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Chair

Mr. Scott Reid

Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development

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• (1305)

[Translation]

The Chair (Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC)): Welcome to the 27th meeting of the Subcommittee on International Human Rights of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

[English]

Today we have with us two witnesses whom I've known personally. These are two extraordinary individuals. They are brothers, Shenli Lin and Mingli Lin. Both are Mandarin speakers, and as a result, we will be doing the translation from Mandarin to the two official languages and back again, which will slow us down a bit.

Both of our witnesses are originally from the People's Republic of China. Both now reside in Canada. Shenli Lin arrived in Canada after a brief period of imprisonment. He had been in prison for practising Falun Gong, a practice that is simply a matter of following one's conscience. He was a prisoner of conscience during his period of imprisonment, before coming to Canada.

His brother, Mingli Lin, was one of 13 individuals mentioned in a motion asking that those individuals be repatriated to Canada where they could join family members. That motion was passed by the House of Commons unanimously in October 2002.

What I hope we can concentrate on in our hearings today is what happened subsequent to that.

Mr. David Sweet (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Westdale, CPC): I have a point of order. I think I know where you are going. But I want to cover an administrative item. The camera here—I don't remember talking about it. That's all right, though. Is it going to be used according to House protocol, so that it will be only on the person who is speaking?

The Chair: That is correct. I would check that with the clerk first.

Mr. David Sweet: Thank you.

The Chair: What happened after that motion was passed is interesting. The Canadian embassy in Beijing, and Canadian officials in Beijing, worked to follow through on the terms of that motion. They worked to help get the individuals who were named in that motion out of prison, and then they worked to get them to Canada.

Unfortunately, in the case of Mingli Lin, the consulate in Shanghai—the Canadian consulate—did not issue a visa. This was raised in the House of Commons. We pointed out that the House had

unanimously passed a motion asking that he be allowed to come to Canada. Nonetheless, the visa was denied. He was subsequently rearrested and spent additional years imprisoned for practising his beliefs. More recently, he was again released from prison, and he has since come to Canada, where we are very glad to have him.

I'm going to turn the floor over to our witnesses now. What I'm hoping they can talk about is the process they experienced after the House of Commons acted 10 years ago. We want to find out what Canadian officials did right and what they did wrong. We do not want to have a situation in the future where another person who has been asked in a motion of Parliament to come to Canada finds himself re-imprisoned in his country as a result of a lack of follow-through by Canadian officials.

I want to say welcome to both Shenli Lin and Mingli Lin. I invite Shenli Lin to begin testifying. Once he has done so, we will have questions from members of the committee.

Thank you.

Mr. Shenli Lin (As an Individual) (Interpretation): Mr. Chair and honourable members, first of all, I would like to thank you for the efforts you made in assisting me in achieving my freedom, in order to help all Falun Gong practitioners.

I was arrested in Shanghai as a Falun Gong practitioner and I was put in prison. I was forced to read propaganda materials. After reading them, I was transported by police car to my home, and I was imprisoned at home with four guards guarding the door until the next day. I was taken to the police station. The four guards left. They told me it was a study workshop for me, and that if I changed my mind, my way of thinking, they would let me go. They said I had to agree with them by saying that Falun Gong was evil. Otherwise, I would have to stay there until I changed.

In China, this is all illegal. Their behaviour is considered illegal. My wife is a Canadian citizen, so what they did is illegal. According to Chinese law, Chinese people can have freedom of speech.

My wife came back to China to see me, and I went with my wife to complain about this imprisonment and to ask for a good environment in which to practice. When we went to the office, what we encountered were fully uniformed police, and we were sent back and I was in jail for 15 days. Then I signed a petition. I was accused of disturbing the peace and was put in prison for a year and a half. I was forced to take cold baths during winter time. I was beaten physically. I was forced to do labour work. I suffered a lot. Every morning, I had to get up early to go work—labour work—and come back late at night. Every day I worked for more than 12 hours. My chest and my back had hemorrhages as well as rotten parts. It was very painful. I had to put a diaper underneath my underpants, and everyday I had to tear it off, and my skin would come off with it.

The food was very bad. We had to use steel needles to sew up leather balls, and it's very hard work. Every day, I would hurt my fingers with those needles, and the skin would peel off, and every day we would also get wax on our hands from handling the balls, and they are all hazardous chemical substances.

