

# Why is Falun Gong Persecuted in China?

Chinese Government Insiders and Overseas Scholars Identify Three Reasons Why a Faction within the Chinese Leadership Targets Falun Gong

1. **Chinese Communist leaders suppress freedom of religion and thought:** Christians must join official, government-run “patriotic churches,” or risk persecution. Baptism and Roman Catholicism are illegal. Uncensored versions of the Bible are illegal and designated “evil cult materials.”

2. **Communist top leader grew jealous of Falun Gong’s widespread popularity:** As part of China’s traditional culture, Falun Gong was taught free in parks and spread by word of mouth. Its health

benefits propelled it across boundaries of age, class and race. By 1998, some 100 million were practicing. All of this proved irksome for Chinese leader Jiang Zemin. He saw in Falun Gong and its popularity a challenge to his moral authority over the Chinese people—the practice was rooted in people’s hearts and history, unlike communist doctrine. Whereas Jiang demanded that people attend “ideological sessions” to study his own theories, Falun Gong was something people all across Chinese were doing of their own choosing. The contrast wasn’t

lost on Jiang “This is obviously very personal for Jiang,” one Party official told the Washington Post. “He wants this organization crushed.”

3. **Falun Gong’s principles defy corruption:** Striving to adopt the principles of truthfulness, compassion and tolerance into their daily lives, Falun Gong practitioners’ ethical living posed a direct challenge to the circles of corruption the Communist Party uses to build and maintain power.

## What is Falun Gong?

Falun Gong — also called Falun Dafa — is an ancient and advanced form of qigong or “Chinese Yoga.” Falun Gong consists of gentle exercises combined with a meditation component.

Aside from its popularity (100 million people in 60 countries), what is usually said to distinguish Falun Gong is its emphasis on the practice of refining one’s moral character in accordance with three principles—Truthfulness, Compassion, and Tolerance. These three principles form the backbone of Falun Gong’s philosophy and practitioners of the discipline aspire to live by them in their daily lives, striving to achieve, over time, a state of kindness, selflessness and inner balance.

The discipline of Falun Gong was first made public in May of 1992 in China by Mr. Li Hongzhi, who adherents regard as the practice’s founder or teacher.

From 1992 to 1994, Mr. Li lectured on invitation in almost every major Chinese city, giving 54 lecture series in all. All instruction at that time was overseen by the Chinese Government’s top qigong organization, the China Qigong Scientific

Research Society. Since the exercises of Falun Gong were relatively simple and easy to learn, those who had learned could easily show others. Soon, people began establishing volunteer practice sites in parks and public recreation areas throughout China. Furthermore, news reports and word of mouth acclaimed Falun Gong’s health benefits and positive impact.

During the early-to-mid 90’s, Falun Gong was also widely embraced by the Chinese Government. Mr. Li was invited to speak at many government venues, such as the Hero’s Foundation in the government’s Public Security Department and received numerous awards such as the “Star Qigong” award given to Mr. Li at the 1993 Oriental Health Expo in Beijing.

By 1996 Falun Gong had established itself as the fastest growing spiritual practice in China, and perhaps, the

world. With Mr. Li’s third book, *Zhuan Falun*, landing on Beijing’s best-seller list, millions were said to be practicing by then as the practice continued to be passed on by word-of-mouth, and free of charge with volunteer practice sites established throughout the country.

By the end of 1998, a Chinese Government survey concluded there were between 70 and 100 million people practicing Falun Gong in China — more than 8% of the entire population. In many areas, Falun Gong had become a household name, synonymous with good health and principled living.

Today, volunteer practice sites existed in more than 60 countries around the world as listed on Falun Gong’s web site: [www.falundafa.org](http://www.falundafa.org).



# How Far Will They Go?

Would the Chinese Government coerce people to burn themselves on Tiananmen Square in order to enlist the general public in its then-failing campaign to “eradicate Falun Gong”?

Summer 2000. Beijing, China. It had been over one year since then-Chinese leader, Jiang Zemin, ordered Falun Gong “eradicated.” While cases of torture and killings had been reported, the campaign was not gaining the fervent momentum among the general public Jiang had anticipated when he called on Party leaders to crush Falun Gong “in three months.”

In some provinces far from Beijing, local officials were thought to be only paying lip service to the directive, largely unwilling to go on the offensive against the widely respected practice.

In the period between late November of 2000 and early 2001, an August 2001 Washington Post article entitled, “Torture is Breaking Falun Gong,” described a more intense propaganda campaign being instituted in conjunction with the more widespread use of compulsory brainwashing, via torture and an increased use of police brutality to punish and intimidate practitioners who refuse to renounce their beliefs.

