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Investigate the Persecution
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A Look Back on the “Tiananmen Square Self-Immolation” Hoax at its Ten Year Anniversary

January 20, 2011

On Jan. 23, 2001, a self-immolation incident involving 5 people happened on the Tiananmen Square in Beijing. The Chinese regime’s mouthpiece Xinhua immediately announced that the self-immolators were Falun Gong practitioners, thus intensifying the persecution of Falun Gong with another round of violent defaming and attacking. Ten years have passed, the World Organization to Investigate the Persecution of Falun Gong (WOIPFG) considers it necessary to look back on this significant matter and its circumstances.

1. The abnormally high occurrences of meetings and activities about the persecution

From late 2000 to early 2001, the frequency of Party Central Committee level meetings and activities related to the persecution saw a surprising increase. Below are a few publicized activities.

On Dec. 26, 2000, on the Central Disciplinary Committee fifth meeting, Jiang Zemin gave a speech about the persecution of Falun Gong. However, Falun Gong was not mentioned in the official release of Jiang’s speech.

On Jan. 5, 2001, Li Lanqing, then CCP Politburo Standing Committee member and head of “CCP Central Leadership Team to Handle the Falun Gong Issues,” called a meeting of the leaders of the National Federation of Trade Unions, the Communist Youth League and Women’s Federation to talk about the “struggle against Falun Gong.”

Around Jan. 5, the core team of the CCP Central Organization Department held a “study meeting” to study Jiang’s speech on the Central Disciplinary Committee fifth meeting. Zeng Qinghong emphasized the importance of strengthening the “struggle against Falun Gong.”

Jan. 8, secretary of the Central Party Youth League, Zhou Qiang held a meeting of all secretaries of the Youth League to study Li Lanqing’s Jan. 5 speech and the Central “610 Office” announcement on “Falun Gong activities during the Chinese New Year in Beijing.” Specific tasks were delegated according to the announcement.

Jan. 10, Zhou Qiang held another meeting of all secretaries of the Youth League to study the content of the “country-wide working meeting of handling Falun Gong issues” and also the orders from the “Central Leadership Team on Handling Falun Gong Issues.”

Jan. 11, the “Anti-Cult Association” initiated the “mass signing” of the “anti-cult, pro-human rights” banner in Peking University.

Jan. 15, People’s Daily published a long article in the form of a Xinhua reporter interviewing the manager of the State Council Information Office. The article was filled with defamation against Falun Gong. It eulogized the regime’s illegal and unconstitutional persecution into so-called “Chinese government’s lawful handling based on public demand.”

Jan. 16, while meeting with a Japanese delegation, Jiang Zemin claimed that he weighted 90kg and so was not afraid of Falun Gong.

Jan. 16, deputy chairman of “anti-cult association”, He Zuoxiu held an anti-Falun Gong signature gathering of 300 scholars from the Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Jan. 17, All-China Federation of Trade Unions coerced their model workers and officials to attend a “thoroughly expose Falun Gong” meeting.

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Jan. 18, All-China Students' Federation organized 14 universities in Beijing to send an "anti-cult" letter to all universities, middle schools, vocational schools in the country.

Jan. 20, People's Daily published a commentary claiming that Falun Gong "wanted to overthrow the CCP's leadership and change the socialist structure by creating chaos and destroying stability in China." The article also claimed that Falun Gong "had become a political tool of some Western anti-CCP forces."

Jan. 20, Luo Gan held a nation-wide 'strike hard' meeting to order local officials to increase the arrests and step up the punishments against "domestic and foreign anti-CCP forces, minority separatists and religious groups, including Falun Gong."

In the morning of Jan. 21, Luo Gan started on an inspection trip to Beijing Public Security Bureau Criminal Investigation Department Special Police Division, Armed Forces Beijing 6th Division and the Beijing Public Security Bureau State Security Department. Luo Gan praised the police' violent suppression of Falun Gong practitioner on Tiananmen Square. Luo also commanded the regular police and armed police forces to "continue the struggle, not afraid of fatigue, carry out the 'strick hard' tasks."

Jan. 21, All-China Women's Federation held a propaganda event titled "families rejecting evil cult, supporting science."

