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The Moral Crisis in China Part III – How the Communist Party Destroyed the Chinese Spirit

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Summary: What changed China from a country of such high moral standards to a country with such low standards? It did not happen overnight, but, after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) gained ascendancy in China in 1949, the change was both rapid and dramatic. To ensure its reign, the CCP consciously and systematically eradicated the Chinese people's spiritual beliefs and traditional Chinese culture. Part III of the series explores how the CCP destroyed the Chinese's people's spirit, their traditional culture, and consequently their morality.

The Moral Crisis in China

Part III – How the Communist Party Destroyed the Chinese Spirit

In Part I of the Moral Crisis series, we discussed the dramatic moral crisis occurring in China. In “Part II – Traditional Chinese Culture,” we explored China’s proud heritage as an “ancient civilization” which placed a high value on righteous acts and inner thoughts, where Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism either originated or took root; where people cultivated virtue and devoted their lives to attaining enlightenment; and where reaching the level of the divine and achieving a oneness with heaven were the fulfillment of life’s purpose.

What changed China from a country of such high moral standards to a country with such low standards? It did not happen overnight, but, after the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) gained ascendancy in China in 1949, the change was both rapid and dramatic. To ensure its reign, the CCP consciously and systematically eradicated the Chinese people’s spiritual beliefs and traditional Chinese culture. Part III of the series explores how the CCP destroyed the Chinese’s people’s spirit, their traditional culture, and consequently their morality.

I. Thou Shalt Have No Other Authority before Me

It is important to recognize the crucial role that religion and culture play in maintaining virtue in society. Culture, religion, and a belief in the divine, on the one hand, create a spiritual basis for people’s morality. They enable people to understand what right and wrong are and to consciously choose and nurture high moral standards in their daily lives. These standards are a guide to what people should and should not do.

The law, on the other hand, regulates people’s behavior. Law defines what people can do and cannot do. It prescribes punishment after the crime has been committed, while a milieu that nurtures virtuous behavior prevents crime from happening in the first place. For a country to be a great nation, both morality and the law have to be in place.

In over 5,000 years of history, the Chinese people recognized and internalized traditional values, values that played an essential role in establishing and maintaining

morality in China. For thousands of years, the Chinese people knew to respect divine beings; they believed that “good begets good and evil begets evil;” they emphasized the role of virtue in their lives and paid attention to ethics.

China’s high moral standards enabled Chinese culture to endure and became the only uninterrupted ancient culture in the world...until 1949, when the CCP took the reins of power.

The overall CCP theory was one of struggle, sugar-coated with a communist utopia. It knew that its atheist nature and theory of struggle could not attain ascendance in the face of religion and the deeply embedded traditional Chinese culture. It would have been an extreme form of hubris unheard of in traditional Chinese culture for any man to assert that his or any group’s own personal choice supplanted the divine as the source of righteousness. Therefore, the CCP needed to completely wipe out people’s spiritual beliefs and implant its communist theory into their minds.

After the Communist Party gained control of China, it instituted reforms and programs designed to have Communism itself define what was good. That is, if it was good for Communism, it was good. If it was not good for Communism, it was bad. To establish its authority, the Party had to supplant traditional culture and establish the legitimacy of the CCP as the one and only source to which everyone turned to determine what was right. It had to bring about a number of pervasive societal changes. The Party devoted the nation’s resources to eradicating all beliefs in higher powers, divine beings, and anything above Communism; to destroying China’s traditional culture; and to assimilating ethnic minorities and minority groups under Communism’s autocratic rule.

As the result, the CCP systematically eradicated traditional Chinese culture and demonized it as superstition. It extinguished Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism; it destroyed cultural relics; it eliminated spiritual beliefs; and it created a culture that fostered unquestioning and unconditional obedience to the Party itself. The loss of their spiritual beliefs made the Chinese people lose their moral bearings. They were indoctrinated with the Communist Party’s version of morality as a way of life.

II. Destroying the Chinese Spirit

A. Uprooting Established Religions

In the first two years alone after the Party came to power, two million people were killed for following their spiritual practice. For the next 30 years, no one dared to mention cultivation practice. Other widespread acts of destruction included demolishing temples, historical sites, and cultural relics; the burning of scriptures, and forcing Buddhist monks and nuns to return to secular life. By the 1960s, there were hardly any religious places left in China.

