

CHINA

Update on Torture

This document summarizes reports of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners in China which Amnesty International has received since it published a report, entitled *Torture in China*¹, in December 1992.

The information in this document adds to the body of evidence already available about the use of torture in China and the patterns in which it takes place. These patterns were described in detail in *Torture in China*, which also cited dozens of cases of prisoners reported to have been subjected to various forms of torture or ill-treatment in recent years.

I. The death under torture of Deng Fujiang in Jiangxi province

In January 1993, a provincial Chinese newspaper² cited the case of a villager from Beigang township, Xingyu city, in Jiangxi province, who died under torture on 2 March 1992 after being detained for 38 hours.

The villager, Deng Fujiang, had been detained in the morning of 1 March 1992 by Public Security personnel from the township on suspicion that he had stolen a wooden log from another villager. According to the newspaper report, the Public Security officers had no evidence at all that Deng Fujiang had committed the theft. Despite that, they lured him into the township government compound under the pretext of discussing another matter and tortured him repeatedly to make him admit to the theft. He was shackled with his hands tied behind his back, repeatedly beaten and kicked, suspended by the arms and whipped. The torture continued nearly non-stop, though he maintained his innocence throughout the ordeal. His cries while he was tortured were overheard by his wife and other relatives. They had rushed to the compound where he was held and tried in turn to persuade the officials that he was innocent and to offer bail for him. Their pleas were to no avail and the torture continued while they were pleading outside, until he died in the evening of 2 March.

Following his death, the newspaper says, the perpetrators connived with the Secretary of the township Communist Party Committee (CPC) to cover up their actions and ordered the body to be immediately cremated. Deng Fujiang's relatives managed to see his body at the crematorium: it was covered with bruises and wounds all over. They apparently tried to telephone the Public Security Bureau of the nearest city to report the matter, but they were prevented from doing so by the township CPC Secretary.

¹ *Torture in China*, December 1992, AI Index ASA 17/55/92.

² *Jiangxi Legal News*, bimonthly No.1, January 1993.

According to the newspaper, no action had been taken to investigate the case by 18 April 1992, when 37 relatives and fellow villagers of Deng Fujiang jointly addressed a letter to the Xingyu city government to demand such an investigation. The newspaper report did not indicate whether any action was subsequently taken to bring the perpetrators to justice.

II. The case of Yin Jin and other prisoners in Taiyuan, Shanxi province

Yin Jin, 34-years old, a journalist and former head of the Shanxi Bureau of the *Hainan Economic Newspaper*, was jailed for several years without charge or trial for taking part in the 1989 pro-democracy movement. Now free, he is reported to be in very poor health due to ill-treatment inflicted on him in detention. He has lost his job as a result of his imprisonment and has not been able to find new employment.

In July 1989 Yin Jin was taken into police custody in Hai Kou, on Hainan island in south China, after an order for his detention was issued by the Public Security (police) Bureau of Taiyuan city in Shanxi province (north China). The detention order did not specify the reason for his detention, but indicated that Yin Jin was to be detained for "shelter and investigation" - a form of administrative detention which is frequently used by the police to illegally detain political or criminal suspects for long periods of time without charge.³ Though, according to government regulations, "shelter and investigation" should last no longer than three months, Yin Jin was illegally held under this system for more than thirteen months. He was subsequently sentenced without trial to a term of "re-education through labour" - another form of administrative detention imposed as a punishment.

Following his release, Yin Jin gave a detailed account of his imprisonment which was recently published outside China.⁴ He described in particular several incidents during which prisoners, including himself, were tortured or ill-treated in various places of detention in Taiyuan and elsewhere. One such incident, which occurred at the Detention Centre (*kanshousuo*) of Taiyuan city Public Security Bureau (PSB), is described by Yin Jin as follows:

"On 22 September 1989, the Taiyuan city PSB Detention Centre invited two television reporters to the Detention Centre and went out of their way to lay on a fantastic meal for the prisoners sentenced to death who were to be executed the following day. This was to show how humanitarian they were, as a propaganda exercise. When the filming was done, however, they took away all the food. Such a despicable act greatly angered the prisoners sentenced to death, whose morale was already low. So, when the guards were eating with the reporters, the prisoners started to sing songs such as "the Internationale" and "You Walk Right

³ For further information on "shelter and investigation" and other forms of administrative detention, see Amnesty International's report *China - Punishment without Crime: Administrative Detention*, September 1991, AI Index ASA 17/27/91.

