

Sophia Bell - based on interviews with a
former Chinese official



THE RED VEIL

紅色的帷幕

A FORMER OFFICIAL'S TESTIMONY:
AWAKENING WHEN HIS DAUGHTER WAS
KILLED FOR HER FAITH

THE RED VEIL

*A Former Official's Testimony:
Awakening When His Daughter Was
Killed for Her Faith*

Author: As told to **Sophia Bell**

(based on interviews with a former Chinese official who
defected to the USA)

Copyright © 2025 THE EPOCH MEDIA. All rights reserved. No reproduction allowed.

EDITOR'S NOTE

This book is based on true stories, events, and contexts. However, to protect the privacy of certain individuals, the names of characters and some identifying details have been altered, simplified, or restructured for narrative purposes.

Some passages in the book are recounted from the personal perspective of those involved, reflecting their own experiences and perceptions at the time. These views do not necessarily align with the stance of THE EPOCH MEDIA.

In terms of style, although the Editorial Team has made necessary adjustments, to respect the original subject and preserve the spirit and vitality of the story, we have endeavored to retain as much as possible the rustic quality and original voice of the subject.

The Editors



FOREWORD

Every human being lives with dreams. There are small, simple dreams. And then there are immense dreams, on the scale of an entire nation, an entire era. But what happens when a man, once an architect of the mighty "Chinese Dream," one day realizes that to build that dream, the system demands an unpayable price: the very life of the daughter he loves most?

When the castle of ideals crumbles, when all faith in the path one has chosen turns to dust, where does a person turn to for an anchor? When the logic of power and materialist theories become powerless before a pain so great, where does one find the answer to the question: "Why?"

The Red Veil is the journey to find the answer to that question. This is not a book of political analysis, but the painful soliloquy of a father, a stark confrontation with the truth after the veil of deceit was torn asunder by family tragedy.

The protagonist's journey is one of "awakening"—awakening to the nature of the system he once trusted, awakening to the power of the spiritual faith he once denied, and above all, awakening to rediscover the value

of being human after traversing the very depths of despair.

We invite the reader to step into this story, not merely as an observer, but as a fellow traveler, to contemplate the price of truth, the fragility of dreams of power, and the light of conscience that is never extinguished, even in the darkest of nights.

Sophia Bell

DAY ONE

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Nods slightly, a faint, fleeting smile on his face. His voice is low and a little hesitant at first.)*

Hello, Ms. Bell. Thank you for coming. This place isn't the easiest to find, is it?

Sophia Bell:

Yes, good morning, Mr. Liu!

It's a bit far from the city center, but for a journalist like me, finding a location isn't a major issue...

I'm very grateful that you agreed to this interview... Oh, but I don't want to call it an "interview," that sounds too rigid. I'd rather call this a sharing of sentiments between you and the readers of THE EPOCH MEDIA, and I am simply a small bridge...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(He listens intently, his eyes studying Sophia with a hint of initial scrutiny, which then softens as she speaks. He nods again, a thoughtful expression crossing his face.)*

"A sharing of sentiments..." *(He repeats the phrase softly, as if absorbing its meaning).* Yes, Ms. Bell, that phrasing... I'm more at ease with it. "Interview" sounds as if I'm a subject to be examined, or an event to be dissected. But "sharing"... it implies willingness, sincerity.

(He takes a small sip of tea, his gaze drifting out the window for a moment before returning to Sophia.)

THE EPOCH MEDIA... Yes, I'm familiar with your publication. They have done many commendable things, publishing information that many others don't dare to, or don't want to, speak of. Perhaps that's why I... I found the courage to be here today.

(A brief silence falls as he seems to gather his scattered thoughts.)

So, Ms. Bell, where would you like to begin this "sharing of sentiments"? My life has had many turns, and some things are perhaps... not easy to speak of. But I will try. For An Ran... and for others like her.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, as I mentioned in the email I sent, we are an independent media organization with a network of journalists in many countries, targeting a global readership... We are dedicated to universal values such as truth, sincerity, and evoking the inherent goodness in every person...

That is why, when we were introduced to your story, we felt you could be a representative figure for the noble values THE EPOCH MEDIA wishes to convey to its readers...

Well then, shall we officially begin?

I'll start with a gentle question: After about a year in the US, how do you find the "atmosphere" here? Is it like a noisy, bustling marketplace where people scramble over the filthy dollars of "goddamn capitalists"?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(A faint, distant smile touches his lips as he hears Sophia's question. He looks into his teacup for a moment before looking up, his gaze deep.)*

"A bustling marketplace... the filthy dollars of goddamn capitalists?" *(He repeats the last words, his tone not one of mockery, but of contemplation).* Those are words... that I once heard, and was even indoctrinated with, in a different environment, Ms. Bell. When one is only allowed to see the world through a single lens, the reflection can only have that one color.

(He pauses to take a sip of tea.)

One year here... it's not a very long time, but it's been long enough for me to feel it. The "atmosphere" you speak of... it's far more complex. It's true, there's a hustle, there's competition, there are people preoccupied with material things, with what they call the "American Dream." Sometimes, standing amid the bustling crowds in Manhattan, I too feel overwhelmed, I feel the powerful pull of that machine.

But the "bustle" you speak of, if it exists, is very different. It is not the scramble within a narrow cage, where people must trample over each other to climb up out of fear, because there is no other way. Here, I sense a... freedom. Freedom to pursue, freedom to fail, and more importantly, freedom to speak out, freedom to believe in what you hold to be right, even if it goes against the majority.

(His voice lowers slightly, a trace of sadness passing over him.)

One year here, what I've felt most keenly is not the "filthy dollars," but the value of breathing freely. Something that, in my homeland, I and so many others, especially my daughter... An Ran... did not have.

(He looks directly at Sophia.)

Of course, no place is a paradise. Every society has its dark side, its injustices, its imperfections. But at least here, one can speak openly about those dark sides, can try to fix them, without fear of disappearing without a trace the next day.

It's not merely a "marketplace," Ms. Bell. It's a much vaster space, where every person, good or bad, has the opportunity to express themselves with relative completeness. And that is something I am learning to get used to, and to cherish.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, I understand. American-style Western capitalism isn't a perfect model; not everything is as radiant as the stars... it certainly has its own share of problems.

But let's not focus on American society today. We are here to hear you share the stories, the fates of the people on the other side of the Pacific...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(He nods gently, his gaze dropping to the teacup on the table for a moment. He places his hands on his thighs, a gesture of drawing himself in, as if bracing for a more difficult journey.)*

You're right, Sophia. We are not here to discuss the pros and cons of American society. In any case, that is not the place where I have spent nearly my entire life.

(He looks up, his gaze now heavier as it meets Sophia's. A soft, almost inaudible sigh escapes him.)

"Across the Pacific..." *(He repeats, his voice turning distinctly somber)*. That place holds so much... the joy, hope, and ideals of youth... and then the shattered dreams, the pain, and the irreplaceable loss.

(He falls silent for a moment, as if searching for the right words, or perhaps trying to calm the emotions welling up inside him.)

The lives, the fates... as you said. That is what I want to share. Even if my account may be fragmented, and there may be moments when emotion makes it difficult for me to continue. But I will try, because I believe the truth needs to be known. Especially the truth about the people... the good, innocent people who have endured so much injustice simply because of their beliefs.

(He looks directly at Sophia, a sense of resolve appearing in his weary eyes.)

So, where would you like me to begin that long, sad story? With the days when I was a young man

embracing my own version of the "Chinese dream," or with the events that completely changed my life and my understanding of it?

Sophia Bell:

Yes, to help our readers follow the story, could you first briefly tell us about your background? About where you were born, your work, and why you came to the US?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(He nods gently, taking a deep breath as if to compose himself and organize his memories. He gazes out the window for a moment, then turns back, his eyes distant.)*

Yes, Ms. Bell. So that everyone can better understand the path I have walked... I will share a brief summary.

(He hesitates for a moment, as if choosing his words.)

I was born in a small village in a coastal province in the East. My family was not well-off, but my parents placed great importance on education. From a young age, I showed an aptitude for my studies, always at the top of my school. Perhaps because of that, I was noticed early on by the local authorities, seen as a "sapling" to be nurtured. In those days, that was a great honor, not just for me but for my entire family.

My academic path was quite smooth. I was admitted to one of the country's top universities in the capital. I studied subjects that I then believed could contribute to building a strong nation: political economy and philosophy. After graduating with excellent results, I was invited to stay on as a lecturer. Those were years I spent engrossed in research and writing, eventually earning my doctorate and then the title of professor.

(He pauses, a contemplative look on his face.)

When I was around thirty-five or thirty-six, my essays on China's future development path, on a model that combined what I considered the best of different systems, made a certain impact in academic circles and even among some high-level leaders. That was likely the turning point that took me from the lecture hall into the political arena. I was invited to work at a central-level policy research agency, and then, as part of my "practical training," I was transferred to a major city, a dynamic economic hub in the South. There, I worked hard and made certain advancements, reaching a position equivalent to a deputy mayor, in charge of planning and development.

(His voice drops, a deep sadness flashing in his eyes.)

As for why I came to the US... *(He takes a very deep breath)*. That is a long story, the most painful and tragic

turn of my life, Ms. Bell. It is tied to my only daughter, Liu An Ran... and to an event that caused my entire worldview, my beliefs, and my life to completely collapse. To put it as briefly as possible for now, I left for my own safety and, more importantly, so that I could preserve the last shred of my dignity and have a chance to speak the truth about what happened to my daughter, my family, and countless others... I had to leave my homeland. And fortunately, I received help from the U.S. Consulate in Guangzhou to be able to get here.

(He falls silent, looking down at his clasped hands on his lap. The atmosphere in the room seems to grow heavier.)

Those are the main points, Ms. Bell. The rest... will likely take much more time to tell.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, that is a picture of many colors... the ideals of a young man, the maturity of a thinker and a politician, the pain over family, over a daughter...

I apologize if I've brought up unhappy memories... I have heard about your daughter's story, a sad story, a situation that, if it were me, I don't know how I would face such a tragic circumstance... I deeply empathize with you, and with your daughter...

We are willing to listen to you share the specifics, if it helps you feel your heart is somewhat lighter...

But first, perhaps you could share about lighter topics, like the ideals of your youth... or the achievements you are most proud of?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's words, his eyes blink softly. A fleeting warmth crosses his weathered face. He nods slowly.)*

Thank you, Ms. Bell... for your understanding. The matter of An Ran... it is indeed a wound too deep. There are times I don't know how I got through it. Perhaps... it was thanks to a little remaining faith, a little hope that my voice, however small, could contribute in some way...

(He pauses for a moment, taking a gentle breath, as if trying to push back the heavy emotions.)

You are right. Perhaps we should start with things that are... lighter. So I can slowly piece together the fragments of memory.

(He smiles faintly, a sad but sincere smile. His gaze drifts into the distance, as if searching for a faraway past.)

The ideals of my youth... *(He repeats, his voice holding a hint of nostalgia).* In those days, like so many other young

people, I was full of passion. Born and raised in a period when the country was still facing many difficulties after historical upheavals, we were taught that we must dedicate ourselves to building a new China, a strong and prosperous China that the world would respect.

I believed in that fervently. When I was in university, and later when I became a researcher and a lecturer, that flame within me burned brightly. I was passionate about studying economics, politics, philosophy... not just as abstract theories, but I always tried to find a practical path, a model best suited to lift the country out of poverty and backwardness, to rise and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the great powers.

(He looks at Sophia, a flicker of pride in his eyes.)

The achievements I'm most proud of... Perhaps it would be the books, the essays into which I poured my heart and soul. In them, I sketched out a modern China, not only strong economically but also advanced in science and technology, a society with order, where people lived prosperous lives. I envisioned a nation that could learn the good things from the West, from other developed countries, yet still retain its own identity. I once dreamed of my own "Chinese dream," where talent was valued, where the rule of law was supreme, and where the country would truly become a beacon.

(His smile fades, replaced by a somber expression..)

In those days, I believed that as long as we had the right path and dedicated people, all difficulties could be overcome. I poured all my intellectual energy into those ideas, into those writings. And when they were recognized by the elite, by some leaders, I thought... I was on the right track, that I could truly contribute my small part to that great cause.

(He falls silent for a moment, looking down at his teacup, which has now grown somewhat cold.)

Those were the days... when I felt my life was most meaningful, before the wheels of politics, and later, the brutal events, swept it all away.

Sophia Bell:

What you've shared about the "Chinese Dream," it sounds to me like it's very similar to the concept of the "Chinese Dream" in the political ideology of China's current leadership?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's question, he raises his eyebrows slightly, a complex, thoughtful expression on his face. He is silent for a moment, appearing to weigh his words carefully.)*

Ms. Bell, you have a very keen observation. "The Chinese Dream"... *(He repeats, his voice contemplative)*. It's true, in terms of wording, there is an undeniable similarity. And this, I must admit, is also one of the things that has troubled me greatly in later years.

(He pauses, his gaze fixed on a point in the distance, as if looking through the wall to a faraway place.)

Back then, when I and many other intellectuals were pondering the country's future, that phrase, or similar ideas, was perhaps part of the general current of thought. Everyone wished for their country to be strong, for their nation to be glorious. My "dream" at the time, as I've shared, was of a comprehensively developed China, a civilized nation with the rule of law, with harmony between tradition and modernity, where people could maximize their potential in a relatively free and creative environment. I thought about learning from the best of the world, both East and West, to build a unique and superior model.

(He shakes his head slightly, a sad smile flashing across his face.)

But the "dream" I envisioned... it wasn't just about impressive economic growth figures, skyscrapers, or advanced weaponry. It had to be built on a foundation of respect for human beings, of a genuine rule of law,

where the voices of the people were heard, where moral values and conscience were not trampled upon. It was an all-encompassing dream, not just for one group, but for the entire nation.

As for the "Chinese Dream" that we see widely promoted later... *(He hesitates, choosing his words carefully)*. I'm afraid it has been cloaked in a different guise, or perhaps, it has been interpreted and implemented in a very different way from what I and many of my contemporaries had once envisioned.

(His voice carries a hint of bitterness.)

Perhaps, people borrowed the beautiful linguistic veneer, but the substance inside... was something else, something that placed the interests of one party, of one group, above all else, at any cost. A "dream" for which, to achieve it, people were willing to sacrifice the freedom of the populace, willing to extinguish dissenting voices, willing to trample on core human values.

Sometimes I ask myself if my initial ideas, however pure, may have inadvertently contributed to creating an illusion, a slogan, that was then exploited. That is a question... for which I will probably never have a complete answer.

(He looks at Sophia, his eyes filled with a deep sadness.)

The "dream" I once pursued has been shattered, or at least, it has been distorted to the point that I no longer recognize it, Ms. Bell. And that shattering, it began when I realized just how ruthless people could be in order to build that so-called "strength."

Sophia Bell:

Yes, I'm beginning to understand that, throughout your youth and your political career, you were always moving towards what was good for the country in general and for each family, each individual, in particular.

Could you elaborate on the core points of your "dream" system back then? Beyond major points like emphasizing private economic development, science and technology, or a society under the rule of law, did you touch upon other aspects like freedom of speech, freedom of religion or belief, degeneration and corruption, or whether the model you envisioned was based on any other in the world, such as the US, Singapore, Japan, or the Nordic countries, for example?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(He listens very intently, his eyes fixed on Sophia. When she finishes, he nods slowly, a sad smile appearing and then vanishing.)*

Yes, Ms. Bell, you could say that. Throughout my youth, and even after entering the political arena, deep down I always believed that I had to do something useful for the country, for the people. Although, looking back, there were things I misunderstood, and paths I chose that did not lead to the destination I had hoped for.

(He takes a deep breath, collecting his thoughts.)

When you ask about the core points of my "dream" back then... beyond what has been said about the economy, science and technology, and the rule of law, there were indeed other aspects I contemplated, though perhaps my ideas were not yet fully mature or contained flawed perceptions.

Regarding freedom of speech, to be honest, I viewed it through a somewhat limited lens at the time. I envisioned a space where intellectuals and experts could contribute constructive opinions on national policies, where academic debates were encouraged to find the truth. But perhaps, I didn't fully envision or didn't dare to think of absolute freedom of speech for every citizen, where each person could express their political views without fear, even if they went against state policy. I was still preoccupied with "order" and "stability" as prerequisites for development.

Regarding freedom of religion or belief... (*He hesitates, a look of torment on his face*). This is a point where, looking back, I see my understanding was very limited, even mistaken. I was heavily influenced by dialectical materialism, trained in a system that regarded religion, belief, and even cultivation practices like Falun Gong later on, as things of the past, as "superstition," and even as obstacles to scientific progress and rational thought. In my "dream" back then, there wasn't much room for these things. I once naively thought that as society developed and material life became abundant, these "superstitions" would naturally disappear. A grave mistake, Ms. Bell.

Regarding degeneration and corruption, I recognized it as a plague, a cancer that could destroy all nation-building efforts. I believed that a strong rule of law, a streamlined and incorruptible state apparatus with strict sanctions, could solve this problem. But perhaps I focused too much on building the "structure" without sufficiently seeing the rot from within the "human system," and the terrifying power of interest groups and the absence of fundamental moral values.

As for a specific model, just as you mentioned, I did study and was influenced by many countries.

Singapore was a model I paid close attention to: a centralized, efficient political system, an administration considered relatively clean, and an astonishing pace of economic development despite limited resources. I

admired the decisiveness and long-term vision of its leadership.

From the United States, I learned about the dynamism of the market economy, its advanced science and technology, and the spirit of constant innovation.

I also looked to Japan for its discipline, work ethic, and miraculous post-war recovery, as well as its combination of tradition and modernity.

The Nordic countries with their welfare state models and relatively high social equality were also points I reflected on, though I found it difficult to apply them wholesale to China's conditions.

My goal was to distill what I considered the essence from these models, combine it with China's specific characteristics, to create a unique path. A kind of "strongly-guided state capitalism" or a "socialist market economy with Chinese characteristics" operated by an effective state under the rule of law, where the Communist Party would still maintain its leading role but must operate within a legal framework and be more attentive to the voices of experts and the people.

(He sighs softly.)

Looking back, my "dream" at the time, despite having aspects I still consider progressive, was still very flawed and somewhat naive. I focused too much on "efficiency," on "strength," on "order" through a certain lens, without

sufficiently realizing the importance of fundamental human freedoms, especially freedom of thought and belief. And perhaps, that was one of the biggest shortcomings, a "blind spot" that prevented me from seeing the dangers lurking within the very system I once believed in and served.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, I can feel your passion and ambition for your country... Regarding the points you raised in your "dream," it seems China has succeeded in many of them...? For example, in aerospace science, biotechnology, new energy... and especially, one specific example that I personally find extremely impressive for China's economic and scientific development is its infrastructure and transportation system, with the brightest spot being the high-speed rail system that spreads across the entire country, connecting major cities!

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(He listens to Sophia, a faint, somewhat bitter smile on his lips. He nods slightly, his gaze distant, as if comparing what Sophia said with his own experiences.)*

You are not wrong, Sophia. Seen from the outside, and based on the numbers, the glamorous images that the state media relentlessly paints, it is true that China has achieved "accomplishments" that have astonished the

world. Aerospace, biotechnology, new energy... and especially the high-speed rail system you mentioned. I too was once very proud as those plans gradually took shape; many of them were things that my generation, the policymakers, had once nurtured, once dreamed of.

(He pauses for a moment, his voice lowering.)

When the first high-speed trains sped along modern viaducts, connecting different regions, I used to imagine that those trains carried not just passengers, but also prosperity, connection, and hope. I thought that this was the concrete manifestation of a "dream" gradually becoming reality.

(A soft sigh escapes him.)

But then, when I had the chance to look deeper, or rather, when undeniable truths were laid bare before my eyes, I began to ask myself: What is the price paid for those "successes"?

To get those high-speed rail lines, how much land was taken from farmers for a paltry price, or even forcibly seized? How many homes were razed, how many lives were upended without adequate compensation? How many enormous kickbacks lined the pockets of corrupt officials during the implementation of those billion-dollar projects? How many dissenting voices, how many

public grievances were brutally silenced to ensure "progress" and "image"?

(His voice catches slightly, but he quickly regains his composure.)

It's just like many other "accomplishments" the world marvels at. Behind the modern factories, the giant industrial parks, lies a ruined environment, the health of the people threatened. Behind the impressive export figures are harsh labor conditions, the sweat and tears of millions of workers.

Back then, I, like many others, was perhaps too intoxicated with macro-level goals, with impressive numbers, and forgot that behind every project, every number, lies the fate of specific human beings, with their joys, sorrows, and their legitimate rights. We were taught, and perhaps we lulled ourselves into believing, that the sacrifice of some individuals was necessary for the greater good of the collective, of the nation.

(He looks directly at Sophia, his eyes filled with torment.)

The "bright spots" you speak of, it's true, they exist. But they are also like brilliant spotlights on a grand stage, hiding the dark corners behind it, where the extras are suffering in silence. And what's sadder is that,

sometimes, those very "bright spots" are used as tools to legitimize, to justify that darkness.

I once believed that economic, scientific, and technological development would automatically bring about a better society. But now, I understand that without a moral foundation, without genuine respect for the rule of law, without listening to and protecting human rights, then all material "success," no matter how glittering, is merely a glittering facade, easily shattered and incapable of bringing true happiness to the people.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, to this day, China has indeed made a strong impression on the world when looking at the statistics! But along with that, its product quality has also made the world wary, even fearful enough to stay away... In your "dream" back then, did you address this aspect?

If so, what did you think should be done to improve quality? In terms of processes? Applying high technology? Upgrading skills?... Do you think "ethics" has anything to do with product quality?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening to Sophia's comments on product quality, he nods gently, a look of concern on his face. He clasps his hands together on the table.)*

You are very right, Sophia. The issue of "Made in China" product quality is a sad reality, a source of anguish not only for international consumers but also for conscientious Chinese people themselves. It's like a stain that is hard to wash away, running counter to the national pride we are constantly reminded of.

(He is silent for a moment, as if reminiscing.)

In my "dream" back then, when I envisioned a China that was economically and technologically powerful, I also thought that the country must create products of quality, with a reputable standing in the international market. I did not envision a great power that relied solely on cheap labor and low-quality products to compete. I thought about transitioning from "Made in China" to "Created in China," and even further, to "Trusted in China."

To improve quality, I also envisioned the solutions you just mentioned:

Regarding processes: There must certainly be strict national standards, approaching international standards, and an independent, transparent system for quality supervision and inspection.

Regarding the application of high technology: I believed that investing in research and development, applying advanced technology in production, was the inevitable

path to improving quality and productivity.

Regarding upgrading skills: Vocational education and training must be emphasized, so that workers not only have skills but also a sense of pride in the quality of the products they make.

(He pauses, looking directly at Sophia, his voice becoming more serious.)

But, Ms. Bell, all those technical solutions, while necessary, are merely treating the symptoms. The root of the problem, in my view, lies in a concept you just mentioned, a concept whose importance in this field I perhaps did not fully recognize at the time: and that is ethics.

(He emphasizes the word "ethics.")

Why are there milk products tainted with melamine, contaminated food, fake medicine, toxic toys...? Is it because we lack technology, lack processes? Yes, but that is not the main reason. The main reason is the decay of business ethics, the bottomless greed of some people, who are willing to disregard the health, even the lives, of their fellow human beings for profit.

In a society where money is placed above all else, where the pursuit of profit blinds people, where good traditional moral values are downplayed, even mocked,

how can one expect quality, safe products to be made sustainably?

When the legal system is not strict enough to punish deceitful businesses, when corruption is so rampant that "backdoor deals" and "bribes" to bypass inspection agencies become common, how can processes and standards be implemented seriously?

When workers are exploited, disrespected, seen only as tools of production, how can they have passion and pride to create good products?

(His voice is tinged with bitterness.)

Back then, perhaps I put too much faith in the power of "mechanisms," "policies," and "technology." I failed to see or deliberately ignored the fact that without a solid moral foundation for the entire society—from the leaders, the managers, to the producers and the workers—all efforts to improve quality are like building a house on sand.

The decay of morality, in my opinion, is one of the most chronic diseases, the source of many problems that China is facing, not just in product quality. And to cure this disease, one cannot rely on administrative orders or empty slogans. It requires an awakening of conscience, a restoration of core human values.

That is something that, back then, in my "dream," I did not fully see, or did not dare to look at directly, Ms. Bell.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, that "dream" was indeed a dream, and it quickly vanished into thin air when we "awakened"... So, could you share with our readers how you awakened? What caused you to awaken, and is it connected to your sad story?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's question, he closes his eyes for a moment. When he opens them, a deep pain is visible, yet mingled with a strange calmness. He exhales very slowly.)*

"A dream... vanished into thin air when we awakened..." *(He repeats, his voice low and hoarse).* You are right, Sophia. Painfully right. It truly was a dream, a dream I was immersed in for far too long. And when I woke up, the reality laid bare before me was so naked and brutal that... no words can fully describe it.

(He falls silent for a moment, looking down at his own hands, his fingers trembling slightly.)

My "awakening" was not a sudden moment like flipping a light switch. It was a process, slow, painful, with small cracks at first, which gradually widened until the entire

illusory castle I had built in my mind collapsed completely.

