

# Meditation Campaign Reaches One Million Minutes

## Tens of thousands donate positive thoughts towards ending the persecution of Falun Gong

By **RONNY DORY & GARY FEUERBERG**  
Epoch Times Staff

WASHINGTON—Facing the U.S. Capitol on the National Mall, scores of meditating and praying individuals were earnestly trying to build up “capital” of positive energy to end the 10-year persecution of the spiritual practice of Falun Gong. Held on Sunday, July 19, it was one day before July 20, when 10 years ago, the communist Chinese regime initiated a campaign of imprisonment, defamation, torture and death of adherents of the ancient spiritual practice.

Following the meditation portion of the event was a rally, “Freedom For Falun Gong,” where original songs were sung on the persecution of Faun Gong. Two invited speakers urged the U.S. government to put human rights before trade, and demand that the communist regime bring an end to the killing of innocent people.

During the interludes between musical acts, one of the event’s organizers Caylan Ford read annual summaries of the Chinese Communist Party’s brutal persecution, year by year from 1999 to 2008. Her factual account of the history of the persecution defies the notion that human rights were improving in China. The record shows over the years, more arrests, more torture, practitioners dead within days, sometimes within hours, after being taken into police custody, thousands still sent to re-education through labor (RTL) camps, and practitioners’ organs—heart, liver, kidney and corneas—taken from live practitioners.

The Rally and Mediation events were the culmination of a month’s long campaign to raise one mil-

lion minutes of meditation to “bring peace to China by finding it in yourself,” the campaign slogan. In one of the tents was a picture of a thermometer showing the number of minutes accumulated, and it was updated periodically. It was around 900,000, a little short of the goal, at 2 p.m. Most of those minutes had been donated online at the Million Minutes of Meditation website, which began in May 2009.

How was “meditation” defined? For purposes of this campaign, Jared Pearman, the event’s organizer, said “Any time you spend contemplating the value of truthfulness, compassion and forbearance—the principles of Falun Dafa—or the universal principles in your life that you consider good...we are calling meditation. All of that is to be added up to a million.”

The idea is to show solidarity and support with everyone—regardless of their faith—to be able to exercise their rights to practice one’s faith or religion.

“The object of today’s rally and concert is to help people understand what Falun Gong is. A lot of people have heard about it on the news, you’ve read about the persecution going on in China, but not that many people have actually had a chance to experience Falun Gong,” said Pearman.

Ken and Marie from Washington, D.C., who were shy about giving their last names, stopped by to donate minutes of mediation. “We were in the right place at the right time,” said Ken. “It’s a really great cause, we can use the positive energy and it’s a positive way to get freedom,” said Marie.

At the end of the day, Pearman announced that by combining the online count with the count at the



Anders Erikson plays during the concert and rally at the Million Minutes of Meditation on July 19 at Washington, D.C. JEFF NENARELLA/THE EPOCH TIMES

Mall, they had reached the million minute goal.

### SUFFERINGS OF A DAUGHTER

Two victims of the Falun Gong persecution came to the mediation event and were invited to speak of how the persecution had impacted their life.

Jin Pang was 15 years old when the violent persecution began on July 20, 1999. She saw many Falun Gong practitioners arrested and their houses ransacked, while the state-controlled media slandered Falun Gong. Her mother, Junping Cao, was a practitioner whose dermatitis was cured soon after practicing, said Ms. Pang.

“The happy times for my family were destroyed. Even though I was young, I had to confront the local policeman and residence committee members who harassed my mom almost everyday....In 2000, she was tortured because she did the exercises in the public park. The police shocked her with an electric baton until the battery was dead. They beat her with spiked clubs and dragged her by her hair in the Weifang Xingbu police station.”

In 2008, just before the so-called “peaceful Olympics,” Pang’s family was beset with more interference.

Her mother and aunt were among the 10,000 Falun Gong practitioners who were rounded up and sent to forced labor camps.

“...my parents house in Weifang city, Shandong province, was ransacked twice...our valuable property was confiscated by the ...Public Security Bureau. They stole my father’s car and still haven’t returned it.”

