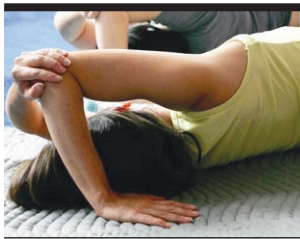


# HEALTH & LEISURE FOCUS

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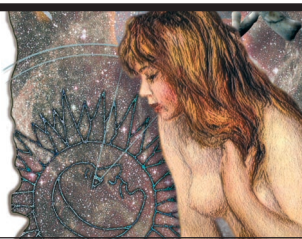


## FELDENKRIAS BENDS IN BUDAPEST

Page 2

## THE STARS HAVE THE ANSWERS

Page 2



## TRADITIONAL TAI CHI FOR WOMEN

Page 3



# Peacefulness under pressure

The story of a controversial Chinese practice now in Hungary, the Central European University and an angry Chinese Embassy

Richard Szabó  
The Budapest Sun

**AFTER** years of suffering from back pain and sore hips, knees and ankles, Tibor Horváth says that he found the cure. Five simple exercises called *Falun Dafa* (better known to the wider world as *Falun Gong*) completely relieved him of his pains, he claims.

Having practiced *Kung Fu* since the age of seven, he enjoyed good health. But, over the years, excessive strain took its toll, causing significant damage to his muscles and tendons. By the time he was 19-years-old simple tasks like walking, bending over or lying down would all cause him intense pain.

But things turned for the better after he attended *Falun Dafa* sessions in Budapest. "I saw an improvement within the first month of practicing.

"I used to feel very heavy and tired and this feeling completely disappeared after the first few months.

"As for my tendon pains, they were gone within one and a half years – I no longer suffer from these symptoms," he said.

First made public in China during 1992, this previously secret form of *qigong*, or "Chinese yoga" as some call it, consists of four slow, gentle and smooth standing movements and a sitting meditation.

*Falun Dafa* has since spread worldwide and is now practiced by 100 million people in 60 countries. It has received thousands of awards, proclamations and letters of appreciation from governments as well, recognizing its health benefits and contribution to society.

The Chinese government had also presented awards to *Falun Dafa*, but banned it in 1999, arresting its followers.

The Chinese Embassy in Hungary justifies the move, describ-

ing *Falun Dafa* as a doomsday sect that is bent on overthrowing the regime. Upon closer inspection, the teachings of *Falun Dafa* do contain elements that are critical of Chinese Communist ideology. However, its core principles are based on ancient Buddhism and Taoism, summed up as "Truth, Compassion and Tolerance."

### POPULAR MOVEMENT

Horváth believes that the Chinese government changed its stance, because it feared losing power to a more popular movement.

"*Falun Gong* became very popular and strong in many countries. The Chinese leadership believed that it would empower a change in society, so they tried to remove and denounce it," said the 30-year-old.

Amnesty International's Budapest office has expressed concern over China's arbitrary detention of tens of thousands of *Falun Dafa* practitioners.

Many of them held in labor camps and psychiatric hospitals have reportedly been ill-treated and even tortured for refusing to renounce their beliefs.

Statistics compiled by the global *Falun Dafa* community estimate that, to date, more than 3,024 practitioners have died as a result of China's persecution. Human Rights Watch says that the actual number may be as high as 10,000.

An investigative report recently made public in Hungary by Canadian human rights lawyer David Matas, details transcribed phone calls to China's health and military institute staff.

Many interviewees openly admitted to harvesting the organs of *Falun Dafa* practitioners, which are allegedly sold to foreign transplant patients.

A spokesman from the Chinese Embassy dismissed the report as groundless, calling it negative *Falun Dafa* propaganda. The



**FALUN DAFI PRACTICE ON BUDAPEST'S MARGIT ISLAND:** Qigong exercises and seated meditation give you "truth, compassion and tolerance," say its practitioners. A doomsday sect bent on overthrowing the government, say the Chinese authorities.

embassy did, however, take Matas' recent visit to Budapest quite seriously.

