



Australian Government
Refugee Review Tribunal

Country Advice

China

China – CHN38654– Nine Commentaries
on the Communist Party

16 May 2011

1. Deleted.

2. Is there any information about the ‘Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party’?

The ‘Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party’ are editorials attacking the Chinese Communist Party (CPC). The Commentaries first appeared on 19 November 2004, in a series of nine editorials, in *Daijiyuan*, the Chinese language edition of *The Epoch Times*. *The Epoch Times* was founded by Falun Gong practitioners in 2000.¹ It is linked to the Falun Gong organisation and is sometimes referred to as a Falun Gong publication.² Falun Gong and non-Falun Gong sources state that the Commentaries have been banned in China. No official proclamation banning the Commentaries has been found by RRT Country Advice in English language sources. Human Rights in China (HRIC) reported, however, that arrests of people in possession of the Commentaries indicates that its possession constitutes a crime and can result in arrest and imprisonment.³ Nonetheless, there is 2011 information indicating that the Commentaries are still being distributed in China.

The *Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party* was first published in English, in book form, by *The Epoch Times*. According to the book’s ‘Foreword’, the Commentaries first appeared on 19 November 2004, in a series of nine editorials, in *Daijiyuan*, the Chinese language edition of *The Epoch Times*. The ‘Foreword’ indicates that their authorship is anonymous for “reasons that should be clear upon reading the Commentaries”.⁴ The book is available in the MRT-RRT Library.

The book examines the history and methods of the CPC, arguing that the party has used violence, lies and manipulation to attain and maintain its power. It further argues that the party has destroyed the moral foundation of the nation and been responsible for the deaths of 60 to 80 million innocent Chinese people. There is a particular focus on the persecution of the Falun Gong organisation: the introduction states “Among its unending list of crimes, the vilest must be its persecution of Falun Gong” and Chapter 5 is devoted to this persecution.⁵

¹ Ownby, David 2008, *Falun Gong and the Future of China*, Oxford University Press, New York, p.220 – Attachment 1.

² Ownby, David 2008, *Falun Gong and the Future of China*, Oxford University Press, New York, p.220 – Attachment 1; RRT Country Advice 2006, *Country Advice CHN30916*, 7 November, pp.2-3 – Attachment 2.

³ Zhang, Erping 2005, ‘Beijing’s Cyber War’, *China Rights Forum*, Human Rights In China, No.3, 4 October http://hrichina.org/fs/view/downloadables/pdf/crf/CRF-2005-3_GC_Cyber.pdf – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 3.

⁴ The Epoch Times 2004, *Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party*, Yih Chyun Book Corp., Gillette, NJ, pp.v-xvii – Attachment 4.

⁵ See: RRT Country Advice 2006, *Country Advice CHN30916*, 7 November – Attachment 2.

David Ownby in his book *Falun Gong and the Future of China*, published in 2008, describes the Commentaries as follows:

...As for the *Epoch Times*, the newspaper's focus on human rights is both humanitarian and political, but the paper's editorial stance, particularly its publication of the "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party" and its appeal to Chinese Communist Party members to renounce their membership, constitutes a direct attack on the legitimacy of China's government and very nearly a call for its overthrow – if by peaceful means. The Nine Commentaries are a blanket condemnation of Communism in general and of Chinese Communism in particular. Although there is undoubtedly some truth in the commentaries, they lack balance and nuance, and read like anti-Communist propaganda written in Taiwan in the 1950s, or perhaps like McCarthyite boilerplate from 1950s America. I can readily understand the anger of Falun Gong practitioners toward Chinese authorities and toward Chinese Communism, and I accept the idea that the Communist party has, over time, inflicted extreme, unnecessary violence on the Chinese people, but as a professional historian I cannot sanction such one-sided depictions, which ultimately reveal much more about the authors of the texts than about their subjects...⁶

A November 2009 article by *The Epoch Times* mentions that the Commentaries are "banned in China".⁷ Dr. Thomas Weyrauch, in a report dated 2006, refers to "the (banned) book "Nine Commentaries"..."⁸ A 2005 HRIC stated that a report by the Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet and Society had noted that the Commentaries "top the list of Web pages banned inside China".⁹ An April 2011 Freedom House report notes that the Commentaries are a banned publication.¹⁰ Freedom House also noted that the Commentaries are amongst the "various dissident initiatives that challenge the regime on a systemic level" which are the "most systematically censored topics" on the internet.¹¹

