



Falun Gong and the Religion Question in China

This lecture will examine the rise of Falun Gong—and in fact the entire *qigong* movement—from the perspective of the history of religion in modern China. The invention of *qigong* was a compromise that sought to preserve traditional Chinese medical-spiritual wisdom in the face of the import of biomedicine in the early Communist period. It morphed into a popular movement during the chaos of the Cultural Revolution and became a mass movement during the reform period, claiming to be mixture of science and Chinese tradition. The ensuing persecution of the Falun Gong by the Chinese state has been seen in the West as a conflict between freedom of belief and Communist atheism.

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