At the center of the propaganda war aimed at turning the entire nation against Falun Gong, was the “self-immolation” incident. On January 23, 2001, five individuals set

themselves on fire in Tiananmen Square. Within hours, Chinese authorities flooded the state-run media with grisly photos of the event, claiming the self-immolators were Falun Gong practitioners.

For more than a year after the event, no foreign media were given access to any of the individuals reportedly involved, while state-run media had ready access to the victims days after the incident.

As “self-immolation” programs saturated Chinese television and radio over the next several months, public opinion began to turn against Falun Gong. More and more of the populace willingly identified practitioners in their neighborhoods and workplaces, where they would then be sent to brainwashing centers or prison camps. The pervasive use of torture escalated throughout China.

The “self-immolation” played a pivotal role in implementing a policy of genocide against Falun Gong in China, but was the incident exactly as China’s state-run media characterizes it? The following pages offer insights into investigations and evidence that has been uncovered, demonstrating, perhaps, just how far the Chinese Government will go to “eradicate Falun Gong.”

“Liu Chunling’s [...] neighbors described her as a woman who led a troubled life and suffered from psychological problems...None every saw her practice Falun Gong.”

— Feb. 6, 2001 Washington Post article reporting on the background of one individual China’s state-run media claimed was a Falun Gong practitioner and burned herself on Tiananmen Square.

“...we have obtained a video of that incident that in our view proves that this event was staged by the government.”

— An August 2001 statement from the International Education Development (IED) NGO before the United Nations in Switzerland about the Tiananmen Square Self-immolation incident

## 1. Fully Prepared on Tiananmen Square?

**The Cameraman:** Footage taken from surveillance cameras show a policeman shooting the entire event up close with a video camera. The up-close footage is later used in a barrage of propaganda against Falun Gong. Chinese authorities claim this footage was taken by CNN, but CNN says its camera was confiscated by police before they had time to shoot anything on the Square that day. *Why are Chinese authorities lying about the source of the up-close footage, and how did one policeman happen to have a video camera on-hand at the exact time and place of the self-immolation?*

**The Backdrop:** Chinese state-run media also used footage taken from the rooftops of the buildings surrounding Tiananmen Square, claiming this footage came from the surveillance cameras. The surveillance cameras, however, normally pan side to side methodically and never zoom. However, the footage used by the state-run media was focusing on the self-immolation event specifically, moving back and forth to different individuals, and it also zoomed in on the events as they unfolded. *Who shot this footage from the rooftops around the Square, how did they happen to be in the right place and why are Chinese authorities lying about the source of this footage as well?*



**Fire Resistant?:** From the up-close footage of one victim (at left), we can see he is wearing heavy, protective clothing. Furthermore, his hair, which is the most flammable part of the body, remains fully intact as does a plastic bottle held in his lap. *After reportedly being engulfed in flames, how is it possible that neither the hair nor the plastic bottle are burnt? Also, why would someone wanting to burn himself wear such heavy, protective clothing?*

**“False Fire,” an award-winning documentary film investigating the self-immolation incident is available on-line at: <http://www.faluninfo.net/videosonline.asp>**

**The Equipment:** In less than a minute after the fires erupted on Tiananmen Square, several police officers were on-hand and equipped with fire extinguishers to put out the blaze. Police officers have never been known to patrol the Square with fire extinguishers, and the closest building that might have fire extinguishers—the People’s Great Hall—is about a 20 minute walk round-trip. *Why were police carrying fire extinguishers with them that day?*

**The Lines:** The up-close footage shows that after the fires were extinguished, a police officer approaches one of the victims with a fire blanket, but then pauses for several seconds as if waiting (photo above). With the video camera rolling immediately in front of them, the victim finally shouts out a few lines and then the police officer throws the blanket over him. These lines, which mention a part of Falun Gong’s name in China, “Dafa,” are used as “evidence” that the self-immolators were Falun Gong practitioners. The state-run media also embellished these lines in their reports to claim Falun Gong encourages suicide or violence. *Why did the police officer wait until the victim had spoken his lines before coming to his aid?*



## 2. Medical Blunders and “Miracles”

**Medical “miracle”:** China’s Xinhua News Agency reported that because the victims had injuries from smoke inhalation, doctors feared they might suffocate due to swelling of the trachea and so the trauma teams operated on all of them, cutting open their trachea and throats to allow them to breathe. All of the victims were badly burned and some had gone into shock. Yet, the state-run media went on

