

Appendix III: Journalists Imprisoned in China

Compiled by the Committee to Protect Journalists as of June 15, 2007.

Chen Renjie, *Ziyou Bao*
Lin Youping, *Ziyou Bao*
IMPRISONED: July 1983

Twenty-four years after their imprisonment in the early days of China's economic reform, Chen and Lin are the world's longest-serving journalists, according to CPJ research. The two men, along with Chen Biling, wrote and published a pamphlet titled *Ziyou Bao* (Freedom Report). They distributed only 300 copies of the pamphlet in the southern Chinese city of Fuzhou, Fujian province, in September 1982.

The following July, they were arrested and accused of making contact with Taiwanese spy groups and publishing a counterrevolutionary tract. According to official government records of the case, the men used "propaganda and incitement to encourage the overthrow of the people's democratic dictatorship and the socialist system."

In August 1983, Chen Renjie was sentenced to life in prison, and Lin was sentenced to death with reprieve. Chen Biling was sentenced to death and later executed.

Fan Yingshang, *Remen Huati*
CHARGED: October 16, 1995

In 1994, Fan and Yang Jianguo printed more than 60,000 copies of the magazine *Remen Huati* (Popular Topics). The men had allegedly purchased fake printing authorizations from an editor of the *Journal of European Research* at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, according to official Chinese news sources. Printing authorizations are a prior restraint used to curtail independent publishing in China.

CPJ was unable to determine the date of Fan's arrest, but on October 16, 1995, he was indicted on charges of profiteering. On January 31, 1996, the Chang'an District Court in Shijiazhuang City sentenced him to 13 years in prison, with three years' subsequent deprivation of political rights, for publishing and distributing illegal "reactionary" publications. Yang escaped arrest and was not prosecuted.

Fan's appeal was rejected on April 11, 1996, according to the Chinese government's response to a query

by the San Francisco-based Dui Hua Foundation, a prisoner advocacy group.

Hua Di, freelance
IMPRISONED: January 5, 1998

The imprisonment of Hua, a Stanford University scientist and permanent resident of the United States, raised objections from former U.S. President Bill Clinton, Hua's colleagues at Stanford University, and others. But nine years later, he remained in jail.

While visiting China, Hua was arrested on allegations of revealing state secrets, a charge used frequently against journalists who write about controversial matters. Charges are believed to stem from articles that Hua had written in academic journals about China's missile defense system.

On November 25, 1999, the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court held a closed trial and sentenced Hua to 15 years in prison, according to the Hong Kong-based Information Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. In March 2000, the Beijing High People's Court overturned Hua's conviction and ordered that the case be retried. This judicial reversal was extraordinary, and it appeared to be a response to international pressure. But the decision did not mean that he was freed.

Instead, after a retrial, the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court issued a modified verdict, sentencing Hua to 10 years in prison in November 2000. News of the sentence did not break until three months later, when a relative gave the information to foreign correspondents based in Beijing.

Hua suffers from a rare form of male breast cancer. Requests for his release on medical grounds have been denied.

Yue Tianxiang, *Zhongguo Gongren Guancha*
IMPRISONED: January 1999

Along with his colleagues Wang Fengshan and Guo Xinmin, Yue started a journal campaigning for workers' rights after they were unable to get compensation

from the Tianshui City Transport Agency (TCTA) following their dismissal by the agency in 1995. The first issue of *Zhongguo Gongren Guancha* (China Labor Watch) exposed extensive corruption among TCTA officials, according to international media reports. Only two issues were ever published.

On July 5, 1999, the Tianshui People's Intermediate Court in Gansu province sentenced Yue to 10 years in prison on charges of "subverting state authority," according to the Hong Kong-based Information Centre for Human Rights and Democracy. Wang and Guo were sentenced to two years each and have since been released. All three men reportedly belonged to the outlawed China Democracy Party, a dissident group, and were forming an organization to protect the rights of laid-off workers.

In 2006, the U.S.-based Dui Hua Foundation, a prisoner advocacy group, reported that Yue's sentence was reduced to nine years in March 2005. He turned 50 in Lanzhou Prison in December 2006.

