



Internationale Gesellschaft
für Menschenrechte (IGFM)

CHINA



Torture methods in the People's Republic of China



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In the People's Republic of China had to or still has to suffer being beaten and kicked. This by far most common form of abuse is especially easy to spot once the prisoner has been released from prison as the victims exhibit widespread bruises and injuries on their bodies. Numerous victims of torture have reported that the beatings and other torture methods stopped a few weeks before they were due to be released from the camps or penitentiaries in order not to leave behind any external signs of the abuse.

Beating as well as other torture methods (see below) cause wounds, which in most cases are not given medical care or it is given too late. Inflammations and even greater pain can be the consequence of further abuse.

With a leather belt und buckles: The victim lies on the ground or stands facing a wall and is beaten with the leather belt belonging to the guard uniform. Immense pain and injuries in the area of the head are caused especially through the belt buckles.

With cables: Being beaten with a cable is described as even more painful than with the uniform belt.

Through other prisoners: Other prisoners follow the orders of the security staff and beat and kick the victim, as they are offered to have their sentences shortened or eased.

Beating of the backside: This method of torture is also known as "passing on the board". The victim is beaten with a board, bludgeon, or stick up to a hundred times. Heavy inflammations and at times open wounds are the consequence of this.



Kicks and beating with the fist: Both methods are used frequently; very sensitive areas such as genitals are not spared. There have been reports of victims being beaten over and over again until they became unconscious.

With clubs and other heavy, blunt objects: The areas of the body that are beaten are often very sensitive, for example the head, genitals or joints. There are isolated reports, in which the victims were tortured with hammers.

With thorny or nettle plants: Especially beatings with plants that have thorns or spines cause extremely painful wounds to the skin. According to several reports nettle plants were also used in order to further enlarge the pain.

With boards that have nails sticking out of them: The victim is beaten with a board, or a similar object, containing nails which stick out. The result of which is a heavy, if not deadly injury.

Twisting and overstretching limbs



Twisting of the arms: The victim's arms are forcefully twisted behind his back.

Overstretching of the legs: The victim stands in a room with his/her legs stretched. The head must be bent downwards as far as possible, the fingers pointing towards the ground. This method is often combined with the "airplane-method" (see below: being forced to remain in one painful position). The victim stands facing a wall, his/her legs held close together and stretched, and in addition to this must place his/her hands sideways on the wall, pointing upwards.

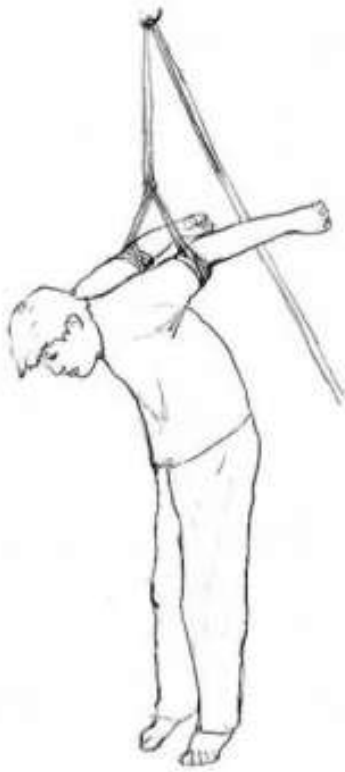


Overstretching of the legs II
("Tiger-seat"): The victim is tied to thighs and knees on a narrow wooden or iron bench. The hands are tied behind the back. At certain intervals, boards or bricks are pushed under the feet. The victim's legs are overstretched and he or she suffers terrible pain.

Overstretching of the legs
III: The seated victim's head is pressed down until the forehead touches the thighs.

"Bed-pressing": The victim is seated on the floor with the legs stretched out in front of him/her. His/her head and upper body are pressed down onto the legs. In this position the victim is tied up and shoved under a bed. Torturers or other inmates then climb onto the bed and walk or jump around on it.

Overstretching of the ankles: The seated victim's toes are pressed to the ground pointing outwards, in most cases through the torturer standing or jumping on the victim's feet.



