

Congressional-Executive Commission on China Roundtable

10:00 am – 11:30 am on December 3, 2009

Dirksen Senate Office Building, room 628

Testimony: Dr. Gao Yaojie

Ladies and Gentlemen: Good morning.

Today, I'd like to introduce to you some true situations about the AIDS epidemic in China.

In 1984, Zeng Yi, an academician with the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, reported blood "contamination by AIDS virus" in the blood banks of some hospitals. In 1988, after his discovery of the AIDS virus in the stored blood, Mr. Sun Yongde, chief physician of the Epidemic Prevention Center of Hebei Province, called for action by the Health Department of Hebei Province, CPC Hebei Provincial Committee, and even the Ministry of Health, and some relevant departments under the State Council. However, the officials turned a deaf ear to these voices and did not take any action to control AIDS. Even worse, to get rich, they promoted "blood economy."

The AIDS virus knows no national boundary, race, sex, or age. Once infected, the victim suffers tremendously in mind and body. They stray, worry, wonder, feel helpless and isolated, sink into desperation, and finally vanish.

Seeing too many partings in life or death, one will be overwhelmed by strong feelings. Before leaving this world, AIDS patients have endless words of love, hatred, and complaints to tell. They do not want to die. Their cry for life and their family members' weeping will crush your heart and make you cry too. Why do they dare not identify themselves? The misleading propaganda has named AIDS a sex-related "dirty disease," and AIDS patients risk endless discrimination if they are identified. But the fact is, in China, AIDS has spread mainly via "blood disaster".

I. "Blood disaster" and "AIDS" are national disasters.

At present, the AIDS epidemic is rising in China. If you step in a village into an AIDS epidemic area, you will see newly-built but vacant houses. The neighbors will tell you that the house owner built it with the money earned by selling blood. Now, the owner has died of AIDS and many "new tombs" have emerged in the fields. According to an official report, the number of people infected with AIDS is growing by about 30% annually.

1. China Philanthropy Times in Heilongjiang Province reported on November 30, 2005: At 5:00 AM on October 1, 2004, Yang, a 29-year-old staff member of the Construction Farm of the Bei'an Branch of Heilongjiang Province Land-reclamation Bureau, died of AIDS. Yang's death unveiled an earth-shattering case—the staff hospital at the construction farm had illegally collected and supplied blood for a long period of time, resulting in the AIDS-related deaths of at least 19 innocent people.

2. Chinese Business Morning View in Jilin Province reported on December 5, 2005: One day in October 2004, Zhang Xixia, a busy farmer in Dehui City of Jilin Province, suddenly had a long-lasting fever. In September 2005, Zhang was diagnosed as suffering from a gastric ulcer. Zhang went to Beijing for treatment and during the preliminary test at Beijing 301 Hospital, the HIV antibody test showed "positive" reaction.

3. Chinese Business View in Liaoning Province reported on December 1, 2005: Since 2005, Liaoning Province had discovered 145 AIDS patients and people infected with AIDS virus, being the highest number

reported over the years. Seven AIDS patients were found in Shancun Village of Shanyang County and most of them were infected when they sold blood in Shanxi.

4. North News reported on November 30, 2005: Inner Mongolia discovered 132 AIDS patients and AIDS virus carriers who caught the disease mainly through the blood channel.

5. Lanzhou Morning Post in Gansu Province reported on November 30, 2005: Over 1,000 people in a small county in southeast Gansu, who were not drug users or sex workers or whoremongers, were forced to sell blood by poverty. Since that time, 12 of them had been confirmed infected with the AIDS virus.

In the 1990s, “blood stations” emerged like mushrooms after rain. AIDS, a disease never heard of 20 years ago, is now spreading to all the 31 provinces in mainland of China. You may have heard that Henan Province is the high prevalence area for, and the birthplace of, AIDS. But that is not true. AIDS spreading is even more seriously in other provinces, such as Shanxi, Shaanxi, Shandong, Anhui, Hebei, Hunan, Guangdong, Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Sichuan, and the three northeast provinces. You may know Wenlou Village in Henan Province, a famous AIDS village. But it is only one typical example of AIDS villages and a template set by the government. Who knows how many AIDS villages like “Wenlou” there are in the whole country? How many of them can be treated in the same way Wenlou is treated? The spread of AIDS in China is staggering. According to official figure in 2006, China had 840,000 AIDS patients. Only 5% of the AIDS virus carriers can be located and the other 95% have merged into the population. Since 1992, the contaminated blood has flown to the whole country: from Shanghai in the east to Urumqi in the west, from Heilongjiang in the north to Guangzhou and Hainan in the south. “Blood mongers” sell large volumes of contaminated blood to biopharmaceutical companies in Shanghai, Wuhan, and other places to produce series of nutrition medicines such as albumin, globulin, interferon, and blood platelet factor. These medicines have been sold throughout the whole country.

