

## **Liu Xiaobo and the Citizens' Rights Movement: A New Face for China's Democracy Movement in 2003**

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### **Abstract**

The June Fourth massacre illustrated the fatal risks involved in complaining directly to the Communist Party of China's top leadership. In ensuing years, liberal-minded intellectuals did not abandon the goal of democratic reform but switched to a very different approach. It was: to seek justice in concrete cases and to garner popular support for them by spreading word on the Internet or in the semi-open press. When authorities were exposed as violating law or fundamental morality, they were obliged to do reforms, some of which could become permanent. One had to be careful, though, not to anger the authorities, because crackdowns could destroy fragile progress before it had a chance to solidify. Liu Xiaobo was an active practitioner and supporter of this approach.

**Keywords:** *Liu Xiaobo, Communist Party of China, June Fourth massacre, democracy movement, citizens' rights movement*

## 1. Introduction

Picturing the fire, the tanks, and the blood of 1989, people often ask why the democracy movement that year failed – and what China would look like today if it had not.

It is certainly true that certain things failed that year. The student protestors failed in their immediate goals. Deng Xiaoping failed in his moral judgment. His regime failed in its attempt to mislead the world about what had happened. But did the democracy movement itself “fail”? This is a complex question. Its full answer will emerge only when 1989 can be seen as part of a longer-term process, and that process is still underway.

Future historians will note, at a minimum, that a resurgence of the democracy impulse in Chinese society appeared in the late 1990s and continued into the 2000s at least until 2010. By 2003, when it was at its peak, it acquired the name “citizens’ rights movement”. The regime dealt this movement a severe blow in late 2008 when it crushed “Charter 08” and imprisoned Liu Xiaobo. For a few years the movement had carried the torch of spring 1989, but pursued democratic ideals using very different – and arguably smarter – methods. It no longer staged huge rallies or butted heads with the regime at the highest levels; it worked from the ground up, quieter and more gradually than the 1989 movement. It made use of the diffuse new tool called the Internet and focused on concrete projects and modest goals that brought measurable progress step-by-step. Although less confrontational, its tactics aimed at concrete change and its ultimate goal was a more profound transition than what the 1989 protesters had declared. No one person designed the

approach, but Liu Xiaobo's thinking and his inveterate action did much to shape it.

## 2. "Liberals" Appear

From 1949 until the mid-1990s, the word *liberalism* (*ziyouzhuyi*) appeared in public language in China only with a negative connotation. In the 1980s a few prominent intellectuals (Bai Hua in 1981 and Liu Binyan, Fang Lizhi, and Wang Ruowang in 1987, plus others) were denounced as "bourgeois liberals". The word *liberal* suggested "out of control" or "self-interested". In the late 1990s, though, more and more people, mostly intellectuals, began to identify as "liberals" (*ziyoupai*) in a new sense. Now the term meant "pro-freedom". In 1998 Zhu Xueqin, a well-regarded historian of modern Chinese thought and a self-identified liberal, published an analysis of the term. The implied contrast with communist ideology was hard to miss:

[Liberalism] reaches conclusions empirically, not *a priori*. It sees history as moving in fits and starts and does not subscribe to historical determinism of any kind. It is opposed to planned social systems. In politics it calls for representative democracy, constitutionalism and rule of law, and it opposes dictatorship whether by one person or by a small group. In ethics it calls for protection of the individual person and holds that while many values can be disaggregated, the value of the individual cannot be; an individual cannot be made into a tool and sacrificed to an abstract idea.<sup>1</sup>

The version of liberalism that Zhu described went further than what the 1989 protesters had demanded. Democracy, constitutionalism, and rule of law were on the agenda in both periods, but those were things that the

communist government still claimed, in theory, to be supplying. The question of who should be in charge was not raised in 1989. Student leaders then had not called for removal of the Communist Party. But the liberals' goals in the late 1990s ("oppose dictatorship whether by one person or by a small group") did imply regime change.

### **3. A Semi-official Liberal Press Emerges**

A new kind of journalism emerged around that time. Economics, not politics, provided its original spark. This happened because, in 1989, the prestige of the Communist Party had sunk so low that Party newspapers were not selling well. In an era of "make your own money or perish", newspapers had to balance their books, and managers of newspapers found that the best way to do that was to publish stories that attracted people and to profit by selling paid advertising. Newspapers came out with secondary publications – "evening papers", "weekend papers", or "city papers" – carrying stories about movie stars, crime, police, sports, travel, and the like. A catchphrase for the new business model was "big newspapers hatch little ones, and the little ones pay for the big ones". It gradually emerged, however, that readers of the little newspapers were interested not only in entertainment but in serious stories about economic inequality, political corruption, health care, the cost and quality of schooling, environmental safety, and other such topics. This situation opened a door for liberal editors. They could now let the little newspapers play the classic roles of the press: monitoring political behavior and voicing public opinion. The little papers were never fully free, though. Always registered through their parent newspapers, they were still inside the state system and could be closed down if they went too far.

*Southern Weekend*, a “little newspaper” that eventually was not so little, was the pioneering example. It was founded in 1984 as the offspring of *Southern Daily*, the Communist Party’s flagship newspaper in Guangdong Province, and it originally carried stories about such things as planting flowers and raising goldfish. Its circulation was about 7000. In 1995, though, it brought in a group of idealistic young reporters who went to work finding and reporting “deep background” stories. Under Jiang Yiping, who was chief editor beginning in 1996, they wrote about fake liquor, bridge safety, the underworld, unjust convictions, abuse of power, and other muckraking topics. They consistently took the side of underdogs when they wrote about human trafficking, bias against AIDS victims, and workers who did not get their pay. They observed a principle of “no local reporting”. As long as their unpleasant stories were about other places, not Guangdong, the senior officials at the parent newspaper would look the other way. But precisely this point made *Southern Weekend* much sought after in all those other places – i.e., nationwide. By 1998 the paper was being printed in nineteen cities in China and its circulation had soared to 1.3 million.

The success of *Southern Weekend* caused neurons to flash in the minds of editors elsewhere. In Guangzhou, *Southern Metropolitan News* was born; in Beijing there were *Beijing Youth News* and *China Industry and Commerce*; in Xi’an, *China Business News*; in Chengdu, *West China City News* and *Chengdu Commerce*; and elsewhere, others. Words like “commerce” and “business” were used in titles partly as covers; the true missions of these papers were not business but to report on problems in society, to seek fairness, and to reflect popular opinion. For analysis and comment these new papers turned to intellectuals, who often were only too happy to oblige. Their opinions, formerly confined to salons or dinner tables, now could reach tens of thousands of readers. It was a happy symbiosis. Liberal thought was spreading.

