

## **Round-Table on Internet and Free Flow of Information in China**

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Since January 2000, when the Chinese newspaper People's Daily published new Internet regulations from the State Secrecy Bureau, the Chinese government has cracked down on Internet use that it considers dangerous, arresting several individuals, shutting down sites, and passing new laws that codify existing practice. The Digital Freedom Network (DFN), a U.S.-based organization that promotes and develops the use of Internet technology for human rights activism, has been monitoring the use of the Internet in China. Below is a list of at least 25 individuals in China currently detained for online activity (this list is online at <http://dfn.org/focus/china/netattack.htm>). DFN also has a page containing the latest news related to Net restrictions in China at <http://dfn.org/focus/china/chinanetreport.htm>.

Many of the individuals listed below were detained for months or even years before facing formal charges, usually subversion. Those who get a trial are always found guilty and receive multi-year sentences. The detainees include Falun Gong believers who forwarded material about the movement and others who e-mailed pro-democracy publications to others or published articles online that criticized government officials. Some are not even dissidents. Huang Qi was detained two years ago after several overseas dissidents posted material on a missing-persons Web site he used to run about the June 4, 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations. He remains in custody. Wang Jinbo reportedly went on a hunger strike in January 2002 because prison guards would not allow his family to see him.

It is imperative that the United States and other nations act quickly to do everything it can to ensure their release. But even if these 25 individuals were to be freed, there is no guarantee that others won't be arrested and convicted on similar charges. China uses a combination of tough legislation and modern technology to restrict online information. Any online activity that the government considers threatening is banned, including using the Internet to incite the overthrow of state power, topple the socialist system, destroy national unity, promote "cults" (interpreted to mean groups such as the Falun Gong spiritual movement), or support the independence of Taiwan.

To ensure that individuals such as Huang Qi are not imprisoned in China, we should continue to promote technological tools that enable Chinese users to express themselves freely in a reasonable manner. Supporting efforts such as the anonymous proxy service SafeWeb will certainly help. But we must also find a way to reach out to China's young people. Internet users in China today are young, urban, well-educated - a reflection of how economic reforms since the Tiananmen Square crackdown have improved the living standards of many Chinese. But as beneficiaries of official policy, they have little reason to distrust the government and are incredibly suspicious of the United States. In the days after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Chinese bulletin boards were flooded with messages from Chinese users criticizing U.S. arrogance and claiming that the U.S. got what it deserved for "meddling" in the affairs of other nations. These users will grow up to become the future leaders of the world's most populous nation. Reaching out to this generation will require more than encryption software and other technical solutions. It will require that we build up a relationship of mutual trust with China so that its next generation of leaders will allow its citizens to live in a more open society.

## Chinese individuals currently detained for online political or religious activity

Compiled by the Digital Freedom Network (April 2002)

