



Dr. YANG Jianli

President & Founder, Citizen Power Initiatives for China
Research Consultant, Harvard University
Founding Member, Committee on Present Danger: China
Co-Founder, China Human Rights Accountability Center
Senior Advisor, Human Rights Foundation
Senior Advisor, Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights
Advisor, UN Watch
Advisor, Right to Nonviolence
Advisor, Freedom Now
Advisor, Freedom Rights Project
Senior Advisor, International Chinese-Tibetan Association
Member, Program Council of Forum2000 (Founded by Václav Havel)
Member, International Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes
Against Humanity of the Castro Regime
Trustee, Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation

"A Chinese Star" H.H. the Dalai Lama

"A Magnificent Spirit" National Review

"A beacon of hope for democracy" Unanimous Resolution, Massachusetts State Legislature

Highlights

- ❖ Ph.D. Mathematics, University of California, Berkeley, 1991
- ❖ Ph.D. Political Economy, Harvard University, 2001
- ❖ Co-Author of a Democratic Constitution for China, 1993
- ❖ Survivor, 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre
- ❖ Former Communist Party Official
- ❖ Prisoner of Conscience of China (2002-2007)
- ❖ Founder & Lead Organizer of the annual Interethnic/Interfaith Leadership Conference
- ❖ Co-Chair, Geneva Declaration of Internet Freedom, 2010
- ❖ Publisher, online magazine Yibao (Civic Forum in Chinese)
- ❖ Signatory to Charter 08, a manifesto of Chinese Intellectuals calling for political reform in China
- ❖ The Representative of the Nobel Peace Laureate Liu Xiaobo at his Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony, 2010
- ❖ Elected Top 100 Chinese Public Intellectuals of 2009-2017
- ❖ Recipient of 2013 Truman-Reagan Freedom Award, 2013 Harvard Kennedy School Alumni Achievement Award, 2012 CEPOS Freedom Award, 2012 Morris Abram Human Rights Award (UN Watch), First Freedom Pioneer Award (2007, Beijing Spring), 2007 Freedom Spirit Award (Independent Federation of Chinese Scholars and Students in the U.S.), 2006 Democratic Hero Award (Asian-Pacific Foundation for Human Rights in New Zealand), Spirituality and Justice Award (2003, All Saints Parish Episcopal Church of Brookline, MA), 2002 Outstanding Democracy Fighter Award (Chinese Democracy Education Foundation), 1999 Sun Yat-Sen News and Cultural Award (Sun Yat-Sen Cultural Foundation in the U.S.), 1999 First prize in essay competition sponsored by "Central Daily" in Taiwan, 1991 Outstanding Graduate Instructor Award (University of California at Berkeley), 1990 Outstanding Chinese student in America Award, AU Education Foundation in San Francisco

Biography

Dr. YANG Jianli is a scholar and human rights activist, a world-renowned leader for China's democracy.

Dr. Yang was born in Shandong Province, China and graduated from college at the age of 19. A rising star in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in the 1980's, he quickly became disenchanted by the corruption and duplicity he experienced in the communist system. He left China to pursue a career in Mathematics at U.C. Berkeley in 1986 when he was 23 years old. In 1989, his fellow Chinese students at Berkeley elected him to go back to Beijing in support of their counterparts in China who were demonstrating for democracy in Tiananmen Square. He went back to Beijing, joined the movement and witnessed the massacre of thousands by the guns and tanks of the CCP army including tanks running over protesters. This event changed his future. He narrowly escaped capture and returned to the United States to study democracy and continue his activism.

In 2002, after completing his Doctorate in Political Economy at Harvard (earlier he had got a PH.D. in Mathematics from UC Berkeley), Dr. Yang returned to China to help the labor movement with non-violent struggle strategies. He was arrested and sentenced to five years in prison, kept in solitary confinement in a good part of the imprisonment. Following an international outcry for his release, including a UN Resolution and a unanimous vote of both houses of the United States Congress, Dr. Yang was freed in April of 2007. Immediately following his return to the U.S., he formed Initiatives for China/Citizen Power, a pro-democracy movement committed to a peaceful transition to democracy in China. He firmly believes that continued world democracies' leadership in holding China accountable for respecting the human and political rights of its citizens is a critical component for world stability and for the peaceful transition to a democratic society in China.

Dr. Yang holds a deep conviction that the path to democracy in China lies through the awakening of a unified Citizen Power (公民力量 Gong Min Li Liang) among all the peoples under Chinese government rule. A few months after its formation, Initiatives for China/Citizen Power launched a demonstration of Citizen Power by sponsoring a 500-mile walk by Dr. Yang from Boston to Washington D.C. to highlight the human rights situation in China and to call for continued American leadership in the struggle for peaceful democratic reform. The GongMin Walk received worldwide acclamation from leaders around the world, including H.H. the Dalai Lama and the President of Republic of China (Taiwan), Ma Ying-Jeou. Dr. Yang concluded the GongMin Walk at a large commemorative rally on Capitol Hill on June 4, 2008, the 19th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre.

Before the establishment of Initiatives for China, Dr. Yang founded and presided Foundation for China in the 21st Century (1989-2002). During that time, he co-authored a constitution for a democratic China which was endorsed by the Dalai Lama, and founded the online magazine Yibao (Civic Forum). Under the theme of understanding, trust, and cooperative actions, in 2000, he created the annual Interethnic/Interfaith Leadership Conferences, last series of which was held in Tokyo, Japan in November 2017.

In March 2010, Dr. Yang co-chaired the Committee on Internet Freedom at the Geneva Human Rights and Democracy Summit. In December 2010 in Oslo at the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize awarding ceremony, he represented that year's laureate, the imprisoned Chinese democracy leader Liu Xiaobo, who would die in the CCP regime's custody on July 13, 2017. In March 2011, he spoke at UN Human Rights Council, directly questioning the representatives of China on the Human Rights issues. In December, he joined the Dalai Lama and four other delegates, to attend Forum Democracy and Human Rights in Asia, hosted by former Czech president Vaclav Havel. Over the years, Dr. Yang has helped design, launch, and lead numerous China's major citizen initiatives. Dr. Yang is a frequent contributor to and interviewee by the international media, panelist at hearings held by US Congress, European Parliament, UK Parliament and Taiwan Legislative Yuan, and speaker on various international forums, on topics ranging from human rights in China, China's democratization, China's politics, ethnic relations in PRC, the cross-strait relations, to US China policies.