

2013 John Cobb Common Good Award

By Joe Hough

Professor Tiejun Wen is a leading figure in the new Rural Reconstruction movement in China. He serves as Executive Director of Institute of Advanced Studies for Sustainability and is also director of The Center for Rural Reconstruction at Renmin University of China.

Prof. Wen and his team have promoted sustainable development in China's agriculture for more than 20 years. During these years he developed a strong team of colleagues who have worked with him tirelessly. The rich experience gained from his work in rural reconstruction has provided Professor Wen a deep understanding of China's reality, especially its institutional transitions and its governance of countryside. Due to the efforts of Professor Wen and his team, a huge grass root movement emerged. Thousands of peasants, city dwellers, and migrant workers, along with college students and even soldiers, have joined the movement and they have become a major force for efforts to create an ecological civilization in China that could become a model in other parts of the world.

Working with his team and his colleagues in the movement to bring about change, Professor Wen became a leading force in rural organization and widespread educational experiments focused on creating sustainable agriculture for an ecological civilization.

In 2001, he and his team organized student communities in support of the agricultural sector in 200 colleges. These communities, working with more than a hundred villages, launched programs to improve the life and culture of persons in rural China. In 2002, they published the first issue of *China Reform: Agriculture Edition*, the first Chinese magazine aimed at defending the rights of peasant people.

In 2003, they opened the first village community college focused on encouraging cooperation among farmers and developing appreciation for cultural diversity. By 2004, they had established the first home for migrant workers, and in 2005 they initiated the first green fare trade cooperative association. In 2008, they turned their attention to urban agriculture by organizing citizens to participate in organic gardening, and last year they established the first Chinese cooperative ecological network to promote organic farming.

Prof. Wen also established a number of centers to promote ecological agriculture including the Renmin University Center for Rural Construction and the Beijing Center for Liang Shuming Rural Construction. In addition he initiated The South-South Forum on Sustainability, the aim of which is to create an ecological civilization where human beings live in harmony with each other and the natural world.

Finally, along with all of the organizational work for an ecological civilization in China, Professor Wen and his colleagues managed to publish dozens of books critical of the rush to modernization in China that has created huge environmental and human problems that must be addressed if China is to move toward the goal of an ecological civilization.

Prof. Wen's outstanding leadership and research has led to a number of awards and honors. In 1998, he received the State Council's Award for Outstanding Contributions. In 2003, he received the CCTV Annual Award as one of China's ten top Economic Talents, and in 2010 the City of Beijing honored him with the Municipal Government Award for his outstanding research and leadership.

Tonight, we have the honor of conferring upon him another great honor. With pleasure we confer upon Professor Tiejun Wen the John Cobb Common Good Award for his vision and leadership in the creation of the new Rural Reconstruction Movement in China and his many other contributions to efforts by Chinese people to create in China a new viable ecological civilization.