Jan. 22, Government Offices Administration of the State Council conveyed 5 requirements from 2 "announcements." One announcement was issued by the CCP Central Disciplinary Committee and the CCP Central Organizational Committee. The announcement was about "taking the biggest advantage of all levels of CCP members in the struggle against Falun Gong." The second one was issued by the Discipline Supervision Working Committee and the Organizational Department of the Party Working Committee.

Jan. 23, Tiananmen Square Self-Immolation hoax happened.

2. The coincidence between one million signatures and the self-immolation hoax

An incident that cannot be separated from the "self-immolation" hoax is the establishment of the "China Anti-Cult Association" (will be referred to as the "cult association") two months prior to the hoax. On Nov. 13, 2000, the regime setup the "cult association" for the sole purpose of persecuting Falun Gong. Its first mass activity was the "one million signatures" series of anti-Falun Gong events initiated at Peking University on Jan. 11, 2001, formally started on Jan. 16 in Chinese Academy of Sciences. The signatures gathered would be sent to United Nations Human Rights Conference in Geneva. The purpose was to fabricate some grassroots reasoning behind the persecution of Falun Gong, which was under a wide range of international condemnation. The quick gathering of large number of signature was made possible by the self-immolation hoax. There were only 7 days from when the signature gathering started to when the self-immolation happened.

3. Investigations by WOIPFG: 4 important findings

The self-immolation hoax is an important event used by the Chinese regime to defame Falun Gong. After WOIPFG was established on Jan. 20, 2003, the first investigative announcement by WOIPFG was to investigate the self-immolation hoax. Thereafter, WOIPFG published 4 investigative reports. The key points of these reports are the following.

1) Loopholes on-the-scene (Different from the suspicious points described in the documentary "False Fire"): The route from Tiananmen Square to Jishuitan Hospital is 10km long wide roadway. With a siren-sounding police vehicle leading the way, it took the ambulance 2 hours to travel this 10km long wide road. According to a Jan. 30, 2001 Xinhua report, the "self-immolation" happened on Jan. 23 at 14:41. Less than 7 minutes after the incident happened, three ambulances arrived on the scene to take the burnt "self-immolators" to the Jishuitan Hospital, which was considered the best hospital to treat burnt wounds. However, WOIPFG confirmed with multiple employees of the Jishuitan Hospital that the wounded "self-immolators" arrived at the hospital at around 17:00. A 20 minutes route took the ambulance more than 2 hours to cover. What happened during these 2 hours?

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2) Mouthpiece reports contradicting one another: WOIPFG compared 5 reports from CCP Central level mouthpiece media. These reports were:

- Xinhua.net April 24, 2002 report from Geneva, titled "Exclusive interview with Wang Juan, daughter of the Tiananmen Square self-immolator Wang Jindong"

- Xinhua May 19, 2002 report from Zhengzhou City, titled "Confession of the Tiananmen Square self-immolator Wang Jindong"

- Guangming Daily, "During those nightmarish days – recollection of family members of former Falun Gong fanatic Wang Jindong", written by reporter Wang Guangrong

- China News Zhengzhou City branch, April 8, 2002 report "Tiananmen Square self-immolators, Wang Jindong and Xue Hongjun remembering their ridiculous past"

- Xinhua.net April 7, 2003 report titled "Wang Jindong describes the before and after events of the '1.23 Tiananmen Square self-immolation'"

The contradicting details of these reports include mainly: the date when "Wang Jindong" and "Wang's entire family" started to practice Falun Gong; the time when Wang Jindong called out a slogan; whether there was "heated flames" on Wang's body; how was the gas poured onto Wang's body; whether Wang's hair was burnt; the whereabouts of police vehicles after the incident happened; what exactly did Wang Jindong shout at the time of "self-immolation"; and details of Wang's family members. More over, these details are different from the CCTV video report.