⁴ see *Zhongguo Zhi Chun (China Spring)*, January 1993 issue, pp. 17-21.

Ahead Bravely, Sister", as a final protest before being put to death. Other prisoners in the Detention Centre soon joined them, singing loudly in chorus. The infuriated director of the Detention Centre then led all his men in a big show of force. They ordered the prisoners to lie or kneel on the ground, with their heads against the wall, bottoms up, and started to beat them fiercely with sticks and clubs. The prisoners were already accustomed to such severe beatings, so no one offered any resistance.

"When the director, Gao Shikui, club in hand, ordered me to lie down with my head against the wall, I refused; so he and four other people, including the deputy director Xie Zhihong, beat me up with sticks and clubs, fists and feet. I felt compelled to resist, but one is no match against many, so all I could do was to bash my head against the wall, using [the threat of] death as a means of resistance. They used handcuffs to tighten the grip on my wrists, which caused my hands to become numb. The next day they also put me in irons weighing more than 50 kilograms and locked me up in the darkest, coldest and dampest cell.

I have complained many times about this to the detention centre procurator (in charge of supervising violations of the law in the detention centre). I have also complained to the Taiyuan city Public Security Bureau and Procuracy. I even brought a private suit to the Taiyuan city Intermediate People's Court and Procuracy. But all this was like throwing stones in the sea; nobody bothered to look into the matter. My previously very sturdy health has been wrecked after many incidents of ill-treatment. I suffer from pain in the lower back and often I cannot stand up once I have squatted down. On 5 April 1990, when I asked to go to hospital for examination and treatment, the detention centre deputy director, Xie Zhihong, gave me yet another beating with punches and kicks. In August 1991, I was finally overwhelmed by paralysis. Although I was later able to move again, I still suffer from serious after-effects."

Yin Jin also reported that he had been detained in succession in many places in Hainan, Guangdong and Shanxi provinces and said that he had "yet to come across a place where prisoners were not beaten and abused". He cited the following examples of prisoners being abused:

- ◆ When he was detained in Hainan, a prisoner was severely beaten just for asking why the prisoners' meal was being served so late on a particular day.
- ◆ At the Detention Centre of Taiyuan city Beicheng district Public Security Sub-Bureau, one guard forced four prisoners to eat a pack of cards because playing cards was a breach of prison regulations.
- ◆ At the Shelter and Investigation station of Taiyuan city Public Security Bureau, a man named Zhu Longxin who had made a complaint to his father, was suspended in the

air and severely beaten, then sent to a "reform through labour" camp; he is now paralysed in his legs.

- ◆ At the reform-through-labour camp in Dong village, Yongji county, a prisoner undergoing "re-education through labour" ran away in 1989 because he could not take any more of the humiliation and starvation. He was recaptured and beaten to death by a guard. His assailant was later given a two-year sentence.
- ◆ Gao Xu, a computer student from Shanxi university who had taken part in the students' sit-in at Tiananmen Square in 1989, was tortured and ill-treated in Beijing and Taiyuan. On 4 June 1989, he was severely beaten by troops in Beijing after being tied to a pillar at the Great Hall of the People [on one side of Tiananmen Square]. He was later taken to the Minzu Palace and beaten again, then locked up at Beijing's Qincheng prison before he was finally transferred to a detention centre in Taiyuan. He is nearly blind in one eye and reportedly suffers from persistent headaches. According to Yin Jin, he has asked repeatedly to be given medical treatment, but the detention centre authorities refused to allow him to go to hospital. One night, he was in such pain that he was howling, keeping the guards from sleeping. One of the guards then picked up a bench and started thrashing him with it till the bench broke. The guard did not stop until several political prisoners protested; their protest was later recorded in a report on their cases as being part of their "crimes".
- ◆ Ding Junze, a lecturer in philosophy from Shanxi University who is serving a 12-year prison sentence for taking part in the 1989 pro-democracy movement, was severely beaten at the time of his arrest in 1989. When he refused to sign his arrest warrant, he was assaulted with an electric baton by a police officer from the Shanxi provincial Public Security Department. Ding Junze suffers from heart trouble and the assault caused him to collapse with a heart attack. While he was held at the Taiyuan Detention Centre, he was placed in a cell with common criminal offenders who were reportedly instructed by jail officials to report on him and to beat and abuse him.⁵

