

Bill Gates Praised Yuan Longping in His Speech During His Visit to China

Yuan Longping Solved the Food Problem for the World

On June 14, 2023, Microsoft founder Bill Gates posted on social platforms that he had arrived in Beijing. It is worth mentioning that this trip has aroused public attention. This is the first time it has come to China since 2019. On June 15, Bill Gates praised Yuan Longping, the father of hybrid rice, in his speech in Beijing, saying that he had overcome the key issues that affect people's quality of life, and that he was able to feed a large number of people in the world.

In this Beijing speech, Bill Gates said: "It has been four years since I came to China last time, and the world has changed dramatically. Compared with 2019, many people today have less confidence in the future. In the past four years, the world has experienced the new crown epidemic, the resurgence of infectious diseases, the intensified impact of climate change, and famine in some areas. Responding to these challenges has become more urgent than ever. China has made great achievements in reducing poverty and improving the health of its people."

Bill Gates said: "I have always been fascinated by Yuan Longping's achievements. He bred the world's first hybrid rice variety, which not only changed China's agriculture and economy, but also helped feed a large population. Influenced by his work and inspired by the world's most important agricultural research platform - the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) invested more funds in rice research. Yuan Longping also trained more than 3,000 rice scientists from more than 50 countries, allowing them to bring experience to the Back to their own country. Billions of people survive and thrive as a result, it's hard to imagine anything else capable of innovation."

At the same time, Bill Gates also emphasized that China has invaluable experience in health, agriculture, nutrition and poverty reduction that is worth sharing with the world, and looks forward to continuing to work with Chinese partners to make more contributions to global progress.

Bill Gates said in his speech on the 15th that in addition to fighting diseases, outstanding Chinese researchers are also committed to other research that can help improve the quality of human life, such as helping farmers grow enough to feed people in the face of global climate change. Food for people all over the world. "I have always respected Yuan Longping, the 'Father of Hybrid Rice'. His research not only changed China's economic and agricultural development, but also 'feed the whole world'.

"Yuan Longping has also taught more than 3,000 rice research scholars from more than 50 countries, allowing them to bring their experience back to their own countries. Billions of people have survived and developed as a result, and it is hard to imagine any other innovation that can match it". Bill Gates also added, "The foundation supports the cooperation between Chinese and West African rice research experts. Without the rich experience and knowledge of the Chinese team in rice cultivation, the cooperation will not be possible. Without African countries' understanding of their local environment, we understand that cooperation cannot be carried out. Such a cooperation model is worth promoting around the world."



Academician Profiles

“Three meals a day, the fragrance of rice fills the air, those who are full should always remember Yuan”

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Yuan Longping (left) as a child



Yuan Longping (middle) in the rice field

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As an effective way to get rid of poverty, the Gates Foundation attaches great importance to agricultural development. According to the foundation, China's agricultural research and extension system has rich expertise and innovative technologies, and its experience can help solve similar challenges faced by other developing regions

Yuan Longping, academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, outstanding agricultural scientist, "Father of Hybrid Rice". Over the past 50 years, he has devoted all his energy to the cause of hybrid rice, fulfilled his purpose of "developing hybrid rice to benefit the people of the world", and made great contributions to the development of grain production in China and the world. He has successively won more than 20 international and domestic awards, such as the National Invention Special Award, the first National Highest Science and Technology Award, the UNESCO "Science Award", "Wolf Award", and "World Food Award", and was elected as a foreign academician of the American Academy of Sciences .

"You young people have never experienced famine, and you don't know the importance of food. A grain of food can save a country, but it can also trip a country." Yuan Longping once mentioned his original intention to study rice in an interview.

He devoted his whole life to the national rice scientific research. He cared about the country and the people. His hybrid rice scientific research results solved the food problem for China and many other countries. The Pakistani people praised Mr. Yuan as "the man who ended hunger".

Many people may not know that Yuan Longping was delivered by Lin Qiaozhi, the leading modern obstetrics and gynecology department in my country, so he and Xiamen, Fujian Province have formed a relationship since their birth. He was born in the 1930s, so he experienced the darkest period in China. As

a young man, he was displaced by his parents due to the war and took refuge in various places. He spent his childhood in the mountain city of Chongqing. Yuan Longping was a child who liked to think and explore the mysteries of life. He had a curious heart. He liked the land and plants, so he chose to study agriculture from an early age.

Yuan Longping compares himself to a seed, and the seed chooses the land that breeds it. Since it is a seed, it will take root and germinate wherever it is sown. He gave up his qualifications to join the army and chose to work as a teacher at the most difficult and remote Anjiang Agricultural School. The harsh living conditions and harsh environment did not repel this young teacher living in the city, but laid the foundation for his subsequent research on hybrid rice

However, it was in the 1960s that Yuan Longping turned what he loved into a mission and responsibility. He witnessed the tragic scene of the famine era. That period of solidified history became the biggest driving force for Yuan Longping to move forward. He launched a challenge for the "hungry demon" who threatens mankind. He respects authority, but is not superstitious about authority. He dares to question the argument put forward by Western authoritative experts that "rice hybridization has no advantage". Therefore, when Yuan Longping proposed the research topic of hybrid rice, he was opposed and ridiculed by some authoritative scholars. Focusing only on his research, he knew that only when he succeeded would he have the most powerful words to fight back.