In the 1990s, several hundred thousand people sold blood to the illegal blood stations in Henan Province and they were infected with the AIDS virus. The true number of these people should be five times the official figure.

In the 1990s, the whole country was under a cash rush. The Head of the Health Department of Henan Province proposed a new idea for earning money: encouraging the establishment of blood stations by all. The idea was called a money-earning policy depending on “seals internally and blood externally.” They depended on official seals to issue certificates and collect money. They encouraged local health departments and blood mongers to organize farmers to sell blood.

Apart from the blood stations run by health departments, many others were established by various enterprises, associations, and military units. In the early and mid-1990s, there were over 270 official and “legal” blood stations and countless illegal ones in Henan.

The official blood stations have been the most active advocates for “blood economy”. In those years, eye-catching posters saying “honor to blood donors: healing the wounded and rescuing the dying” were common on the walls of hospitals in Henan. “Blood mongers” told blood sellers: “Blood is like water in the well. It remains at the same amount much no matter how much you have donated. Blood donation is like substituting old blood with new blood. It is good for metabolism. Blood donors won’t suffer from high blood pressure. Your body will benefit from it.”

At that time, blood stations adopted the “plasma collection” method: collecting blood from many people, mixing the blood together, separating the plasma and red blood cells with a centrifuge, selling the plasma to pharmaceutical companies, and transfusing the mixed red blood cells back into the blood sellers.

Disaster befell during the devilish back transfusion. In addition, there were many deadly loopholes in the entire process. First, after blood extraction, both the disinfected scissors for cutting the blood transfusion tube and the disinfected clamp for clutching the blood bag would contact the freshly extracted blood. The separating centrifuge used then had 12 containers inside it and each would accommodate two bags of blood. It was easy for the blood bag to be damaged during the separation. If the operator of the blood station operated casually and failed to discard the damaged blood bag, the red blood cell contaminated by the blood of other people would be transfused back into the body of the blood seller. If one of the blood sellers had AIDS or hepatitis, other blood sellers would all be infected.

Since 1999, many people have “died of a strange disease” in many places in Henan, including Dongguan Village of Suixian County of Shangqiu, Shangcai County of Zhumadian, Wenlou Village, Donghu Village of Xincui County, and Qulou Village of Weishi County of Kaifeng. People did not know that the perpetrator was AIDS until too many people had died. When the fact that all these people were blood sellers was made known, the public began to understand that the source of the disaster to be blood selling.

By October 2004, 12 people had died in the infamous Wenlou Village, Shangcai County, Zhumadian District, Henan Province. Once, during a period of ten days, eight people died. In the same year, 34 people died of AIDS in the neighboring Houyang Village, with the oldest aged 54 and the youngest 29, and either sex making up half of the death toll. In eight families, three generations were infected with AIDS and one family went extinct. In one family, ten members were infected with AIDS, being the most among all infected families. Six members of this family have died, three in 2004. A pair of brothers died of AIDS, within the shortest interval of 100 days.

Dongguan Village of Suixian County in Shangqiu District had over 700 people, and half of them sold blood in those days. Among these blood sellers, over 100 were infected with the AIDS virus and some of them, mostly young and middle-aged, had shown symptoms. Before they were aware of AIDS, many people had died and their symptoms were quite similar to that of AIDS patients. Nobody could recall the exact death toll.

At this moment, the officials used their trump card: classifying AIDS as “secret” and stifling media disclosure of the truth. In fact, over a dozen reporters were dismissed and expelled by Henan Province. Outsiders were prohibited from visiting the AIDS villages, no matter what their intentions were: investigating truth or helping AIDS patients and orphans. Those who dared speak out were punished.

In this way, the truth about the AIDS epidemic in China has been covered up. Even today, after more than two decades, the truth about AIDS in mainland China is still unavailable. Many people at home and abroad only know that there are AIDS patients in Wenlou Village, Shangcai County, Henan Province. What they do not know is that there are many, many unknown AIDS epidemic areas in China.

At 6 PM on November 22, 2001, the Chief of Women’s Federation of Weishi County called me and asked if I had led reporters to Xingzhuang Township of the county to take photos of AIDS patients and those who died of AIDS. I said: “I do not know.” Half an hour later, Wang Zhe, Vice-head of the Provincial Epidemic Prevention Center in charge of AIDS works, came to my home and again asked about reporters’ taking photographs in Xingzhuang. I said I was busy having meetings recently and did not go out that month. An hour

later, Li Chengxian, Vice-head of the Public Security Department of the province (head of the provincial working team in Weishi County), and Vice-county Head Lu also came.