We suffered a lot. I couldn't sleep well because of the pain, and also the rotten areas of my body, so they had to send me to the clinic, the clinic inside the prison. Even the doctor accused them of not being human beings because they sent me so late. However, I did not give up. They, as a result, extended my imprisonment to two years from one year and a half. They said, "If you do not change your mind, you will never leave the prison until the end of your life." I said, "If I do not leave, I will stay here until the end of my life."

● (1310)

Thanks to the Canadian Parliament as well as the government, other organizations, and related personnel, on January 13, 2002, I was released. Then subsequently, I came to Canada.

I would like to thank the Canadian Parliament, as well as the government members who offered me assistance. I am very happy, because in this free land I can continue my practice of my Falun Gong beliefs. In China, there are hundreds of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners. They are still suffering. They are still being oppressed by the Chinese government.

I would like to thank you for your help and ask for your assistance in the future.

Thank you.

● (1315)

The Chair: Thank you.

We invite our other witness now, please.

Mr. Mingli Lin (As an Individual) (Interpretation): Mr. Chairman and all committee members, as an oppressed Falun Gong practitioner...first of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and all other members who offered us help, for your efforts to offer us assistance in order to change the environment in China to assist Falun Gong practitioners.

Mingli is my name. In July 1997 I started practising Falun Gong to cure myself of my illnesses. A short period after I started practising I started feeling much healthier. I can say Falun Gong gave me a new life.

The Chinese First Secretary, Jiang Zemin at the time, started to denounce Falun Gong. As a result, I was kidnapped four times by the Chinese police. In 2000 I was detained for a month just for my practice. The next time was in January 2001, when I was forced to enter a workshop to be brainwashed. The third time was in April 2001, when I was put in a labour camp for two years. The fourth time was in October 2005, when I was sentenced to six years in prison, and this is the most unforgettable one.

The government had no reason to kidnap me, and they used an excuse for being a psychiatric patient to imprison me for six years. In the beginning, I was forced to sit on a little wooden container from morning to evening. I had to sit straight and couldn't move my feet, and I had to put my arms behind my back for more than 10 hours. If I moved, I would have been beaten. Physically, this is unbearable for a human being. If I moved, they would kick my face and my head. All my teeth were kicked out. They kicked me with leather boots. As a result, I had to replace all my teeth, which were knocked out.

In January 2009 I was forced to write a report declaring that I disagreed with Falun Gong discipline. I said Falun Gong's essence is truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance. They said, "What is this BS? You have to write it." Then they stripped me naked. They forced me to sit on the concrete floor and poured cold water over me and used bamboo strips to hit my face, my head, and my body, and I started bleeding.

Because I did not write this repentant letter report, they would not let me sleep. During the day they used a large ghetto blaster to blast me with propaganda. As a result, every day I wasn't in my right mind, because I couldn't sleep. I could not distinguish between daytime and nighttime. They would not let me go to the bathroom. They said I had to do it on the spot.

● (1320)

They would tie me on the bed. They used a big wire and pushed it into my stomach; when it reached the bottom of my stomach they would pull it out. They did it repeatedly. They broke my pipe for food. They pulled out the wire and of course blood came out. My mouth was full of blood. Under such circumstances, I couldn't bear it anymore. I lost consciousness. They saw the blood everywhere and they called the medical personnel. They looked at me and said, "You have to send him to the hospital." Because I was on a famine protest and I was bleeding, they said, "He will die." So they sent me to the hospital, to the emergency. They gave me an IV at the hospital.

The Chair: You can take your time if you wish.

Mr. Mingli Lin (Interpretation): This is only a part of the suffering. Because they wanted me to write repentant letters and I refused, two persons would grab my feet and they would swing me against the wall, and they used boiling water to pour on my face.

In Chinese prisons, Falun Gong practitioners suffer enormously. You can't even imagine. I remember in 2001, when I had to do labour work for two years, I was asked to work starting in the morning at five, six o'clock, until 8:30 p.m. This was normal. Every day we had overtime, sometimes to 10 p.m., even midnight.