Wu Yilong, *Zaiye Dang*
IMPRISONED: April 26, 1999

Mao Qingxiang, *Zaiye Dang*
IMPRISONED: June 1999

Wu and Mao, both organizers for the banned China Democracy Party (CDP), were detained in the run-up to the 10-year anniversary of the military crackdown on demonstrators at Tiananmen Square. A few months later, authorities detained two more leading CDP activists, Zhu Yufu and Xu Guang. The four were later convicted of subversion for, among other things, establishing a magazine called *Zaiye Dang* (Opposition Party) and circulating pro-democracy writings online.

On October 25, 1999, the Hangzhou Intermediate People's Court in Zhejiang province conducted what *The New York Times* called a "sham trial." On November 9, Wu was sentenced to 11 years in prison, Mao to eight; in each case, a three-year suspension of political rights follows their imprisonment. Xu received a five-year sentence and was later released. Zhu was sentenced to seven years. After his release in September 2006, Zhu told journalists that he had been abused and deprived of sleep while in prison.

"The guards would tell three or four criminals to beat me, saying it was a private matter between prisoners," Zhu told The Associated Press.

Xu Zerong (David Tsui), freelance
IMPRISONED: June 24, 2000

Xu is serving a 13-year prison term on charges of "leaking state secrets" through his academic work on military history and of "economic crimes" related to unauthorized publishing on foreign policy issues. Some observers believe that his jailing may have been related to an article he wrote for the Hong Kong-based *Yazhou Zhoukan* (Asia Weekly) magazine revealing clandestine Chinese Communist Party support for a Malaysian insurgency in the 1950s and '60s.

Xu, a permanent resident of Hong Kong, was arrested in Guangzhou and held incommunicado for 18 months until his trial before the Shenzhen Intermediate Court. He was convicted in December 2001, and his appeal to the Guangzhou Higher People's Court was rejected in 2002.

According to court documents, the "state secrets" charges against Xu stemmed from his use of historical documents for academic research. Xu, also known as David Tsui, was an associate research professor at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou. In 1992, he photocopied four books published in the 1950s about China's role in the Korean War; he then sent the photocopies to a colleague in South Korea. The verdict stated that the Security Committee of the People's Liberation Army of Guangzhou later determined that the books had not been declassified 40 years after being labeled "top secret." After his arrest, St. Antony's College at Oxford University, where Xu earned his doctorate and wrote his dissertation on the Korean War, became active in researching his case and calling for his release.

Xu was also co-founder and editor of the Hong Kong-based academic journal *Zhongguo Shehui Kexue Jikan* (China Social Sciences Quarterly). The "economic crimes" with which he was charged were related to the "illegal publication" of more than 60,000 copies of 25 books and periodicals, including several about Chinese politics and Beijing's relations with Taiwan.

Xu was arrested just days before an article appeared in the June 26, 2000, issue of *Yazhou Zhoukan* in which he accused the Chinese Communist Party of hypocrisy by condemning other countries for interfering in its internal affairs by criticizing its human rights record.

Xu began his sentence in Dongguan Prison, outside of Guangzhou, but was later transferred to Guangzhou Prison, where it is easier for his family to visit him. He has been spared hard labor and is allowed to read, research, and teach English in prison, according to the U.S.-based Dui Hua Foundation, a prisoner advocacy group. He suffers from high blood pressure and diabetes.

In 2006, Xu's family members were informed that he had received a nine-month reduction in his sentence,

according to Dui Hua. Based on that information, he would be scheduled for release in 2012.

Yang Zili, *Yangzi de Sixiang Jiayuan*

Xu Wei, *Xiaofei Ribao*

Jin Haike, freelance

Zhang Honghai, freelance

IMPRISONED: March 13, 2001

The four members of an informal discussion group called Xin Qingnian Xuehui (New Youth Study Group) were detained and accused of “subverting state authority.” Prosecutors cited online articles and essays on political and social reform as proof of their intent to overthrow the Chinese Communist Party leadership.

Yang, Xu, Jin, and Zhang were charged with subversion on April 20, 2001. More than two years later, on May 29, 2003, the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Xu and Jin to 10 years in prison, Yang and Zhang to eight years. Each of the sentences is to be followed by two years’ deprivation of political rights.

At the time of their arrest, the four men were all students or recent university graduates who gathered occasionally to discuss politics and reform with four others, including an informant for the Ministry of State Security. The most prominent in the group, Yang, posted his own opinion pieces and reports by the others on topics such as rural poverty and village elections, along with essays advocating democratic reform, on the popular Web site *Yangzi de Sixiang Jiayuan* (Yangzi’s Garden of Ideas).

