

What You Can Do to Help Practitioners in China

You may have heard about the brutal crackdown by the Chinese government against Falun Gong in China. Since July, 1999, the Chinese government has detained and harassed thousands of Falun Gong practitioners who simply made peaceful, legal appeals for their right to practice their faith.

Practitioners have been forced from their homes, sentenced to harsh jail terms, sent to labor camps without trial, beaten, and tortured. The Chinese Communist Party, an officially atheist regime, refuses to acknowledge its citizens' basic rights to freedom of belief and continues to ignore requests for an open dialogue to resolve the situation. In the last year, at least 22 Falun Gong practitioners have died while in the custody of the Chinese police.

The best way you can help the practitioners in China is to let people around you know what Falun Gong is. China's most insidious weapon against all spiritual faiths and disciplines is to call them 'cults' because the derogatory connotations of that word is often enough to put anyone on guard, and in the case of Falun Gong, it is a label that is completely inaccurate. Falun Gong practitioners are just ordinary citizens of all ages and from all walks of life who lead normal lives and actively participate in their communities. They have simply made a personal choice to do something that they feel will allow them to improve themselves. There are no obligations, and everyone is free to come and go as they wish.

Let people know that Falun Gong is a practice based on ancient philosophies that helps people gain better health and peace of mind. The idea of a "cultivation practice" or "spiritual discipline" may still be somewhat unfamiliar to some of us in the West, but many other self-cultivation practices similar to Falun Gong have been practiced elsewhere in the world for centuries, bringing health and wisdom to countless generations.

Also, let people know what is actually happening in China. Many practitioners have risked their lives to get information out of the country about the widespread human rights abuses against practitioners. Talk to as many people as you can about the situation, be they your friends and family or your internet chat group. Some other ways to let people know what's happening include:

- Help put us in touch with groups in your community, such as at your workplace, libraries, community centers, social organizations or groups, or college campus so we can give presentations on the practice and the situation in China and show a documentary video that we've prepared ("*Falun Gong: The Real Story*", Parts 1 and 2). Alternatively, you can order the tapes from your local Falun Gong volunteers and invite people to watch them.
- Contact your government representatives, such as congressmen, senators, and state and local officials. Send them information about what Falun Gong is and let them know that their constituents are concerned about the human rights situation in China.
- We also welcome you to simply show your support by participating in Falun Dafa events in your local area. We're always happy to see you!

Many thanks for your help and concern.

For more documented information on the crackdown on Falun Gong in China, visit <http://www.minghui.ca/eng.html> and <http://www.amnestyintl.org>.