Vice-county Head Lu said: “On the 21st and 22nd of this month, five reporters from *Beijing Legal Paper*, three males and two females (their leader called Lu Guang) came to Xingzhuang of Weishi County to take photos of patients and dead bodies. We want you to take the film back.” He also said: “AIDS should not be frequently talked about. We are afraid that people might panic, local products will be refused by consumers, and the image of Henan will be affected.”

Half an hour later, they left. Later, I was told that they enforced martial law in three counties and cities, but failed to find the reporters that night. Half a month later, I heard that the five reporters escaped back to Beijing that very night with the photos. In 2003, Lu Guang won first place at an international photo contest. Since then, Lu Guang’s AIDS photos have been reprinted in several media publications at home and abroad, and he was placed under great pressure.

China Youth, October 31, 2005 --- Investigation in AIDS village by university students: AIDS has been threatening our loved ones beside us.

According to the latest official data, China had over one million AIDS virus carriers. Wang Longde, Vice-minister of the Ministry of Health, said on November 7, 2005, that only 5% of the carriers could be located and the other 95% had merged into the population.

According to the WHO’s estimation based on an annual growth rate of 30%, by 2010, China will have ten million people infected with AIDS virus.

That means there will be one AIDS virus carrier among every 130 people.

In western countries, the AIDS virus spreads mainly through drug injection. In China, however, the biggest perpetrator may not be drug use or unsafe sexual activities, but group infection during blood trading under poor management.

II. Mobile blood trading is the source of spreading AIDS.

Blood trading is rampant in China. Many farmers sell blood from place to place. They may be in Henan or Hebei today, and in Shanxi or Shaanxi tomorrow, and in Shandong or Anhui the day after that. Each of these mobile blood sellers hold three to five “blood donor certificates” and they are professional blood sellers.

1. Fujian Daily reported that in 1997, Li Bencai and his wife Li Xiuhua left their hometown, Gongmin Town, Zizhong County in southwest Sichuan Province, and came to work at an electric appliance plant in Zhongshan City of Guangdong Province. At that time, Li Bencai could earn only 650 RMB per month and his wife earned even less. Living expenses in Guangdong were much higher than that in their hometown. No matter how frugal the couple was, they could not save money. Finally, Li Bencai thought of a way to earn money—by selling blood.

2. China Youth reported on December 1, 2005 that Lulou Village, Lixin County, Anhui Province, was composed of four natural villages, namely Luzhai, Lushuiyuan, Xizhuang, and Shiqiao. In the 1990s, because of a “blood disaster,” 195 people in this village (with 1,256 villagers in total) were infected with AIDS. Statistics showed that 42% of the village population, or some 532 people in 324 families, once sold blood.

3. Yangcheng Evening reported that in late 1990s, some farmers in Shangluo District of Shaanxi Province suffered from a “strange disease” that could not be diagnosed for a long time. Later, repeated tests finally revealed that these farmers were infected with AIDS.

4. *Finance Magazine* in Shandong Province reported on May 2nd that the danger of AIDS infection by blood trading has not completely disappeared. At present, some underground blood stations still operate in Henan, Shandong, Shanxi, Anhui, and some other provinces. Large numbers of innocent farmers are still being misled by some propaganda. Knowing only benefits of blood selling and nothing about its drawbacks, they keep on selling blood.

From early 1990s to present, there have been six plasma collection stations in Shandong Province and they are located in Qihe, Zhangqiu, Xiajin, Yuncheng, Shenxian, and Yanggu, respectively. Some people witnessed that the latter three stations collected blood at night from 12:00 AM to 6:00 AM. Each blood seller sold 800 ml of blood each time and received 80 RMB.

One day in April 2005, someone witnessed a four-wheel lorry transporting some farmers who had just sold blood back to their homes. According to Yang, a blood seller, she sold blood four times a month, two times in Yanggu and two times in Shenxian. She earned over 300 RMB per month. She was 53 when she was interviewed. However, some regulations specified that people over 50 were not allowed to sell plasma and that the minimum time interval between two blood extractions should be two weeks. Yang had a fake ID card forged based on a borrowed residence booklet, and she just pasted her photo onto it.

5. *China Economic Times* reported on November 30, 2005, that the Health Department of Hebei Province announced that 80% of those infected with AIDS in Hebei Province were infected through blood contamination.

6. Reporters from the *China Economic Times* carried out three rounds of investigation in July and November of 2005 in some areas of Hebei Province, including Qiaoxi District, Qiaodong District, Julu County, Shahe City, Weixian County, Boxiang County, Xingtai County, Ningjin County, Guangzong County, Pingxiang County, and Renxian County, under the jurisdiction of Xingtai City, and Wu'an City, next to Shahe City (belonging to Handan District).