<http://dfn.org/focus/china/netattack.htm>

1. **Chi Shouzhu**, a veteran Chinese activist, was detained on April 18, 2001 shortly after printing online pro-democracy material from a Web site using a friend's computer, according to the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy. The center said he was carrying the material when he was detained at a train station in the northeastern city of Changchun. Chi was released in June after serving a 10-year prison term for taking part in 1989 pro-democracy protests. Leng Wanbao, a dissident living in the northeastern province of Jilin, was interrogated for more than two hours by police on April 18, 2001, according to the Paris-based Reporters sans frontières (Reporters without Borders). Police accused him of publishing "subversive articles" on the Internet. Some of Leng's writings were allegedly found on Chi Shouzhu, who was arrested a short time before. (See also "China Cracks Down on Cyber-Dissent," Associated Press, April 19, 2001; Reporters sans frontières protest letter, April 20, 2001, <http://www.rsf.fr/uk/html/asia/cplp01/lp01/190401.html>)
2. **Dong Yanhong**, a staff member at Tsinghua University, was sentenced on December 13, 2001 to five years in prison for spreading information on the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement over the Internet, according to the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy. In addition to Dong, five others were sentenced by the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on December 13: Liu Wenyu, a professor of electric power at Tsinghua University; Liu's wife Yao Yue, a microelectronics researcher at Tsinghua University; Wang Xin, an academic at Tsinghua University; Tsinghua electronics professor Meng Jun; and Wang Xuefei, graduate student at a Shanghai university. ("6 Convicted in China Falun Gong Case," Associated Press, December 24, 2001, "China Jails Six for Falun Gong Web Activity - Group," Reuters, December 23, 2001.)
3. **Guo Qinghai**, a friend of dissident Qi Yanchen and also a freelance writer, was arrested in September 2000 for "subverting state power." Guo published articles on the Internet that discussed Qi's case and frequently put on overseas online bulletin boards essays promoting political reforms in China. On April 24, 2001, the Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy reported that a court in Cangzhou, in the northern province of Hebei, tried Guo on April 3 for subversion. According to the center, the court did not inform Guo's family of the hearing, the group said. On April 26, 2001, he was sentenced to four years in prison. (See also "China Charges, Tries Internet Dissidents: Group," Reuters, April 25, 2001.)
4. **Hu Dalin** was detained on May 18, 2001 by police in the southeastern city of Shaoyang after he published articles online that were written by his father, retired Beijing strategy scholar Lu Jiaping, according to the U.S.-based Chinese dissident e-mail publication V.I.P. Reference. No formal charges have been filed against Hu, but police told family members that he was arrested because of "subversive" activities online, according to the publication. Lu remains free in Beijing. (See also "Denial and Detentions," Digital Freedom Network, May 24, 2001.)
5. **Huang Qi**, 36, an Internet entrepreneur from Chengdu who ran a site containing information about the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre, was detained on June 3, 2000 on the eve of the massacre's eleventh anniversary. One of the items on Huang's Web site (<http://6-4tianwang.com>), which was originally a Web site about missing persons, was a letter from the mother of a young student killed during the demonstrations. The letter accused police of beating her son to death. On July 14, 2000, Huang's wife Zeng Li was officially notified that her husband was being charged with "subversion." Huang's trial began on February 13, 2001. It was suspended after Huang Qi

collapsed in court on the afternoon of the trial's first day. On June 25, 2001, a relative of Huang's was notified that his trial was rescheduled for June 27. On June 26, the Chengdu Intermediate Court announced that the trial was again postponed indefinitely. On August 14, Huang was tried secretly. No family members were allowed to attend. (See also "Trial of Chinese Website Creator to Reopen This Week," Agence France-Presse, June 26, 2001; "CHINA: Jailed Internet publisher tried in secret," Committee to Protect Journalists, August 16, 2001.)

6. **Jiang Shihua**, a high school computer teacher in Nanchong, was arrested on August 16, 2000 after publishing articles online that criticized the Chinese government. Using the pen name Shumin, which means "common citizen," Jiang started writing and posting articles on August 11, 2000 from the Silicon Valley Internet Café, which he owns. Jiang was immediately charged with "subverting the state power." According to the Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy, a court in Nanchong sentenced Jiang to two years in jail in December 2000. On May 18, 2001, the Higher People's Court in the southwestern province of Sichuan upheld his conviction. (See also "Web dissident sentenced to two years imprisonment," Reporters sans frontières Action Alert, March 14, 2001, "Chinese Court Turns Down Internet Dissident's Appeal: Rights Center," Agence France-Presse, May 23, 2001.)
7. **Jin Haike**, a geological engineer, was one of four intellectuals detained in Beijing on March 13, 2001 and charged with subversion on April 20, 2001. Jin, along with Consumer Daily reporter Xu Wei, software developer Yang Zili, and freelance writer Zhang Honghai - had co-founded the "New Youth Study Group," a discussion group that discussed Chinese political reform, particularly in rural areas. The center said that university students participated in the study group's events and that members posted material on a Web site and sent e-mails to each other. A fifth intellectual, Zhang Yanhua, was also detained with the four but was later released. Jin, Xu, Yang, and Zhang were tried on September 28, 2001. (See also "China Said to Charge Four of Subversion," Associated Press, May 21, 2001; "China Charges Four with Subversion: Rights Group," Reuters, May 21, 2001; "Four Chinese intellectuals tried for subversion," Digital Freedom Network, September 28, 2001.)
8. **Li Hongmin** was arrested around June 10, 2001 and sent to a detention center in his hometown of Shaoyang (Hunan Province). Sources for the U.S.-based dissident publication VIP Reference and the Hong Kong-based Information Center of Human Rights and Democracy said that he was arrested after e-mailing copies of the Chinese version of The Tiananmen Papers to friends. The Tiananmen Papers are a collection of documents allegedly smuggled out of China that reveal the decisions of China's top leaders before, during, and after the bloody June 4, 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations. (See also "Chinese Held for Distributing 'Tiananmen Papers' on the Internet," Agence France-Presse, July 2, 2001; E-mail with Richard Long, June 27, 2001.)
9. **Liu Wenyu**, a professor of electric power at Tsinghua University, was sentenced on December 13, 2001 to three years in prison for spreading information on the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement over the Internet, according to the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy. In addition to Liu, five others were sentenced by the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on December 13: Liu's wife Yao Yue, a microelectronics researcher at Tsinghua University; Tsinghua staff member Dong Yanhong; Wang Xin, an academic at Tsinghua University; Tsinghua electronics professor Meng Jun; and Wang Xuefei, graduate student at a Shanghai university. ("6 Convicted in China Falun Gong Case," Associated Press, December 24, 2001, "China Jails Six for Falun Gong Web Activity - Group," Reuters, December 23, 2001.)

