

Our Future Is Shaped By the Freedoms We Uphold



**JOHN
DELLER**

If as a nation, Australia focuses on an ethical and moral base for trade, and gives voice to the values of our democracy and way of life, despite protestations from a foreign power, then Australia may prosper on its own terms.

The recent ABC Four Corners investigation 'Power and Influence,' and accompanying reports published in Fairfax media have shed light on how the Chinese Communist Party is infiltrating Australia. In 2016 at a China Matters conference in Perth WA, Stephen FitzGerald, a former Australian ambassador to China, also noted that Chinese Communist Party-directed interventions in Australia are "challenging fundamentals of our system like freedom of speech and the media and enquiry, and the very validity of our political system."

This challenge to our freedoms in Australia is well-known to many Australians of Chinese and non-Chinese background who practice the meditation discipline Falun Gong (also known as Falun Dafa), since the persecution of Falun Gong began in China in July 1999.

It is not widely known that Falun Gong was initially supported by the Chinese government following its public introduction by Mr Li Hongzhi in 1992. The teachings of Falun Gong emphasize ethical behaviour, high moral standards, personal growth, and responsibility for one's own actions. In December 1993

at the Asian Health Expo in Beijing Mr. Li was awarded the Most Acclaimed Qigong Master award and in March 1995 Mr. Li was invited by the Chinese ambassador to introduce Falun Gong at the Chinese Embassy in France. In 1998 the State Sports Commission estimated that upwards of 70 million people practising Falun Gong in China, including government officials, officers in the armed forces, and university lecturers.

However, former Chinese Communist leader Jiang Zemin opposed the popularity of Falun Gong and its renewal of an ancient spiritual discipline in the Chinese tradition of "cultivation" or "self-improvement" based on the principles of truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance (*Zhen, Shan, Ren* in Chinese).

To support his campaign to eliminate Falun Gong, Jiang implemented a massive media operation to demonise Falun Gong to all levels of society throughout China.

In addition, Jiang also directed Chinese Embassy and Consular staff to spread the official anti-Falun Gong propaganda to government leaders and influential people throughout the world, extending the persecution outside of China.

PRESSURE BY DECREE

This persecution extended to Australia. "Good relations" with China, including trade, were linked to Australia's acquiescence to the Chinese Communist Party's line on Falun Gong. This was emphasised in March 2002 during a press conference in Australia, when China's then Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan told Australia to refrain from supporting the activities of Falun Gong to preserve friendly and cooperative relations with China from being damaged in any way.

During Tang's visit, the then Foreign Minister Alexander Downer issued certificates to prevent Falun Gong protestors from having fixed or large banners across the street from the Chinese Embassy in Canberra. By August 2002, an Australian-based consortium had a contract to supply China with liquefied natural gas worth up to \$25 billion. The issuing of Mr. Downer's certificates did not cease until December 2006, after a legal challenge by Falun Gong practitioners in the ACT Supreme Court proved a success.

State Members of Parliament have also been directly pressured by Chinese Consulates in Australia to not have any contact with Falun Gong.

In 2007, *The Age* newspaper in Melbourne reported that in August 2006 Victor Perton, a Liberal member of State Parliament at the time, had sent an email to all 128 state MPs, inviting them to a briefing on a report about allegations of organ harvesting in China. Within hours, the Chinese Consul-General in Melbourne, Liang Shugen, apparently had a copy of Perton's email. What surprised Perton was that one of his colleagues would send his email straight to the Consul-General and that the Consul-General then sent an email to all state MPs, pressing them not to attend the briefing.

In August 2015, the Sydney Morning Herald reported that the Chinese Consul-General in Sydney, Li Huaxin, had written to the president of the NSW Legislative Council, Don Harwin and asked him to forward the correspondence to all NSW MPs. The Consul General's letter described Falun Gong as a "downright anti-China group" and pressed MPs not to attend a briefing at NSW Parliament House on international human organ harvesting and trafficking. Nine State MP's, who had previously confirmed their attendance, then cancelled after receipt of the Consul General's letter.

In addition to being the representative body for Falun Dafa (Falun Gong) in Australia, the Falun Dafa Association is the local presenter of the New York-based Shen Yun Performing Arts on its annual global tour.

Shen Yun's efforts to revive China's traditional culture, which is in essence a culture of cultivation of one's inner self within the lineage of Buddhist, Taoist and Confucian teachings, has met with ongoing harassment from the Chinese Communist regime. This is because Shen Yun presents the spiritual depth of traditional Chinese culture which the Chinese Communist Party has sought to eliminate, and because Shen Yun was established in 2006 by artists who practised Falun Dafa.

The Chinese Embassy and Consulates in Australia also pressure Members of Parliament and theatre managers around Australia not to attend or accept bookings for Shen Yun shows.