During the interview, almost all people infected with AIDS and their family members believed that they were “harmed” by the hospital. Their suffering today was caused by the hospitals transfusing contaminated blood into their bodies. It was an open “secret” that blood trading in 1990s infected many people with AIDS. Where does the contaminated blood flow? Up to now, 80% of all the AIDS patients I have seen were infected through blood transfusion. This was the beginning of the tragedy. How many people will be infected by blood containing the AIDS virus is a question yet to be answered.

III. Truth about AIDS spread

During a group consultation on April 7, 1996, I discovered a patient infected with AIDS due to a blood transfusion during a uterus operation. As she received blood from the blood bank, my keen sense told me that she would not be the only one infected with AIDS virus this way. It was strange, however, that all her family members, particularly her husband, did not catch AIDS. After knowing my concern, an official from the Provincial Health Department retorted: “You are good at making a scene. How can you be so lucky to see so many AIDS patients?” From then on, I began to doubt the past hearsay about AIDS spread by drug abuse and sexual promiscuity. Recently, I learned that, different from the situation in other countries, AIDS spread in China is mainly through “blood economy.” However, government officials dare not bear responsibility, and they use every trick possible to cover up truth, safeguard their personal interests and the interests of their own group, and keep themselves in power. They have no concern about people’s life and death. I had to investigate the spread of AIDS on my own.

I found many people infected with AIDS via blood or plasma transfusion. Take children patients for example: they cannot take drugs or be engaged in sexual activity. Their parents or other close acquaintances showed “negative” results during HIV-antibody testing. They received blood from AIDS patients and they were totally innocent.

Seeing economic growth, the current government regards China as a harmonious society and a rising power in the world. However, what I saw in the countryside were poor people badly in need of clothing and food. Violent cases happen from time to time in the whole country, and natural and manmade disasters occur one by one, especially the AIDS epidemic. AIDS will directly affect China’s economic development and this is an undeniable fact. However, present-day Chinese have three characteristics: telling lies, practicing fraud, and faking.

In AIDS-related trade, there are numerous quacks (scam-artists) and fake medical practitioners. There are now even fake patients. Chen Fengyao, a self-proclaimed businessman from Taiwan, has fooled people around from northeast China to Henan. He spent 50,000 RMB on hiring each fake AIDS patient to speak in his favor. He claimed to have cured over 300 AIDS patients. Mo Yixian from Beijing introduced himself as a researcher from the Chinese Academy of Sciences and claimed to have cured over 100 AIDS patients. In fact, he is a swindler and used to sell pig feed. In his sixties, he deceived six girls from an AIDS epidemic area into becoming his concubines. A reporter disclosed his dirty tricks, and he put a bounty price of two million RMB on the reporter. Li Zhenxi from Henan called himself the first TCM doctor who could cure AIDS. In fact, he was a farmer in his hometown Gongyi City back in 1994. However, this quack was backed by corrupt officials. The wife of a department leader retorted to Li’s critics on many websites: “If you do not know how to cure AIDS, you should let others try.” Other quacks include Li Demin from Hubei, who called himself a “national treasure,” and Sun Chuazheng from Zhejiang, who claimed to have cured over 100 AIDS patients within three years. There are many, many other quacks and I cannot list them all here. More than one thousand such quacks have written to me or visited me. They bribed corrupt officials to be their backing and protective umbrella with the money they swindled out of AIDS patients. They also bought off some immoral reporters and media to do fake propaganda for them. These are great banes in the AIDS field, but no one bothers to investigate. On the contrary, many people side with the swindlers. This is a Chinese characteristic.

The patients infected with AIDS via blood transfusion were not only turned down when they tried to report the situation to the higher level or file a lawsuit, but even locked up by the authorities. An oral regulation specifies: the court won’t accept the lawsuit concerning AIDS infection via blood transfusion. If you want to seek help from a lawyer, you will find that 50% of Chinese lawyers are politicians (they became lawyers because they have connection with officials in public security authority, procuratorate, or court) and 40% are money seekers who just muddle along. They speak gloriously but do nothing good. They are totally different from lawyers in other countries. I can give you four examples: Sun Xiaoyu, grandson of Sun Ya, and Jing Baobao, son of Fan Jiuzhi, two children infected with AIDS via blood transfusion after 2000, and husband of Wang Xiaoqiao, and Luo Fang herself—they each spent tens of thousands RMB on hiring lawyers.

I find what Chinese authority dreads most is that the true situation of AIDS epidemic will be made known to foreign leaders.