When I was still in the machine, I would occasionally see unsettling things, injustices, words that did not match actions. But at that time, I often justified it to myself, reassured myself that they were just "a few bad apples spoiling the barrel," localized problems in a large, functioning system. I tried to believe that the grand goals we were pursuing would justify the minor flaws. Or perhaps, I was too focused on plans, on figures on paper, that I lacked the courage, the sensitivity, to look directly at the pain of flesh-and-blood human beings.

(His voice begins to tremble slightly; he clears his throat lightly.)

But the real "awakening," the final shock that brought everything crashing down, just as you sensed... it is tied to my daughter, An Ran.

(He pauses, his eyes welling up with tears. He quickly wipes them away, then tries to keep his voice steady.)

When my daughter, an outstanding student, a pure soul, was arrested and imprisoned simply for her belief in Falun Gong, a peaceful cultivation practice for self-improvement... that's when the cracks within me began to grow. I tried to use my connections, the little status I

had left after being sidelined in political infighting, to find out, to intervene. But it was all in vain. All I received was silence, evasion, or empty promises.

I saw the coldness, the callousness of a state apparatus that was supposed to be "of the people, by the people, for the people." I saw how lies were elaborately woven to cover up the truth. I saw old colleagues, people who once shook my hand warmly, turn their backs on me as if I were a leper.

(The pain in his voice becomes more and more apparent.)

And then... when I received the terrible news about An Ran... the news that she had been... had her organs harvested while she was still alive... *(He cannot continue, his voice chokes up. He bows his head, his shoulders shaking).*

(After a long moment, he looks up, his eyes red but his gaze holding a frightening determination.)

That moment, Sophia, was no longer an "awakening." It was a complete shattering. All my ideals, all my belief in the so-called "righteousness" and "justice" of the system I had once served, turned to dust. I saw clearly its evil, inhumane, and utterly deceitful nature. It wasn't just a few "bad apples"; the entire barrel was poisoned to the core.

The "Chinese Dream" I once cherished now appeared as a tragic farce, a painted cake decorated with the blood and tears of innocent people like my daughter.

Painful, yes, painful to the extreme. But it was in that extreme pain that I truly "awoke." Awoke to see that I had been wrong, had been blind, had inadvertently abetted an inhuman machine. And awoke to understand that to be silent in the face of evil is to be complicit with evil.

That is why I am sitting here today, Ms. Bell. Though it is late, I must speak the truth. For An Ran, and for the millions of other An Rans who are suffering in silence.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, before meeting you, I had also heard about your daughter's case, and as an independent journalist, I have heard about many similar heartbreaking cases... The crime of organ harvesting targeting "political prisoners" and "prisoners of conscience" is truly painful... It demonstrates the absolute evil of a tyrannical regime...

I understand that the pain of losing a child in such a situation is indescribable... I'm sure that now that you have awakened, you must have many regrets, many things you wish you could do over...

But when you were still in office as a politician specializing in ideology, what was your stance on religion in general and Falun Gong in particular?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening to Sophia's words, he nods gently, his gaze distant and heavy with sorrow. When Sophia mentions "political prisoners," "prisoners of conscience," and the crime of organ harvesting, a look of indignation and pain flashes across his face, but he quickly suppresses it.)*

Yes, Ms. Bell... "Absolute evil," you used the right words. When that crime happens to your own dearest loved one, the truth is laid bare, more raw and horrific than any words can describe.

(He takes a deep breath, trying to keep his voice steady.)

The pain of losing An Ran... it will indeed follow me for the rest of my life. And just as you said, there are so many things I regret, so many things I wish I could do over, say over, think over... If only I had realized sooner, if only I hadn't believed so readily in what I was taught, if only I had listened more to my daughter... Perhaps... *(His voice chokes up a bit).*

But the past cannot be changed. The only thing I can do now is to face it, and try to do what is right in the time I have left.

(He pauses, arranging his memories of a distant time, a time when his perception was very different.)

When you ask about my stance on religion and Falun Gong while I was in office, while I was a worker in "ideology"... to be honest, that was a period when I, like many of my colleagues, was heavily influenced by prejudice and one-sided propaganda.

Regarding religion in general, I was educated to believe, and I myself believed, that it was a product of a certain historical stage, the "opiate of the masses" as Marx said. I viewed religion as something of the past, perhaps having certain cultural and moral values, but fundamentally incompatible with a modern, scientific, materialistic society. I believed that as people's material lives improved and their education level rose, the influence of religion would naturally decline. In the development plans and projects I helped formulate, religion was often seen as an element to be "managed" and "guided" so as not to hinder overall development, rarely as a legitimate spiritual need of human beings, or a positive resource for society.

As for Falun Gong, when the persecution began in 1999... *(He hesitates, a look of discomfort on his face)*. At that time, I was at the peak of my research career, about to enter the political arena. The information I had access to, like many others in the system, was primarily from

official state media channels. The news reports, articles, and propaganda materials all portrayed Falun Gong as an "evil cult," a reactionary political organization disguised as qigong, which endangered social stability and people's health.

To be honest, I didn't investigate it deeply at the time. I was busy with my own grand projects and plans. I passively accepted that information as an unverified truth. I also had the preconceived bias of a materialist, viewing those who pursued cultivation and believed in Gods and Buddhas as "superstitious" and "backward." I thought to myself, if Falun Gong were truly good, why would the government crack down on it so harshly? There must be a reason.

(His voice carries a hint of remorse.)

When I was a provincial-level official, despite having a certain status, the information I received about the persecution was still one-sided. They were directives from the central government demanding to "strengthen the struggle," "resolutely deal with it," or reports from subordinates about "achievements" in "transforming" Falun Gong practitioners. I never had the opportunity, or perhaps I never took the initiative to seek the opportunity, to interact with practitioners, to listen to their side of the story.

My stance at the time, if any, was one of indifference, a tacit acceptance that "the government must have its reasons for doing this." At most, I sometimes felt the measures were a bit too harsh, unnecessary, but then I would tell myself it was "the job of the specialized agencies." I did not see, or did not want to see, the essence of the matter: that it was a brutal persecution targeting good, honest citizens simply because they had a different spiritual belief.

(He sighs, a deep regret evident in his eyes.)

That was a blindness, a reprehensible apathy, Ms. Bell. And I have paid a terrible price for that blindness. It wasn't until the tragedy struck my own family, struck An Ran, that I was shocked into realizing how wrong I had been, how I had been deceived and had deceived myself.

Sophia Bell:

Are you saying that the information you received regarding the persecution of Falun Gong was all one-sided, and that as such a high-ranking official, you were not aware of the actual situation? Is it even possible that you had never heard anyone mention the crime of organ harvesting while you were in office?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's question, he nods slowly, his gaze lowered, filled with a sense of bitterness and shame.)*

Yes, Ms. Bell. It's exactly as you say. It sounds hard to believe, doesn't it? That someone in my position, someone supposedly with access to many sources of information, could be so ignorant about a major event, a tragedy unfolding right within my own country.

(He looks up, directly at Sophia, his voice tinged with bitterness.)

"One-sided information"... that's putting it mildly. The reality is, we lived in a tightly controlled information bubble. What we read in the newspapers, watched on television, heard in meetings... it was all filtered, directed according to a specific agenda. Reports sent up from lower levels were also often just "beautified" figures, embellished achievements to please superiors, or to hide pressing problems.

Even internally, discussions on "sensitive" issues like Falun Gong were very limited. People would usually avoid the topic, or just repeat the official rhetoric. Anyone who dared to ask questions, who dared to express doubt, could bring trouble upon themselves, be considered "ideologically problematic," or having an "unstable stance." Fear, though unspoken, permeated every corner.

I am not making excuses for my ignorance. I should have been more proactive in finding out, I should have been more responsible. But at the time, I was caught up in the whirlwind of work, of personal ambition, and perhaps, there was also a part of me that was complacent, thinking I knew enough, that my understanding was correct.

As for the crime of organ harvesting... *(His voice drops, a look of revulsion and horror in his eyes)*. Ms. Bell, while I was in office, I had never once heard of this from any official channel, or even in internal whispers.

(He emphasizes each word.)

Perhaps it was kept secret at an even higher level, or limited to certain special departments. Or maybe, those who knew didn't dare to breathe a word because of its horrific nature. I don't know.

The first time I heard about this crime was after I had lost all my positions, after my daughter was arrested. Some Falun Gong practitioners approached me; they shared with me what they knew, the evidence they had collected. At first, honestly, I didn't believe it. I couldn't believe that a government, no matter how tyrannical, could do something so barbaric, so inhumane. I thought they were exaggerated accusations, a product of

indignation. I still harbored some faint illusion about the "limit" of evil.

(The pain is once again visible on his face.)

It wasn't until... it wasn't until that unimaginable tragedy befell my own An Ran... only when a former subordinate, with all his remaining courage and compassion, secretly informed me of the truth behind her death... that I completely collapsed. Every illusion, no matter how small, vanished.

It was a truth so horrific, it surpassed anything I could have imagined as an "ideology official." And it also showed me that the system I once served not only controls information, but it is also capable of concealing the most ghastly crimes behind a thick curtain of lies.

(He falls silent, the indignation and anguish seeming to render him speechless.)

Sophia Bell:

Yes, it sounds like a tragicomedy... I apologize if my words are a bit harsh... but surely after you awakened and looked back at your life, you must have recognized the tragicomic elements within it...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's comment, he shows no sign of offense or discomfort. Instead, a sad smile, almost a bitter smirk, appears on his lips. He nods slowly.)*

"A tragicomedy..." *(He repeats, his voice low and full of contemplation).* No, Ms. Bell, your words are not harsh at all. On the contrary, they are very accurate. When I "awakened," as you put it, and looked back at my entire life up to that point, I too saw it as nothing less than a play. A play in which I was both an actor and an audience member, and perhaps, one of the unwitting contributors to that tragicomic script.

(He pauses, his gaze distant, as if reviewing each scene of his life.)

The "comedy" part of it, perhaps, was my naivety, my illusion. A young man from a small town, with grand dreams of building the nation, poring over books, believing in lofty theories and beautiful promises. Then an intellectual, an official, thinking he held the truth, that he was planning the future for an entire people, intoxicated with plans, figures, and eloquent speeches. Considering himself an enlightener, a guide, without ever knowing that he was just a puppet on a string, or worse, a blind man leading other blind men into the darkness.

The bitter "humor" comes from realizing that the things I once considered noble, as ideals, could in fact be exploited, be distorted to serve dark purposes. My heartfelt writings were perhaps just bricks that helped build the castle of lies that would later crush my own family.

(His voice drops, the "tragedy" part becoming evident.)

As for the "tragedy"... that is the price paid for that illusion, for that blindness. It's the shattering of my family, the wrongful death of An Ran. It's the collapse of every belief, every value I had ever pursued. It's the lateness of realizing the truth, when nothing could be saved.

The tragedy is that I, someone supposedly working in "ideology," had such an empty and flawed ideology regarding the core issues of humanity and society. I, a father, could not protect my only daughter from the clutches of the very evil that I myself, albeit unintentionally, was a part of.

The tragedy is that when I tried to seek justice for my daughter, I realized that "justice" in that system is just a luxury, another farce.

(He sighs, a deep exhaustion on his face.)

You are right, it is a tragicomedy. And I was a character in it, a character that probably made many laugh at his foolishness, and also made many weep for his pain. When the velvet curtain of my life's stage came down on an old chapter, and a new one opened here, on this land of freedom, I look back and see only sorrow and regret.

But perhaps, even in a tragicomedy, one can draw lessons, don't you think, Ms. Bell? Lessons about truth, about conscience, and about the price of silence in the face of evil. That is what I am trying to do now, so that at least, the rest of my life will no longer be a joke of fate.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, the past is over and cannot be changed... But let's suppose, yes, I emphasize the word "suppose," suppose you were given the chance to go back about two or three years in the past and were allowed to change one thing, what would you do? For your daughter, for your wife... what would you do to help them? I'm not clear about your family background; if it's not too sensitive and private, could you share a little about it?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's question, he is silent for a long moment, his eyes looking down, lost in deep thought. His hands clench slightly. This is a question that touches the deepest and most painful corners of his heart.)*

"If I could go back in time... and change one thing..." (*He repeats, his voice almost a whisper, then lets out a long, heavy sigh*). That's a question I've asked myself countless times, Sophia. During long, sleepless nights, in moments of solitude, images of the past keep returning, and that "what if" question torments my mind.

(He looks up, his gaze somewhat dazed, as if he were truly looking at a distant memory.)

If... if I could go back about two, three years... when An Ran was still there, when things hadn't reached their worst... (*His voice trembles slightly*). I wouldn't hesitate for a second.

The one thing I would want to change is not my career, not my status, but my attitude and actions towards my daughter, towards her belief.

I would... I would sit down and truly listen to An Ran. Listen to her talk about Falun Gong, about the wonderful things she felt, about the values of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance that she pursued. I wouldn't dismiss it, wouldn't advise her in a domineering way that she must give it up "for her future," for "fear of affecting the family." I would cast aside all the prejudices, the irrational fears of someone who had been brainwashed by the system for too long.

I would learn about it with her. I would read the book "Zhuan Falun," which I only had the good fortune to read later, far too late. I would try to understand why such a peaceful cultivation practice would frighten the authorities so much.

And most importantly, I would stand by her side. I would use everything I had, not to force her to give up her belief, but to protect her, to protect her legitimate right to freedom of belief. Even if it meant facing anything, even if it meant giving up everything I had built. Because nothing is more precious than the safety and happiness of one's child.

(Tears roll down his cheeks again. He doesn't wipe them away immediately.)

As for my wife... *(His voice drops, another sadness, softer but no less deep, emerges)*. My wife, her name was Shuquan. A gentle woman, a dedicated elementary school teacher. She passed away more than ten years ago from cancer, when An Ran was only eleven.

(He smiles sadly.)

If I could go back to when she was alive... perhaps what I would want to do is spend more time with her, listen to her more, share more with her. Back then, I was too engrossed in my career, in my "grand ideals," that I often

neglected the simplest, closest things. Shuquan had a very pure soul, a very good intuition. Perhaps, if I had been more open with her, she could have given me wise advice, helped me see things in a more balanced way.

After she passed away, I tried to make up for it by giving all my love to An Ran. She was all I had. That's why the pain of losing her became so unbearable.

(He looks at Sophia, his gaze sincere.)

As for my family background... there's nothing too special or complicated, Ms. Bell. We were once a small, ordinary, loving family. My parents are in the countryside, they are simple farmers. I am an only child. After Shuquan passed away, it was just the two of us, father and daughter, relying on each other. An Ran was very understanding and well-behaved from a young age. She was an excellent student and got into a prestigious university in the capital. That was my greatest pride.

But it was the geographical distance, and perhaps the difference in perception at the time, that prevented me from understanding and protecting her in time when the storm hit.

(He sighs, a relentless regret.)

If only... if only I could do it over. But life has no "if onlys," does it, Ms. Bell? We can only try to live better

with what is left, and hope that our mistakes will be a lesson for others.

Sophia Bell:

So you mean that when you found out your daughter was practicing Falun Gong, you feel you missed the opportunity to understand her in time and had no specific plan to help her?

Do you think that if you hadn't been a government official, if you didn't have political rivals, your daughter might not have fallen into such a tragedy? My point is, it seems your daughter was, in a way, a victim of a power struggle that you didn't recognize sooner?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening to Sophia's every word, his face hardens, the lines on it deepening. He nods slowly, a bitter acknowledgment.)*

That's right, Ms. Bell. When An Ran first shared with me that she was practicing Falun Gong, my reaction at the time... thinking back on it now, I feel truly ashamed and regretful. I didn't listen with an open heart, but with the fear of an official, with prejudices that were deeply ingrained in my subconscious. I was worried about her "future," feared it would "affect" my career, feared the vague things that the propaganda system had sown.

Instead of investigating, instead of trying to understand why a smart, knowledgeable girl like An Ran would choose that path, I rushed to advise against it, even in a somewhat imposing manner, though I tried to seem gentle. I missed the golden opportunity to walk alongside my child, to understand her. That is one of my biggest regrets. At that time, I had no "specific plan" to help her in the way she needed, because I myself didn't understand what she needed, didn't understand the nature of the issue. I only thought about how to keep her "safe" according to my own narrow view, which was to give up Falun Gong.

(He pauses, taking a deep breath. Sophia's second question touches on another aspect, a cruel truth he also had to face.)

As for whether my daughter was a victim of the power struggle I was caught up in... *(His voice drops, a choked-up indignation evident)*. This is something that I only painfully realized later, after everything had fallen apart, when a former subordinate risked everything to reveal the whole story to me.

Just as you said, perhaps An Ran, in some way, became a pawn, a weak point for my political rivals to exploit and deliver a decisive blow. When they learned I was being "groomed" for a higher position, they scrambled to find a way to take me down. And An Ran's practice of Falun

Gong, in the context of the fierce ongoing persecution, became the perfect pretext.

They deliberately blew the matter up, reported it to higher-ups, created pressure. The fact that An Ran was arrested so quickly and decisively, and then my expulsion from the Party and loss of all positions in such a short time, it was all part of a carefully calculated plan. Their goal was to eliminate me from the political scene, and they succeeded.

(He clenches his fists, indignation and helplessness clear in his eyes.)

At the time, I was too focused on my professional work, on my "ideals," and was not sharp enough, not vigilant enough against the schemes and plots of officialdom. I didn't realize that my advancement, my "non-factional" stance, was a thorn in the side of many people. I was too naive to think that as long as I worked well and dedicated myself, I would be recognized.

And An Ran... my innocent child... had to pay the price for her father's lack of political astuteness, for his naivety. If I hadn't been an "official," if I hadn't been in their "sights," perhaps... perhaps An Ran wouldn't have been noticed like that, wouldn't have become a target so quickly and brutally. Although the persecution of Falun Gong was a reality, and any practitioner could be in

danger, her case was clearly accelerated, made more severe by the political factor targeting me.

(He sighs, a boundless sorrow.)

That is a bitter truth, a burden of guilt that I will have to carry for the rest of my life. I not only failed to protect my daughter from the evil of the regime, but I also unintentionally pushed her into the vortex of dirty power struggles.

It's true that I didn't realize it sooner, Ms. Bell. And by the time I did, it was all too late.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, I'm aware that the situation with the persecution of Falun Gong has been going on for over 20 years, but from what I've observed, not 100% of practitioners are arrested by the police, although nearly 100% of them are monitored. It seems they only target certain key cases, for example, practitioners who play important roles, or those they consider "stubborn," or other special cases like your daughter...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening to Sophia's analysis, he nods slowly, his expression thoughtful.)*

You have a point, Sophia. Your observation is very close to the reality that I only had the chance to learn about and realize later. The persecution of Falun Gong, though comprehensive and brutal, is carried out with certain "tactics" and "focal points."

It's true that not 100% of practitioners are arrested immediately. But as you said, nearly 100% of them are subject to monitoring, control, and harassment at various levels. From being frequently "visited" by local police, to being pressured at work, having their travel restricted, to having their books and materials confiscated, and their relatives threatened... It's a tense, suffocating atmosphere they have to live in every day.

As for arrests, it's true that they often target "key cases" as you analyzed:

First, those who play important roles: These are the people they consider "coordinators" or "persons in charge" of local practitioner groups. By arresting them, they aim to disband the cultivation groups, cut off communication, and create fear among the rest.

Second, the "stubborn" ones: These are practitioners who are steadfast in their belief, who refuse to be "transformed" (i.e., to renounce their practice and write pledges, even to slander Falun Gong) despite being tortured, enticed, or threatened. They are considered

"diehard elements" who must be severely punished to serve as an example. Many of them receive very long prison sentences or are sent to forced labor camps and "brainwashing" centers for extended periods.

Third, those who dare to speak out, to expose the truth: These are the brave practitioners who collect evidence of the persecution, of torture and abuse, and then try to send it overseas or disseminate it within the country. They are the ones the authorities particularly hate and try every means to silence.

And fourth, other "special cases": Like the case of my daughter, An Ran. She was not a "coordinator" or someone with a prominent role in the practitioner community. But she was the daughter of an official who was in the "sights." Arresting An Ran served multiple purposes: it was a warning to other practitioners, a direct blow to me, and an "achievement" for those seeking to curry favor with their superiors to report.

(He sighs, a clear bitterness on his face.)

They have a huge and sophisticated surveillance and monitoring apparatus. They create lists, classify practitioners. They have "quotas" to meet for "transformation" or arrests. Sometimes, arrests are also random, either to "fill a quota" or during high-profile "campaigns."

In a system where the law is merely a tool and there is no independent oversight, arbitrariness and brutality can happen at any time, to anyone they deem "problematic."

My daughter, An Ran, probably fell into that "special case" category. An outstanding student, the daughter of an official (albeit one who had partially fallen from grace), who was firm in her belief. She became too "perfect" a target for those who wanted to claim credit and for those who wanted to eliminate me.

(He falls silent for a moment, gazing out the window, his eyes distant and pained.)

It is an unequal fight, Ms. Bell. On one side is an entire colossal state apparatus, with police, secret agents, prisons, media... while on the other side are just ordinary people, unarmed, with only their belief in Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance. And in that fight, people like An Ran became victims.

Sophia Bell:

I'm still not quite clear from what you've shared. If, in that situation, you had understood your daughter better, supported her cultivation, or even started cultivating with her... what would you have done to protect your daughter and yourself?

Or, if you had more "political experience" or "political astuteness" and could see the true face of your political rivals, knowing their schemes in advance, what would you have done? Compromise with them, or even proactively withdraw from the political arena? Or some other clear solution?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening to Sophia's hypothetical questions, he becomes pensive for a long moment. These are things he has also agonized over. He clasps his fingers together, looks down, and then slowly looks up.)*

You ask very profound questions, Sophia, questions that touch upon the "crossroads" in my life that I did not, or could not, take. It's very difficult to say for certain what I would have done in those hypothetical situations, because reality is always much more complex. But based on what I have experienced and come to understand later, I can share my thoughts.

If I had understood my daughter better, supported her cultivation, even cultivated with her...

(A sad smile flashes across his lips.)

This is a beautiful, but also very challenging, "what if."

First, spiritually: I believe that if both father and daughter shared the same belief, walked the same

cultivation path, our bond would have been even deeper. We could have shared with and encouraged each other, facing difficulties together. That would have been a tremendous source of spiritual strength. An Ran would not have felt alone, and I would have found true peace and the meaning of life sooner.

Regarding protection: This is the hardest part.

First, I would have been more cautious: If I had understood the nature of the persecution, we would have been more careful in all our actions. Perhaps we would not have practiced openly in conspicuous places, would have kept books and materials more carefully, and limited contact with untrustworthy people.

Second, I would have sought legal aid (however slim the chance): Despite knowing that the law in China is just a tool, with prior preparation, we could have sought out courageous human rights lawyers (though they are few and also face immense danger) for advice, in case the worst happened.

Third, I would have prepared for the worst-case scenario: Perhaps we would have had to think about finding a way to leave the country sooner, before it was too late. This is an incredibly difficult decision, as leaving one's homeland is never easy. But if safety and freedom of belief were the top priorities, it might have been a necessary choice.

Fourth, I would have exposed the truth: If there were an opportunity and preparation, secretly collecting evidence of the persecution, of human rights violations, and finding ways to bring it to international attention would also be a way to protect ourselves, albeit a very risky one. Because when the matter becomes known internationally, the authorities might have to be more cautious.

If I had more "political astuteness," and saw the schemes of my rivals...

This is a different scenario, focusing more on the power struggle aspect.

Proactively withdrawing from politics: This is a very strong possibility. If I had realized that I was just a pawn, that my "integrity" and "non-factional" stance had become a weakness, and that these struggles could endanger my family, I would likely have chosen to withdraw early. Perhaps I would have requested a transfer to a less important position, or even given up my political career to return to purely academic research and teaching. The safety of my family, especially An Ran, would have been the top priority.

Compromise? This is a difficult choice, and I'm not sure I could have done it, especially if the compromise went against my moral principles. But if a certain level of "compromise" (e.g., not being too prominent, not

competing for power with them) could have kept my family and me safe, I might have had to consider it, however unwillingly. However, given the nature of those people, it would be hard to trust any long-term "compromise."

Finding allies (if possible): In politics, not everyone is bad. If I could have found like-minded people, people who were also dissatisfied with the current situation, forming an alliance could have created a certain counter-balance, though it would be very difficult and dangerous. But this is a very risky path.

Preparing an escape route: Parallel to any action, preparing a "Plan B"—that is, finding a way to leave the country if the situation became too dangerous—would also have been necessary. Political astuteness is not just about dealing with threats, but also about knowing when to "flee" to preserve one's life and more important values.

(He sighs.)

It's easier said than done, Ms. Bell. When you're in a real situation, with immense pressure, confusing information, and complex ties, making the right decision is extremely difficult.

But one thing I am sure of: If I could do it over, I would place An Ran's safety and happiness, her freedom of

belief, above all career ambitions or the illusory "ideals" I once pursued. Perhaps, that is the most important "astuteness" a father, a human being, needs to have.

And perhaps, if I had done that, although life might have been different, without "status," without "power," at least I wouldn't be living in this endless torment and regret as I am now.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, I can sense that in that real-life situation, it would be very difficult to find a win-win solution... but in the hypothetical situation above, your ability to prioritize your daughter's safety and happiness, her freedom of belief, above all career ambitions or "ideals"... that is a decision that requires a great deal of sacrifice, and I think not many people would make that choice...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening to Sophia, he nods gently, a sad smile on his lips. His gaze is distant, filled with understanding and also sorrow for the choices people often have to face.)*

You are very right, Sophia. A decision like that, placing the safety and freedom of a loved one above all personal ambitions, all embellished "ideals," requires a great sacrifice. And in the society I lived in, where career, status, and "prospects" are often put first, where people

are taught to sacrifice the small for the big, the individual for the collective (though what that "collective" actually is, is another question)... it's true that not many people would make that choice. Or perhaps, not many would dare to make that choice.

