

The Early Days of The Epoch Times

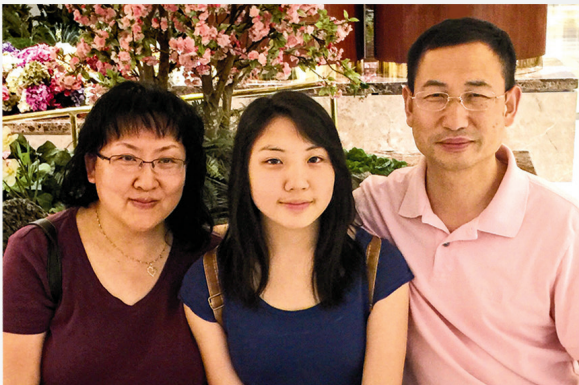
My name is Kirk Wang. As senior vice president of subscription at The Epoch Times, I am just one of the many who work behind the scenes to make sure each and every one of our readers gets access to our news. Today, I'd like to share my story with you.

My Journey to the United States

I was born and raised in communist China, where our textbooks taught us to “impale our enemies with a thousand spears.” Our problems were always caused by the “evils of American imperialism.” We had no freedom, only brainwashing and tyranny. It was a society where relationships between people were tense. People struggled against each other for limited resources, and after rounds and rounds of political campaigns that culled most of the kind and trusting people from society, only the most cunning could survive. This was not the world I wanted to live in. The mass slaughter of pro-democracy student activists in 1989 only confirmed my decision. So, when the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was forced by the West to loosen its authoritarian grip after Tiananmen, I left China.

Living the American Dream

My reason for coming to the United States was selfish at first: I just wanted to enjoy the freedoms of a democratic society and live a happy life. I didn't really think much about giving back. After coming over in 1993, I worked my way through two master's degrees and found a job as a software engineer. In 1997, my wife and I bought our first house. The down payment cost me all the savings I had back then—\$7,500—but I had a good feeling about it. Our neighbors also happened to be Chinese immigrants, a couple who practiced Falun Gong. The spiritual principles of Falun Gong taught people to be truthful, compassionate, and forbearing. It was a stark contrast from the China I knew, where every man was out for himself. Through this qigong practice, I was able to get in touch with the traditional values of Chinese spirituality, while the meditation exercises improved my health. My wife and I soon became dedicated practitioners. We had family, faith, and a home. And for a little over one year, everything finally seemed all right.



A picture of Kirk's family taken in 2015.

An Inflection Point

In July of 1999, the CCP selected the target of its next political campaign: Falun Gong practitioners. Overnight, the qigong practice that it used to praise widely was now slandered as a “dangerous cult”—a charge the CCP laid on its enemies—and all of its members were to be physically persecuted, and have their reputations smeared, and their finances cut off.



Kirk Wang, SVP of subscription, The Epoch Times.

I was even more shocked that all the mainstream news sources outside of China repeated the same lies as the CCP's state media. For the first time, I realized that even the United States might not be completely free from the influence of the CCP. I was faced with a choice. I could pretend like nothing was going on and continue to live life with my family, now including a little daughter. Or I could do something to fight back against the lies, and give a voice to the voiceless. I chose the latter. When The Epoch Times was founded in 2000, I was the first to join the production team in Atlanta.



A rally to raise awareness of the persecution of Falun Gong in Washington D.C.

Our First Issue

In the early days, most of us were scientists and engineers by trade (learning this kind of expertise was one of the few ways to get out of China). We didn't know much about newspapers. Coming up with our 14-page PDF for the first issue was a days-long struggle in an Atlanta basement. Our software crashed multiple times while we were working on our first issue. We learned the importance of pressing the “save” button rather quickly. If we didn't do so, hours of hard work could be erased in a second. What's more, the printing press we used back then couldn't make plates directly from computer files. So we had to print out our files on sheets of 11-by-17-inch paper, stick them together two by two, and send them to the press, which would then make films out of the physical papers. Now it seems silly what we had to do to make that first issue. But when I finally emerged from that basement after our last all-nighter with the completed proof behind me, there was no better feeling. When I felt the sunlight on my face, a calm determination welled up inside me from the depths of my heart; it assured me that despite all the challenges still ahead for The Epoch Times, truth would win out over lies in the end.

I burst into tears.

The Road Since Then

That was 22 years ago, and since then, things have been anything but easy. During those years, we almost went bankrupt several times. We hardly had any employees. I soon realized that I had to do this newspaper thing full-time if we were going to have a fighting chance at success. So I quit my cushy desk job to give my full attention to The Epoch Times. Saying it now, it's just a few sentences. But hidden within them are countless other stories: nine years of constant travel and being away from my family for one to three months at a time, my neighbors thinking my wife was a single mother, my young daughter crying for me whenever I had to leave home yet again, seven-day workweeks, no vacations, sleepless nights wondering if I'd be able to pay my bills—the list goes on and on. But every time I get to chat with a reader, I am reminded of why I do this, and of that calm determination I felt in my heart so many years ago. When a person has found the truth, you can see it in her eyes and hear it in his voice. There's something warm and pure about it, something that feels like sunlight.

Why I Keep Walking

Thinking back to why I gave up my comfortable life all those years ago, it came down to one thing: If I ever had my back up against a wall, I'd want people to fight for me, too. It's a complete 180 from the “every man for himself” logic that I was raised on, and I'll admit that it's taken me quite a while to unlearn those habits completely. But America is a nation whose sons and daughters are willing to give their lives for the freedom of those they'll never meet—and that spirit is both very special and very contagious. You, our readers, embody that spirit. Each one of you is a warrior who is willing to fight for the truth and the freedoms we're entitled to as part of our humanity. My only goal in working for The Epoch Times is to serve the men and women like you, so that you can have a reliable source of information to guide your decisions. It is a privilege to serve Americans like you, and to be a small part of the fight for our freedom. It's the least I can do for the country and the people who have shown me the best of humanity.

In Truth and Tradition,

Kirk Wang
The Epoch Times



Kirk Wang, Dr. Robert Malone, and Jill Malone at CPAC 2022 in Orlando, Fla.

“Epoch Times, by the way, all the way through [COVID-19], has been a truth teller.”
—DR. ROBERT MALONE

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