When former U.S. President Clinton came to give a speech at Tsinghua University, I was invited to attend the AIDS and SARS International Seminar held on November 10, 2003, and asked to give a speech in the

afternoon. I arrived in Beijing on November 7th and settled in “Tsinghua Unisplendour International Center” at about 2:00 PM on November 9th. At 5:00 PM, Shi Ji, Party Secretary of my unit in charge of personnel, and Zhu Jinping, Chief of the old cadre department, suddenly entered my room and said that they came to see me. Giving them no more chance to speak, I left my room and went to Beijing Normal University with the head of the Law Institute of Beijing Normal University. Before I left, they asked when I would be coming back. I said, “In the evening.” That night, I stayed at Beijing Normal University and did not return to Unisplendour Hotel. At 8 AM the next morning, when I was to enter the meeting room, both Ji and Zhu were waiting for me at the entrance. They said, “Do not mistake us. We just want to have a word with you.” I said: “That is unnecessary, I will attend this meeting. When I come back, it is up to you to take whatever measure you like.” Then, a staff member of Tsinghua meeting organizing committee urged me to enter the meeting room. Ji and Zhu wanted to enter the room too, but were stopped by the meeting organizing committee. In the afternoon, foreign media made public the incident and asked: “Who said Gao Yaojie had personal freedom?” On November 12th, I returned to Zhengzhou. Now, six years have passed and no leader has ever talked to me about this incident.

In 2007, the United States awarded me the “Vital Voices” award, but the authority obstructed my going to the U.S. and put me under house arrest for half a month. Thanks to the efforts of Mrs. Hillary, the current U.S. Secretary of State, China finally let me go. However, they asked me to establish a foundation in the name of Gao Yaojie upon my arrival at the US. I refused to do so. I was still under surveillance even in the U.S. and they blocked my information channels, which angered Zeng Jinyan (wife of Hu Jia) to the point of tears.

After staying in the U.S. for over a month, many friends asked me to settle down in the U.S. They said, “For your safety, do not go back.” My career was in China and there were many AIDS patients and orphans who needed me badly. I could not bear leaving them. So I returned. On the surface, the authority was good to me. They presented me with food and electric appliances. However, the reality was the opposite. They installed four surveillance cameras around my house and kept on monitoring my telephone, computer, and correspondence.

In February 2009, the U.S. Secretary of State Hillary visited China and requested to see me on February 22nd. The authorities agreed ostensibly. I arrived in Beijing on February 19th, and the following day, they dispatched Zhao Fenli, a long-retired vice-party committee secretary of the TCM College to Beijing too. They even used the police to try to stop me. Zhao thought I might stay in Zeng Jinyan’s home. The national security personnel blocked Zeng’s front door, prohibiting any one from going out or in. In fact, I did not stay in Zeng’s home. After two days’ futile searching, Zhao failed to find me. As for me, I was honored to be able to meet with the Secretary of State Hillary.

Since the 1980s, people began to classify AIDS as a venereal disease. Many believe that one won’t catch AIDS so long as he does not take drugs, go whoring, or practice prostitution. In fact, most AIDS infections in China have been caused by the blood disaster. The spread of AIDS via sex and other channels only makes up a small proportion.

According to some relevant literature, the AIDS virus, or HIV, belongs to a human slow virus group, within a slow virus genus in the reverse virus family. According to HIV’s gene and biological features, and the feature of the receptor used by HIV after its entry into the cell, HIV is divided into three types: gene type, biological type, and molecular type.

(1) Gene type: Based on gene difference, HIV is further divided into two types: HIV-1 and HIV-2. HIV-1 consists of M, O, and N subtype groups. M subtype group includes A1, A2, B, C, D, E, F1, F2, G, H, J, and K

subtypes. O subtype group and N subtype group are rare. HIV-2 is mainly seen in West Africa and West Europe. There are also a few reports from North America.

HIV-2 consists of A, B, C, D, E, F, and G subtypes. Its biological feature is similar to that of HIV-1, but with weaker virulence, longer course upon infection, and lighter symptoms. However, it is still incurable.

(2) Biological type: Based on the biological feature of HIV separation strain, there are the merging type and the non-merging type.

(3) Molecular type: Based on the feature of receptor using by HIV, there are X4 type and R5 type.

In central China, most AIDS virus infection cases are caused by B-subtype virus, which is rarely spread via sexual activity. In other countries, infection is mostly caused by subtype C-virus, which is easily spread via sexual activity.

We have seen a lot of cases in which a man or woman has AIDS, but his / her spouse and their child are not infected. This means that HIV infection follows certain scientific rules and that stereotyped propaganda will do nothing but cause panic.

There are over 3,000 villagers in a publicly-known AIDS village. In mid 1990s, over 1,500 villagers in this village sold blood. In early 2003, over 800 of them were confirmed to be suffering from AIDS. However, none of the villagers had used drugs. This reveals the true cause of the AIDS spread.