(He pauses for a moment, his voice contemplative.)

When I was still in the machine, I also witnessed, and was even a part of, that mindset. People were willing to trade their health, their time with family, even their conscience, for a higher position, a little more power, a little more benefit. People were afraid of being left behind, afraid of being seen as "lacking ambition," afraid of not meeting the "organization's expectations."

That vortex sweeps people away, blinds them, hardens their hearts. People gradually forget the true values of life, forget the love and care for their dearest ones. Children can become an "investment" for the future, the family can become a "rear base" to serve one's career.

(He sighs, a deep sadness.)

I was also like that, to some extent. I used to be proud of my career achievements, used to place high expectations on An Ran as a continuation of them. And when An Ran chose a "different" path, a path that I considered "dangerous" and "without a future" by that society's

standards, my first reaction was fear, was to want her to change.

It was only when I lost everything, lost the most precious thing, that I painfully realized that all those "lofty" things, those "ambitions," those "ideals" I once pursued, if they didn't bring true happiness and peace to the ones I loved, then they were meaningless, ephemeral.

(He looks directly at Sophia, his gaze sincere and somewhat more serene.)

That decision to make a trade-off, it's true, it demands a lot. It demands giving up the selfish "ego," giving up illusions of fame and status. It demands having the courage to go against the crowd, to accept being seen as a "failure" in the eyes of the world by conventional standards.

But now, having "awakened," having tasted the depths of pain and regret, I believe that if I could truly do it over, I would not hesitate to choose that trade-off. Because, in the end, what is truly important? A high office, a hollow reputation, or the smile of my daughter, the peace in the souls of my loved ones?

Perhaps, only when one has gone through great loss can one see more clearly what is gold and what is brass,

what are eternal values, and what are just temporary vanities.

And I also believe that, although not many might make that choice in that situation, there are still fathers, mothers, ordinary people, who have been and are quietly doing extraordinary things for the sake of love, for their conscience, despite all risks. They are the glimmering points of light in a society still filled with much darkness. And their stories also need to be told, need to be known.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, so, to make that choice, for you, it seems that once you awakened and saw many things clearly, it would be easier to decide...

But there's something else. When readers read your words above, most will probably ask: why did your worldview change after reading the scriptures of Falun Gong? Why are people like your daughter so steadfast and faithful in their cultivation in an environment of prohibition, persecution, and the ever-present risk of being arrested and having their organs harvested? In other words, what is so valuable about Falun Gong that many people are willing to trade everything for it?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's questions, he nods slowly. A faint, serene but also pensive smile appears on his lips. He knows these are the key questions, the things that many outsiders would wonder about, even doubt.)*

You raise very important questions, Sophia. Those are the very questions I once asked myself, before I truly began to look into it. And I understand that for those who have never had contact with it, never experienced it, it is difficult to imagine why a cultivation practice could change a person so profoundly, and why so many people are willing to face danger, even sacrifice their lives, to protect their belief.

(He pauses for a moment, as if choosing his words most carefully.)

As for why my worldview changed after reading the scriptures of Falun Gong, specifically the book "Zhuan Falun"...

Before that, as I've shared, I was a complete follower of dialectical materialism, trained and working in an environment that extolled empirical science and regarded anything spiritual or religious as "superstition." My worldview was built on theories of class struggle, the linear development of history, and the idea that man could master nature and society with his intellect and will.

When I read "Zhuan Falun," it was initially with curiosity, with a desire to find out what on earth had so captivated my daughter and so many others, what had caused the government to crack down so fiercely. But the more I read, the more I was shaken.

That book opened up a completely different world to me, a cosmology, a view of life that I had never imagined before. It didn't just talk about qigong and health; it explained in a profound and systematic way the origin of the universe, the different levels of space, the existence of Gods and Buddhas, the relationship between matter and spirit, the true purpose of being human, the law of karma, reincarnation...

Those things, at first, might be difficult for a materialist like me to accept. But the reasoning in the book was incredibly logical, coherent, and it answered many of life's great questions that modern empirical science is still struggling with or deliberately avoids. It doesn't contradict true science; on the contrary, it opens up new horizons for understanding.

More importantly, "Zhuan Falun" teaches people to be good, truly good, according to the standard of the universe: Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance.

When I contrasted those principles with the social reality I was living in, with the lies, the schemes, the selfishness,

the struggles that I had witnessed and even been a part of, I saw a stark contrast. I realized that the moral values advocated by Falun Gong are the very medicine that Chinese society desperately needs, the foundation for building a truly civilized and harmonious society.

It wasn't a "change" of worldview by force, but a natural "awakening" from within. The materialist philosophies I once believed in suddenly seemed shallow and narrow. I began to see things more deeply, from multiple dimensions. I understood that behind the tangible material manifestations, there are invisible but incredibly powerful laws governing everything.

As for why people like An Ran remain so steadfast in their cultivation in such a harsh environment, I think there are a few main reasons:

First, personal experience of the benefits of Falun Gong: Most people who come to Falun Gong experience clear positive changes in their physical and mental health. Illnesses improve or disappear, their temperament becomes calmer and happier, and their relationships with family and society improve. When people have truly experienced these good things, their faith becomes very solid.

Second, the understanding of the Truth: As I said, Falun Gong is not just a qigong practice for health, but a Dafa

(editor's note: Falun Dafa or Falun Gong) of cultivation for both mind and body, helping people understand the meaning of life, the laws of the universe. When one has recognized it as the Truth, as the right path to return to, no difficulty or danger can shake them. They understand that what they are pursuing is incredibly noble and precious.

Third, the power of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance: It is these principles that give them the strength to face the persecution. "Truthfulness" helps them not to lie, not to yield to unreasonable demands. "Compassion" helps them maintain a compassionate heart even towards their persecutors, not to respond to violence with violence. "Forbearance" helps them endure hardships, brutal torture, while still holding firm to their belief.

Fourth, a sense of responsibility for the community and the future: Many Falun Gong practitioners feel they have a responsibility to speak out about the persecution, so that people are not deceived by false propaganda, and to protect good values for future generations. They believe their perseverance will help make evil retreat and allow justice to be served.

In short, Ms. Bell, Falun Gong not only brings health, but more importantly, it brings people a moral awakening, a spiritual sublimation, a hope for the future. It answers

the deepest questions about life and the universe that each of us, to some extent, ponders. It is because of these great and true values that many people, like An Ran, are willing to trade everything to protect their belief.

It is not a blind faith, but a conscious choice based on deep understanding and experience. And that is also something that, before I truly looked into it, I could never have understood.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, thank you for giving an answer that is both analytical and concise... Personally, I resonate with what you're saying. I have also read the book Zhuan Falun, and it brought me many deep stirrings of the mind and thought... But many of our readers have never read this book, so being able to explain it through just a few brief sentences is not something everyone can do...

So, is there a more understandable and vivid way to put it? For example, through what actions, words, or incidents of Falun Gong practitioners that you witnessed made you admire them?... When your daughter was arrested, did you receive any specific help from them?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening to Sophia's concerns, he nods gently. He understands that explaining the profound values of*

a cultivation practice to those who have never encountered it is not easy.)

You are very right, Sophia. It's true that through just a few words of analysis, it is difficult for those who have never read "Zhuan Falun," never had contact with practitioners, to fully feel the depth and power of Falun Gong. Perhaps specific stories, real actions that I have witnessed, will help people visualize it more clearly.

(He is silent for a moment, as if recalling memories, people who passed through his life after the great turning point.)

After An Ran was arrested, and especially after I lost all my positions and was shunned by friends and colleagues, my life fell into a dark, desperate place. I felt as if the whole world had abandoned me. It was during those times that some Falun Gong practitioners, people whom I had previously not even paid attention to, or held wrong views about, were the ones who proactively reached out to me.

The first thing that made me admire them was their courage and selflessness. They knew who I was, knew I had been part of the system that persecuted them, knew that contacting me could bring risks to themselves. But they still came, without any hesitation. They didn't come to blame, didn't come to demand, but came to share, to comfort.

Another thing was their patience and compassion. When they talked to me about Falun Gong, about the truth of the persecution, they didn't try to impose their views, didn't show any bitterness or hatred. They spoke in a peaceful, unhurried manner, presenting evidence and reasoning patiently, even when I was still full of doubt, even when I initially used words that were not very kind. They didn't seem to mind my attitude at all, but only focused on helping me understand the truth.

When An Ran was arrested, it's true they tried to help me a lot, even though they themselves were facing immense difficulties.

Some practitioners tried to use their few connections to find out news about An Ran, where she was being held, what her situation was. They even introduced me to a few courageous human rights lawyers, those who were willing to take on "sensitive" cases like this, despite knowing the chance of success was very low and the risks to themselves were very high.

During my darkest days, they visited me frequently, brought me some food, sat quietly listening to me, or simply stayed by my side. Some of them were just ordinary working people, not well-off themselves, but they were willing to share what they had. That sincere, simple kindness touched my heart.

It was one of them, a very kind-looking middle-aged woman, who gave me the book "Zhuan Falun." She said that perhaps reading the book would help me find peace and answers to my questions. She didn't force me at all, just gently suggested it.

I remember one time, when I was in despair, almost ready to give up on everything, a young practitioner said to me: "Mr. Liu, don't be discouraged. The light will come. We must believe in justice, even if it comes late. The important thing is to maintain benevolent thoughts in our hearts, not to let evil make us become like them." Those words, from a young person facing brutal persecution, moved me deeply and made me think a lot.

Or there was another practitioner, an elderly man who had been brutally tortured in prison, but when he met me, he showed no resentment. He only said that he hoped those who committed the crimes would soon awaken, because they were also destroying their own futures. That level of tolerance, in that situation, truly made me bow my head in admiration.

Those actions, those words, though they may be small, they showed an extraordinary inner strength, a kindness that nothing could extinguish. They didn't just talk about Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance; they were living by those principles, even in the harshest circumstances.

It was these things, Ms. Bell, that gradually melted the ice in my heart, made me re-examine everything, and finally gave me the courage to seriously look into Falun Gong. They showed me that even in the most desperate darkness, there are always people who carry the light of faith and kindness within them. And it is that light that has the most enduring power to move people's hearts.

Sophia Bell:

So, compared to the Chinese Communist Party's propaganda about Falun Gong, how different do you find it from what you actually experienced or witnessed?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing this question, a sad and somewhat ironic smile flashes across his lips. He shakes his head gently.)*

"Different"... that word is probably not enough to describe it, Ms. Bell. It should be said that it is completely opposite, like day and night, like black and white. What I actually experienced and witnessed regarding Falun Gong practitioners, and later what I personally felt when I began to cultivate, is in absolute opposition to the deceitful, fabricated propaganda that the CCP has been and is still spouting daily.

(He takes a deep breath, as if preparing to lay bare those contrasts.)

Regarding the so-called "Superstitious, Anti-Science":

CCP's Propaganda: They portray Falun Gong as a superstition, going against science, causing people to refuse medical treatment, leading to death. They try to create an image of practitioners as being ignorant and backward.

The Reality I Witnessed and Experienced: I saw many practitioners who were intellectuals, with high academic degrees, including scientists, doctors, engineers, professors... just like my own daughter, An Ran. They came to Falun Gong not out of ignorance, but after careful consideration and investigation. I myself, someone who used to do scientific research, when I read "Zhuan Falun," I also found that the principles in it do not contradict true science at all, but rather open up deeper understandings of the universe and humanity. Falun Gong emphasizes cultivating one's mind and character, while practicing gentle exercises, which helps to comprehensively improve health. Many people were cured of incurable diseases after practicing, that is a fact I have witnessed. They do not reject modern medicine at all, but understand that cultivation is a different path, at a higher level, to achieve health and spiritual sublimation.

Regarding the so-called "Political Organization, Subverting the Government":

CCP's Propaganda: They constantly slander Falun Gong as a political organization with a conspiracy to overthrow the Communist Party, orchestrated by "foreign hostile forces." This is the main pretext they use to legalize the persecution.

The Reality I Witnessed and Experienced: Falun Gong has no tight organizational structure like a political party. There are no membership lists, no fees, no hierarchy, no offices. People come to practice the exercises and study the Fa completely voluntarily. The teachings of Master Li Hongzhi, the founder of Falun Gong, are all public and focus only on guiding people to cultivate their character and improve their morality; there is not a single word inciting subversion or opposition to the government. The fact that practitioners speak out against the persecution and clarify the truth is the legitimate right of self-defense for those being persecuted, not "engaging in politics." They only want a free environment to practice, nothing more, nothing less. It is the CCP's irrational persecution that has pushed them into a position where they must speak out.

Regarding the so-called "Disturbing Social Order, Dangerous":

CCP's Propaganda: They staged incidents like the "Tiananmen self-immolation hoax" to defame Falun

Gong, attributing extremist, violent behaviors to practitioners that endanger society.

The Reality I Witnessed and Experienced: The Falun Gong practitioners I came into contact with were all peaceful, kind people who always tried to live by the principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance. They treated everyone well, were responsible towards their families and work. Even when treated unjustly, beaten, and tortured, they maintained a peaceful attitude and did not respond with violence. They only peacefully appealed, held banners, and distributed flyers to clarify the truth. How could such people "disturb social order"? It is the CCP's persecution machine that is the real cause of instability, fear, and division in society.

Regarding the so-called "Brainwashing, Mind Control":

CCP's Propaganda: They claim that Falun Gong "brainwashes" practitioners, making them obsessed, abandoning their families and work.

The Reality I Witnessed and Experienced: Falun Gong is the complete opposite. It helps people become clearer, more intelligent, and to better understand the meaning of life. Practitioners still live normal lives in society, still work and take care of their families. In fact, they do those roles even better because their character is elevated and they know how to think of others. No one is forced

to believe or to follow. Everything is voluntary, based on each person's own understanding and experience. The thing that is truly "brainwashing" is the CCP's propaganda system, which has crammed people's minds with distorted information and baseless hatred.

(He sighs, a sadness passing over him.)

That difference, Ms. Bell, is so vast that it makes me feel disgusted at the lies I once believed, even if only in part. It also showed me the terrifying power of a propaganda machine, how it can turn white into black, turn good people into enemies of the people in the eyes of many.

And the most painful thing is that it is these deceitful propaganda narratives that created a thick fog, obscuring the truth, allowing the crime of organ harvesting from Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience to take place for so long without being widely exposed.

That is why speaking the truth, however difficult and dangerous, has become so important.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, those are also the lies of the CCP that I have read

and heard about... and this persecution, as of now, has lasted for a quarter of a century...

A new question just popped into my head: if you were currently a policy advisor to the current leader of China, what advice would you give him?

From an outside observer's perspective, as a journalist like myself, I don't see a clear stance from him on the persecution of Falun Gong... Although he was not the one who initiated it, his attitude seems to be one of condoning evil by turning a blind eye...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's question, he is silent for a long moment. A contemplative, complex expression is clear on his face. He gently rubs his temple, as if this were an incredibly difficult problem, a burden of immense weight.)*

"If I were a policy advisor to the current leader of the CCP..." *(He repeats, his voice low and full of thought)*. This is a very big hypothetical, Ms. Bell. And to be honest, in the current context, I don't think the advice of someone like me, a "defector," someone who has "awakened" in a way they did not desire, could possibly be heard.

(He sighs, then looks directly at Sophia, his gaze serious.)

But if, just "if," I had that opportunity, and if that leader truly had a shred of conscience, a shred of desire to leave

a positive mark on history, and not just to consolidate power at all costs, then I would boldly offer the following advice, especially on the issue of Falun Gong:

First, bravely face the truth and immediately end the persecution:

This is the most crucial and fundamental step. I would advise him that the persecution of Falun Gong over the past two-plus decades is a grave historical mistake, an indelible stain, completely contrary to the values of humanity, morality, and the rule of law. It has not only caused suffering to millions of innocent people, but has also severely damaged China's international reputation and sown fear and distrust within society.

Continuing this persecution, in any form, will only aggravate the problem, create more enemies, and leave a terrible legacy for future generations.

Specific action: Immediately order a halt to all illegal arrests, torture, and imprisonment of Falun Gong practitioners. Release all those who are being unjustly detained.

Second, conduct a comprehensive and public investigation into the crime of organ harvesting:

This is an intolerable crime against humanity. I would advise him to establish an independent commission of

inquiry, with the participation of international experts (if necessary and possible), to clarify the full truth about the harvesting of organs from Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience.

The masterminds, the perpetrators of this crime, at whatever level, must be brought to public trial and be severely punished before the law. There can be no cover-up, no condoning.

This is not only about returning justice to the victims, but also a way to restore some faith in the law and in basic human conscience.

Third, restore the reputation of and provide compensation to the victims:

There must be a public apology to Falun Gong practitioners and their families for the suffering and loss they have endured due to the wrongful persecution.

The reputation of Falun Gong must be restored, acknowledging it as a peaceful cultivation practice that benefits health and social morality.

There must be a policy of adequate compensation for the victims and their families for their material and spiritual losses.

Fourth, allow true freedom of belief:

I would emphasize that freedom of belief is a fundamental human right, enshrined in China's own constitution (even if only in form). Allowing people to freely choose their beliefs, including the practice of Falun Gong, will help society become more stable, morality to be uplifted, and the people to feel more connected to their country.

A truly great nation is not one that controls its people's thoughts, but one that respects their diversity and freedom.

Fifth, reform the political and legal systems towards transparency and a true rule of law:

The issue of Falun Gong is just a symptom of deeper problems within the system. Without real reform, similar tragedies could happen again.

Furthermore, it is necessary to build a true state of law, where the law is above everything, including the Communist Party. There must be judicial independence, freedom of the press, and effective mechanisms for supervising power.

(He pauses, a look of exhaustion on his face.)

Regarding the attitude of the current leader that you mentioned... It is indeed very difficult to see a clear

stance. Perhaps he is trying to maintain some kind of "balance" internally, or has other priorities that he considers more urgent. But as you said, "condoning evil by turning a blind eye" is itself a form of evil. History will not forgive those who have power but do not dare to stand on the side of justice, do not dare to correct the mistakes of the past.

These pieces of advice, I know, could be considered "naive," "unrealistic" in the current political context of China. But I believe they are the right things to do, if one wants to lead the country out of the mire of lies, violence, and injustice.

If that leader has enough courage and vision to implement these changes, he will not only solve a pressing problem, but could also open a new, better chapter for China. If not... then I'm afraid the "Chinese Dream" he is trying to build will just be a castle made of sand, easily collapsing before the storms of truth and justice.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, I understand, advice like this, even if it were golden, would, in the eyes of the CCP's leaders, just be the "unrealistic" words of someone who is good at theory but lacks sufficient "political astuteness"...

Mr. Liu, I apologize for letting this sharing session go past noon... Perhaps we should pause our story for now and continue tomorrow morning, what do you think?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia mention the time, he glances at his watch, then smiles faintly. A more relaxed smile after having shared so much.)*

Oh, really? Is it already past noon? *(He shakes his head lightly, as if he hadn't noticed).* Time flies when we're talking. It's true, when one gets to unburden one's heart, to speak the things that have been held in for so long, one often loses track of time.

(He nods.)

You're right, Sophia. "Unrealistic," "good at theory but not politically astute"... Those are probably the comments they would have for such advice, if they ever had the chance to hear it. And perhaps, they wouldn't be entirely wrong from the perspective of those who hold power and are only concerned with maintaining it at all costs.

(He looks at Sophia with gratitude.)

Thank you for patiently listening to me all morning. Truly, I feel much lighter. There are things that, if kept inside forever, become an unbearable burden.

Pausing here and continuing tomorrow morning is a very good idea. I also need some time to quiet my mind, and perhaps you need to rest as well. These stories, after all, are not easy to hear, not easy to digest.

(He stands up slowly.)

So, shall we meet again at 8 a.m. tomorrow, still here, Ms. Bell? I will prepare a fresh pot of tea. I hope tomorrow, we will have a session just as productive as today.

Thank you again, Sophia. For coming, and more importantly, for listening with your whole heart.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, see you tomorrow morning...

And there's one more thing I'd like to ask for your opinion on: in our team of journalists at THE EPOCH MEDIA, a colleague of mine named Julian Lee specializes in topics like politics, philosophy, and leadership ideology... Since you were originally a Professor of philosophy, then also worked on policy and direction within the CCP government, and now your understanding of life has been broadened and deepened... It suddenly occurred to me that I could perhaps invite Julian Lee to come here with me

tomorrow morning to continue our conversation. Would that be alright?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's proposal, he is slightly surprised, his brow furrowing for a moment. He is silent for a bit, looking at Sophia, then his gaze turns contemplative.)*

Another journalist, specializing in politics, philosophy, and leadership ideology... His name is Julian Lee, you said? *(He repeats, as if to remember and consider.)*

This is an unexpected suggestion, Ms. Bell. Our conversation, as you know, is very personal, filled with experiences and pains that I have tried to bury for a long time. Opening up to one person has already been a considerable effort for me.

(He pauses, looking at the cold teacup on the table.)

However, I also understand your intention. My past, my thoughts, perhaps they do touch upon the areas that Mr. Julian Lee is interested in. Someone with deep expertise in philosophy and ideology might ask sharper questions, helping to explore aspects that we may not have touched upon, or to make the analyses of ideology, of the transformation in my understanding, clearer and more coherent for the readers.

(He looks up, with a hint of inquiry towards Sophia.)

If Mr. Julian Lee is truly a person of integrity, with empathy and respect for this story, like you, and if his presence can genuinely help my "testimony" be conveyed more profoundly, more comprehensively to the readers of THE EPOCH MEDIA... then I think I can consider it.

I am not afraid of facing difficult questions, Ms. Bell. What I care about most is the sincerity and the good purpose of this sharing. If he comes with that spirit, then perhaps his presence would be a good thing.

Could you tell me a little more about Mr. Julian Lee? About his working style, or perhaps his notable works, if it's convenient? But in any case, I trust your introduction and judgment, Sophia. You understand the nature of this story and what we are trying to achieve best.

So, if you feel this is the right thing to do, I will be willing to speak with both of you tomorrow morning.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, I understand, Mr. Liu... Your sharing with the readers of THE EPOCH MEDIA, through me as a small bridge, is personal and a sharing from the heart about the painful things that have happened, about the evil of the CCP, and also about the beauty of Falun Gong...

I think tomorrow, we will spend a little more time clarifying and enlivening some aspects of the topics we've discussed... After that, my idea is to ask you to share more about the future path for China, a topic you have dedicated your life to researching and, with the light shed by the Fa principles since you began cultivating, I think your worldview has opened up a great deal... That's what made me think of Julian Lee, because I see a resonance in character as well as in thought and in the field that you both share an interest in... My intention is simply to be a small bridge to connect a meeting between two like-minded people, two true "comrades"...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening to Sophia's explanation and ideas, his expression gradually relaxes, and a gentle smile, one of understanding and appreciation, appears. He nods slowly.)*

Yes, Ms. Bell, you have captured the spirit of what I wish to share very well. My purpose in sitting here is indeed to speak the truth about the suffering we have endured, about the evil nature of the CCP, and at the same time, to help the world better understand the beauty and righteousness of Falun Gong – the very thing my daughter and millions of others have steadfastly defended.

It is very necessary for us to spend more time tomorrow morning to further clarify what has been shared. I want

to make sure that the most important messages are conveyed as clearly and vividly as possible.

(He pauses for a moment, looking at Sophia with consideration.)

As for your idea of inviting Mr. Julian Lee to join the latter part, when we discuss the future path for China... *(He repeats, his voice contemplative)*. This is indeed a topic I have agonized over, contemplated my entire life, from when I was a young researcher to when I entered politics, and now, with what I have learned from the Fa principles, my perspective has undergone changes, openings that I could never have had before.

If Mr. Julian Lee is truly someone who shares these concerns, who shares a desire to find the right path for the future, and can discuss these issues with me at a deeper level – not just simple political and economic analysis, but also elements of morality, of spirituality, of the revival of traditional values – then I think his presence could bring certain value.

You said you see a "resonance" and want to be a bridge for "like-minded people," for true "comrades"... *(A sad smile flashes as he mentions the word "comrade," a word that has been so tainted in his homeland)*. I understand your meaning. In a world full of deceit and self-interest, finding people who truly share the same aspirations, the

same benevolent heart and desire for the good of humanity, is incredibly precious.

So, Ms. Bell, I agree with your proposal. We will spend the first part of tomorrow morning continuing to clarify what is unfinished. After that, if you feel it is appropriate, I am willing to meet and exchange views with Mr. Julian Lee on the issues that concern us both. Perhaps a discussion with someone on the same "frequency" as Mr. Julian Lee, under your guidance, could bring interesting and profound perspectives for all of us and for the readers.

I trust your arrangement and your good intentions.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, then I'll see you tomorrow morning, Mr. Liu!

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(He smiles, a sincere and somewhat more relieved smile than at the beginning of the interview. He nods.)*

Yes, Ms. Bell. I will see you tomorrow morning. Thank you very much for a meaningful morning.

(He walks Sophia to the door, his eyes still holding a trace of sorrow but now glinting with a new hope.)

