

# Falun Gong and Cross-cultural Image Building in the *New York Times*

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**ABSTRACT:** In this paper, 222 news reports about Falun Gong found in the *New York Times* from 2008 to 2016 are scrutinized via the theory of image building. An analysis is offered of images of the movement presented in the *New York Times*, in which location, disorder, and superstition are presented as key themes. The newspaper's level of objectivity is considered, as are its reflections on the anti-cult movement. The context of cross-cultural communication is examined, with a focus on the lack of cultural understanding that is evident as well as the writers' uncertainty about the definition of Falun Gong.

**KEYWORDS:** *New York Times*, anti-cult, Falun Gong, image building, cross-cultural communication

## 1. Background

### 1.1 From Domestic to International Communication

Of the fifteen contemporary organizations identified as 'cults' in China, Falun Gong was one of the earliest to have emerged. It attracted a large number of followers, including many young students and intellectuals disillusioned with China's socialist system. The political and economic reform program known as "opening up" which began in the 1980s became global news. China was once again in the international spotlight following a self-immolation incident in January 2001, when five Falun Gong practitioners burned themselves with gasoline in Tiananmen Square, Beijing (two of whom died and three of whom survived with injuries). Both domestic and foreign media outlets reported widely on this shocking incident.

The attention created by this event led to information and communication about Chinese new religions moving from the domestic to the international stage. This shift is particularly evident in the example of Falun Gong. After the organization was outlawed by the Chinese Government near the end of the twentieth century, its followers began moving to other Asian countries, such as South Korea and Thailand—and even to parts of Europe and the United States (Guo, 2003). In the process, the controversy over Chinese new religions has become a hot topic in the international media, with the news media in more and more countries publicizing stories about the controversial movements.

### ***1.2 Reports on Falun Gong in the Western Mainstream Media***

Western media began to report on Falun Gong from 1999 and onwards, including *The New York Times*. A total of 684 relevant reports can be found in the *New York Times* on the topic from 1999 to the present. These, in turn, can be divided into two kinds of news: (1) reports on major events taking place in China and the U.S., and (2) excerpts from Falun Gong-related stories in the official Chinese media (e.g., from the Xinhua news agency and the *People's Daily* newspaper). The self-immolation incident in Tiananmen Square in 2001 attracted extensive media attention, both at home and abroad, with many reports being made that Falun Gong needed to be urgently and strictly controlled to contain the serious threat posed to people's safety by the group.

The material in the *New York Times* is representative of the Western media's take on Falun Gong sentiment. Indeed, the publication can be said to have made a global contribution to communication about such movements. Nonetheless, although this news outlet provides important information on the subject, the *New York Times* reveals certain gaps in U.S. understanding of the Chinese context, the study of which may lead to answers that will facilitate improvements in inter-country communication more generally.

### ***1.3 The Theory of Image Building***

The phrase “image building” refers to the process of building image frames—i.e., examining different points of view (internal and external) by looking at elements such as an image's background, layout, and surrounding text. Such analysis of an image can be used not only to determine developing trends in the depiction of the subject concerned, but also to understand external views and opinions on that subject (Bennett and Gabriel, 2000). Compared with other image publishers, the media has a special role and level of responsibility with image building because of the great impact that the media can have on people's lives. The rapid development and popularity of the mass media and new media mean that people's judgment and perceptions are affected by them; society relies on the media to reinforce

opinions and influence beliefs. The media has become a source for learning about unknown fields and ideas, which makes it a crucial social tool (Zhang, D., 2015).

#### ***1.4 The Data Selected For This Study***

The object of research in this study, the *New York Times*, is a newspaper that is published all around the world. It is widely considered to be one of the most important and serious U.S. news media publications. Its target audience is the well-educated, and its levels of credibility and authority have led to the newspaper setting the standard for journalism in the United States and beyond. Since it first appeared in 1851, the *New York Times* has developed continually, being circulated ever more widely. In 1996, its online outlet was established successfully, and, in 2016, the newspaper won a Pulitzer Prize for International Reporting. In an era dominated by television and the Internet, the *New York Times* continues to play an important global role in news reporting, having a powerful influence (Liu, 2013). For these reasons, the decision to focus on the *New York Times* in the present study of Falun Gong and image building is significant because the examination of such an important publication can help us to understand more about cross-cultural communication in general.