#### 4. Reaching into Society

From October 1996 to October 1999, Liu Xiaobo was in a labor-reform camp in Dalian on charges of “disturbing the social order”. But after his release he quickly melded into the liberal tide. He devoted much time to helping people who had been to prison, whose loved ones still were in prison, or who in other ways were victims of the regime. He comforted them, advised them on their legal rights, and wrote articles in their defense. He defended The Tiananmen Mothers, Falun Gong practitioners, the veteran democrat He Depu, Yang Zili and Xu Wei (two of the “four stalwarts” of the *New Youth* case in 2000), and a number of young Internet activists. He acquired a reputation as a go-to person for help with political persecution.

At the same time, though, a worry grew inside him. Many of the people he was helping, admirable though they were, were living on society’s margins, banished there by the consequences of their own idealism. They had been to prison, had lost their jobs, and sometimes were ostracized even by friends and family who feared absorption of their taint. To pin one’s hopes for China’s transformation on these people alone seemed far-fetched.<sup>2</sup>

However, viewed another way, these people were not marginal at all. The problems that they protested – corruption, pollution, profiteering, bullying, mendacity – were at the very center of society. It was precisely their candor about the central truths that had pushed them to society’s margins. On the same principle, people who lived within the mainstream could get along there only because they were willing to keep quiet about its realities. In a devastating piece called “Porcine Philosophy”, Xiaobo lampoons his countrymen, especially its intellectuals, as examples of Socrates’ “pigs satisfied” – willing to bury conscience for the sake of safety and lucre.<sup>3</sup> Still, that condition was not

the same as having no conscience at all. It followed, Xiaobo reasoned, that there must be considerable potential in society for support of an opposition movement – if only those sources could be tapped.

He identified what he called “gray areas” in society. The market economy and the Internet had brought a new diversity to people’s activities, interests, and values. Freedoms were creeping into their daily lives, and they were more willing than before to defend those freedoms. They did not want to do battle with the Communist Party and certainly did not seek glory or martyrdom; but, so long as their basic survival was not threatened, they were willing, as Xiaobo put it, to “nibble at the system’s edges”. Edge-nibbling proceeded without any obvious leaders or organization. People knew that if leaders or an organization were to appear, they would be crushed.

A good example of non-confrontational resistance was this one: when liberal editors at *Southern Weekend* were fired in 2001,<sup>4</sup> thirty-eight of the journalists who worked for them protested not by writing a joint open letter but by each composing a letter of his or her own, forming a kind of leaderless tide. The unity of their action lay only in their timing and tactics. One favorite tactic was to invoke classical texts. A protester wrote that *The Book of Rites* (ca. 200 BCE) advises that “In facing difficulties, don’t just hide.” Another quoted the *Huainanzi* (ca. 139 BCE): “The cock crows before the dawn, and the crane whoops at darkest night, but neither escapes the slaughter of sacrifice.” Another drew on a poetic essay by Fan Zhongyan (CE 989-1052): “Better to speak and live than to be silent and die.” Yet another invoked the modern Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941): “I thank thee that I am none of the wheels of power but I am one with the living creatures that are crushed by it.”<sup>5</sup> This kind of literary guerilla activity allowed its

participants, Xiaobo observed, to be “resisters and survivors at the same time.” They were having their say without staking everything on one dramatic (and perhaps suicidal) gesture. Xiaobo liked the approach.

Liberal pioneers got good support from society. Managers at publishing houses, television stations, universities, and elsewhere began to protect critical voices. If a television station interviewed a “sensitive” guest or a magazine published a politically edgy article, the work units themselves sometimes wrote self-criticisms so that the offending speaker or writer could live for another day. People fired from one work unit for speaking too freely might be picked up by another. And work units often allowed their employees to step “outside the system” to make comments.

As the trend gained momentum, tactics became more sophisticated. Managers of work units learned that, when criticized from above, it was sometimes best not to offer a defense. Arguing back might just lead to exposure of more details that could, in turn, be evidence for more criticism. It was usually better just to nod heads, lie low, and bide time. The saying that “the top has its policies and the bottom its counter-policies” was well known at the time. This meant, among other things, that subordinates can dissemble. Editors at *Southern Weekend* several times were summoned to Beijing to listen to criticism and receive “guidance”. They carried notebooks, wore serious expressions, took copious notes, and then went back to Guangzhou to continue what they had been doing before. The harvest of such a trip was that people could feel they had bought a bit more time. Xiaobo admired this tactic, but worried, too, that “over time it could lead to pride in petty cleverness of a kind that erodes the spirit.” He preferred the leaderless-guerilla technique of the thirty-eight *Southern Weekend* letter writers. “Their words were mild,” he wrote, “but amounted to a unique kind of collective resistance.”<sup>6</sup>



## **5. Building a Gradualist Approach**

Xiaobo reflected on how different these low-key tactics were from the prevailing mood of the 1980s, which he called a “reformist era filled with moral passion”.<sup>7</sup> Those passions had been expressed in high-sounding and sometimes self-promoting language that carried the same flavor of reverence for sacrifice and martyrdom that the communist ideology of the Mao era had promoted. Today’s tactics were superior, in his view. Now people who chose to resist could balance their risk against the limits of what they could reasonably endure. Their idealism would not land them in a place where, like the marginalized dissidents, they owned little and could do even less.

In March 2003 Xiaobo published an essay on his own understanding of “liberalism”. He wrote:

Liberal politics is humane. It is low-key. The reason why a liberal political system can get the most out of people, can call forth their creativity, is that it does not ask for cruel sacrifice or aim to produce saints. Preservation of life is its highest priority, and it fully respects the ordinary human desires that arise in daily life. It evaluates a person’s behavior only by whether it accords with common rules of civility. ...Even in the rough and tumble of nasty politics, a true liberal does not surrender to bursts of blind passion that impose pointless costs on oneself or on society.<sup>8</sup>

Here Xiaobo was seeking to purge the martyr ideology of the Mao era. He sought to purge it not only from Chinese society but from himself as well. No one had ever taught him in grade school that life is long and that he should learn general life skills. The point of Mao-education was that children were packages to be readied for one-time use in the revolutionary cause – either to die for the Party or to live for it alone.

There was no education in how to manage problems or how to act in good conscience in daily life.

