Description of Eastern Lightning

“Eastern Lightning is a particularly virulent cult that parades as a Chinese house church network. Started in 1989 in central China, Eastern Lightning quickly spread across China and then overseas.”

“Eastern Lightning blasphemes that Jesus did not rise from the dead and will not come again. Instead, Eastern Lightning claims that God already has returned, this time as a Chinese woman whose teachings must be obeyed in order to be saved from Armageddon, supposedly soon to start in China.”

“What makes Eastern Lightning particularly virulent is that in China, it aims deceptive, well-organized attacks at only house churches and their leaders.”

“The attacks typically begin with infiltration of an underground church to identify its leaders and their respective financial, social or sexual weaknesses. Once the leaders have been trapped via gifts, favors, money or sex that target those weaknesses, they are exposed to the teachings of Eastern Lightning and pressured to join it.”

“Those who join are required to turn over all of their assets, leave their families, live in the cult's communes and obey all of its orders, including those to infiltrate other house churches.”

“Those who refuse to join are blackmailed, kidnapped, beaten, poisoned and/or murdered with alarming frequency. The large number of underground churches that have fallen victim to Eastern Lightning attests to the brutality of the tactics commonly used by this cult, which is now also using websites and other media to recruit and to infiltrate.”


“The key figures in Eastern Lightning include a Chinese woman named Deng, the supposed female messiah, and a Chinese man named Weishan Zhao, a former member of Shouters, another sect, who has moved to the United States to direct Eastern Lightning's activities from safety.”