As the *New York Times* has been covering news about Falun Gong for seventeen years, there is a significant amount of available data. In order to facilitate close scrutiny of the data at hand, this study concentrates on the period from 2008 to the present day, during which 222 Falun Gong-related stories have been published. In the following, the question of how the *New York Times* builds images of Falun Gong will be examined via textual analysis and a comparison of Chinese and Western cultures.

## **2. Image Building and Falun Gong in the New York Times**

### ***2.1 Basic Image Building***

Because the primary audience of the *New York Times* is unlikely to be familiar with Falun Gong, an explanation of the organization is necessary when it is mentioned in news. In Western mainstream media, the basic description of Falun Gong, which can also be regarded as a qualitative definition, largely follows the description given by the *New York Times*. This definition can be said to provide the foundation for all of the information that follows (Gao, 2006).

Because the name of the organization cannot be translated literally into English, and the Chinese Pinyin rendering “Falun Gong” is commonly used in the media. It is difficult, however, for readers who do not speak Chinese to comprehend the meaning of the name, so it is important that an appositive is used as a means of explanation. In the *New York Times*, “Falun Gong” tends to be defined as “a spiritual movement that is banned [or outlawed] by the Chinese

Government.” A less neutral label tends to be used by Falun Gong critics, who often term the organization an “evil cult.”

We can see, then, that the description provided by the *New York Times* has a universal, non-emotional quality. The word “banned” is clearly utilized as a conditional attributive, explaining that Falun Gong is prohibited by the Chinese Government. The key words, however, are “spiritual movement”—a designation without emotional bias that allows the complex connotations of the “cult” label to be avoided. The choice of words can be considered more political than sociological here—in the main, Falun Gong is described not as a cult, but as “movement” that opposes the Government (and, as such, is banned by the Government). The terminology used by Falun Gong critics is much more loaded; the phrase “evil cult” clearly indicates negativity and distrust. Since the Western practice of “yellow journalism” has been widely condemned, the press tends to avoid the use of emotional terms in news reports, and the *New York Times* is no exception. As such, a phrase like “evil cult” is far less likely to appear in an article about Falun Gong in the *New York Times*, as non-emotional reporting is considered more credible.

## ***2.2 Internal Images of Falun Gong: Centralization and Disorder***

After defining the basic character of Falun Gong, the *New York Times* reports on the organization tend to focus on describing the organization’s internal image. Here, references are often made to location, disorder, and superstition.

### ***2.2.1 Location: Centralization***

Discussions about location and Falun Gong in the *New York Times* tend to focus on the places where practitioners live and perform their daily activities. The newspaper reports that activities related to Falun Gong in the U.S. occur regularly in the Flushing/Chinatown area of New York. Here, parades, protests, and other activities are said to take place.

Through background tracking, we can discover that Flushing (in the Queens District of New York) is a well-known area of Chinese settlement. The *New York Times* reports that it is home to perhaps “the largest Falun Gong following in the United States.”<sup>1</sup> As well as having a large Chinese population and thus being referred to as “Flushing Chinatown,” there are also many Koreans and other Asians resident in the Flushing area. The presence of Falun Gong practitioners in Flushing indicates that the organization continues to target a Chinese following. As such, its activities are characterized by a certain geographical positioning. Additionally, this centralization of activity means that Falun Gong has a limited

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<sup>1</sup>Extract from “Born on a Queens Street: A Battle Over Falun Gong Goes to Court” (July 29, 2016).

impact on other communities in New York, thus preventing the organization from gaining much attention from media outlets in other countries without a Falun Gong presence.

### 2.2.2 *Disorder and Confusion*

The depictions of Falun Gong in the *New York Times* also suggest a lack of order. Indeed, the words “disorganized,” “turbulence,” and “disorder” appear frequently in Falun Gong-related reports. An air of chaos is evident in such descriptions as: “Plastic water bottles fly into the air, aimed at the parade . . . from time to time into the streets, pushed back by the police.”<sup>2</sup> The presentation of such scenes of confusion is used to demonstrate that the Falun Gong community in the U.S. lacks a certain maturity and stability. Notably, however, repeated reports about Falun Gong parades and other, small-sized events indicate that the organization is still considered worthy of attention and discussion.

