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April 29, 2004

His Excellency Hu Jintao, President  
The People's Republic of China  
Beijing, China

Dear President Hu,

On this, the second anniversary of Dr. Yang Jianli's detention on April 26, 2002 in Kunming, China, I am writing again to reiterate my deep concern regarding his case. Dr. Yang received his doctorate from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government in 2000 and is highly regarded as a scholar and a great humanitarian.

Several months ago, on the occasion of Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to our campus, over 100 faculty members from Harvard University endorsed a letter expressing concern about Dr. Yang's plight. In response, Ambassador Yang replied that China is a country "ruled by law" and that Dr. Yang's case is being handled "in accordance with law."

Article 168(1) of the Chinese Criminal Procedure Law requires that a verdict be issued within two-and-one-half months of a trial. However, Dr. Yang has been held now *for almost eight months beyond the date of his trial*, August 4, 2003. Because he is being detained in violation of Chinese law, I am requesting in the most urgent manner that he be released, forthwith, to his family.

Dr. Yang's wife, Christina Fu, who works at Harvard Medical School, is a valued member of our community. They have two young children, Aaron, age 8, and Anita, 11, and Dr. Yang's detention is a cause of continual pain and suffering for his family. In Premier Wen's speech at Harvard last December, he told us, "A deeper mutual understanding is a two-way process." In that spirit, I firmly believe that Dr. Yang's continued detention – as well as the fact that he was held for over a year in solitary confinement, without access to his family or legal counsel and without access to reading materials or exercise – has been more than sufficient punishment.

I sincerely hope that you will take the time to consider this plea, as well as the implications and importance of Dr. Yang's immediate release, not only for the Harvard community but also for the greater cause of world justice.

Thank you, Mr. President, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Harry S. Martin III  
Henry N. Ess III Librarian & Professor of Law