

Dr. David Liang

A child dreams to be a scientist one day. The child grows up; he immerses in space systems and technology, part of a nation's space defence. The man turns older; he travels throughout the world, telling everyone who listens about the wonders of life, technology and the truth.

Dr. David Liang's life journey not only shows what Chinese people went through in an era of unrest and change, but it is also a testimony of how Chinese-Canadians are able to contribute to Canada.

To describe Dr. David Liang, one has to start with his impressive curriculum vitae. Dr. David Liang graduated from the University of Alberta with a doctorate degree in Electrical Engineering. He was the Head and Thrust Leader of Space Systems and Technology within the Canadian Department of National Defence (DND), responsible for all space related research and development activities including Surveillance of Space and Surveillance from Space within DND. He was also responsible for all satellite communications, ballistic missile defence and nuclear related research and development. á

Amongst his most memorable journeys, there was one in 1991 when he represented Canada in the first NATO technical Forum held in Berlin after the unification of East and West Germany. In 1997, he led the Canadian National Defence delegation to participate in the Ballistic Missile Defence Conference in Israel. He also represented Canada in four NATO technical panels, in COCOM (Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls) meetings as well as at Trilateral Canada û USA - UK Defence Space Research and Development Collaborations. In 1991, he received a special Departmental commendation for his contributions to research and development. In 1996, he received a Certificate of Award presented by NATO Advisory Group for Aerospace Research and Development.

In 2003, Dr. Liang took early retirement to begin a new chapter in his life. He now travels around the globe to give lectures and seminars. In 2012 alone, he flew 180,000 miles and spoke on topics such as 'Success and broad ranging challenges of the 21st century', 'Science, Truth and Life, Bible prophecies and the Rise of China, Scientific footprint of eternal truth, China dream and beautiful life'. Even though Dr. Liang left China when he was three years old, he still has heart-felt concern for the future development and well being of China. This year, he finally fulfilled his dream of returning to the land of his birth, after being away for more than 60 years. He hopes that through his writing and talks he could share his experiences and understanding to help the Chinese people achieve their dreams and have more beautiful life.

As an overseas Chinese with a very unique background, some of his words caught the attention of government officials. There was concern at some level of the Canadian government when he took early retirement at 56, and he was requested not to set foot in China for ten years after his retirement, a æ'cool-off' period due to his previous work with the DND. Now that he has retired for 10 years, his visa application to visit China went under close scrutiny. To win the confidence of Chinese officials, Dr. Liang wrote to Xi Jinping, the President of China, expressing his interest in visiting China. Finally his visa application was accepted, and he could begin to 're-establish' his ties with China.

In 1996 when the relationship between Taiwan and China was particularly tense, Dr. Liang, after struggling with himself whether to speak his mind, agreed to an interview with a reporter from Taiwan. At that time he

was afraid that Lee Teng-hui, the former President of Taiwan, would declare the independence of Taiwan leading to an inevitable clash across the Taiwan Strait. He did not expect that the interview would become part of a special bulletin landing on the desk of the President of Taiwan.

On June 7th, 1998, as an overseas scholar, Dr. Liang gave a lecture in Taipei: 'Political, economic, and military analysis across the Strait of Taiwan - the importance of embarking on a win-win strategy'. Unexpectedly, many of the political and military leaders attended his talk, including Hu Wei-chen, the Vice-President of ROC Security Council.

Although Dr. Liang is a scientist, he recounts a lot of his own experiences as out of the ordinary. To him, it is miraculous that he was able to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles and escape from harm in these episodes of his life.

From birth to 19 years of age, Dr. Liang had a very turbulent life. David was born in 1946 in Xiamen, China, at a time when China was in the midst of turmoil. When he was three, at the urging of his father teaching in the Philippines at the time, his mother and six children boarded the last ship for Hong Kong. The crowded ship was heavily bombarded by the People's Liberation Army, but miraculously they were not hurt and arrived in Hong Kong safely.