10. **Liu Weifang** was sentenced in northwestern China for posting articles on Internet chatrooms that criticized the Communist Party, the Xinjiang Daily reported on June 15, 2001. The paper said that the small business owner was convicted of inciting subversion against state power. Liu had posted several articles in 1999 and 2000 that criticized both the Party and China's top leaders. Although he used the Internet name "Lgwf," Chinese officials determined that he posted the articles. (See also "Chinese Man Sentenced to Three Years in Prison for Cyber Writings," Agence France-Presse, June 18, 2001.)
11. **Lu Xinhua** was detained on March 11, 2001 in Wuhan, capital of central China's Hubei province, according to the Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy. On April 20, 2001, he was formally charged with inciting to subvert state power. The group said that Lu was the most active dissident on the Internet in Wuhan. He often posted on overseas Web sites essays promoting democracy in China and reports on human rights violations in Wuhan. On January 14, 2002, the Wuhan Municipal Intermediate People's Court convicted him and sentenced him to four years in prison. Lu was convicted for an article of his in which he attacked Chinese President Jiang Zemin. The article said that only a system of "mutual supervision" and a more stable system of laws would reduce corruption in China, according to Agence France-Presse. (See also "China Charges, Tries Internet Dissidents: Group," Reuters, April 25, 2001; "Two More Chinese Fall Afoul of Internet Laws: Report," Agence France-Presse, April 25, 2001; "Two Chinese political dissidents jailed for airing views on Internet," Agence France-Presse, January 14, 2002.)
12. **Meng Jun**, an electronics professor at Tsinghua University, was sentenced on December 13, 2001 to 10 years in prison for spreading information on the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement over the Internet, according to the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy. In addition to Meng, five others were sentenced by the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on December 13: Yao Yue, a microelectronics researcher at Tsinghua University; Yao's husband Liu Wenyu, a professor of electric power at Tsinghua University; Wang Xin, an academic at Tsinghua University; Tsinghua staff member Dong Yanhong; and Wang Xin, graduate student at a Shanghai university. ("6 Convicted in China Falun Gong Case," Associated Press, December 24, 2001, "China Jails Six for Falun Gong Web Activity - Group," Reuters, December 23, 2001.)
13. **Qi Yanchen**, sentenced to four years in prison on September 19, 2000, is the first Chinese convicted of subversion for material he wrote that was published on the Internet. The charges stem from articles that Qi wrote for the November 1998 and January 1999 issues of Open magazine in Hong Kong and published under the pen name Ji Li. Qi was also officially charged for writing articles in the May 6, 1999 and May 17, 1999 articles of the U.S.-based Chinese dissident e-mail publication Dacankao (V.I.P. Reference). Qi was arrested on September 2, 1999 in the northeastern Chinese city of Botou. According to V.I.P. Reference, who spoke to Qi's wife Mi Hongwu, Qi Yanchen's right to appeal his conviction expired on September 29, 2000. Although Mi wanted to appeal the conviction, Qi's lawyer decided not to help him due to pressure from the National Security Bureau at Cangzhou.
14. **Wang Jinbo**, 29, was arrested on May 12, 2001 for "defaming" police on the Internet, according to the Information Center on Human Rights and Democracy. He was arrested in Junan town in eastern China's Shandong province. When Wang's father asked for more information about the charges against his son, police threatened to arrest him as well. On December 13, 2001, the Intermediate People's Court in Linyi, Shandong, found Wang guilty of subversion for publishing foreign news articles on the Internet and posting an online message that urged the government to re-evaluate the 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy demonstrations at Tiananmen Square. He began a hunger strike on January 9, 2002 because prison guards did not allow his family to see