Xu was a reporter at *Xiaofei Ribao* (Consumer’s Daily). Public security agents pressured the newspaper to fire him before his arrest, a friend, Wang Ying, reported online.

The court cited a handful of articles, including Jin’s “Be a New Citizen, Reform China” and Yang’s “Choose Liberalism,” in the verdict against them. In November 2003, the Beijing Higher People’s Court rejected their appeal without hearing defense witnesses. Three of the witnesses who testified against them at trial were fellow members of the group who sought later to retract their testimonies.

Yang, Xu, and Jin are being held at Beijing’s No. 2 Prison. Yang’s wife, Lu Kun, who was detained and questioned along with her husband but later released, told reporters in 2005 that she was unable to visit him for four years after he was first imprisoned. Zhang, who initially suffered from ill health in detention, is jailed at Lishui Prison in Zhejiang province, where he makes sweaters, his brother told CPJ.

Tao Haidong, freelance

IMPRISONED: July 9, 2002

Tao, an Internet essayist and pro-democracy activist, was arrested in Urumqi, capital of the Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region (XUAR), and charged with “inciting subversion of state authority.” According to the *Minzhu Luntan* (Democracy Forum) Web site, which had published Tao’s articles, his writing focused on political and legal reform. In one essay, titled “Strategies for China’s Social Reforms,” he wrote that “the Chinese Communist Party and democracy activists throughout society should unite to push forward China’s freedom and democratic development or else stand condemned through the ages.”

Previously, in 1999, Tao was sentenced to three years of “re-education through labor” in Xi’an, Shaanxi province, according to the New York-based advocacy group Human Rights in China. The sentence was in connection with his essays and his work on a book titled *Xin Renlei Shexiang* (Imaginations of a New Human Race). After his early release in 2001, Tao began writing and posting articles on various domestic and overseas Web sites.

In January 2003, the Urumqi Intermediate Court sentenced Tao to seven years in prison. His subsequent appeal to the XUAR Higher Court was rejected.

Zhang Wei, *Shishi Zixun* and *Redian Jiyao*

IMPRISONED: July 19, 2002

Zhang was arrested and charged with illegal publishing after producing and selling two underground newspapers in Chongqing, central China. According to an account published on the Web site of the Chongqing Press and Publishing Administration, a provincial government body that oversees all local publications, beginning in April 2001, Zhang edited two newspapers, *Shishi Zixun* (Current Events) and *Redian Jiyao* (Summary of the Main Points), which included articles and graphics he had downloaded from the Internet.

Two of Zhang’s business associates, Zuo Shangwen and Ou Yan, were also arrested in July 2002 and indicted for their involvement with the publications. Zuo printed the publications in neighboring Sichuan province, while Ou managed the publications’ finances. At the time of their arrest, police confiscated 9,700 copies of *Shishi Zixun*.

The official account of the arrests stated that the two publications had “flooded” Chongqing’s publishing market. The government declared that “the political rumors, shocking ‘military reports,’ and other articles in

these illegal publications misled the public, poisoned the youth, negatively influenced society, and sparked public indignation.” Zhang, Zuo, and Ou printed more than 1.5 million copies of the publications and sold them in Chongqing, Chengdu, and other cities.

On December 25, 2002, the Yuzhong District Court in Chongqing sentenced Zhang to six years in prison and fined him 100,000 yuan (US\$13,000), the amount that police said he had earned in profits from the publications. Zuo was sentenced to five years and fined 50,000 yuan (US\$6,500), while Ou received a two-year sentence.

Abdulghani Memetemin

East Turkistan Information Center

IMPRISONED: July 26, 2002

Memetemin, a writer, teacher, and translator who had actively advocated for the Uighur ethnic group in the northwestern Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region, was detained in Kashgar, a city in Xinjiang, on charges of “leaking state secrets.”

In June 2003, the Kashgar Intermediate People’s Court sentenced him to nine years in prison, plus a three-year suspension of political rights. Radio Free Asia provided CPJ with court documents listing 18 specific counts against Memetemin, including translating state news articles into Chinese from Uighur; forwarding official speeches to the Munich-based East Turkistan Information Center (ETIC), a news outlet that advocates for an independent state for the Uighur ethnic group; and conducting original reporting for the center. The court also accused him of recruiting additional reporters for ETIC, which is banned in China.

Memetemin did not have legal representation at his trial.

