

# Brainwashing: Extermination of Mind and Body

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By Xia Yiyang

From the onset, the persecution of Falun Gong by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has not acted as an implementation of law, but rather a political campaign to persecute spiritual beliefs. At the core of this political campaign is the goal of “transforming” deep spiritual beliefs through intense psychological torture or brainwashing.

## **The order to transform through brainwashing came from the very top**

Within 20 days of the start of the persecution on July 20, 1999, the CCP Central Committee issued two documents targeting Falun Gong practitioners who were also CCP members for brainwashing<sup>1</sup>. On August 24, 1999, a third document, jointly issued by the General Office of the CCP Central and the General Office of the State Council, expanded the use of brainwashing on all Falun Gong practitioners. It elevated the importance of such brainwashing to be the “important measure for the effectiveness and the victory of this struggle (against Falun Gong).”

All three documents stipulated that, “if one does not come to the ‘correct understanding,’ i.e. giving up one’s belief in ‘truthfulness, compassion, tolerance,’ the basic principles of Falun Gong, one

cannot be “released” even if this person was only seeking fitness [through the practice].”

The head of the “CCP Central Committee Leading Group for Handling the Falun Gong issues” has and continues to be directly in charge of carrying out brainwashing.

Luo Gan, then deputy head and later head of the leading group, gave speeches focused on brainwashing and strongly promoted the so-called “Masanjia [labor camp] experience<sup>2</sup>.” In September 2000, the CCP Central 610 Office—a secret agency created for the sole purpose of persecuting Falun Gong practitioners—established the “education and transformation work (directing and coordinating) team” to focus on the nationwide brainwashing activities. The team was headed by Li Dongsheng, then deputy director of the CCP Central 610 Office. In September 2009, Li became the director of the CCP Central 610 Office and remained in that position until December 2013, when Li was purged and investigated for a serious legal violation.

### **Transformation standards**

Transformation through brainwashing does not simply mean giving up the practice. The earliest transformation standards appeared in the Notice by the “Two Offices” on August 24, 1999<sup>3</sup>. Then, Masanjia Forced Labor Camp came up with a set of standards. The head of the CCP Central 610 Office, Wang Maolin, introduced these standards at the “Ministry of Justice Education and Transformation Work Sharing and Award Meeting” held on August 29, 2000. There are five standards to which Falun Gong practitioners must adhere: relinquish the practice, write the repentance statement, submit all Falun Gong books and materials, write testimonials against Falun Gong and the founder and transform other practitioners.

If any one standard is not met, one is not considered to be transformed. Transformation is the way that leads to leniency, shortening one's term, serving one's term outside the prison or labor camp and being released before serving the full term<sup>4</sup>. That is to say, reeducation through labor had nothing to do with "illegal actions," but targeted entirely one's spiritual beliefs. In September 2000, the CCP Central 610 Office officially promulgated the Masanjia transformation standards to the entire country<sup>5</sup>.

### **Failures in ideology inevitably lead to violence**

The CCP's punishing system is different from that of democratic countries because of the element of "thought reform." However, the brainwashing of Falun Gong practitioners differs from the thought reforms of the political persecutions throughout the history of the CCP's rule, both in the methods used by the perpetrators and the impact of such methods on their victims.

The CCP's ideology was constructed as a hybrid of Marxism-Leninism combined with Mao's theories. In the early years of its rule, carried by the residual of the "victorious" Revolution, the CCP's ideology still had the power of misleading and intimidating at the same time. Most of the people being reformed did not have a sophisticated belief system of their own and thus passively accepted the new doctrine; many others had illusions of the CCP, thus tried to persuade themselves to be reformed, even though it was not out of their free will.

Falun Gong, however, is totally different. Rooted in traditional Chinese culture, Falun Gong provides a completely different set of values and world view; The practitioners benefit from this cultivation mentally and physically, thus won't be influenced and confused by CCP's propaganda.

On the other hand, while the practice of communism has already failed around the world, the CCP has lost much of its early ideology, turning instead to an interest driven entity. With little ability to capture the hearts of the Chinese people, the CCP turned to violent reform, such as brainwashing, to keep its rule. Party officials believed they could crush the Falun Gong movement within days, but practitioners' moral fortitude and courage has proved too powerful.