IV. AIDS takes away the youth and the middle-aged, dreadful life for the left-behind, old and young

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, AIDS had become a large-scale epidemic and been in focal spread. It was the “blood economy” that helped the AIDS virus to harm the ordinary people, mostly farmers. To improve their lives, build houses, get married, buy fertilizer, pay taxes, pay medical expenses, and pay tuition for their children, these farmers had to sell blood. To earn more, some even sold blood two or three times a day. They became weak and even fainted in the blood extraction process. Where did their blood flow? The contaminated blood was transfused into the patients under operation or critical patients. In this way, many innocent people were infected with AIDS and their infected number was higher than that of blood sellers. However, as they lived in different places, it was hard to locate them all.

Blood sellers began selling blood in groups, and villagers from over a dozen villages around a central key village became blood sellers at the same time. Around Wenlou Village are Houyang Village, Shaodian Village, Zhangyu Village, Wangying Village, Chenglao Village, and Zhangpolou Village. The AIDS epidemic in these villages were as serious as it was in the key village, and even more serious in some of these surrounding villages. The villagers caught AIDS, a long-course disease (may last over ten years), but they were illiterates who could neither write nor argue, and they found it hard to tell others about their suffering.

The families suffering from AIDS are now regretful about selling the blood. Who should be blamed? Whose sin is this? Who brought the suffering to these ordinary people? Up to 2009, not a single official has been held responsible for the “blood disaster”.

AIDS brings about poverty and destroys people’s lives. Suffering not only from illness, but from the coldness of society, AIDS patients are live a desperate life. Death is the unavoidable end for everybody, but for AIDS patients, death accompanies them every single day.

AIDS, the world plague, tortures the human body, causes economic loss, destroys family life, and kills countless people, mostly the young and the middle-aged. Left behind are the old and young. Children living in the shadow of AIDS are troubled by three major problems:

1. Survival: They lack food and clothing, especially in the bitterly cold winter. They have neither winter clothes nor shelter and nobody cares about them. Even so, some swindlers still cheat them into slavery or prostitution in other places in the name of “helping the orphans”.

2. Education: Most AIDS orphans are school-aged. With no parent to guide them, they are easily led astray. Most orphans dislike learning and refuse to go to school even if you have paid tuition for them. Instead, they muddle around all day long, making trouble, fighting, stealing, and falling prey to villains. When they have turned bad, they end up damaging the social stability.

3. Psychology: Many children have had a contorted psychology. They find all things against them, refuse to communicate with others, and believe that other people have treated them unfairly. Some children even hate the society and form cliques to do whatever they like, regardless of whether it is legal or illegal. Some become robbers at a very early age. We have to worry about what they will become in the future.

In my opinion, the salvation of the orphans is only one side of the problem. The more urgent task is to stop the spread of the “blood disaster,” which is the source of orphans. Otherwise, the “blood disaster” will kill more parents and create more orphans. I dare not imagine the outcome.

On April 30, 2001, I investigated a primary school in an AIDS-high prevalence area. Among the 100 students in the school, 29 were AIDS orphans. In January 2002, the headmaster of the school wrote to me, “Seven AIDS orphans graduated last year, but new orphans came. We now have 33 orphans in total and the number is still rising.” Who can save these poor children?

On October 2, 2001, I went to another AIDS village and visited a dozen AIDS families. In this village, all children above the age of 12 had dropped out of school; the girls helped their families do chores and other labors while looking after the AIDS patients in their families. At only 14 or 15, some girls were “bought” by men in their 30s or 40s to be their wives. Worse still, some swindlers cheated the girls into going with them to work in other places, but the work turned out to be “prostitution”. A “Boss Jin”, who claimed to run a textile mill in Suzhou, hired six girls, aging from 16 to 19, from an AIDS village. When the girls arrived in Suzhou, they did not see the textile mill, but a large beauty parlor, and Boss Jin wanted them to serve the male customers. They knew what that meant and escaped in the dead of a night. Boys from the village ended up no better. Some 15 and 16-year-old boys do hard labors, unbearable even for adults, and many even became miners.

Since the autumn of 1996, I have written and printed 1.2 million copies of materials on AIDS prevention and handed them out throughout China. I have written seven books on AIDS prevention and distributed over 500,000 copies and published over one million copies of them in the country. The total expenses for doing these, including postal fees and trip expenses, totals over one million RMB, which was covered by my bonuses and remunerations as an author and my private savings. I have never received any donations. Why? Because I have been in a perilous position. Since 1999, I have found that the authorities were not friendly towards me.