We had targets to reach, all of us, and if you did not reach your target, you would not sleep. You had to hand all these products in. After you handed in the work, they had to hang you upside down and put a bucket of poo and pee underneath your head. Then they would lower you into the bucket, up close to the bucket for you to smell the stench. They would ask you, "Can you reach your target? If you don't reach your target, you will have to eat feces, human feces."

In Chinese prisons, Falun Gong practitioners suffer many, many pains and sufferings. I saw with my own eyes a Falun Gong practitioner. They used plastic shoes to hit his head, to the degree that his head was broken, was battered to pieces, and they still refused to take him to hospital. And they used cold water to pour on his head. The person said, "Do you understand truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance?" They would block his mouth and they would pick him up and throw him down four floors.

In prison you often heard screams coming from Falun Gong practitioners who were beaten, who were being tortured. Often we heard that.

Thank you. Thank you so much for enabling me to come out of prison earlier, for your efforts and your assistance.

• (1325)

Thank you very much...that I could eventually come to Canada. Your assistance was very effective.

The torture I've just described is not even considered to be the most severe in China, so your assistance and your efforts will have a political impact. The Falun Gong practitioners in China are still suffering what I have suffered.

Thank you to the international community for applying pressure to the Chinese government. I urge the international community to apply pressure to the Chinese government to let them go quickly.

I was kidnapped four times in China. They had no legal grounds for any of these times. Once I was at home with my elderly mother. They kidnapped me from home and tied my hands behind my back. My mother had to kneel down in front of them and ask, "Why would you take my son away because he practised Falun Gong? I think Falun Gong helped him. He is much healthier now because the essence of Falun Gong is truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance. The police should protect our people. Why do you have to take him away?"

They didn't answer. They tied me up, put me into the police car, and drove away.

I'd like to extend my official gratitude for your efforts to apply pressure to the Chinese government to release me earlier to eventually come to Canada and escape the torture by the Chinese government. Thank you very much. Thank you to everybody who offered assistance. I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you to both of our witnesses. I can only imagine how difficult it is to have to describe that all over again. We are appreciative.

What we normally do in this committee is have one question from each of the members. We have about half an hour. That gives us five minutes for each questioner, including the time for the response.

Mr. Sweet, would you like to begin, please?

• (1330)

Mr. David Sweet: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

There are no words that can describe how much we regret the treatment you received. There is certainly no way for us to have any kind of conception of not only the physical pain but the continued emotional scars that you manage until this day.

My first question is for Shenli Lin.

Did you experience the same magnitude of torture that Mingli did when you were incarcerated?

Mr. Shenli Lin (Interpretation): Yes. We were jailed in the same place. I received the same treatment, only I was not in prison for as long as he was. At the beginning he had to labour for two years and then spend six years in prison. After my two years of hard labour I was released and came to Canada. So the time was not as long.

Parliamentarians and Canadian society urged...and their voices were very loud because my wife was Canadian, so the Chinese government was scared. They wanted to torture and oppress me, but they were also afraid of the Canadian voices. They ran out of... They could not continue to imprison me, so that's why I ended up coming to Canada earlier. I suffered for a shorter time, but the content was the same.

Mr. David Sweet: I know that some of my colleagues are going to talk to you about some measures that Canada can take to make sure that circumstances like Mingli experienced will not happen in the future. I am compelled to ask you a question because of one of the guests in our audience here. You obviously experienced lots of torture, and you had other Falun Gong there who experienced lots of torture as well. Was there any evidence that you saw or experienced of organ harvesting of Falun Gong practitioners when you were there?

Mr. Shenli Lin (Interpretation): I did not see if organs were taken. When I was imprisoned, my blood was tested. They had to do a physical examination. This could be the first step. When I was imprisoned at the beginning I did not know. After I came out, in retrospect I knew, because it had something to do with the voices coming from outside that they could not do whatever they wanted with me.

At the end of my two years of labour, in the last half year, my room was larger. They did not pay too much attention to monitoring me. I did not know the reason. I think it's because they saw my resolve; at the beginning I thought that. After the words that came out, in retrospect, I understood it's because of Canadian society and parliamentarians' voices that they could not do much with me. They knew they had to release me. When I came for my paperwork and application to come to Canada, I could tell they knew this was inevitable.