**Medical blunder:** In the days following the self-immolation incident, state-run media ran several programs showing the self-immolation victims in the hospital. However, every one of the victims is so wrapped up in bandages, one cannot see

**An ambulance gone missing:** According to the Xinhua News Agency, the self-immolation incident took place at 2:41p.m. After adding the 7 minutes it took to put out the fires and the 20 minutes that it normally takes for a vehicle to go from Tiananmen Square to Jishuitan Hospital (it should take less time for an ambu-

to say that the victims were able to field questions from journalists shortly thereafter, each of which denounced Falun Gong in the media. Patients would never be able to recover the ability to speak so quickly after this kind of surgery, let alone sing, as did one of the victims, when interviewed just days afterward. *Is China’s state-run media lying or have Chinese doctors performed a medical miracle?*

their faces. Common medical practice calls for severe burn victims to be treated with medicinal ointments and for the burns to be left uncovered to the open air. *Why are these “burn” victims wrapped up in so much gauze one cannot even identify them?*

lance), the ambulance should have arrived at Jishuitan Hospital between 3:00 and 3:30pm Yet several medical personnel at the hospital have confirmed that the ambulance didn’t arrive at the hospital until around 5:00pm. *Where was the ambulance between 3:30pm and 5:00pm?*

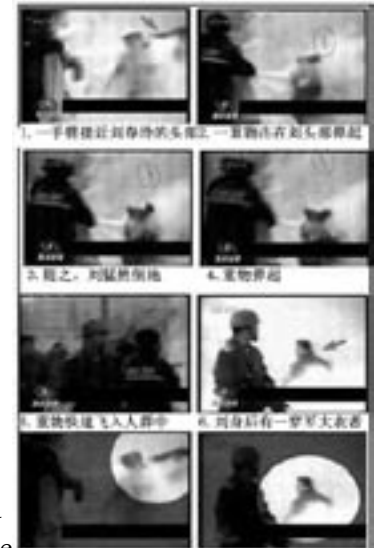
## 3. False Identities?

**Will the real Wang Jindong please stand up?:** Three pictures of alleged self-immolator, Wang Jindong, used by China’s state-run media (below) appear to be three different people (see chart, far right). Furthermore, National Taiwan University’s Speech Processing Laboratory, a world leader in the areas of Chinese language speech identification, synthesis, and verification, analyzed the voice of “Wang Jindong” from a number of different interviews broadcast by China’s state-run television. The laboratory concluded that the “Wang Jindong” in one of the programs is a different person than the “Wang Jindong” appearing in two other programs. *Why would China’s state-run media use different actors to play the part of Wang Jindong?*



## 4. Questionable Deaths

**The Mother:** According to state-run media one of the self-immolators, Ms. Liu Chunling, died from her burns. However, the up-close footage played in slow-motion (see photo sequence at right) shows that just as the last of the flames that had engulfed her were extinguished, she was violently beaten with a club to the head by a man wearing a military coat and standing amongst the police who were supposedly trying to save her. Immediately before the blow was struck, Liu appears to be waving and moving around madly. *Why did the police officer beat her down and could this be the true cause of her death? Was she, perhaps yelling something she was not supposed to?*



**The daughter:** According to medical staff who treated Liu Siying (the daughter of Liu Chunling) at Jishuitan Hospital, “Liu Siying died suddenly at a time when her burns were more or less healed, her health had basically recovered, and she was ready to be discharged from the hospital.” On March 16th, 2001, one day before her death, Liu Siying’s electrocardiogram (EKG) and other tests all showed normal results. Then, on Saturday, March 17th, 2001, between 11:00 A.M. and noon, doctors suddenly discovered that Liu Siying was in critical condition. She died shortly thereafter. Hospital staff report that between 8:00 and 9:00 that same morning, government and Party officials paid a visit to Liu Siying in her hospital room and talked to her for quite a long time. “At that time, Liu Siying was still quite animated and active,” the staff members reported. *How is it that Liu died so suddenly after appearing fully recovered?*

Physical Feature	Photo 1	Photo 2	Photo 3
<b>eyebrow Bone</b>	Prominent	Collapsed	Collapsed
<b>Ear</b>	Large and rectangular	Small and round	Cone shape
<b>Mouth</b>	Clearly defined	Thick and big	Wide, no shape
<b>Lower Jaw</b>	Regular	Obviously sturdy	Receding
<b>Nose</b>	Long and straight	Short and thick	Wide tip and collapsed bridge
<b>Build</b>	Medium	Obviously sturdy	Relatively thin
<b>Skull</b>	Rectangular forehead with a black mole	Round top	Flat top, cone shape