

**Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations**

**U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs**

**Disappeared, Jailed and Tortured in China: Wives Petition for Their Husbands' Freedom**

Delivered in English by Chia Shih

Rayburn House Office Building Room 2172

Thursday, May 18, 2017

Honorable Chairman Chris Smith, honorable Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations representatives, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Wang Yanfang, wife of human rights lawyer Tang Jingling. I'd like to express my gratitude to Representative Chris Smith, Senator Marco Rubio, Representative Nancy Pelosi, and many other representatives, as well as Bob Fu, president of ChinaAid Association, for your attention and support of my husband Tang Jingling and many other victims of human rights abuse in China. As the situation of religious freedom, rule of law, and human rights continues to deteriorate in China, support for the victims from the international community is very valuable and precious. This is also an important milestone in joint endeavors to maintain universal values all over the world.

In the past a few decades, people of many countries terminated their seemingly powerful and long-lasting autocratic regimes through non-violent resistance and fulfilled the transition from autocracy to democracy. My husband, Tang Jingling, is a well-known human rights lawyer. He is also the initiator and a keen advocate of the civil disobedience movement. He is dedicated to promoting the civil disobedience movement, hoping to bring forth a democratic and free China.

In 1995, the national security police began to monitor Tang Jingling after he expressed his life-long mission to promote democracy in China. In 1999, he published an article on China's democratization in Guangzhou. Then, he was forced to leave the big law firm he was working for. As a human rights lawyer, he has been involved in many major cases of human rights abuse, political rights abuse, and worker's rights abuse. For example:

In 2003, a petition was initiated to abolish the internment and repatriation regulations and cancel the temporary residence permits policy after college student Sun Zhigang's death. Tang Jingling served as the legal counsel. In 2004, he was the defense lawyer for the two people charged in the Xingang labor unrest case in Dongguan. In January 2005, he defended the newly elected village head in the Shibi third villagers' campaign to remove old village officials. In August 2005, he was one of the key lawyers in the case of the Taishi villagers' campaign to remove village officials. Due to his involvement in human rights cases, the authorities forced his law firm to terminate his employment and suspended his lawyer license. In 2006, he planned to attend an

event in the U.S, but he was stopped at customs and his passport was confiscated by the police. He is still not allowed to leave the country to this day.

After losing his lawyer license, he participated in many human rights cases as a citizen, including the poisonous vaccine lawsuit, the investigation of Li Wangyang's death, and many other cases involving land property, forced demolition, and so on.

My husband graduated from Shanghai Jiaotong University in 1993. He began to practice in law in 1998. He lost his lawyer license in 2005 due to his work in human rights protection. During the Jasmine Movement in February 2011, he was charged with "inciting subversion of state power" and was detained in a "black jail," where he was threatened and tortured, including extensive sleep deprivation for 10 days in a row. He was allowed to sleep for 1 to 2 hours a day after he began to have some dangerous symptoms, like trembling all over, numbness in both hands, and heart discomfort, until he was released on August 2, 2011.

He initiated and promoted the civil disobedience movement to seek justice for people at the bottom of society, but his wife was forced to lose her job in May 2008. During his detention in February 2011, I was forcibly brought to Conghua and detained. They took my phone, bruised my arms, and didn't allow me to notify my family and lawyer, which caused my severe depression and poor health. Then the police tricked my mother to go to Guangdong to take care of me and I was put under house surveillance for a long time. I was not allowed to meet with my family and friends. I was not even allowed to leave my home. More than 20 people took turns watching me. I was completely isolated from the outside world for almost five months. When my husband was released, my physical and mental health had been severely damaged.

On May 16, 2014, Tang Jingling was criminally detained on the charge of "picking quarrels & provoking troubles" and was arrested on June 20 with the charge of "inciting subversion of state power." On September 23, his mother passed away on hearing of his arrest. His lawyer and I applied bail him out to attend his mother's funeral, but the authorities ignored everything on legal, moral, and humanitarian levels and rejected our request. They didn't notify him of her death until October and caused deep sorrow. The authorities forbade his lawyer to meet with him for six months while his case was being transferred to the procuratorate. During the two years in the detention center, all communication was banned. There was no way to guarantee his rights. On January 29, 2016, he was sentenced to five years' imprisonment with the charge of "inciting subversion of state power." He is serving the sentence in Huaiji Prison, Guangdong province.