Stretching and overstretching of the upper arms: The hands of the victim are tied up behind his/her back- one hand from over the shoulder, the other over the lower back. The hands are then pulled together and placed in



handcuffs. In most cases this form of torture leads to the victim fainting after about 20 minutes. Still victims are tortured for up to four hours with this method. According to reports, some victims were forced to dance in order to enhance the pain.

Hoisting up the victim by his/her arms, which are twisted behind his/her back: The victim's arms are twisted behind his/her back and tied together with a thin rope. Then the victim's arms are pulled upwards, in which case they are overstretched and the shoulder joint is often dislocated. The rope cuts into the flesh of the victim. The pain is so severe that the victim often loses control over his/her bladder. According to reports there have been deaths due to this torture method, especially when the victim was abused repeatedly with this method.

Forced abidance in a painful position



The victim must - often over a number of days and sometimes whilst tied up - remain in a certain position. This form of torture is often used in combination with the deprivation of food, water or sleep.

Crouch and stand cells: The cage is shorter than the victim. The dimensions are measured so that the victim can neither stand straight nor lie down. In addition to this the victim is often handcuffed to the bars. The pain which is caused after a short period of remaining in such an unnatural position is so unbearable that thirst, hunger



and the lack of sleep are nearly forgotten.

Standing over a long period of time in the “still-standing” position: The victim has to stand outside underneath the hot sun, feet on the burning hot ground, sometimes without shoes or socks. Apart from the torture of having to stand still in one position for so long, the victims get sunburnt.

Crouching for a long time: The victim has to crouch down, hold his/her head in their hands while resting the elbows on the thighs. This results in the legs going numb and causes the entire body to ache.

Crouching for an extremely long period of time: The victim is forced to remain in a crouching position over an extremely long period of time. While the victim is permitted to rest his/her hands on the ground, this quickly causes bruising on the hands. The victims are guarded throughout the entire duration of the punishment, normally by fellow inmates, who on the one hand are promised



benefits while on the other hand are threatened to be punished themselves if they leave the victim in peace.

Crouching for an extremely long period of time is combined with deprivation of sleep: If the victim falls over, he/she is forced to get back up and get back into the crouching position. This happens until the victim breaks down. In some cases the victim is forced back into the position again afterwards. The victims suffer paralysis and long-lasting pain. In the most extreme case, which was reported to the ISHR, a woman was forced to crouch for an entire month. Her subsequent fate is unknown.

“Military crouching”: The victim is forced into a crouching position; feet placed one behind the other. Only the front half of the back foot touches the ground, and therefore carries nearly the whole bodyweight. Normally this method causes pain after only a few minutes, especially for the back foot and the leg. Sometimes it even leads to the loss of feeling in the leg or a complete loss of control over it.



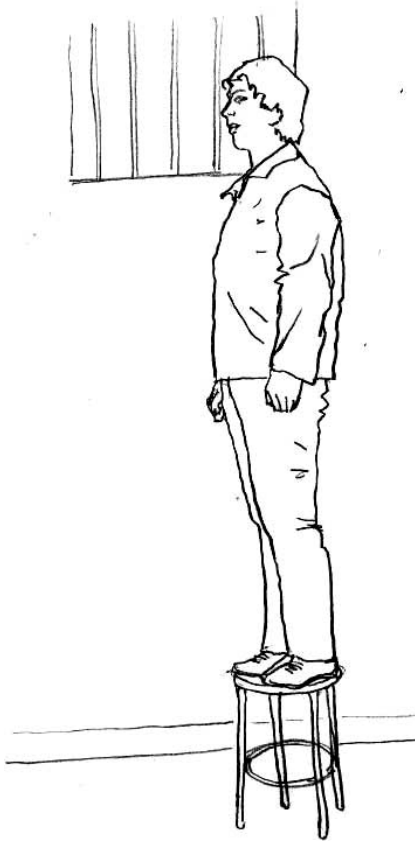
Crouching in a square: The victim must crouch on a floor tile of 30×30cm. The head must be raised and the feet must not overstep the boundaries.

Crouching with one's legs apart: The victim must crouch with his/her legs far apart, while both arms should be pointing forward, parallel to the ground.

Crouching on the ground: With the help of tables and boards the victim is forced into a corner of a room and has to crouch there on little space.