### 2.2.3 *Superstition*

Ideologically speaking, Falun Gong practitioners are presented in the *New York Times* as being superstitious; in particular, they are depicted as believing in the “agnostic force” described by the organization’s founder, Li Hongzhi. It seems that most followers have little understanding of the natural sciences and/or the law, yet they have no doubt about the veracity of Li Hongzhi’s statements. Let us take the following example: “Although Falun Gong is known as a system that combines elements of Buddhism, mysticism and traditional exercise regimen, some followers also ascribe to the more unconventional teachings of Mr. Li, including alien visitation, ethnic separation and other beliefs.”<sup>3</sup> Here, Falun Gong practitioners are represented as ignorant and lacking knowledge; their beliefs appear to be pure superstition.

## 3. The Image-building Strategies of the *New York Times*

### 3.1 *Variety in News, Reference, and Quotation Representation*

In order to create a comprehensive and impartial style of news reporting, the *New York Times* offers a range of interpretations from a variety of sources. As a consequence, the resulting images are complex and multifaceted. When it comes to news events related to Falun Gong, the opinions of both the organization’s followers and anti-Falun Gong groups are often presented, drawn from such sources as interview material. These reports often detail the opposing positions at length, with multiple voices being used from both sides of the story. Furthermore, these

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<sup>2</sup>Extract from “Falun Gong Marchers Are Jeered in Chinatown” (May 26, 2008).

<sup>3</sup>Extract from “Born on a Queens Street.”

representative voices are selected from a variety of backgrounds. For example, in “Some Chinese Leaders Claim U.S. and Britain Are Behind Hong Kong Protests,”<sup>4</sup> quotations are given from the protesters, a U.S. Consulate spokesman, a spokesman for the National Democratic Foundation, Chinese diplomats, Chinese and American officials, representatives of the Hong Kong Committee, university students, and other government spokespersons. This approach enables different viewpoints to be understood and also reveals the range of issues related to the story—for instance, legal, political, economic, and social factors might be significant.

Aside from utilizing a variety of sources in its reports, in recent years, the *New York Times* has begun to quote from official statements made by the Chinese Government and others. In the main, these quotations are taken from the Chinese mainstream media. The overall number of such quotations remains low, however; out of the 222 news reports examined here, there are only 19 that include quotations from the Xinhua news agency (China’s official news agency). A further eight quote from the *People’s Daily* newspaper. Nonetheless, it is clear that these two resources are considered the most credible, being commonly used by *New York Times* journalists seeking quotations from Chinese sources (though a few other authoritative news sources are also used). In many cases, the *New York Times* directly lifts and translates large segments from stories originally published in the Chinese media, a method which helps avoid ambiguities and misunderstandings. For example, in “China Assails U.S. ‘Arrogance’ in Report on Religious Freedom,” the reporter includes lengthy comments from the Xinhua news agency, as well as quoting from Burmese government reports.

Interestingly, despite this inclusion of material from China in US reports, we can also see that there is still, at present, a lack of direct interaction between the *New York Times* and Chinese media. When looking into the process of Chinese anti-cult development, news quotations and references are very important because the Chinese media can be considered authoritative on this matter. The percentage of quotations from such sources in the *New York Times* is a mere 12.2 percent. Strengthening communications between the countries thus remains one of the most important challenges, in terms of future cross-cultural cooperation.

### ***3.2 Describing the News in Detail***

Nuanced description is one of the primary strategic approaches used when building images. When describing an event, the *New York Times* often narrates the background and the scene, and adds related interview material. When it comes to describing people, the approach is very detailed, including discussions of their language, actions, and demeanor.

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<sup>4</sup>October 10, 2014.

It appears that the *New York Times* news reports are often based on partial descriptions. When discussing political, economic, and religious matters related to the news topic, however, the newspaper offers more exhaustive detail. This is reflected in the sensory descriptions given in the articles being examined here, such as: “Eyes flashing, lips curled in operatic scorn, a middle-aged woman holding a placard reading ‘Evil Cult, Falun Gong!’” Here, the portrayal of the demeanor and actions of the subject creates a strong image of a Falun Gong critic. A similar image is also evoked in the following: “The marchers raised their thumbs in the air and in return, spectators gave the thumbs-down sign while chanting a derisive oath in Chinese.”

