

Documentary for Honor Capstone

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For my Honor Capstone I filmed a documentary entitled “Hope”. The documentary has two different versions, each 30 minutes long. Their content is the same, but their styles are slightly different. One version suits Western viewers better. The documentary “Hope” is about the story of Mr. Zenon Dolnyckyj. He is a Falun Gong practitioner from Canada. How did he come to know about Falun Gong and begin to practice? Why does he like practicing Falun Gong? Through interviews, the documentary will answer these questions. This will give the audience a general idea of what Falun Gong is, in other words, they will come to understand the big picture through a personal story.

However, because millions and millions of Chinese people started practicing Falun Gong in China, former Chinese President Jiang Zemin became very jealous of the popularity of the peaceful meditation practice, and on July 1999 banned Falun Gong and began to persecute its practitioners. Many Falun Gong practitioners have been tortured to death since then. Jiang controls the entire Chinese media system and uses it to spread false and slanderous propaganda about Falun Gong to the Chinese people; Jiang’s son also controls the Internet and blocks information with the facts about the meditation practice. Chinese people have no freedom of speech or information. In 2001, 36 Western Falun Gong practitioners, including Zenon, traveled to Beijing’s Tiananmen Square to

make a public appeal; they wished to speak to all of China and to give the Chinese people a chance to know the facts regarding Falun Gong's growth and popularity around the world. I interviewed Zenon about his experience of telling the truth to Chinese people in Beijing. Zenon's wish was simple, clear, and powerful: "China, stop the persecution!" This documentary will talk about Mr. Zenon Dolnyckyj's personal stories, but by watching this, audiences may get a general understanding of what Falun Gong is, how brutal the persecution is, and by gaining a closeness with practitioners feel their compassion.

The other version is better for Eastern audiences. It has six differences from the first version. First, the second version will develop the story of the documentary step by step, while the first version, after showing a section on Zenon, will have one of his friends say some things to build up suspense, and then show the title, "Zenon's Story", only then truly entering the main section of the story.

Second, the second version will play a song with deep meaning at the end. This song will play along with one beautiful scene after another, allowing the main theme of the documentary to reappear and rise up. The first version will end with some words from Zenon; these words are very close to the wish he had when going to China.

Third, the second version uses a lot of background music, while the first version uses little. Fourth, the second version, when having a photograph disappear from view, uses a "Venetian Blinds" transition, while the first version doesn't, opting for a more natural transition style instead.

Fifth, the second version leaves a small section where Zenon is on the Great Wall of China, choked with tears of emotion and unable to speak. The first version, on the other hand, to fit better with faster-paced Western films, does not have this brief section. Sixth, right after talking about the persecution, the second version will, after briefly showing the Chinese national emblem, quickly display the word “but”; it will then quickly switch over to a scene of Tiananmen Square with the words “In China”. The music played during is part is deeply solemn and stirring. The first version, on the other hand, will use a softer but still sorrowful piece of music, and will just have one scene of Tiananmen Square with all of the words “But in China” appearing at once. The first version will also have smaller words.

Regardless of which version it is, this movie puts its utmost into allowing the audience to, while in a peaceful atmosphere and with a feeling of beauty, come to deeply understand the joy in Zenon’s heart after his gaining a “new life” after learning to practice Falun Gong, as well as his determination in fulfilling his wish to do his utmost to stop China’s brutal persecution of Falun Gong practitioners.