Mr. David Sweet: Thank you, Shenli Lin.

Mingli Lin, you were kidnapped four different times. Do you feel that was because you were more vocal than most Falun Gong practitioners, or you were kidnapped multiple times for some other motivation?

Mr. Mingli Lin (Interpretation): For someone like me, who was kidnapped four times—hundreds of thousands are kidnapped; four times is not considered too much. There were people who were kidnapped six or eight times. As a practitioner of Falun Gong, they wanted to tell the truth because they know it's beneficial to them.

I had heart conditions and other physical problems. Hospitals could not help me. A few months after I started practising Falun Gong, I was healthier. In Chinese there's a saying, "You pay back a person who gives you a drip of help." Falun Gong offered me all these benefits. How can I not voice my opinion when Falun Gong practitioners are suffering?

Falun Gong's essence is truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance. This is good. All the practitioners of Falun Gong in China would tell everybody around them that Falun Gong is good. The Chinese government oppresses Falun Gong because they think it's dangerous, because too many people practise it, but more people practising means it's going to be better.

Being kidnapped four times is not considered a lot among all these other Falun Gong practitioners. There are people who were kidnapped many more times than I was. That's how it was.

• (1335)

Mr. David Sweet: When they ruptured your esophagus, you mentioned they took you to a hospital. Then you mentioned another practitioner whom they beat over the head and didn't take to hospital. In this macabre behaviour, were you able to find out why they would allow some people to suffer and presumably die because they were not hospitalized while some were taken to the hospital?

Mr. Mingli Lin (Interpretation): I think the urging coming from international society has something to do with that. I think the calls the Canadian government made had an impact on the Chinese government. It applied pressure. If people have nobody behind them making these calls, they will wait until they die. If for a period of 10 years there were voices calling for my release, they would know not to kill me. They would say, "Okay, I'll make you suffer. I'll torture you, but I won't kill you." Otherwise, they would be under enormous pressure from international society. That's why, when they saw that I was about to die, they took me to the hospital, so that I could go on living.

I saw with my own eyes the police.... The police would not use their own fists to beat us. They would use those murderers who are in jail. These people form a monitoring group that watches over other people who are in prison, especially the Falun Gong practitioners. All these physical abuses were carried out by these people in that group. The police never beat us; they did not do it themselves with their own fists.

The physical abuse was extreme. For example, there was a man whose genitals were beaten until they fell apart. It was inhuman. They would tie you on the bed and pour feces on you. These types of inhuman behaviours are not uncommon. It's hard for a normal person to imagine it. They would be applied to either a man or a woman.

The urging of the Canadian government has an impact and applies pressure on the Chinese government. I was a result of it. I would like to thank you for it.

There was another person. When they put the wire in his stomach, they had to actually open his stomach to take the bits out of his stomach. This is extreme.

There's a person by the name of Xin Foo Goo. After they opened up his stomach to take the residue out, they did not even give him anesthetic. Can you imagine how much he suffered? This happens too much in China every day.

• (1340)

The Chair: Mr. Marston, you're next.

Mr. Wayne Marston (Hamilton East—Stoney Creek, NDP): I want to thank both of you gentlemen for coming here.

One of the points you just made was how hard this is to understand. For Canadians who live in a country where we have the kinds of freedoms you now experience with us, it's that much more difficult for us to understand people who can do the things they do. It raises a number of questions for us.

One that comes to my mind is how they seem to focus on individuals and put them through long-term trials and torture. Did either or both of you have some particular status, aside from being Falun Gong, that might have drawn their attention to you?

Mr. Mingli Lin (Interpretation): We're just normal people. We don't have any special social status.

Mr. Shenli Lin (Interpretation): Oppression against Falun Gong practitioners is across the board. From the top, you would have intellectuals, you would have university professors, senior engineers. Ja Li Chu...the Canadian government also offered him assistance. He was released after me. He was a senior engineer. They do not have any standard. As long as you practise Falun Gong, it doesn't matter if you are a central committee member, they would oppress you.

For example, Zhu Rongji, the former premier, spoke up to offer us his sympathy. He was pushed out of the Chinese government. So there's no discretion whatsoever.