### **3.3 Image Construction through New Media: Visualization and “Live Feeling”**

The emergence of new media and the spread of the network has led to information being accessible through a variety of new channels (Huang, 2015). The embrace of Internet communications by the *New York Times*—which, as noted earlier, is a highly-regarded newspaper with a long history—has enabled the publication to step forward into a new era of faster interaction, in which the rules of time and space have been renegotiated. In this way, the *New York Times* has been able to reach a wider, more international readership than ever before, meaning that changes to content and delivery have been necessary.

The development of new media has led to many reflections on the more diverse set of images that can be created and disseminated. Internet networks allow audiences to access more varieties of information more quickly, thus leading them to accept a wider range of content. Driven by such conditions, the *New York Times* has introduced a full spectrum of image-building techniques online, including audio, video, and photography. The aim here is to supply audiences with a clearer understanding of the story at hand. Where Falun Gong-related news is concerned, however, the *New York Times* continues mainly to use photographs to recreate three-dimensional images in its readers’ minds.

Of the 222 *New York Times* reports examined here, 112 (i.e., just over half) include pictures. The photo coverage is dynamic, focusing mainly on the action of the subject, but also on some smaller details that work in concert with the texts. The combination of pictures and text renders the reports more vivid; the amalgamation allows the meaning of the image to become clearer and the scene to be reflected in a more nuanced way. It appears that the *New York Times* aims to generate a more stereoscopic, more authentic image in the audience’s mind through the use of multimedia. The method can be considered a means of enabling the reader to gain a more in-depth understanding of news content.

## 4. The Inspiration behind Image Building in the *New York Times*

### 4.1 Event-based Image Building

The building of images of Falun Gong in the *New York Times* relies heavily on reports about notable events. These events can be divided broadly into two categories: (1) stories about Falun Gong-related events in China, and (2) reports on domestic conflicts, disputes, and protests involving Falun Gong followers. Most of the latter are relatively trivial civil disputes. Where the former are concerned, however, the Chinese events discussed tend to be quite significant, being related either to Falun Gong's activities or to more general events, such as the torch relay for the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, to give one example (Yang, 2011).

Two news stories about Falun Gong's activities in the US provide a general indication of the kinds of domestic news reports that the *New York Times* publishes about the group: "Born on a Queens Street" and "Long-time Anti-Beijing Protests Provoke a Sudden and Angry Backlash." Both stories concern confrontations between Falun Gong practitioners and anti-Falun Gong organizations in Flushing. In the process of image building, the *New York Times* generally links these two groups with two opposing sides in Chinese politics: the anti-government side and the pro-government side. Although the headline of "Long-time Anti-Beijing Protest," published in 2008, might appear to suggest that the report is about a protest against Falun Gong practitioners, the angle actually taken favors Falun Gong practitioners. In "Born on a Queens Street," the leader of an anti-Falun Gong organization, Zhu Lichuang, is portrayed as a puppet of the Communist Party, as per a previous report in the *Epoch Times*, a free, daily pro-Falun Gong newspaper. The *New York Times* balances the bias of the story here, however, by focusing on Zhu's "outspokenness," which, the paper claims, has led him to become "a target." What is clear is that the *New York Times* has developed the language and images used in Falun Gong-related reports as the number of stories published has increased; more angles have been included and a more diverse vocabulary has come into play, thus helping to strengthen the reader's understanding of Falun Gong and the anti-cultism of the Chinese Government. This diversification has also led to these news reports becoming more neutral in tone.

The *New York Times's* overall attitude toward Falun Gong can be seen to shift subtly after every related event that sparks international interest. On the whole, the reports are becoming more detailed and less stereotyped, with the style and tone being increasingly objective and positive. We can divide this shift into three stages. The first stage began in around 2001, at which time news stories about Falun Gong were related mainly to the self-immolation incident; the second stage commenced in about 2008, when Falun Gong and other "evil cults" abroad were



linked with major events such as the Wenchuan earthquake and the 2008 Olympic Games; and the third stage emerged after the Zhaoyuan case in Shandong in 2014, when foreign media began to re-examine the significance of the anti-cult perspective that has been repeatedly emphasized by the Chinese Government.