Crouching with one's heels pulled up: The victim has to crouch over nails, which are placed under the victim's heels. He/she must lift his/her heels in order to avoid stepping onto the nail.

Crouching or standing while handcuffed to bars
This position makes it impossible for the victim to sleep or eat.



Standing outside in winter: The victim has to stay outside in the freezing cold over night or has to stand in snow or on ice. Depending on the length of the torture toes and even the feet can freeze off.

Standing on a chair ("exhausting an eagle"): The victim is standing on a high chair. In this position the victim in some cases has to raise its arms over its head. As soon as the victim falls from



the chair in exhaustion, he/she is beaten and forced back onto the chair.

Long standing on one leg: The victim is forced to balance on one leg. If he/she fails to manage this or falls down due to exhaustion, the victim is beaten and kicked.

Standing on bricks: The victim has to stand on a pile of bricks with his/her hands tied up over their head and attached to the ceiling. Once the victim loses balance, the pile of bricks collapses and the victim hangs in the air.

Being handcuffed to a heating pipe: The victim is handcuffed to a heating pipe over a long period of time.

Standing/ kneeling/ crouching/ sitting with tied up arms: The victim's arms are handcuffed together either behind their back or between the legs. Often shackles are used as well. The victim can neither sleep nor walk, stand, use the toilet or eat. Often the victim can only move in a half bent, half crouching position for weeks.



“Carrying a sword on one’s back”: This position quickly causes the emergence of pain and paralysis.

Kneeling on bricks, ashtrays or other objects with sharp edge: The victim must kneel on bricks, ashtrays, wooden planks or other sharp objects.

Hanging from a pole: The victim hangs headfirst from a pole. The lower legs rest on the pole while the hands hold on to the knees. The body weight mainly weighs down on the knees. This torture method is reported to be very painful.



“Airplane”: The victim stands with his/her head pointing to the floor with his/her hands pointing to the ceiling at his/her side (like the wings of an airplane), while touching the wall.

Standing at a 90° angle: The victim must bend his/her upper body forwards so that it forms a 90° angle whilst the hands are placed behind the head.

Sitting on the iron chair: The victim is tied up to a metal chair, sometimes for as long a week. Due to this the victim is forced to follow nature’s call on this chair and remain sitting in it. Apart from the humiliation this causes, it can also lead to the person getting sore from sitting for such a long period of time.

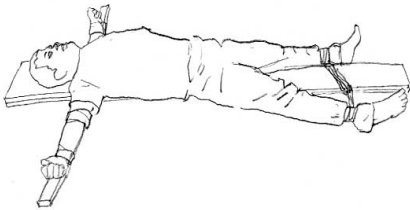


Sitting on a board with a square-edge: The victim sits on an iron plank with sharp bumps and indentations. After a while this causes bloody wounds. Infections are common.

Sitting on square-edged objects: The victim must remain seated on square-edged objects for a long period of time without being allowed to move.

Sitting on a broomstick: The victim is forced to sit on the handle of a broom over a long period of time. If he/she is

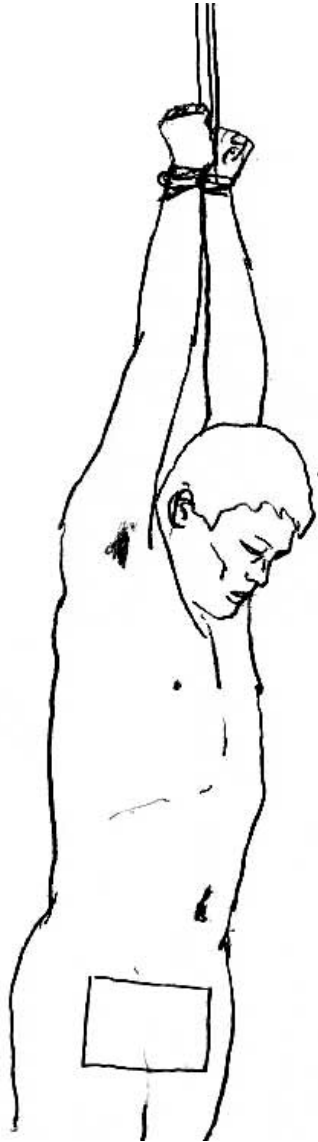
unable to do so, he/she is
beaten as a punishment.