### **The locations and perpetrators of brainwashing**

Transformation quotas are given to prisons, labor camps, brainwashing centers, work units and neighborhoods. Specific personnel is assigned to carry out the transformation work. The labor camps were the CCP's first choice as the locations for transformation.

On October 29, 1999, Masanjia Forced Labor Camp (Formally Masanjia Re-education through Labor Camp) located in Shenyang, Liaoning province, setup the "Female No. 2 Brigade" to house Falun Gong practitioners<sup>6</sup>. It is the most notorious site in the persecution of Falun Gong.

Since the start, Masanjia Labor Camp was selected by the CCP Central 610 Office to carry out brainwashing trials. The abusive techniques and manipulations practiced at Masanjia were then promoted across China. According to the former director of the Shenyang Municipal Bureau of Justice, Han Guangsheng, Masanjia has only one brainwashing tool—the electric baton<sup>7</sup>. In actuality, Masanjia has implemented a few dozen torture methods on Falun Gong practitioners.

Beijing is a good example. According to media reports, the city was "faced with tremendous difficulties and setbacks in its work

to transform Falun Gong practitioners.” Eventually, it was the Beijing Bureau of Reeducation through Labor that “found a way to overcome the difficulties.”

The Beijing Bureau of Reeducation through Labor was awarded the highest honor by the Ministry of Justice for its brainwashing techniques. It became the “advanced unit in anti-Falun Gong work” in Beijing. Most guards in China’s forced labor system are not trained to do ideological work. How could the least qualified guards solve the problem that all Party officials and the ideological professionals failed?

Wang Maolin, the head of the CCP Central 610 Office offered a realistic explanation of Beijing’s success: strict management, an isolated environment and the “forceful nature of the reeducation through labor system<sup>8</sup>.” Those who are familiar with the situation in China’s labor camps and CCP’s terminology understand that the latter refers to violence and torture.

Since the isolation and ongoing violence and torture in the labor camps could not be applied directly to the society, in 2000, the CCP Central 610 Office started to promote “study sessions” in similarly secluded venues. In 2001, these sessions were given the new title of “Legal Education Centers,” i.e., brainwashing centers, and were highly promoted across the country<sup>9</sup>.

These Legal Education Centers are like prisons and labor camps, but are set up by local non-law enforcement authorities. It is worth noting that in over ten years, over 400 such brainwashing centers were established throughout the country. While they do not belong to any government or law enforcement agencies, they are neither part of any civil organizations. They have no legality and are not registered anywhere. No documents were issued by either the Party or the State to define their affiliation and mission. As a result, without being subject to any legal oversight or regulation, staff at these extrajudicial education centers freely

arrests, detains, tortures and even kills at will.

In addition to the aforementioned major brainwashing facilities, i.e. labor camps and brainwashing centers, CCP officials at all levels actively carry out brainwashing within the society at large. The Chaoyang district in Beijing once had 720 so-called “education assistant” teams. Furthermore, under the planning of CCP Central, corporate enterprises, the Women’s Union, the Communist Youth League, scientific communities, scholars, and educators have all participated in the brainwashing of Falun Gong practitioners one way or another.

### **Evidence of brainwashing noted throughout the persecution**

The earliest record of brainwashing occurred before the nationwide persecution began in July 1999. After the April 25, 1999 peaceful appeal in Beijing by Falun Gong practitioners, the CCP’s highest ranking officials frantically prepared for the crackdown. The former director of PLA 301 Hospital, Li Qihua, wrote a letter about how he had benefited mentally and physically from practicing Falun Gong and how beneficial it could be to the country and the people of China. The letter was titled “The shallow understanding of Falun Gong by a veteran member of Red Army and CCP.” Upon reading this letter, then vice chairman of the CCP Central Military Commission (CMC) Zhang Wannian, immediately reported to Jiang Zemin. Jiang then wrote a long letter to the Politburo, Secretariat and CMC leadership<sup>10</sup>.

In the following few days, Zhang began to send officers to speak with Li Qihua on a daily basis. They attempted to make Li give up his belief in Falun Gong by exhausting him with non-stop conversations. In the end, they even fabricated a “regret” paper<sup>11</sup>. The letter Jiang sent earlier became an official document issued

by the Office of the CCP Central Committee (No.[1999]19) on May 23. The document detailed the transformation of Falun Gong practitioners who were also CCP members<sup>12</sup>.