To show that the Party was open to other ideas and the existence of religion, the Party did allow some Buddhists, Taoists, and Christians to exist if they remained strictly under the Party's control. The Party founded the Chinese Buddhist Association in 1952 and the Chinese Taoist Association in 1957. Both organizations declared clearly in their founding statements that they would be "under the leadership of the People's government." In reality, they would be under the leadership of the atheistic CCP. Both associations indicated that they would actively participate in activities to implement government policies. These religious organizations were actually secular organizations. Members in these organizations were encouraged to pursue happiness, glory, splendor, wealth, and rank in this life. The Party had completely transformed religious doctrines, their inner meaning, and their purpose.

The Buddhists and Taoists who followed the traditional practices, were devoted, and abided by the precepts were labeled as counter-revolutionaries or members of superstitious sects and secret societies. Swept up by the revolutionary slogan "purifying the Buddhists and Taoists," they were imprisoned, forced to "reform through labor," or even executed. Even religions spread from the West, such as Christianity and Catholicism, were not spared.

Based on the statistics in the book *How the Chinese Communist Party Persecutes the Christians* published in 1958, even the limited number of documents that have been made public reveal that, among the clergymen who were charged as "landlords" or "local bullies," a staggering 8,840 were killed and 39,200 were sent to labor camps. Among the clergymen charged as "counter-revolutionaries," 2,450 were killed and 24,800 were sent to labor camps. [1]

Lenin once said, "The easiest way to take a fortress is from within." Controlled by the

children and grandchildren of Marxism-Leninism, the CCP naturally and tacitly understood this tactic. The CCP began its destruction of Buddhism by first uniting with some of its practitioners. They even sent Communist Party members underground to infiltrate the religion and subvert it from within. In a criticism meeting during the Cultural Revolution, someone questioned Zhao Puchu, who was the Vice President of the Chinese Buddhists Association, “You are a Communist Party member, why do you believe in Buddhism?”

At the inaugural meeting of the government-established Chinese Buddhist Association, many Buddhists in the association proposed that the Buddhist precepts be abolished. They claimed that these disciplines had caused the death of many young men and women. They also proposed that monks and nuns should be free to get married, to drink alcohol, and to eat meat.

Master Xuyun was at the meeting and saw that Buddhism was facing the danger of extinction in China. He stepped forward to oppose the proposals and appealed for the preservation of the Buddhist precepts and dress. Master Xuyun was then slandered and labeled a “counter-revolutionary.” He was detained in the abbot’s room and denied food and drink. He was not allowed out of the room even to use the toilet. He was also ordered to hand over his gold, silver, and firearms. When Xuyun answered that he had none, he was beaten so badly that his skull was fractured and bleeding and his ribs broken. Xuyun was 112 years old at the time. The military police pushed him from the bed to the ground. When they came back the next day and found Xuyun still alive, they brutally beat him again.

Buddhism forbids killing. During the “Suppression of Counter-revolutionaries,” [2] the CCP killed many people. The political monks thereupon rationalized their destructive acts with the justification that “killing the counter-revolutionaries is an even greater compassion.” During the “War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea” (1950-1953) [3], monks were even sent to the front lines to kill.

Take Christianity as another example. In 1950, Wu Yaozong [4] formed the “Three-Self” Church, which followed the principles of self-administration, self-support, and self-propagation. He claimed that they would break away from “imperialism” and actively join the “War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea.” A good friend of his was imprisoned for over 20 years for refusing to join the Three-Self

and suffered all kinds of torture and humiliation. When the friend asked Wu Yaozong, “How do you regard the miracles Jesus performed?” Wu answered, “I have discarded all of them.” Not acknowledging Jesus’ miracles equates to not acknowledging Jesus, so for the “Three-Self” Church to call itself a Christian Church was a misnomer.

The state-controlled church system has been ordaining bishops without the Vatican’s approval. In 2011, China ordained Lei Shiyin as the bishop of Leshan City, Sichuan Province, in June and Joseph Huang Bingzhang as the bishop of Shantou City, Guangdong Province, in July. Both ordinations were done without papal approval. The Vatican excommunicated them. China responded by calling the Vatican’s denunciation “extremely unreasonable and rude.” [5]

In an example of how the CCP dealt with ethnic beliefs, the CCP considered the traditions of the Hui Muslim group to be one of the “Four Olds” (四旧) – Old Customs, Old Culture, Old Habits, and Old Ideas. During the Cultural Revolution [6], the CCP started the “Casting Away the Four Olds” campaign [7]. The Hui people were forced to eat pork, Muslim peasants and mosques were required to raise pigs, and each household had to furnish two pigs to the country every year. The Red Guards even forced the second highest Tibetan living Buddha, the Panchen Lama, to eat human excrement. They ordered three monks from the Temple of Bliss located in Harbin City, Heilongjiang Province, which is the largest Buddhist temple built in modern times (1921), to hold a poster board that said, “To hell with the sutras—they are full of shit.”