“Hell’s shackles”: Tong-
shaped braces cut into the
victim’s ankles and wrists. A
victim with “hell’s shackles”
on can neither stand nor
crouch, move or sleep.

Being chained to a “death
bed”: This form of punishment
goes hand in hand with
isolation. For weeks on end
the victim is tied to a wooden
board, spread-eagled and not
able to move. The victim is
always in chains and has to be
fed by fellow inmates. The
victims have to sleep on the
board as well as follow
nature’s call on it. Some
victim’s are undressed before
the start of their punishment.
They suffer from bedsores.

Hanging



Being hung by handcuffs is already very painful in its most simple form. The Chinese security institutions come up with various gruesome forms of this torture method.

Hanging by the hands (“Hanging-up a cage”): The hands of the victim are tied together. Then the police pulls the hands of the victim over his/her head and hangs them



so that their feet no longer touch the ground. A variation of this method is hanging the victim from a tree or pole with handcuffs.

Hanging by the feet (“Big-hanging”): The victim is hanged upside-down by his/her feet.

“Corsage” (Straightjacket): The “Corsage” consists of a piece of canvas with sleeves. The sleeves are longer than the arms and have strings attached to them. With these strings the victim’s arms are crossed and tied up behind the back, then forcefully pulled back over the head. This violent upward-pulling motion causes the shoulders to dislocate and the arms and elbows to break. In some cases the victim, who is experiencing great pain, is then hanged upside-down from a tree.

Electroshocks



Victims are abused with up to a dozen electroshocks at the same time, at times over several hours.

The victims are shocked everywhere: the face- even the eyes- genitals, nipples, and other sensitive body parts. Electro sticks are also inserted into the mouth and vagina.

The electroshocks leave behind scars. These scars often become infected and make further electroshock treatment even more painful.

Forced feeding

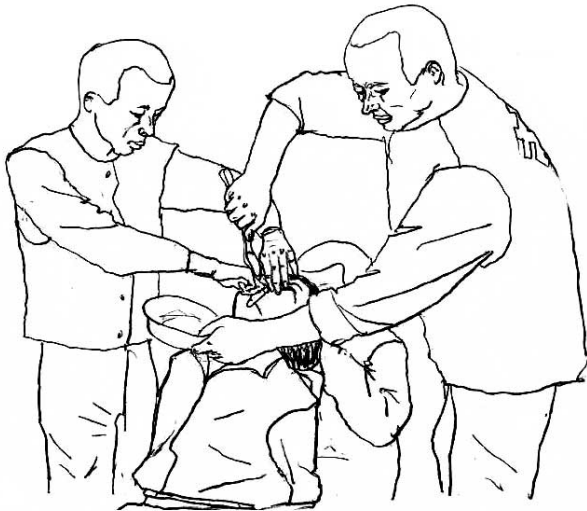


Again and again prisoners go on hunger strike as a means of protest against the conditions of their detention or against the lack of legal foundation of their detention. Those prisoners are usually punished with forced feeding. The main aim of the forced feeding ordered by the police is not however to feed the victim. The objective is to break the will and the resistance of the victim.

Inserting a tube through the nose: A tube is inserted through the victim's nose into the stomach, without a lubricant. The tube is not inserted by medical staff, but by members of the guards. Injuries are accepted.

Repeatedly inserting and protracting tubes: The tube is repeatedly inserted and protracted. Several victims have died due to

this, probably because of aspirated blood.



Infusing sharp, repulsing or hot substances: The victim is forced to swallow substances such as: saturated salt solutions, vinegar, alcohol, red pepper, urine or excrements. This method leads to strong nausea. The victims are also forced to drink extremely hot or boiling water (see below).

Leaving tubes in the stomach: Some victim's tubes are left in the stomach over several hours. Since they are tied up, they cannot remove them on their own.

Forced opening of the mouth: In some cases the victim is "feed" through the mouth. In order to get the victim to open his/her mouth, the police use brutal force. Often other inmates are forced to open the victim's mouth with the help of metal spoons or other hard objects. Mouth and teeth of the victim are injured during this process.

