

What Does “Shen Yun” Try to Tarnish?

Recently, the “Shen Yun Performing Arts” advertised by “Falun Gong” in New York has been strongly resisted by local Chinese. The local Chinese put up banners outside the performance theater that read “Say no to Shen Yun, say no to cult politics, and stay away from the Falun Gong cult!” “Shen Yun preaches the Falun Gong cult in the disguise of traditional culture.” “Shen Yun advertises the Falun Gong cult in the name of entertainment.” They expressed strong resentment at “Falun Gong” and “Shen Yun Performing Arts”. In fact, news about their encountering resistance is frequently reported, and the reasons are clear-cut!

“Shen Yun” tarnishes the Chinese traditional culture

China, as one of the four ancient civilizations, has a long-standing traditional culture. Arguably the Chinese traditional culture crystallizes the essence of the 5,000-year Chinese civilization and represents the fundamental creativity of its achievements. It is the collective of moral heritages and diverse cultural thoughts and spiritual concepts that have developed over the historical course of the nation. For this reason, the deep and profound Chinese traditional culture has attracted more and more attention from more and more foreigners. The “Falun Gong” cultists know it so well. In order to attract foreigner who are deeply interested in the Chinese traditional culture, the “Shen Yun Performing Arts” created by “Falun Gong” has always upheld the banner of “promoting the Chinese traditional culture” and “showing the oriental charm”. The followers not only pay attention to external publicity, but also carefully design the show. The show is broadly divided into three sections: traditional Chinese cultural performances, performances that preaching the ‘Falun Gong’ doctrine, and performances that try to tarnish the Chinese government for their “persecution” of “FalunGongers”. In order to cover up its attempt to take advantage of the Chinese culture, traditional cultural performances adapted from Chinese folk dances and music are intentionally put on in the first half of the show, but they are only an insignificant component. What follows is lengthy performances to propaganda the teachings of “Falun Gong”, deify its founder Li Hongzhi, and smear the Chinese government. The hypocritical “Shen Yun” show upsets viewers who expected to enjoy a traditional Chinese culture show and extremely disgusts them, who believe that the “Falun Gong” cult is actually trying to tarnish the Chinese traditional culture. On December 21, 2016, *Visalia Times* in California, USA, reported on its website (visaliatimesdelta.com) that the “Falun Gong” organization resorted to deceptive advertising about its “Shen Yun” gala, which was nothing but a “weird mix”. On December 23, 2016, *Fresno Bee* disclosed in a report on its website (Fresnobee.com) how the “Shen Yun Performing Arts”, which claims to represent the 5,000-year Chinese culture, actually disseminates political information instead. The report emphasized that “Shen Yun Performing Arts” is bitterly criticized by scholars and the media. According to the report, a representative of the 5,000-year Chinese cul-

ture as it claims, “Shen Yun Performing Arts” chooses to rely on flashy and dazzling marketing. Mainstream media in the world, such as *Los Angeles Times*, *The Guardian*, *The New York Times*, and *The Telegraph* all criticized the “Shen Yun Performing Arts” affiliated to the “Falun Gong” gang. *The Evening Standard* did a report named “‘Shen Yun’ tarnished Chinese culture” and commented that it “tarnishes the Chinese culture and disgusts viewers.”

“Shen Yun” tarnishes art

“Falun Gong” cultists bragged “Shen Yun Performing Arts” as a very premium art show supported by a cast of “world-class artists”. The actors and actresses are all “prestigious” as winners in “world-class” competition. They exaggerate the show as “a world-class show”, “the No. 1 show in the world”, “a super show”, and “an unrivaled show”, etc. Is that true? A careful study on the profiles of the performers published on the website of “Falun Gong” sheds some light on the answer. The “Shen Yun Art Troupe” is boasted roughly in two ways. The first one is self-praise. For example, “Pianist” Li Yan boasted that he was admitted into “the Middle School Affiliated to the Tchaikovsky Central Conservatory of Music in Russia at the age of ten”, but this institution is non-existent in Russia; also, Bai Xue, a soloist in the art troupe, unreasonably claimed that she has developed into a “world-class” singer after only a few years of studying at the Shenyang Conservatory of Music; Zheng Mingjun, a “cellist”, claimed that he won a performance award in the First Full-age Cello Competition in China in 1988, which never happened, as revealed by investigation. In addition, the cultists also brag themselves by inventing competitions and taking all the awards in them. The “Falun Gong” organization has invented a number of so-called “world-class” competitions since 2007, and Li Bojian, Liu Xinyi, Wang Luyi, Zhou Xiao, Dong Meijing, Su Xianzhi, and Liang Shihua, who are currently active on the stage of “Shen Yun Performing Arts”, are precisely the winners. Su Xianzhi, for example, was the winner of the Silver Award for young women in the “Second World Competition of Chinese Dances” held by the “Falun Gong” organization. Imagine what a shame for a show performed by such a cast to be called art! Yelp and Tripadvisor are the most well-known review websites in Europe and America. Many foreign viewers who watched the Shen Yun gala left messages on the website, saying that the performance is inferior and is simply a blasphemy of art. “It is more like spending money on a show presented by neighbor’s daughter.” “The show itself is not wonderful and is certainly not worth the ticket.” “Generally speaking, the show is incoherent and disappointing, and the music is disappointing, too.” “The music and the dances in the show are not even matched. The dances are soulless. The erhu solo is not as good as the show in New York City Subway.” “The orchestra is very simple, and the projection technology is probably outdated for generations. The show is barely artistic.”

A PAID ADVERTISEMENT