

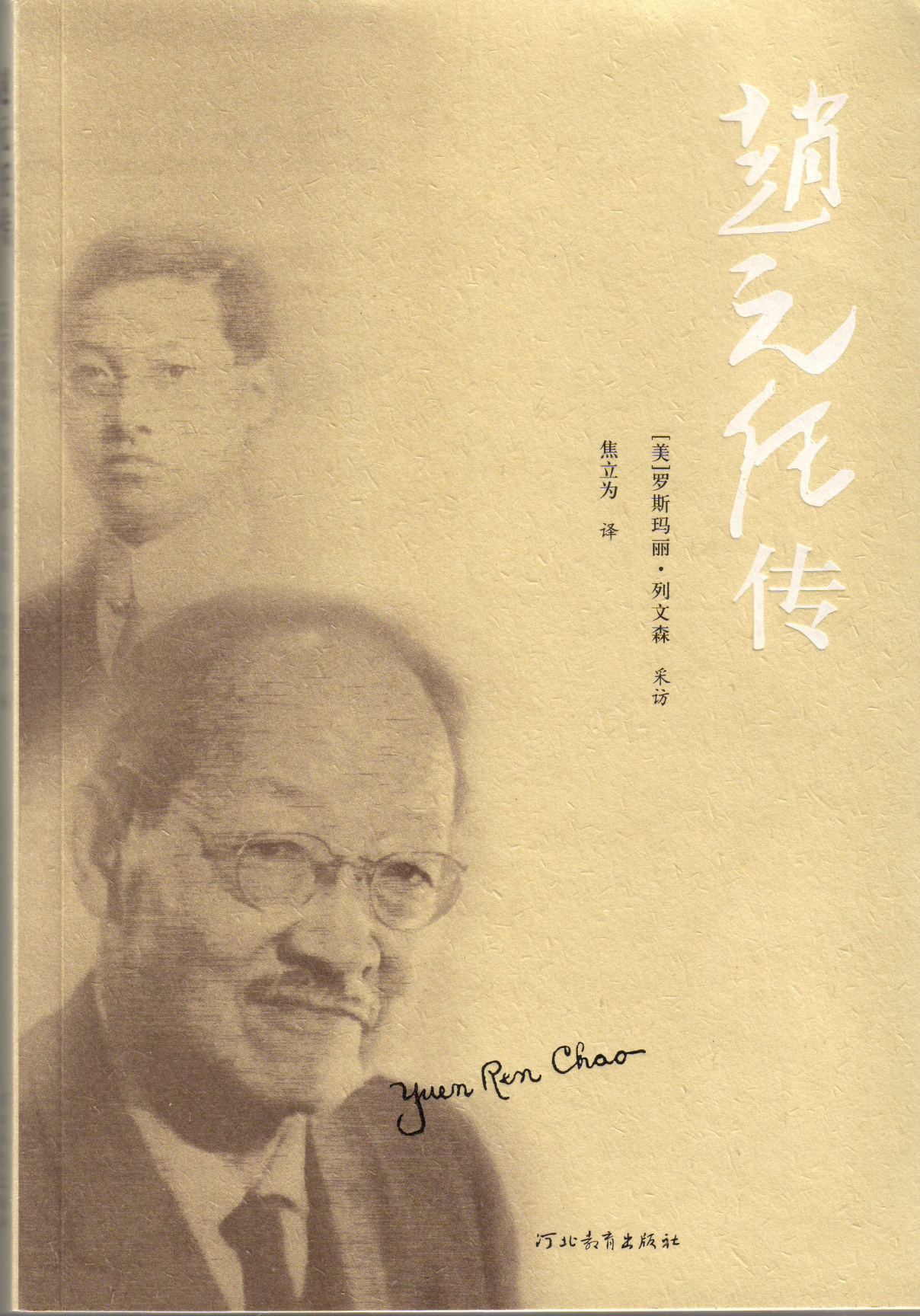
趙元任傳

「美」羅斯瑪麗·列文森 采訪

焦立為 譯

Yuen Ren Chao

河北教育出版社



译序 一^①

赵元任先生于1892年11月3日出生于天津，1982年2月24日在美国麻省剑桥市逝世。赵先生的一生不但硕果累累，而且精彩纷呈。

赵先生早年在家中接受的是传统教育。他的祖父在中国北方做官，常常因为朝廷之命而辗转各地任职，赵先生一家也因此常常随着搬迁。赵先生对语言的热爱产生很早，毫无疑问，这主要因为他在语言学方面有天赋。在他的《我的语言自传》一文里，他详细回顾了为什么在四岁的时候他就能说不太标准的北京话、标准的江苏常熟话，并且能够用江苏常州读书音朗读。

他的出众的能力很早就被社会发现。1910年他得到庚子赔款退款奖学金资助赴美留学，在康奈尔大学和哈佛大学取得硕士和博士学位后，执教于中美两国最好的大学：清华大学、哈佛大学，1947年后执教于美国加州大学伯克利分校。他杰出的贡献也给他带来了最高的荣誉。他是美国艺术与科学院（AAAS）院士，1945年当选美国语言学会会长，1960年当选美国东方学会会长。他还被普林斯顿大学（1946年）、加州大学伯克利分校（1962年）和俄亥俄州立大学（1970年）授予荣誉博士学位。1981年，北京大学授予他荣誉教授称号，这一荣誉

^① 译者按：本序言的前一部分是王士元教授应美国《语言》杂志主编之约于1983年发表的，后一部分是王教授应本书译者之请于2009年年初补记的。本序原为英文，译者翻译成中文后已由王先生审阅，原英文序附后。

肯定让他倍感欣喜，因为它来自他年轻时的家乡——北京。

