her death.</p>
8 Aug. 2002	Hongze County, Jiangsu	Police detained 24 Christians, including several teenagers, at a private home in Huangji Town. All of the attendees, aged 12 to 70, were taken to the local police station and interrogated, and a 15-year-old girl, Li Xuehai, was slapped on the face by a police officer. After 10 hours without food or drink, most of the detainees were released.
23 Aug. 2002	Kuandian County, Liaoning	Police raided the home of Ma Fuhua in Guanshui Town while several Christians were meeting there. While police carried out body searches and ransacked the house, Ma's 16-year-old son tried to stop them, and was struck to the ground by a policeman. Ma Fuhua and most of the other adults were detained for 15 days on charges of "disturbing social order."
16 Sep. 2002	Daqing, Heilongjiang	He Huajiang, a widower with a 14-year-old son, was detained on Sep. 16, 2002 for practicing Falun Gong. After more than three months in detention at the Qingxin Police Station, He was transferred to the Daqing City Labor Camp on Dec. 23, where he died under torture that same night.
22 Sep. 2002	Lianshui County, Jiangsu	Police detained 29 Christians belonging to the "Cover the Head" group during a prayer session in Fumiao District. Several children were among those detained. During the detention, evangelist Zhuang Shiyin's 3-year-old son began to run a high fever, and only after repeated appeals was Zhuang allowed to take his son to a doctor under police escort.
26 Sep. 2002	Donggang, Liaoning	Police ransacked the home of Chen Guangping, a member of the Christian group Three Classes of Servants, and detained her for 15 days on "cult" charges. The police station chief told Chen that her child would be refused admission to college because of her record.
29 Sep. 2002	Dandong, Liaoning	Police raided a private home in Yuanbao District where Li Xiuxia and another Christian evangelist were preaching. Li and the other evangelist were detained, and police escorted Li back to her home, where they carried out a search that included her 10-year-old child's toys and backpack. The child was reported to be greatly distressed by the incident. Li was detained for 63 days on "cult charges," then released on a one-year parole during which she was confined to Dandong City.
14 Oct. 2002	Pingyao County, Shanxi	Police detained Li Haifeng, 19, and another Christian evangelist during a gathering at a private home in Puyi Town at 11 p.m. on Oct. 14. Li was tortured, while the other evangelist was spared because of a heart ailment. Both women were detained for 36 days before being released.
22 Oct. 2002	Chengdu, Sichuan	Li Haifang, a 17-year-old Christian evangelist from Henan Province, was detained along with an older evangelist, Zhou Kaiju, while preaching in a private home. Zhuo was released, but Li was reported to have still been in detention in July 2003.

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21 Nov. 2002	Xinan County, Henan	Police raided a private home in Tiemen Town while 21 young members of the "Second Baptism" group were rehearsing for a Christmas program. The young people were taken to the local police station and fined 200 <i> yuan</i> each on the charge of "participating in a cult." When they refused to pay, they were transferred to the county police station. The next day, the parents of 18-year-old Wang Xiaoqiang paid 1,000 <i> yuan</i> to secure the release of Wang and another detainee. The other 19 were subjected to forced labor for 15 days.
23 Nov. 2002	Baofeng County, Henan	Police detained more than 60 Christians gathered at a private home in Zhangbaqiao Town on the morning of Nov. 23, among them 15-year-old Zhao Erxin. All of the Christians were photographed and fingerprinted, and half of them, including Zhao, were released around midnight after paying fines of 30 <i> yuan</i> . The others were released two days later.
25 Nov. 2002	Tonglu County, Zhejiang	Christian evangelist Xu Guoqin, 18, was detained with two others in Bipu Village on the morning of Nov. 25. Handcuffing the three evangelists together, police escorted them to several nearby villages, where Xu was forced to stand on a tall platform and raise her hands over her head while the police accused her of sexual promiscuity. The three detainees were then taken to the local police station, where they were tortured. One of the evangelists was bailed out by her family a month later, but the fates of Xu Guoqin and the other evangelist were still unknown a year later.
5 Dec. 2002	Linqu, Shandong	Huang Ying, the daughter of Falun Gong practitioners, was 18 months old when her mother, Luo Zhixiang, died in detention on Dec. 5, 2002. Her father, Huang Guohua, was also taken into detention, and Huang Ying was left in the care of her paternal grandparents. Huang Ying knows that "some bad people killed Mommy," but she has been taught to lie to her maternal grandmother, who believes Luo Zhixiang is working in Guangzhou. Huang Ying spent three months with her father in early 2004, after which Huang Guohua fled into exile.
20 Jan. 2003	Fengqiu County, Henan	Cheng Xiangchong, a 16-year-old Christian from Changheng County, was detained while evangelizing with Wang Yujie, 20, at a private home in Qicheng Town. At the police station, both Cheng and Wang were beaten, and Cheng was stripped and subjected to torture until late at night. Both were released over the next two days after paying stiff fines.
26 Sep. 2003	Pingdingshan, Henan	 <p>Police detained Christian house church activists Xiao Biguang and Zhang Yanan on Sep. 26, then detained Zhang's wife, Ding Guizhen, on Sep. 27. Xiao was finally released after a month in detention. Xiao and his wife, Gou Qinghui, have a 4-year-old son. Gou lost her job as a teacher at the government-authorized Beijing Theological Seminary as a result of her husband's activism.</p>
Nov. 2003– Feb. 2004	Xiong County, Hebei	Liu Qian, 12, was diagnosed with leukemia on Nov. 15, 2003. Her parents taught her Falun Gong, after which her health seemed to improve. Liu Qian returned to school on Feb. 6, but the school principal would not allow her to attend classes until she signed a pledge to give up Falun Gong. When she and her mother refused to cooperate, Liu Qian was suspended from school. Soon afterward, her health deteriorated, and on Feb. 11, 2004 she died.