In addition, Freedom House reported, in 2011, that *The Epoch Times* emails copies of the Commentaries into China:

...Meanwhile, overseas groups such as Radio Free Asia, Human Rights in China, and the *Epoch Times* have reportedly sent millions of e-mails into the country, supplying users with news summaries on Chinese and international events, instructions on anticensorship technology, and copies of banned publications like former CCP leader Zhao Ziyang's memoir, *the Nine Commentaries*, or the prodemocracy *Beijing Spring* magazine.¹²

⁶ Ownby, David 2008, *Falun Gong and the Future of China*, Oxford University Press, New York, pp.221-222 – Attachment 1.

⁷ Adams, Shar 2009, 'Power of Nine Commentaries 'enormous': Human Rights Commissioner', *The Epoch Times*, 23 November

http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=25563&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=1 – Accessed 18 May 2010 – Attachment 5.

⁸ Weyrauch, Thomas 2006, *Important Aspects on Human Rights in the People's Republic of China*, 10th European Country of Origin Seminar in Budapest (1-2 December 2005), ECOI website, 17 March, p.23 – Attachment 6.

⁹ Zhang, Erping 2005, 'Beijing's Cyber War', *China Rights Forum*, Human Rights In China, No.3, 4 October http://hrichina.org/fs/view/downloadables/pdf/crf/CRF-2005-3_GC_Cyber.pdf – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 3.

¹⁰ Kelly, Sanja & Cook, Sarah (eds) 2011, *Freedom on the Net 2011: A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media*, Freedom House, 18 April, p.102 – Attachment 7.

¹¹ Kelly, Sanja & Cook, Sarah (eds) 2011, *Freedom on the Net 2011: A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media*, Freedom House, 18 April, pp.92-93/footnote 25 – Attachment 7.

¹² Kelly, Sanja & Cook, Sarah (eds) 2011, *Freedom on the Net 2011: A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media*, Freedom House, 18 April, p.102 – Attachment 7.

Also, *The Epoch Times*, in an article dated May 2011, outlined how Falun Gong material, including the Commentaries, are distributed in China.¹³

3. Deleted.

¹³ Robertson, Matthew 2011, 'Underground Print Shops Deliver Truth to China's Masses', *The Epoch Times*, 10 May <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/china/underground-print-shops-deliver-truth-to-chinas-masses-56118.html> – Accessed 11 May 2011 – Attachment 8.

Attachments

1. Ownby, David 2008, *Falun Gong and the Future of -China*, Oxford University Press, New York. (MRT-RRT Library)
2. RRT Country Advice 2006, *Country Advice CHN30916*, 7 November.
3. Zhang, Erping 2005, 'Beijing's Cyber War', *China Rights Forum*, Human Rights In China, No.3, 4 October http://hrichina.org/fs/view/downloadables/pdf/crf/CRF-2005-3_GC_Cyber.pdf – Accessed 7 November 2006.
4. The Epoch Times 2004, *Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party*, Yih Chyun Book Corp., Gillette, NJ. (MRT-RRT Library)
5. Adams, Shar 2009, 'Power of Nine Commentaries 'enormous': Human Rights Commissioner', *The Epoch Times*, 23 November http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/index2.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=25563&pop=1&page=0&Itemid=1 – Accessed 18 May 2010.
6. Weyrauch, Thomas 2006, *Important Aspects on Human Rights in the People's Republic of China*, 10th European Country of Origin Seminar in Budapest (1-2 December 2005), ECOI website, 17 March.
7. Kelly, Sanja & Cook, Sarah (eds) 2011, *Freedom on the Net 2011: A Global Assessment of Internet and Digital Media*, Freedom House, 18 April.
8. Robertson, Matthew 2011, 'Underground Print Shops Deliver Truth to China's Masses', *The Epoch Times*, 10 May <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n2/china/underground-print-shops-deliver-truth-to-chinas-masses-56118.html> – Accessed 11 May 2011.
9. Deleted.
10. Deleted.
11. Deleted.
12. Deleted.
13. Deleted.
14. Deleted.
15. Deleted.