In the first stage (from 2001 to 2007), reports about the activities of Falun Gong were related mainly to events in China; practitioners in other countries were largely ignored. During this period, the *New York Times* tended to portray Falun Gong as a group oppressed by the Chinese Government which was quietly resisting. In the second stage (2008 to 2013), the *New York Times* was more overt about the conflict between Falun Gong and the Chinese Government, creating a strong image of unrest. During this intermediate phase, most of the reports blamed the Chinese Government for its lack of control, especially where large events like the aforementioned earthquake and the Olympic Games were concerned. As China is considered an “other” in the eyes of Western media, the Western understanding of the Chinese Government reflected this “othering.” This contrast is reproduced in news reports, where stereotypes and misunderstandings become the hallmarks of cross-cultural perceptions. After 2014, in the third stage of reporting, the dramatic murder of a woman in Shandong Province by members of the Almighty God sect became the focus of Falun Gong-related stories in the *New York Times*. Here, cultural conflict was evident once more, as definitions and understandings of individualism do not translate well across the cultural divide. In the West, it is generally believed that individuals’ actions cannot be deemed improper as long as they do not harm the interests of others. For this reason, definitions of Falun Gong and its relationship to the term “cult” tend to be very vague in the *New York Times*. The criminal activities reported upon in Zhaoyuan City, Shandong Province, however, are examples of cases where great damage had been caused, even leading to deaths. This evoked a discussion about the concept of “cult” in the Western press, which, to some extent, led to a narrowing of the gap between the Chinese and Western understandings of the term. Subsequently, the flow of information between East and West has increased, thus enabling the Western media to achieve a deeper understanding of the cult controversy in China.

When considering anti-cult communication from an international perspective, the increasing convergence in beliefs and understanding is due in part to the fact that media focus has shifted from Falun Gong’s political position as an anti-government movement to the social angle, in which the harm caused to everyday people by their participation in Falun Gong is the object of scrutiny. At the present time, the *New York Times* has become less condemnatory about the control of Falun Gong by the Chinese Government, while expressing greater concern about Falun Gong’s actions and interest in Chinese actions against new religions.

#### **4.2 Misunderstandings of Chinese Culture in Cross-cultural Communication**

In the stories related to Falun Gong published by the *New York Times*, examples can still be found of untrue information. For example, it has been reported falsely that the Chinese Government tortures Falun Gong practitioners. It has even been suggested that the Government has practiced “organ harvesting” from prisoners of conscience. This misinformation comes from false information posted on Falun Gong websites, which aim to damage the Chinese Government. Problems with misreporting are closely related to the lack of interaction between Chinese and American media outlets.

The articles also reveal certain inadequacies in interpretations of Chinese society and culture. In news reports about Falun Gong, the *New York Times* seldom mentions China’s cultural background, just as the back story of Falun Gong and its formation is largely ignored. Understanding social and cultural context is a basic requirement in grasping the reasons for Falun Gong’s emergence; such details might help readers to see why it is regarded as a threat and measures have been instituted to counteract the activities of such organizations. This lack of understanding of the society and culture has also resulted in certain discrepancies between Chinese and American news reports.

Furthermore, the news culture in China differs significantly from that in the US. As such, the views and attitudes put forth in the *New York Times* tend to place an emphasis on liberalism, in which concepts such as freedom of religion and free speech being of far more import than in the Chinese press.

#### **4.3 Uncertainty in the New York Times about Falun Gong’s “Cult” Label**

The term “liberalism” perhaps best describes the basic stance of the press in the West. From the liberalist viewpoint, it is considered perfectly reasonable and legitimate to carry out protests against the status quo; it is believed that individuals’ rights should be protected. In the *New York Times* news reports, therefore, such activity is generally represented as tolerable. The newspaper does not explicitly define Falun Gong as a “cult”; rather, it is constructed as an “anti-government religion or group.” Many of the statements in the articles also implicitly reflect the importance of protecting individual freedom—for example, in “Born on a Queens Street,”<sup>5</sup> a lawyer is quoted as stating, “If they follow a leader who teaches about aliens and segregated heavens, my clients get to call those ideas cultlike, bizarre and dangerous. That’s how freedom of speech works.” The overarching orientation is not that Falun Gong is a “cult” that should have been stopped; rather, it is

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<sup>5</sup>July 29, 2016.

because of freedom of expression that other people have the right to express the feeling that the organization's ideas are dangerous and unacceptable (Cheng, 2012).

This liberal viewpoint is also reflected in the *New York Times's* questioning of freedom of religion in China. In many news articles, China's views on "cults" and religious freedom are discussed together. For instance, in "China Assails U.S. 'Arrogance' in Report on Religious Freedom," it is stated that situation regarding religious freedom has deteriorated in China and the example is given of the claim that Falun Gong practitioners are being detained in a heavily guarded center for the mentally ill—though it is not clear whether this claim is true or false.