Since he was arrested in August 2013, I was put under 24-hour surveillance, which brought huge emotional pressure and fear to me. However, I have been appealing for my husband and request that they release him. On July 1, 2014, I went to Hong Kong to attend a demonstration and appealed in the media to urge people to pay attention to Tang Jingling and other prisoners of conscience, like Yuan Chaoyang and Wang Qingying. I was threatened by the police after returning to Guangdong, and my freedom was restricted during the so-called "sensitive" period.

After the massive arrest of human rights lawyers on July 9, 2015, I got in touch with families of arrested human rights lawyers and went to the Supreme People's Procuratorate with them. In August, I was not allowed to leave home.

Since Tang Jingling worked as a lawyer more than a decade ago, he participated in many human rights cases and promoted civil disobedience movement. Consequently, he lost his lawyer license, he was detained, monitored, arrested, tortured, and sentenced, and his wife lost her job, was harassed, summoned, monitored, and detained.

Today other 709 case lawyers are still suffering from such torture. Many prisoners of conscience are still unable to meet with their lawyers and families. Christian churches and still being shut down. Christians are still being detained and sentenced.

Thus, I sincerely plead with President Trump and U.S Congress to urge the Chinese government to guarantee Tang Jingling's right to meet with his lawyer and his rights to reading, communication, medical treatment and food with enough nutrition as well as ensure that Tang Jingling, Wang Quanzhang, Jiang Tianyong, Wu Gan, Yuan Xinting, and the other 709 case lawyers and prisoners of conscience have their basic human rights in prison, and make certain that they are not being tortured and are released to reunite with their families. I hope President Trump can meet with family of the victims in the U.S before his visit to China, talk about his attention to China's worsening religious freedom and human rights situation during his visit, and give the list of prisoners of conscience to the embassy. I believe this is also an important action to maintain universal values all over the world.

Many thanks,

Wang Yanfang

*[Editor's note: The following is a letter written by Tang Jingling while in prison, in which describes his experiences with the Communist government. It was originally published and translated by China Change.]*

### [A Prisoner's Human Rights Report](#)

*"I can't help but sigh over how much more civilized the South African apartheid regime of 50 years ago was compared to the Chinese Communist regime of today." – Tang Jingling*

*"Other people don't know better than the Chinese people about the human rights condition in China and it is the Chinese people who are in the best situation, in the best position to have a say about China's human rights situation." – Wang Yi, China's Minister of Foreign Affairs, June 2, 2016.*

Recalling his nearly 30 years in prison, Nelson Mandela wrote in his memoir *Long Walk to Freedom*: "It is said that no one truly knows a nation until one has been inside its jails. A nation should not be judged by how it treats its highest citizens, but its lowest ones—and South Africa treated its imprisoned African citizens like animals." Having now spent 22 months in Chinese Communist prisons, I'd say that, based on what I've witnessed and experienced, the Chinese Communist Party treats prisoners who don't enjoy special privileges even worse than animals.

And those who are imprisoned for seeking their political rights or defending freedom of religion and other human rights are repressed with particular brutality.

Based on my observations, my impression is that the different levels and standards of prisoner treatment reflect the bureaucratic hierarchy of the country. People who have risen to higher levels of the bureaucracy will be held in a better detention facility or cell or will otherwise receive better treatment. Then there's the principle that originated with the Empress Dowager Cixi: "Better it go to the foreigners than to my slaves." Generally speaking, in other words, foreigners are less likely to be compelled to engage in forced labor, and their religious beliefs are granted a certain degree of respect.