DAY TWO

[Scene: The next morning, still in Mr. Liu Siyuan's cozy living room. Mr. Liu has already prepared a fresh pot of tea, its fragrance lingering in the air. Sophia Bell arrives first, and a moment later, Julian Lee also arrives. Mr. Liu greets him at the door, shaking Julian's hand politely while maintaining his inherent thoughtful demeanor.]

Sophia Bell:

Good morning, Mr. Liu. Thank you for continuing to make time for this important sharing.

Mr. Liu, as we agreed yesterday, today we will be joined by Julian Lee, a colleague of mine at THE EPOCH MEDIA who specializes in political and human rights issues.

Julian, this is Mr. Liu Siyuan, the person I told you about.

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(His expression is a little brighter than yesterday, but still holds a trace of thoughtfulness.)*

Hello, Ms. Sophia. Hello, Mr. Julian. Please, come in. I've already prepared tea.

(All three sit down. Mr. Liu pours tea for his guests.)

Julian Lee: *(in a polite and professional tone)*

Thank you for having me, Mr. Liu. Your home is very peaceful and cozy. Sophia has told me a lot about your sharing yesterday, and I am truly looking forward to listening to you today.

Sophia Bell:

Yesterday, I had the chance to hear you share your story as a living witness, and from the perspective of a father, a man, and a former CCP official...

I also learned that you began practicing Falun Gong, and it has been about a year and a half or two years now... Because, from what I know, practitioners often view life and events in a way that is both gentle and calm, as well as profoundly clear...

So I would like to propose, for today's sharing, that we could hear you share from the perspective of a practitioner. What do you think?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's proposal, he nods gently, a faint, serene smile on his lips.)*

Ms. Sophia, that is a very interesting and profound suggestion. You are right, when a person steps onto a true path of cultivation, their worldview and their outlook on life will undergo great changes. The way they see things, the way they face the ups and downs of life, will also be very different.

(He pauses for a moment, his gaze drifting out the window to where the morning sun is shining, then turns back to Sophia and Julian.)

It's true that I had the good fortune to begin practicing Falun Gong after the major turning points in my life. The time has not been very long, about two years as you said, but what I have learned, what I have felt from this Fa has truly changed me from the very root.

Before, although I was an intellectual, someone who worked in ideology, I still viewed everything based on the theories of ordinary people, based on worldly gains and losses. When I encountered misfortune, I would easily fall into resentment, pain, and despair. When I had a small achievement, I would easily become complacent and look down on others.

But since I began cultivating, I have gradually learned to look at everything with a more open and calmer heart. I understand that everything that happens in life has its karmic reason; nothing is accidental. The tribulations I had to endure, though extremely painful, were also opportunities for me to look at myself, to wash away my wrong notions, to "awaken" as you said.

I learned to look inward, meaning that when I encounter a problem, instead of blaming the circumstances or others, I must first look at myself to see if there is anything I'm not doing right, any bad attachments that need to be eliminated. This helps me maintain my composure in the face of storms, and also helps me to improve myself day by day.

The principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance that Falun Gong teaches have become the guiding compass for all my thoughts and actions. To live truthfully, to treat others with kindness, and to be tolerant when facing adversity – these are things that

seem simple but are incredibly profound and not easy to practice.

(He smiles faintly.)

So, Ms. Sophia, Mr. Julian, I am very willing to share with you from the perspective of a practitioner. Perhaps, by re-examining what has happened to me, to my family, and even the great issues of the country from this perspective, we will gain new understanding, deeper reflections.

I will try to use my sincerity and what I have enlightened to from the Fa to share. Please, feel free to ask your questions.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, through our conversation yesterday, I heard you speak about the very painful story of your daughter, about the persecution of Falun Gong, about your career path, and also about the fickle and insidious world of officialdom...

I sense that, from the perspective of a practitioner, mentioning these points is not to lament like an unfortunate person seeking comfort from someone else... but rather it is a voice to defend justice, expose evil, and honor goodness...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(His gaze is serene yet holds a quiet determination.)*

Ms. Sophia, you have articulated the thoughts in my heart very well. Truly, when I decided to sit here and share these stories, it was not to complain about personal misfortunes, or to seek sympathy or comfort. Those things, for a practitioner, are no longer the main purpose.

(He pauses for a moment, looking directly at Sophia and Julian with sincerity.)

When a person has stepped onto the path of cultivation, especially cultivating in the Dafa according to the principles of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance, they will understand that the tribulations and injustices they endure, no matter how painful, are part of the process of tempering their character, of paying back the karma they created in the past, and of elevating their realm. Complaining about one's fate or resenting others will only increase karma and will not solve the problem at its root.

Therefore, when I recount An Ran's story, the pain of losing a child is still there; it can never fade. But now, I see it not just as my own family's tragedy. My daughter, and millions of other Falun Gong practitioners, are victims of a brutal, unjust persecution based on lies and hatred. They are persecuted simply for holding firm to

their belief in good values, in Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance.

Therefore, my speaking the truth is not to "recount suffering," but rather:

First, to expose the evil nature of the persecution and of the Chinese Communist Party: I want the world to understand more clearly the crimes they have committed and are still committing, from slander and fabrication, to torture, murder, and even the horrific crime of organ harvesting. A regime based on violence and lies cannot last long.

Second, to defend justice and truth: The truth needs to be known. Justice needs to be reclaimed for the innocent who have suffered so much. To be silent in the face of evil is to be complicit with evil.

Third, to honor the beauty and steadfastness of Falun Gong practitioners: I want people to see that, amidst the darkness and brutality, there are still people who staunchly defend their belief in benevolent values. They have shown extraordinary forbearance, compassion, and steadfastness that no violence can subdue. That is the beauty of Falun Dafa, the beauty of true practitioners.

Fourth, to awaken people's conscience: I hope that through my story, through what I have witnessed, more

people, both in China and around the world, will be able to reflect, to reconsider, and no longer be deceived by false propaganda. The conscience and benevolent thoughts in every person are extremely precious, and they need to be awakened.

(He smiles faintly, a serene smile that holds strength.)

From the perspective of a practitioner, I understand that exposing evil is not to sow hatred, but to help people distinguish right from wrong, so they can choose to stand on the side of goodness. That is also a form of compassion.

Therefore, Ms. Sophia, Mr. Julian, I am very willing to continue sharing, with that mindset. I hope that what I say will be helpful, even if only in a small way, to clarifying the truth and protecting good values.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, thank you, Mr. Liu...

And... about Julian... As a colleague, I know that you are not only passionate about studying philosophy, leadership ideology, or national policies and institutions... but you also diligently read the scriptures of various religions, and I also know you enjoy reading

the books of Falun Gong, and you hold a great deal of goodwill towards Falun Gong... As such, would you also agree to participate in today's sharing with the mindset of a seeker of the Way or from a religious perspective?

Julian Lee: *(Julian is slightly surprised at first when Sophia mentions his reading of Falun Gong books, but he quickly shifts to an open and sincere expression.)*

Thank you, Sophia, for the introduction. It's true that alongside my work as a journalist specializing in political and human rights issues, I personally have a deep interest in philosophy, ideologies, and especially the role of spiritual and religious values in shaping society and human behavior.

(He pauses for a moment, looking at Mr. Liu with a gentle smile.)

In the course of my studies, I have read many scriptures of the world's major religions. And just as Sophia said, I have also had the opportunity to read the books of Falun Gong, including "Zhuan Falun." What I read left a very deep impression on me, and I truly hold a great deal of goodwill towards the principles and values that Falun Gong promotes.

I have found that, at the deepest level, many true religions and cultivation ways guide people towards

benevolent values, towards self-perfection, and towards seeking a deeper meaning in life that transcends everyday material concerns.

(Julian looks at Sophia and Mr. Liu with a serious expression.)

Therefore, Ms. Sophia, Mr. Liu, I completely agree and am very willing to participate in today's sharing not just as a journalist, but also with the mindset of someone on a journey to understand the Way, someone who cherishes spiritual values and wants to explore the deeper meanings of the events and issues we are discussing.

I believe that when we can look at issues not only from a political and social perspective, but also from the perspective of universal principles and moral values, our conversation will become even richer and more profound.

To listen to Mr. Liu, someone who has had such extraordinary real-life experiences and is now walking on a path of cultivation, share from that perspective, is a very precious opportunity for me. And I also hope to contribute my own thoughts and questions from the perspective of someone who is learning about and cherishing these values.

Thank you both. I am ready.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, thank you both... So let's officially begin our second day of sharing...

Yes, I'd like to start with the topic of the CCP's evil... If we look back at history, we can see the horrifying things the CCP has done... the most recent being the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989 and the persecution of Falun Gong from 1999 to the present...

Could you both briefly share your thoughts on these two events from an observer's perspective? Let's start with Mr. Liu...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's question, a look of sorrow and contemplation crosses his face. He stares at the teacup in front of him for a long moment before speaking, his voice carrying the weight of memory and reflection.)*

Ms. Sophia, Mr. Julian, it's true that when looking back, both of these events are tragic milestones.

Regarding the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, at that time, I was a second or third-year university student, majoring in Marxist-Leninist Philosophy. Not long before that, at the age of 20, I had been honored to be admitted into the Chinese Communist Party. For a young man like me back then, raised under the Party's

education and guidance, being a member of the Party was a source of pride, a great recognition. My thinking at that time completely trusted the Party's leadership and the socialist path the country was pursuing.

Therefore, when the student movement broke out, from the standpoint of a young Party member, someone who believed in stability and the Party's leading role, I mainly received information through official channels. What we were told was about a small group of students being "incited," making "inappropriate" demands, causing "riots," and affecting "social stability."

To be honest, at that time, I had no real knowledge of the true nature of the demands of the majority of the students, nor could I imagine the severity of what had happened. The information about the army being mobilized, I simply understood it as a necessary measure to "maintain order," to "protect the fruits of the revolution." The images, the casualty figures... they barely reached us in a complete and objective way. Everything was described as a "decisive" action by the government to "quell the riots."

Later, after I graduated, became a lecturer, and then entered politics, the Tiananmen incident became an almost taboo subject, not to be discussed publicly. Even when I was a provincial-level official, detailed, multi-

faceted information about that event was still beyond my comprehension.

It was only later, after I came to the US and had the opportunity to access free sources of information, uncensored historical documents, and testimonies from witnesses... that I was truly shocked to realize the scale and brutality of what had happened at Tiananmen. Only then did I understand the pain and indignation of those who had lost loved ones, those who had to live in exile. And I also felt ashamed for my own ignorance and indifference for such a long time, although it may not have been entirely my personal fault, but rather the consequence of a system that suppressed information and the somewhat blind faith of my youth.

As for the persecution of Falun Gong since 1999, as I have shared, my process of understanding also went through similar stages: from believing one-sided propaganda, to indifference, then initial doubts when tragedy struck my family, and finally, a complete "awakening" when I investigated it myself and began to practice.

Compared to the Tiananmen incident, the persecution of Falun Gong is perhaps even more subtly concealed, carried out silently but with extreme brutality and systemization on a much larger scale. That is also why many people, even in China, do not know or do not

believe in the crimes that are taking place, especially the atrocity of organ harvesting.

Both of these events, to me now, are clear proof of how a dictatorial regime can control information, distort the truth, and commit horrific crimes without being punished appropriately, at least for a long time. And it also shows the importance of seeking the truth, of listening to different voices, something I failed to do for most of my life until it was too late.

Those are my thoughts, Ms. Bell, when looking back at these two events from the perspective of someone who was once in an information "fog" and had a great initial faith in the Party.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, and you, Julian, please share your thoughts...

Julian Lee: (Julian's eyes are fixed on Mr. Liu as he listens, then he nods slightly as Sophia invites him to speak. He clears his throat lightly, his posture upright and professional.)

Thank you, Ms. Sophia, and thank you, Mr. Liu, for such a sincere and profound sharing. From the perspective of a journalist, someone who has observed the political and social developments in China for many years, I also have

a few thoughts on these two events, which may add a few more dimensions.

Regarding the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989, for the international community and researchers, this is often seen as a dark turning point, exposing the true face of the Chinese Communist Party when faced with challenges to its absolute power. The Tiananmen incident has the following main characteristics:

First, calculated brutality: The crackdown was not just a spontaneous reaction, but shows signs of a carefully calculated decision from the highest leadership, aimed at completely extinguishing the democracy movement and sending a strong deterrent message to anyone with similar intentions in the future. It showed that, for the CCP, "stability" (in their understanding, maintaining power at all costs) is more important than the lives and aspirations of the people.

Second, information suppression and false propaganda: Immediately after the event, China's propaganda machine worked at full capacity to distort the truth, labeling the peaceful protesters as "rioters," "counter-revolutionaries," and concealing the true number of casualties. This, as Mr. Liu just shared, succeeded in deceiving not only domestic public opinion but also a part of international opinion for a time. It is also a classic

example of how a totalitarian regime controls the flow of information.

Third, long-term consequences: The Tiananmen incident not only extinguished the democracy movement in China for many years, but also created a subsequent generation of leaders who were even more vigilant and hard-line against any expression of political dissent. It also caused many intellectuals, those with reformist ideas, to fall silent or leave the country.

Regarding the persecution of Falun Gong since 1999, I see this as a systematic campaign of spiritual, and even physical, genocide against a peaceful group of people based on their beliefs. The persecution has the following main characteristics:

First, the regime's irrational fear: The rapid growth of Falun Gong, with tens of millions of people practicing across the country, along with its moral value system of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance, which is not in conflict with any benevolent government, was seen by the CCP (especially by Jiang Zemin at the time) as an ideological threat. They feared an independent spiritual force, not under the Party's control, that could weaken their ideological foundation.

Second, the use of the state apparatus for persecution: The CCP mobilized the entire state machine, from the

police, courts, prisons, to the media and mass organizations, to carry out the persecution. The establishment of the "610 Office," an extra-legal ad-hoc agency to direct and implement the persecution, shows the severity and their disregard for the law.

Third, propaganda of hatred and dehumanization of victims: One of the most brutal tactics was the use of media to slander and defame Falun Gong, inciting fear and hatred among the public towards practitioners. The dehumanization of the victims ("evil cult," "not human") created the conditions for torture and murder to occur with little hindrance from society's conscience. This is a classic tactic of genocidal regimes.

Fourth, crimes against humanity: The evidence of brutal torture, illegal imprisonment, and especially the atrocity of organ harvesting from living Falun Gong practitioners, as we have mentioned and will discuss further, has crossed all lines of criminality. This is no longer an internal issue of China, but a crime against humanity that requires the condemnation and intervention of the international community.

Both of these events, in my view, show a consistent pattern of behavior by the CCP: when it feels challenged or encounters an element it cannot control, it will not hesitate to use violence and deceit to eliminate it. The

only difference, perhaps, is the level of sophistication in the cover-up and the scale of the brutality.

And as Mr. Liu so rightly said, information control is an incredibly effective tool for them. It not only deceives the people within the country, but also makes it difficult for the outside world to access the truth and have timely, strong reactions. That is also why the work of independent journalists, of those who dare to speak the truth, has become more important than ever.

Sophia Bell:

So, do you both notice that these two horrific events are both related to one person?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's question, he frowns slightly, a sharp glint in his eyes. He is silent for a moment, as if considering something, then nods slowly.)*

Ms. Sophia, your question is very direct and touches upon a point that perhaps many people have also thought about. When we look back at the history of these two events, it's true that there are imprints, pivotal decisions that seem to be closely related to a few specific individuals at the top echelons of power.

Regarding the Tiananmen Square incident of 1989, the role of Deng Xiaoping in making the final decision to use force has been mentioned by many historical analysts. However, the person who directly benefited and was promoted to the position of General Secretary after the event, as we all know, was Jiang Zemin. It can be said that the Tiananmen incident paved the way for him to rise to the pinnacle of power.

And then, ten years later, in 1999, it was Jiang Zemin, as the head of the Party, the state, and the military, who, despite the opposition of many others in the Politburo, unilaterally launched and directed the brutal persecution of Falun Gong. He established the 610 Office, a special agency with boundless power, to implement this campaign.

From the perspective of an observer, and later as someone who sought the truth, I see that there is an undeniable connection. It seems that a deep-seated fear, a jealousy, and a desire to consolidate absolute power drove those decisions.

In the Tiananmen incident, perhaps it was the fear of an entire generation of old leaders of losing control, and Jiang Zemin seized that opportunity.

In the persecution of Falun Gong, many analyses suggest that it was Jiang Zemin's personal jealousy of the rapid

growth and prestige of Falun Gong, as well as the fear that an ideology based on Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance could overshadow the Party's ideology. He used this persecution as a way to test the loyalty of officials, to consolidate his own faction, and to create an "enemy" to divert public attention from other internal problems.

Whatever the specific motives were, it is clear that the personal decisions of a dictatorial leader, in a system that lacks mechanisms to check power, can lead to catastrophic consequences for an entire nation. History has proven this many times.

Julian Lee: *(Julian nods in agreement with Mr. Liu's analysis, then adds with a sharp insight.)*

Mr. Liu has analyzed this very accurately. From a journalistic and political research perspective, the role of Jiang Zemin in both of these events, though at different levels of directness, is something that cannot be overlooked.

Regarding Tiananmen 1989: As Mr. Liu said, Jiang was the biggest political beneficiary. The fact that he was chosen to replace Zhao Ziyang, who had a more moderate stance towards the students, shows Jiang's "suitability" for the hard-line approach that the

conservative faction in the Party desired after the event. This also shaped his later leadership style.

Regarding the persecution of Falun Gong in 1999: This was clearly a decision that bore the heavy personal imprint of Jiang Zemin. Many inside sources and international analysts have pointed out that Jiang faced disagreement, even tacit opposition, from other members of the Politburo Standing Committee, who believed that persecuting a large group of peaceful citizens was unnecessary and could cause instability. However, Jiang used his personal power, his influence in the military and security apparatus, along with inciting fear of "the Party's demise," to impose his will.

It is Jiang's alleged statement, "I can't believe the Communist Party can't defeat Falun Gong," that clearly shows his belligerence and obsession with power.

Launching this persecution is also seen as a way for Jiang Zemin to create his own political "legacy," consolidate power, and install his own faction before the transfer of power.

The involvement of a single individual, especially a leader with supreme power, in such momentous and consequential decisions is a common feature in dictatorial regimes. It shows the danger of concentrating power in the hands of one person or a small group,

without oversight, without mechanisms for debate and balance of power.

When an individual can place their subjective will above the national interest, above the lives and freedoms of the people, then tragedies like Tiananmen or the persecution of Falun Gong are almost inevitable. And clarifying the role and responsibility of such individuals is also an important part of seeking historical justice.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, you both said that Jiang Zemin was the biggest beneficiary after the Tiananmen incident, but what was the reason he benefited? Why did Deng Xiaoping choose him?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu nods slightly, his eyes revealing a contemplation of the complex power calculations of the past.)*

Ms. Sophia, this is a question that delves into the top-level political developments in China at that time, an issue that perhaps even insiders have different interpretations of. However, based on what was later made public and analyses by scholars, we can somewhat picture the reasons.

It's true that Jiang Zemin was the biggest beneficiary after the Tiananmen incident. From his position as Party Secretary of Shanghai, he was chosen by Deng Xiaoping and other veteran leaders to replace Zhao Ziyang, who had fallen out of favor for his soft and sympathetic attitude towards the student movement.

So, why Jiang Zemin?

First, his hard-line stance on the student movement in Shanghai: This was probably the most crucial factor. While the situation in Beijing was very tense, in Shanghai, Jiang Zemin demonstrated a resolute and somewhat more skillful approach in controlling the situation. He ordered the closure of the *World Economic Herald* (Shijie Jingji Daobao), a reform-leaning newspaper that supported the students, and also took measures to prevent the protests from spreading without causing major bloodshed like in Beijing (at least before the massacre took place).

This action by Jiang was said to have pleased Deng Xiaoping and the hard-line leaders. They saw in Jiang someone capable of "maintaining stability," someone who would not hesitate to protect the Party's power, something that Zhao Ziyang had failed to demonstrate from their point of view.

Second, a relatively "clean" background with few entanglements in central-level factions: Compared to other potential candidates in Beijing, Jiang Zemin was at that time considered to be less involved in the complex factional struggles at the center. This might have made him a "safer" choice, someone who could reconcile different factions after the crisis.

Third, experience in economic management: Although not an outstanding economic reformer, Jiang had experience managing a major economic center like Shanghai. In the context where China needed to continue the path of economic reform after political turmoil, this factor could also have been considered.

Fourth, the support of veteran leaders: The final decision still rested with Deng Xiaoping and a small group of veteran leaders. They needed someone who could both ensure political stability with a hard-line approach and continue the cause of economic reform that Deng had initiated. Jiang Zemin, with what he had demonstrated in Shanghai, seemed to meet those requirements in their eyes.

In short, Jiang Zemin's selection, in my view, was a combination of many factors, but his resolute attitude in handling the situation in Shanghai, especially his firm hand with the free press and control over the protests, was the biggest "plus point" in the eyes of Deng Xiaoping

and the hard-liners. They needed a successor who would not waver, who was willing to use strong measures to protect the Party's monopoly on power, and Jiang had proven that.

Julian Lee: (*Julian nods, adding a further analytical perspective.*)

Mr. Liu has analyzed the main factors very thoroughly. I would just like to emphasize a few more points from a political observation perspective.

First, the fall of Zhao Ziyang created a power vacuum: Zhao Ziyang's removal due to his disagreement on how to handle the protests created a vacuum at the highest leadership position. Deng Xiaoping needed to quickly find a replacement to stabilize the situation and demonstrate control.

Second, Jiang Zemin was "Deng's man": Although Jiang was not Deng's closest confidant, he was seen as loyal to Deng's line, especially in maintaining the Party's leadership while promoting economic reform. Jiang's hard-line stance in Shanghai reinforced this belief.

Third, the "test" in Shanghai: How Jiang handled the *World Economic Herald* and the protests in Shanghai was seen as a "test" of his loyalty and ability to control the situation. The fact that Jiang followed the wishes of

the central leaders in this matter, despite negative reactions from intellectuals, showed that he was someone who "knew how to listen" and was willing to carry out difficult orders.

Fourth, he was less "prickly" than other candidates: Some other figures in the Politburo at the time might have had greater ambitions or stronger factions, which could have worried Deng and the veterans about internal stability later on. Jiang Zemin, to some extent, seemed like a less controversial choice within the Party at that time.

Thus, Jiang Zemin's selection was not just personal luck, but the result of a series of complex political calculations during a crisis period for the CCP. And just as Mr. Liu said, his "decisiveness" in Shanghai was the determining factor, showing that he was someone Deng Xiaoping could trust to protect the Party's "fortress."

Sophia Bell:

I generally don't like to criticize any individual by name in my articles or books... but why do I mention Jiang Zemin? ... Because from a personal perspective, I see him as the very representation of evil!

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Hearing Sophia's words, he nods slowly, his eyes showing a flash of agreement but also a degree of contemplation.)*

Ms. Sophia, I understand your reservation about not wanting to criticize an individual by name in your works. That is a cautious and professional attitude for a journalist and author. However, when we are faced with systematic crimes and tragedies, clarifying the responsibility of the leaders, of the decision-makers, is sometimes unavoidable if we want to get to the bottom of the truth.

You said that from a personal perspective, you see Jiang Zemin as "the representation of evil"... (*He pauses, thinking*). This is a very strong assertion, and I can understand why you feel that way, especially when looking at the persecution of Falun Gong.

For me, as someone who was once in the system, then became an indirect victim, and later a seeker of the truth, I also see that the policies and actions under Jiang Zemin, especially concerning the persecution of Falun Gong, carry a particularly dark and brutal color.

First, personal jealousy and fear: Many analyses suggest that Jiang Zemin's determination to eliminate Falun Gong stemmed from his personal jealousy of the growing prestige and influence of Master Li Hongzhi, as well as the fear that a moral value system based on Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance could weaken the ideological foundation of the Communist Party, and thereby his own absolute power. This was not a concern

for the nation or the people, but a concern for his personal power and that of his faction.

Second, disregard for the law and collective opinion: His ignoring the disagreement of many other members of the Politburo and establishing the 610 Office as an agency above the law shows an extreme level of autocracy and despotism.

Third, inciting hatred and using the propaganda machine brutally: The way the propaganda machine under his direction slandered and defamed Falun Gong, sowing fear and hatred among the populace, is a classic example of using the media as a tool for crime.

Fourth, the policy of "defaming their reputations, bankrupting them financially, and destroying them physically": This genocidal policy, believed to have originated from Jiang Zemin's directive, has led to countless tragedies, from torture and murder to the crime of organ harvesting. It shows a boundless cruelty.

When an individual, with power in hand, can cause suffering to tens of millions of people, destroy beautiful moral values, and create an unhealable wound for an entire nation simply for selfish personal motives, then seeing that person as a "representation of evil" is not without basis.

However, from the perspective of a practitioner, I also understand that evil does not exist only in one individual. Jiang Zemin may be the instigator, the one who bears the main responsibility, but that crime was also carried out by an entire system, by countless other people, from the sycophants and those who blindly carried out orders, to those who remained silent in complicity.

And even deeper, that evil is also a manifestation of the moral decay in the entire society, the triumph of base desires, the forgetting of benevolent values.

Therefore, pointing out the role of Jiang Zemin is necessary to clarify historical responsibility, but it is also necessary to recognize that for evil to run rampant to such an extent, it needs "fertile ground" to grow. And changing that "ground," restoring moral values, is the fundamental solution.