III. Further testimonies about ill-treatment in Tibet

In January 1993, Amnesty International received further evidence and testimonies about the torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners in Tibet. This included photographs of two prisoners held since 1988 in the Tibetan capital Lhasa, who were reported to be in very poor

⁵ Ding Junze is now reportedly serving his sentence at Shanxi provincial No.1 Prison, in Qi county. In the spring of 1992, he broke his toe, but the bone did not heal despite treatment in prison. He is reportedly in poor health due to his heart condition and poor nutrition in prison. His wife has appealed many times to the authorities for him to be released on bail for medical treatment, but this has been refused to date. During the past two years, both Ding Junze and several other political prisoners held at Qi county prison have been refused permission to go and briefly visit close relatives who were gravely ill, even though this is often granted to prisoners at the discretion of the prison authorities. In two cases, including that of Ding Junze's mother, the relatives died shortly after, but the authorities also refused permission for the prisoners to attend the funerals.

health due to repeated torture and ill-treatment in detention. They are Sonam Wangdu, a 38-year-old trader serving a life sentence in Drapchi Prison for the alleged murder of a policeman during demonstrations in Lhasa in March 1988, and Lhundrup Gaden (lay name Tashi Gyatso), a 22-year-old former monk from Ganden Monastery imprisoned for taking part in the March 1988 demonstrations in Lhasa.

According to unconfirmed reports received in March 1993, Sonam Wangdu and Lhundrup Gaden may have been released on bail in late February 1993. While Amnesty International would welcome their release, if confirmed, it is concerned that the allegations that they were repeatedly tortured in detention should be urgently investigated by an independent and impartial body and that measures should be taken to provide adequate medical treatment and compensation for the injuries they reportedly incurred as a result.

Sonam Wangdu

A photograph of Sonam Wangdu received in early 1993 shows him in a wheelchair with a plastic tube running along his leg, which is apparently used to drain his urine. An accompanying report smuggled out of Tibet indicated that he has become paralysed below the waist and confirms previous reports that he was unable to control his bladder and had suffered serious kidney and bladder injury as a result of beatings. He is reported to have been tortured and ill-treated on several occasions since his arrest in April 1988, including during interrogation while he was held at Gutsa Detention Centre in Lhasa, as well as at the time of his trial in 1989 and later while serving his sentence at Drapchi Prison.

Sonam Wangdu was summarily tried in Lhasa in January 1989 together with several other Tibetan political prisoners. According to a former political prisoner who escaped from Tibet in 1992, during the trial Sonam Wangdu and several other defendants tried to tell the court that their confessions had been extracted from them under torture. As a result, they were immediately manacled, dragged into a courtyard outside the courtroom and severely beaten with rifle butts and metal rods by a group of about 20 soldiers. The following day, after the trial ended, they were again severely beaten with rifle butts, kicked and punched, before being taken back to prison. Sonam Wangdu was reportedly kicked on his lower back and in the ribs, and was frothing and bleeding from the mouth as a result. According to the former prisoner, Sonam Wangdu was subsequently permanently bent from the beating and had to use a stick to walk, but he still continued to be repeatedly subjected to beatings and other ill-treatment while at Drapchi Prison. On one occasion, according to the former prisoner, he was taken to an apple orchard [where prisoners at Drapchi have to work], where he was beaten, given electric shocks with a cattle prod and struck across the face; other prisoners saw this while they were going to work and heard Sonam Wangdu calling for his mother and

asking to be killed. In early 1991, his condition deteriorated and he was reportedly unable to walk on his own. Since then, he is reported to have been sent several times to hospitals in the area, but was sent back each time to the prison despite his poor condition.

Another photograph received in early 1993 shows Lhundrup Gaden (also known as Tashi or Tashi Gyatso) sitting on the floor with his back propped against a wall. He is reportedly unable to stand up and suffers from constant pain in the head and periodic blindness and deafness. At the time of his arrest in March 1988, Lhundrup Gaden was reportedly flogged on his lower back and hit on the head with an iron bar until he became unconscious. He was also reportedly tortured later on several occasions. In January 1989, he was sentenced to three years' imprisonment and later transferred to Drapchi Prison. In May 1990, his sentence was increased by an additional nine years' imprisonment for alleged pro-independence activities in prison and allegedly planning an escape attempt with fellow prisoners. Following his second trial, he is said to have been chained hand and foot for nine months and forced to carry out hard labour thus chained. He still suffered acute pain in his head as a result of earlier ill-treatment, but received no adequate treatment and his health continued to deteriorate. In August 1992, he collapsed while working and was taken to the Lhasa People's Hospital, then transferred later to another hospital. According to unofficial sources, doctors have suggested that his brain or nerve system may have been damaged, but there are no facilities for treating such injuries in Tibet.