The Party also destroyed temples and religious relics on purpose. The massive destruction occurred during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. The Cultural Revolution was, in fact, “revolutionizing” Chinese culture in a destructive way. Starting in August 1966, the raging campaign of “Casting Away the Four Olds” brought devastation to all of China. Regarded as objects of “feudalism, capitalism, and revisionism,” Buddhist temples, Taoist temples, Buddha statues, historical and scenic sites, calligraphy, paintings, and antiques became the Red Guards [8] main targets for destruction. Take the Buddha statues for example. There are 1000 colored, glazed Buddha statues in relief on the top of Longevity Hill in the Summer Palace [9] in Beijing. After the “Casting Away the Four Olds,” every one of them was vandalized. None of them has a complete set of the five sensory organs.

The first Buddhist monastery in China, the White Horse Temple (Bai Ma Temple), located outside Luoyang City, Henan Province, was unable to avoid disaster. The temple was built in 68 A.D., the eleventh year of Yong Ping in the Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220 AD). It is honored as “the Cradle of Buddhism in China” and “the Founder’s Home.” The Party incited peasants to destroy the over 1,000-year-old clay statues of the Eighteen Arhats built in the Liao Dynasty (916-1125 AD), burned the Beiyue scripture [10] that an eminent Indian monk brought to China 2,000 years ago, and smashed the Jade Horse, a rare treasure, to pieces.

B. Destroying Traditional Chinese Culture

The Party did not stop with eradicating religion. It also destroyed any traditional Chinese culture that had even the slightest religious overtone.

Before 1949, peasants farmed their own small pockets of land and observed traditional practices. In order to bring agriculture under Party control, they were brought into teams, cooperatives, and then collectives. Those who continued individual farming were labeled counter-revolutionaries. They had to attend meetings and were made to stay for days, and sometimes weeks, until they “voluntarily” agreed to join the collective. All religious, mystical, or spiritual institutions and ceremonies were abolished and replaced with political meetings and propaganda sessions.

During the Cultural Revolution, many traditional cultural materials were destroyed. For example, Zhang Bojun [11] had a family collection of over 10,000 books. The Red Guard leaders used them to make a fire to keep themselves warm. What was left was sent to paper mills and shredded into paper pulp.

Traditional Chinese characters embody the essence of 5,000 years of civilization. Each character’s form and pronunciation, and the idioms and literary allusions composed of combinations of the characters, all express profound cultural meanings. The nuances that the characters themselves evoke embody a deep and subtle richness that developed over centuries of refinement. The CCP not only simplified the Chinese characters, but also tried to replace them with Romanized pinyin, thus removing all cultural tradition from the Chinese characters and language.

For example, the characters of yin-yang (陰陽), a basic concept in Taoism, were simplified as (阴阳). The change is in the right part of the characters. In the traditional Chinese, the right part of yin (陰) means cloud (云) – no light; the right part of yang (陽) means sun (日) and moon (月) – with light. Traditional Chinese considers both sun and moon as yang. However, in the simplified Chinese, moon (月) became yin (阴) and sun (日) became yang (阳). The meaning has been completely changed and the richness eliminated.

進, advance, progress, has the meaning of walking (走之旁) into a better place (佳).

The simplified character (进) means walking (走之旁) into a well (井) (trapped).

Again, the meaning has changed.

The CCP has modified the Chinese language as well. The CCP introduced many terms into daily life, unconsciously changing the way people think. For example, due to its theory of “struggle,” much of the vocabulary that the CCP introduced is infused with meanings related to “battle” or “gangs,” such as:

革命 (revolution) – These two Chinese characters, when translated literally, mean “killing (革) life (命).” That’s exactly what the CCP’s revolution is. It is praised and promoted by the CCP on a daily basis.

战线 (war front) – A widely used term for many industries or systems. For example, the education industry is “education war front” (教育战线); ideology is now “thought war front (思想战线).”