Julian Lee: *(Julian nods after Mr. Liu finishes speaking, then continues with an analytical tone.)*

I agree with the points Mr. Liu just made. Sophia's feeling that Jiang Zemin is the "representation of evil" is a very understandable emotion, especially when faced with the scale and nature of the persecution of Falun Gong.

In political science and the study of totalitarian regimes, we often see the role of the "strongman" or "supreme leader" as crucial in shaping policy and causing major upheavals. Jiang Zemin, in the case of the persecution of Falun Gong, acted as a typical "strongman":

First, concentration of power: He consolidated his personal power and used it to impose his will on the entire Party, despite differing opinions.

Second, creation of an enemy: "Discovering" or "creating" an enemy (in this case, Falun Gong) is a classic tactic to consolidate power, unify the ranks (albeit through coercion), and divert attention from other issues.

Third, use of state violence: He did not hesitate to use the entire violent apparatus of the state to crush the designated "enemy."

Fourth, a (subtle) personality cult: Although not as blatant as in Mao's time, the fact that policies bore a strong personal imprint and that loyalty to the individual leader became an important metric is also a manifestation.

However, as Mr. Liu has also pointed out, an individual, no matter how powerful, cannot single-handedly commit a crime on such a large scale. It requires the participation,

complicity, or at least the silence of an entire system. That system includes:

First, the bureaucracy: Those who execute the orders.

Second, the security forces and military: The tools of violence.

Third, the propaganda machine: The tool for brainwashing and inciting hatred.

Fourth, public apathy or fear: This creates the conditions for evil to spread.

Therefore, when we say Jiang Zemin is "the representation of evil," perhaps it should be understood that he is the embodiment, the initiator, and the one who bears the highest responsibility for a form of "organized evil," a "systemic evil" nurtured and executed by a dictatorial regime.

The fact that journalists, researchers, and witnesses like Mr. Liu dare to point out the role of specific individuals like Jiang Zemin is a crucial step in combating forgetfulness and demanding accountability. It is not just "personal criticism," but a scientific and responsible analysis of how power can be abused to commit horrific crimes.

Sophia Bell:

Speaking of the CCP's evil as manifested through the persecution of Falun Gong, from your personal

observations and the independent international investigations you know of, could you elaborate further so that readers can understand better? About the evidence, the numbers, the scale...

Normally in the US or Europe, when a patient needs an organ transplant, they usually have to wait for months or a few years for the hospital to find a suitable donor... But I've heard that in cases in China, they can find a suitable organ for a patient in just a few days... what does this tell us?

Julian Lee: *(Julian's expression becomes more serious; he takes out a small notebook and a pen, as if to systematize the important information.)*

Ms. Sophia, Mr. Liu, the issue you've just raised – the incredibly stark difference in organ transplant waiting times between China and Western countries – is one of the most important pieces of indirect evidence, a "red flag" signaling that something extremely unusual and alarming is happening in China's organ transplant industry.

As you rightly said, in developed countries like the US or in Europe, where there are transparent and tightly regulated systems for voluntary organ donation, the waiting time for a suitable kidney, liver, or heart can be months, or even several years. This is due to the scarcity

of donated organs compared to the demand, and the complexity of finding a medically compatible match. Patients are placed on a waiting list, and organ allocation is based on objective medical criteria.

So, why is it that in China, one can "order" an organ and receive it in just a few days or weeks?

This points to a horrifying truth: China must have a huge "warehouse" of living organs, where the "suppliers" are living human beings who can be killed on demand to provide organs for patients.

To clarify for the readers, let me present some key points from independent international investigations I have studied, especially from the reports of David Kilgour, David Matas, and Ethan Gutmann:

First, regarding the explosion of the organ transplant industry in China:

Since the year 2000, the number of organ transplants in China has skyrocketed. China quickly became the country with the second-largest number of transplants in the world, after the US.

What's noteworthy is that this boom occurred in a context where China had no effective public voluntary organ donation system. According to traditional culture,

Chinese people are often unwilling to donate organs after death. The number of voluntary donors was extremely small, unable to meet the massive scale of transplants.

Second, regarding the inexplicable "official" source of organs:

Initially, the Chinese government claimed that the main source of organs was from executed prisoners. However, the number of executed prisoners (though still high) could not account for the number of transplants. Furthermore, the use of organs from executed prisoners also violates international medical ethics.

After international pressure, China announced it would build a voluntary donation system and gradually reduce the use of organs from executed prisoners. But the number of transplants remained high, and the waiting times remained suspiciously short.

Third, regarding the absurdly short organ waiting times:

As Ms. Sophia mentioned, this is one of the strongest pieces of evidence. Hospitals in China and websites promoting transplant tourism (before they were taken down due to pressure) openly advertised that they could find a matching organ for a patient in just a few weeks, sometimes even days. This is impossible without a huge

bank of prisoners, who are blood-typed and tissue-typed in advance, ready to be killed when an "order" comes in.

Some hospitals could even schedule organ transplants in advance, which shows that they had complete control over the organ supply.

Fourth, regarding evidence from witnesses:

Investigators have collected testimonies from doctors, nurses (some of whom have fled abroad), prison guards, and even former patients who went to China for transplants. Their testimonies reveal a tightly organized process, from blood-testing prisoners (especially Falun Gong practitioners), to selecting a suitable "source," and performing the organ extraction surgery, often while the victim was still alive or had just been killed.

There are chilling accounts of Falun Gong practitioners being tortured, subjected to unusual health checks (focusing only on internal organs), and then "disappearing."

Fifth, regarding statistical data and logical analysis:

Investigators have analyzed data from hundreds of transplant hospitals in China, comparing figures on the number of beds, doctors, and publicly announced surgeries (though often concealed) with the number of

organs from legal sources. The discrepancy is huge, amounting to tens of thousands of cases per year with unexplained origins.

Ethan Gutmann, in his book "The Slaughter," estimated that around 65,000 Falun Gong practitioners may have been killed for their organs in the period from 2000 to 2008. Later reports have updated this number to be potentially much higher.

Sixth, regarding the timing coincidence:

The boom in China's transplant industry (after 2000) coincides astonishingly with the start of the persecution of Falun Gong (July 1999) and the mass arrest and detention of Falun Gong practitioners in prisons and labor camps nationwide. They became an abundant "source" of organs, healthy (due to not smoking, drinking, and practicing qigong) and unprotected by the law.

All these factors, when pieced together, paint a horrific picture: The Chinese Communist Party, for profit and to eliminate a group of people it considers an "enemy," has condoned, and even masterminded, an industry of organ harvesting from prisoners of conscience, with Falun Gong practitioners being the main and first victims.

The fact that organ waiting times in China are so short, Ms. Sophia, is not a "medical achievement" as they try to propagandize, but is in fact evidence that convicts them of a crime against humanity in progress. It shows an ultimate disregard for human life, where people are turned into a "stockpile of spare parts" to serve the interests of others.

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu listens to Julian speak, his face growing heavier. He nods slowly, his voice somewhat shaky.)*

Mr. Julian, what you have just presented... it systematizes and clarifies so much of what I had vaguely sensed and painfully learned later. When An Ran... when she was taken away, and I later learned the truth, I also asked myself how they could do such a thing so quickly, why there was such a huge "demand."

The numbers, the analyses you've provided, they show that this was not the spontaneous act of a few inhumane individuals, but a sophisticatedly organized system of crime. The so-called "short organ waiting times" in China, to me now, is synonymous with countless innocent lives being unjustly taken, "to order."

It also explains why the authorities try so hard to cover up information, why they refuse truly independent

international investigations. Because the truth is too horrific, and if it were fully exposed, it would be an undeniable sentence on their conscience.

I... I truly don't know what more to say. I only feel the pain and indignation growing stronger. Thank you, Mr. Julian, for bravely speaking these things.

Sophia Bell:

Speaking of which, I remember something that deeply shocked me, and I suspect it is related to the crime of organ harvesting in China...

Let me summarize: in late June 2018, during a work trip to Ho Chi Minh City - the largest city in Vietnam, I happened to read that there was an exhibition of plastinated human bodies, called the "Mystery of Human Body" exhibition, in the name of science and art....

I went to see it and was shocked...

I couldn't understand why people would do that in the name of science and art...

The most shocking image for me was the body of a pregnant woman, dissected, with the fetus inside being about 7-8 months old... I don't understand why and how they could get the body of a pregnant woman to dissect

and display to the public? If the woman had died from illness or an accident, surely her family would have buried her with dignity; there could not be a situation where her family would donate her body to a stranger for them to dissect and display as they pleased..

Later, I did more research and learned that these bodies were from the body plastination factory founded by a German named Gunther von Hagens in August 1999 in China... And it seems many other factories were established by other people as well... and they have held many exhibitions in many places around the world...

My suspicion is, could the bodies supplied to these factories be the bodies of victims of live organ harvesting in China?

Julian Lee: *(Julian listens to Sophia's story with a very serious expression. When Sophia finishes, he nods slowly, his eyes full of thought and a degree of outrage.)*

Ms. Sophia, your experience and your suspicions about the "Mystery of Human Body" exhibition you saw in Ho Chi Minh City are truly noteworthy, and they align perfectly with the deep concerns that many human rights investigators, including myself, have raised for years.

What you described – especially the shocking image of the plastinated body of a pregnant woman with her fetus – is one of the key points that raises questions about the origin and ethics of the bodies used in these exhibitions.

(He pauses for a moment, as if to emphasize the gravity of the issue.)

Just as you found out, Gunther von Hagens, the inventor of the plastination technique, established a large factory in Dalian, China, in August 1999. And it wasn't just Von Hagens' factory; many other plastination facilities later sprang up in China, turning the country into a center for producing and exporting plastinated human specimens.

The timing coincidence is very suspicious:

First, July 1999: The Chinese Communist Party begins the nationwide persecution of Falun Gong, leading to the arrest and detention of millions of practitioners.

Second, August 1999: Von Hagens' plastination factory is established in Dalian.

Third, from 2000 onwards: The organ transplant industry in China explodes, and at the same time, the "Body Worlds" exhibitions and similar versions begin to appear and tour the world, using bodies mainly sourced from China.

Your suspicion about whether these bodies could be from victims of organ harvesting is a completely well-founded suspicion shared by many:

First, the ambiguous source of the bodies: The exhibition organizers often claim that the bodies are from people who "voluntarily donated their bodies to science" or are "unclaimed bodies." However, they rarely, if ever, provide authentic proof of consent from the deceased or their families, especially for bodies originating from China. The voluntary body donation system in China, like organ donation, is almost non-existent or very weak.

Second, the "disappearance" of prisoners of conscience: As we have discussed, hundreds of thousands, even millions of Falun Gong practitioners and other prisoners of conscience have "disappeared" within China's prison and labor camp system. Their families receive no information, no bodies. The question is: where did those bodies go?

Third, the economic benefits: Both the organ transplant industry and the plastinated human body exhibition industry generate huge profits. The scenario where prisoners of conscience are treated as a "resource" to be exploited – taking organs for sale, with the remaining body parts sold to plastination factories – is a horrific but not illogical one in an inhuman system that places economic and political interests above human life.

Fourth, specific cases like the pregnant woman: As Ms. Sophia so astutely pointed out, a family voluntarily donating the body of a pregnant woman along with her fetus for display is something almost impossible in any culture, especially in East Asian culture. The existence of such specimens further increases the suspicion that their origin was not "voluntary" or "clean." It is highly likely that they were prisoners who were killed, and no one could speak up for them.

Connecting to organ harvesting:

Although proving directly and legally that a specific body in an exhibition belongs to a specific victim of organ harvesting is extremely difficult (as the Chinese government tightly controls all information and evidence), the indirect evidence is very strong:

First, an abundant supply of prisoners of conscience, who are controlled and unprotected by law.

Second, after the valuable organs are removed, the rest of the body must be "disposed of." Selling it to plastination factories would bring profit and help "erase the traces" effectively.

Third, the lack of transparency and unsatisfactory explanations from both the Chinese side and the exhibition organizers.

Many human rights organizations and investigators have called for independent investigations into the origins of the bodies used in these exhibitions, and have called for boycotts until there is complete transparency. What you witnessed and your suspicions, Ms. Sophia, are not just personal feelings; they reflect a deeply-founded concern about a potential crime, where the brutality does not stop at taking lives, but also includes the desecration and commercialization of the victims' bodies after death.

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu listens to Sophia's story and Julian's analysis, his face turns pale, clearly showing horror and pain. He shakes his head slowly, his voice somewhat hoarse.)*

Unbelievable... It's unbelievable how cruel human beings can be... When I learned that An Ran's organs had been harvested, I thought that was the absolute depth of inhumanity. But hearing what Ms. Sophia has described, and Mr. Julian's analysis... the thought that the victims' bodies, possibly even my daughter's, could be put on display, commercialized... that is an indignity, an insult that cannot be described in words.

I... I truly don't know what to say anymore. It's beyond all limits of imagination about evil. If these things are true, then the Chinese Communist Party has not only committed crimes against humanity, but they are also

destroying the very moral values, the final boundaries of what it means to be human.

(He bows his head, his hands clenched tightly, trying to suppress his emotions.)

I thought I understood something of their brutality. But perhaps, I was still too naive. Their evil, it has no bottom.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, cases like Mr. Liu's daughter are a tragic story... such evil acts, yet concealed and protected by the CCP government, are only partially revealed through a few sources and witnesses...

Julian Lee: *(Julian nods at Sophia's words, his eyes showing empathy for Mr. Liu but also the resolve of a journalist pursuing the truth.)*

Ms. Sophia is very right. Cases like that of An Ran, Mr. Liu's daughter, are incredibly painful personal tragedies, but they are not isolated, individual incidents. They are pieces that reveal a very small part of a much larger picture of crime, a crime that is systematically concealed and protected by the power of the CCP state.

(He looks at Mr. Liu, then back to Sophia.)

The fact that these evil acts are only partially revealed through a few sources and witnesses is a sad reality, but also understandable in the context of a totalitarian regime:

First, absolute control of information: As we have mentioned many times, the CCP controls almost the entire flow of information within the country. Any information that is unfavorable to them, especially information that exposes crimes, is thoroughly censored, blocked, and distorted. The "Great Firewall" not only blocks information from the outside from getting in, but also prevents information from the inside from getting out.

Second, threatening and terrorizing witnesses: Those who dare to speak out, dare to testify about these crimes, face the risk of brutal retaliation, from being arrested, tortured, and imprisoned, to having their relatives harassed and monitored. This creates an overwhelming atmosphere of fear, causing many people who know the truth to not dare to speak out.

Third, the lack of independent investigative mechanisms within the country: In China, there are no independent investigative bodies, no truly independent judiciary, no free press to expose and prosecute these crimes. Everything is under the direction of the Party.

Fourth, the complexity and difficulty of collecting evidence: For crimes committed secretly and in an organized manner like organ harvesting, collecting direct, irrefutable evidence is extremely difficult, especially for international investigators whose access to crime scenes and witnesses in China is very limited.

Fifth, the indifference or economic interests of some countries and international organizations: Sadly, sometimes due to immediate economic or political interests, some countries and international organizations have chosen to "turn a blind eye" to the evidence of the CCP's crimes, or only speak out weakly, without enough deterrent effect.

It is because of these barriers that the information we get is often just the "tip of the iceberg," coming from:

First, courageous witnesses who have escaped abroad: These could be former prisoners of conscience, doctors, nurses, police officers... people who directly or indirectly knew about the crimes and decided to speak out despite the danger.

Second, the relatives of victims who relentlessly seek justice: Like Mr. Liu's case, though it was late, the pain and the truth pushed him to speak out.

Third, persistent international human rights investigators: People like David Kilgour, David Matas, Ethan Gutmann... have spent years collecting and analyzing evidence, despite obstruction and denial from the Chinese side.

Fourth, leaks from within the system: Though rare, sometimes confidential information and documents are leaked out by people with a conscience still left in the system.

Every piece of information, every testimony from a witness, however small, is incredibly precious. They are like puzzle pieces that slowly help us to form a complete picture of the crime. And the job of independent journalists, of human rights organizations, is to try to collect, verify, and disseminate those pieces, so that the truth is not buried, and so that the perpetrators cannot escape responsibility forever.

The struggle to expose the truth and demand justice for the victims of the CCP is a long and arduous one. But as Mr. Liu has said, as long as there are courageous people who dare to speak out, as long as there are people who persist in seeking the truth, the light will eventually triumph over the darkness.

Sophia Bell:

So, the international community, especially governments or global organizations like the United Nations, still hasn't taken any concrete and strong enough action to bring this crime to light... From my observation, there are still only a few individuals or small groups bravely standing up to speak out about this matter...

There was a time I had hoped that the governments of the US, France, or Canada might make stronger statements or take more forceful actions, not just stop at a few sentences in an annual religious report, or in the draft of a bill by a few congressmen...

Julian Lee: *(Julian's face shows clear agreement and a degree of disappointment at Sophia's remarks.)*

Ms. Sophia, what you have just shared reflects a sad reality and is also a great concern for many who care about the human rights issue in China. It is true that to date, the response of the international community, especially from major governments and global organizations like the United Nations, to the CCP's crimes, including the atrocity of organ harvesting, has remained very limited, not commensurate with the severity of the problem.

(He pauses, as if to emphasize the disappointment.)

What do we see?

First, the United Nations: It is often criticized for being ineffective, dominated by major powers (including China with its veto power in the Security Council), and often only issuing general reports and appeals that lack strong sanctions or truly robust investigative mechanisms. UN human rights bodies may speak out, but their influence and ability to act are often limited by political factors.

Second, Western governments (US, France, Canada, etc.):

Just as you said, they do issue annual reports on human rights and religious freedom, which mention the persecution of Falun Gong and allegations of organ harvesting.

There are also congressmen and legislators in these countries who strive to introduce bills and resolutions condemning the crime, demanding investigations, or prohibiting their citizens from participating in transplant tourism in China. These are very commendable efforts.

However, at the executive level, the level of overall foreign policy, the actions are often not strong and decisive enough. Statements are often diplomatic, avoiding excessive direct confrontation with Beijing.

Why is there this hesitation and lack of decisiveness?
There are many complex reasons:

First, for economic interests: China is a huge market, an important trading partner for many countries. The fear of damaging economic relations, of trade retaliation, often makes governments "reconsider" when taking strong actions related to human rights. "Money" often speaks very loudly.

Second, geopolitical considerations: China is a global power, playing an important role in many international issues (climate change, counter-terrorism, nuclear proliferation...). Western countries sometimes need China's cooperation on these issues, and therefore may "concede" or "downplay" human rights issues in exchange for that cooperation.

Third, the difficulty of collecting "irrefutable" evidence: As we've said, collecting direct evidence that meets the highest legal standards to be able to impose strong sanctions is very difficult when dealing with a regime that suppresses information like China.

Fourth, China's strong lobbying efforts: Beijing spends a lot of money on lobbying and propaganda activities abroad to downplay the accusations and influence politicians and the media.

Fifth, political polarization within Western countries: Sometimes, foreign policy issues, including human rights, also become subjects of debate between political parties, weakening consensus and joint action.

Therefore, the burden of speaking out, exposing the truth, and demanding justice often falls on the shoulders of:

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for human rights: They play a very important role in investigating, collecting evidence, advocating for policy, and raising public awareness.

Independent journalists and individual activists: Courageous, persistent individuals who pursue the truth despite difficulties and dangers.

The overseas Chinese community and victim groups: Their voices, those of people who have directly experienced or have relatives who are victims, have a very powerful emotional impact.

I also share your disappointment, Ms. Sophia. We had hoped for stronger, more decisive actions from the world's leading democracies. But reality shows that the fight for human rights and justice is often a long road, requiring persistent, unceasing efforts from many sides, and we cannot just rely on governments.

However, it is not without hope. Pressure from public opinion, from civil society organizations, and the tireless efforts of individuals can gradually create change. The fact that more and more parliaments in various countries are passing resolutions of condemnation, that independent tribunals (like the China Tribunal in London) are issuing judgments on the CCP's crimes, are important steps forward, even if they may be slow.

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu listens to Julian's analysis, he sighs, a look of sadness and helplessness flashing across his face.)*

Mr. Julian is very right. Calculations of economic interest, geopolitical considerations... often cause justice and human rights to be relegated to a secondary priority. That is a sad reality of this world.

When I was still in the system, I also witnessed how the Chinese government used its economic power as a tool to exert influence, to silence criticism from the outside. They are very good at "buying silence" or "diverting public opinion."

And after I came here, I also placed a lot of hope in the democratic powers. But then I also realized that nothing is easy. This fight is not just the fight of the victims alone, but also the fight of the conscience of all humanity.

Nevertheless, I still believe that as long as we don't give up, as long as the truth continues to spread, there will be a day when justice is served. The efforts of people like Ms. Sophia, Mr. Julian, and so many others around the world are a great source of encouragement and hope for people like me.

Sophia Bell:

What about the viewpoint of the current leader of the CCP? Yesterday, I also mentioned that I don't see him clearly expressing his stance on the persecution of Falun Gong and the crime of organ harvesting... I read somewhere that someone shared their opinion that Mr. Xi's situation is like the saying, "it's hard to get off a tiger once you're riding it."

Could you both interpret the meaning of this saying in Mr. Xi's case?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu hears Sophia's question and becomes pensive for a moment, his gaze distant as if trying to comprehend the complex power calculations within the leadership in Beijing.)*

The saying "it's hard to get off a tiger once you're riding it"... is indeed a very evocative image, and perhaps it also partly reflects the predicament of China's current leader,

Mr. Xi Jinping, when faced with the heavy legacy of the persecution of Falun Gong and its related crimes.

(He pauses, choosing his words carefully.)

From the perspective of someone who was once in the system, I can imagine a few aspects of the "tiger" that Mr. Xi might be "riding":

First, the legacy of Jiang Zemin and his faction: The persecution of Falun Gong was a major "project," a political "legacy" that Jiang Zemin and his faction painstakingly built and maintained. This faction still has considerable influence in the Party, the military, and especially in the security, police, and judicial systems – the very agencies that directly carry out the persecution. Touching the issue of Falun Gong, especially overturning the verdict, could directly impinge on the interests and even the safety of this faction. They will not let that happen easily.

Second, the fear of "instability" and the "Party's demise": This is an inherent fear of any CCP leader. Admitting a mistake in a persecution of such a large scale, bringing justice to tens of millions of people, could be seen as an act of "negating the past," weakening the prestige and legitimacy of the Party. They fear it could lead to further demands, other "historical reviews," and ultimately the collapse of the regime.

Third, the crime is too immense to be "handled quietly": The crime of organ harvesting, if publicly acknowledged and investigated, would be too great a shock not only for the Chinese people but also for the international community. The responsibility would not just stop at a few individuals, but could implicate an entire system. "Getting off the tiger" in this case could mean facing a "historical trial" whose consequences no one can foresee.

Fourth, the constraints of the established apparatus: The 610 Office and the entire system for persecuting Falun Gong has been operating for over two decades; it has become a gigantic machine, with countless people involved and entangled interests. Stopping this machine, dismantling it, and dealing with those involved is an extremely complex and difficult task.

So, Mr. Xi may be in a dilemma.

Either continue to "ride the tiger": That is, to maintain the policy of persecution as it is, or to some extent, to avoid causing major disturbances within the Party and to maintain a superficial "stability." But this means continuing to condone the crime, continuing to carry the historical burden, and facing increasing condemnation from the international community and people of conscience at home.

Or find a way to "get off the tiger": That is, to find a way to fundamentally resolve the Falun Gong issue, to bring justice to the victims. But this path is fraught with thorns and dangers, requiring extraordinary courage, great political determination, and could face fierce opposition from conservative forces and those with "blood debts."

The fact that Mr. Xi has not clearly expressed his views on this issue, as Ms. Sophia has observed, may be because he is weighing and calculating between these difficult options. Or perhaps, he is prioritizing the consolidation of his personal power first, dealing with issues he considers more urgent, before daring to touch this dangerous "tiger."

However, history has shown that avoiding facing the truth, trying to maintain a status quo based on injustice and crime, is never a sustainable solution. That "tiger," if not "tamed" or "dismounted" wisely and bravely, will sooner or later turn around and bite its rider.

Those are my thoughts, based on my limited understanding of that complex situation.

Julian Lee: *(Julian nods in agreement with Mr. Liu's analysis, then adds a political science perspective.)*

Mr. Liu has interpreted the meaning of "riding the tiger" in the case of Xi Jinping very profoundly. I would just

like to add a few aspects from a political analysis perspective.

First, on policy continuity and the succession of power: In single-party systems like China, there is often an implicit pressure to maintain the continuity of major policies, especially those related to "national security" and "regime stability." For a new leader to come in and completely reverse a major policy of his predecessor, especially a "sensitive" policy like the persecution of Falun Gong, could be seen as a challenge to the unity of the Party and could cause internal rifts.

Second, on the "Legacy Trap": Mr. Xi inherited a "legacy" from Jiang Zemin, which is the persecution of Falun Gong. This "legacy" has created a huge apparatus (the 610 Office, the system of labor camps, prisons, hospitals involved in organ harvesting...), a network of interest groups related to the persecution, and a large number of officials who are "implicated." Dealing with this "legacy" is not simple. If Mr. Xi were to forcefully overturn it, he could create a strong wave of opposition from those whose interests are tied to the persecution, or those who fear being held accountable.