Huang Jinqiu, *Boxun News*

IMPRISONED: September 13, 2003

Huang, a columnist for the U.S.-based, citizen-journalist Web site *Boxun News*, was arrested in Jiangsu province. Huang’s family was not officially notified of his arrest for more than three months. On September 27, 2004, the Changzhou Intermediate People’s Court sentenced him to 12 years in prison on charges of “subversion of state power,” plus four years’ deprivation of political rights. The sentence was unusually harsh and appeared linked to Huang’s intention to form an opposition party.

Huang worked as a writer and editor in his native

Shandong province, as well as in Guangdong province, before leaving China in 2000 to study journalism at the Central Academy of Art in Malaysia. While overseas, Huang began writing political commentary for *Boxun News* under the pen name Qing Shuijun. He also wrote articles on arts and entertainment under the name Huang Jin. Huang’s writings reportedly caught the attention of the government in 2001. According to *Boxun News*, Huang told a friend that authorities had contacted his family to warn them about his writing.

In January 2003, Huang wrote in his online column that he intended to form a new opposition party, the China Patriot Democracy Party. When he returned to China in August 2003, he eluded public security agents just long enough to visit his family in Shandong province. In the last article he posted on *Boxun News*, titled “Me and My Public Security Friends,” Huang described being followed and harassed by security agents.

Huang’s appeal was rejected in December 2004. His lawyer told CPJ in early 2005 that the journalist had been mistreated in prison and was in poor health. In late 2006, Huang’s family told *Boxun News* that his health appeared to have improved.

Kong Youping, freelance

IMPRISONED: December 13, 2003

Kong, an essayist and poet, was arrested in Anshan, Liaoning province. A former trade union official, he had written online articles that supported democratic reforms, appealed for the release of then-imprisoned Internet writer Liu Di, and called for a reversal of the government’s “counterrevolutionary” ruling on the pro-democracy demonstrations of 1989.

Kong’s essays included an appeal to democracy activists in China that stated, “In order to work well for democracy, we need a well-organized, strong, powerful, and effective organization. Otherwise, a mainland democracy movement will accomplish nothing.” Several of his articles and poems were posted on the *Minzhu Luntan* (Democracy Forum) Web site.

In 1998, Kong served time in prison after he became a member of the Liaoning province branch of the opposition China Democracy Party (CDP). In 2004, he was tried on subversion charges along with codefendant Ning Xianhua, who, according to the U.S. advocacy organization Human Rights in China and court documents obtained by the San Francisco-based Dui Hua Foundation, was accused of being the vice chairman of the CDP branch in Liaoning. On September 16, 2004, the Shenyang Intermediate People’s Court sentenced

Kong to 15 years in prison, plus four years' deprivation of political rights. Ning received a 12-year sentence. Kong's family has never seen the verdict in the case, according to CPJ sources in China.

Kong suffers from hypertension and is imprisoned in the city of Lingyuan far from his family, making visits difficult. In a letter written to his family from prison, Kong said that his sentence had been reduced to 10 years on appeal, but that information could not be confirmed.

Yu Huafeng, *Nanfang Dushi Bao*
IMPRISONED: January 2004

Yu, deputy editor-in-chief and general manager of *Nanfang Dushi Bao* (Southern Metropolis News), and Li Minying, the newspaper's former editor, were detained less than a month after the newspaper published an article about a suspected SARS case in Guangzhou, the first case reported since the epidemic ended in July 2003. Their imprisonment was followed in March 2004 by the jailing of former editor-in-chief Cheng Yizhong, who was held for five months. Li was released from prison in February 2007, but Yu remains behind bars.

The arrests appeared to be a part of a crackdown on the newspaper, which had become popular for its aggressive investigative reporting on social issues and wrongdoing by local officials. The paper broke news that a young graphic designer, Sun Zhigang, was beaten to death in March 2003 while being held in police custody in Guangzhou. The public outcry over Sun's death led to the arrest of several local government and police officials, along with a change in national laws on detention.

On March 19, 2004, the Dongshan District Court in Guangzhou sentenced Yu to 12 years in prison on corruption charges. According to the official Xinhua News Agency, Yu was convicted of embezzling 580,000 yuan (US\$76,000) and distributing the money to members of the paper's editorial committee. The court also accused Yu of paying Li a total of 800,000 yuan (US\$104,000) in bribes while Li was editor of *Nanfang Dushi Bao*. Yu's sentence was reduced to eight years on appeal in 2004, and by a further year in 2007.