And then there's a large group of prisoners who try to curry favor and build "connections" with people inside the prison in order to enjoy all sorts of special treatment and largess. This leads to an abundance of unfathomable corruption and shady deals. The subjective arbitrariness of prison regulations, the excessive deprivation of prisoners' rights, and the lack of transparency and external oversight have all contributed to this sort of abnormal economy of cash and power within China's notorious system of detention.

Of course, these different classes of treatment are relative among prisoners themselves. On the whole, all prisoners are living under inhumane conditions. It's like one detainee said after being transferred from Guangdong Provincial Detention Center (which mainly holds high-ranked officials) to Baiyun District Detention Center (BDDC): "The moment I stepped foot into the Provincial Detention Center, it was like I'd fallen from high up in the heavens into the depths of hell. I never imagined until I got here that there was an even deeper level of hell!"

The ugliness that exists outside detention facilities is often hidden behind various veils. But inside the wall of the detention center, that ugliness reveals itself unadorned, 24 hours a day. In conditions unfit even for animals, a person must be extremely disciplined to avoid being overcome by hatred and maintain his humanity to avoid being swallowed up by wild beasts. It truly is a very difficult challenge. When it's impossible for us to eliminate evils directly, we must not condone these evils with our silence. Even though I now find myself behind bars because of my efforts on behalf of human rights and democracy, I too am unable to remain silent. For me, this report is my attempt to bear witness to injustice and evil so that I can avoid taking any part in such evils myself.

Below, I will describe seven different aspects of the evil in China's detention centers.

### **I. Inhumane and degrading treatment, including rampant beatings and torture**

On the day I arrived at BDDC, I was kicked by one of the center's auxiliary police officers for refusing to squat down when he ordered me to do so. Within the jail's heavily guarded walls, detainees still wear manacles and shackles around the ankles. When guards escort a detainee from place to place, they often order him to squat as a completely unnecessary way of degrading him. When I got to Guangzhou No. 1 Detention Center, I saw this kind of thing much less frequently, but there were still quite a few prisoners who were treated this way.

I have never seen guards beat any detainees at Guangzhou No. 1, but beatings were not at all uncommon at BDDC. As the guards patrolled the cell block, they would call a detainee to come out of his cell into the passageway. (According to veteran detainees, there weren't enough security cameras to monitor the passageway fully.) First, he would be subjected to a stream of

verbal abuse. That was followed by the sound of blows raining down on his body before the injured detainee was returned to his cell. I saw this kind of thing with my own eyes.

At Guangzhou No. 1, I've seen only one detainee—a Uyghur—beaten up like this, and it seemed like that was a common occurrence for Uyghurs like him. Even though the beatings were being carried out by investigators, rather than detention center guards, authorities at the jail and the procuratorial official stationed at the center never made any factual record of those detainees' injuries, let alone file any reports or hold anyone accountable. Han Chinese detainees were no different: the detention center allowed investigators to interrogate detainees for 24 hours straight, with no breaks, until they were finally able to force out the confessions they were looking for.

There was one detainee who entered Guangzhou No. 1 the same month as I did who was interrogated continuously like this for nearly a month and only allowed back in his cell for a short time every day around nightfall. This is a technique commonly used by Communist Party discipline inspectors, and many “official detainees” experience this kind of thing as well. It's just that for them it happens in the illegal private jails set up by the Party's committees for disciplinary inspection. After those “official detainees” offer up their forced confessions there, they get sent to the detention center.

In the cells, each of the cement slabs on which we sleep is fitted with two fixed iron rings. These “fixed shackles” are used by the detention center as a means of disciplinary punishment. A person forced to wear ordinary shackles is still able to move about on his own and take care of many of his daily needs. But once fettered to these fixed shackles, routine daily tasks like eating, getting dressed, or using the toilet all mean that the detainee has to rely on others for everything, making it a terribly agonizing experience.