Mr. Wayne Marston: The effort to reform you, in their view, was to bring you back into the population saying Falun Gong was bad. But one of the things that the Canadian people would be interested in, in China, is our trade relationship. From our standpoint, there is the belief that human rights must be attached to trade. That's why this committee would take a particular interest in your own situation.

Do you have any recommendations that have come out of your experience that you would make on how the Canadian government and our embassies and people responded in your particular case? Or are there ones that you know of?

Mr. Shenli Lin (Interpretation): I feel the Canadian government, in different ways, in the area of trade and education, in the areas where you can have exchanges with China...during the exchange you can let the Chinese counterpart know about the level of oppression against Falun Gong practitioners and what happens to them in China. That would be good. Just as you said, we need to add the human rights content into our proposal of exchanges, because in China we do not enjoy human rights. Apart from communism, there's nothing else you can believe. If I say that I believe in truthfulness, compassion, and forbearance, why wouldn't they let me try to be a good human being? If I'm a good human being, it's good for the government, good for the society.

I remember in certain areas, when they looked for workers in a factory, they would say the Falun Gong practitioners would have an advantage over other people to get into the factory to work. You can imagine if there are more of these workers in the factory, the whole level of life and working conditions would be better in the factory. Why the government would not allow you to do that is because they do not allow a different type of belief. If you believe otherwise, they are scared. That's why I think the Canadian government, in many different areas, in the exchanges with the Chinese government, can let them know, because many Chinese people in China do not know...they are not aware of this level of oppression. On Chinese radio and television, there is Chinese propaganda inundating everything. As a result they are brainwashed. They only receive the government's perspective. They do not know the truth.

If the Canadian government can, during the exchanges with the Chinese government, let them know what the Falun Gong organization is like, and also about the most basic human rights a citizen should enjoy in the country, I think this would be beneficial to us.

• (1345)

Mr. Wayne Marston: A question of you, Mr. Chair. On the Canada-China dialogue, are you aware if the Falun Gong's issues have ever been raised there?

The Chair: I am not aware one way or another, but I could try to get our analysts to get the answer back to you. I'll do that.

Unfortunately, that uses up your time, Mr. Marston.

We now go to Mr. Hiebert.

Mr. Russ Hiebert (South Surrey—White Rock—Cloverdale, CPC): Thank you very much for providing such courageous and graphic testimony. I know it was obviously very difficult for you to explain what had happened to you, and personally I'm astonished at the barbaric treatment you were forced to endure. But by speaking out, I think you're filling an important role in informing not only us but others as to what is actually happening.

When you were in the prisons that you experienced, obviously, there were other Falun Gong practitioners who were imprisoned as well. Can you give me an idea of how many Falun Gong practitioners you believe are experiencing what you experienced?

Mr. Shenli Lin (Interpretation): I come from Shanghai originally, and the Falun Gong practitioners in Shanghai would meet regularly. I think there are thousands of Falun Gong practitioners in Shanghai who have suffered different levels of

torture and oppression, from people in their 70s to people in their 30s. They suffered what I suffered. And I am speaking only of Shanghai.

Many people suffered much as we did and others suffered more. In the 30 provinces of China, it's hard to say what the number is exactly. According to the Chinese government's statistics, there were 70 million Falun Gong practitioners in China, and I think there are about 100 million. As long as you do not give up your belief in Falun Gong, they will oppress and torture you. Some people have given up because of the fear and some people continue in their resolve. I would think this affects tens of millions. I think there are 30 million people who perished because of torture, and the ones who are still alive are suffering.

There are many torturers who went underground. In the earlier years, the Chinese government would publicly announce its intention to oppress, but now it has gone underground. Because the Chinese people would come and question them, the government went underground. This secretive oppression and torture is hard to quantify. On the Internet, you would find new cases of oppression every day. They're still looking for people who have disappeared, so it's difficult to pinpoint what the number is, because of the secretiveness of the torture. We are talking about tens of millions.

• (1350)

Mr. Russ Hiebert: What do you believe is the most effective thing our government or other governments or international organizations could do to facilitate the release of these people who are being tortured? How could we convince the Chinese government that this should not be happening in the first place? Do you have names of people from the prisons you were in who would benefit, as you have, from the assistance of our government or other governments in seeking their release?