同志 (comrade) – These two Chinese characters, when translated literally, mean “same (同) idea (志).” CCP members initially used it to refer to themselves as carrying the same idea of communism. Later it became widely used to replace all other personal relationships, such as parent-child, husband-wife, teacher-student, neighbor, association membership, etc. People just call each other 同志.

Music is another tool that the CCP uses to brainwash people. Party musicians took the beautiful melodies from ethnic groups’ traditional songs and added Party-praising lyrics. While people enjoy the music, they are unconsciously praising the Party.

For example, “The East Is Red” (东方红) was one of the most popular songs that the CCP promoted in China during Mao Zedong’s era. It was based on a folk melody from the Northern Shaanxi (province). The lyrics introduced by the CCP musicians praise Mao as the “savior” of the Chinese people.

“The Golden Hill of Beijing” (北京的金山上) [12] was based on a popular Tibetan song. But the lyrics liken Beijing to a divine hill and Mao to a god. The song became very popular throughout China, but what will the Tibetan people really think now when they hear their once beloved song?

The Party also ruined minority cultures. *Wikipedia* documented that “the Cultural Revolution wreaked much havoc on minority cultures in China.” [13] In Tibet, over 6,000 monasteries were destroyed, often with the complicity of local ethnic Tibetan Red Guards. In Inner Mongolia, some 790,000 people were persecuted. Of these,

22,900 were beaten to death and 120,000 were maimed during a ruthless witch hunt to find members of the alleged separatist New Inner Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. In Xinjiang, copies of the Quran and other books of the Uyghur people were apparently burned. Muslim imams were reportedly paraded around with paint splashed on their bodies. In the ethnic Korean areas of northeast China, language schools were destroyed. In Yunnan Province, the palace of the Dai people's king was torched, and in 1975, an infamous massacre of Hui Muslim people at the hands of the People's Liberation Army in Yunnan, known as the "Shadian incident" [14], reportedly claimed over 1,600 lives.

C. Reforming Intellectuals

Intellectuals pass on the traditional cultural, protect and nurture society's value systems, maintain social conscience, and, to a certain extent, help to maintain society's moral standards. The CCP put a huge amount of effort into silencing the intellectuals, reforming them, or even simply eradicating them.

In September of 1951, the CCP initiated a large-scale "thought reform movement." It started with the intellectuals at Peking University, requiring them to "organize a movement (among teachers in colleges, middle and primary schools, and college students) to confess their history faithfully and honestly, so as to cleanse any counter-revolutionary elements." [15]

At the end of February 1957, claiming to "let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend," the CCP called on intellectuals to voice their suggestions and criticisms of the Party, promising no retaliation. The people thought that the CCP had finally become open-minded, so they began to speak out and express their true feelings, and their criticism grew more and more intense.

On May 15, 1957, Mao Zedong wrote an article saying, "In recent days the Rightists ... have shown themselves to be most determined and most rabid. ... The Rightists, who are anti-Communist, are making a desperate attempt to stir up a typhoon above force seven in China ... and are bent on destroying the Communist Party." [16]

Officials who had been indifferent to the campaign had suddenly become enthusiastic and “earnest.” In her memoir, *The Past Doesn't Disappear Like Smoke*, Zhang Bojun’s daughter recounted:

Li Weihang, Minister of the United Front Work Department, called Zhang Bojun in person to invite him to a rectification meeting to offer his opinion about the CCP. Zhang was seated on a front row sofa. Not knowing this to be a trap, Zhang articulated his criticisms of the CCP. During the whole course, “Li Weihang appeared relaxed. Zhang probably thought Li agreed with what he said. He didn’t know Li was pleased to see his prey falling into the trap.” After the meeting, Zhang was classified as the number one “rightist” in China.

All of the intellectuals who criticized the CCP were later labeled “rightists.” There were more than 550,000 such “rightists” nationwide. Even some of China’s leaders, including Deng Xiaoping and then Prime Minister Zhu Rongji, were labeled “rightists.” Those who did not submit to humiliation were killed—serving as examples to terrorize other intellectuals. The traditional “scholarly class,” exemplars of social morality, was thus obliterated.

Mao Zedong said, “What can Emperor Qin Shi Huang brag about? He only killed 460 Confucian scholars, but we killed 46,000 intellectuals. In our suppression of counter-revolutionaries, didn’t we kill some counter-revolutionary intellectuals as well? I argued with the pro-democratic people who accused us of acting like Emperor Qin Shi Huang. I said they were wrong. We surpassed him by a hundred times.” [17] Not only did Mao kill the intellectuals, but more grievously, he also destroyed their minds and hearts.