There's an even more “advanced” and perverse technique, which is to shackle a detainee's hands to the fixed iron rings as well. In this way, even sleep requires one to curl up like some poor shrimp. This type of punishment generally lasts anywhere from a few days to a couple of weeks. In 2014, I saw this in action in Cell 1309. There was a young man clearly suffering from psychological illness and intellectual impairment. The Communist judicial authorities diagnosed him with anti-social personality disorder and sentenced him to 10 years in prison. Because he couldn't control his actions, he was shackled for around a week.

Anyone sentenced to death, regardless of whether or not there's any cause for disciplinary punishment, will also be given the fixed shackles up until the time when he is sent to be executed. One Pakistani man entered the detention center in 2009 and has been subjected to fixed shackling since 2014. Under this long period of suffering, he was forced to write several letters to the Guangdong High Court and the Supreme People's Court begging either to be unshackled or put to death. Wang Qingying (王清莹), who was detained along with me, was given the fixed shackles a number of times and suffered even more serious tortures as well.

I don't know how much longer this kind of inhumane torture will be allowed to continue. Scenes like this serve as a metaphor for the lives of our enslaved people. So much of our agonizing struggles are attempts to break free of these shackles of our bondage. Despite all of their efforts, our people continue to suffer deprivations because those efforts are focused on digging themselves out of the pit associated with their enslavement. Does our generation plan to sit still and remain as slaves, destined to be forgotten by history while the dictatorship flourishes? Or

will we make a place for ourselves in history by parting the Red Sea and walking that path out of the desert and into the land of freedom?

An even more common form of inhumane treatment is the overcrowded and confined nature of the cells. Out in the real world, even pigs raised for slaughter aren't treated like this because everyone knows that this will cause serious harm to the pigs. But for months, even years at a time, prisoners are locked up together in these dark, damp, and cramped spaces with no sunlight or fresh air. This in itself causes suffering and is the root of many human rights and humanitarian problems in the detention centers.

For example, it's normal at BDDC to lock up 20 or even 30 people in a space of 20–30 m<sup>2</sup>. The detention center often has a large number of empty cells, so I don't understand why they need to fill cells beyond their capacity like this. Much of the work burden for guards is already being handled by detainee labor and hired security guards, so adding more cells shouldn't be all that difficult.

At BDDC, detainees are typically forced to sleep lying packed together, with one person's feet next to another person's head and vice versa. It's common to be awoken from a deep sleep with a kick in the face from the person next to you or even find your cellmate's toes rubbing up against your mouth. At Guangzhou No. 1 Detention Center, we have to sleep all the way from the cell entrance to right in front of the toilet. The irony is that one of the lines of the detention center rules we were forced to recite every day went like this: "It's forbidden for two people to share a quilt." These days, the authorities make detainees sleep crowded together far more tightly than two people sharing a quilt.

I had another experience that was even more revolting. When I arrived at BDDC they weren't issuing toothbrushes or cups and didn't allow detainees to bring or buy their own. Instead, they forced detainees to use old, discarded toothbrushes and cups and share these among several individuals at once, without any consideration of the fact that many detainees suffered from infectious diseases. Veteran detainees told me that this was not the first time something like this had happened. Fortunately, a clever cellmate of mine fashioned a cup for me out of an old chrysanthemum tea container, which I used until I left that facility. At BDDC, meal trays and spoons were also shared. Guangzhou No. 1 is a bit better in this respect, as each detainee is issued a set of personal items to use upon arrival.

A detainee who had once been jailed in the Tianhe Detention Center told me that detainees there were forced to sit and "meditate" for long periods at a time. I don't know what the situation is like there now, but BDDC had a rule that detainees were required to "meditate" while the guards were patrolling the cell blocks, about a half-hour each morning and each afternoon. The situation is basically the same at Guangzhou No. 1.

## **II. Forced labor**

My labor assignment here consists of keeping watch on the night shift and some manual piece work. Two inmates in each cell are made to keep watch at night. (Sometimes, even more are assigned to this work—especially when conditions are so crowded that there's not enough room to sleep. In Guangdong Provincial Detention Center and other jails where there are fewer prisoners, they don't have this kind of work assignment.) Each shift is made up of two people, who take turns keeping watch for periods of 90 minutes to two hours. Detainees enjoying special treatment don't have to keep watch or do piece work; instead, they get lighter assignments. In

some prisons, they have a small number of inmates who are permanently assigned to the night watch, instead of forcing the majority of detainees to be awakened from deep sleep like they do in the detention centers. I think this is a completely unreasonable measure they use to make detainees' lives miserable.