Xiaobo's turn in the 2000s toward a focus on daily life, common human values, and gradual progress was part of a more general shift in the liberal camp of Chinese intellectuals. May Fourth thinkers like Hu Shi (1891-1962), who were viewed in their time as less radical than the revolutionaries because they advocated "drop by drop" progress for China, were gaining new respect. Denounced by Mao in the 1950s and publicly unmentionable until after Mao died, Hu Shi made a considerable comeback in Chinese intellectual circles in the 1990s.

Eastern European thinkers who had experience with making slow, gradual progress under communist regimes – Václav Havel from Czechoslovakia and Adam Michnik from Poland in particular – were also extremely important to the new Chinese liberals. Cui Weiping, a professor at the Beijing Film Academy, translated a collection of Havel's works, put it on the Internet, and followed it soon thereafter with a translation of Michnik's *Towards Civil Society*. Havel's and Michnik's political thinking began (could *only* begin) by accepting the brute fact that communist political systems in their countries were entrenched and backed by a strong foreign power. It made little sense to confront those systems directly. One needed to look for starting points in the crevices of society, away from the centers of power, in places where the personal dignity and the consciences of people could thrive, and where like-minded people could associate. "Charter 77" in Czechoslovakia and the Solidarity labor union in Poland were fruits of this approach.

Havel advised his fellow citizens not to focus on the power at the top but to "live in truth" in daily life, on the ground, where there was space "to approach life differently". When people maintain their personal dignity in daily life, they undermine the power of the controlling state and gradually hollow it out, which eventually makes

systemic change more possible. Chinese readers of Havel were heartened to learn that in Czechoslovakia, it was, in the end, something as simple as the assertion of a rock 'n' roll group's right to sing that catalyzed the collapse of the regime. Michnik asked his fellow resisters to speak directly to the Polish public, not to the rulers of the state; to jettison the rhetoric of the state and to speak in daily-life language; to seek rights, not power; and to aim at building a society, not at toppling a regime. Any person, in any location, could begin such work.

Of course no state-run press in China would touch books by Havel or Michnik, but they spread widely on the Internet. Drawing on Havel and Michnik, Liu Xiaobo urged Chinese citizens "to live an honest life in dignity" (from Havel) and "to start at the margins and permeate toward the center" (from Michnik).<sup>9</sup>

## **6. Identifying with Civil Society**

A further reason for citizens to turn their attention away from the summit of power in China was that recently it seemed no one at the summit was hearing them. In the decade before June Fourth there had always been dialogue, however awkward, with the top. When Wei Jingsheng called democracy a "fifth modernization" in 1978, he was adding to the "four modernizations" of Deng Xiaoping. Hu Yaobang and Zhao Ziyang, formally the top Party leaders from 1981 to 1989, were both known for a willingness, at least sometimes, to listen to suggestions from below. Democracy advocates in the 1980s often talked with liberal-minded officials and followed with interest the signs of struggles inside the government between liberal and conservative officials. At Tiananmen in 1989, students sought "dialogue" with the men who lived behind the tall red walls nearby. After the June Fourth massacre, though, it was as if a switch had been thrown to halt all interaction between top leaders and

society. There was no dialogue, direct or indirect, and barely a trickle of news about struggles between liberals and conservatives in the government. The rulers now seemed to be nothing but a cabal focused on maintaining power and plundering the country's wealth for their families. They no longer had common language with society.

In 2003, Xiaobo noted what he called a “decline of officialdom and rise of civil society in the market of public opinion”.<sup>10</sup> “Official talk” – including news, statistics, and forecasts – was losing credibility to the “unofficial talk” of society on the Internet. That transition, moreover, was accompanied by the appearance of what Xiaobo called “popular moral conscience”. This conscience was not necessarily connected with political dissidence. Broader and vaguer than that, it arose from a new consciousness of “rights” that was spreading. For example:

- Officials in Renshou County in Sichuan for ten years had been levying arbitrary fees on local farmers until one of them, Zhang De’an, led a group to the county government offices to insist, once and for all, that the extra-legal levies stop.
- A foundry that made iron alloys in Liaoyang city in the northeast was shorting the wages and severance packages of workers until Yao Fuxin, a worker there, organized a protest at local government offices. Authorities quietly arrested Yao, but when the arrest became known 40,000 workers from more than twenty factories in the area took to the streets demanding his release.

Xiaobo refers to people like Zhang De’an and Yao Fuxin as “new heroes” of the rights movement. Government controls kept such activities boxed in, but eventually, Xiaobo felt, they might “permeate” to neighboring areas.

In the same essay, Xiaobo arrives at a general analysis. Increasingly, he writes, “power resides with the officials and moral conscience with society.” Moreover there are “huge rifts”:

between power and legitimacy, between an enforced façade of stability and social crises below, between official consciousness and popular consciousness, between authority wielded in the name of the public and actual public good.

This analysis underlay most of what he wrote for the next few years. The various “huge rifts” were fields of opportunity for the rights movement.

The term *minjian*, meaning “among the people” or “not in officialdom” entered Xiaobo’s writing and thinking. He wrote of *minjian* autonomy, *minjian* forces, the *minjian* viewpoint, and *minjian* reason, all of which he saw as heartening developments. The *minjian* trend, he wrote, was:

the deep structure of the progress of society since the beginning of reform [in 1978] and the best course for the transition of all of China. Rather than handing the future of the nation and the fortunes of more than a billion people to a few “rulers” in Zhongnanhai, it is far better that every person be involved, starting individually from the *minjian* point of view.<sup>11</sup>

Xiaobo insisted that China’s progress could be measured only in these *minjian* terms. Foreign analysts and China’s elite both paid far too much attention to the ins and outs of politics in Zhongnanhai, as if those were the driving forces in Chinese society, but they are not.<sup>12</sup>

Xiaobo’s conception of *minjian* was broad. It included anyone, whether “inside” or “outside” the system, who had grounds for taking an

independent stand. This included groups like AIDS victims, petitioners, environmental activists, people whose houses were condemned to make way for developers, and many others. Their causes and methods were various but their resentment of imperious officialdom made them natural allies. Xiaobo wrote:

People have their own positions in society and their own agendas, so of course they can and should choose their own methods. So long as what they are doing pushes toward the same general transition in society, the combined effect of all their various efforts will inevitably be greater than that of anyone acting alone.<sup>13</sup>

Xiaobo's project had expanded from "dissident" circles to be potentially as broad as all of society. He stayed in touch with friends who worked in journalism, literature, film, business, and other fields. He read Internet websites run not only by his liberal friends but by the government, by commercial enterprises, and even by latter-day Maoists as a way to stay in touch with what various sectors of society were thinking.