III. Dictating How People Should Think

A. Controlling People’s Minds

From its inception, the CCP created a culture of terror to suppress any independent thought and to force the Chinese people to conform. Anyone who did not conform, including advocates of democracy, independent thinkers, skeptics within the CCP’s system, and members of spiritual groups, became targets for torture, disappearance, or extermination as a way to warn the public.

Ultimately, the Party's control and its surveillance became all-encompassing. It included a household registration system; a neighborhood residents' committee system, to which everyone had to belong; and a Party structure in every company and every village. Not only were individuals culpable, but the Party used its absolute power to punish relatives of those who were labeled "landlords," "rich," "reactionaries," "bad elements," and "rightists." Hatred became a way of life: "Bite into your hatred, chew it, and swallow it down. Plant the hatred into your heart so that it sprouts." [18] .

People were encouraged to turn in their family members and their associates, to create written materials to frame them, and to publicize and exaggerate their mistakes. That was the only way they were able to advance in this warped society.

Lies and deception became the norm. Some famous examples include: "The yield per *mu* (about 9.165 acres) was over ten thousand *jin*" during the Great Leap Forward (1958). "Not a single person was killed on Tiananmen Square" during the June 4th massacre in 1989. "We have controlled the SARS virus" (2003). "It is currently the best time for human rights in China."

In essence, the Party usurped the function that higher beings played in ancient China, but instead of enabling people to cultivate to a higher level or to achieve enlightenment, every person had to love, appreciate, and be grateful to the Party. Faith became blind faith in the Party. Loyalty became unquestioning loyalty to the Party. The purpose of the law was to serve the Party. The greatest honor was to devote your life to the Party.

People were indoctrinated with such phrases as: "Heaven and the earth are great but greater still is the kindness of the Party;" "We owe all our achievements to the Party;" "I take the Party as my mother;" "I use my own life to safeguard the Central Committee of the Party;" "A great, glorious and correct Party;" "An undefeatable Party;" "China would be in chaos without the Communist Party;" "China is so vast. Who else can lead it but the CCP?" "If China collapses, it will be a worldwide disaster, so we should help the CCP maintain its leadership."

How many people have died as a result of communism? A website [19] lists a large number of sources of information that detail the number of deaths under Mao's rule. One source that was listed, the *Washington Post*, published an article on July 17, 1994, discussing a 581-page report on this information. One quote: "This and other new evidence shows that the number of people who died in more than a dozen repressive, often violent political campaigns between 1950 and 1976 – especially the Great Leap Forward and the chaotic 1966-76 Cultural Revolution to create a new society – is millions higher than previously thought. According to some high estimates, Mao's repression, radicalism and neglect may have been responsible for up to 80 million deaths. ... While it is impossible to measure the violence done to the spirit of so many Chinese in a world turned upside down, the legacy of these traumas affects all of Chinese society. Furthermore, many have been left with a near permanent sense of insecurity. ... What Mao did was unleash mass movements against his rivals and the 'bad classes' of society. He did in fact target segments of society for repression, which sometimes led to public humiliation of the victims and death by torture, unchecked by any legal constraints." [20]

The Chinese people have lived in such fear that they feel compelled to follow a Party whose policies resulted in an estimated 80 million deaths; giving up their spirits became a matter of survival.

B. Stockholm Syndrome

On August 23, 1973, in Stockholm, Sweden, a former prisoner robbed a bank, took four female clerks hostage, and locked them in the basement. Six days later, after the ordeal was over, the victims had become emotionally attached to their captor and even defended him. The criminologist and psychiatrist Nils Bejerot, who assisted the police during the robbery, coined the term "Stockholm Syndrome." It can be viewed as a traumatic bonding and describes "strong emotional ties that develop between two persons where one person intermittently harasses, beats, threatens, abuses, or intimidates the other."

On May 14, 2005, Dr. Yang Jingduan, a Thomas Jefferson University Hospital psychiatrist in Psychiatry and Human Behavior, delivered a lecture at Harvard University in which he described how the Stockholm Syndrome applied to the Chinese people. He described four prerequisites for Stockholm Syndrome: "First, you

truly believe that your life is in danger and the abuser can kill you any time without hesitation. Second, the abuser will give you small favors, and, more crucially, give you water when you are in desperate thirst. Third, you are in total isolation from any other sources of information other than from the abuser. And fourth, you are made to think you have no escape.” [21]

Dr. Yang gave several examples, one of whom was Chunyan Teng, a former Falun Gong practitioner in New York who Amnesty International rescued from a Chinese prison. After she was released, Central Chinese TV (CCTV) interviewed her. She said, "I really do not want to leave here; the policemen in the labor camp are really like my relatives." She missed the prison and claimed that she was not persecuted there at all. Everybody was stunned. Amnesty International was puzzled, thinking that she was pressured to say what she did. In fact, however, she really felt that way; it was really what she thought.