3) Investigation of Jishuitan Hospital about Liu Siying's sudden death: WOIPFG obtained detailed information from Jishuitan Hospital physicians who treated Liu Siying. The physician admitted that Liu's burn wounds were treated and were recovering, but she died suddenly just before leaving the hospital. For the period of time including one day before her death, Liu's LDH, CK and other tests were normal. On the morning of Saturday, March 17, at around 8am and 9am, the director of Jishuitan Hospital and the director of Beijing Bureau of Medical Affairs visited Liu in her ward. They talked for a long time and "Liu was very lively." But at around noon, the physicians noticed that Liu was in critical condition. She died shortly afterwards. WOIPFG investigation also found out that the autopsy of Liu Siying was done in the same hospital but the autopsy report was issued by the Emergency Center. Except for a brief mentioning of heart failure, the exact cause of death was never publicized.

4) Expert Voice Analysis: The analysis of Wang Jindong's voices in three episodes of CCTV's "Topics in Focus" did not belong to the same person. The analysis was done by renowned voice lab in Taiwan University.

4. Incidents that Followed

1) CCTV's self-immolation report: CCTV released several videos about the self-immolation incident. Overseas independent media produced a documentary called "False Fire" describing the loopholes of the CCTV videos. After "False Fire" was released, CCTV edited the original videos and released the edited version.

2) Shooting and re-shooting of the self-immolation act: Most CCTV anti-Falun Gong programs are done by someone named Li Yuqiang, who used the title of CCTV reporter. But in fact, WOIPFG found out that Li Yuqiang was not a CCTV employee to begin with. He was sent to CCTV for the specific role of producing anti-Falun Gong programs. When Li was asked why did not the plastic bottle in between the "self-immolator" Wang Jindong's legs burn, Li answered: "That scene was taped afterwards and added in the video. If I knew it is such a big loophole, it would not have been taped." If Wang Jindong were really a Falun Gong practitioner, would he be so cooperative with the CCTV in the shooting of the fake news?

3) The much favored self-immolator: The most favored character in the internationally known Falun Gong related cases ought to be the "survivor" of "self-immolation." Among the five "self-immolators," only two died, mother Liu Chunling and daughter Liu Siying. The earliest released video of CCTV showed that Liu Chunling died because an unknown object

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was thrown to her head. Liu Siying died suddenly on the day she was supposed to be released from the hospital due to satisfactory recovery condition. Both deaths indicated killing to hide the truth.

Comparing to some other wellknown cases of Falun Gong practitioners' death, the "self-immolators" were definitely the favored ones. For the Changchun TV signal interception participants, at least 6 were persecuted to death. They are Liang Zhenxing, Liu Chengjun, Liu Haibo, Lei Ming, Hou Mingkai and Zhou Runjun. Liu Haibo and Hou Mingkai were beaten to death several hours after they were captured.

Falun Gong practitioner Gao Rongrong's face was heavily disfigured by hours of electric shock. From her arrest, to her escape, to her arrest again, every development was under the watchful eye of the international community, yet Gao Rongrong was still persecuted to death.

At least three Falun Gong practitioners who were interviewed by rights lawyer, Gao Zhisheng were persecuted to death. They are Sun Shuxiang, Wang Yuhuan and Liu Lihua.

5. Conclusion

The WOIPFG investigative results prove that the Tiananmen Square self-immolation hoax is a conspiracy from the Chinese regime to defame Falun Gong.

The Tiananmen Square self-immolation hoax is an important turning point. There are at least 3 triggering reasons: After over a year of fruitless suppression of Falun Gong, the regime was not able to incite hatred against Falun Gong in the public, since the Chinese people have been through similar political movements and would not agree with the persecution; the regime felt especially ashamed, agonized and angry at the Falun Gong practitioners' displaying banners and doing exercises on the Tiananmen Square, which has been considered by the regime its political center and window-display to the outside world. Therefore, the regime was eager to clear the field in the Square; Pressured by international condemnation on the persecution, the regime needed some voices from the general public as an excuse for the persecution and to lessen the condemnation. Especially that the regime needed something quickly in order to attend the UN Human Rights Conference, which was going to be held in Geneva in a few months.

On the other hand, the self-immolation hoax and the hatred-filled propaganda that followed, had reminded the Falun Gong practitioners to further clarify the truth about Falun Gong to Chinese people. After the self-immolation hoax occurred, the Tiananmen Square was heavily guarded. It was impossible for Falun Gong practitioners to go there. Therefore, the Falun Gong practitioners' truth clarification efforts turned to a new page.