Yuan Longping specially visited Bao Wenkui, a famous professor and geneticist of Beijing Agricultural University. He said to Yuan Longping: "The research of hybrid rice is a career to understand the essence of life, promote the process of life, and also a career to cultivate human civilization. Engaging in such a career is where life is the value." These words gave Yuan Longping a lot of encouragement, and he

returned to his research work full of emotion and enthusiasm.

Beginning in 1968, Yuan Longping took advantage of the favorable winter and spring climate conditions in Hainan Island where he traveled, and went to Sanya Nanhong Farm every year to breed and produce hybrid rice. Over the past six years, he and his students have used more than 1,000 varieties of conventional rice to conduct more than 3,000 determinations and backcross experiments with the sterile plants and their progeny found at the beginning, but they have not found a suitable variety. Although the progress of hybrid rice research has been slow for several years, Yuan Longping continued his research work on hybrid rice without any complaints or haste.

After readjusting the research plan and numerous experiments, the hybrid rice "Baiye" was finally successfully developed in November 1970. He is like the Tang monk who went to the west to learn the scriptures. Before that, he had dreamed countless times of enjoying the shade under the ears of rice, which was so pleasant, but all these dreams came true. Yuan Longping's perseverance is really worth learning from all of us.

He was elected as an academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering in 1995, and he is the Chinese scientist who has won the most world-class awards. "National Highest Science and Technology Award", Japan's "Koshihikari International Rice Award", the first and only winner of a special invention award in China, the British "Agronomy and Nutrition Award", the US "Hunger Relief Award", "Food The only winner in Asia of the Security Medal of Honor, the 1986-1987 UNESCO Science Award, the winner of the "Ho Leung Ho Lee Foundation Biologist" and the "Medal of the Republic". He has won countless honors, but he has always maintained with a peaceful and indifferent state of mind, he focused on his rice research work.

Yuan Longping has realized two great dreams. One is the rice yield exceeds 1,000 kilograms

per mu, and ensuring the safety and health of food is his first dream; let the hybrid rice go out of China and go to the world, Solving the problem of hunger for all mankind is his second dream. In his nineties, he is still working hard to realize his third dream, which is to open up 100 million mu of saline-alkali land in 8 years, so that the output value of saline-alkali-resistant rice per mu can reach 300 kilograms.

We are fortunate to live in a peaceful country, but don't forget that hunger is not just in the past. Nearly 1 billion people in the world are still starving, and tens of thousands of people die of hunger every day. On average, one person dies every 5 seconds due to diseases caused by hunger and malnutrition.

Our motherland has been able to make it to today, thanks to seniors like Yuan Longping who have studied silently and contributed silently.

It is because of their existence that China has everything it has now. They are the backbone of China, and it is they who support China's strength. After half a century of rice research, Yuan Longping spread the seeds of his dreams farther afield.

At 13:07 on May 22, 2021, Yuan Longping passed away in Changsha, Hunan, at the age of 91. Yuan Longping is the pioneer in the research and development of hybrid rice in China and the first scientist in the world to successfully use rice heterosis. He is known as the "Father of Hybrid Rice". Until the beginning of 2021, he still insisted on carrying out scientific research work at the Nanfan Base in Sanya, Hainan.

Yuan was both professionally and personally interested on rice production. He spent a majority of his time in the field, rather than staying confined in a lab or publishing papers. As such, he played a large role in Chinese agriculture by mentoring and leading others in the field, which helped foster future achievements in Chinese agriculture.

In 1979, his technique for hybrid rice was introduced into the United States, making it the first case of intellectual property rights transfer in the history of the People's Republic of China. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization 1991 statistics show that 20 percent of the world's rice output came from 10 percent of the world's rice fields that grow hybrid rice.

Yuan advocated for sharing the success of his breakthroughs with other nations. He and his team donated crucial rice strains to the International Rice Research Institute in 1980. These donated strains were used to create hybrid rice strains that could sustain and grow in tropical countries to help their food supply chains. In addition to donating important rice strains, Yuan and his team taught farmers in other countries to grow and cultivate hybrid rice.

Four asteroids and a college in China have been named after him. The minor planet 8117 Yuanlongping was also named after him.

Yuan won the State Preeminent Science and Technology Award of China in 2000, the Wolf Prize in Agriculture and the World Food Prize in 2004.

He was the Director-General of the China National Hybrid Rice R&D Center and appointed Professor at Hunan Agricultural University, Changsha. He was a member of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, foreign associate of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences (2006) and the 2006 CPPCC.

Yuan worked as the chief consultant for the FAO in 1991.



Academician Profile

Yuan Longping (September 7, 1930–May 22, 2021), male, Han nationality, born in Beijing, without party affiliation, was born in De'an County, Jiujiang City, Jiangxi Province. A well-known agricultural scientist at home and abroad, the pioneer and leader of China's hybrid rice industry, a close friend of the Communist Party of China, an outstanding representative of non-partisan people, the winner of the "Republic Medal", former vice chairman of the Hunan Provincial Political Consultative Conference, and the National Hybrid Rice Project Former director of the Technology Research Center, Academician of the Chinese Academy of Engineering, known as "the Father of Hybrid Rice".