Dr. Yang was asked whether such people are sick. “They really are. They are afflicted with Stockholm Syndrome. The Chinese people suffer from Stockholm Syndrome as a result of the CCP’s manipulation.”

Looking at the four prerequisites for Stockholm Syndrome, Dr. Yang described how they applied to the situation in China.

“First, you believe that your life is in danger and the abuser can kill you at any time without hesitation. The estimated 80 million lives lost after the Party’s take-over were the result of many large scale campaigns of slaughter: The Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries, Land Reform, The ‘Three Anti Campaign’ and ‘Five Anti Campaign,’ the Cultural Revolution, the June 4 Massacre, the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners, the Suppression in Tibet, and so on. The Chinese people got the message. They could be slaughtered at any moment.

“Second, the abuser will give you small favors. The CCP frequently claims: ‘The greatest human right is the right to live.’ This serves two purposes. It allows the CCP to claim it espouses ‘human rights,’ and it enables the CCP to appear benevolent because people’s lives could be annihilated at any moment and in an instant. It is the CCP that allows them to live.

“Third, you are in total isolation from any other sources of information other than from the abuser. The CCP maintains tight control over the media, which constantly pours forth its praise.

“Fourth, you are desperate and have no escape. You have no hope. Over the years, this is how almost all of the Chinese people have come to feel.”

So, not only did Chunyan Teng have Stockholm Syndrome, most of the people who live in China suffer from Stockholm Syndrome to some degree.

C. Three Case Studies

Few people have been able to study how being indoctrinated into having blind faith in and unquestioning loyalty to the Party have affected the Chinese people. Not only is China a closed society, but to express anything but complete satisfaction with the Party is dangerous.

The available information is therefore limited and primarily anecdotal. In 1992, Falun Gong, a spiritual practice of the Buddha School, following three principles of the universe – Zhen, Shan, Ren (Truthfulness, Compassion, Forbearance) was introduced in China. In 1999, Jiang Zemin the General Secretary of the CCP from 1989 to 2002, initiated a brutal crackdown resulting in many practitioners being put in prisons, forced labor camps, and brainwashing centers. A limited number of Falun Gong practitioners have escaped from Communist control. Once having healed in a free environment, they were able to discuss their experiences. Such experiences offer insight into how the CCP destroys the human spirit to force the victim to obey the Party.

Jana Bin Li, who presently lives in Los Angeles, became a Falun Gong practitioner in China in 1996. Although the Party banned the practice on July 20, 1999, Jana continued to practice. The Party arrested her three times and also interned her in a mental asylum. She described one instance of the torture she suffered after spending a year in a forced labor camp. “They demanded that I write a guarantee that I would not practice Falun Gong anymore and confess my crimes. I refused. Then they used two electric batons to shock me on my hair, my neck, my head, my arms, and my back. I could smell my scorched hair and skin and hear the

sound of the electric batons. I felt that my head was twisted. Several times when I couldn't bear the pain, I fell down and screamed. They pulled me up again to continue shocking me.

“It was a long and gradual process, but the lack of sleep, brainwashing, constant attacks, and daily torture wore me down. They kept telling me I was a really bad person to be in a labor camp and to cause so much trouble for the government, for the police, for my relatives, and for my mother. Finally, I even felt guilty for making those people torture me. Just because I existed, they had to spend time and effort torturing me. I went insane and totally lost my ability to think.

“Finally, I decided that I could maintain my belief, but publicly renounce it. It was the worst decision I ever made – for China, because each ‘success’ encouraged them to continue, and for me – for what it did to me. They made me say it in front of the entire labor camp. I had to say ugly words about our Teacher and wonderful words of praise about the Communist Party. To think about it is like remembering a nightmare, but I have to tell you. Afterwards my spirit died and I lost my conscience. I did not know who I was. I was someone else – an automaton created by the CCP. I was totally destroyed. I often burst into tears for no reason, even today.”