In March 2008, *The Age* reported that the Chinese Consul-General in Melbourne wrote to Victorian politicians urging them not to accept invitations to see the classical Chinese dance performance *Shen Yun* and stated, "In view of the

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

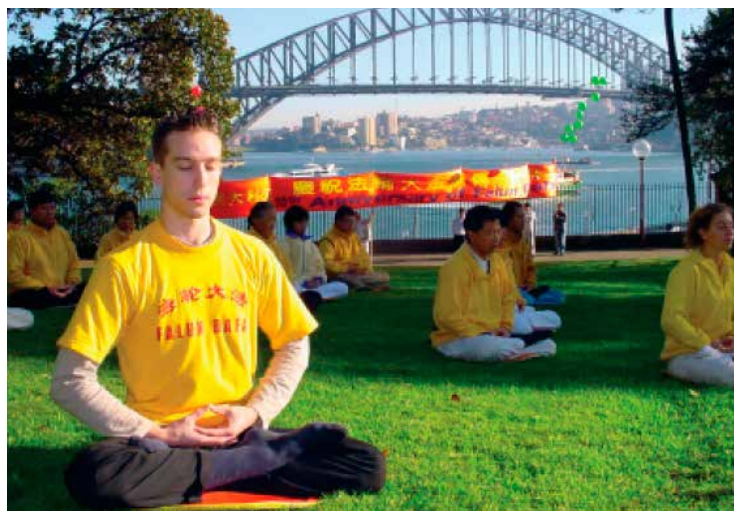




PHOTO: SUPPLIED

good relations between China and Victoria it's my sincere hope that you will not attend the performance and will also avoid any future contact with Falun Gong and its affiliates."

In 2010 and 2014 the Chinese Consulate in Sydney issued press releases to other Consuls-General and NSW MPs titled *Facts about Falun Gong and the so-called "Shen Yun Performing Arts,"* deriding *Shen Yun* and labelling it a political tool of Falun Gong.

More recently, two Chinese Communist Party propaganda articles against *Shen Yun* appeared in the (paid) *China Daily* supplement in Melbourne's *The Age* newspaper on January 13, 2017.

PRESSURE BY PROFIT

In addition to formal pressure from Chinese authorities, the impact of Chinese business tycoons with reported links to the Chinese Communist Party has been felt since the year 2000. The 2017 Four Corners-Fairfax investigation referred to secret briefings by ASIO's Director-General Duncan Lewis in 2015 to senior officials in the Liberal, National and Labor parties, warning them about accepting foreign-sourced political donations.

It is well-documented, even on Chinese Communist Party websites, that the Australian Council for the Promotion

Nine State MP's, who had previously confirmed their attendance, then cancelled after receipt of the Consul General's letter.

of Peaceful Reunification of China is one of many overseas branches of the China Council for the Promotion of Peaceful National Reunification, which was established by the Chinese Communist Party Central United Front Work Department and the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference.

Most Australians would not realise that the United Front Work Department has a high place within the Chinese Communist Party hierarchy under the Chinese Communist Party Central Committee. In addition to its role within China it is tasked with developing political and business ties overseas, and trying to influence foreign nationals to accept the Chinese Communist Party's views.

In an article in *The Conversation* in June this year, Associate Professor Feng Chongyi, of the University of Technology, Sydney, described the united front strategy as having two parts, "One is unity among friends under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The other is the life-and-death struggle against enemies of the state."

Tragically, peaceful, meditative Falun Gong practitioners have been cast as 'enemies of the state' under the Chinese Communist Party's campaign to eliminate them.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND POLITICS

In Australia, human rights are a legitimate area of political debate, and indeed a current focus with Australia's bid for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council in 2018. In China, only the Communist Party decides on matters of politics and labels any group that exposes its human rights abuses as an "anti-China political group."

Conflating the Chinese Communist Party with China, the nation and the people, is one of the greatest deceptions the Chinese government has committed against the long-suffering Chinese people.

Falun Gong practitioners care about the people of China and the people of Australia.

Over the past 18 years, we have learnt a lot about the machinations of the Chinese Communist Party, and we are seriously concerned that the Australian government has not fully understood the threat that accompanies engagement with the Chinese Communist Party and its envoys.

We acknowledge that in China there are good people who want to end the persecution of Falun Gong. How can Australia help? The same way Australia can help protect the people of Australia from a corrupting Chinese Communist Party influence.

Stop and consider what is

truly good in human life. If the sole focus is on making money we may end up rationalising any behaviour no matter how immoral it is, or who is hurt in the process. Consider the explosion of the billion-dollar organ harvesting and transplant industry in China under the Chinese Communist Party's control.

If as a nation, Australia focuses on an ethical and moral base for trade, and gives voice to the values of our democracy and way of life, despite protestations from a foreign power, then Australia may prosper on its own terms.

The human rights challenges facing Falun Gong practitioners, both in China and in Australia, are an important part of the conversation about how Australia-China relations will develop, and what sort of future Australians want for their country.

John Deller is the Honorary Secretary of the Falun Dafa Association of Australia Inc. For more information visit: www.falundafa.org

To read the Investigative Report on the Control of Overseas Chinese and the Implementation of Global United Front Strategy by the Chinese Communist Regime: www.upholdjustice.org/node/181