

Shen Yun Alleges Lawsuit 'Undoubtedly' Part of CCP Attack Campaign

Performing arts company raises concern over CCP infiltration into U.S. media as well as attempts to erode freedoms.

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Shen Yun Performing Arts presents the beauty of traditional Chinese culture, as it existed before communism. Courtesy of Shen Yun Performing Arts



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by Petr Svab

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A civil complaint filed last month against Shen Yun Performing Arts is undoubtedly part of a coordinated offensive against our company being orchestrated by the Chinese regime,” the arts company said in a [statement](#) on Dec. 3.

The woman who filed the lawsuit has been linked to a Chinese government entity and has contributed interviews to individuals that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) apparatus uses to attack Shen Yun, according to the statement.

“When the dust settles and the smoke clears, it will become frightfully apparent to the American people that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has facilitated the spread of false narratives in mainstream media on a large scale,” the statement said.

“What is at stake is not just the reputation of our beloved company; what is at stake is America’s ability to prevent Beijing from controlling U.S. companies, the press, freedom of belief, and freedom of expression in the United States.”

Shen Yun, the world’s premier classical Chinese dance and music company, was started in 2006 in New York by practitioners of Falun Gong, a spiritual practice based on principles of truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance that has been brutally persecuted by the CCP since 1999.

The company’s eight orchestras and dance troupes perform for about a million people a year under the tagline, “China before communism.” Some of its dance pieces depict the persecution of Falun Gong.

“The CCP has targeted our company with a global campaign to malign and shut us down since our founding,” the statement said, pointing to a report earlier this year documenting more than 130 incidents when the CCP tried to interfere with Shen Yun including by pressuring local

officials and theater management to cancel the shows “and even resorting to thuggery, vandalism, and death threats.”

Last month, U.S. federal judges sentenced two men for taking part in CCP’s campaign against Falun Gong. One was [spying](#) for the CCP on Falun Gong practitioners in the United States and the [other](#) tried to bribe an IRS agent into opening an investigation into Shen Yun in order to strip the company of its nonprofit status.

About-Face

The recent complaint was filed by a woman who used to perform with Shen Yun, but left the company in 2019. Over the past two years, she has brought up a number of allegations, including claims that the company exploits and abuses its performers.

She repeated some of the allegations in a New York Times article earlier this year and again in the suit.

After the New York Times published its article, dozens of current and former Shen Yun artists [came forward and debunked](#) the allegations.

The company pointed out that the woman has dramatically changed her story about Shen Yun over the years.

“In the two years after she left the company, she wrote about how she loved her time at Shen Yun. During this same period, she also made several requests to return to the company or teach at a school that trained many Shen Yun artists,” the statement from Shen Yun said.

“Furthermore, she said she wanted to open her own dance studio, indicating she would help other aspiring young dancers join Shen Yun. All of this obviously contradicts what she now alleges in both her media interviews and legal complaint.”

However, in recent years her dance studio in Taiwan opened a collaboration with a teacher at the Beijing Dance Academy (BDA), a CCP-run dance school that views Shen Yun as a main competitor,

according to a report by the Falun Dafa Information Center (FDIC), a nonprofit monitoring the persecution of Falun Gong.

In the past two years, the woman has also given interviews to two YouTube channels that produce virulently anti-Falun Gong content. Two internal CCP whistleblowers [revealed](#) earlier this year to the FDIC that the regime was feeding information to and sought to use the individuals behind the YouTube channels as vehicles for spreading anti-Falun Gong propaganda.

The Shen Yun statement questioned whether “the radical and sudden change” in the woman’s attitude toward Shen Yun was the “result of these factors.”

“What is certain is that her new narrative serves as the basis for her legal complaint, and parrots a broader, sinister campaign to cancel Shen Yun,” it said.

According to the latest of the CCP whistleblowers, the smear campaign is run personally by the head of China’s Ministry of State Security, Chen Yixin, a loyalist of CCP head Xi Jinping.

The goal of Chen’s campaign is to turn “the American government and public opinion against the persecuted community” with smears laundered through sources such as social media influencers and major U.S. media, an FDIC report [stated](#).

“His plan was to undermine Falun Gong’s overseas presence, dismantle the organization, and completely resolve the ‘Falun Gong issue’ by the end of the year,” the whistleblower said.

Shen Yun noted that this CCP campaign “appears to be the origin of recent articles in the New York Times and other outlets.”



The New York Times headquarters in New York City on Dec. 7, 2009. Mario Tama/Getty Images

The company criticized the articles for relying on “a mere handful of former Shen Yun performers—several of whom have public connections with the Chinese regime and/or were let go by Shen Yun for violating company rules.” It said certain media outlets had used the disgruntled performers’ claims “to make broad assertions about a company that has worked with hundreds of performers.”

It urges the media to exercise “restraint, skepticism, and engage in careful fact-checking before they amplify the accusations of such individuals, especially given the CCP’s well-documented effort to target Shen Yun with transnational repression and propaganda.”

Distortions, Inaccuracies

The recent New York Times articles were “riddled with inaccuracies and grossly distort the operations” of Shen Yun, the company said, referring to an FDIC report to that effect earlier this year.

Contrary to the claims in the New York Times that the company relies on teenage and child performers, 85 percent of Shen Yun artists are adults “with the remaining slots available to talented young people”

from affiliated religious performing arts schools, who can apply to go on tour with Shen Yun “as part of a curriculum approved by the New York State Department of Education,” the statement said.

Some of the articles also falsely suggested that Shen Yun discourages performers from receiving medical care, the statement noted.

“In fact, performers regularly receive top-notch medical care for a wide range of ailments, from minor aches to Achilles ruptures,” it said, pointing to an [interview](#) with Dr. Damon Noto, a specialist in treating dance and sport injuries, who treats Shen Yun performers on a regular basis.

The statement also criticized The New York Times for “cultural and religious bias.”

“Given that ours is a faith-based community, the rhetoric the Times and other media are promoting, and recklessly so, stirs up hatred toward Shen Yun performers and Falun Gong practitioners more broadly,” it said.

“It is, therefore, no surprise that bomb threats, threats of mass shootings, and threats to rape and kill Shen Yun’s female performers have escalated in recent months.”



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Author’s Selected Articles

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Nov 26, 2024



New York Times' Attacks Detached From Reality, Shen Yun Artists Say

Nov 19, 2024



Shen Yun Responds to New York Times Article 'Riddled With Inaccuracies'

Nov 18, 2024



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