Soon after, the family moved to Indonesia. At that time the Chinese in Indonesia were discriminated against and they were not allowed to pursue higher education. David wanted to go to the Philippines, where his father had once served as a high school principal, and where he could attend university. However, without nationality or Indonesian passports, he could not leave. At that time many travel agencies made false birth certificates for people to apply for Indonesian citizenship and passports. David took the risk, but when he tried to pick up his passport, he was arrested, handcuffed and put in jail. Although he was out on bail after two days, court proceedings lasted two years. At the end, David, as an Indonesian Chinese without Indonesian citizenship, was convicted of not reporting to officials that he had moved, as required by local law. He must comply with the condition that he leave Indonesia immediately. It was a close call since being convicted of making a false birth certificate would carry a prison sentence of up to 25 years. Amazingly, without nationality or a passport, David was able to legally enter Canada under extremely fortuitous circumstances, since in 1965 Canada still had a rather restrictive immigration policy for non-whites.

Those two days in prison not only left indelible memories, but also became a major obstacle in David's application for a job with the Department of National Defence. On top of that, he was born in China, a country that was then considered hostile to western nations. Despite all this, he sent off his application to the DND, even admitting that he had previously violated Indonesian law. Not having heard from them for eight months, he accepted a job with the Alberta Government Telephone (AGT), only to receive a job offer from the DND a few days later. Even though it was a dream come true, David felt that he must keep his promise with AGT. After fulfilling his promise of working for AGT, he reapplied to the DND ten months later. Surprisingly they decided to give him a job offer again. David truly believes, without God's will, this would not have happened.

David worked at the DND for 27 years. He describes his work as 'Beyond Top Secret'. When he decided to retire early, Canadian National Security was highly suspicious of his motive to retire at the age of 56. He willingly took two lie detection (polygraph) tests, to prove his loyalty to Canada and her allies.

While Dr. Liang was working at the DND, he had come across both people and bureaucratic issues. At one time, he was responsible for outsourcing a national defense project. In the bidding process, Dr. Liang and his team of technical experts established objective technical and cost criteria, which led to the selection of a small company over a much larger consortium with a much deeper pocket and political influence. This decision, against the wishes of his superior, resulted in the demise of his department, the removal of his management and technical responsibilities and a demotion to the DND Headquarters. He was vindicated when four years later, the Assistant Deputy Minister of Research and Development, a former boss of his, offered him the job of his former supervisor, the Head and Thrust Leader of Defence Space Systems and Technology.

Although he made a major blunder in his judgment when he was young, Dr. Liang now uses his faith as his principle of life and these words from the Bible as his motto, Those who honour me, I will honour... (First Book of Samuel 2:30) He believes this promise is what God has given and sustained him.

Dr. Liang has mixed feelings when he looks back on his life, It has been 48 years since I came to Canada. I am truly grateful that I could find a new home in this land. Even though I did experience some discrimination and a severe setback, I always know that as long as I am willing to work hard, my contribution would be recognized.

From another perspective, Dr. Liang already has position and status. Although he was working for the military as a civilian, he had the equivalent rank of a one-star general. His son is studying for a PhD degree in engineering physics and his daughter a lawyer at the DND. These are extended blessings, with much more to look forward to in his life. Now he is on the board of the Chinese Christian Mission of Canada. In addition to his intrinsic interest in international affairs and Bible prophecies, he writes and posts articles and books on the web for free access. He plans to continue his travel around the world to give motivational and faith-related talks. In the next six months, he will travel across North America, as well as U.K., Saudi Arabia, Israel, Uganda and Kenya to talk to the local Chinese people there.

Looking at Canada and the world from his home in Ottawa, Dr. Liang feels that the spacious and unspoiled environment here is something that citizens in other countries can only dream of. He encourages Chinese-Canadians with these words, Appreciate the advantages and opportunities offered by this great nation, especially through the cordial relationship between China and Canada, so that you can contribute to the well-being of both countries and the world. Chinese Canadians are much like other ethnic minorities, enjoying equal opportunity, sometimes even more favorable opportunities due to the fabric of our multi-cultural society. Don't miss these opportunities! ô

Now, no matter where he is, Dr. Liang loves to share these words from the bottom of his heart, Let's reach for the stars together!