Third, on the priority of consolidating personal power: In his early years in power, and even later, one of Mr. Xi's top priorities has been to consolidate his personal power and eliminate political rivals through the

"tiger and fly" anti-corruption campaign. He may see dealing with rival factions, especially the remnants of the Jiang Zemin faction, as a prerequisite before he can touch on thorny issues like Falun Gong. However, his anti-corruption campaign, while it has touched some high-level figures in Jiang's faction, seems not to have reached the root of the crimes related to Falun Gong.

Fourth, on the fear of a "domino effect": If he admits the mistake and resolves the Falun Gong issue, it could set a "precedent," leading to demands to review other historical issues (like Tiananmen, the Cultural Revolution...), and could ultimately shake the foundation of the regime. This is something that any CCP leader tries to avoid.

So, the image of "riding the tiger" is very accurate. Mr. Xi may not have been the one who actively "got on this tiger" (as it was already there from his predecessor's time), but once on it, controlling it or finding a way to get off safely is extremely difficult. Any move could cause unforeseen reactions.

Mr. Xi's silence or ambiguity on the Falun Gong issue could be interpreted as a strategy of "biding his time" while he tries to consolidate power and deal with other challenges. Or, more sadly, it could be a tacit acceptance, a continuation of the old policy for the reasons mentioned above.

Either way, a leader who does not dare or is unable to face and correct the mistakes and crimes of the past will always be a burden to himself and to the entire nation. History will be the judge of that.

Sophia Bell:

I'm thinking, could there be a situation where, even now, Mr. Xi himself doesn't know the extent of the evil of the persecution of Falun Gong?... Much like Mr. Liu's own case, before your daughter was harmed, you also didn't know the truth of this persecution...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu hears Sophia's question, he frowns slightly, pondering for a moment. This is a very sharp and thought-provoking question.)*

Ms. Sophia, this is a possibility that perhaps we should not completely rule out, although it seems hard to believe for someone in a position of supreme power like Mr. Xi Jinping.

(He pauses, choosing his words carefully.)

When I look back at my own case, it's true that I was in an "information bubble" created by the system. Although I was a provincial-level official with my own information channels, on "sensitive" and tightly controlled issues like

Falun Gong, what reached me was still mainly directed and filtered information. I didn't know, or didn't want to know, or didn't dare to find out the full truth until tragedy struck my family.

So, could Mr. Xi Jinping, the leader of an entire nation, also be in a similar state of "information blindness" regarding the extent of the evil of the Falun Gong persecution, especially about the crime of organ harvesting?

I think there are a few factors to consider:

First, the system of reporting and "filtering" information: In a dictatorial system, information is often heavily "filtered" as it moves from the bottom up. Subordinates tend to report what their superiors want to hear, concealing negative information and truths that could be disadvantageous. Information about excessive brutality, serious human rights violations, may not have been reported fully and truthfully to the highest level, or may have been greatly downplayed.

Second, the encirclement by interest groups: Those who directly participated in and benefited from the persecution, especially those deeply "implicated" in the crime of organ harvesting, will do everything to hide the truth, to prevent information from reaching Mr. Xi. They

might create a wall of information around him, providing only "processed" reports.

Third, the leader's priorities: A supreme leader faces countless domestic and foreign issues. It's possible that, for a long time, the Falun Gong issue was not Mr. Xi's top priority, and he relied on reports from specialized agencies (like the security system, the 610 Office) without independent verification.

However, there are also factors that make us doubt the possibility of Mr. Xi being "completely unaware":

First, the "tiger and fly" anti-corruption campaign: In the process of purging political rivals, especially high-ranking figures from Jiang Zemin's faction (like Zhou Yongkang, Bo Xilai, Xu Caihou, Guo Boxiong...), these individuals were all deeply involved in the persecution of Falun Gong and the crime of organ harvesting. It's hard to believe that during the investigations, information about these crimes did not reach Mr. Xi's ears at all, even if it was not made public.

Second, information from the international community: Although the CCP tries to cover it up, the reports, resolutions, and hearings by human rights organizations and international parliaments about organ harvesting in China surely could not have completely bypassed Mr. Xi's intelligence and information systems.

Third, the persistent nature of the issue: The persecution of Falun Gong has lasted for over 20 years; it is a major issue affecting China's international reputation. A leader with Mr. Xi's vision and grasp of information would find it hard to be completely "oblivious" to such a long-standing and serious issue.

Therefore, in my personal speculation, the situation may be more complex than "completely unaware." It's possible that Mr. Xi knows to some extent, but the detailed extent and true brutality of the crime, he may not have fully grasped, or it may have been downplayed by misinformation. Or it could be that he knows but, due to political calculations and considerations of power, he has chosen "not to know more," or to "temporarily set it aside."

Like in my case, perhaps it would take a certain "shock," a special event, to make someone in Mr. Xi's position truly confront the full, horrific truth. But whether that "shock" will come, and whether he will have the courage to act, is another question.

These are just my personal speculations, based on my experience and observation. The inner workings of the CCP are always an unpredictable "black box."

Julian Lee: *(Julian nods in agreement with Mr. Liu's caution.)*

Mr. Liu has provided a very pertinent and balanced analysis. Whether a supreme leader like Xi Jinping is "completely unaware" of the extent of the evil of the Falun Gong persecution is a complex question.

I agree that the possibility of being "completely unaware" is very low, especially after more than a decade in power and with what has transpired during his anti-corruption campaign.

However, there is a concept in the study of totalitarian regimes called "willful ignorance" or "plausible deniability."

Regarding Willful Ignorance: The leader might intentionally not want to delve deep into the darkest aspects, the specific crimes, to avoid direct moral or legal responsibility. They might tacitly allow or condone subordinates to do the "dirty work," as long as the political goal is achieved.

Regarding Plausible Deniability: Subordinates might intentionally not report the details of brutal acts to their superiors, so that the superiors can "plausibly deny" knowing about those crimes if questioned later. This is a way to protect the "top leader."

In Mr. Xi's case, it could be a combination of many factors:

First, he might know that the persecution of Falun Gong is brutal, but not fully grasp the extent of the savagery of organ harvesting on an industrial scale.

Second, he might have received reports that were "beautified" or "downplayed" by intelligence and security agencies.

Third, he might be prioritizing other issues that he considers "existential" to the survival of the regime and his personal power, and is temporarily "turning a blind eye" or postponing dealing with the Falun Gong issue.

And fourth, as Mr. Liu said, the fear of "opening Pandora's box," the fear of unforeseen consequences if this case is overturned, is also a very large barrier.

Therefore, instead of "completely unaware," it is perhaps more accurate to say that Mr. Xi might be in a state of "knowing but not wanting to fully confront," or "knowing but not yet able to/daring to act decisively" due to complex political calculations.

However, as the head of state, the ultimate responsibility still rests with him. "Not knowing" (to whatever extent) cannot be an excuse for not stopping and punishing the crimes against humanity happening under his rule. History will record that.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, I thought of this hypothesis for two reasons:

First, we see in history that there have been many emperors who were kept in the dark by their officials, causing them not to know the corruption of the country, still thinking the country was "at peace";

Second, in Mr. Xi's case, in reality, he may have never had direct contact with any Falun Gong practitioners or witnesses, and all the information he receives is based on reports from his subordinates...

Additionally, I once heard someone share that Mr. Xi is in a situation where "the government's orders cannot get out of Zhongnanhai," meaning that his orders are not fully transmitted and are not taken seriously...

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu listens to the reasons Sophia provides, he nods, his expression showing understanding and agreement with those analyses.)*

Ms. Sophia, the reasons you have given to support the hypothesis that Mr. Xi may not grasp the full truth are very thought-provoking, and they reflect the inherent realities in centralized power systems.

Regarding emperors being kept in the dark:

Just as you said, the history of China and other countries has countless examples of emperors, those who held supreme power, living in a "separate world" created by their courtiers and officials. They only heard good words, reports of achievements, while the harsh truths, the suffering of the people, the corruption of the bureaucracy were skillfully hidden.

The purpose of this concealment could be to curry favor with the emperor, to cover up their own incompetence or corruption, or to avoid unnecessary wrath. The result is that the emperor thinks the country is in a state of "peace and prosperity," while in reality, it may have been rotting from within.

In a system like the CCP, where loyalty to a superior (and protecting the interests of one's faction) is often placed higher than the truth, the risk of the "supreme leader being kept in the dark" is very real.

Regarding the possibility that Mr. Xi has never had direct contact with Falun Gong practitioners or witnesses:

This is also a very high probability. A leader in Mr. Xi's position is usually protected by many layers of security and information. The chance of him meeting and listening directly to a Falun Gong practitioner recount what they have been through, or a witness to the crime of organ harvesting, is almost impossible.

Any information that reaches him on this issue will certainly have passed through many layers of "filtering" by the security, propaganda, and specialized agencies. These reports, as I have said, have very likely been "edited" to fit the "general line" or to not cause "alarm" for the leadership.

Without direct contact, without a perspective from the reality of the victims, it is very difficult for a leader to feel the full extent of the brutality and injustice of a policy. They only see dry numbers and reports, not the pain and tears of flesh-and-blood human beings.

Regarding "the government's orders cannot get out of Zhongnanhai":

This is a very interesting observation and may also reflect part of the reality of the power struggle in China. Although Mr. Xi has consolidated immense power and eliminated many rivals, it does not mean he has absolute control over every corner of the vast apparatus.

There may be interest groups, hidden "emperor emeritus" figures, or underground forces in the localities, in the military, in the security system, who are still trying to obstruct, weaken, or distort Mr. Xi's directives, if those directives go against their interests.

If this is true, then even if Mr. Xi intends to change a certain policy (for example, the policy towards Falun Gong), his orders may not be fully and seriously implemented at the lower levels, or may be deliberately distorted. "The top has policies, the bottom has countermeasures" is not a rare phenomenon in China.

This also means that Mr. Xi may be facing a persistent, underlying power struggle, and resolving the Falun Gong issue, if at all, will depend on whether he can truly get a grip on the "steering wheel" of the entire machine.

All of these factors, Ms. Sophia, contribute to making the picture more complex. It shows that even a leader with supreme power can be isolated in terms of information, limited in the execution of his will, and face invisible but very strong resistance from the very system he heads.

This does not diminish the leader's responsibility, but it helps us to better understand the difficulties and complexities they may be facing, and why positive changes sometimes happen slowly or not as expected.

Julian Lee: (*Julian nods in agreement.*)

The points that Ms. Sophia and Mr. Liu have just analyzed are extremely pertinent. The phenomenon of "information cocoons" surrounding high-level leaders is a well-studied issue in political science. The greater the

power, the higher the risk of being isolated from reality by those around them.

And the phrase "chính lệnh bất xuất Trung Nam Hải" (the government's orders cannot get out of Zhongnanhai) is a classic description of power fragmentation or covert opposition within the Chinese political system, even under leaders who are considered the strongest. It shows the complexity of governing a vast country with a huge bureaucracy and many different layers of interests.

If Mr. Xi is truly in that situation, then the possibility that he "doesn't know" or "can't do" certain things, while it may seem hard to believe, is a possibility that needs to be seriously considered. This further emphasizes the importance of independent voices, of information from the outside, to be able to penetrate those "information walls."

Sophia Bell:

Yes, let's suppose our readers at THE EPOCH MEDIA read up to this point, they might have a question: "Emperors in the past didn't have the Internet, so being kept in the dark is understandable; but what about today's society, with the explosion of the Internet? Surely he knows how to search the Internet?"

Therefore, Mr. Liu, in the past, in your various positions within the CCP regime, when using the Internet, were you blocked by the Great Firewall, or did you even realize you were being blocked? And could Mr. Xi be blocked by his own Great Firewall system?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu hears Sophia's question and smiles faintly, a smile that is somewhat bitter and understanding.)*

Ms. Sophia, this is a very practical question and accurately reflects the query of many people living in societies with a free Internet. "Why not just search the Internet?" – it sounds simple, but the reality in China is extremely complex.

(He pauses, as if to choose his words precisely.)

When I was still working in the system, in various positions, our use of the Internet also had certain regulations and limitations, although perhaps not as harsh as for ordinary people in some aspects.

Regarding the Great Firewall: Yes, this firewall system is very effective. For the vast majority of people, accessing foreign websites considered "sensitive" like Google, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and major international news sites (BBC, New York Times, The Epoch Times...) is completely blocked. If they want to access them, they have to use circumvention tools (VPNs), but the use of

VPNs is also increasingly being tightened and can carry legal risks.

For cadres and civil servants:

In some agencies, especially those related to research, foreign affairs, or security, there may be "special channels" or "exceptions" that allow access to certain foreign websites for work purposes. However, these accesses are often closely monitored.

Even when access is possible, the mentality of self-censorship is very strong. We knew that every action online could be tracked. Searching for "sensitive" or "reactionary" information could bring unnecessary trouble, affecting one's career, and even the safety of oneself and one's family. Therefore, many people, even if they had the ability, would not dare or would not want to search for information that goes against the official mainstream.

Furthermore, internal information sources (internal news bulletins, confidential documents, directives from superiors) were often considered "more important," "more reliable" than the "floating" information on the external Internet, which was seen as "hostile" and "distorted." There was a trust (or a forced trust) in the Party's official information system.

Did I personally realize I was being blocked? Yes, of course. When trying to access some international news sites or free discussion forums, error messages or pages that wouldn't load were common occurrences. But as I said, trying to "jump the wall" to find that information was not a priority, and it also carried risks. We were used to living in a "controlled information space."

So, could Mr. Xi Jinping be blocked by his own Great Firewall?

This is an interesting question.

Technically: With his position, he certainly has unlimited access to any source of information in the world, if he wants to. The Great Firewall is a tool to control the people, not to restrict the supreme leader.

But the problem is not just technical, but also about the "human filter" and the "psychological filter":

First, the human filter: What information will the people around Mr. Xi – his secretaries, advisors, intelligence and security agencies – present to him? Would they dare to present dissenting information, harsh truths from the "outside" Internet that go against his or the Party's views? Or will they also "filter" the information, only providing what is "suitable," "beneficial"?

Second, the psychological filter: Even if Mr. Xi could "Google" it himself, would he have the time, the patience,

and most importantly, the openness to accept information that is completely contrary to what he has believed and what his system has reported to him? Is it easy for a person at the pinnacle of power, surrounded by praise and "beautified" reports, to accept that he has been deceived or that his system is committing horrific crimes?

Furthermore, searching for information on the Internet also requires the skill to distinguish fact from fiction, to cross-reference sources. In an environment where he is accustomed to receiving "official" information, "swimming" on his own in the mixed sea of global Internet information may not be the usual working method of such a leader.

Therefore, although Mr. Xi is not technically blocked by the Great Firewall, he may be "blocked" by another "invisible firewall", which is his system of advisors, the bureaucracy, and also his own prejudices and political priorities.

In short, having the Internet does not equate to having freedom of information, especially for those in a closed and tightly controlled system like China. And even for the top leader, accessing and accepting the truth is not as simple as "searching Google."

Julian Lee: (*Julian nods in agreement with Mr. Liu's analysis.*)

Mr. Liu has explained it very clearly and realistically. I would just like to add one small point.

In addition to the "filters" that Mr. Liu mentioned, there is another factor: "confirmation bias." People tend to search for and believe in information that confirms what they already believe, and ignore or doubt information that is contrary.

For a leader who has been shaped by a certain ideology, who has made policies based on "official" information, actively seeking and accepting completely opposite information on the Internet is a huge psychological challenge.

They might view such information as "products of hostile forces," as "fake news," or "slander." The CCP's propaganda system is also very good at creating "counter-narratives" to neutralize unfavorable information from the outside.

Therefore, even with the tool of the Internet, it is very difficult for a supreme leader of China to "see" the truth in the same way that we in the free world see it, and it depends on many complex factors, not just simple technical access.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, in Mr. Xi's case, even if we assume he is not blocked by the Great Firewall, the likelihood of him searching for information via the Internet is not high... he may not even use a computer or smartphone himself, for "security" reasons.

Regarding the Great Firewall, I encountered a situation like this: just the other day, when I tried using an AI application that has been much talked about in the press recently, called DeepSeek, I tried asking it a simple question: "What do you know about Falun Gong?" Can you two guess how it answered me?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu hears Sophia recount her experience with the AI application, he frowns slightly, a smile that is both knowing and bitter appears.)*

Ms. Sophia, this is a very interesting and thought-provoking situation in the context of today's technology. The fact that high-level leaders may not directly use computers or smartphones for "security" reasons is entirely possible. They usually have a whole team of assistants and secretaries to handle technology and information-related matters. This further increases the role of the "human filters" we talked about.

As for your question to the AI application DeepSeek... *(He pauses, looking at Sophia and Julian, as if waiting for confirmation of his guess).*

If DeepSeek is an AI application developed or operating under the control, or at least under the influence, of the censorship system in China, then I can guess that its answer about Falun Gong would be very... "cautious," if not completely aligned with the authorities' direction.

Perhaps it would:

First, give a vague, evasive answer: For example: "Falun Gong is a complex topic with many differing opinions. I cannot provide detailed information on this matter." Or, "I am an AI language model and do not have the ability to make judgments on religious or political issues."

Second, repeat the official propaganda rhetoric of the CCP: It might describe Falun Gong with negative terms, with the false information that their propaganda machine has sown, for example, "banned in China," "related to illegal activities"...

Third, completely refuse to answer or report an error: Simply provide no information at all, or display an error message that it cannot process the request.

I don't think an AI application operating in that environment could give an objective, truthful answer, talking about the health benefits, the moral values of Falun Gong, or mentioning the brutal persecution that practitioners are enduring. The Great Firewall is not just a firewall that blocks Internet access; it is also a content censorship system, a thought-directing system that has seeped into technological products like AI.

That is my guess, Ms. Bell. I am very curious to know what DeepSeek's actual answer was.

Julian Lee: (*Julian nods, showing great interest in Sophia's story.*)

This is a very good example of how information control can extend into the field of artificial intelligence, Ms. Sophia. Mr. Liu has made very pertinent guesses.

Large AI models, especially those trained or fine-tuned by Chinese companies, or those that want to operate in the Chinese market, will certainly have to comply with the government's censorship regulations. Their training data may have been "cleaned" to remove "sensitive" information, or they are programmed to give "safe," directed answers.

I also lean towards the possibility that DeepSeek would either:

Give a very brief, neutral answer to the point of being meaningless, providing no valuable information whatsoever.

Or, if it's a bit more "clever" in its evasion, it might selectively quote information from official Chinese sources, which is to say, repeat the propaganda rhetoric.

For an AI to "evade" or "distort" the truth about Falun Gong, if that is the case, would be another testament to the fact that the Great Firewall is not just a technical barrier, but also a tool for shaping perception, an effort to control thought on a large scale, even in the era of AI.

I would also very much like to know what its actual answer was. This could give us another perspective on the extent and manner in which censorship is being applied in new technologies.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, among the guesses you both just made, one was correct, which was Mr. Liu's third guess, that it "Completely refused to answer or reported an error." I was quite surprised! It didn't evade vaguely, but outright reported an error, accompanied by a line notifying me that I had "violated their usage policy." Just for one question!

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu hears Sophia's answer, he nods gently, a sad smile on his lips. There is no look of pride for having guessed correctly, but rather a confirmation of what he already knew too well about this system.)*

So my third guess was correct... "Completely refused to answer or reported an error." And it even came with a notice that you had "violated their policy." *(He shakes his head slowly).*

This, Ms. Sophia, Mr. Julian, does not surprise me, but it still fills me with a deep sadness. It shows that even a tool that is supposed to be "artificial intelligence," designed to provide information, has been "programmed" to fear the truth, to avoid issues that the authorities deem "sensitive."

The fact that it notified you of "violating the policy" for simply asking a simple question about Falun Gong, an objectively existing entity, shows how deeply censorship and ideological imposition have taken root. They don't just block information; they also want to brand the very act of being curious, of inquiring about those topics, as "wrong," as a "violation."

This also reflects something I said earlier: the Great Firewall is not just a technical firewall. It is a comprehensive system of thought control. It creates an environment where truth is suffocated, and even the

most modern tools must bend to comply with those irrational "policies."

It's truly sad to see technology, which should serve to broaden knowledge and connect people, being turned into a tool to reinforce censorship and maintain ignorance.

This is a very specific and vivid example, showing the challenges we face when trying to find and share the truth in such a tightly controlled environment. Thank you for sharing this experience. It really clarifies a great deal.

Julian Lee: *(Julian's expression is serious, he jots something down in his notebook.)*

The information Ms. Sophia just provided about DeepSeek's response is extremely valuable. The fact that an AI refuses to answer and reports a "policy violation" when asked about Falun Gong is concrete evidence that tech companies, especially those with ties to the Chinese market, are under immense censorship pressure.

This has several important implications:

First, the spread of censorship into the field of AI: It shows that the CCP's war on information control has expanded to AI platforms. Large language models are becoming a new "front line" in shaping public perception.

Second, pre-programmed "policies": The AI reporting a "policy violation" indicates that censorship rules have been built into its algorithm or training dataset. This is not a random error, but a deliberate design.

Third, the risk of a distorted "AI worldview": If AI models, which are becoming increasingly important in providing information and assisting humans, are "taught" to evade or distort the truth about important issues, then the risk of a generation of users (especially in China) having a distorted worldview is very high.

Fourth, a challenge to academic freedom and research: If even asking a question about a topic is considered a "policy violation," then how can there be free and objective academic research and discussion?

Ms. Sophia's experience is a classic example of how the "soft power" of censorship is being applied. It's not just about blocking access, but about creating an environment where certain topics become "untouchable," even for artificial intelligence.

This further emphasizes the importance of developing and protecting open, transparent AI platforms that are not dominated by totalitarian regimes, to ensure that this technology truly serves the interests of humanity, not as a tool for oppression and control.

Thank you for sharing this very timely and alarming detail.

Sophia Bell:

Speaking of which, we can see that no matter how great the CCP's evil is, people inside and outside of China are still more or less affected by the Great Firewall when trying to find the truth via the internet, making it difficult for them to access more objective, multi-faceted information..

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu nods slowly, his eyes showing a trace of sadness but also full of understanding.)*

Ms. Sophia is very right. The CCP's Great Firewall is not just a mere technical barrier for people within the country. Its influence, whether direct or indirect, can spread beyond its borders and affect people who are trying to understand the truth about China from all over the world.

(He pauses, thinking about the ways the Great Firewall can exert its influence.)

For people inside China:

First, information isolation: This is the most obvious impact. They are cut off from the free flow of world information. What they know about domestic and international events is mainly through the lens that has been "edited" and directed by the Communist Party. This creates a "parallel reality," where objective truth is distorted or completely hidden.

Second, a mentality of fear and self-censorship: Even if someone manages to circumvent the firewall, the fear of being monitored and punished also makes them self-censor their behavior online, not daring to express dissenting opinions, not daring to search for "sensitive" information. Over time, it becomes a habit, a conditioned reflex.

Third, difficulty in distinguishing fact from fiction: When exposed only to one-sided information for a long time, people's ability for critical thinking and distinguishing real from fake information is diminished. They easily believe state propaganda and are skeptical of information from the outside.

For people outside of China:

First, difficulty in accessing authentic information from within: Journalists, researchers, and international human rights organizations face great difficulties when trying to understand the real situation in China. Interviewing

witnesses and collecting evidence becomes dangerous and restricted. The Great Firewall makes it harder for information from within the country to get out.

Second, the spread of disinformation and propaganda: The CCP not only builds the Great Firewall to block information, but they also proactively use the Internet to spread disinformation and propaganda campaigns to the outside world through state-run media in foreign languages, "sock puppet" social media accounts, or by influencing international media platforms. This can create information noise and reduce trust in independent sources.

Third, influence on tech companies and global platforms: As in the case of DeepSeek that Ms. Sophia just shared, or other large tech companies that want to operate in the Chinese market, they may have to accept "playing by Beijing's rules," which means implementing content censorship and cooperating with the authorities in monitoring users. This indirectly extends the reach of the Great firewall beyond its borders.

Fourth, the hesitance of individuals and organizations to criticize China: The fear of economic retaliation, cyber-attacks, or sanctions from China can also make some individuals and organizations abroad more cautious when speaking out on sensitive issues.

Thus, no matter how great the CCP's crimes are, the Great Firewall remains an effective tool for them to cover up, distort the truth, and create difficulties for efforts to seek justice. It is not just a problem for the Chinese people, but also a challenge to freedom of information and truth on a global scale.

Our sitting here, trying to share and clarify these things, is also an effort to help break through that "firewall," even if only in a small way.

Julian Lee: *(Julian nods, adding the perspective of an international journalist.)*

Mr. Liu has analyzed the impacts of the Great Firewall very comprehensively. I completely agree.

From my experience as a journalist, I see that the Great Firewall is not just a censorship system; it also creates a "closed information ecosystem" in China. In that ecosystem, "domestic" applications, platforms, and content are prioritized for development and domination, while external competitors are blocked. This makes the Chinese people increasingly dependent on domestic services, which are easily controlled and monitored by the authorities.

And as Mr. Liu said, its influence does not stop at the border. We are seeing a global "information war," where totalitarian regimes like China are becoming more and

more sophisticated in using technology for propaganda, influence, and to weaken democracies. They learn very quickly the techniques of spreading fake news, using AI to create false content, and attacking the weaknesses of free societies.