Jana gained her freedom and, in 2005, she told her story for the first time at an Amnesty International “Walk against Torture” in Oceanside, California. [22] She broke into tears, and many in the audience cried with her. She has been telling her story ever since.

Chen Gang became a Falun Gong practitioner in 1995. He described what happened to him after the persecution began in 1999.

“In the labor camp, because I refused to renounce Falun Gong, I was allowed less than four hours of sleep per night. Sometimes they deprived me of sleep for as long as 15 days. Even so, they would still force me to do hard labor during the day or physically torture me for long periods of time. Seeing that I would not give in, they asked ‘transformed’ people (those who had succumbed to the torture and brainwashing) to persuade me with all kinds of warped arguments. Once, in order to force me to renounce my belief, they tortured me with high-voltage electric batons for a long time, scorching a large area of the skin on my head and body.

“I will never be able to forget the agony. I was covered with wounds, my back was injured, and I lay in a bed like a dead fish, unable to move. The only thing I heard was the agonizing screams from other Falun Gong practitioners who were being tortured. Tears streamed down my face. I thought even hell could not be worse! What hurt most, however, was from inside. Since the persecution began, I had lost my excellent job and my loving family had been torn apart. I was sent to the labor camp and deprived of all dignity and rights. I was suppressed and insulted and lived a painful life worse than that of a slave. Even in such misery, the police still would not leave me alone and kept up the torture until they destroyed every bit of my dignity, my innocence, and my belief. They forced me to become someone I despised, they sullied my character and soul, and they trampled my hope for grace and wisdom. They forced me into a state of regret, shame, and self-disappointment. They were like devils that tortured and taunted me: ‘You deserve to live in hell! With no hope of ever getting out!’

“I dared not think about how to face my colleagues, friends, and neighbors, and how to face anyone I knew. I didn’t want to let them know that I was a coward, a treacherous, weak-kneed person. I broke down. I was gobbled up by anxiety, helplessness, and depression, and I almost lost the desire to live. Within a short period of time, I became old and feeble, to the point that when my wife came to visit me, she saw that my hair had turned gray, as if I had aged a dozen years in a couple of months.”

Looking at those who had been transformed, Chen thought, “That is the very nature of this persecution: good people are turned into violent hooligans and ruffians!” [23]

Many people who could no longer bear the torture gave in to the Party. The police arrested Jennifer Zeng in February 2000. After enduring extensive forced labor and torture, she pretended to be “transformed” to gain her freedom and write a book about her experiences. The Party wouldn’t let her go so easily. She had to write articles slandering Falun Gong and read them out loud in front of the whole group. As proof that she was actually transformed, she was ordered to transform other practitioners. “There was a girl. She was sent to the labor camp on the eve of my release. She was only 19 years old. I was given a last test before I was released. So the police made me watch her, to make sure she didn’t sleep. So after a whole night of not sleeping, I was

right beside her. Because I knew what would happen to her after I was released, I really didn't feel any lightness or happiness in my heart because I was going to be released that day. What was the point of me being released if she and all the others were still there?"

After her release, she was in shock, "It was so hard, and later on, when I realized what I had really done, the real remorse was so great that I wanted to give up writing this book because I was too ashamed of myself for having betrayed my beliefs."

Jennifer left her family in China and made her way to Australia, where she could finally be free of CCP control. Because it was important to let people know, she shared her experiences in her book, *Witnessing History: One Woman's Fight for Freedom and Falun Gong*. [24] She also told her story in the award winning documentary film, *Free China: the Courage to Believe*, directed by Michael Perlman. [25]

These three people managed to escape to freedom and recover their true selves. We can only wonder what it does to a person to be transformed and never escape to freedom. We can only wonder, when we hear a Chinese voice on a blog or in the media, whether that voice comes from the person's true self or from someone who became "an automaton created by the CCP."

IV. Conclusion

Mao left a legacy for the CCP and for China. He used the barrel of a gun to impose the will of the Party as the sole authority in judging good and bad. Jiang Zemin, further contributed to that legacy by encouraging official corruption. He sanctioned the widespread use of money and favors to reward people who toed the Party line. Thus, on the one hand, the CCP has destroyed the Chinese's people's individual spirits and forced and coerced them into following the Communist Party. On the other, it has provided material wealth and physical rewards for obedience. The Party's redefinition of "good" is "to devote every fiber of your being to the Party" and "evil" is "to commit acts that contravene the Party's will and supremacy."

