

Yang Jianli
President, Initiatives for China

- Ph.D. Political Economy, Harvard University
- Co-Author of a Democratic Constitution for China
- Survivor, 1989 Tiananmen Square Massacre
- Former Communist Party Official
- Prisoner of Conscience of China (2002-2007)
- Lead Organizer of the annual Interfaith/Interethnic Leadership Conference
- Co-Chair, Geneva Declaration of Internet Freedom
- Publisher, China E-Weekly (Yibao) Chinese E-Magazine of Ideas, Issues, and Commentary on Contemporary China
- Signatory to Charter 08, a manifesto of Chinese Intellectuals calling for political reform in China
- The Representative of Liu Xia, wife of 2010 Nobel Peace Laureate Liu Xiaobo, for Organizing Activities around the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremony
- Elected Top 100 Chinese Public Intellectuals of 2009, 2010, 2011
- Recipient of 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

Yang Jianli was born in Shandong Province in northern China and graduated from college at the age of 19. A rising star in the Chinese Communist Party, Jianli quickly became disenchanted by the corruption and duplicity he witnessed in the communist system. He left China to pursue a career in Mathematics at U.C. Berkeley. In 1989, at the age of 26, his fellow graduate 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 arrived in time to witness the massacre of thousands by the guns and tanks of the Chinese army. This event changed young Jianli's future. He narrowly escaped capture and returned to the United States himself to studying democracy.

In 2002, after completing his Doctorate in Political Economy at Harvard, Dr. Yang returned to China to help the labor movement with non-violent struggle strategies. He was arrested and sentenced to five years imprisonment for “spying”. 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. Dr. Yang formed Initiatives for China , 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 (Gong Min Li Liang) among all the peoples under Chinese government rule. A few months after its formation, Initiatives for China launched a demonstration of Citizen Power by sponsoring a 500-mile walk by Dr. Yang Jianli 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, President of Republic of China (Taiwan), Ma Ying-Jeou, and the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives. Dr. Yang Jianli concluded the GongMin Walk by joining Speaker Pelosi at a large commemorative rally on Capitol Hill on June 4, 2008, the 19th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre.

Before the establishment of IFC, Dr. Yang established Foundation for China in the 21st Century. He is the co-author of a constitution for a democratic China, and founder of China E-Weekly online magazine. Under the theme of understanding, trust, and cooperative actions, Dr. Yang created Interethnic/Interfaith Leadership Conferences, last series of which was held in Los Angeles, CA in April, 2011.

In March, 2010 Dr. Yang co-chaired the Committee on Internet Freedom at the Geneva Human Rights and Democracy Summit. In March, 2011 Dr. Yang spoke at UN Human Rights Council, directly questioning the representatives of P.R. China on the Human Rights issues. In December, Dr. Yang, joined H.H. Dalai Lama and four other delegates, to attend Forum Democracy and Human Rights in Asia, hosted by former Czech president, Vaclav Havel.

Dr. Yang Jianli has been widely recognized as a major leader of China's democracy movement and one of the most important international advocates for China's peaceful democratic transition.