Burning and scalding



Cigarettes: Fingers, toes, faces, genitals, nipples, and other body parts are burned with cigarettes. According to reports, in some cases the victims are even forced to swallow burning cigarettes.

Burning-hot iron bars: Some victims are tortured with burning-hot iron bars. Due to the bad hygienic standards in Chinese prisons, this leads to the wounds becoming infected.

Pouring hot water over the head: Extremely



hot water is poured over the victim's head in order to scald him/her.

Infusion of boiling water: Very hot or even boiling water is forced into the victim via tubes through the nose or mouth. Inner scalding is the result.

Hunger, thirst, sleep deprivation

Hunger: Some victims receive an insufficient amount of food over long periods of time. At times prisoners are given no food at all for days. Some victims have developed hunger oedemas; others starved down to their skeletons and were too weak to stand upright.

Thirst: The victims receive an insufficient amount of water for several days. As a means of punishment or due to neglect some prisoners are given no water at all.

Sleep deprivation: The victims are kept from sleeping for days on end. This is achieved through binding them up in painful positions, but also through constant light, noise and especially beating, kicking and other punishments in case the victim lies down.

Deprivation of sleep is defined as torture by human rights standards and by the UN. As harmless as it may sound, constant sleep deprivation is an extremely cruel form of torture as it shatters the nervous system and

leads to other severe physical and psychological damages.



Sexual violence

Rape/Mass-rape: Women imprisoned for political reasons are locked up in cells with male criminals. At times the women are undressed prior to this. The guards order the criminals to rape the women or at least make it clear that there will be no consequences for



them if they do take advantage of the victims. Prisoners have also been raped by guards. Male political prisoners, too, have become rape victims, due to sexual violence coming from homosexual criminals or guards.

Inserting objects: Different objects are inserted into the vagina or anus of the victim, including bottles, clubs and brushes.

Other forms of sexual violence: The sexual perversion of some members of the Chinese “security institution” knows no boundaries. It is even more difficult for the victims to report what has happened to them when it comes to these topics. If they do report about it, they normally prefer that this information does not become public.

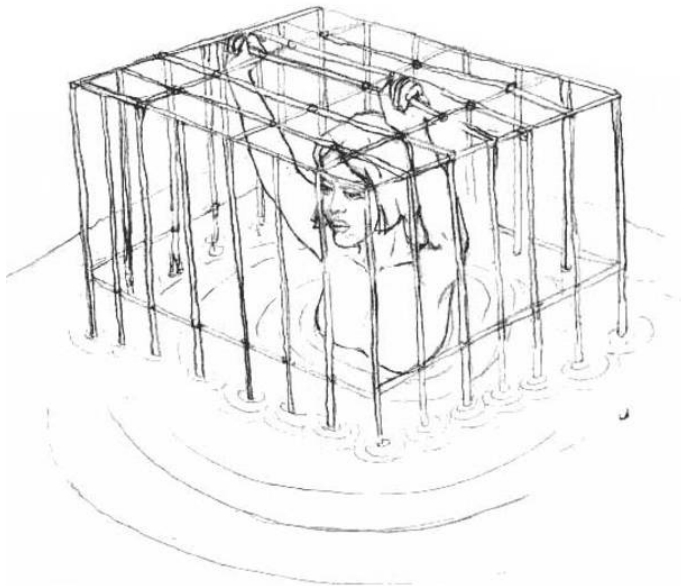
Isolation

Isolation-darkness cells: Small cells sometimes only provide a space of less than 3m². Isolation cells normally neither have windows, nor a bed, water or a toilet. For months the victim is locked away in such a small cell and has to eat, sleep and follow nature’s call in it. Because the cell is less than 1.5 metres high, one cannot stand up straight in it. Sometimes the victim’s hands are handcuffed to the cell door in order to enhance the punishment so that the victim cannot sleep for days. It can also happen that