As for manual piece work, there's assembling "red envelopes" and auspicious decorations for Chinese New Year; folding and packing Christmas cards under the brand names "Giftmaker" and "Sue Ryder" (a charity registered in the UK); packing disposable food-service gloves and plastic medical gowns; and affixing advertising stickers for Uni-President Food brands (*a Taiwanese company*). From what I can see, these jobs are pretty steady, so the detention center must have long-term commercial contracts. Rarely has the piece work that I've had to carry out lasted longer than three hours at a time. At BDDC, there wasn't ever any piece work assigned to my cell. But there are cartloads of stuff coming and going in the passageways outside all the time. At Guangzhou No. 1 I have a cellmate from Chongqing who was arrested together with his wife. When they were able to see each other at trial, she told him that the women's cell block had been given very heavy labor assignments and were even forced to work overtime every day late into the evening.

From what I've seen and experienced first-hand, it seems that labor assignments at detention centers have been decreasing but that not much has changed inside the prisons. Outside the VIP cells holding high officials and foreigners, other prisoners still have to work pretty hard. They generally are engaged in rather intensive industrial labor. In this respect, the Ministry of Public Security and Ministry of Justice are actually operating China's biggest sweatshop factories. The millions of detainees they have under their jurisdiction far outnumber the employees of any company in the world.

### **III. Correspondence, Visits, Meetings, Money, and Goods**

In the two years I've been detained, the only time I've been allowed to write a letter was an order form for two books that I sent my wife in March of this year. My lawyer told me that people concerned about me on the outside had been sending me letters and cards, but detention center authorities have been quietly confiscating them all and I haven't seen the slightest trace of any mail. They use these despicable methods against political prisoners in particular. When Mandela was in prison, he was still able to receive letters after they'd first been inspected and censored by the prison authorities. I can't help but sigh over how much more civilized the South African apartheid regime of 50 years ago was compared to the Chinese Communist regime of today. The Chinese authorities inspect all mail and guards can restrict access to letters almost at will, without any rational or predictable rules.

According to the provisions of the *Prison Law*, convicted prisoners may regularly receive visits from family members.\* The overwhelming majority of those held in detention centers have not yet been convicted, but without exception they have been deprived of the right to visit with family or friends. Even telephone calls are forbidden! Since many cases drag on for some time without decision, these detainees are completely cut off from their friends and family. The cruelty of this is hard for someone who hasn't experienced it to comprehend. Another side-effect of this inhumane treatment is that it prevents any information from inside the detention center from reaching the outside world, giving the green light to all sorts of corrupt misdeeds and cruel abuse. Ordinary prisoners may keep up with how their family is doing through letters and photographs, but even this is denied political prisoners.

Moreover, the facilities that detention centers make available for meetings with lawyers are often seriously inadequate, and those for visits with family are even worse. Meetings with lawyers are carried out under the eyes and ears of detention center guards, something that people in normal countries with rule of law would probably find unbelievable. Not long after I and other political prisoners arrived at Guangzhou No. 1, the authorities there made a point of “re-arranging” the lawyer meeting room by moving the fixed round-backed chair on which we detainees sit further away from the the dividing screen, which prevents lawyers from showing clients the prosecution files or verifying evidence.

For those detainees who’ve used their “connections,” deliveries of money and “care packages” become a kind of paradise. They have many opportunities to eat food that’s been sent in by their families, something that ordinary detainees can only look at with envy. Some of the kinder of these privileged detainees will share their food with their cellmates. These are without doubt the easiest moments to remember in the hellish environment.