Both men maintained that the money was acquired legally and was distributed in routine bonus payments to the staff. Chinese journalists familiar with the case have told CPJ that evidence presented in court did not support the corruption charges.

In 2005, Cheng was named the recipient of the 2005 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize. He was not permitted to attend, but in his acceptance statement he asked to share the honor with Li and Yu,

whose suffering, Cheng said, was "the shame of all of China." Later that year, more than 2,000 journalists in China signed an open letter to the Guangdong High People's Court appealing for the release of Yu and Li. Observers could remember no precedent for this show of support.

Yu's wife told CPJ that she travels monthly to Beijing to petition for the release of her husband.

Zhao Yan, *The New York Times*
IMPRISONED: September 17, 2004

Zhao, a news researcher in the Beijing bureau of *The New York Times* and a former investigative reporter for the Beijing-based *China Reform* magazine, was detained in Shanghai less than two weeks after the *Times* ran an article correctly predicting the retirement of President Jiang Zemin from his final leadership post.

Zhao was held under suspicion of "providing state secrets to foreigners," a charge that denied him access to a lawyer for nine months after his initial detention, prolonged his pretrial detention, and cloaked his case in official secrecy. Leaked state security documents confirmed that Zhao was detained in connection with the September 7, 2004, article on Jiang's retirement, but indicated that the sparse evidence against him comprised only a brief handwritten note taken through unknown means from the Beijing office of the *Times*. A fraud charge was added in April 2005. After a series of delays, Zhao was tried in June 2006 in closed proceedings, during which he was not permitted to call defense witnesses.

On August 25, 2006, the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court convicted Zhao of fraud charges. But in a very rare move for criminal cases brought to trial in China, the court acquitted him of the more serious state secrets charges due to "insufficient evidence." Zhao was sentenced to three years in prison.

The fraud charge stemmed from an accusation that Zhao took 20,000 yuan (US\$2,600) from a local official with the promise of helping to obtain his release from a work camp in 2001. Zhao was known as an aggressive investigative reporter and activist before joining the *Times*. Sources familiar with the situation told CPJ that the fraud allegation against him was unsubstantiated.

Zhao's detention fueled an international outcry, and the issue was raised with high-ranking U.S. officials in talks with Chinese counterparts. The state secrets charge against Zhao was briefly dropped ahead of Chinese President Hu Jintao's April 2006 visit to the White

House, prompting speculation that he would soon be released from prison. But all charges were reinstated after Hu's visit.

After his sentencing, Zhao's lawyers petitioned for a fully open appeal hearing with the right to call defense witnesses, something denied him at trial. But authorities denied this request as well, and rejected Zhao's appeal after reviewing it behind closed doors in November 2006.

Zhao is due to be released from prison in September 2007.

Shi Tao, freelance

IMPRISONED: November 24, 2004

Shi, the former editorial director at the Changsha-based newspaper *Dangdai Shang Bao* (Contemporary Business News), was detained near his home in Taiyuan, Shanxi province.

He was formally arrested and charged with "providing state secrets to foreigners" for sending an e-mail on his Yahoo account to the U.S.-based editor of the Web site *Minzhu Luntan* (Democracy Forum). In the anonymous e-mail sent several months before his arrest, Shi transcribed his notes taken from local propaganda department instructions to his newspaper, which included directives on coverage of the banned religious movement Falun Gong and the upcoming 15th anniversary of the military crackdown on demonstrators at Tiananmen Square. The official Xinhua News Agency reported that the government later certified the contents of the e-mail as classified.

On April 27, 2005, the Changsha Intermediate People's Court found Shi guilty and sentenced him to a 10-year prison term. In June, the Hunan Province High People's Court rejected his appeal without granting a hearing.

Court documents in the case revealed that Yahoo had supplied information to Chinese authorities that helped identify Shi as the sender of the e-mail. Yahoo's participation in the identification of Shi raised questions about the role that international Internet companies are playing in the repression of online speech in China and elsewhere.

In November 2005, CPJ honored Shi in absentia with its annual International Press Freedom Award for his courage in defending the ideals of free expression. Shi's mother, Gao Qinsheng, was invited to attend the ceremony in New York but declined the invitation after police told her that her son's conditions in high-security Chisan Prison would improve if she stayed home. Instead, Shi's conditions stayed the same through 2006. He was forced

to work cutting and polishing gems, he lost weight, and he was not allowed to read newspapers or write.