V. What did I get from doing AIDS prevention and orphan-saving works?

In 2000, I was placed under surveillance and shadowing, and my telephone was monitored. They even forbade me to give science-popularization lectures in university, including those on AIDS knowledge. In 2001, I began helping AIDS patients and orphans. The authority forbade me to see reporters or investigate the AIDS

epidemic in the country. They did not allow me to go abroad to receive awards. In 2003, the authority instigated a swindler to sue me. Although he lost the lawsuit, the authority kept its negative attitude against me. The dispute about the spreading channels of AIDS should be academic in nature. Helping AIDS patients is a good deed. The support for them, both in material and spirit, aims to grant them a better condition for survival. However, these loving actions were viewed by the government as the behavior of a dissident.

My family members have also been affected, including my younger sister and brother, and especially my three children. My son was thirteen when the Cultural Revolution began and was imprisoned for three years under the charge of “crime of counterrevolution”. Even today, he is timid and is estranged from me. He is the best hostage with whom the Henan authority has punished me. Many people knew that on February 18, 2007, the day before my first visit to the US, the authority forced him to kneel down before me and ‘kowitz’ (bow) three times, asking me not to go to the US and receive the award. My youngest daughter, Guo Yanguang, immigrated to Canada with her husband as technical emigrants in 2000. Now, she is under the control of a rascal backed by the “National Security” personnel from Jiangmen of Guangdong Province. She is extremely hostile to me. The following is a letter she wrote to me (at 1:16 AM, October 20, 2009).

“[No theme]

From: "yanguang guo" <guoyanguang@yahoo.ca>

To: "Yao Jie Gao" <gaoyaojie2003@yahoo.com.cn>

You are on a path reviled by our countrymen. You can keep on making fuss this way. When you die, there won't be any relatives beside you. You will die in loneliness.”

One day in 2007, a high-ranking official from the provincial government visited me. He said, “Secretary Xu (secretary of CPC Henan Provincial Committee) wants you to write a book entitled *Past and Present of AIDS in Henan*. You can first have a look around Wenlou Village of Shangcai County... The leaders say that we can organize a writing group and follow your instruction and use your signature only...”

I sensed something inside it and immediately refused the suggestion. Three days later, he called me again, but I still refused to write such a book. I knew why they treated me so well. They wanted me to say something untrue to cheat the others.

At the end of March 2009, a lady in the French Embassy called me: “France has decided to award you the Women’s Human Rights Award.” I told her that I was to receive an award in Shanghai in mid-April and we might talk about this then. She said OK. However, the award-giving ceremony in Shanghai was postponed for over a month.

On the morning of May 6, my telephone line was cut again by the authorities. At noon, a friend came to pick me up. She said: “You’d better leave. Trouble comes again.” We had no time for lunch and immediately took a bus to Beijing. Three days later, I went to Langfang City. Over half a month later, I went to Sichuan. In early June, I went to Guangzhou and on June 12th, I settled down in Minglang Village on the suburb of Guangzhou, a quite remote area. I meant to stay there for a while, like I did last year to avoid the Olympic Games, and maybe two to three months later, I could go home. I wanted to deliver my manuscripts of three books to the publishing house. Otherwise, I would let the AIDS patients and their family members down, especially those who have died of AIDS.

I have dedicated myself to “AIDS prevention and orphan salvation” for over 13 years. Now, I can find no way out. The authority offers a reward of 500 RMB to the one who reports my whereabouts (50 RMB for

others). They have tried all possible means to stop us (AIDS investigators and prevention supporters) from entering the AIDS villages. On March 14, 2003, Professor Gao Yanning, Du Cong and I went to Shuangmiao Village, an AIDS epidemic area, and we were nearly caught. The materials (books, clothes) I mailed to the poor epidemic areas were often confiscated by the authority. My daily life and activities have been restricted and my telephone and computer are constantly monitored. I am often shadowed and even put under house arrest. My personal freedom is restricted to such an extent that I cannot carry out my work.

In June, I learned that due to his investigation of the true number of the students who died during the Sichuan Earthquake, Mr. Tan Zuoren was arrested by Chinese authority under the accusation of “instigating to overthrow the state regime.” Mr. Tan just wanted to help the vulnerable people, but he was met with much resistance and punishment. My work is similar to Mr. Tan’s and is of wider scope, involves more people, lasts longer, and has greater impact. Seeing Mr. Tan’s example, I have had to maintain sharp vigilance. I am not afraid of death. I just want to publish a book, telling the truth of the AIDS victims to our offspring; or, I will not be able to die in peace. That is why I left my home. I have cried too many times and my tears have soaked my pillow. I am over 80 already and my days in this world are numbered. Although I know that my present trip may end anytime and anywhere with my death, to tell the truth about China’s AIDS epidemic, I had to do it.

