

Falun Gong: The End of Days

By Maria Hsia Chang

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The world first took notice of a religious group called Falun Gong on April 25, 1999, when more than 10,000 of its followers protested before the Chinese Communist headquarters in Beijing. Falun Gong investigates events in the wake of the demonstration: Beijing's condemnation of the group as a Western, anti-Chinese force and doomsday cult, the sect's continued defiance, and the nationwide campaign that resulted in the incarceration and torture of many Falun Gong faithful. Maria Hsia Chang discusses the Falun Gong's beliefs, including their ideas on cosmology, humanity's origin, karma, reincarnation, UFOs, and the coming apocalypse. She balances an account of the Chinese government's case against the sect with an evaluation of the credibility of those accusations. Describing China's long history of secret societies that initiated powerful uprisings and sometimes overthrew dynasties, she explains the Chinese government's brutal treatment of the sect. And she concludes with a chronicle of the ongoing persecution of religious groups in China, of which Falun Gong is only one of many, and the social conditions that breed the popular discontent and alienation that spawn religious millenarianism.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
This is an objective and scholarly account of one of the most challenging mass phenomena to emerge from China in recent years. Falun Gong ("Law Wheel Cultivation"), founded in 1992, had attracted millions of practitioners in China and worldwide by the time the Chinese banned it as an "evil cult" in 1999. Chang, a professor of political science at the University of Nevada, Reno, presents a highly readable account of the origins and beliefs of the group. Although Falun Gong's practices are rooted in traditional Chinese qigong, which involves meditation to cultivate qi (life force), Falun Gong has broader goals of moral salvation, drawing on concepts from China's traditional religions, including Buddhism and Taoism. Since the group's founder and leader, Li Hongzhi, fled China to become a resident in the United States in 1998, he has become increasingly critical of the Chinese government. He encourages his followers to stand up for Falun Gong, despite fierce Chinese government repression, even at the risk of their lives. Chang is unsparing in detailing the illegal and deceptive methods the Chinese government has used to repress Falun Gong. At the same time, she explains why the authorities fear such a movement, situating the repression of Falun Gong in the broader context of China's persecution of certain other religious faiths and its history of revolts led by millenarian movements. The author relates how rapid change, disillusionment with the increasingly irrelevant official Marxist ideology, and growing corruption in China have made many people feel anxious for some moral and spiritual anchor.
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From Booklist
Political scientist Chang provides a brief and accessible introduction to Falun Gong that places the movement in political and historical context, and she offers a critique of the Chinese government's policy toward religion that raises important questions about relations between quasi-religious groups such as Falun Gong and modern states. Though Chang is most concerned with criticizing the practice of "socialism with Chinese characteristics," many of the questions she raises are relevant beyond China and beyond single-party states. Her overview of religious and millenarian movements in Chinese history makes it clear that ostensibly apolitical groups have had profoundly political impacts, and this lends credence to at least one rationale for the Chinese government's hostile reaction to Falun Gong. At the same time, her analysis of the extent to which hostile government reaction has transformed religious and quasi-religious groups into revolutionary political movements amounts to a cautionary tale for modern states and a compelling argument for a practice of religious freedom that extends beyond mainstream and established religions. *Steven Schroeder*
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Review
"This very readable book is the best introduction available to the Falun Gong and the issues raised by its emergence and struggle with the Chinese state." Jan S. Prybyla, Pennsylvania State University"

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marina Rutt:

Why? Because this Falun Gong: The End of Days is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap this but latter it will jolt you with the secret the item inside. Reading this book close to it was

fantastic author who also write the book in such remarkable way makes the content interior easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning thoroughly. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any longer or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book get such as help improving your talent and your critical thinking method. So , still want to hesitate having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

Vanessa Gibson:

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James Pitts:

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