Zheng Yichun, freelance

IMPRISONED: December 3, 2004

Zheng, a former professor, was a regular contributor to overseas online news outlets, including the U.S.-based Web site *Dajiyuan* (*Epoch Times*), which is affiliated with the banned Falun Gong movement. Zheng wrote a series of editorials that directly criticized the Communist Party and its control of the media.

Because of police warnings, Zheng's family remained silent about his detention in Yingkou, Liaoning province, until state media reported that he had been arrested on suspicion of inciting subversion. Zheng was initially tried by the Yingkou Intermediate People's Court on April 26, 2005. No verdict was announced, and on July 21 he was tried again on the same charges. As in the April 26 trial, proceedings lasted just three hours. Though officially "open" to the public, the courtroom was closed to all observers except close family members and government officials. Zheng's supporters and a journalist were prevented from entering, according to a local source.

Prosecutors cited dozens of articles written by the journalist, and listed the titles of several essays in which he called for political reform, increased capitalism in China, and an end to the practice of imprisoning writers.

On September 20, the court sentenced Zheng to seven years in prison, to be followed by three years' deprivation of political rights.

Sources familiar with the case believe that Zheng's harsh sentence may be linked to Chinese leaders' objections to the *Dajiyuan* series "Nine Commentaries on the Communist Party," which called the Chinese Communist Party an "evil cult" with a "history of killings" and predicted its demise.

Zheng is diabetic, and his health suffered a decline after his imprisonment. After his first appeal was rejected, he intended to pursue an appeal in a higher court, but his defense lawyer, Gao Zhisheng, was himself arrested in August 2006. Zheng's family has been unable to find another lawyer willing to take the case.

Zhang Lin, freelance

IMPRISONED: January 29, 2005

A freelance writer and political essayist who made a living by writing for banned overseas Web sites, Zhang was convicted of "inciting subversion of state authority" and

misrepresenting national officials in his articles and in a radio interview.

Zhang, who spent years in jail in the 1990s for his pro-democracy activism and for organizing a labor union, was detained at a train station near his home in Bengbu, in central China's Anhui province. Police apprehended him as he was returning from Beijing, where he had traveled to mourn the death of ousted Communist Party leader Zhao Ziyang. He was initially accused of "disturbing public order," but police formally arrested him on charges of inciting subversion after confiscating the computer he was using.

The Bengbu Intermediate People's Court tried him on June 21, 2005, in proceedings that lasted five hours, his lawyer, Mo Shaoping, told CPJ. The defense argued that the six articles and one interview cited by the prosecution were protected free expression. Zhang's wife told reporters that his imprisonment was also connected to essays he wrote about protests by unemployed workers and official scandals. On July 28, 2005, the court convicted Zhang and sentenced him to five years in prison.

For 28 days in September 2005, Zhang waged a hunger strike to protest his unjust sentence and the harsh conditions at the Bengbu No. 1 Detention Center. Officials there subjected him to long hours of forced labor making Christmas ornaments and refused to allow him to read newspapers or other material, according to his lawyer. During his hunger strike, he was fed through his nose, and was hospitalized briefly before returning to the detention center.

Zhang's appeals were rejected without a hearing, and he was moved to a prison in Anhui province. Zhang's wife told CPJ that his health has suffered during his imprisonment. They have a young daughter.

Li Changqing, *Fuzhou Ribao*
IMPRISONED: February 2005

Li, deputy news director of *Fuzhou Ribao* (Fuzhou Daily), was arrested in southern China's Fujian province in connection with an investigation of whistleblower Huang Jingao, a local Communist Party official who wrote an open letter to the state-run *People's Daily* in 2004 denouncing corruption among local officials.

Huang won public support after describing death threats that he said forced him to wear a bulletproof vest. But in November 2005, he was convicted of accepting bribes and sentenced to life in prison. Supporters said that the charges against Huang were politically motivated.

Li was initially accused of inciting subversion. He

told his lawyer that he was tortured in detention, and interrogated repeatedly about his defense of Huang in newspaper and online articles.

The unexplained subversion charge was later dropped, and Li was formally accused of "deliberately fabricating and spreading alarmist information." The new charge was related to an October 13, 2004, report in the U.S.-based Chinese-language Web site *Boxun News* reporting an outbreak of dengue fever, a viral mosquito-borne disease, in Fuzhou.