Lhundrup Gaden

Both Sonam Wangdu and Lhundrup Gaden were reported to be in good health before their arrest in 1988. The recent report of their release has not as yet been confirmed.

IV. Prisoners ill-treated at Tianjin Prison No.1

According to a recent Asia Watch report⁶, a pro-democracy activist from Tianjin stated after escaping from China that he had witnessed several political prisoners being frequently beaten and subjected to other forms of ill-treatment at Tianjin Prison No.1. The activist was himself detained there for 19 months after June 1989. According to the report, those ill-treated included:

- ◆ Wang Ning, aged around 35, a former trade union official at the Tianjin Hongqiao District College of Planning and Design, who had served as chairman of the Tianjin Workers Autonomous Federation (TWAF) in May-June 1989. At the time of his arrest after 4 June 1989, Wang Ning was reportedly knocked off his bicycle by the security officials who arrested him, suffering as a result injuries which were reportedly not treated and left him crippled in one leg. He was also reportedly tortured and given frequent beatings at the prison after his arrest. He was eventually sentenced to eight years' imprisonment for taking part in a "counter-revolutionary group" and is still serving his sentence at Tianjin Prison No.1.
- ◆ Zhu Wenhua, a 33-year-old cadre at the Tianjin No.2 Wristwatch Factory who was also held at Tianjin No.1 Prison after June 1989, was reportedly frequently beaten, shocked with electric batons and handcuffed with tight manacles. He was also subjected to long periods of solitary confinement, sometimes for as long as six months. Like Wang Ning, Zhu Wenhua was convicted of involvement in a "counter-revolutionary group" for his role in the TWAF and sentenced to six years' imprisonment. He is reportedly no longer held at Tianjin No.1 Prison and his present whereabouts are not known.

V. Protestants arrested in Henan and other provinces

Various incidents have been reported in recent years of members of protestant groups who were beaten while in police custody and of violence inflicted by police during raids on religious gatherings in various places in China. Several such raids and arrests took place in north China during the second half of 1992.

According to reports, a number of Christians were beaten by police on 15 June 1992, when police raided a "house church" gathering attended by more than 100 Christians in Hu Guan district of Changzhi, in northern Shanxi province. Police reportedly sealed the doors of the house where the meeting was taking place and beat those inside with electric batons. According to unofficial sources, 12 of the religious leaders and layworkers were subsequently taken into police custody where they were repeatedly interrogated and beaten, some sustaining severe bruises and swellings to their heads and torso. Seven of the 12 were

⁶ "Economic Reform, Political Repression: Arrests of Dissidents in China since Mid-1992", Asia Watch Vol.5, No.4, 2 March 1993, p.21.

apparently released after a few weeks, while the remaining five were detained until early August 1992, then placed under house arrest in Changzhi.⁷

On 8 September 1992, a similar raid took place in Henan province when some 40 Public Security (police) officers broke up an "illegal" theological training seminar for church leaders in the village of Guo Fa, in Wuyang district of Henan province. The police arrested 120 Christians and three foreign visitors attending the seminar. Two of the foreigners were held in custody in a hotel for six days and the third one was released after 16 days. The 120 local Christians were taken to the Public Security Bureau Detention Centre of Wuyang district and were reportedly subjected to psychological abuse and physical torture by jail officials, including repeated interrogation, beatings, and sleep and food deprivation. Twelve of those held were released on 20 September 1992 after being made to pay 66 **yuan** (about US\$12) for food and "accommodation" expenses while in detention. The others remained in custody for several more weeks, some being reportedly moved to detention centres in other areas after 20 September. All were reportedly released by mid-December, but made to pay sums of up to a 1,000 **yuan** for their food and other expenses in detention.⁸

Amnesty International has no further details about those who were reportedly ill-treated in these two incidents. However, it is concerned about the allegations of ill-treatment and about other reports indicating that religious believers detained or harassed by police are frequently subjected to beatings and other abuses.

Amnesty International calls on the Chinese authorities to ensure that the reports of torture and ill-treatment cited in this document are urgently investigated by independent and impartial bodies, and that their reports are made public.

⁷ See *China News and Church Report*, No 2033, 9 October 1992.

⁸ See *News Network International - News Service*, 23 October and 22 December 1992.