The fact that AI platforms like DeepSeek have to "comply with policy" when asked about Falun Gong is an alarming example. It shows that, without vigilance and clear regulations on AI ethics and the transparency of training data, we risk creating technological tools that serve the purpose of censorship and propaganda, rather than serving truth and freedom.

The fight against the Great Firewall and similar information control efforts is, therefore, not just a fight for the Chinese people, but a fight for all who cherish truth, freedom of speech, and a healthy, trustworthy cyberspace.

Sophia Bell:

I just thought of a concluding sentence like this: Wherever there is information control, there is something evil being hidden...

Do you both think so?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu hears Sophia's concluding thought, he nods slowly, a deep agreement evident in his eyes. He is silent for a moment, as if contemplating that summary, then speaks slowly.)*

Ms. Sophia, that sentence of yours, "Wherever there is information control, there is something evil being hidden"... it is concise, succinct, yet it encapsulates a very bitter and universal truth.

(He pauses, looks at Sophia and Julian, then continues.)

From my own experience, as someone who was once in a tightly controlled information system, and later as someone trying to seek the truth, I completely agree with that assertion.

Why must information be controlled? If a government is truly clean, truly for the people, if the policies they enact truly benefit the majority, then what do they have to fear from the truth? What do they have to hide? On the contrary, they would want information to be transparent, so that the people can understand and support them.

What is information control meant to hide? Usually, it is to hide weakness, corruption, wrong policies, illegal acts, and especially crimes against the people. When the truth is exposed, their prestige will collapse, their power will be shaken. Therefore, they must use every means to

cover up, to control the flow of information, to maintain a false image.

Information control is a sign of a lack of confidence and fear. A strong government, confident in its own righteousness, would not need to fear dissenting opinions or criticism. They would be willing to engage in open dialogue and debate. Only the weak, those who know they are in the wrong, have to resort to censorship and suppression to silence others.

The persecution of Falun Gong is a classic example. If Falun Gong were truly an "evil cult" as they propagandize, why would they need to ban its books and materials, to block all websites that speak about Falun Gong objectively? Why would they have to fear the accounts of practitioners, the evidence of the crime of organ harvesting? It is because they know that the truth is not on their side. It is because what they are doing is evil, is a crime, that they must try at all costs to hide it.

Your sentence, it is not only true for China, but perhaps true for any place in the world, in any era, where freedom of information is trampled upon. It's like a law. Darkness always fears the light. Lies always fear the truth.

That is a very good summary, Ms. Bell. It makes one think.

Julian Lee: (*Julian nods decisively, showing clear agreement.*)
I completely agree with Ms. Sophia's concluding thought and Mr. Liu's analysis. It is an extremely accurate and highly universal assertion.

In the field of journalism and the study of freedom of speech, there is an unwritten rule: The level of information censorship by a government is often directly proportional to the level of wrongdoing and shady dealings that government is hiding.

An open, transparent society, where information flows freely, where the press can perform its role of monitoring and critique, is usually a society with lower levels of corruption, higher government accountability, and where the people are more respected.

Conversely, in places where information is tightly controlled, where the state monopolizes the truth, where dissenting voices are suppressed, that is often fertile ground for abuse of power, corruption, injustice, and systematic crimes.

China's Great Firewall is an extreme manifestation of information control to hide evil things. Its purpose is not only to prevent people from accessing the truth, but also to maintain an "official narrative" written by the Communist Party, a narrative that glorifies reality and demonizes anyone who dares to challenge it.

Ms. Sophia's sentence can be considered a simple but effective "litmus test" to assess the nature of any regime. If they fear information, if they try to silence the people, then there is definitely something very wrong, very evil, happening behind that curtain of censorship.

This is a powerful reminder of the importance of freedom of information and the role of those who dare to seek and speak the truth, wherever they may be.

Sophia Bell:

And in a place with such information censorship, it's very easy for many lives to be pushed into tragic situations without anyone knowing...

Speaking of which, it makes me think of the topic: how to build a better country, where people will at a minimum have freedom of speech?

You are both people who are interested in philosophy, leadership ideology, and the building of political institutions... so I think you will be very interested in questions on this topic and will have in-depth interpretations...

But our time today is nearing noon, perhaps we should leave this topic for tomorrow morning? What do you think?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu hears Sophia introduce the new topic, his eyes light up a bit, showing clear interest. However, he also looks at his watch and nods in agreement with Sophia's proposal.)*

Ms. Sophia, the topic you just raised – "how to build a better country, where people will at a minimum have freedom of speech" – is indeed an immense issue, a concern not only of my own but perhaps of anyone who desires a just, civilized, and progressive society.

That is a question I tried to find an answer to throughout my years of research and even when I entered politics, although at that time, my thoughts might have been limited and influenced by prejudice. And now, with what I have been through, with the new understanding from the path of cultivation, I ponder it even more deeply.

Factors like the foundational philosophy, the leader's ideology, the way institutions are built... they all play an extremely important role in shaping a nation.

I am very interested and willing to share my thoughts on this topic. However, you are right, there isn't much time left this morning. This is a large topic that requires enough time for us to delve into its aspects thoroughly.

Therefore, I completely agree with your proposal. We will dedicate tomorrow morning to focus on discussing this issue. I believe that with Julian's participation as well, we will have a very rich and rewarding discussion. I will have more time to reflect and systemize my ideas for tomorrow's discussion.

Julian Lee: *(in a tone of interest, using this opportunity to introduce his book)*

I am in complete agreement with Ms. Sophia and Mr. Liu. The topic of building a better country, especially ensuring the right to freedom of speech, is one of the greatest challenges and also the noblest goals of any civilized society.

This is also an area where I have spent a lot of time researching. Ms. Sophia, Mr. Liu, I am truly very interested in the topics we will be discussing tomorrow. For the past few years, my work has also focused quite a bit on understanding the thinking and legacy of leaders after they leave power. I have had the opportunity to meet and interview many former high-ranking officials and some former heads of state.

There is one particular interview that I have devoted a great deal of passion and time to recently, and that is with a former President. It was a multi-day dialogue, going deep into the most important decisions of his term,

his reflections, what he learned, and most importantly, how he wants his legacy to be remembered.

A book that I am in the process of completing, with the title "AFTER POWER: THE LEGACY - A Conversation with a former President". The manuscript has also received some positive initial feedback from test readers.

(Julian Lee takes a carefully bound manuscript from his briefcase.)

On that note, Mr. Liu, as we will be discussing these topics tomorrow, if you don't mind, I would like to gift you a copy of the manuscript to look over tonight. I believe that with your experience and erudition, reading about the reflections of another leader after leaving office, and then your own sharing about "power" and "legacy" from your unique perspective, will bring invaluable contributions to our discussion.

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Mr. Liu is a little surprised but also shows appreciation, accepting the manuscript.)*

Oh, thank you, Mr. Julian. This is truly a meaningful and very timely gift. "AFTER POWER: THE LEGACY"... the title is very thought-provoking. I will definitely read it carefully tonight. And I am also very much looking forward to our discussion tomorrow; there will certainly be much more to reflect on.

Sophia Bell:

Wonderful! So, I'll see you both tomorrow morning. I'm sure we will have another valuable sharing session.

DAY THREE

Sophia Bell:

Good morning, Mr. Liu! Have a good day! Julian and I have come again today to continue listening to your sharing. The last two sessions have truly given us much to reflect on.

Julian Lee:

Good morning, Mr. Liu. Thank you for continuing to make time for us. Sir, as Sophia said, your stories and analyses have opened up many valuable perspectives. I

am also very grateful that you agreed to look over the manuscript of my book, "AFTER POWER: THE LEGACY."

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

(Smiling gently, he nods)

Good morning, Ms. Sophia, Mr. Julian. Thank you both for coming. Yes, I did spend some time quickly reading the manuscript of "AFTER POWER: THE LEGACY" by Mr. Julian. Although I only skimmed through it, what I perceived has left a truly deep impression. I was quite surprised and also very appreciative that a former President, a man who was at the pinnacle of power, would have such frank reflections and self-examinations about the nature of the system, the limits of power, and especially the return to core moral values. There are many points in the book that made me think and feel a sense of resonance, especially when he emphasized the importance of "taking virtue as the foundation" for a nation, a society. That reminded me of so many teachings of the Eastern ancients that I had previously overlooked...

Sophia Bell:

It's interesting that you mention that, Mr. Liu. In the last two sessions, we have delved deep into your personal

experiences, the nature of the persecution of Falun Gong, and the crimes of the Chinese Communist Party. Today, perhaps we can look back together at the values, the ancient philosophies of both the East and the West on the art of governing, on a better society...

Mr. Liu, after all that you have been through, and especially after you began practicing Falun Gong in the past year or so, do you have any new interpretations of the teachings of the ancients, for example, the saying "When those above are not righteous, those below will be in chaos," when reflecting on the current state of China?

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

(Nodding, his eyes showing a look of deep contemplation)

Ms. Sophia, your question touches upon something I have agonized over a great deal, especially in this past year. Before, when I was a researcher, an official, I had also read the teachings of the ancients like "When those above are not righteous, those below will be in chaos." But to be honest, at that time, I only saw them as historical summaries, lessons from experience... I hadn't truly grasped the universal law hidden behind them. I was too focused on economic models, on political institutions, and forgot that the root of a nation, the prosperity or decline of a society, lies in the morality of

its rulers, and more broadly, the morality of the entire people.

It wasn't until I witnessed with my own eyes the ultimate brutality and deceit of the Chinese Communist Party in its persecution of Falun Gong, and later, when I was fortunate enough to encounter the Dafa and read Zhuan Falun, that my worldview completely changed. It was as if I had woken up from a long dream. "When those above are not righteous, those below will be in chaos" was no longer just an empty saying; it manifested painfully and clearly in every corner of Chinese society today. When the "above" – those who hold the highest power – have completely gone against the universal values of humanity, trampling on conscience, how can the "below" – that is, the entire society – not fall into "chaos"? It is an inevitable thing, an unavoidable karmic consequence.

Julian Lee:

(Listening intently, he then adds)

I completely agree with Mr. Liu's initial remarks. From the perspective of political science and the history of nations, a clear pattern can be seen: any system, no matter how superior it may seem in its design, if it lacks the moral foundation of those who operate it, will sooner or later fall into decline or become a tool of oppression. The saying "When those above are not righteous, those

below will be in chaos" is not only true for Eastern culture; it also has similar manifestations in Western history. When the ruling elite loses its integrity, pursues personal and factional interests, public trust will erode, social division will increase, and instability is hard to avoid. Reflecting on these ancient philosophies in a modern context, especially with what is happening in China, is extremely necessary for us to understand the root of the problem.

Sophia Bell:

Thank you for the very profound general sharing, Mr. Liu and Julian. Mr. Liu, could you analyze more specifically, from what you have witnessed and experienced, how the "unrighteousness" of the "above" in China manifests, and how it has led to "chaos" in society, especially in the context of the persecution of Falun Gong?

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

(Nodding gently, his voice becomes deeper, filled with emotion.)

Ms. Sophia, the "unrighteousness" of the "above" in China, that is, of the Communist Party, is not just isolated wrongdoings, but a rottenness from its very nature, from its core ideology.

First, it is the complete denial of Gods and Buddhas and traditional moral values. Since seizing power, the CCP has systematized the destruction of traditional culture, replacing it with Marxism-Leninism, a doctrine based on class struggle, violence, and atheism. They sow into the minds of the people, especially the younger generation, that there are no Gods or Buddhas, no karmic retribution, that man is the master of nature and can do anything to achieve his goals. When the root of morality, the reverence for Heaven, Earth, Gods, and Buddhas is gone, what limit is there for evil?

Second, it is systematic deceit and trickery, which has become the nature of the regime. From the initial promises of a just and free society, to the embellished economic growth figures, to the covering up of heinous crimes... all are lies. They build a giant "red curtain" of propaganda to deceive the people and the world. When the leaders, an entire system, live by lies, how can they ask the "below" to be honest?

Third, it is the worship of violence and absolute power. "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun" – this saying has become their guiding principle. Anyone, any group of people with different ideas, with the potential to shake the Party's monopoly on power, is considered an enemy and must be eliminated. They do not use virtue to win people's hearts, but use police, military, prisons, and re-education camps to suppress.

It is from this root "unrighteousness" that it has led to comprehensive "chaos" in society.

Corruption has become a national plague, from the biggest tigers in the Politburo to the small flies at the village level, all trying to plunder, to enrich themselves on the sweat and tears of the people. Because when there is no morality, no belief in karma, greed has no end.

Social morality has severely degenerated. People deceive each other for profit; contaminated food and fake goods are rampant. Indifference and selfishness have seeped into every family, every relationship. Because when the "above" has set a bad example, has trampled on all moral values, how can the "below" maintain their kindness?

And the peak of that "chaos," nothing is clearer than the persecution of Falun Gong.

Falun Gong teaches people to live according to Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance, guiding people back to the best moral values. Such a peaceful practice, simply because the number of practitioners was too large, exceeding the number of Party members, made the CCP leaders, especially Jiang Zemin, feel their power was threatened. Unreasonable jealousy and fear turned into the most brutal persecution campaign in modern history. They fabricated, slandered, used the entire media machine to defame Falun Gong, turning gentle

practitioners into "enemies of the state." Millions were arrested, brutally tortured, sent to labor camps, had their organs harvested while alive... This is not just "chaos" anymore, this is a crime against humanity, the clearest manifestation of the evil nature of a regime that has completely lost its humanity.

Julian Lee:

(Listening intently, he then adds)

Mr. Liu's analysis of the CCP's "unrighteousness" and the resulting "chaos" is extremely pertinent. I just want to add one aspect, which is that this "unrighteousness" is also manifested in the fact that the CCP has deliberately cut off the Chinese people from the very source of their great culture. A nation no longer connected to its traditions, to the moral values that have been forged over thousands of years, will become easily manipulated, easily led by foreign and extremist ideologies. When people no longer know to revere Heaven and Earth, no longer understand karma, it becomes much easier for them to do evil things, or to condone evil. The Cultural Revolution is a classic example of the uprooting of traditional culture, and its consequences still linger today, creating the conditions for persecutions like the one against Falun Gong to occur.

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

Mr. Julian is very right. They fear traditional culture

because the values of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance, the principles of Benevolence, Righteousness, Propriety, Wisdom, and Faith that the ancients extolled, are completely opposite to their deceitful and violent nature. A person imbued with traditional culture would find it difficult to accept the rule of such an atheistic and immoral party.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, I'm beginning to understand that the art of governing needs to be rooted in "virtue"... not just in the ancient feudal models, but also true for today's Communist and Capitalist models. It seems that for any model or institution, if the leadership and the people do not take virtue as the root, society will sooner or later fall into chaos and then decline...

But could a "good model" make that decay happen more slowly, Mr. Liu, Mr. Julian? And when speaking of "taking virtue as the root," what suggestions can the Taoist ideas like "The Imperial Way of non-action (wu wei)" or "The Kingly Way of establishing virtue" offer us today?

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

Ms. Sophia raises a very profound issue. It's true that the "model" or "institution" also has its role. A well-designed

institution, with checks on power, with transparency, may be able to curb the decay to some extent when the general morality of society declines, or at least make the process slower and less painful. However, I still believe that is only treating the symptoms. If the "root of virtue" is shaken, then even the best model will eventually be penetrated, exploited by the unvirtuous. History has shown that many republics, many seemingly stable democratic institutions have also declined when the elite and the populace lost their foundational moral values.

As for the Taoist ideas you mentioned, like "The Imperial Way of non-action" or "The Kingly Way of establishing virtue," these are precisely the philosophies of governance that I have come to appreciate deeply after I began to cultivate.

"The Imperial Way of non-action (wu wei)" does not mean doing nothing at all, but that the ruler follows the Way of Heaven, follows the laws of nature, and does not interfere crudely, imposing his subjective will on the people. To let the people live freely, develop freely, with the government only playing a role of gentle regulation and guidance, like water flowing naturally.

"The Kingly Way of establishing virtue" emphasizes that the leader must prioritize cultivating his own virtue, using his moral character to inspire and set an example for the people. When those above have virtue, the people

will naturally follow suit, and society will be peaceful, without the need for harsh punishments or complicated laws.

Let's try to reflect on the Chinese Communist Party, they have done the complete opposite. They are not "wu wei" but extremely "you wei" (proactive interference), interfering in every aspect of the people's lives, from thought and belief to livelihood. They do not "establish virtue" but "establish might" through violence, through deceitful propaganda. And what is the result? A society full of conflicts, tension, where people live in fear and have lost their faith. The persecution of Falun Gong is a classic example of that "you wei" and "lack of virtue." A practice that teaches people to cultivate their hearts towards goodness, to live by Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance, was seen by them as a threat and they tried every means to eliminate it. They have gone against the Dafa, against the will of Heaven and the hearts of the people.

Julian Lee:

I very much agree with Mr. Liu's analysis. The Taoist concept of "wu wei," if viewed from the perspective of Western political philosophy, has interesting similarities with ideas of "limited government" or classical liberalism, where the role of the state is limited to protecting basic freedoms and maintaining order, leaving the rest for society to self-regulate. However, the core difference and

also the profundity of Taoism, as Mr. Liu has pointed out, is that it is founded on the "Tao" (the Way) and "De" (Virtue). A "wu wei" government is not just one that doesn't interfere, but one that doesn't interfere because the leader has reached a certain moral realm, understands the laws of the universe, and believes in the self-regulating ability of society when people live morally.

As for "The Kingly Way of establishing virtue," it emphasizes something that many modern democracies sometimes overlook, which is the personal moral quality of the leader. We can have very democratic election processes, complex oversight mechanisms, but if the person elected lacks virtue, they can still find ways to manipulate the system to serve personal or factional interests. Conversely, a truly virtuous leader, even in an imperfect system, can still bring stability and prosperity to the nation. Ancient Chinese history has many sagacious kings like Yao, Shun, King Wen, and King Wu; they ruled not by cunning or harsh laws, but by their own virtue, which won the allegiance of the world.

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

Exactly, Mr. Julian. The sage-kings of ancient times, they didn't need massive propaganda machines, they didn't need large police forces to control the people. They only needed to live in accordance with the Way, cultivate themselves, and be an example for the common people.

At that time, as Laozi said: "I take no action and the people are transformed of themselves; I prefer stillness and the people are rectified of themselves; I am not meddlesome and the people enrich themselves; I have no desires and the people are simple and honest of themselves." That is the highest realm of the art of governing.

Sophia Bell:

If "virtue" must be the root, then the greater the virtue of the highest leader, the more beneficial it is for the people and the country. Is my understanding correct, Mr. Liu, Mr. Julian?

If so, then another question arises: how can we select a person of sufficient talent and virtue?...

In ancient Chinese history, there was the practice of "passing the throne to the worthy" during the time of Emperors Yao and Shun, while today, most countries follow the form of elections... Do these forms truly guarantee finding the most worthy person? And what suggestions does the Confucian philosophy of "Cultivate oneself, regulate the family, govern the state, bring peace to the world" offer us about the necessary qualities of a leader?

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

(Nodding, his face showing agreement)

Ms. Sophia, you understand my meaning very well. The higher the virtue of the leader, the greater the blessing for the nation and the people. Because when the leader has virtue, they will know how to love the people as their own children, will know to place the nation's interests above personal interests, will know to use wise and talented people, and will not do things that go against the Way of Heaven and righteousness.

Regarding the question of how to select a person of sufficient talent and virtue, it is indeed a difficult problem from ancient times to the present, in any system. The practice of "passing the throne to the worthy" in the time of Yao and Shun was an ideal model, where the successor was chosen based on proven virtue and talent, not bloodline or faction. That was the pinnacle of impartiality and being for the people. However, that model requires the current ruler to be a true sage, without selfish thoughts, and the society at that time must also have a very high moral foundation.

Today, elections are the common form in many democratic countries. In theory, it gives power to the people to choose their representatives. But in reality, as we can see, elections also have many problems. They are easily influenced by money, by the media, by glamorous

but unrealistic promises, and by the fleeting emotions of the crowd. Sometimes, those who are good at public speaking, good at lobbying, win the election, not necessarily those who truly have virtue, talent, and a heart for the people. In China, there is no real election for the top leadership position at all. It is entirely a power struggle and arrangement within the Party.

As for the Confucian philosophy of "Cultivate oneself, regulate the family, govern the state, bring peace to the world," this is an extremely important guide on the path and qualities of a leader, a gentleman. It points out a very logical sequence: to do great things for the world, one must first start by cultivating one's own moral character ("cultivate oneself"). When one has virtue and wisdom, one can then manage one's own family well ("regulate the family"). If the family is harmonious and well-ordered, one can then govern a state well ("govern the state"). And when the state is stable and prosperous, one can then think of bringing peace and stability to the whole world ("bring peace to the world").

The Chinese Communist Party has gone completely against this sequence. Their leaders, how many of them truly "cultivate themselves"? Or do they only care about enriching themselves, their families, their factions? The families of many high-ranking officials are full of scandals, their children living luxuriously abroad with the people's money. A person who cannot "cultivate

oneself," cannot "regulate the family," how can they "govern the state" well? Their persecution of Falun Gong, a practice that teaches people to "cultivate oneself" according to Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance, is the clearest proof that they fear people with morality, fear values that could shake the foundation of their rule, which is based on lies and violence.

Julian Lee:
(*Continuing*)

The problem of selecting a virtuous and talented leader that Ms. Sophia raised, and Mr. Liu's analysis of "passing to the worthy" as well as "elections," is truly a perennial challenge. Even in Western democracies with multi-party election systems, finding and promoting truly worthy leaders is still very difficult. As Mr. Liu said, money and media have too much influence. Sometimes, the public is swayed by constructed images, carefully calculated messages, rather than looking at the true character and competence of the candidates.

The Confucian philosophy of "Cultivate oneself, regulate the family, govern the state, bring peace to the world," though originating from the East, has universal values. It emphasizes that leadership ability is not just management skills or professional knowledge, but must originate from personal character. A leader cannot separate their private self from their public role.

Dishonesty in private life, greed, or other personal moral issues will sooner or later affect their decisions and behavior when in power.

And I think, another important point in "cultivating oneself" is the ability to self-reflect, self-correct, and listen. A leader, no matter how talented, if they do not know how to "cultivate themselves," do not know how to look at themselves, is very likely to become despotic and detached from reality.

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

Mr. Julian's point is very well-taken. "Cultivating oneself" is not just about maintaining morality, but also a continuous process of learning and correcting oneself. The ancients said, "no man is perfect," everyone has shortcomings. The important thing is whether one dares to recognize and correct them. The leaders of the CCP, they consider themselves the "pinnacle of wisdom," the "representatives of the people's interests," so they never admit their mistakes, never "cultivate themselves" in that sense. All mistakes are blamed on "hostile forces" or objective factors. That is another manifestation of their "unrighteousness."

Sophia Bell:

But for modern people today, what is glamorous on the

outside, what is easy to see, is more convincing... While ancient, invisible, and abstract ideas are difficult for people to perceive... That is why China's explosive economic development over the past 40 years has been like a dazzling "diamond" that attracts the support of its people and international friends...

Speaking of which, I am reminded of a work trip to Vietnam in 2018. While on a trans-Vietnam train from south to north, the train sometimes passed through rural areas and hills... At that time, looking out the train window at the distant green hills, I suddenly exclaimed to another passenger next to me, "You Vietnamese people have a very good sense of forest protection"... Do you know what that passenger replied to me then?..

He replied: "Hey, beautiful American journalist, the green scenery you see is not as good as you think!"...

I didn't quite understand what he meant and asked again: "What do you mean?!"

He explained: "You see, those distant green forests are eucalyptus forests, the 'achievement' of deforestation to plant industrial trees... Eucalyptus is a fast-growing tree, very suitable as a raw material for the paper industry. But you know what, people don't realize that eucalyptus is a tree that destroys soil fertility terribly! Not only is it unable to retain moisture for the soil, but it also kills

other shrubs with the poison in its leaves and roots... And after about 10 years of planting this tree, the hills will be eroded and become barren, and the shrubs and microorganisms cannot survive... From a distance, it looks very beautiful, but when you get close and look down at the ground, you will see that the ground of the hills has become as desolate as a desert..."

This image shocked me...

And later I associated the image of the eucalyptus forest in Vietnam with the Communist regime in China... With its skyscrapers, modern cities, impressive economic growth figures... could it be that it is also concealing a desolation, an internal destruction of morality, of culture, of human rights, Mr. Liu, Mr. Julian? And could it be that this is precisely the manifestation of a "Hegemon's Way (Ba Dao)" that the ancients warned against, a rule based only on superficial strength without a sustainable moral foundation?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Remains silent for a moment after hearing Sophia's story, his face showing deep thought and empathy.)*

Ms. Sophia, your story and your association are truly profound, very visual. "Eucalyptus forest"... it gives me the shivers. It's not just an image; it is the naked truth about the so-called "miraculous rise" of China under the rule of the Communist Party.

Just as you said, the skyscrapers, the sea-crossing bridges, the dizzying GDP growth figures... those are the glamorous things, easy to see, easy to convince those who only look at the surface, or those who deliberately do not want to see the truth. But what is behind that "lush green"?

It is the irreversible environmental destruction, the air so polluted that people dare not breathe, the water sources depleted and poisoned.

It is the ultimate moral decay, where people are willing to do anything for money, regardless of conscience, regardless of the health and lives of their fellow human beings.

It is the trampling of human rights, of freedom of belief, where millions of innocent people, Falun Gong practitioners, Uyghurs, Tibetans, are suppressed, deprived of the most basic human rights.