The author, identified by his lawyer as Li, anonymously reported more than 20 cases, according to *Boxun News*. In seeking to confirm the information, the Web site did its own research, and updated the story to reflect 100 cases.

Li was tried in Fuzhou on January 19, 2006. On January 24, the Gulou District Court convicted Li and sentenced him to three years in prison. His appeal was rejected.

Ching Cheong, *The Straits Times*
IMPRISONED: April 22, 2005

Ching, a veteran Hong Kong reporter who was the China correspondent for the Singapore daily *The Straits Times*, was detained in Guangzhou while attempting to meet with a source to obtain transcripts of interviews with the late ousted leader Zhao Ziyang. He was held under house arrest in Beijing without access to a lawyer or his family until a formal arrest order, on espionage charges, was issued in August 2005.

Official Xinhua News Agency reports in 2005 accused Ching of collecting millions of Hong Kong dollars to spy for Taiwan. Specific charges against him were not made clear until after his closed hearing in Beijing on August 15, 2006. On August 31, the Beijing No. 2 Intermediate People's Court convicted Ching of espionage and sentenced him to five years in prison, plus an additional year's deprivation of political rights.

The verdict in the case later appeared online and was published by several Hong Kong newspapers. The document accused Ching of accepting around 300,000 Hong Kong dollars (not "millions" as first reported by Xinhua) in fees to submit classified reports on political affairs, economics, and international relations for a Taiwan-based organization called the Foundation on International and Cross-Strait Studies, which authorities said was a cover for a Taiwan intelligence organization. Prosecutors said that Ching had met two representatives from the organization at a current events conference, and had done research for them.

In his defense, Ching argued that he had no knowledge that the organization was a front for Taiwan intelligence—a charge the foundation itself has strongly denied—and that he had provided no state secrets. Ching’s appeal was rejected in November 2006.

Ching suffers from heart disease and ulcers, and his family is appealing for his release on medical grounds. At his family’s request, he was transferred to a prison in Guangzhou.

Li Yuanlong, *Bijie Ribao*

IMPRISONED: September 2005

Li, a reporter for the news daily *Bijie Ribao* in Guizhou province, was tried on charges of “inciting subversion of state authority” for online articles criticizing the Chinese Communist Party. The five-hour hearing was held on May 11, 2006. The following July, the Bijie Intermediate People’s Court sentenced him to two years in prison.

Li’s articles about poverty and unemployment in his home province angered local officials, according to the U.S.-based advocacy group Human Rights in China. He told his lawyer that he had become increasingly frustrated with the “lies and clichés” he was writing for his state-controlled newspaper, and felt that it was his responsibility as a reporter to expose injustice and inequality. Li began writing articles that were very critical of Chinese Communist Party and local government actions. He then posted them, under the name Ye Lang (Night Wolf), on the banned U.S.-based Web sites *Boxun News*, *Dajiyuan* (*Epoch Times*), *Yi Bao* (ChinaEWeekly), and *New Century Net*.

Li is expected to be released from prison in September 2007.

Yang Tongyan (Yang Tianshui), freelance

IMPRISONED: December 23, 2005

Yang, commonly known by his pen name, Yang Tianshui, was detained along with a friend in Nanjing, eastern China. He was tried on charges of “subverting state authority” and on May 17, 2006, the Zhenjiang Intermediate People’s Court sentenced him to 12 years in prison.

Yang is a well-known writer and a member of the Independent Chinese PEN Center. He was a frequent contributor to U.S.-based Web sites banned in China, including *Boxun News* and *Dajiyuan* (*Epoch Times*). He often wrote critically about the ruling Communist Party, and he advocated the release of Internet writers Zheng Yichun and Zhang Lin.

According to the verdict in Yang’s case, which was translated into English by the San Francisco-based Dui Hua Foundation, the harsh sentence against him was related to a fictitious online election, established by overseas Chinese citizens, for a “democratic Chinese transitional government.” Yang’s colleagues say that without his prior knowledge, he was elected “secretariat” of the fictional government.

Yang later wrote an article in *Dajiyuan* in support of the model.

Prosecutors also accused Yang of transferring money from overseas to Wang Wenjiang, who had been convicted of endangering state security. Yang’s defense lawyer argued that this money was humanitarian assistance to the family of a jailed dissident and did not constitute a criminal act.

Yang had previously spent 10 years in prison for his opposition to the military crackdown on demonstrators at Tiananmen Square in 1989. Believing that the recent proceedings against him were fundamentally unjust, he did not appeal.