him. (See also "Chinese dissident arrested for defaming police online," Agence France-Presse, May 12, 2001, "Outlawed party member jailed," Reuters, December 14, 2001, "Rights activist sentenced to four years in jail," Deutsche Presse-Agentur, December 14, 2001; "CHINA: China jails dissident for subversion - HK group," Reuters, January 14, 2002.)

15. **Wang Sen**, a member of the banned China Democracy Party, was arrested on April 30, 2001 for seeking to usurp power according to the Information Center on Human Rights and Democracy. Wang had posted an allegation that the southwestern Chinese city of Dachuan's medical center had sold tuberculosis medicine, which was donated by the Red Cross, at inflated prices. He was arrested in Dachuan, located in Sichuan province. (See also "Chinese dissident arrested for defaming police online," Agence France-Presse, May 12, 2001.)
16. **Wang Xin**, an academic at Tsinghua University, was sentenced on December 13, 2001 to nine years in prison for spreading information on the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement over the Internet, according to the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy. In addition to Wang, five others were sentenced by the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on December 13: Yao Yue, a microelectronics researcher at Tsinghua University; Yao's husband Liu Wenyu, a professor of electric power at Tsinghua University; Tsinghua staff member Dong Yanhong; Tsinghua electronics professor Meng Jun; and Wang Xuefei, graduate student at a Shanghai university. ("6 Convicted in China Falun Gong Case," Associated Press, December 24, 2001, "China Jails Six for Falun Gong Web Activity - Group," Reuters, December 23, 2001.)
17. **Wang Xuefei**, graduate student at a Shanghai university, was sentenced on December 13, 2001 to 11 years in prison for spreading information on the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement over the Internet, according to the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy. In addition to Wang, five others were sentenced by the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on December 13: Yao Yue, a microelectronics researcher at Tsinghua University; Yao's husband Liu Wenyu, a professor of electric power at Tsinghua University; Wang Xin, an academic at Tsinghua University; Tsinghua staff member Dong Yanhong; and Tsinghua electronics professor Meng Jun. ("6 Convicted in China Falun Gong Case," Associated Press, December 24, 2001, "China Jails Six for Falun Gong Web Activity - Group," Reuters, December 23, 2001.)
18. **Wang Zhenyong**, a 30-year-old former assistant professor in psychology at Southwestern Normal University, was arrested in China for e-mailing four articles about the Falun Gong spiritual group to a colleague, according to the Chongqing Daily seen by Agence France-Presse on June 2, 2001. He downloaded the articles from an overseas Web site in December 2000 and forwarded the articles to a colleague, who then distributed the articles over the Internet. (See also "Academic Arrested in China for Spreading Falungong Views Via Internet," Agence France-Presse, June 2, 2001.)
19. **Xu Wei**, reporter for Consumer Daily, was one of four intellectuals detained in Beijing on March 13, 2001 and later accused of unspecified charges. Jin had co-founded the "New Youth Study Group," a discussion group that discussed Chinese political reform, particularly in rural areas. Members posted material on a Web site and sent e-mails to each other. Xu was tried on September 28, 2001. (See also "China Said to Charge Four of Subversion," Associated Press, May 21, 2001; "China Charges Four with Subversion: Rights Group," Reuters, May 21, 2001; "Four Chinese intellectuals tried for subversion," Digital Freedom Network, September 28, 2001.)