It is the erosion, the desertification of the beautiful traditional culture of thousands of years, replaced by a foreign, struggle-based, atheistic ideology.

And your connection to the "Hegemon's Way (Ba Dao)" is completely accurate. The ancients distinguished very clearly between the "Kingly Way (Wang Dao)" and the "Hegemon's Way (Ba Dao)." The "Kingly Way" is to

use benevolence and virtue to win the hearts of the people, making the world submit naturally. The "Hegemon's Way" is to use force, cunning, and oppression to rule, making people obey out of fear, not out of respect.

The Chinese Communist Party is precisely following the typical "Hegemon's Way." They use economic power to bribe, to influence other countries. They use a huge propaganda machine to paint a pretty picture, to cover up crimes. They use the military and police to suppress dissenting voices at home. They may temporarily achieve some superficial "successes," may make some people praise them, but it is a false prosperity, a "green color" of a eucalyptus forest, without sustainable roots. Because it is built on lies, on fear, and on the destruction of core human values. Once that "Hegemon's Way" is no longer strong enough to oppress, or when the people have become too tired, too pained, then collapse is inevitable.

Julian Lee:

Ms. Sophia's "eucalyptus forest" imagery is truly powerful. It shows a universal law: what grows too fast, focusing only on the outside while neglecting the inner foundation, often hides potential destructive risks. In economics, people also talk about unsustainable "overheated growth." In politics, a regime that relies only

on coercive force without genuine consent from the people will sooner or later face a crisis.

The "Hegemon's Way" that Mr. Liu just analyzed is not limited to the CCP's domestic rule. We also see clear manifestations of it in their foreign policy. The "One Belt, One Road" ambition was initially promoted as a win-win cooperation, but in many places, it has turned into a "debt trap," a tool for China to increase its geopolitical influence, even to interfere in the sovereignty of other countries. That is using economic power to impose its will, a form of the "Hegemon's Way" in international relations. This is completely contrary to the "Kingly Way" that truly visionary and virtuous leaders of the past pursued, where influence was built on the basis of mutual respect and common interests.

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

Mr. Julian is right. That "Hegemon's Way" spreads to the outside as well. They want the whole world to recognize them, to acknowledge their "China model." But they forget that true respect does not come from material strength or imposition, but must come from morality, from the humanistic values that the nation contributes to humanity. So far, what the CCP has "contributed" to the world seems to be only instability, unfair competition, and the spread of a toxic ideology.

Sophia Bell:

The "achievements" of modern China, most notably the high-speed rail system spanning the country, were built in an extremely short period of about 15 years! As an objective observer from the other side of the Pacific, I am truly impressed!...

This achievement is something that very easily wins the hearts of the people... I remember a few weeks ago, when I was at Harvard University for a short documentary, I met a female Chinese student studying there. I talked with her for a while, listened to her talk about China, about her family's life back home. Her grandfather is a veteran revolutionary Party member, and her father is a successful businessman. Once during dinner, her grandfather and her father clashed over political views... I still remember she told me that her grandfather scolded her father, saying: "If it weren't for the Party, would you have a fancy house and car to enjoy now?! You don't know how to be grateful to the Party and yet you still speak the rotten words of those reactionary capitalists?!"

This student's story made me think a lot about the complexity of Chinese society. On one hand, there are undeniable material achievements, but on the other hand, there are trade-offs, ideological imposition, and perhaps a lack of a moderate path, a "Doctrine of the Mean" that Confucianism once extolled, isn't that right, Mr. Liu, Mr. Julian? Could it be that the absence of the "Mean" has led

to such conflicts and extremism in both the thinking and actions of the government and a part of the populace?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening intently to Sophia's story, he then nods gently, a trace of sadness flashing across his face.)*

The story Ms. Sophia tells is very typical of many families in China today, especially those with multiple generations living together. The conflict between the older generation, those who lived through the revolutionary period, were "brainwashed" and deeply imbued with the Party's ideology, and the younger generation, who have had the opportunity to be exposed to the outside world and have different perceptions, is not uncommon.

The grandfather's scolding in the story: "If it weren't for the Party, would you have a fancy house and car to enjoy now?!" – that is precisely a rhetoric that the Communist Party has very successfully crammed into people's heads. They deliberately equate economic development, material achievements, with the existence and "great" role of the Party. They want people to believe that everything good they have is granted by the Party, and therefore they must "be grateful to the Party," must be absolutely loyal to the Party.

But they have deliberately ignored a truth: that economic development was achieved through the sweat, tears, and

even the lives of millions of working people, through the belated opening up to acquire science and technology from the world, and also through the trade-off of the environment, of morality, of human rights. The "fancy house and car" may be real, but what is the price paid for it? Is it freedom of thought, human dignity, a just and humane society?

And you are very right to connect this to the absence of the "Doctrine of the Mean" of Confucianism. The "Mean" does not mean being a fence-sitter, having no opinion, but maintaining harmony, balance, not going to extremes, not being biased. It is the path of moderation, reason, and virtue.

The Chinese Communist Party, since its establishment, has always followed an extreme path. Either far-left with the Cultural Revolution, destroying everything, brutally denouncing people. Or far-right in developing the economy at all costs, regardless of morality and the environment. They have no "Mean." They only have "struggle," "annihilation," "imposition."

That lack of the "Mean" is clearly shown in how they treat people with different opinions, people with beliefs. Instead of dialogue, instead of seeking harmony, they only know how to use violence to suppress, as they did with Falun Gong. They do not accept the existence of anything outside their control and their ideology. It is

this extremism, this lack of the "Mean" in thought and action that has created countless tragedies and instability for Chinese society.

Julian Lee:

Ms. Sophia's story and Mr. Liu's analysis of the "Doctrine of the Mean" are very thought-provoking. Extremism in thought, as Mr. Liu said, is a prominent feature of many totalitarian regimes, not just China. When one ideology is considered the only correct one, all dissenting opinions are considered "reactionary," "hostile," then there is no room for moderation, for seeking common ground.

The "Doctrine of the Mean" of Confucianism, if understood correctly, is a very profound philosophy about self-control and inner balance, which then leads to harmony in social relations and the stability of the nation. It requires one to "be sincere in thought, rectify the heart, cultivate the person" before thinking of great deeds. When a person cannot maintain the "Mean" in their heart, is easily swayed by greed, anger, ignorance, by immediate benefits, then their actions will easily go to extremes.

In the context of the grandfather and father in Ms. Sophia's story, we clearly see the absence of a space for dialogue based on respect and reason. The grandfather is trapped in slogans, in indoctrinated prejudices. The father, though he may have different perceptions, finds it

difficult to express them in a moderate way. This polarization is a great wound in many societies, and it often stems from a lack of cultivation of the "Mean" at both the individual and national governance levels. A society without the "Mean" will be easily incited, easily divided, and will resort to extreme actions, harming itself.

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

Exactly. "The Mean" also means knowing the "time," knowing the "place," knowing what is appropriate in each situation, not being rigid, not being dogmatic. The CCP always imposes one model, one single will on the entire society, regardless of reality, regardless of the people's aspirations. That is a complete violation of the spirit of the "Mean."

Sophia Bell:

I'd like to ask Julian this: Through your interactions and interviews with many former presidents or high-ranking officials in Western countries, what noteworthy viewpoints have you observed? Is there any resonance with the ancient Chinese thoughts we've just discussed, for example, the importance of a leader's morality, or the necessity of a moderate, balanced path in national governance?

Julian Lee: (*Smiling, he nods*)

That's a very interesting question, Sophia. Indeed, through many conversations with leaders and policymakers in the West, especially those who have left office and have had time to reflect, I have noticed some very thought-provoking commonalities, and sometimes, surprising similarities with the ancient wisdom of the East, though expressed in a different language and frame of reference.

First, one thing that many former leaders often emphasize after being free from the pressures of power is their disappointment with excessive pragmatism and the erosion of morality in modern politics. They realize that policy decisions are often dominated by short-term interests, by lobbying groups, by the pressure of re-election, rather than by universal moral principles or the long-term interests of the nation. This, in a way, also reflects the lack of the "root of virtue" that Mr. Liu and the Eastern philosophers have spoken of. When leaders no longer prioritize morality, then no matter how democratic the institution may seem, it can still be manipulated.

Second, there is a concern about the growing polarization in society and the difficulty in finding a common voice, a consensus. Many admit that the media, social networks, and even political tactics have

contributed to deepening the division, rather than promoting dialogue and mutual understanding. This reminds me of the importance of the "Doctrine of the Mean" that we just discussed. A society that lacks moderation, that lacks respect for different viewpoints, will find it very difficult to maintain stability and sustainable development.

Third, a very noteworthy point is the growing awareness of the role of the "silent citizens," ordinary individuals who uphold core moral values in their communities. Like the former President in the book "AFTER POWER: THE LEGACY" that Mr. Liu has read, he also emphasizes that the future of a nation lies not only in the hands of politicians or the elite, but also depends heavily on the moral strength of ordinary people. This has a certain resonance with the Confucian view that social morality is built from the foundation of the family and the community.

And finally, although not all, some former leaders also begin to return to deeper philosophical and spiritual questions about the meaning of life, about the true legacy they leave behind. They realize that power and fame will eventually pass, what remains are humanistic values, the contribution to a better world. Perhaps this is a belated form of "self-cultivation," but it is still very valuable.

Of course, Western culture has its own traditions of thought, from ancient Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle with their concepts of justice and virtue, to the Enlightenment thinkers with their ideas of natural rights, social contract, and the republic. In those thoughts, the role of reason, law, and institutions is often emphasized. However, if we look deeper, we still see threads connecting to Eastern thought, which is the aspiration for a just society, where people can live with dignity, and the leader must have a moral responsibility to the people. The difference may lie in the method and the emphasis, but I believe the goal of a good society based on universal values is where they meet.

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Listening to Julian, he nods in agreement.)*

Mr. Julian's sharing is very interesting. It shows that, whether in the East or the West, whether in different political systems, the concerns about morality, about the role of the leader, about a better society, seem to be perennial questions of humanity. Perhaps, when people reach the end of theories, of models, they return to the most core values, the things that belong to the original, innate kindness of human beings that the Dafa often mentions.

Sophia Bell:

We have discussed some of the governing philosophies of ancient China, and some of Julian's sharing from a Western perspective... What about from a religious perspective? Mr. Liu is a Falun Gong practitioner, and Julian, as I know, has also passionately read many scriptures of different religions...

Could you both share more about the concept of Good and Evil, about morality in governance, or what universal principles major religions often mention when speaking of an ideal society and the role of a leader?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(His gaze becomes calmer, his voice slow.)*

Ms. Sophia, when viewed from the perspective of a practitioner, especially after being enlightened by Dafa, I see that all major righteous religions in the world, despite having different forms of expression and specific doctrines, ultimately all teach people to be good, to believe in Gods and Buddhas, to believe in the law of karma, and to uphold universal moral values.

Regarding the concept of Good and Evil, all righteous religions define it very clearly. Good is to follow the Heavenly principles, to be compassionate, to be tolerant, to be truthful, to be patient. Evil is to go against the Heavenly principles, to be selfish, to be cruel, to be deceitful, to be contentious. If a society wants to be

peaceful and prosperous, it must take Goodness as its foundation and eliminate Evil. The leader, more than anyone else, must be at the forefront of practicing Goodness, using their virtue to guide the people. If a leader's mind is full of evil thoughts, and they act according to Evil, then that nation will surely be in ruins, and its people will suffer. The Chinese Communist Party's persecution of Falun Gong is the ultimate expression of Evil, when a regime uses violence to eliminate practitioners who follow Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance.

Major religions also all talk about the law of Karma. You reap what you sow. An individual who does evil will suffer retribution, and a regime that commits crimes cannot escape the punishment of Heaven and Earth. This may not come immediately, but it is an infallible cosmic law. When I was still in the machine, I didn't believe in this. But now, I believe in it absolutely. The crimes that the CCP has committed, especially the crime of harvesting organs from living Falun Gong practitioners, will sooner or later be exposed, and the masterminds will have to pay for their crimes.

Regarding the art of governing, righteous religions usually do not offer a specific model like political doctrines, but they all emphasize that a leader must have reverence for the Divine, must love the people, and rule with benevolence, not with violence. They must be the

protector of true faith, creating conditions for the people to cultivate their morality. History has shown that in dynasties and nations where the leader respected Gods and Buddhas, valued wise and talented people, and cared for the moral life of the populace, that nation was often peaceful and prosperous for a long time. Conversely, tyrants and regimes that suppress faith will sooner or later be eliminated.

Julian Lee: *(Nodding, he continues after Mr. Liu.)*

What Mr. Liu has shared is very profound and accurately reflects the core spirit of many major religions. From the perspective of someone who has studied many scriptures, from the Bible of Judaism and Christianity, to the Quran of Islam, or the Upanishads and Bhagavad Gita of Hinduism, I have noticed a very clear common denominator: the existence of a sacred order, a Supreme Being, and that human beings have a responsibility to live in accordance with the will of that Supreme Being, that is, to live according to morality and justice.

In the Bible, the kings of Israel are reminded to fear God, to keep His laws, and to rule the people with justice. When they did so, the country prospered. When they fell into sin, worshiped false gods, and oppressed the people, disaster struck. The concept of "Divine Justice" is an important foundation.

In Islam, the leader (Caliph) is considered the successor to the prophet to implement Sharia law, with the goal of ensuring justice (Adl) and the common good (Maslaha) for the community. Piety (Taqwa) and integrity are important qualities.

In Hinduism, the concept of "Dharma" (the Way, duty, cosmic order) plays a central role. The leader (Raja) has a "Rajadharma" – the duty of a ruler – which is to protect Dharma, maintain social order, and ensure the prosperity of his subjects. If one goes against Dharma, which is Adharma, it will lead to chaos.

Although the expressions are different, they all point in one direction: a good society must be built on a moral foundation, the leader must be a model of virtue, and there must be reverence for sacred, transcendent values. When people, especially those in power, lose this connection to their spiritual roots and only pursue worldly power and material things, that is when Evil has the opportunity to rise and society falls into decline.

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

Mr. Julian has summarized it very well. Whether in the East or the West, whatever the religion, the root is still to teach people to be good, to revere the Divine, and to believe in retribution. That is the rope that holds humanity's morality. When that rope is cut, as the CCP

has done, people will have no anchor, and society will fall into chaos.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, regarding "reaping what you sow," regarding "retribution," I have also read some concepts like "karmic retribution" in Buddhism, or the old Chinese saying "Good is rewarded with good, evil is met with evil; it's not that there is no retribution, the time has just not yet come"... If these things are real, and people, from the highest leader to the common folk, all know to revere Heaven and Earth, Gods and Buddhas, and fear "retribution," then wouldn't the overall morality of society be elevated?

And isn't it true that "virtue" is the very root foundation of prosperity and decline? Abundant virtue leads to a peaceful and prosperous nation, while thin virtue and great karma lead to the nation's decline, social chaos, and the people's suffering...

Speaking of the "root" and the "branches"... Is it that many governments today, especially the Chinese regime, only know to take "rule by law" as the root, but in fact, "rule by law" without a moral foundation is just the branches, even a tool to cover up the "lack of virtue" of those in power, Mr. Liu, Mr. Julian?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Nodding vigorously, his face showing deep agreement.)*

Ms. Sophia, what you have just said has truly touched the very essence of the matter. Absolutely correct!

If people, from the monarch to the commoner, all understood and believed in the law of Karma, knowing that all their actions, whether good or evil, whether secret or public, will have corresponding consequences, then social morality would surely be maintained and elevated. When there is reverence for Heaven and Earth, Gods and Buddhas, and fear of karmic retribution, people will not dare to do evil, will not dare to be greedy, will not dare to deceive. At that point, without the need for harsh laws, society would naturally become stable and harmonious.

"Virtue" is the very root of a nation, the foundation of its prosperity or decline. Thousands of years of history in China and the world have proven this. Dynasties where the king was wise and the ministers were virtuous, where all from top to bottom cultivated morality, the country was peaceful and the people were happy. Conversely, when morality declined, when kings were debauched and unvirtuous, and officials were corrupt, then no matter how powerful the nation once was, it would quickly fall into decline, chaos, and the people would suffer. "Abundant virtue leads to a peaceful and

prosperous nation, while thin virtue and great karma lead to the nation's decline" – that is an undeniable truth.

As for the "rule by law" you mentioned, I completely agree. The law is necessary to maintain social order, to deter evil. But it can only be the "branches," a supplementary tool for the "rule by virtue." If a government relies only on law, on punishment, while ignoring moral education and not building a foundation of faith for the people, then that is a failure.

Especially in China today, the Communist Party always preaches about the "socialist rule of law," but in reality, their law is just a tool to protect the Party's power, to suppress dissidents, to legitimize their own wrongdoings. They use "rule by law" to cover up the "lack of virtue" of an entire system. When the law enforcers have no morality, when the law itself is created by the unvirtuous, then that "rule by law" is even more dangerous than lawlessness, because it wears the false cloak of "justice" to deceive the people and the world. The persecution of Falun Gong is a clear example: they created vague laws, imposed absurd charges to arrest and sentence peaceful practitioners. That is not "rule by law"; that is trampling on the law, on human justice.

For a society to be truly stable and develop sustainably, "rule by virtue" must be the root, "rule by propriety" (education through rites and culture) must be the trunk,

and "rule by law" should only be the branches and leaves, the last resort when morality is no longer enough to deter.

Julian Lee: (*Nodding in agreement.*)

Mr. Liu's analysis of the relationship between "rule by virtue" and "rule by law" is extremely profound. In Western political thought, there are also similar debates, for example, between the school of natural law, which holds that law must be based on universal moral principles, and the school of legal positivism, which only values the formal process of enacting law.

However, more and more thinkers are realizing that a legal system, no matter how rigorous, cannot in itself guarantee justice and stability without the moral foundation of society and of those who implement it. The law can punish wrongful acts, but it cannot sow the seeds of kindness. The law can prevent crime to some extent, but it cannot create a society where people voluntarily do good.

As Ms. Sophia and Mr. Liu have said, if people have faith in transcendent values, in karmic retribution, then the "law in the heart" will be even stronger than the law on paper. At that point, "rule by law" will become gentler, and will only play the role of a tool to regulate individual cases, not the main means of governance.

The fact that the CCP emphasizes "rule by law" while suppressing faith and destroying traditional morality is, in fact, a self-contradiction and they are digging their own grave. Because a "rule by law" without "virtue" as its foundation will only be a castle built on sand, which will sooner or later collapse before the storms of history and the judgment of conscience.

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

Exactly. Without virtue, nothing can be sustainable. That is something I have only come to deeply understand after so many ups and downs.

Sophia Bell:

I just recalled a saying, I don't remember where I read it, but it goes something like this: "For one with thin virtue to hold a high position, for one with meager wisdom to make grand plans, it is rare that they do not bring disaster..." Perhaps this is the main spirit of what we are talking about in our sharing today...

The Chinese Communist Party, with its thin virtue, has brought disaster to the Chinese people, culminating in the persecution of kind Falun Gong practitioners... and perhaps one day, as you both have said, the "retribution" will come, and it will have to pay for what it has done... Do you both agree?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Nodding slowly, his gaze firm and somewhat solemn)*

Ms. Sophia, that saying, although you don't remember the source, contains a great truth, a law of the universe that no one can escape. "For one with thin virtue to hold a high position, for one with meager wisdom to make grand plans"... that is precisely the portrait of the current leaders of the Chinese Communist Party, and also of those who initiated the persecution of Falun Gong.

They have no faith in Gods or Buddhas, no moral foundation, only a boundless ambition for power and the fear of losing that power. They use cunning schemes, cruel tactics to maintain their rule, to suppress good people. They consider themselves "great, glorious, and correct," but in reality, their wisdom is limited to vying for benefits, to deceiving and controlling.

The burden they are trying to carry – the fate of an entire nation, the stability of an entire region – but with such thin virtue and meager wisdom, how can they bear it? Disaster is inevitable, not only for themselves, but also for the nation they rule.

The persecution of Falun Gong is the pinnacle of that "lack of virtue" and "lack of wisdom." To persecute people who live by Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance, people who are bringing good moral values

to society, is not just a crime, but also an act of self-destruction of one's own nation's moral foundation.

And as you said, the law of Karma is unerring. "Good is rewarded with good, evil is met with evil." What they have sown, they will surely reap. The day "retribution" comes may not be tomorrow or the day after, but it will surely come. History has proven that no tyranny can last forever, especially a tyranny that has committed heinous crimes against its own people and against the universal values of humanity. I believe in that completely.

Julian Lee: (*Pensively*)

The saying that Ms. Sophia quoted, though it may be expressed differently in various cultures, its core meaning is universal. It is a warning about not exceeding one's own limits, especially the limits of morality and wisdom when holding great responsibilities.

From a historical and political perspective, we see many empires, many powerful leaders collapse not because of external enemies, but precisely because of mistakes stemming from arrogance, a lack of understanding of natural and social laws, and most importantly, an internal erosion of morality.

The Chinese Communist Party may have achieved certain material accomplishments, may have built a sophisticated control apparatus. But if the "virtue" of its

leaders does not match the power they hold, if their "grand plans" go against the interests and dignity of human beings, then sooner or later, those accomplishments will become meaningless, and that apparatus will collapse under the weight of the very crimes and mistakes it has committed.

The persecution of Falun Gong is not just a human rights issue; it is a sign of the regime's deep moral crisis. And just as Mr. Liu and Ms. Sophia have said, such actions cannot go without consequences. "Retribution" can be understood in many ways, from the judgment of history, the punishment of the law (though it may be late), to the laws of cause and effect that we may not yet fully comprehend. But one thing is certain: no evil can exist forever without paying a price.

Sophia Bell:

Yes, thank you both... We have shared perspectives on good and evil, on some ancient governing philosophies rooted in virtue, on karma and retribution... Our session is also drawing to a close, so I think we should conclude the third interview here...

Along with the content of the previous two sessions, we have heard Mr. Liu share his story, about the evil of the Chinese Communist Party through the persecution of

Falun Gong, about the crime of live organ harvesting.... The messages you have shared are all pressing issues of our time and require each of us, including the readers of THE EPOCH MEDIA, to look straight at the truth and choose to act according to justice and conscience...

Mr. Liu, if you were to say a few short but sincere words to the readers of THE EPOCH MEDIA, as a farewell for today's session, what would you say?

Mr. Liu Siyuan: *(Looking at Sophia and Julian with grateful eyes, then his gaze turns distant, his voice calm but filled with a powerful belief.)*

Ms. Sophia, Mr. Julian, and through you both, I would like to send a message to the esteemed readers of THE EPOCH MEDIA.

If there is anything I want to convey after all that I have been through, it is this:

Please hold firm to your belief in truth and conscience, no matter how dark the shadows may be. Because the light of Truthfulness-Compassion-Forbearance is eternal, and justice will ultimately triumph over evil.

Every truth that is spread, every voice that is raised for justice, is an invaluable contribution to making this world a better place. Thank you all very much.

Sophia Bell:

Thank you sincerely, Mr. Liu, for your incredibly profound and courageous sharing throughout these past three interviews. Thank you, Julian, for joining us and contributing your valuable analyses. We will do our best to convey these messages fully to our readers.

Julian Lee:

Thank you, Mr. Liu, for your trust and for sharing. Your stories and insights are truly an inspiration and a powerful reminder for all of us.

Mr. Liu Siyuan:

I would also like to thank Ms. Sophia and Mr. Julian for patiently listening and for creating the conditions for me to be able to say these things.

* * *

CONCLUSION

The three sessions of dialogue have concluded. No grand pronouncements, no loud drumbeats — only a man who once lived in the eye of a historical storm, now quietly recounting what he knows, what he believes, and what he could no longer remain silent about.

We do not expect every reader to receive everything in the same way. But if anything lingers in the end, perhaps it is the pang of a question in the heart: how much is being hidden beneath the veneer of what is permitted to be said?

The Red Veil seeks not to argue, nor to pass judgment. It is simply a journey of memory and conscience, recounted in the most sincere voice we could preserve.

And if these accounts can cause someone, somewhere, to pause and reflect — then perhaps, the book has done its part.

Sophia Bell

THE EPOCH MEDIA

* * *

ABOUT THE AUTHOR & THE EPOCH MEDIA PROJECT

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sophia Bell is an independent author who writes about culture, society, science, and spirituality, with the aim of seeking truth, awakening conscience, and reflecting on the destiny of humankind.

Her works often originate from real-life interviews, recorded with honesty, emotional depth, and a spirit of enlightenment.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

This book is part of a series published by THE EPOCH MEDIA – an independent publishing initiative with a global vision and a mission to preserve and spread timeless echoes. Without chasing the daily news cycle, we aim for books that can deeply touch the human consciousness.

CONTACT

- ✧ Website: www.theepochmedia.com
- ✧ Email: editor@theepochmedia.com
- ✧ QR Code:



OTHER WORKS IN THE SAME PROJECT

You can find other publications by THE EPOCH MEDIA:

- *Red Dust, Golden Light*
 - *After Power: The Legacy*
 - *Sunset and Sunrise of Science*
 - *The Red Veil* → this is the current book
 - *Echoes Before Time*
 - *Entering The World*
 - *The Last Bells*
 - *Before Us*
 - *Thousand Lives*
-

Thank you for taking the time to read this book!
May God and Buddha bless you on your journey of
discovering the truth.