Dec. 2003	Lanzhou, Gansu	Zhao Xudong, a Falun Gong practitioner, was detained on Dec. 7, 2003 and held at the Hualinshan No. 2 Detention Center in Lanzhou City. Zhao's mother, Bai Jinyu, and his wife, Li Hongping, were also detained, and Li was sentenced to three years of forced labor, leaving the couple's 8-year-old daughter in the care of Zhao's elderly father. Zhao Xudong died on Feb. 7, 2004 as a result of physical abuse.
1 Jan. 2004	Chongqing, Sichuan	 <p>Zhang Yuanyuan, born on July 16, 1999, is the daughter of Falun Gong practitioners. Her father, Zhang Hongxu, was sent to a labor camp on July 22, 1999 and released in early 2002, but he fled again in Oct. 2003 under fear of arrest and has continued to drift since then. On Dec. 23, 2003, police burst into the family's home and detained Yuanyuan's mother, Wu Yongmei, putting Yuanyuan in the custody of the state. Wu was sent to a labor camp, but was released early because of poor health resulting from harsh treatment. She requested that custody of her daughter be returned to her, but was refused, and she has since disappeared.</p>
Feb. 2004	Harbin, Heilongjiang	 <p>Lin Huixuan, now 5, began a life on the run with her mother, Xu Lei, and grandparents when they fled their home in 2001 under fear of persecution for practicing Falun Gong. Huixuan's father, Lin Yanqing, was sentenced to 3 years of RTL at the end of 2002. Huixuan's mother and grandparents were detained in Harbin on Feb. 19, 2004 and taken to Beijing, and Huixuan was left in the care of relatives.</p>
9 Feb. 2004	Huaibei, Anhui	House church leader Chu Wei and his wife, Yin Yanling, were among 12 people detained when police raided their church in Huaibei's Xiangshan District. Although all were released later the same day, Yin was detained again the next day for questioning, and heard police say that her husband would be sent to RTL. After Yin was released, she and Chu went into hiding, leaving their 15-year-old daughter and 14-year-old son at home and sending their youngest child, 11, to relatives. Police came to the house late every night to question the children regarding their parents' whereabouts. Yin subsequently returned home, but Chu remained in hiding.

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18 Feb. 2004	Changtu County, Liaoning	Wang Zhe, a high school student whose family practices Falun Gong, was expelled from school after objecting to derogatory comments about the spiritual movement made by school officials. On Apr. 6, Wang Zhe and his mother went to the school demanding that he be readmitted. The school headmaster reported the matter to the police, who detained Wang Zhe in a county detention center.
24 Feb. 2004	Chicheng County, Hebei	Zhang Conghui, an 18-year-old high school student, was pressured to drop out of school because of her belief in Falun Gong. On Feb. 24, Zhang went to Beijing to petition on behalf of Falun Gong, and was detained and sent for brainwashing in Zhangjiakou City.
4 Mar. 2004	Jilin, Heilongjiang	Li Xinxin, an eighth-grader in Shaluhei Township, Yongji County, was reported to the authorities by a teacher because she spoke of Falun Gong to her classmates. Xinxin was expelled from school, and police later came to her home and detained her father, Li Bailong.
Feb–May 2004	Kunming, Yunnan	Police began investigating an underground Christian Bible training school in Kunming in February. On Mar.12, Chen Zuoting was detained when he went to the school to see if belongings had been confiscated. Police charged Chen with “endangering the interests of the nation” and searched his home in nearby Zigong, occupied by his wife, Qi Guilin, and 8-year-old son. Chen was released on parole on Apr. 20, but police attempted to detain Qi Guilin at a house church meeting on May 14. Qi grabbed her son and fled to Sichuan Province. As of mid-June the mother and son were still evading arrest.
May 2004	Cangyuan, Yunnan	 <p>Zhang Yongguang, a Christian evangelist to the Wa minority, was detained on May 4 and held for 25 days on charges of “engaging in illegal religious activities.” On May 29, he was escorted to a jail in his hometown in Henan Province. His wife, Yuan Yuehua, and 8-year-old son, Zhang Lingen, were uprooted with him, and were denied permission to visit him in jail. Zhang Yongguang faces three years in prison.</p>
July 2004	Xinjiang	Some 100 Christians were detained during a meeting in Xinjiang organized by the Ying Shang church, a 5 million-member house church network based in Anhui Province. Luo Bingyin, a key leader of the Ying Shang movement, was transferred to Funan Prison on unknown charges. Luo had previously been imprisoned in 1978 and 2001. His wife, Huang Xiulan, and his 17-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son were reported to be under intense pressure from the police.
6 Aug. 2004	Kaifeng, Henan	Public Security police raided a retreat by more than 100 house church leaders of the Henan House Church in Tongxu County. The meeting was held at the home of one of the retreat organizers, whose name was not reported. His wife, Xiang Zi, and three children, aged 8 to 11, were also detained, and the children were reported to have been “crying a lot when being dragged away.”