

Six: Persecution Of Faith

10: False Fire



One year had passed since Jiang Zemin started the persecution of Falun Gong. Many lies and smears had been spread, and slews of attacking articles had been broadcasted. However, from the central government to local citizenry, all were against the crackdown. Jiang began to grow worried, with depression setting in. He had experienced a heart attack, and being taken to the Hospital 301. Even in his hospital bed, Jiang was thinking about one question: “How to turn the public sentiments against the so-called evil cult of Falun Gong, and incite wide-spread hatred?”



Jan. 23, 2001 was Chinese New Year Eve, a day of celebration. But on Tiananmen Sq. unfolded a bizarre tragedy: several people were ablaze. The statement Xinhua News broadcast around the world in English, was that all five persons involved were Falun Gong practitioners. The group had allegedly attempted self-immolation on the Sq.



Once broadcasted, the disturbing tragic scene stirred up tremendous anger in China. Animosity towards Falun Gong surged, such was the emotional power of the images the CCTV put together. The state propaganda machinery was accelerating with a vengeance. Personalities of every sort appeared on state-run television to condemn Falun Gong. Jiang could finally let out a long sigh of relief at seeing all of this.



In the meantime, many overseas media called into question the veracity of the incident and the Chinese media account.

A slow-motion replay the immolation footage, in which it was visible a police officer dealing a crippling blow to the head of Liu Chunling, the woman who died on the scene. A heavy object was in the officer's hand.



Twelve days after the incident, the Washington Post ran a front-page story titled: "Human Fire Ignites Chinese Mystery – Motive for public burning intensified fight over Falun Gong".

The article detailed finding of the Post reporter, who traveled to Kaifeng,

China, the hometown of the slain immolator Liu Chunling. Surprisingly none ever saw her practicing Falun Gong.



The CCTV footage of the immolation was riddled with inconsistencies. Beyond the matter of Liu being struck by an apparent policeman, how could dozens or more fire extinguishers and fire extinguishing blankets suddenly arrive on the scene? Who shut the close-up video footage? Why did the two organizers not put the blaze on themselves? Why didn't Liu Baorong show any signs of intoxication, after drinking so much gasoline?



Shortly after this happened, a female reporter for CCTV's "Focus Interview" program, was interviewing people at the Tuanhe Labor Camp, about the self-immolation.

One Falun Gong prisoner of conscience there, Zhao Ming, raised the question: “Why the Sprite bottle on Wang Jindong’ lap, supposedly filled with gasoline, was not even slightly deformed or damaged from the heat of the raging fire?”

The reporter, named Li Yuqiang, responded candidly:” We shut the scene after the fact. If we knew it looked suspicious, we wouldn’t use it at all.”



On August 14, 2001, at a meeting of the United Nation, the NGO International Education Development made a formal statement, which declared: their analysis concluded the supposed self-immolation incident in Tiananmen Sq. was staged by the Chinese government. The Chinese representative at the meeting just kept quiet, and didn’t even bother to respond.



Soon after the immolation incident, a popular novel that had been published 10 years ago “Yellow Disaster” was, curiously enough, banned throughout China. In Chapter 2 of the novel, someone pays off terminally ill persons to burn themselves, and then used the incident to frame opponents, in politically motivated persecution. Could Jiang & Co. have drawn inspiration from the plot in Yellow Disaster? Why the sudden ban?



On the night of March 5, 2002, in Changchun, the regular program of 8 cable TV stations was interrupted, and replaced with 45 min. broadcast about Falun Gong, including self-immolation or deception, which showed a slow-motion sequence of Liu Chunling being struck over the head by a police officer, while she was on fire. The next day the discussion of the

matter could be heard at the office, on the bus, in school, at the supermarket, demonstrating the impact on people's minds of a lie being exposed.



Jiang was furious when he heard the news about the TV tapping that night. He reportedly shook from anger for several minutes. He then reacted by pounding with his fist on the table, and shouting: "Send for Zeng Qinghong and Luo Gan immediately!" Jiang's secretary, though already accustomed to his boss's temper, had never seen Jiang so mad and violent.



Jiang ordered that combat readiness be declared in the military and among the armed police. Luo Gan ordered the police to investigate the TV tapping and crack the case within a week.

Jiang yelled: "Shoot to kill any Falun Gong practitioner who was involved!"

Kill them without exception! I guarantee nobody will be held responsible for their death! Crack the case quickly! Otherwise, everybody steps down!”



On March 12, 2002, Falun Gong practitioner Liu Haibo was suspected of having sheltered those Falun Gong practitioners involved in the broadcast. Kuancheng police arrested him, and tortured him to death during questioning. Chang Xiaoping, the first deputy Party chief and the head of 6 10 office in Changchun, gave the following instructions: First, dealing with Falun Gong would not rule out bloodshed and killing. Second, secrecy was to be maintained at all costs to avoid harm to China’s international standing. Third, no investigation on any Falun Gong follower’s death.



On March 24, 2002, police kidnapped Liu Cheng-jun, another Falun Gong adherent who had been involved. The police shut Liu in the legs, after, he

was already in cuffs and shackles, injuring him severely. Liu was tortured ruthlessly in detention.

And during the court hearing, he was taken out electrocuted repeatedly. He was unlawfully sentenced to 19 years in prison.

He died of maltreatment at the hands of police in jail on December 26, 2003.