The CCP Central 610 Office issued the “Points to implement the education and transformation battle” in September 2000,<sup>13</sup> to carry out the transformation to all Falun Gong practitioners across the country.

Since then, brainwashing has become the most important daily task for all levels of the CCP Committees. Hebei province, one of the focused regions for brainwashing, spent 15 million yuan in 2001 to establish brainwashing centers in 11 municipalities and various counties<sup>14</sup>.

April 25, 2001, the CCP Central Organization Department issued a document detailing the experiences in the struggle against Falun Gong by Masanjia Labor Camp, the Beijing Bureau of Reeducation through Labor, and Qitaihe CCP Committee (Heilongjiang province). The document focused on transformation<sup>15</sup>.

In addition, the CCP Central 610 Office also organized special campaigns. In 2010, it started a “2010-2012 Transformation-Through-Reeducation Assault and Consolidation Overall Battle Work Plan,” which triggered a new round of brainwashing of Falun Gong practitioners nationwide<sup>16</sup>.

When the three-year battle ended, the Central 610 Office immediately started another one for the next three years. From the goals set for this current round, one can see that the CCP’s struggle against Falun Gong had already failed. For instance, one region set a goal such that “by the end of 2015, those already ‘transformed’ will remain transformed.” Another goal was to ensure that “during the final battle period there should be no new Falun Gong members.”

### **The immorality of brainwashing**

For Party and State officials at various levels, transformation of Falun Gong practitioners is mandatory and directly connected to their performance. To meet their goals, the most commonly used method is organizing many people to target a single victim. This method was suggested in the Notice by the “Two Offices” back in August 1999. The Notice says: “one should use the ‘1 on 1, more on 1’ method.”

The Chuncheng neighborhood office of Lvyuan district, in the city of Changchun in Liaoning province implemented a “6-on-1” method by mobilizing an official from the neighborhood, a regular official, the secretary of the neighborhood office, a police officer, a family member, and a co-worker to force one Falun Gong practitioner to transform. An enterprise affiliated with the Tonghua Steel and Iron Group in Jilin province set the record of “20-on-1.”<sup>17</sup>

The number of Falun Gong practitioners in a region is used as the base number when calculating the transformation rate. Those in labor camps are not included in the base number. Therefore, in order to reach the target transformation rate, some regions send practitioners who refuse to give up the practice to labor camps or sentence them to prisons.

January 17, 2001, Falun Gong practitioner Liu Yan from Qingan County, Heilongjiang province was caught and severely beaten before being sent to Huaihua Forced Labor Camp for a year and a half. At first, the labor camp refused to accept the badly wounded Liu. The police had to “twist somebody’s arm” to persuade the labor camp. On July 21, 2002, Liu Yan was persecuted to death.

In order to reach the transformation rate, the CCP Laiwu Committee secretary in Shandong province, Li Yumei, would bribe and coerce labor camps to accept Falun Gong practitioners

who refused to give up the practice and would otherwise not be accepted by the camps due to the physical conditions. It is fairly common for officials to bribe the labor camp to accept Falun Gong practitioners to meet the transformation rate.

Because the brainwashing centers, labor camps and prisons all must meet the transformation rate, they all resort to torture methods to meet their quotas.

There were indeed tyrannies, collective punishments, sometimes even punishment by family extermination in Chinese history, but no one would make family members kill each other, or force someone to betray one's teacher for self-interest. Chinese traditional culture teaches respect for one's teacher, thus the saying "Teacher for one day, Father for an entire life." Students under the same teacher are considered belonging to the same family.

Yet the transformation tactics used against Falun Gong practitioners are forcing one to not only sell out one's teacher and fellow students, but also self-incriminate. Essentially, transformation is the extermination of one's conscience and soul. Those who refuse to be transformed are constantly subject to various methods of torture. To force a human being, through torture no less, to give up a cultivation practice that improves one's spiritual and moral nature is the real crime and an act of shame for any civilized society.

Violence and brainwashing emerged during the early years of the persecution. A high-ranking CCP official revealed to the Washington Post that the early stage of persecution was not at all successful, until an "effective approach" was found in 2001. This effective approach includes three aspects: violence, high-pressure propaganda and brainwashing classes. The anti-Falun Gong campaign worked only when all three aspects were used, with the greatest emphasis placed on brainwashing classes.