Mr. Shenli Lin (Interpretation): The Canadian government has offered help for a long time. It's been a long time since they started helping. I've felt it myself. Of course, I benefited from it because I was jailed early. In 1999, when the oppression started, I was put in jail, so I was in the labour camp for two years.

The situation actually changed during the two years. As I said earlier, I did not understand why they monitored me so stringently and then became more lenient. At the beginning I did not understand why, but after I came out of jail I understood: I understood that this was the effort coming out of the Canadian government and Canadian society.

The voice the Canadian government offered about the Falun Gong practitioners is very effective in regard to the Chinese government. I'm an example. My younger brother is an example.

In the same labour camp, when I spoke up for other fellow prisoners, the police did not actually use their voices against me because they knew that I had a background and that I had people supporting me, and that was the voice of the Canadian government.

If you tell the Chinese government about what you know about the Falun Gong organization, definitely it will have an impact. It will help. They will even take measures to improve the conditions, because if international society keeps voicing their opinion, of course the Chinese government has to keep up its face of a society of human rights and freedom of speech. They want to leave a good impression in the international society. So they would have to heed the international voice; otherwise, they would lose face, and they don't want to lose face.

So if you say this exists, that this type of torture exists and this oppression exists, they will have to heed that. If there are many more governments of different countries that start voicing this, it will give even bigger help to us.

I think the Canadian government is ranked either number one or number two in the group of countries that are offering help to the Falun Gong practitioners, but there is not a uniform voice yet in international society. If everybody stands up and speaks up against the Chinese government, they will have to give up their oppression.

So I think, of course, that we are the people who benefited from it.

As to other Falun Gong practitioners, we can offer you the names afterwards. We hope that the group of people who you want to help will not stay only within the category of their spouses being Canadian; I think this group should be expanded and applied to all Falun Gong practitioners, to people who really are in need of your help for them to be able to come here and enjoy the peace of freedom.

● (1355)

Mr. Mingli Lin (Interpretation): You want us to offer you names. There are many in China. In Shanghai, Tilanqiao prison is notorious for its torture. I was there. When I was released from Tilanqiao prison, there were many. Exactly how many, I don't know. I can't tell you. But there were hundreds, at least. I knew many people personally, dozens, and they're still there.

The man I mentioned whose genitals were beaten, his name is Bin Zhu. He and Jie Thu Lay and all of them were in Tilanqiao prison. They're still there. They're still being tortured.

On the surface, the torture seems to have gone, but as we said earlier, it has gone underground. An individual can be imprisoned and sit in a room by himself. Two murderers will sit there and watch you during the day, and two other ones at night. If you move, they will beat you.

One person, Zhang Lee Yun, when he was put in jail started telling these guards that Falun Gong was good. These four hooligans pinned him to the ground and started beating him. You couldn't even recognize him. His nose was torn up and his teeth were knocked out. You couldn't recognize him. He said Falun Gong was good. That's all he said.

This is too inhumane. And there are many, still so many.

As I said, your assistance was very helpful. The Tilanqiao prison in Shanghai is very evil.

The Chair: Mr. Cotler.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to commend you both for being here today. I know it's not easy to have to relive those experiences.

Particularly in your case, Mingli Lin, it's not easy to have to relive the torture that you endured in prison.

You know, I've always felt that the Falun Gong values of truth, compassion, and tolerance were the kinds of values that exemplified the best of Chinese civilization, and that therefore the Falun Gong should be rewarded for being exemplary Chinese citizens rather than being punished, imprisoned, and tortured, as they have.

I want to take this opportunity, Mr. Chairman, to commend you for your long-time involvement in representations on behalf of the Falun Gong.

And sitting here is Mr. David Kilgour, who's been so steadfast all these years, both while he was in government and, maybe even more importantly, since he's been out of Parliament and government.

I want to say to you, Shenli Lin, that it was really the heroic involvement of your wife, Jinyu Li, whom I first met back in 2001....

I sometimes feel it's the wiser spouses who end up being the reason that prisoners are released.

I think you know, but I just want to reiterate, how her efforts were so singularly important in bringing about your release.

I have two questions. The first has to do with the fact that Canadian governments have tended to raise issues of human rights in China generally, and that of the Falun Gong—in particular the political prisoners who are Falun Gong—more privately than publicly in their relations with the Chinese government. That's not true for us as parliamentarians. We've raised the issues publicly. But the governments have tended to raise them privately.