*\*Editors’ note: Tang’s wife recently filed a complaint about being deprived of the right to visit her husband.*

#### **IV. Indifference to or outright deprivation of religious freedom**

The authorities prohibit religious books that are important to me as a Christian, like the Bible, from being sent into the detention center. Quite a few foreign detainees who are Muslim or Christian can receive copies of the Quran, the Bible, or other religious books in their own languages. But I haven’t seen any Uyghur detainees with their own copies of the Quran.

Uyghur detainees are routinely deprived of their religious rights, and though Falun Gong practitioners are deliberately being kept away from where I’m being held, I can’t imagine that their situation is any better than mine. Even when their cases aren’t connected in any way, political prisoners are deliberately kept apart from each other. Perhaps the Communist authorities learned some lessons from the way that the apartheid government in South Africa imprisoned all of its political prisoners together in one place.

Cultural and educational rights aren’t protected either. Not only does the detention center not have a library or reading room, they also prevent detainees from receiving books or subscribing to newspapers or magazines. Political prisoners always want to do some studying on their own, but they’re placed under tighter restrictions than ordinary prisoners. It was over a year after I was jailed that I was first allowed to receive a few books sent by my family, but only books related to law were permitted. I had a young Uyghur man in my section of the detention center teach me the Uyghur alphabet and asked my family to send me a Uyghur-Chinese dictionary to help me study the language further. But those plans never got anywhere because of meddling by the authorities.

For the last several months I’ve again been inexplicably prevented from receiving books. It was only last March that I was finally able to receive two books. And last month was the first time I was able to send out a letter to my family. I’ve heard that many political prisoners, like Guo Feixiong (郭飞雄) or Xu Zhiyong (许志永), have had to go on hunger strike in order to fight for their right to read.

The ridiculous thing is that every day the detention center authorities force detainees to recite from memory the center regulations, which are mainly about rules of behavior and rights and



obligations. They make you recite these every day, and each person has to pass muster. The more rational thing would be to have the detention center employees be the ones who had to memorize and recite these rules. Once you memorize the regulations, then they make you recite a bunch of old moral education rhymes like *Di Zi Gui* (《弟子规》, Rules for Being a Good Student) and *San Zi Jing* (《三字经》, Three Character Classic). Everything depends on how good or bad the detention center officials or guards are, but they don't take into consideration the real needs of detainees at all.

Even if there is some benefit in reciting these texts, the way they're forced on people leads them to become hated. These are just the same old habits of forced brainwashing that the Chinese Communists have always used. Human nature is as easily twisted as the plum blossoms in Gong Zizhen's famous essay, "The Pavilion for Sick Plum Trees." In order to accommodate these ridiculous regulations, many detainees who haven't even been convicted yet already begin proactively copying and memorizing the prison regulations while they're still in the detention center. I never would have believed it if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes!

## **V. Food and drink, sanitation and medical treatment, and buying things**

During the month I was at BDDC, I lost 5 kg because the food was terrible, the portions were small, and I wasn't allowed to purchase any food to supplement. I'm not a fat person to begin with, so a weight loss of 5 kg is no small thing. They only served two meals at BDDC, one at 11 am and the other at 4 pm. Later, after I revealed through my lawyer that they weren't serving us any breakfast, they again started serving breakfast twice a week—a plain steamed bun one day and the other day a bowl of gruel so thin it should technically be called water. I have no idea whether they continued serving that pitiful breakfast after I left. A veteran detainee at BDDC told me that they'd always served breakfast in the past, and he didn't know why they'd recently become so stingy.

For our main daily meal, they'd serve a few pieces of leafy vegetable (but because leafy vegetables were more expensive, they only served them a few times). Typically we'd get some bean sprouts of inferior quality or one or two slices of winter melon, pumpkin, or carrot with a slice or two of fatty pork or the kind of thin ham sausage that's wrapped in plastic. The rice was yellowish and often smelled of mildew. That was pretty much the entire menu. During afternoon calisthenics, I would often feel dizzy because of poor nutrition.

