

The Woman Behind the Hotline (Part 2)

A Ray of Hope

Dear Epoch VIP,

To say that The Epoch Times is a special media to me would be an understatement. It's been there for me ever since I was a little girl in China, and one of the few places where I know I can read the truth, regardless of what the government's media outlets may say or do.

When I was nine, my parents were arrested before my own eyes from our home in Beijing. They weren't criminals: just Falun Gong practitioners.

My mother, a hospital worker, had just been looking for a spiritual practice, a way to live around her many illnesses. My father, a professor and Chinese Communist Party (CCP) member, followed suit after he saw my mother's improvement in health.

When I was younger, my mom would tell me stories about how people would commit suicide during the Cultural Revolution because they were so humiliated. And before that, how the landlords had all of their money taken away, simply because everyone had to be "the same."

My parents used to tell me these stories about other people, but when the Falun Gong persecution began, **it finally happened to them too—even though my dad was a Party member who taught communism, socialism, and Marxism in school.**

In an instant, my parents were handcuffed and taken away from me to a labor camp, to a place I had no idea about. A place that the news never talked about. I had no idea what the authorities would do to my parents and it worried me.

I saw the brutal treatment of Falun Gong practitioners in labor camps for the first time in the Chinese-language edition of The Epoch Times (via a VPN). Though this knowledge made me extremely scared and gave me nightmares, it also brought a sense of security in finally knowing the kind of place my parents were taken to and that people like my parents were not forgotten. They wouldn't just disappear, no matter how much the CCP wanted them to.

Having lived through this experience, I can say there's no platform in China that gives a voice to the human rights victims. **For all the people who are persecuted and their loved ones—it's really a very alienating experience.**

But because there was a media like The Epoch Times, I felt less alone. It finally seemed like there was someone out there listening to me—to my parents—and hearing us.

When I was in high school, my parents (who had returned from labor camp by then) sent me to the United States as an exchange student. They told me to enjoy the freedom in America since by then, we all knew too well what a country without freedom for its people was like.

The American people that I've come across since then have been very nice, friendly, and helpful, and it's had a wonderful effect on me. But at the same time, it's always felt like some of them didn't really know what was going on outside of America.

In China, all of the elites and intellectuals—including those I saw on the news when I was younger—always said that due to differences in ideology, sooner or later there will be armed conflict between China and America. If you watch Chinese state-run news, the narrative (though it fluctuates based on the CCP's diplomatic needs) has always been anti-American.

It's not the Chinese people themselves, of course, that have something against America. But many Chinese people live in this environment where they're being brainwashed, and every day they're being told that America is the enemy. It was so strange to me that Americans, and the American government, didn't seem to have any reaction to this at all.

A media doesn't just keep things that people know about from being forgotten, like with my parents; it also brings into view things that people didn't previously know about, that they should know. That is why I take my job at The Epoch Times very seriously—so that the people I've met in America can have the knowledge they need to protect their freedom, and the people living in fear in China can have the knowledge they need to win it back.

In Truth and Tradition,

Teresa You
The Epoch Times

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Manager, Customer Service