Making a conscious choice based on a true understanding of high moral standards might lead to the person or his family being labeled an "enemy of the people," subject to humiliation, torture, and a physical or spiritual death, while submitting to the Party

might lead to safety and wealth. The choice is all the more difficult because the CCP has destroyed the spiritual, religious, and moral base that traditional Chinese culture used to provide. That base is now far too fragile to support anyone.

Given that this is the culture that pervades Communist China, is it any wonder that China faces a moral crisis? The better question might be, “How could it not?”

Part IV of the Moral Crisis series will deal with the means that individuals, groups, and religions, both inside China and in other countries, have used to deal with China’s moral crisis and with the issue of hope for China’s future.

Endnotes:

[1] *The Theory and Practice of the Chinese Communist Party’s Suppression of Religions* by Bai Zhi.

<http://www.dajiyuan.com/gb/3/4/15/n300731.htm> (in Chinese).

[2] The Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries campaign, which started in March of 1950, dealt violently with former members of secret societies, religious associations, and the Kuomintang (KMT). [3] The “War to Resist U.S. Aggression and Aid Korea,” as the CCP called it, broke out in 1950. It is commonly known in the Western world as the “Korean War.”

[4] Wu Yaozong (1893-1975 AD) and others published the so-called “Means for Chinese Christianity to Exert Efforts in the Construction of the New China,” also called the “Innovation Manifesto of Three Self” in 1950, and formed the “Three-Self” church thereafter.

[5] *Reuters*, “China criticizes Vatican for excommunicating bishops,” July 25, 2011. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/07/25/us-china-vatican-idUSTRE76O18220110725>.

[6] *Wikipedia*, “Cultural Revolution.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution.

[7] *Wikipedia*, “Four Olds.” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Olds

[8] “Red Guards” referred to civilians who were the frontline implementers of the Great Cultural Revolution. Most were youngsters in their mid-teens.

[9] The Summer Palace, located 15 kilometers (9 miles) from Beijing, was the largest

and best-preserved royal garden in China, with a history of over 800 years.

[10] In the Dai language, the Beiyue Scripture is pronounced Tanlan. Beiyue is a subtropical plant belonging to the palm family. It is a tall kind of tree with thick leaves, which are mothproof and very slow to dry out. In ancient times when paper was not yet invented, the Dai's ancestors imprinted letters or articles on the leaf. The letters carved on the leaf are called the Beiyue correspondence, and the scripture on it, Tanlan (Beiyue scripture).

[11] Zhang Bojun (1895-1969 AD) was one of the founders of the "China Democratic League," a democratic party in China. He was classified as the "number one rightist" in 1957 by Mao Zedong and was one of the few "rightists" who was not redressed after the Cultural Revolution.

[12] *Baidu*, "The Golden Hill of Beijing."

<http://baike.baidu.com/view/2109954.htm>

[13] *Wikipedia*, "Cultural Revolution."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_Revolution.

[14] *Wikipedia*, "Shadian incident."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shadian_incident

[15] *The Writings of Mao Zedong 1949-1976* (Vol. 2)

[16] *Selected Works of Mao Zedong* (Vol. 5), "Things Are Beginning to Change" (1957)

[17] Qian Bochong, *Oriental Culture*, fourth edition (2000)

[18] From the song of the modern opera "Legend of the Red Lantern," a popular official "Model Play" developed during the "Great Cultural Revolution" (1966-76)

[19] "Source List and Detailed Death Tolls for the Primary Megadeaths of the Twentieth Century"

<http://necrometrics.com/20c5m.htm>

[20] <http://www.paulbogdanor.com/left/china/deaths1.html>

[21] *Epoch Times*: An Analysis of Chinese People's 'Stockholm Syndrome'

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/5-5-30/29104.html>

[22] *Epoch Times*, "Amnesty International Walks Against Torture," October 28, 2005.

<http://www.theepochtimes.com/news/5-10-28/33823.html>

[23] *Stories of Conscience*, The Falun Gong Human Rights Working Group, 2005, P 56-57.

<http://www.falunhr.org/reports/2005/story.pdf> [24] Jennifer Zeng, 2006. *Witnessing*

History: One Woman's Fight for Freedom and Falun Gong, New York: Soho Press, Inc.

<http://www.amazon.com/Witnessing-History-Womans-Fight-Freedom/dp/1741144000>

[25] *Free China: the Courage to Believe*
<http://freechinamovie.com/>