At Guangzhou No. 1, we basically got double what they served at BDDC and the rice was an ordinary white color. They served breakfast of two cold buns or pineapple buns. Both places served winter melon, pumpkin, and white radish with the skin and roots still intact, and they never picked out the yellowed leaves or tough roots of leafy vegetables. At Guangzhou No. 1 for quite a while they gave us frozen duck wings with down still on them that sometimes emitted a terrible odor. According to a jailmate who had worked in the frozen food industry, these likely had been frozen for quite a long time. They were finally removed from the menu only after causing a widespread bout of diarrhea.

Owing to the crowded and confined conditions of detention, sanitation is quite inhumane. Each cell only has a squat toilet, and the water faucet for flushing the toilet is the same one used to get water needed for other daily uses. So when you need to wash bowls and eating utensils, you have to do it right above the toilet. Before they collect the trays after our meals, we have to rinse them

very quickly above the toilet before handing them in. Heaven only knows whether or not they wash them again or disinfect them back in the kitchen!

At BDDC, they forced detainees to eat each meal in 3–5 minutes. At Guangzhou No. 1, you get about 10 minutes. According to a detainee who'd been held at the Guangdong Provincial Detention Center, there they have a dedicated washbasin and faucet, separate from the toilet. That proves beyond a doubt that those who operate and manage detention facilities are in fact cognizant of ordinary human needs.

How to dry clothing is also a major problem. There is a row of plastic hooks on the wall of the enclosed courtyard space that's attached to each cell. This is where we're supposed to hang our clothes to dry. The door to this courtyard is only opened once in the morning and once in the afternoon, for less than an hour each time. Sometimes it's even less, not even half an hour. If the weather is rainy, it can take several days for clothes to dry and you have no other clothing to change into. You have no choice but to wear clothes that have grown mildewed from the damp and humidity.

Under these conditions, it's obviously impossible to air out bedding. When one detainee leaves, the bedding he leaves behind will get assigned to a new arrival. Many quilts never lose their musty and mildewed odor. I've heard of some detention facilities where they only close the door to the outside courtyard at night, which is a slightly more humane way of doing things. When I got to Guangzhou No. 1, for some unknown reason the officer who admitted me made a point of giving me the filthiest and most ratty quilt available. Later, I got a newer one from a detainee who was on his way out, and I'm still using that today.

At Guangzhou No. 1, twice a day (excluding holidays) a nurse will distribute medication to detainees who are sick or who suffer from chronic illnesses. Each year, BDDC holds more than 5,000 detainees—several times more than Guangzhou No. 1. During the month I was at BDDC, I never saw any medical care like we have here.

When I got to the detention center, I increased my physical exercise and I could clearly feel my health improving a bit. But I catch colds far more frequently here than I did on the outside. I think that's obviously a result of the terrible sanitary conditions and nutrition here. We have to bathe with cold water, even in the fall and winter, which is another reason many people get sick.

Generally, the 500 yuan each person can spend each month to purchase items goes to the purchase of daily items (underwear and a limited selection of supplementary foods). This is based on a provision in the Detention Center Regulations that was set many years ago (in 1990). If the food provided by the detention centers didn't leave detainees feeling hungry, this monthly amount would be sufficient even with today's prices. Goods are typically bought in group purchases twice a month, with detainees using an order form provided by the detention center to mark down what they want and the desired quantities. I've also heard of detention centers where they offer detainees a variety of meals, turning the jail into a kind of restaurant and general store.

Luckily, I've never been sick enough to require being hospitalized. Based on what I've heard from others who have, the detainee wing at the Guangzhou People's Armed Police (PAP) Hospital has earned the nickname "Police Beatings Hospital." What sick people need is treatment and care, but most people's memory of that place is that it's even worse than jail itself. Patients are assigned only one set of clothes, and if they want to launder them they have to go around naked in the meantime. Patients wear leg shackles the whole time, and quite often some

will get shackled to their beds because of some trivial matter and left lying in their own excrement while no one bothers with them.