Her mother and aunt were taken away. Junping Cao, 51, has been held in the Qingzhou detention center for 12 months. Her daughter said that at one point she was not allowed to sleep for five straight days, and the authorities are not allowing the family to have any contact. She worries constantly about her mom and other moms who have also experienced the persecution in China.

Jin Pang now lives in the U.S. She spoke when her friends Randall Effner and Sara Effner, a father-daughter folk duo, were performing “Dear Mother” at this event. Ms. Pang sometimes performs with them playing the erhu. You can hear this moving song and read its words of anguish at: www.justicewillprevail.com.

Another performer at this rally, Angela Li, sang in Chinese, “Leaving for Tiananmen.” Ms. Li was arrested for going to Tiananmen

Square in July 1999 and saying, “Falun Dafa hao,” which translated means “Falun Dafa is good.” “Leaving for Tiananmen” is about a daughter explaining to her mother why she must risk her life to appeal for Falun Dafa.

In the beginning of the persecution, many practitioners went to Tiananmen Square to appeal. One can find the words on Web site cited above, which is where you can hear it sung in (mostly) English by Sara Effner accompanied by Randy Effner. The haunting melody begins with these two verses:

“Mama tomorrow I’m leaving home

For Dafa’s name, I feel that I must go

It pains my heart to see your black hair turn gray

I know you worry that they’ll take me away

“Mama, please don’t you worry for me

Truth has been safeguarded since antiquity

Dafa has taught me to seek Zhen-Shan-Ren

[Truth-Compassion-Forbearance]

Now I’m prepared to face the storms ahead.”

### STORY OF PRACTITIONER DONGWEI BU IN FORCED LABOR CAMP

Another victim and eye-witness of the persecution who spoke at the rally was Dongwei Bu, who was held at the Tuanhe forced labor camp in Beijing for three years. It was Bu’s second time in a labor camp; in 2000, he was sentenced for one year for the same reason.

“On May 19, 2006, six or seven policemen intruded into my home, searching for a pretext to arrest me. They found several Falun Gong books and took me to a detention center, where I was locked in a small room with 30-35 people for over three months.”

“[In the labor camp] we were forced to stand still for long periods of time, were permitted to sleep only a few hours of time, given very poor food, and were not allowed to use the

bathroom at will. We were also made to read materials defaming Falun Gong, as prison guards tried to force us to recant our beliefs. Many practitioners were beaten and shocked with electric batons,” said Bu.

Mr. Bu speculates that he was treated relatively better than other practitioners because, unbeknownst to himself, he was an Amnesty International Prisoner of Conscience, and the authorities must have received many letters of inquiry of his condition.

He was also fortunate in being able with his daughter to join his wife in the U.S. soon after he was released. Bu asked the audience to continue to help stop the persecution.

### ARTISTS COME TO SUPPORT MEDITATION DAY

Besides the musicians mentioned already, many others came to offer their talents in this day of mediation, music, and personal sharing of accounts of commemorating the 10th anniversary of the persecution of Falun Gong.

Coming down from Connecticut, rock band Light Club present Chinese human rights issues in the form of American rock music.

Margot Macdonald performed “Whispers of the Dove” and “Hallelujah,” a tour de force in singing technique. MacDonald is an artist in residence at the music center at Strathmore, and the recipient of the 2007 Artist of the Year and 2008 Modern Rock Vocalist award at the Washington Area Music Awards.

Drew Parker sang “Mother China,” a song taken from his debut album, which is receiving a lot of praise. Parker, an upcoming musician from the Toronto area, sings in the acoustic pop-rock genre.

Courtney Dowe sang “Tuidang,” which is about renouncing one’s membership in the communist party and its affiliated associations. It brought much applause especially from the Chinese people viewing the performance. Melodic, soul singer and writer, Dowe has been busking on the streets and in the parks of Washington, D.C. for years.