The year 2003 was filled with events that helped the citizens' rights movement to grow. The concept of "accumulation" grew in Xiaobo's thinking. "The gradual accumulation of new ways of thinking and of doing things," he wrote, "not only can lead eventually to a new political system but can assure a smooth transition in getting there."<sup>14</sup> We review below seven of the more important of those "accumulating events," beginning in late 2002.

### ***6.1. The Audacity of a Stainless Steel Mouse***

One of the better-known causes that Xiaobo took up in his rights advocacy was the defense of Liu Di, a senior in the Psychology Department at Beijing Normal University who was known on the

Internet as the “stainless steel mouse”. Liu Di’s troubles began after a young man in Sichuan named Huang Qi inaugurated a “June Fourth Skyweb” to help look for people who were still missing from the June 4, 1989 massacre. Huang’s arrest on June 3, 2000, ignited a firestorm on the Internet. Liu Di, owner of a mischievous intellect, wrote several pieces in support of Huang, one of which she called “Netizens in the Persimmon Oil Party Should Surrender to the Party and the State”. “Persimmon oil” (*shiyou*) is a near homonym for “freedom” (*ziyou*), so many people knew that “Persimmon Oil Party” meant the liberals. Liu Di’s suggestion was that the liberals do one of two things: either go in hordes to police stations to turn themselves in as “Huang Qi elements” – or, if that did not work, then hit the streets with mass parades in support of communism. This would get the attention of the authorities, she reasoned, because everyone knows that nothing frightens them more than large unauthorized gatherings – no matter the cause. Liu Di was arrested on November 8, 2002, on “suspicion of the crime of overthrowing state power”. Were the authorities so obtuse as not to recognize whimsical sarcasm when they saw it? Or were they so smart that they could perceive the ways in which independent whimsy does undermine the austere face of the state? No one really knew.

Liu Di’s arrest triggered spirited protest on the Internet. The voices of all kinds of other stainless steel things popped up: a “stainless steel seashell”, “stainless steel moon”, “stainless steel requiem”, and “stainless steel green cow”, among many others. There was also “An Open Letter of Concern to the Chinese Government about the Stainless Steel Mouse” that, within weeks, thousands of people signed. That number was a record for open letters at the time – and a sign of the new power of the Internet.

The arrest was profoundly upsetting to Liu Di’s grandmother. (Liu Di’s mother had died when Liu Di was very young, and the little mouse

had been raised by her grandmother, who now was 80.) The grandmother was frantic with worry. When Xiaobo heard about the grandmother's condition, he telephoned her and listened patiently as she related the twists and turns of the whole story. For more than a year afterward the grandmother called him often, as if he were family, insisting time and again that Liu Di was innocent. Xiaobo did what he could to comfort her and wrote a number of articles about her. He had been fired from Beijing Normal in 1989 so no longer had any formal connection with the school, but whenever he referred to Liu Di, Xu Wei, or other graduates from Beijing Normal, he still used the affectionate term "schoolmate".

In February 2003, a young civil servant in the Hubei provincial government named Du Daobin drafted an "Open Letter to Members of the National People's Congress and the Chinese Political Consultative Conference on the Case of Liu Di". The letter asked that Liu Di be released. Xiaobo, Liao Yiwu, Yu Jie and fifteen others wrote a statement of support. Du Daobin followed up with a statement that he called "We Are Willing to Join Liu Di in Jail" that more than three hundred people signed.

## ***6.2. Limits on the Regime's Room for Lying: The SARS Episode***

In February, 2003, around the time of the Spring Festival, news of a "weird disease" spread from cities in south China. It caused panic. "Severe acute respiratory syndrome", or SARS, could be fatal. Doctors and nurses themselves were contracting it. By the time the disease was controlled a few months later, there had been about 7000 cases in China and Hong Kong and about 650 deaths.

The government's first response to the news was to repress it. This was its normal first response to crises, but in spring 2003 the repression was especially urgent because the National People's Congress and the



Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's two ceremonial legislatures, were set to meet in March to approve the coronation of the new president Hu Jintao and his associates. No one expected any surprises at the "two meetings", but the rich panoply of the events was still something that had to go just right.

In Guangzhou, *Southern Metropolitan News* reported that a local scientist named Zhong Nanshan had contradicted the account that the New China News Agency had published. Zhong said the disease was new, dangerous, and poorly understood. On March 14, the day the "two meetings" opened, the same newspaper quoted the deputy director of the Ministry of Health saying that as yet there was no effective way to contain the disease. That comment drew quick riposte from Zhang Dejiang, the Party secretary of Guangdong Province, who let slip the infamous line "the disease is not fearsome; what's fearsome is the media". Privately, however, people were applauding *Southern Metropolitan News* for its pluck. The issue concerned the public's right to know – a basic right. Xiaobo, following the events closely, wrote in an essay that "freedom of speech is the crux of human rights".<sup>15</sup> He raised the question: exactly how independent can a newspaper be before the regime closes it down? What risks are good risks? And when is prudence advisable, so that one can return to fight another day? He wrote:

In order to bring about a gradual transition to democracy, we will need heroic figures with charisma – moral models to give focus to the project. But even more, we will need large numbers of dedicated people to push for change drop by drop.<sup>16</sup>

At a news conference on April 3, Zhang Wenkang, Minister of Health, gave false statistics on the number of SARS deaths in China.

He claimed that the disease had “already been brought under control” and that “it is safe to work, live, and travel in China.” Sitting at home, watching Zhang on television, the former head of general surgery at the People’s Liberation Army Hospital in Beijing, 72-year-old Jiang Yanyong, was indignant. Just a few days earlier, at a conference of doctors from other PLA hospitals in China, he had heard reports on the numbers of people who had contracted SARS and who had died of it, and those numbers were far larger than what the Minister of Health was stating. Dr. Jiang wrote immediately to the Ministry of Health and Central Chinese Television, but he got no response. One of his letters leaked to *The Wall Street Journal* and *Time* magazine, and when those media approached him, he decided to answer their questions honestly. On April 11 the World Health Organization announced that China remained “an epidemic area” for SARS, but it was only after April 20, when Zhang Wenkang and the mayor of Beijing, Meng Xuenong, were dismissed, as scapegoats for the regime, that a vigorous effort to combat SARS got underway.<sup>17</sup> For the regime, the lesson was that maintaining a public lie was not as easy as it once had been.