Security guards beat patients for no reason, and the food is no better than in the detention centers. In the case of Guangzhou No. 1, the food is probably even worse and they don't allow patients to buy extra food while in the hospital. The medical staff is very curt and brutish. One cellmate I had spent nearly a year in the hospital, off and on, and witnessed many cases of gauze being left in patients' bodies after an operation. It got to the point where he finally became afraid to admit that he was sick for fear of being sent to the PAP Hospital. It's said that ill detainees from detention centers all over the province get sent there and that there are more than 500 people being held in the detainee wing.

## **VI. Disciplinary measures, relief procedures, and sham oversight provisions**

Even though the prison uses fixed shackling and other brutal disciplinary measures to punish detainees, I've never seen the detention facility carry out any legal procedure in connection with this.

When the officers take such measures, detainees have no chance to defend themselves. What the officers are acting out here is a real-life legal farce. On the surface, the resident procuratorate office is supposed to carry out oversight of the detention centers, but in the two years I've been in detention I've only seen a single detainee have a meeting with a resident procuratorate official on official business. I've never seen anything in writing about how to contact the procuratorate. How can he carry out his duties of oversight of the legal system and protection of human rights?

## **VII. Detainees with special privileges**

In February of this year, as I was being transferred from Cell Unit 5 to Cell Unit 3, I discovered that a single person was being held all by himself in Cell No. 1301. That man (who people said was a former vice governor of Hainan Province) was clearly living in a newly renovated cell that was just like a hotel. He enjoyed quite a few different kinds of special treatment. His cell was kept open for long periods at a time to prevent him from feeling as if he were being held in a confined space. (It was precisely for this reason that we were able to see a bit of the conditions under which he was being held.) They say he receives the same meals that the guards do.

Cell No. 1302, right next door, is also a special-treatment cell where a dozen or so men are held under much lower security. According to other detainees with good sources of information, those detainees also enjoy much better food than ordinary prisoners—each of them might get a raw cucumber or an extra egg each day. Privileged detainees like these are able to enjoy a standard of living far superior to that offered to ordinary prisoners. This is a microcosm of the same distribution gap that exists between ordinary people and the privileged Communist Party elite outside prison.

Many detainees rely on cultivating “connections” to improve their treatment. They'll get new bedding and clothing. They'll be given drier and more airy places to sleep. They won't have to take overnight shifts or do manual piece work. Instead they'll get light tasks to do or oversee the piece work done by other detainees. Some are even given the job of assigning daily chores among the other detainees, or what is known as being the “jail boss.”

It's the detention center officers who hand out these assignments. I once heard of a person who spent several thousand yuan each month in an unsuccessful attempt to bribe the guards to give

him the position of “jail boss.” Whether ordinary prisoners are treated with basic humanity depends entirely on personal favors from a few detention center guards. As long as the authorities continue to closely monitor and restrict detainees from meeting or corresponding with relatives and lawyers, then it’s wishful thinking for them to harbor any hopes of wiping out this kind of corruption.

I haven’t yet been transferred to prison, where individuals who’ve already been convicted are incarcerated. So, I don’t have much to say here about conditions in China’s prisons. But based on the many cases about which I’ve seen and heard, there are many similarities between prisons and detention centers.

Some might think that what I’ve reported here is based solely on my own personal experience and decide that it’s not a representative enough sample. What I’ve discussed here is mainly based on my personal experience, but for the past two years I’ve been lived 24 hours a day with a total of over 200 other detainees of all types. Many among them have spent time in other detention centers and prisons at different times and in different places. Of what they’ve told me, I’ve only included details that I have been able to corroborate.

I don’t expect the Communist authorities to undertake any reform as a result of this report, but I hope that I myself won’t become numb to these re-occurring atrocities and sink into a kind of degradation. For me, then, this is a way to seek my own salvation.

All men and women of the world who are willing to speak out for justice and humanity: Please listen to what I’ve said here and speak up on behalf of those of us who have already lost our ability to speak for ourselves. I pray that you will be blessed by God’s righteousness!

Tang Jingling

April 26, 2016