

6 February 2018

Mourning Sinologist Professor Jao Tsung-i

Prof. Jao Tsung-i, Wei Lun Honorary Professor of Fine Arts, Emeritus Professor of Chinese Language and Literature, Honorary Adviser of the Institute of Chinese Studies, Honorary Fellow of Chung Chi College, Honorary Fellow of New Asia College and the Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa* of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK), passed away on Tuesday, 6 February 2018, at the age of 101. CUHK is profoundly saddened and conveys its deepest condolences to his family.

Prof. Rocky S. Tuan, Vice-Chancellor and President of CUHK, said, “CUHK has had close ties with Professor Jao Tsung-i for over 40 years. We are deeply grateful for his invaluable advice and significant contributions to the academic development of the University. Professor Jao devoted his whole life to education and research in sinology and nurtured generations of students. His passing is a great loss for both CUHK and the global academia. On behalf of members of the University, I sincerely offer our deepest condolences to Professor Jao’s family. His guidance and support will always be remembered in our hearts.”

Prof. Jao Tsung-i was a world-renowned scholar who attained remarkable achievements in Chinese and Oriental Studies as well as arts and culture. Born into a scholarly family in Chaonan, Guangdong, in 1917, Prof. Jao was first known to literary circles at a young age when he put in order his father's posthumous work 《潮州藝文志》 which was published in 《嶺南學報》. He came to Hong Kong in 1949 and taught at the University of Hong Kong from 1952 to 1968. He was invited by the National University of Singapore to be its founding Chair of Chinese as well as Chairman of the Department in 1968 and stayed on until 1973. During the same period, he also taught at Yale University, USA as Visiting Professor and served as Research Fellow of the Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica, Taiwan. In 1973, he returned to Hong Kong and joined the Department of Chinese Language and Literature of CUHK as Chairman until his retirement in 1978. Thereafter, he travelled and lectured in France, Japan, mainland China, Taiwan and Macau.

An erudite scholar, Prof. Jao's works in research and fine arts gained him worldwide admiration. The extensive scope of his scholarship covered paleography, Dunhuang studies, archaeology, epigraphy, historiography, etymology, history of music, history of religion, Chuci, bibliography, and the study of local gazettes. Prof. Jao was a prolific writer and published over 80 books and 500 papers, the most significant of which being 《饒宗頤二十世紀學術文集》, 《殷代貞卜人物通考》, 《詞籍考》, 《敦煌曲》, 《中國史學上之正統論》, 《中印文化關係史論集》, 《老子想爾注校證》, 《文轍》, 《畫籟—國畫史論集》, 《梵學集》 and 《新加坡古事紀》. He enjoyed great fame for his poetry and lyrics, calligraphy and painting. He published over 20 collections of poetry and lyrics, and held exhibitions of his calligraphy and painting in Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Guangzhou and Beijing. In the last four decades, Professor Jao had been dedicated to the study of recently discovered artifacts and ancient history, and continued to make significant advancements. He also set up the *Computerised Database of Excavated Wood/Bamboo and*

Silk Scripts of China and the *Computerised Database of Oracular Inscriptions on Tortoise Shells and Bones* at CUHK, in which modern scientific technology is used to excellent effect in manifesting traditional culture for the better understanding of all. He enjoyed great fame for his poetry and lyrics, calligraphy and painting.

Prof. Jao Tsung-i was, by common consent in academe, a sinologist of the highest rank in his own right, and a venerated pioneer in the field. He received numerous prestigious awards and honours over the years, such as the Prix Stanislas Julien from the Institute de France, Honorary Membership of the Société Asiatique in France, and an Honorary Doctor of Letters degree from the École Pratique des Hautes Études of France, becoming the first Chinese to receive such an honour in humanities from that institution. He also received a special prize from the Cultural Heritage Bureau and the People's Government of Gansu for the protection of Dunhuang relics, a Grand Bauhinia Medal from the Hong Kong Government, as well as a lifetime award for achievement in the arts from the Hong Kong Arts Development Council.

Prof. Jao was actively associated with CUHK for over four decades. In 1973, he joined CUHK as the Chair of Chinese and the Chairman of the Chinese Department. Upon his retirement, he became the Wei Lun Honorary Professor of Fine Arts in the Institute of Chinese Studies and Fine Arts Department as well as the Emeritus Professor in Chinese Language and Literature. In 1993, he instituted the Centre for Dunhuang and Turfan Studies at New Asia College and the *Hong Kong Journal of Dunhuang and Turfan Studies*. Over the years, he generously donated his calligraphy and paintings to CUHK and provided invaluable advice on promoting academic development at the University. In 2003, Prof. Jao was conferred a Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa*, by CUHK.