

Prisoner Profile: Xu Wanping

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Xu Wanping, a democracy and human rights activist, was born on April 11, 1961. A resident of Chongqing, he was detained on three previ-

ous occasions for activities relating to the student protests of June 1989 and for attempts to establish a political party.

As a result of his involvement with the democracy movement of June 4, Xu was imprisoned for eight years, with an additional five years' deprivation of political rights after release. He later attempted to establish an opposition party, the China Action Party.

In 1998, Xu Wanping was sentenced to three years of Reeducation-Through-Labor for organizing and attempting to register the China Democracy Party in Chongqing, and was also charged with "instigating laid-off workers to cause trouble." He was released in 2001 after serving his sentence in the Xishanping Labor Camp in Chongqing, and immediately returned to human rights work, engaged in activities promoting freedom of association and speech.

Xu was detained again in 2002, along with more than 40 other activists gathering signatures for an open letter addressed to the Chinese Communist Party prior to the 16th Communist Party Congress. The open letter requested a reevaluation of the 1989 protests and subsequent violent crackdown in Tiananmen Square. On June 3, 2004, police framed Xu by concealing heroin on his person. While in custody, Xu was beaten by police officers from the anti-drug public security team, and was bound to a chair for 48 hours. He was subsequently released without charge.

The sequence of events behind his most recent arrest began in March 2005, when Xu's activities drew the attention of authorities. First, he was listed as a signatory to several open letters, including one that declared disobedience of the new Regulations on Letters and Visits that would become effective on May 1, 2005. Then, on April 17, he gave an interview to *The*

Epoch Times in which he announced his support for the "March for Democracy and Freedom," scheduled to take place on April 23 in New York City. He also stated his intention to leave the Communist Youth League, and encouraged others to withdraw from the CCP and the Youth League as part of the *Epoch Times*-sponsored campaign, "One Million People Quit the CCP."

On April 30, local Public Security Bureau chief Li Ming and another officer arrived at Xu's home around 7:00 a.m. and questioned his wife, Chen Xianying, about Xu's recent activities. Xu learned of the visit later that day and telephoned Li to ask the purpose of his inquiries. Within ten minutes of the phone call, Li and nearly a dozen police officers arrived at Xu's home and questioned him regarding his participation in a signature campaign connected with a recent anti-Japanese protest. The police officers then carried out a search of Xu's home and removed his computer, documents and other personal effects, including Chen Xianying's personal bank book. The bank account contained about 2,000 *yuan* remaining from public assistance funds the couple had collected after losing their jobs. The police then forced Xu to accompany them back to the dispatch station.

In April 2005, the government's attitude toward the anti-Japanese demonstrations had changed from silent acquiescence and tolerance to uneasiness and suppression. Several Party-controlled publications openly alleged that "certain persons" were taking advantage of the anti-Japanese protests for other purposes, and called for harsh measures against the instigators. Some observers believed the government was taking advantage of an opportunity to round up dissidents and scapegoat them for the unrest. Other dissidents detained around that time along with Xu included Li Guotao in Shanghai, Li Xiaolong and Xue Zhenbiao in Guangxi, Li Renke and Zeng Ning in Guizhou, Leng Wanbao in Jilin and Hu Jia in Beijing.

On May 24, Xu was formally charged with "incitement to subvert state power," and has since been held at the Chongqing Municipal Detention Center. Gao Zhisheng, a Beijing-based lawyer who handles many dissident cases, attempted to register on June 2 as Xu's legal counsel through his assistant, Wen Haibo, but was denied access to Xu.

Xu's family received no notification of

the trial until Chen Xianying and Xu's mother, Tong Zhengfen, attempted to bring him clean clothing and other personal items in prison on October 20. Chen and Tong personally spoke with bureau chief Li Ming, who refused to allow them to see Xu. The two returned to the detention center that same afternoon, hoping to be granted a visit, but the officer on duty told them that Xu had been indicted and would soon be tried; this notice was all that the family ever received regarding his trial. Xu's family members were not allowed to see the charge sheets or other documents relating to Xu's case, and they were prevented from attending the trial on the grounds that the case involved "state secrets."

The trial took place on November 3, at the Chongqing No. 1 Intermediate People's Court, where Xu was charged with incitement to subvert state power. Xu was represented by Liu Yang, director of the Chongqing Fenghuang law firm, whom the authorities had assigned to Xu's case. Xu pled not guilty to the charge, and refused to sign the court's decision. On December 23, Xu was convicted of "incitement to subvert state power" and sentenced to 12 years in prison, with four years' subsequent deprivation of political rights.

Although Xu was initially detained on the basis of his participation in the anti-Japanese protests, he was ultimately charged and convicted on the basis of entirely different allegations. According to the court judgment, Xu was found to have communicated by Internet and other methods with overseas leaders of the outlawed China Democracy Party, and to have been involved in recruitment and development activities on behalf of the CDP, as well as distributing humanitarian assistance from overseas to the families of imprisoned dissidents. The prosecution's evidence included letters and email between Xu and overseas dissidents, as well as remittance notices of funds received from overseas and letters from family members acknowledging receipt of the funds.

On February 28, the official Xinhua News Agency reported that the Chongqing Higher Court had upheld the verdict and sentence against Xu. Xu's wife learned of the decision only through news reports. It is not known whether Xu has been transferred from the Chongqing Municipal Detention Center since his sentencing.