Do you think this is the best mix—namely, the governments doing this privately and the parliamentarians publicly—or do you feel that governments should be more public in their representations to the Chinese authorities?

● (1400)

Mr. Shenli Lin (Interpretation): I think both have an impact. Openly urging them definitely is more effective. Making a personal urging has an effect as well.

The Chinese officials have strange ways of making friends. For example, if there is a Chinese government official who has more conversations about Falun Gong with foreigners, he will suffer suspicion. So I think openly urging them is better. It will make the international communities and other governments hear this and attach importance to these questions and stand up and voice this together. I think this is a very effective way, but under certain circumstances, if a personal exchange of opinions can be done, I think this could be effective as well.

Mr. Mingli Lin (Interpretation): My personal opinion is that openly urging them, by comparison, is probably more effective. The Chinese government cares about its face. For example, when I was in prison, sometimes the inspectors would come to inspect the prison and then the prison would start doing hygienic work. They would have to make sure that everything is perfect. After the inspectors were gone, they would just let everything go. So they care about their faces.

You talk to them personally, and they will say, yes.... Personally they would tell you, "How could this happen? You're right. I will definitely go and look after this." This is fake. This is hypocritical. After you're gone—from 1999 to now has been more than a decade—there have been many urgings coming from the international communities. On the surface, the Chinese government has reduced its oppression, but it has gone underground.

What I'm trying to say is, your urging definitely is effective. They will know this: his brother is in Canada, so if I kill him in prison, his brother will not let us off the hook. If they say, okay, if you kill him, his brother is going to go and voice his opinion overseas, this is going to deter them. If your relatives and your older brother and your younger brother are out of China, they will not kill you. But if nobody knows about your relatives being abroad, they will kill you.

For example, another individual, Mr. Shun, was beaten to death. For 20 hours they would not let him sleep. Repugnant letters were forced on him. If he refused, they poured boiling water on his body. He lost consciousness right away, and then they'd throw him in cold water to soak him for a week. All his ribs were broken.

So I think openly voicing, openly urging is the better way.

On a personal level, it may have some effect, but it can be deceptive. They're like hooligans. The Communists are like hooligans. They will tell you, "We were not oppressing them." This is just a lie. It was just my brother and me. I'm not talking about anybody else. And of course along with us there are many others who suffered. We are the examples. So they're hooligans. They do not talk sense, the Chinese government.

• (1405)

Mr. Shenli Lin (Interpretation): I'll add something. The deceptiveness of the Chinese government has happened to me. When I first came to Canada, there was a newspaper article

published in China that said I received humanitarian treatment in Chinese prison: "Even though Shenli Lin did not give up his ideas of Falun Gong, did not want to repent, did not even admit that he was wrong, we still treated him humanely." The article said so.

If somebody who does not really know what has happened and reads this article, of course, they will believe it: that even though he did not want to repent, he was treated well. But this is exactly what happened to me, what I just told everybody here. People can be deceived.

So openly urging them I think has a better, stronger effect.

The Chair: We're up to eight minutes on you, Professor Cotler.

I have to go to Madam Péclet now.

Ms. Ève Péclet (La Pointe-de-l'Île, NDP): I would just like to thank the witnesses and tell you that I really admire your courage with all you have been through. I hope that the Government of Canada will work with the Chinese authorities to end this torture of your brothers and sisters in China. I hope we're able to do that.

That's it. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, Madam Péclet. Thank you to our witnesses as well.

We have actually gone a little bit past the time we normally end. I'll just thank both of you very much.

Also, there are a few other folks who I wouldn't mind thanking here. There are a number of people involved with Falun Dafa in Canada who have been very persistent in ensuring that these important issues remain in front of parliamentarians over a period of a decade now.

I want to express my appreciation. I have to express a particular appreciation to our translator. We only have one translator going from Chinese to English and then back. That is not easy. I can watch him doing it through the window here. My congratulations on a very difficult task.

That's it. Thank you very much, everybody, and in particular to Shenli Lin and Mingli Lin. Thank you very much for bringing these issues to our attention.

With that, we are adjourned.

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