In the past three to four years, I have realized that the AIDS epidemic is still serious in rural areas and blood stations have turned underground. **Now, there is a “plasma station” in Sunjiawan of Yunxian County, Shiyan City, Hubei Province. The operators organize over ten thousand women from the mountainous area to sell blood at 168 RMB per 600 ml (see *China Youth*, November 4, 2009).** There are many more undisclosed blood stations. So long as nobody speaks out, the officials can make a fortune and keep their grip on power. They have five methods to deal with those who speak out:

- 1. Buying off with money, giving bribes, poverty relief, disaster compensation, and so on**
- 2. Material temptation, presenting food, articles, furniture, electric appliances, even houses, automobiles, and so on**
- 3. Giving honors, awards, promotion, party membership, and so on**
- 4. Showing severe look, suppression, punishment, threatening, monitoring, house arrest, even making rumor, and so on**
- 5. The last resort for those unyielding to the aforesaid methods: fabricating a charge to frame them and sending them to indoctrination through labor, criminal detention, and even imprisonment.**

These five methods are so effective that many who have dared speak out before have surrendered to temptation and threat. Some of them never speak out again. Some “able men” make an about-face turn and begin singing songs of praise. What a “peaceful and prosperous” society: AIDS under forceful control and the “blood disaster” being gone. They predict that in the future, AIDS will be spread mainly by drug abuse and sexual activity. Of course, the officials who have made a fortune by selling blood have also made excellent political achievements. Their personal interests and the interests of their group are maintained. No one cares about the well-being of the ordinary people.

The authority has many ways to put pressure on me. I give you an example. In early February 2007, three new visitors came to my Blog. Their names were “A Corner in the World”, “Idiot, No Ordinary Idiot”, and “Mouse with Double Eyelid.” They had one thing in common: making irresponsible remarks. At one time, they said that my photos of AIDS patients were fakes fabricated by me. Another time, they said that I looked down

upon sex workers (prostitutes). They made several dozen or even over a hundred comments a day. The most unbearable thing was that they made personal slurs against me, saying that I “was born to a poor family, was sold to a whorehouse at a very early age, and used to be a prostitute.” They made such libelous comments for over ten days, and I doubted that others would ever know these were purposely made slanders. In fact, they were following the order of somebody behind the scenes. Later, I found out that one of them was a powerful woman in Henan. She had only a primary school education and was an active participant in the Cultural Revolution. She called herself an “excellent female cadre”. To make herself beautiful, she had plastic surgery in South Korea and every month, she receives “creotoxin” injections. She claims to have received a Master’s degree level education. In Henan, she is a big shot and nobody dares go against her.

Mine was an eminent family in Caoxian County of Shandong Province. In the end of the Qing Dynasty and at the beginning of the Republic of China, the Gao clan occupied over 3,000 mu of fields, which formed a separate village under the leadership of my father Gao Shengtian. His uncle, Li Wenzhai, was Chief of Kuomintang Party Committee in Shandong Province in the early 1930s and later a Kuomintang congressman. Li moved to Taiwan in 1948. My maternal grandfather, Xu Jiru, was a grand secretary of the Imperial Academy of the Qing Dynasty and an outstanding poet. Jia Hongchen, father of my second aunt, was a successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the provincial level in the Qing Dynasty. I was born in 1927 and received good Confucian education, which gave me an upright and outspoken character that defied brutal suppression.

On February 12, 1939, the second battalion of the Hebei-Henan-Shandong Border Area Detachment of the Eighth Route Army led by CPC occupied Gaoxinhuang Village and took Gao Shengjun, Gao Shengtian, and another man away. They were tortured by the second battalion and several days later, the Gao family redeemed them back with 300,000 silver dollars (see Record of Caoxian County). Then, all properties of Gaoxinhuang, on the surface and underground, were confiscated. After my entire family escaped to Kaifeng, our family properties were destroyed by fire.

This is my life story. In present China, you cannot totally believe what you read, because all know that China is a country of fakeness. I would like to back my story with facts.

I have several senior professional titles, including university professor and chief physician. However, some people may have doubts about this. In China, the higher the professional title, the more people make false claims. Some doctoral supervisors said: “Over 70% of the Doctors in China are fakes.” In my case, however, I was a senior physician of the Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics. I have rescued many critical patients and solved lots of difficult cases through operations. I have given lectures to university students for over three decades. I’m not a party member. I have no governmental backing. What can I rely on if I have no real talent? How can I perform my duty without real ability and learning?

Several decades have passed and not a single official has been held responsible for the “blood disaster”. If the officials are not wooing money and power, if the relevant departments are not indifferent, if the authorities care about people and do not cover up the truth—how can the AIDS epidemic be so serious?