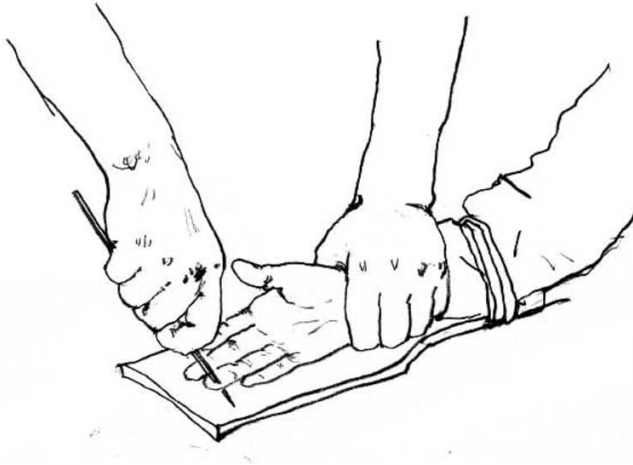
water is poured over the floor to make it difficult for the victim to sleep.

“Water dungeon”: The victim is locked up in an iron cage, naked, and lowered into water until this reaches his/her neck. The victim very quickly becomes cold, and is unable to sit or sleep. If they become unconscious, they drown. According to reports some of these cages have nails on the inside, so that the victim cannot lean against the wall.

Prohibition of eye contact and speaking: The victim is not allowed to speak or have eye contact with his/her fellow inmates. If they fail to do so the result is punishment.



Stab and cut wounds



Stabbing objects under the fingernails: The stabbing of sharp objects - such as bamboo sticks, needles or nails - under the fingernails is a common form of torture. In at least one known case a doctor inserted a needle underneath the fingernail of a tied up victim.

Stabbing through the fingertips: Sharp bamboo sticks are driven through the fingertips underneath the fingernails of a victim e.g. with a hammer. In most cases this makes the fingernail come off completely. While they start off with one finger at the least, sometimes all fingers are "treated".



Stabbing through body parts: Lips, nipples, genitals and for example the skin on one's back are pierced with sharp objects such as needles or nails. In at least one case a thick needle was stabbed into a victim's knee and forcefully moved around.

Cuts: The victim's skin is cut with knives, razorblades, or shards of glass.

Injuring the nose and ears: The victim is stabbed in the nose and ears with little sticks. Especially the puncturing of the eardrum is described as being extremely painful.



Misuse of psychiatry

There are known cases where victims are detained in psychiatric institutions for political reasons, e.g. because they stood up for democracy and the freedom of expression, or because they practised Buddhist meditation exercises. Normally these victims have not been charged or sentenced. But without a sentence there is no time limit to their detainment. These victims are imprisoned for an unlimited amount of time due to the decision of an authority. Even the theoretical hope of being released does not exist for these prisoners.

Healthy prisoners in psychiatric wards: A number of completely healthy victims – with no signs whatsoever of being psychologically unstable – have been sent to psychiatric institutions. They were/ are not only robbed of their freedom, but are also locked up with real, partly violent, psychologically unstable people.

Injections of drugs while in psychiatric custody: Political prisoners are being systematically pharmaceutically abused. Psychotherapeutic drugs belong to the administered substances. Unfortunately the ISHR does not yet have closer details concerning the exact type of substances that are being administered.

Suffocation



“The plastic bag”: A plastic bag is pulled over the victim’s head. The victim begins to panic.

Pushing the head into a bucket of water or urine: The victim’s head is pressed into a bucket filled with water or urine, until the victim becomes unconscious or nearly unconscious. The pressing down of the head in itself is already painful.



Infusing water: A large amount of water is infused into the victim's mouth, whilst his/her mouth is held shut. Choking, feeling as if suffocating and panicking are the result.

Strangling: The victim is strangled around the neck with a rope, belt, and scarf or similar, sometimes until the victim becomes unconscious. In some cases the victim's faces were covered by wet towels.

Abuse through animals

Dogs: The police threaten the victim to be attacked by a dog, or prompt a dog to bite the victim.