For Dr. Jiang, the lesson was that the regime had turned him into a dissident. He had told the truth about SARS as a matter of conscience and professional responsibility. But then the authorities accused him of violating military discipline by talking to the foreign media. They put him under house arrest and banned mention of his name in public. For him, that was it. He responded by writing an open letter to China’s leaders about the night of June 3-4, 1989, when he was on duty as a surgeon at a Beijing hospital and had tried to treat a shooting victim whose liver had been torn by shrapnel from an illegal hollow-point bullet. Xiaobo visited him often after that and they became good friends. They could not meet at “sensitive” times, because at those times Xiaobo was held under house arrest and Dr. Jiang was “invited” (indeclinably)

to go traveling outside Beijing. Xiaobo published essays with titles like “Jiang Yanyong: Putting the Interests of the People First”, “Jiang Yanyong Resists Dictatorship Single-Handedly”, and “Protest the Persecution of the Nation’s Conscience Jiang Yanyong”.

### ***6.3. Exposing the Hidden Practice of Rape: The Huang Jing Episode***

Huang Jing was a music teacher in a primary school in the city of Xiangtan in Hunan Province. On February 24, 2003, she was found dead on her bed, naked. Her body was bruised and scarred. Police at first ruled it a natural death due to heart failure, but the semen of her boyfriend was found at the scene, and an examination by the Nanjing Medical School contradicted the police report. Then some important forensic evidence went missing. Word reached a website called *Citizens’ Rights Web*, whose manager, Li Jian, got in touch with Huang Jing’s mother. Li Jian then organized a statement of support for the mother and several hundred people signed it. Professor Ai Xiaoming at Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou wrote an article called “Date Rape and the Death of Huang Jing” and followed that up with a documentary film about the case that she called *Heaven’s Flower Garden*. Soon thereafter the Beijing Communications Administration ordered *Citizens’ Rights Web* to close. It gave no explanation, but the Huang Jing case must have been the reason. Was it because Li Jian and the Huang family were challenging an official conclusion? Was it because they were seeking an independent judgment from a court?

The normal tactic of website managers when ordered to close their websites was to close and then re-open under a new registration. But Li Jian decided not to do that; he wanted to fight the battle on principle. Xiaobo heard about the case and approached his rights-lawyer friend Li Jianqiang, who, with another lawyer, helped Li Jian to sue the central government’s Communications Administration. When the Xuanwu

District court in Beijing declined to accept the case, they appealed to the Intermediate People's Court in Beijing, but still lost. The final judgment was that "while Huang Jing was in a state of latent pathological change, [boyfriend] Jiang Junwu pursued unusual means of sexual activity that precipitated death." In short, the man and the woman each bore 50% of the responsibility for the death. Although hardly a victory, the result was an advance over the initial ruling. Moreover the methods, in Xiaobo's view, had been correct. Li had been right to sue, to appeal, and to publicize. All of that was good *minjian* advocacy. Xiaobo praised Li Jian in a commentary for Radio Free Asia.

#### **6.4. Getting Rid of "Custody and Repatriation": The Sun Zhigang Episode**

In March, 2003, a twenty-seven-year-old college student named Sun Zhigang, from Wuhan in Hubei Province, traveled to Guangzhou to take a job as an arts designer for a clothing company. On March 17, before he had done his local registration in Guangzhou, police on the streets asked him for an ID. Finding he had none, they brought him to a detention center under a program known as "custody and repatriation" that had been designed to pick up "vagrants" who had come from the countryside and to send them back home.

After three days in detention, Sun was found dead. Early reports in state media said he died of illness, but Chen Feng, a reporter at *Southern Metropolitan News*, noticed an item on an Internet website for young liberals called *West Shrine Alley*, did a bit of investigating, and discovered that Sun had been beaten to death. Police and guards denied beating him, but the forensic evidence was unambiguous. How the beating started is not clear, but Sun might well have angered his captors by objecting to his arbitrary detention. On April 25, *Southern Metropolitan News* published Chen's report, entitled "On the Death of

Detainee Sun Zhigang”, and it quickly drew national attention. Ai Xiaoming convened a colloquium on the topic of Sun’s death and posted the resulting papers on the Internet, where they sparked fevered debate.

The indignation snowballed. On May 14 three young legal scholars – Yu Jiang, Teng Biao, and Xu Zhiyong – wrote an open letter to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress arguing that “custody and repatriation” of the kind that had netted Sun Zhigang was an illegal violation of the personal freedom of citizens and should be either amended or eliminated. Nine days later, on May 23, five eminent lawyers – He Weifang, Sheng Hong, Shen Kui, Xiao Han, and He Haibo – wrote their own letter to the authorities requesting that there be a special investigation into whether the custody-and-repatriation system violates the constitution. The media joined in pressing the question, and before long a major revision was announced. On June 20, Wen Jiabao, premier of the State Council, announced that the “Procedures for Custody and Repatriation of Vagrants and Beggars in Cities” was abolished and a more kindly worded “Procedures for Assisting and Managing Vagrants and the Destitute in Cities” was replacing it. Punishments were announced for twenty-three people who had been involved in the abuse of Sun Zhigang.

Victory in the Sun Zhigang case infused the citizens’ rights movement with new hope. Xiaobo wrote:

An individual exercises a right ... the media exposes the matter ... popular opinion applies pressure ... high officials notice ... the media pursue and popular opinion gets stronger ... the government makes a decision. This chain can be a master template for how an indigenious rights-support movement can bring systemic reform.<sup>18</sup>

### **6.5. Arbitrary Application of Law: The Sun Dawu Case**

Sun Dawu owned a farm in Hebei province where he raised chickens and later moved on to do pork, beef, and grapes until he owned a 100-million-yuan agribusiness that he called the Dawu Farm and Husbandry Group. About 1,500 people lived in the all-new village that he built, which included a school, hospital, library, and nursing home. A free spirit, Sun liked to read articles by liberal intellectuals and often invited Liu Xiaobo and others from nearby Beijing to visit his farm. But then he began to have problems getting bank loans. Was it because he refused on principle to pay bribes? Or because the regime viewed him as too independent, too much of an uncontrolled player? Or was it because of his liberal intellectual friends, who included the economist Mao Yushi and the eminent legal scholar Jiang Ping? Whatever the case, Sun decided to solve the funding problem by opening his own credit union. He offered higher interest rates than the banks did, so had no trouble attracting deposits. But in May, 2003, something snapped inside the regime. Someone, for some reason, decided to stop Sun Dawu. He was arrested, charged with “illegal fund-raising” (his credit union had been entirely legal) and fined thirteen million yuan. People in the citizens’ rights movement took Sun’s side. They publicized the case and provided legal help.