Yet it was not only the brainwashing of Falun Gong practitioners that was utilized in an attempt to extinguish the group. The public also needed to be deceived and coerced into believing that Falun Gong was dangerous so as to elicit support for the CCP's illegal actions. The first major propaganda stunt was a staged self-immolation of falsely-identified Falun Gong practitioners on Tiananmen Square, January 23, 2001. Violence and brainwashing became a policy to be systematically implemented.

In the climate of intense propaganda, the image of 12-year-old Liu Siying's "burnt" body and the video of people falsely identified as Falun Gong practitioners saying that they would ascend to heaven after self-immolation, were continuously broadcast for days on end. It was after the staged event that violence and brainwashing became a policy to be systematically implemented. When people were misled into believing CCP's lies, the legitimacy of violent brainwashing was then secured<sup>18</sup>.

Falun Gong practitioner Zhang Yijie worked at the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, now called the Ministry of Commerce. Zhang was sent to Beijing Female Labor Camp and was held in solitary confinement for an extended period of time because she refused to give up her practice. On a number of occasions, she was locked up in a small dark room for several consecutive days. The first time she was placed in seclusion, Zhang was deprived of sleep for 18 days and nights. The second time, in order to make her sign a "Repentance Statement" (document that proves practitioners have given up their practice by expressing remorse for practicing Falun Gong, renouncing the practice and guaranteeing that they will never associate with other practitioners or go to Beijing to appeal on behalf of the practice), the guards forced her to remain standing for 42 days and nights. In addition, Zhang was subject to food and water restriction, sleep deprivation, limited use of the restroom and other forms of torture. In the end, Zhang was almost blind,

could hardly speak and her hair turned white. But she never gave up her belief in Falun Gong.

The CCP's official media reports confirm the widespread use of torture to brainwash practitioners. A website under the Beijing Bureau of Justice reported on how a Falun Gong practitioner was transformed in Beijing Female Labor Camp: “[a]fter 16 days and nights of non-stop work, Du finally wrote the statement to give up the [Falun Gong] practice....”

The inhumane nature of the transformation methods used against Falun Gong practitioners is well-illustrated in the forced participation by practitioners' family members. At the February 27, 2001 Press Conference of the State Council Information Office, Liu Jing, then director of the CCP Central 610 Office offered a chilling example of a woman in Shandong province who “voluntarily” sent her husband to the notorious Masanjia Forced Labor Camp, and reportedly pleaded with the guards to “help” her own husband!

Lin Chengtao was an assistant researcher at Peking Union Medical College of the Chinese Medical University Basic Medical Sciences Institute. Lin was one of the main researchers of the “863 Plan” and China Medical Board project. In October 2001, Lin was sent to Beijing Tuanhe Labor Camp for refusing to give up Falun Gong. Lin was put through many types of torture, including corporal punishment, repeated psychological brainwashing, solitary confinement and electrocution with three 30,000 volt electric batons administered simultaneously. All these did not make him give up his belief in Falun Gong. Towards the end of 2001, Lin's wife, who was transformed by Beijing Xin'an (Female) Labor Camp, wrote a letter to Tuanhe Labor Camp suggesting that they use electric batons, beatings, mental agitation, and sleep deprivation to force her husband to transform. Lin was forced to repetitively read his wife's letter until, in the end, he could not

withstand such mental torture and “went insane”<sup>20</sup>.

Strictly speaking, every Falun Gong practitioner who was persecuted to death died because they refused to give up their beliefs. Based on the list of deaths published by [minghui.org](http://minghui.org), the incomplete statistics of 588 deaths, until April 30, 2004 in Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning, Shandong and Hebei province, shows that 232 persons (40%) had “refused to be transformed” as the direct cause of death. Among them, 213 (91.8%) were tortured to death.

The CCP requires a 100 percent transformation rate of all Falun Gong practitioners. Such a policy forces practitioners to choose between giving up their belief or suffering horrendous acts of torture. To a firm believer, the former signifies spiritual death while the latter is likely to lead to physical death. Brainwashing is therefore the deliberate extermination of Falun Gong.

### **Brainwashing propels the collapse of morality**

The first person to carry out brainwashing in the labor camp system was Zhou Kaidong, former head of the Beijing Bureau of Reeducation through Labor. Zhou later was sentenced to 15 years in prison for taking bribes.