Sources told *The Budapest Sun* that the organizers of his presentation, in cooperation with the student-run Human Rights Student Initiative, attempted to book an auditorium at the Central European University.

Within hours of the request the Chinese Embassy called and pressured the External Affairs office into stopping the event.

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The External Affairs office flatly denies the claim, stating that the event would have called into question the non-political status of the CEU.

But university policy states that the CEU must affirm, assure and protect the right of students to organize and join political associations, publicize opinion and conduct public meetings.

Sources from within the CEU

say that the actual reason behind the decision was that enrollments have significantly dwindled over recent years.

Diplomatic tensions with China were feared to create an even bigger drop in student numbers.

When asked about the incident, the Chinese Embassy replied that bilateral relations between China and Hungary are very good at the moment.

For this reason they did not want anything to interfere with that.

Some Budapest shopping centers have similarly refrained from hosting *Falun Dafa* events. An Asia Center spokeswoman confirmed the local organization tried to organize an art exhibition in late 2005.

After discussing it with the Chinese Embassy, she decided not to allow it, fearing that it would jeopardize their relationship.

The *Falun Dafa* community



**TORTURE CLAIMS:** An artist's rendition of the torture *Falun Dafa* practitioners say have been used against them in China

has recently celebrated an European Parliament resolution, which condemned China's human rights and expressed concern over the organ harvesting.

The Chinese government has responded to this, enacting new

laws that prohibit organ sales.

Some Hungarian MPs are calling for further action. They say that locals should be informed about the risks involved in accepting an illegally removed organ, and the possible legal repercussions.

# Prepare for the sun, drop the lotion

Moni Oyeyele  
The Budapest Sun

**AS** the summer appears to be coming early this year, most women – and, fortunately, more and more men – feel a strong need to beautify their skin and hair, as impurities are even more visible in the bright sunshine.

But before you run to the nearby *drogerie* for the most effective, fashionable and expensive cosmetics, here is what one expert

says about them, and how you can substitute them.

"There are many beauty products that are totally unnecessary to buy and use, as they do not have any positive effect – except on the bank balance of their producers," Vali Antal, beautician and bionomist says.

"For example, it is totally needless to buy a make-up removal facial wash, as its ingredients are usually more or less identical to any body lotion. Pure olive oil can be an alternative: it does not have

carcinogen ingredients, and it cleanses well," she says.

### USELESS

According to Antal, it is also useless to buy facial tonics, as they only contain water, alcohol and, in the better cases, some fruit extracts.

These are extremely easy to prepare at home: get some water, add a little alcohol (easily bought in the pharmacy), drop in some previously soaked healthy plants – orange, lemon peel, parsley, car-

rot, dried herbs, etc). You can add richness to it with some fresh fruit or vegetable juice, or herbal tea.

"But the simplest facial tonic is cucumber! When I cook, I always rub a slice of cucumber on my face."

The beautician tells *The Budapest Sun*, that many cosmetics are based on lies, pure and simple.

For example, a split hair end is unable to soak up any ingredient, thus, purchasing a hair end

repair lotion is a waste of money. If one has a problem with the hair end, it should be treated from "inside" with a purifying diet and a conditioner that effects the head's skin.

### ADDICTION

"Similarly, we do not need lip balm from the shop either, as most of them actually dry the lips out, and they cause addiction. For dry lips, it is better to use real grape oil, cocoa- or shea butter. The most easily duped age group

is the teenagers, who will just buy anything, provided it claims to be anti-pimple," Antal says vehemently.

"The fact is: pimples should be treated 'internally', by giving up rubbish food and drink, sleeping enough and spending time in the fresh air.

"It is annoying to know how many useless and cell-destroying mixtures are being sold at a high price for teens. Instead of following the trendy advertisements, they should visit a beautician who cleanses their face and can advise them on nutrition."

● Continued on page 3 as  
*Cosmetic cancer concerns*