Xiaobo wrote an article called “Bad Law and Its Victims: on the Sun Dawu Case”, in which he showed how the regime uses arbitrary application of law to serve purposes that are extrinsic to the case at hand.<sup>19</sup> Taking bribes is pervasive, for example – so when person X is charged with bribery and person Y is not, the difference is not guilt versus innocence but the fact that authorities have other reasons for targeting X and not Y. One of the common extrinsic reasons is to purge political rivals; another is to make a show of opposing corruption in order to attract popular support. In any case, the existence of the

ambiguity means that a threat looms constantly over the head of everyone. Knowing that application of the law is arbitrary, people are induced to be maximally cautious.

One of Sun Dawu's defense lawyers was Xu Zhiyong, a lecturer at the law school of Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications. Xu was one of the three young scholars who initiated the effort to abolish "custody and repatriation" following Sun Zhigang's death. Xu had, in addition, run for election to the National People's Congress in the district where Peking University was located – and he had won!<sup>20</sup> His rise to prominence had been fueled by his contributions to a column called "Citizen Life" on a student Internet bulletin board at Peking University. He had posted his thoughts on the Sun Zhigang case there and had learned from the reactions that it drew; it was there, too, that he had offered his first analysis of the Sun Dawu matter.

### ***6.6. Discrimination against the Handicapped: A Hepatitis B Carrier***

A man in Anhui (who, not wanting his name to be publicized, uses the pseudonym Zhang Jie) applied for a government job in September 2003 and was rejected because he carried the virus for hepatitis B. About 10% of the Chinese population carry this virus, and such rejections had always been standard, but Zhang Jie decided to bring a discrimination case to court. A famous professor at the law school of Sichuan University, Zhou Wei, who had successfully argued cases of "height discrimination," announced in the press that he was taking Zhang Jie's case on a *pro bono* basis. He did, they won, and press reports of the result brought a tremendous nationwide response.<sup>21</sup> Two months later a website called *Liver and Gall at One* [an idiom for unreserved trust] published "A Suggestion to Call Upon the Thirty-one Province-level Governments in the Nation to Launch Investigations into whether Restrictions on the Hiring of Carriers of Hepatitis B Violate the

Constitution and to Strengthen the Legal Rights of Carriers of Hepatitis B”. Many people signed. The next year the government was obliged to revisit its hiring standards, and progress on the issue arrived across the country, albeit in stages. Xiaobo viewed the Zhang Jie case as an emblematic example of people awakening to, and pursuing, individual rights.

***6.7. Defender of the Arrested Mouse Himself Is Arrested:  
The Du Daobin Case***

On October 28, 2003, police detained Du Daobin, the young man from Hubei who had initiated the joint statement of people “willing to join Liu Di in jail”. They spirited him straight from the street to detention, while seven of their number went to his home and rummaged through it. Startled, Du’s wife Huang Chunrong immediately picked up the telephone and called Liu Xiaobo. Neither she nor her husband had ever met Xiaobo; she was just going on reputation. She did not know how to use a computer, had not contacted any media, and understood little of what her husband had gotten into. Like others Xiaobo had helped, all she could was to shout into the telephone, “What am I going to *do*?!” The couple’s twelve-year-old son was at home with her. Xiaobo, at the other end, took notes on what she was telling him. He was about to speak when the line went dead. He tried the telephone function on his computer, but that, too, had been cut. Two days later, when he finally reached Huang Chunrong by using a friend’s telephone, he learned more of the story. The police were threatening Huang, and she, with Xiaobo’s advice and support, decided to publicize what she knew of her husband’s disappearance. In the early hours of October 31 Xiaobo wrote a piece called “We Must Strongly Denounce the Arrest of Du Daobin by the Public Security Bureau in the Xiaogan District in Hubei”. He published it on the Internet outside China, but it leaked back into China and



stimulated a burst of support for Du Daobin. Xiaobo's reputation for defending the persecuted grew even stronger.

Within a few days two open letters appeared. One, from Xiaobo, Wang Lixiong, and other dissidents "outside the system", was released on November 2 as "An Open Letter to Premier Wen Jiabao on the Case of the Internet Writer Du Daobin's Receipt of Criminal Punishment for His Words". More than six hundred others signed. The second, from intellectuals "inside the system" including He Weifang, Liu Junning, and Xu Youyu, was published on November 3 as a "A Declaration on the Detention of the Writer Du Daobin by Police in Hubei". It, too, soon had hundreds of signatures. The total for the two letters exceeded 2,000. Wang Yi, a young teacher at the Management School of Chengdu University in Sichuan – who was also the manager of a popular web page called *Teahouse for Any Talk* (and, a decade later, pastor of the Early Rain Covenant Church, one of the largest non-state-approved churches in China), soon initiated a name list of people who were "Willing to Join Liu Di and Du Daobin in Jail". Wang further inspired his Internet followers by preparing a little booklet on how to retain a lawyer and to make other legal moves in the event one is detained by police.

Xiaobo visited Ding Zilin, the highly-respected head of Tiananmen Mothers organization, to make a special report on the Du Daobin case. He returned with the news that "Ding Zilin also wants to accompany Du Daobin, Liu Di, and Yang Zili in jail" – and made this the title of a short article.<sup>22</sup> Morale in the movement soared. Three weeks later Huang Chunrong telephoned Xiaobo to thank him, because by then she had received more than 10,000 yuan in donations from good-hearted strangers who wanted to support Du Daobin. Xiaobo was elated at the donations, but even more elated to see the difference that had taken place in Huang Chunrong. A frightened, distraught spouse, struggling to

be semi-articulate, had turned into a person who spoke with confidence, clarity and composure. Xiaobo introduced Li Jianqiang to Huang Chunrong, and Li took the Du Daobin case. When then sentence finally arrived, on June 15, 2004, it was three years in prison suspended for four years (meaning that, after four years of acceptable behavior on parole, the sentence could be waived). The sentence was lighter than Xiaobo and others had feared; Xiaobo felt the lobbying had made a difference.