This is not an isolated case, but instead a very common phenomenon. The recent shake-ups among high level CCP officials implicate everyone who has played a key role in ordering and intensifying the persecution. Corruption permeates all layers within the regime, from Jiang Zemin, to Zhou Yongkang, former head of the Political and Legal Affairs Committee to Li Dongsheng, former head of the CCP Central 610 Office. No wonder, in the words of Wang Lijun, former director of public

security and vice mayor of Chongqing, they want to “hunt down and kill all” Falun Gong practitioners who follow the principles of “truth, compassion and tolerance.”

The CCP attempts to use morally depraved individuals to transform Falun Gong practitioners—who only aspire to be good, benevolent people—into corrupted, empty shells, just like the CCP itself. Every year, the CCP rewards those who actively intensify the persecution. By honoring those who use violent manipulation against good people, the CCP has forced Chinese people to live within a completely inverted value system of right and wrong.

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[1] Li Lanqing’s letter to the “Ministry of Justice Reeducation and Transformation Experience Sharing and Commendation Conference” (August 29, 2000)

[2] Luo Gan’s speech at the “Ministry of Justice Reeducation and Transformation Experience Sharing and Commendation Conference” (August 29, 2000)

[3] The People’s Daily, August 25, 1999, page 4. Notice from the Office of the CCP Central Committee and the Office of the State Council on Improving Education and Transformation of Falun Gong; [http://www.peopledaily.com.cn/rmrb/199908/25/newfiles/wzb\\_19990825001026\\_4.html](http://www.peopledaily.com.cn/rmrb/199908/25/newfiles/wzb_19990825001026_4.html)

[4] Wang Maolin’s speech at the “Ministry of Justice Reeducation and Transformation Experience Sharing and Commendation Conference” (August 29, 2000)

[5] Opinions of the Office of the Central Leadership team on Handling Falun Gong Issues on Instigating Reeducation Transformation Crackdown Campaign (September 22, 2000)

[6] sina.com, June 15, 2001, “On the director of Masanjia Labor Camp Female No.2 Brigade, Su Jing”

[7] minghui.org, July 4, 2005, Former Director of Shenyang Bureau of Justice exposing secrets of 610 Office; <http://www.minghui.org/mh/articles/2005/7/4/105408.html>

[8] Wang Maolin's speech at the "Ministry of Justice Reeducation and Transformation Experience Sharing and Commendation Conference" (August 29, 2000)

[9] Opinions of the Office of the Central Leadership team on Handling Falun Gong Issues on Instigating Reeducation Transformation Crackdown Campaign (September 22, 2000)

Opinions of the Office of the Central Leadership team on Handling Falun Gong Issues on Intensifying the education and transformation work. (April 9, 2001)

[10] Biography of Zhang Wannian

[11] minghui.org, Truth behind People's Daily Li Qihua's self-criminating statement

[http://package.minghui.org/zhenxiang\\_ziliao/ziliao\\_huibian/fake\\_report/2\\_24.html](http://package.minghui.org/zhenxiang_ziliao/ziliao_huibian/fake_report/2_24.html)

[12] CCP Hebei Provincial Office Notice [1999 No.21] to Follow the Notice from CCP Central Office [1999 No.19]

[13] Opinions of the Office of the Central Leadership team on Handling Falun Gong Issues on Instigating Reeducation Transformation Crackdown Campaign (September 22, 2000)

[14] CCP Hebei provincial office document [2002 No.5]

[15] CCP Central Organization Department Document on the experiences in the struggle against Falun Gong by Masanjia Labor Camp, Beijing Bureau of Reeducation through Labor, and Qitaihe city CCP Committee, April 25, 2001

[16] CECC 2011 Annual Report.

<http://www.cecc.gov/publications/annual-reports/2011-annual-report>

[17] All reference in this section come from the report at [www.zhuichaguoji.org/node/123](http://www.zhuichaguoji.org/node/123)

[18] Torture Is Breaking Falun Gong; China Systematically Eradicating Group: John Pomfret and Philip P. Pan. The Washington Post. Washington, D.C.: Aug 5, 2001. pg. A.01

[19] minghui.org, Record of persecution of Zhang Yijie by the CCP; <http://www.minghui.org/mh/articles/2008/9/3/185228.html>

[20] minghui.org, Jan. 1, 2003, "Relentless Brainwashing created tragedy: young scholar driven insane, wife brainwashed wanting to torture husband"; <http://www.minghui.org/mh/articles/2003/1/1/42004.html>