

Miraculous Escape Despite Third-Degree Burns

"It's mind boggling how some human beings can be so cruel to other human beings."

— Dr. Gail Burbridge, Park Plaza Hospital, Houston, Texas



On the evening of April 26, 2001, Mr. Tan Yongjie was arrested for distributing flyers that urged the Chinese government to stop the persecution of Falun Gong. Because he refused to sign documents renouncing his beliefs, police beat and tortured him repeatedly.

On June 2, guards again tortured Mr. Tan and again tried to force him to renounce his practice. This time, when he refused, the guards tied him to a post and heated iron rods in a furnace until they glowed red. Then they pressed the red-hot irons deeply into Mr. Tan's legs, over a dozen times – all the while asking him if he would give up practicing Falun Gong.

Thinking that Mr. Tan would not be able to run away, the guards left him outside in an orchard, unsupervised. Mr. Tan mustered all his strength to escape, and managed to get to Hong Kong. From there he stowed away on a cargo ship, which took him to Long Beach, California, after two long agonizing weeks of suffering from nausea and pain from his festering wounds. A kind person on his way to Florida offered him a ride and dropped him off in Houston.

Mr. Tan had no money and didn't know where to go. Local police discovered him and sent him to the Star of Hope Mission. When his wounds cracked open and it was discovered that he was so badly injured, Mr. Tan was admitted to the Park Plaza Hospital. Doctors said it was a miracle he was alive. Mr. Tan was well cared for and has had extensive skin grafting, but his scars are still horrible to look at.



"I used a wooden stick as a crutch and by hobbling on my injured legs left the farm. I could barely walk a mile each night. During the day, I worried about being chased, so I hid myself in the brush and ate a few broken pieces of sugarcane left by mice."

Left: Being treated at Park Plaza Hospital