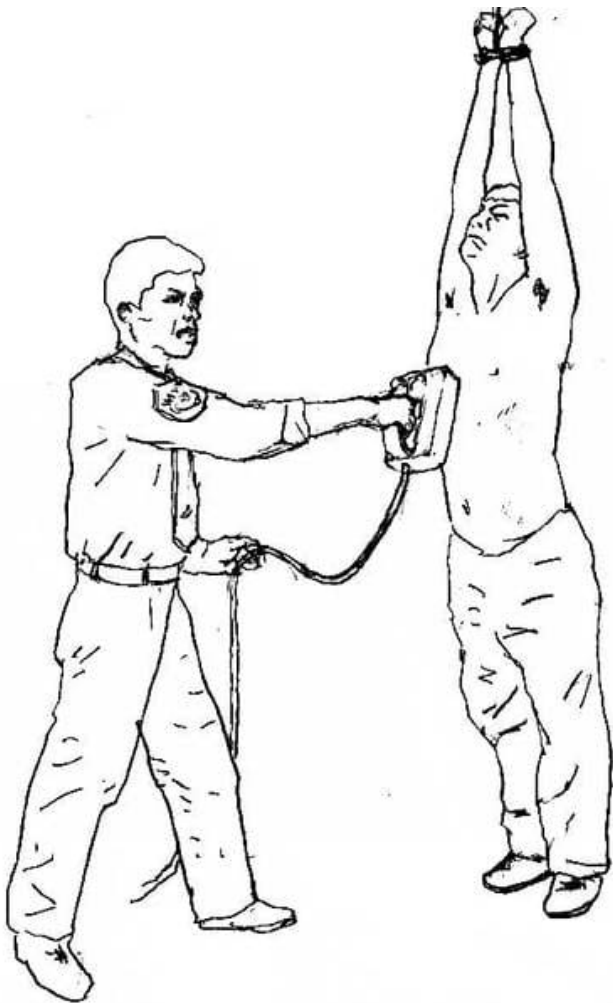
Insects: The victim is tied up outdoors, naked or semi-naked. In some regions of the People's Republic of China this automatically

leads to numerous mosquito bites. It is known from the Gulag of the Soviet Union that in several cases victims were killed in this manner.

Snakes: There are several reports that victims were frightened with snakes. In one case the victim's hands were placed into a bag containing snakes.



Further abuses and torture methods



Breaking of fingers and bones: Especially the breaking of fingers is common practice. The victims are threatened that all of their fingers will be broken, if they do not give in to the will of the torturer (e.g. signing of a declaration, renouncing of the Buddhist meditation practice of Falun Gong etc.).

Dislocating joints: The dislocation of finger, but also of arm joints normally goes hand in hand with the breaking of the fingers (see



above). The same goes for sticking needles etc underneath the fingernails (see above).

Frostbite: Some victims are forced to stand barefoot outdoors in the snow or ice during winter. Pain and later frostbite are the results. (See also standing for a long time).

Crushes: The victim's hand is crushed between two tables or in a door. Common practice is also the pinching of skin.

Red pepper: Red pepper is blown into the victim's eyes or nose.

Nature's call: For a number of days the victim is not allowed to go to the toilet. The victims are forced to use the floor of their cells instead, or if they are tied up to lie or sit in their urine and excrements.

"Stuffing the mouth": The victim's mouth is stuffed with dirty old rags, so that he/she cannot speak any longer. Sealing the mouth shut follows the same aim.

Pouring freezing cold water over the head: A bucket full of freezing cold water is poured over the victim's head. Especially during winter time the wet (and in some cases naked) victims suffer from hypothermia.



Extremely loud noises over headphones: The victims are forced to listen to extremely loud music or propaganda over headphones for a long period of time.

Denying sufficient medical care: Persons, who were ill at the time of their imprisonment or who became ill whilst in prison, are punished by not being given the necessary medical treatment or simply by not being given painkillers. Torture and abuse often leads to external and internal injuries. Denying the victims of these injuries sufficient medical care prolongs and enhances their suffering.

Walking for a long period of time: The victim has to walk without a break for longer than ten hours at a time. If the victim is exhausted, other prisoner are ordered to drive him/her on. Once the victim cannot be forced to go any further, even through kicking and beating, the fellow inmates are ordered to drag the victim along.

Running in chains: Several victims are handcuffed and chained together, and have to run without a break for a long period of time. Because the victims cannot coordinate their movements due to the running and exhaustion they hurt each other through their handcuffs and chains.