## 7. Advancing Internet Culture

In the late 1990s, with the arrival of the Internet in China, a number of idealistic young intellectuals set up web pages. They were called “thought pages”, where “thought” often meant – essentially if not explicitly – political thought. The first example was a page called *On Constitutional Governance* founded by the political scientist Liu Junning and run by Chen Yongmiao. Later *The Du Fu Thatched Cottage* run by Ran Yunfei appeared; so did Wang Yi and his *Teahouse for Any Talk*; Ren Bumei and his *A Night of Unsound Sleep*; Wen Kejian and his *Spring Thunder Action*; Ye Du and *Democracy and Freedom*; and others. Xiaobo became close friends, both online and offline, with the young people who ran them. They admired and emulated Xiaobo for his knowledge, experience, and independence of mind. Xiaobo’s name was banned from the Internet but he wrote for these websites under pseudonyms. At Ye Du’s site, where he wrote most often, his name was “Little Shrimp on the Water Surface”, where “water surface” meant *bo* “wave” (part of his name) and “little shrimp” was code for *xiaoxia*, or Liu Xia.

Xiaobo was impressed with the ways in which the Internet was offering a separate world in which people could incubate ideas before taking them into action in the real world. The website *Citizen Life* had

been a Petri dish for the Sun Zhigang case, for example. In time the “thought pages” gave rise to real-world salons, workshops, and book clubs. These included Guo Yushan’s “lawn salon” at Peking University and the “economics salon” run by Wen Kejian’s Spring Bud Action group in Hangzhou.

The number of visitors to the liberal websites grew steadily during 2003, and this made it much easier than before to gather names in support of statements and open letters. The new names that appeared eventually outnumbered the familiar names, which now seemed only like salt and pepper scattered among long lists. Xiaobo concluded that “the human rights movement is expanding from elite culture into popular and general culture.”<sup>23</sup> More and more complaints, rights cases, and rights-support activities – some political, some not – kept popping up, and the regime had its hands full trying to repress all of them at once. It could not behead the movement, because it had no head. Rights lawyers had no organization, but there always seemed to be one at hand ready to help. People began to take interest in cases that had nothing to do with themselves personally. When news of a court session involving citizens’ rights spread on the Internet, crowds would show up to support the underdogs.

Not all was sunlight and roses, however. As the regime became aware of the effects of the Internet thought pages, it began to harass their managers and sometimes closed their websites. Whenever that happened, Xiaobo made as loud a fuss as he could. Ye Du’s *Democracy and Freedom* was closed forty-seven times, but that did not stop Ye from going right back to do a forty-eighth inauguration. Xiaobo admired his backbone.

## 8. A Path to Transition

What the rights movement lacked most obviously was an organization. It had no charter, no structure, no official leaders. Everyone knew that the regime would pounce if such things appeared. Still, Xiaobo saw possibilities of a kind of organization in the associations that the rights movement already had. He described them as:

various informal communities that were organizations in embryonic form. There were communities of the dissidents, the journalists, the scholars, the lawyers, the legal rights activists, the grassroots rights activists, the entrepreneurs, and even the private bookstore owners.

Moreover these communities “intersected with one another” through websites, open letters, lectures, and seminars. The result was “an unofficial organization that had no organizational form”.<sup>24</sup>

Xiaobo observed that *minjian* resisters, whatever their spheres of activity, tended to have one characteristic in common: they were open. For many openness was not only an ethical principle but a tactic. Openness was an effective way to highlight the sharp contrast with the secretive culture of the regime, which employed fear to make people self-censor and hide. Openness was non-violent “living in truth”. What’s there to hide? Here is my real name. Here are my values. There is nothing wrong with them. You might imprison me, but you cannot imprison the values.

Xiaobo’s concept of a decentered, bottom-up rights movement harmonized with his belief in non-violence as a method. His thoughts on nonviolence had first appeared during the 1989 Tiananmen movement and had matured during his years in the *laogai* camp, where he read about Christian nonviolence. He especially approved of Augustine on

the use of conscience to resist unjust law. In his famous essay “To Change a Regime by Changing a Society” (2006) he wrote that:

Although people must still deal with tyranny and the suffering that it causes, they can respond to hate with love, to prejudice with tolerance, to arrogance with humility, to degradation with dignity, and to violence with reason. Through the power of sincerity and goodwill, victims can take a bold initiative: they can invite victimizers to come home to the rules of reason, peace, and compassion. Recognizing that there is no way, in the near term, to replace China's dictatorial political system with something better, I can see the following ways for Chinese society to continue its healthy bottom-up transformation:

1. Short of attempting to take over political power, we can work to expand civil society and thereby provide people with space where they can live in dignity.
2. Without pursuing a grand program of total societal transformation, we can concentrate on putting freedom into practice in daily life.
3. No matter how strong the freedom-denying power of the regime becomes, each individual person can still attempt to view him or herself as a free person – which means to live an honest life in dignity.
4. While insisting on the basic principles of liberalism, we must also practice tolerance and support plurality of opinion. When people who engage in high-profile confrontation with the regime hear about people who are pursuing matters in more low-key ways, the high-profile people should view the efforts of the low-key people not as errors but as contributions that are complementary to their own.
5. Regardless of whether a person is working inside or outside the system, or working to change things from the top down or from the

bottom up, we should promote everyone's freedom of speech.

6. We must not hope that the dictatorial system will soon disappear ... [but must] encourage and support the rights-defense movement and protect the independence of civil society.<sup>25</sup>

Xiaobo wrote essays about his special admiration, as expressed in item 5 above, for people who push for a democratic transition from inside the system. Because of their closer access to the dirt inside the system, they had more credibility in describing its details. Moreover, the regime could not so easily gainsay them, because it could not easily say they were outsiders. Some of the senior figures had weighty revolutionary credentials, which meant that it would be both difficult and embarrassing for the regime to try to shut them up. The very sharp-tongued Li Rui, for example, was a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, a former secretary to Mao Zedong, and member of the Communist Party earlier than the top leader Hu Jintao was. Could the Hu regime tell *him* to shut up?