The influence of liberalism is further evident in the aforementioned presence of balanced views in the *New York Times*. Offering a range of opinions from both sides of a conflict to the readership facilitates the making of one's own judgments, as well as avoiding bias.

Differences in opinion on Falun Gong can be said to originate from the ways in which the organization is defined in the press. A general failure to explain Falun Gong's background adequately means that foreign media outlets do not seem to have an appreciation of the harm caused to Chinese society by organizations like Falun Gong. In response, it has been argued that the description of such groups as "anti-government movements" or "religions" is ill-informed, which can be understood as a result of a lack of cross-cultural communication (Xue, 2012).

Additionally, uncertainty about how to define Falun Gong also means that questions such as "What is a cult?" and "Is Falun Gong a cult or not?" also feature in articles in the *New York Times*. There are many reasons for the differences between Eastern and Western interpretations of Falun Gong. First, China and the West are ideologically different, which has led to the West continually questioning social freedom and government methodology in China. This criticism of China by Western countries means that newspapers like the *New York Times* often attribute incidents related to Falun Gong to a lack of supervision by the Chinese Government, whereas China understands these incidents as arising from the nature of a dangerous cult. Second, the Western media has not paid a great deal of attention to Falun Gong. As an organization, Falun Gong is more influential in China and neighboring countries such as Korea, Russia, Laos, and Thailand than in the West. Indeed, the organization's influence weakens the further one moves away from China. Even though some Falun Gong practitioners have moved to the U.S. in recent years, the organization's activities are very much regional, being based specifically in areas like Flushing. Furthermore, the primary audience for Falun Gong's activities are still Asians living in the U.S., rather than other communities; the organization has not taken hold more widely. The *New York Times* coverage of Falun Gong-related events in China is also still focused on big events such as the 2001 self-immolation incident, the 2014 Zhaoyuan murder in Shandong, and so on. The current levels of coverage of Falun Gong's other activities are far from

adequate for a Western audience to understand the drive behind action against groups like Falun Gong in the East. Indeed, there is no single definition for the term “cult.” Every country has its own different interpretation of the word, leading to conflicting understandings.

Of the conflicts between Eastern and Western understandings of Falun Gong and other groups mentioned here, the absence of information about Falun Gong’s background in Western news articles might be the easiest one to overcome. By strengthening communications and increasing levels of description in news articles, the gap in understanding could be reduced significantly.

#### **4.4 Translation Problems**

Language differences have also caused some problems. The *New York Times* uses three methods when transliterating Chinese terms that cannot be translated literally. The first involves the use of post-attributives or equivalents, as in the basic explanation of Falun Gong given in the *New York Times* (see section 2.1). The second is that because the Chinese text is more difficult to translate into English, journalists will sometimes directly describe a situation in their own wording. This method sometimes leads to a lack of background information, with the emphasis being placed on surface meaning, which can cause substantial misunderstandings. For example, the 2001 self-immolation incident is referred to as a “meditation exercise” or “silent protest” in some articles. In the third approach, a combination of historical and cultural factors are considered as part of the translation process but this can also be problematic due to the significant divergence between Chinese and western cultures. For instance, the Chinese term “DouZheng,” which was used widely by the Communist Party during the Cultural Revolution, describes action against a certain type of organization. In the article “Cisco’s Helping the Chinese Government to Track Falun Gong Litigation,” “DouZheng” is defined as “persecution of undesirable groups,” a description that is obviously biased. In other words, post-translation, the meaning of the term is greatly changed, thus leading to misunderstandings.

Journalists must strive, therefore, to understand other languages and cultures more deeply, as well as to appreciate the nuances of international politics and history. Detailed knowledge is needed if misinterpretations are to be avoided. Such an approach could not only facilitate increased audience understanding, but also improve cooperation between governments and societies around the world.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, in recent years, reports about Falun Gong published in the *New York Times* have become more detailed and objective. A variety of sources are used, with many direct quotations taken from a range of different people. The images

that are generated are multifaceted, providing a significant level of detail to the reader. Nevertheless, certain issues remain, including inaccuracies, misinterpretations, and certain mistranslations—which, taken together, means that the image of Falun Gong portrayed in such reports is limited. It is hoped that improved cross-cultural communication could help to resolve such problems in the future.

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