

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 17/34/95
Distrib: PG/SC

Date: 5 July 1995

MEDICAL CONCERN

TANG Yuanjuan
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Tang Yuanjuan is an adopted prisoner of conscience who is serving a sentence of 20 years' imprisonment, one of the heaviest prison sentences known to have been imposed for "counter-revolutionary" crimes since the June 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protesters. He is in his mid-thirties and after entering prison was diagnosed as suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis and hepatitis (type unknown, but described as "third grade"). He received hospital treatment in 1990, but it is unclear what medical attention he has since received in prison. In May 1995 Amnesty International received reports that he was suffering frequent upper abdominal pain and the organization is concerned to ensure that he receive prompt access to medical attention.

Background

Tang Yuanjuan was one of five employees at a large car manufacturing plant in Changchun city, Jilin province, who were arrested in 1989 and tried together in 1990 for their activities during the period of the 1989 pro-democracy movement. Tang Yuanjuan was arrested on 10 June 1989 and was accused of being the leader of a discussion group which was officially described as a "counter-revolutionary" group. This was a small informal discussion group known as the "philosophy salon" which had met occasionally in 1987 and 1988 to discuss social, economic and political issues, as had many other groups elsewhere in China during that period. The defendants were also accused of putting up political notices in the car factory and of organizing two demonstrations, each involving several thousand workers in Changchun in May and June 1989. The first demonstration was held to express support for the students on hunger strike in Beijing. The second followed the 4 June 1989 killings in Beijing and was called after students from colleges in Changchun came to the factory to give an account about the suppression in Beijing the previous night. Information from both private and official sources indicated that the demonstrations were peaceful. Neither Tang Yuanjuan nor his co-defendants were accused at their trial of having used or advocated violence.

According to information received by Amnesty International, their trial was a mere formality, the verdict appearing to have been decided before the trial hearings began. Tang Yuanjuan's lawyer argued that the defendants' discussion group could not be construed as a "counter-revolutionary" group, as it had no "counter-revolutionary" aims and no organizational structure. In response to the lawyer's statement, the public prosecutor is reported to have stated that the case had been discussed by the police, procuracies and courts of the city and province and that it had been "agreed upon" by relevant city leaders.

Tang developed a high fever in March 1990 and was later diagnosed as suffering from tuberculosis and third grade hepatitis. His family were informed once his symptoms had become serious and were asked to bring money to the detention centre to allow him to receive hospital treatment. Although he was hospitalized, he was sent back to the detention centre before treatment was complete as the money provided to the hospital was apparently insufficient. He was later returned to hospital after his family contributed more money for treatment, but was again returned to the detention centre in September 1990, apparently because of security measures taken at the time the Asian Games were being held in Beijing.

In April 1991 he was transferred to the Lingyuan No 2 Labour Reform Detachment in Liaoning province. He and other political prisoners held there were reportedly tortured on several occasions (see Amnesty International report: *Torture in China*, ASA 17/55/92, issued in December 1992).

His family has repeatedly requested that Tang Yuanjian be released on bail for medical reasons in order that he can receive proper medical attention and treatment. These requests have been refused by the prison authorities on the grounds that medical bail is only for those with serious illnesses "unable to look after themselves". His family have not been informed of the results of medical tests and believe that he is not receiving treatment.

Tang is believed to have been taking traditional Chinese medicines provided by his family, but it is not known what medical attention is available to him in prison camp. According to reports received in May 1995, he has been complaining of considerable upper abdominal pain. Amnesty International is seeking information on his present state of health and assurances that he will receive all the medical attention and treatment he requires. AI continues to seek his release on the grounds that he is a prisoner of conscience.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Asia Regional Program
Date: 5 July 1995

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

TANG Yuanjuan
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Keywords

Theme: POC/ medical care

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below on behalf of Tang Yuanjuan, an adopted prisoner of conscience serving a 20-year prison sentence. Please see details attached. Letters should:

- note that Tang Yuanjuan was diagnosed in 1990 as suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis and hepatitis and has since been reported as suffering upper abdominal pain. Seek information on what medical attention he is receiving and assurances that he will be provided with any care and treatment he requires
- express concern at the very lengthy sentence of 20 years' imprisonment which was handed down against Tang Yuanjuan in 1990 following his arrest during the crackdown on the pro-democracy protests
- note that he was not involved in any violent activity or advocacy of violence. Express concern that Tang Yuanjuan is imprisoned as a prisoner of conscience for the peaceful expression of his opinions and call for his immediate and unconditional release from prison as a prisoner of conscience

Addresses

Xiao Yang Buzhang
Sifabu
Xiaguangli
Beijingshi 100016
People's Republic of China
Fax: +86.1.467.7351

YAO Yunhui Juzhang

Laodong Gaizao Gongzuo Guanliju

14 Dongchang'anlu

Dongchengqu

Beijingshi 100741

People's Republic of China

Faxes: +86.1.408.1046

(Director of the Prison Administration Department of the Ministry of Justice - formerly known as the Reform-through-Labour Administration)

ZHENG Yuzhan Juzhang

Laogaiju

2 Qishan Zhonglu, Beiling Dajie

Huangguqu

Shenyangshi 110032

Liaoningsheng

People's Republic of China

(Director of the Liaoning Bureau of Reform-through-Labour Administration, the province in which Tang is held)

LI Chengyi Tingzhang

Sifating

45 Beilinglu

Huangguqu

Shenyangshi 110032

Liaoningsheng

People's Republic of China

Faxes: +86.24.692.524

(Director of the Liaoning Department of Justice)