In a 2005 essay Xiaobo allowed himself to muse on whether a senior inside-the-system person (not thinking of Li Rui, or anyone else, in particular) might someday be sent to prison and then win a Nobel Peace Prize. Xiaobo rarely mentioned that prize and had no idea that it would eventually affect him personally when he wrote:

To send a famous inside-the-system dissenter to prison would be to consummate that person's moral character. The heavier the sentence, the higher the standing would be. From the government's point of view, a Nobel Peace Prize would do more harm than good. As the highest moral accolade the world has to offer, it would deliver a two-pronged message: affirmation of the dissenter and censure of the dictatorial government. If the government held a Nobel Peace Prize

winner in prison it would be squandering its political capital in the eyes of the world and pronouncing its own moral death sentence. It would, moreover, be cementing the credentials of an opposition leader.<sup>26</sup>

As if teasing himself for his wild speculation, Xiaobo went on to comment that “of course it would not be easy – even for a dictatorship – to create such a scene.” He did not imagine that the daydream would come true in part, or that the prize winner would die in prison.

## Notes

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- 1. Zhu Xueqin (朱学勤), “Talk on the principles of liberalism” (自由主义学理的言说), *Southern Weekend* (南方周末), December 25, 1998.
- 2. Liu Xiaobo (刘晓波), “The predicament of civil-society opposition in China” (民间反对派的贫困), *Democratic China* (民主中国), June, 2002. (《民主中国》, 2002年6月号。)

3. Liu Xiaobo, *A nation that lies to its conscience* (向良心说谎的民族), Second Edition (Taipei: Taiwan Jieyou Publishers, 2010), p. 62.
4. In addition to the liberal editors fired at *Southern Weekend*, others were sacked, all in the spring and summer of 2001, at the liberal magazines *The Famous of Today* (今日名流) and *Study Room* (书屋). In August, friends of the victims including historians Ding Dong and Qin Hui, senior editor Wu Si, and writers Wang Lixiong and Hu Fayun published a statement called “There are some things we need to say” at the website called *Problems and Isms* (问题与主义). That website was soon closed down. The story of these events is available in an article by the exiled writer Mo Li called “A newspaper is purged, but Chinese intellectuals have things to say” <<https://www.secretchina.com/news/b5/2001/09/11/102900.html>>.
5. *Stray birds*, 1916. Available 16 August 2019 at <<http://fullreads.com/literature/stray-birds/2/>>.
6. Liu Xiaobo, “Shades of Gray: Resisting and surviving at the same time” (灰色——既抗争又生存), *Democratic China* (民主中国), March, 2002. (《民主中国》2002年3月, 总第103期。)
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. Liu Xiaobo, “To change a regime by changing a society” (通过改变社会来改变政权), *Observe China* (观察), February 26, 2006; translated by Perry Link in *No enemies, no hatred: Selected essays and poems of Liu Xiaobo*, edited by Perry Link, Tienchi Martin-Liao and Liu Xia (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), p. 26.
10. Liu Xiaobo, “Political democratization and the rise in the value of civil society” (民间的升值与政治民主化) (2003). <[https://blog.boxun.com/hero/liuxb/57\\_1.shtml](https://blog.boxun.com/hero/liuxb/57_1.shtml)>
11. Liu Xiaobo, “Victory for the popular rights defense movement” (民间维权运动的胜利) (2003) <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid\\_](http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_)



- 3070000/newsid\_3071100/3071189.stm>. Sebastian Veg, in his book *Minjian: The rise of China's grassroots intellectuals* (Columbia University Press, 2019) shows that the bottom-up efforts at social change by Chinese intellectuals was fairly widespread in filmmaking, legal work, the writing of history, and other areas.
12. Liu Xiaobo, *The future of a free China is in civil society* ( 未来的自由中国在民间 ) (Laogai Research Foundation, 2005), pp. 27-28.
  13. Liu Xiaobo, "Shades of Gray: Resisting and surviving at the same time" ( 灰色 —— 既抗争又生存 ), *Democratic China* ( 民主中国 ), March, 2002.
  14. Liu Xiaobo, "Here's hoping that Du Daobin will be another Liu Di" ( 但愿杜导斌是又一个刘荻 ) (2004). <<https://www.chinesepen.org/blog/archives/109112>>
  15. Liu Xiaobo, "Freedom of speech is the front line of rights defense in civil society: On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day" ( 言论自由是民间维权的突破口 —— 写在 " 世界新闻自由日 " ) (2005). <<http://www.epoentimes.com/gb/5/5/5/n911263.htm>>
  16. Liu Xiaobo, *The future of a free China is in civil society* (see note 12), p. 350.
  17. Matt Pottinger *et al.*, "Outraged surgeon forces China to swallow a dose of the truth", *The Wall Street Journal*, April 22, 2003.
  18. Liu Xiaobo, "Victory for the popular rights defense movement" ( 民间维权运动的胜利 ) (2003). <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid\\_3070000/newsid\\_3071100/3071189.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_3070000/newsid_3071100/3071189.stm)>
  19. Liu Xiaobo, "Rule by bad law and its victims: on the illegal financing case of Sun Dawu" ( 恶法治国及其受害者 —— 评孙大午非法融资案 ) (2003). <[http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq\\_article@article\\_id=212.html](http://www.renyurenquan.org/ryrq_article@article_id=212.html)>
  20. That had happened only once before, in 1980, when Hu Ping did it.
  21. "Opposing prejudice against Hepatitis B is more than just a victory for 120,000,000 people" ( 反乙肝歧视: 不仅仅是 1.2 亿人的胜利 ),

*People's Web* ( 人民网 ), August 6, 2004. <<http://www.people.com.cn/GB/shehui/1063/2691794.html>>

22. Liu Xiaobo, "'I, too, am ready to join Du Daobin, Liu Di, and Yang Zili in prison' – Ding Zilin and Jiang Peikun on the Du Daobin affair" ( 我也愿意陪杜导斌、刘荻、杨子立坐牢! —— 丁子霖、蒋培坤夫妇关注杜导斌 ). <<http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/3/11/4/n405653.htm>>
23. Liu Xiaobo, "Political reform and the awakening of human rights consciousness: more on the future of a free China residing in civil society" ( 人权意识的觉醒与政治改革 —— 再论未来的自由中国在民间 ) (2003). ( 《北京之春》, 2003 年 2 月号。 )
24. Yang Yi ( 杨逸 ) (ed.), "Awareness of civil rights is on the rise: The famous author Liu Xiaobo discusses current developments in independent civil society in China" ( 民间权利意识在觉醒 – 著名作家刘晓波谈中国独立民间社会当前的发展 ) (2007). <<https://news.boxun.com/news/gb/china/2007/12/200712190609.shtml>>
25. Condensed from Liu Xiaobo, "To change a regime by changing a society" (see note 9), pp. 25-28.
26. Liu Xiaobo, *The future of a free China's is in civil society* (see note 12), p. 381.