

Chen Shih-hsiang (陳世驥) — In Memory

Chen Shih-hsiang died of a heart attack on May 23, 1971 in Berkeley, California. The academic world lost a genuine, creative scholar and inspiring teacher of Chinese literature; many poets and writers lost a confidant; still more people lost a most encouraging, helpful friend.

Born in Luan-hsien, Hopei (河北灤縣) of a farmer-scholar family on March 7, 1912, Chen Shih-hsiang received a traditional education in the classics from his grandfather, and early training in the English language in secondary school at home, before entering the University of Peking. Once at Peking, he became a devoted student of classical Chinese and English literature and participated in the new poetry movement on campus. Chen Shih-hsiang distinguished himself among friends as a theorist-critic and translator. In 1936, he published *Modern Chinese Poetry*, with Harold Acton, in London. It was the first time that modern Chinese poetry was systematically introduced to the West. After a short sojourn teaching English literature in Ch'angsha, Hunan (湖南長沙), he left China for England, and then the United States, to study literary criticism. At Columbia University, New York, he was a regular contributor to the *Saturday Review* and other periodicals both in the United States and in China. Urged by Pearl S. Buck and Henry Cowell, he also translated the verse of seventeen Chinese folk songs in collaboration with his wife Yao Chin-hsin (姚錦新), who transcribed the music into Western notation for piano. The songs were published with commentary and illustrations under the title *The Flower Drum and Other Chinese Songs* in 1943.

Chen Shih-hsiang joined the faculty of Oriental Languages at the University of California, Berkeley shortly after World War II. He remained there for about a quarter of a century until his death. The first scholarly contribution he made in Berkeley was to render Lu Chi's *Wen fu* (陸機文賦) into English. The first edition of this unsurpassed *tour de force* in the art of translation appeared in 1948. Beginning in the early fifties, he gave up translation to do original research and writing in the fields of Chinese and Comparative Literature. His important works in the next twenty years amount to approximately fifty monographs, notes, prefaces, and other writings in Chinese and English. The most important ones include an illuminating essay on Chinese literature for the *Encyclopedia Americana*, which is still the best of its kind in that scope; the investigation of the beginning of Chinese literary criticism in connection with the origin of *shih* (詩); a comparison of the concepts of *tzu* (姿) and "gesture" in literary criticism; a close examination of a rare textual fragment of the *Laotzu* (老子); a comparative interpretation of Tu Fu's "Pa-chen-t'u" (八陣圖); and several critical papers on Communist literature. In his last years (1966-1971), Chen Shih-hsiang conceived the writing of four essays to encompass Chinese literature from its dawn to the Han period: on *Shih Ching* (詩經), *Ch'u Tz'u* (楚辭), *Han fu* (漢賦), and *Han yueh-fu* (樂府). He had finished the treatises on the first two when he died.

The writing on *Ch'u Tz'u*, the last scholarly monograph of Chen Shih-hsiang, was entitled "The Genesis of Poetic Time." Among other findings and discoveries concerning the meaning of Time (時) in the age of Ch'ü Yuan (屈原), he defined the heroism in *Li Sao* (離騷) as the

“brave quest for the authenticity of being with exemplary individual courage of despair, whether in love or in politics...in the temporal world.” As a Chinese expatriate in quest of the authenticity of being, Chen Shih-hsiang also had the courage of despair, in the temporal world. His conviction in literature as light against darkness, however, was never shaken. He pioneered the study of East-West literary relations as an important part of the discipline of Comparative Literature. A tireless teacher of Chinese humanism abroad, Chen Shih-hsiang will be remembered by his friends and pupils as a man of heroic stature who achieved a comprehensive view of the ancient sages in the East and West.

CHING-HSIEN WANG

## 敬輓陳世驥先生

### (摘要)

陳世驥先生字子龍，號石湘，河北灤縣人，生於一九一二年三月七日；以一九七一年五月二十三日心臟病猝發，在美國加里福尼亞州柏克萊逝世，享年五十九歲。先生幼承家學，及長，入北京大學，主修英國文學，並積極從事新文藝創作，夙有詩名。一九三六年先生與英人哈羅德·艾克頓合作選譯中國現代詩在倫敦出版，厥為我國新詩運動以來第一次英譯之結集。一九三七年抗戰軍興，先生南下長沙，在湖南大學教授英國文學，不久出國赴英，旋轉美洲，就讀紐約哥倫比亞大學，專攻中西文學理論。先生在哥大，除潛心學術研究外，並經常為中美各種雜誌撰稿，文字散見北京文學雜誌及紐約星期六評論等。一九四三年先生與其夫人姚錦新女士合作整理中國民歌，精譯故國謠曲十七首，由姚女士改編譜曲，附以鋼琴伴奏，在紐約出版。

二次大戰後，先生離開紐約，就聘柏克萊加州大學東方語文學系。一九四八年，北京大學為慶祝立校五十週年出版專刊徵稿，先生精譯陸機文賦以應，此實為先生以西洋批評眼光回歸古典中國文學之始。先生主講中國文學及比較文學於加大垂三十年，作育桃李無數；自製中英論文札記序跋問世者都四五十種，蓋在文史哲學方面，其最重要者包括「中國詩字觀念試論」，「姿與 Gesture」，「時間與律度在中國詩中之示意作用」，「想爾老子道德經焮煌殘卷論證」，「原興：兼論中國文學特質」，「杜甫『八陣圖』」，「屈賦發微」等。先生晚年致力於兩漢文學之研究，計劃以比較文學之方法重新探討樂府及辭賦之價值，可惜天不假年，未及成篇而輟。

先生以詩人之心從事文學教育及著述，風範超然，發明極多。近年提倡比較文學，鼓勵新文學創作，初不以古薄今，率斷華夷；胸懷四極，蔚為現代學術態度的新風氣。

王靖獻