# The Nation’s Capital Commemorates a Decade of the Persecution of Falun Gong in China

## Congress Members and Human Rights activists condemn China’s brutality

By **GARY FEUERBERG**  
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WASHINGTON—Marking the 10th year since former Chinese leader Jiang Zemin banned the practice of Falun Gong, over 1,000 practitioners from many parts of the world protested July 16 at a rally in front of the Capitol and heard speeches from 9 or 10 Congressmen and women. Speakers from human rights, religious and pro-democracy organizations also added their words of condemnation of the Chinese communist regime’s harsh policies towards Falun Gong practitioners, ethnic minorities, religious adherents, and democracy advocates.

Of special note in this year’s rally was the presence of Geng He, the wife of renowned lawyer, Gao Zhisheng, who on Feb. 4 was abducted and feared tortured and killed by Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Security. Gao’s wife and two children only this year managed to escape from China and were awarded asylum in the U.S.

It was July 20, 1999 that “the CCP launched a campaign to eradicate Falun Gong,” said Gail Rachlin, from the Falun Dafa Information Center and the host for the event. “It was a conscious and deliberate decision by [former Communist leader] Jiang Zemin and taken up by the CCP propaganda,” said Ms. Rachlin.

The tone of the rally was set early on by the first speaker, Dr. Sue Vaughn from Freedom House, an organization that has been closely monitoring the status of democratic and human civil liberties in China for several years.

“Chinese citizens cannot democratically choose their leadership at any level of government...they cannot enjoy the most basic rights and civil liberties of a robust free society...cannot organize, protest or criticize their government. They cannot express their political opinion or



Over 1,000 practitioners from many parts of the world protested July 16 at a rally in front of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. LISA FAN/EPOCH TIMES

freely practice the religion of their choice,” said Dr. Vaughn.

“The Chinese government in terms of pervasiveness and cruelty is the worst violator of human rights on the earth,” said Congressman, Chris Smith of New Jersey. “...too many in the European community and the United States act as if it is not happening,” he said. “We need to remind President Obama that first and foremost [should be] human rights; trade and commerce issues come second.”

“The use of torture [by China] has been documented over and over again and by the United Nations,” Rep. Smith said he believed that the forced abortions and sterilizations in China to be the “greatest crime against women,” making it illegal to have brothers and sisters.

Congressman Smith called for a reexamination of our trade relations with China, saying, “all of that grinds to a halt unless you treat your citizens with respect.”

Other Congress Members, who managed to quickly break away from their voting responsibilities in the

House that was ongoing during this rally, were Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL), Gus Bilirakis (FL), Wm. Lacy Clay (MO), Anh “Joseph” Cao (LA), Roscoe Bartlett (MD), Lincoln Diaz-Balart (FL), Dana Rohrabacher (CA), and Sheila Jackson Lee (TX).

Representatives Scott Garrett (NJ), Thaddeus McCotter (MI) and Rush Holt (NJ) were scheduled to speak but did not make it.

Congressmen Cummings (MD), Engel (NY), Pascrell (NJ), and Perlmutter (Colorado) provided written statements as did Senator Mark Udall (Colorado).

### RELIGIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT CHINA’S PERSECUTION

Several of the speakers came from a religious background, and focused particularly on the religious aspect of the Falun Gong persecution in China, namely a peaceful non-violent people being brutally treated. They recognize that Falun Gong is an ancient, peaceful meditation and exercise practice.

Patricia Burkhardt, representing Church Women United, spoke of

the persecution as a “vicious attack on people practicing a peaceful way of life.” She characterized the last decade of persecution as “one of the largest human tragedies that mankind has ever known.”

Reverend Patrick Mahoney, Christian Defense Coalition, said at the rally: “I stand in solidarity with every person who was ever brutalized.” Rev. Mahoney, with some of his faith, laid roses in Tiananmen Square just before the Olympics. He said it was no disgrace, but rather an honor, to be arrested and expelled from the country.