20. **Yang Zili**, a software developer known for his outspoken criticism of communism and a grass-roots activist at Beijing University, and his wife Lu Kun were detained by security agents on March 13, 2001. Lu was released two days later, but Yang remains in custody. Yang had co-founded the "New Youth Study Group," a discussion group that discussed Chinese political reform, particularly in rural areas. Members posted material on a Web site and sent e-mails to each other. Yang ran the Web sites <http://thought.home.sohu.com>, <http://yangzi.00books.com>, and "Yang Zi's Garden of Ideas" (<http://lib.126.com>). Yang received a master's degree in geophysics in 1998 at Beijing University. Yang was tried on September 28, 2001. (See also "Dissident Web Writer Arrested in Beijing," Free China Movement press release, March 24, 2001; "Some Supplementary Information About Yang Zili," Lu Kun; "China Said to Charge Four of Subversion," Associated Press, May 21, 2001; "China Charges Four with Subversion: Rights Group," Reuters, May 21, 2001; "Four Chinese intellectuals tried for subversion," Digital Freedom Network, September 28, 2001.)
21. **Yao Yue**, a microelectronics researcher at Tsinghua University, was sentenced on December 13, 2001 to 12 years in prison for spreading information on the banned Falun Gong spiritual movement over the Internet, according to the Hong Kong-based Information Center for Human Rights and Democracy. In addition to Yao, five others were sentenced by the Beijing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court on December 13: Yao's husband Liu Wenyu, a professor of electric power at Tsinghua University; Tsinghua staff member Dong Yanhong; Tsinghua electronics professor Meng Jun; Tsinghua academic Wang Xin; and Wang Xuefei, graduate student at a Shanghai university. ("6 Convicted in China Falun Gong Case," Associated Press, December 24, 2001, "China Jails Six for Falun Gong Web Activity - Group," Reuters, December 23, 2001.)
22. **Zhang Haitao**, 30, creator of the only China-based Web site on the outlawed Falun Gong, was charged with subversion on October 11, 2000 in Changchun, Jilin Province. Zhang, a computer engineer in the Xu Ri Computer Company, is accused of establishing a site promoting Falun Gong in May and of posting an online petition urging followers to protest the government ban on the group. Authorities shut down his site on July 24, 2000; Zhang was detained on July 29. ("News Update," China Rights Forum (Winter 2000/1), [http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/00winter/00W16\\_NewsUpdate.html](http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/00winter/00W16_NewsUpdate.html))
23. **Zhang Honghai**, a freelance writer, was one of four intellectuals detained in Beijing on March 13, 2001 and later accused of unspecified charges. Zhang had co-founded the "New Youth Study Group," a discussion group that discussed Chinese political reform, particularly in rural areas. Members posted material on a Web site and sent e-mails to each other. Zhang was tried on September 28, 2001. (See also "China Said to Charge Four of Subversion," Associated Press, May 21, 2001; "China Charges Four with Subversion: Rights Group," Reuters, May 21, 2001; "Four Chinese intellectuals tried for subversion," Digital Freedom Network, September 28, 2001.)
24. **Zhang Ji**, a college student in Heilongjiang Province, was charged on November 8, 2000 with "disseminating reactionary documents via the Internet." Authorities say Zhang had e-mailed information to U.S.- and Canada-based Web sites of the Falun Gong religious group. They say he also downloaded news about the group and shared it with others in China. ("News Update," China Rights Forum (Winter 2000/1), [http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/00winter/00W16\\_NewsUpdate.html](http://www.hrichina.org/crf/english/00winter/00W16_NewsUpdate.html))
25. **Zhu Ruixiang**, a lawyer and former producer of the Shaoyang Radio Station, was charged with subversion and sentenced to three years in prison on September 14, 2001 after he forwarded e-mail messages to 12 people inside China. The messages, deemed "reactionary" by a court in Shaoyang in the southern province of Hunan, contained copies of V.I.P. Reference (Dacankao), a

daily e-mail publication based in the U.S. consisting of articles and essays related to democracy in China. Zhu was arrested on May 8, 2001, and Public Security Bureau officials confiscated his computer, according to the U.S.-based Free China Movement. (See also "China hands three-year jail term for relaying e-mail," Agence France-Presse, September 15, 2001; "Official verdict of judgment of Zhu Ruixiang," Digital Freedom Network, September 25, 2001.)