

Six: Persecution Of Faith

1: The Spread Of Falun Gong



Mr. Li Hongzhi, the founder of Falun gong, was born on May 13, 1951, into an ordinary family, in Gongzhu Ling City of Jilin Province. Mr. Li had once joined the military, and being transferred, in 1982, to work for a grain-and-oil company in Changchun City. He has, since childhood, practiced a private unknown Buddhist discipline. Mr. Li was just a common worker at the time. He lived with his family in a dormitory provided by his work unit. The living condition was rather modest.



In 1984 Mr. Li modified the practice into a Qigong form that would be suitable for the general public. He named the practice “Falun Gong”. On May 13, 1992, Mr. Li held in Changchun City the first public class. During the two years from 1992 to 1994, he held 54 workshops around the country.



To make his practice available to more people, the fee Mr. Li charged was the lowest in all of China. A ten-day workshop cost only 40 yuan, a third to half that charged by other Qigong masters. Other masters had complained Mr. Li’s low fees. In response, China’s Scientific Qigong Research Association even suggested to Mr. Li that he raise his fares. Mr. Li declined, however, out of consideration for his students’ financial circumstances.



In the early period of his public teachings, Mr. Li would typically travel with few students, and living conditions were said to have been the most difficult. Little money was put into material comfort or convenience. When he first arrived in Beijing, nobody knew who he was. He and his students spent their first few nights in the city staying in the crowded train station. Bench served as a bed.



Often he had to hurry from class to class, rushing about China's many cities, owing to the demands for his teachings.
Often he couldn't even manage to purchase a train ticket with a seat. When tired, he could often sit only on the train's floor.
When hungry, he could often just fill his stomach with instant noodles.
When sleepy, he could only nap by leaning on the nearby chair or wall.



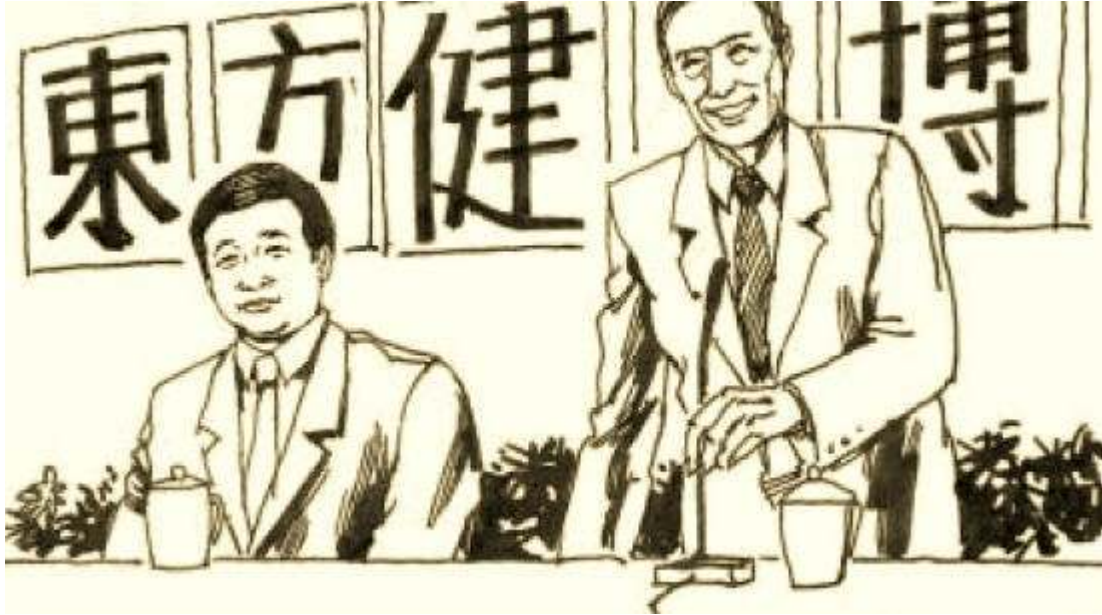
When Mr. Li first began to spread the exercises and teachings of Falun Gong, there numerous practices of qigong in China. Phony practice mixed in with the genuine ones. Good people mixed in with the bad. Things were complicated at the time, although many people had indeed in those years gained better health from doing traditional practices such as Taichi and the Five Animal Movements. There were also many fake qigong masters who allegedly duped people. Many persons spent a fortune seeing and studying with the qigong masters hoping to be healed. Many ultimately made with no avail.



In Sept. of 1992, Falun Gong was recognized by the Scientific Qigong Research Association, as an affiliated qigong practice. In December of the same year, Mr. brought some of his understudies with him, to participate in the Oriental Health Expo, held that year at China

World Trade Center in Beijing.

Li Hongzhi's name and Falun Gong spread like a wildfire there, quickly creating a stir. The executive director of the Health Expo, Mr. Li Rusong, and the chief consultant of the event, Mr. Jiang Xuegui, spoke highly of Mr. Li's qigong power, and the contribution his Falun Gong was making.



Professor Jiang said this: “Mr. Li can be considered a star of the 1992 Oriental Health Expo. I have seen him create many miracles. I saw patients with pains, and patients in wheelchairs, and those who have challenges moving about, come to him for help. After receiving treatment from Mr. Li, they could miraculously stand up and walk. As the chief consultant to the expo, I'm here to responsibly recommend Falun Gong to you. I think this practice will indeed bring people healthy bodies and new development.”



In 1993, Mr. Li offered free health treatment to the delegates of the Convention For Justice and Courage. The Chinese Ministry of Public Security wrote a letter to the Scientific Qigong Research Association, thanking Mr. Li. Meanwhile, the People's Public Security Daily published an article, saying that most of the model workers there had very good results, after receiving the treatment.



With the spreading of Falun Gong, numerous people were benefited physically, and spiritually. Many recovered from incurable illness, or refractory conditions, therefore encouraged family members and friends to try out. The practice's founder, Li Hongzhi came to be called honorifically "Master Li". In few years, the number of practitioners reached 20 million, and kept growing with robust momentum.



In 1995, Mr. Li concluded teaching of his practice in mainland China. Early that year, he went to Paris to give a class, his first teaching outside of China. While in Paris, he had a small meeting with several Chinese diplomats, one of whom was China's Ambassador to France. He was then invited to give a speech at the Culture and Education Division of the Chinese Embassy in France. Afterward, he traveled to Sweden, and later to the United States. Falun Gong began to grow around the world.



As of January of 1996, Mr. Li's book "Zhuan Falun" was ranked among the ten best sellers by the Beijing Youth Daily. Although by June, the Deputy Minister of Propaganda, Xu Guangchun, to seek personal political gain, revoked the registration number of "Zhuan Falun", the pirate copies of the book were still in great demand.



When Jiang Zemin started the persecution of Falun Gong in 1999, he claimed that he never heard of Falun Gong. As a matter of fact, Jiang's wife Wang Ye-ping was herself practicing Falun Gong in 1994. One time during exercise, Wang discovered that Jiang, by her side, surreptitiously emulating the movement. Jiang was both embarrassed and angry when Wang had caught on him. It's at that point that Jiang ordered his wife to stop practicing Falun Gong. He said: "Even my wife believed in Li Hongzhi, who is going to believe in me, the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party!"



In the beginning, Jiang was not against Falun Gong, and had read "Zhuan Falun". However, what he wanted to hear from Master Li most, was details about his previous lives, prediction of his political future, and how to stay in power. Mr. Li knew his intention, and stated that cure illness was fine, but

no politics.

Hence, Jiang Zemin began nursing his hatred.