Yanjun Sun, a scholar in religious studies, openly withdrew from the CCP early this year. As a consequence, he and his family in China have been persecuted. He first praised Falun Gong as “the most sincere, kind group, and possessing great wisdom.” Mr. Sun said: “The Chinese communist regime tries to stir up conflicts among different ethnic groups to make them hate each other...The Chinese Communist Party is the most dangerous enemy of mankind...”

### “GOD IS ON OUR SIDE”

The Gao family—not just lawyer Gao—had suffered tremendously under their constant surveillance, interference, deprivation, and physical abuse by the CCP.

“I can speak out what is on my mind without any danger,” said Gao Zhisheng’s wife Geng He. Describing the persecution of Falun Gong, she said that when Gao learned the details about it, he was “shocked” and it “made his heart extremely heavy.”

Geng said she remembered the day Gao learned about the truth of the persecution. As he was reading through the materials, he had tears in his eyes the whole time which became red and swollen, she recalled.

“From that day on, he was determined to take the responsibility to seek justice for this group of people,”

Geng said.

Gao risked his life to go to Shandong, Hebei, and Northeast China to investigate the facts of the persecution of Falun Gong practitioners. Geng said that Gao realized that it was not only the Falun Gong practitioners who were brought much pain, but that the continued policy of the persecution of Falun Gong has affected the nation. It made people “lose their humanity, lose their morality, brought a feeling of shame and guilt, and affected the most fundamental values.” “This is a terrible thing and the most unfortunate thing for the nation,” said Geng. She said she was also speaking for Gao.

Geng closed with words from Gao:

“Gao has said: ‘to end this nation’s sufferings, we must have people with high morals; Falun Gong practitioners have done it, we must do our part.’ Not to mention that there is God, whose Will cannot be resisted.”

### THREE WORDS

Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart of Florida said “three words” as he pointed with his index finger to one of many demonstration signs held by practitioners that displayed “truthfulness, compassion, and tolerance.” He said how often when he is on the floor of the Congress he thinks they could use a dose of one of those principles, i.e., tolerance.

Diaz-Balart said, “These are the fundamental beliefs in Falun Gong,” Diaz-Balart contrasted the Chinese leaders who rule by “brute force” with the “peaceful followers of Falun Gong, peaceful religious, and democratic activists.”

“Where we see the brutality --, it is an embarrassment to mankind,” a phrase he invoked several times. He deplored the way democratic countries regard China “as if it were a moral, peaceful, law abiding” country and was even awarded the Olympics—the symbol of peace—“this is an embarrassment to mankind.” “It is a regime of thugs, by thugs, for thugs”

### CONGRESSWOMAN WARNS CHINESE DIPLOMATS IN THE US

Congresswoman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (FL) noted that the CCP police state tactics were on the same order as the Gestapo and the KGB. She said they even send Falun Gong practitioners to mental institutions just like they did to dissidents in the former Soviet Union.

The Congresswoman also noted a meeting she had with a man who had been “beaten up by Chinese thugs” in the U.S. That man, Bai-qiao Tang, who is a democracy advocate from China Peace and Democracy Federation, spoke later and recounted how he had been attacked by four men coming at him from several directions. When this reporter interviewed him, he still had a cast around his hand. Tang said to me he was injured around his eye and his nose. Fortunately, the police came to his rescue and the culprits fled the scene.

Ros-Lehtinen had a warning for the Chinese embassy and consulates in the U.S.:

“Any Chinese diplomat who engages in the coordination of an assault on an American citizen inside this country should be declared ‘persona non-grata’ by the State Department and sent out of the United States.”

### LARGEST HUMAN RIGHTS LEGAL EFFORT SINCE WWII

Mention was made how the person most responsible for assault on Falun Gong in 1999 was former communist regime leader Jiang Zemin. Theresa Chu, from Taiwan, representing the Global Falun Dafa Association and the coordinator and director of World Urge of the Human Rights Law Foundation (Asian division) spoke of the enormous legal challenge that the persecution has been. More than 50 lawsuits, involving 30 lawyers, in 30 countries have been filed against Jiang Zemin and other Chinese officials.

“...this [is] the largest international human rights effort since World War II,” Chu said.