Yang has been suffering from health problems as a result of ill treatment in prison, his sister told the Hong Kong-based *Apple Daily* newspaper.

Guo Qizhen, freelance

IMPRISONED: May 12, 2006

Guo was detained as he prepared to join a rolling hunger strike led by Gao Zhisheng, the lawyer for imprisoned Internet journalist Zheng Yichun. (The lawyer was himself jailed in August 2006.) Guo was formally charged with offenses related to his prolific writing for the U.S.-based Chinese-language Web sites *Minzhu Luntan* (Democracy Forum) and *Dajiyuan* (*Epoch Times*).

The Cangzhou Intermediate People’s Court tried Guo on charges of “inciting subversion of state authority” on September 12, 2006. He was convicted and sentenced to four years in prison, plus an additional two years’ deprivation of political rights.

In its opinion presented to the prosecutor on June 16, the Cangzhou Public Security Bureau cited several online essays as proof of Guo’s crimes, including one titled “Letting Some of the People First Get Rich While Others Cannot Make a Living,” in which he accused the Communist Party government of using its policies to support an “autocratic” and “despotic” regime. Guo was outspokenly critical of corruption and widespread poverty in the country.

In his defense, Guo argued that his criticism of the Communist Party was protected by the Chinese constitution. He

has appealed his sentence. Guo is married and has a son.

Zhang Jianhong, freelance
IMPRISONED: September 6, 2006

The founder and editor of the popular news and literary Web site *Aiqinhai* (Aegean Sea) was taken from his home in Ningbo, in eastern China's Zhejiang province.

In March 2007, the Ningbo Intermediate People's Court found Zhang guilty of writing 60 articles that "slandered the government and China's social system to vent his discontent with the government," according to the official Xinhua News Agency. He was sentenced to a prison term of six years for the crime of "inciting subversion of state authority," to be followed by one year's deprivation of political rights.

Zhang was an author, screenwriter, and reporter who served one and a half years of "re-education through labor" in 1989 on counter-revolutionary charges for his writing in support of protesters. He was dismissed from a position with the local writers association and began working as a freelance writer.

In March 2006, his Web site *Aiqinhai* was shut down for the unauthorized posting of international and domestic news. Zhang had also been a recent contributor to several U.S.-based Chinese-language Web sites, including *Boxun News*, the pro-democracy forum *Minzhu Luntan*, and *Dajiyuan* (*Epoch Times*).

The journalist had written commentary calling for political reform in China and had reported on allegations that the Chinese government illegally procured organs from living prisoners. An editorial he wrote two days before his detention called attention to international organizations' criticism of the government's human rights record and, in particular, the poor treatment of journalists and their sources two years before the start of the Olympics. Zhang referred to the situation as "Olympicgate."

Sun Lin (Jie Mu), *Boxun News*
IMPRISONED: May 30, 2007

Police arrested Sun and his wife, He Fang, at their Nanjing home after the reporter angered authorities with his online video, audio, and written news reports. Following their arrest, police accused Sun (known by his pen name Jie Mu) of illegally possessing weapons and heading a criminal gang.

Sun began reporting for the U.S.-based, Chinese-language *Boxun News* in September 2006, the Web site's founder, Watson Meng, told CPJ. He had recently reported on crime and public protests.

In online videos and audio recordings, Sun had documented apparent police harassment related to his work as a reporter. On March 21, police came to his house in Nanjing to warn him to stop reporting. They said that he was working for an illegal news organization and did not have an officially issued press card. *Boxun*, which posted a video of the police visit, is based in North Carolina and posts news from citizen contributors in China. The site is banned in China, and domestic access is blocked.

In one of his most recent reports, from Tiananmen Square on May 25, Sun and fellow reporter Guang Yuan discussed *Boxun's* unsuccessful effort to gain accreditation to cover the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

On May 29, police raided the restaurant run by his wife, He, and arrested more than 20 people, mostly employees of the restaurant, *Boxun* reported. Sun interviewed 10 of them after their release. Plainclothes police seized Sun and He at their home at 7 p.m. the following day.

After the May 30 detention, the official *Nanjing Daily* reported that Sun was accused of heading a criminal gang that had extorted money from taxi drivers, and that police recovered guns and ammunition from his home. The official report did not mention Sun's wife. Sun and He have a young daughter.