在音乐上他从小就受到父母的熏陶，他的母亲能唱昆曲，他的父亲教他吹笛。因为从小受到音乐熏陶，他后来谱写了好几十首曲子，其中一些广为当世及后世中国人喜爱和传唱。他在语言和音乐上的双重才能传给了他的女儿赵如兰教授，她在哈佛大学同时教这两个科目。

赵先生的家庭生活也非常幸福。他与神仙伴侣杨步伟医生共同生活了六十多年，两个人性格典型互补：赵夫人热情而开朗，赵先生内向但幽默。他们自然而然地成了包括他们自己的大家庭还有一群来自世界各地的朋友和学生的社会活动围绕的中心。当然，在他们幸福持久的婚姻背后有一个秘诀。赵先生后来解释说，重要的一点是夫妻双方在新婚之初就应该达成以下共识：男人决定居家大事，女人负责琐碎小事。后来赵先生话锋一转，说他们共同生活了几十年，可是从来没有一件大事需要作决定。

赵先生思维永远非常活跃，这使他在诸多领域都作出了开创性的贡献。在安华·迪尔（Anwar Dil）教授编辑的赵先生的《中国社会语言学论文集》（斯坦福大学出版社1976年出版）的书后附有赵先生的长长的著作目录，任何人浏览之后，都会马上惊异于赵先生的兴趣如此之广。1915年他在《科学》杂志上译介了无线电还有新发现的海王星；1919年他在《美国数学会快报》（Bulletin of American Mathematical Society）上发表了关于连续性数学归纳法的一则文章；1922年他翻译了《阿丽思漫游奇境记》，该书广为后世好评；1928年，中国政府正式采纳了他设计的汉语罗马化方案——国语罗马字，该方案巧妙地用元音和辅音的不同变化兼表了不同的声调，避免了使用附加符号；1936年，他为教育部撰写了小册子《广播须知》，等等等等。与此同时，他还发表了大量的语言学理论著作并创作了不少乐曲，其智识之广博何止十倍于常人！

在中国语言学的开创方面，赵先生比任何其他人的贡献都大，他奠

定了中国语言学的基础。他1928年出版的专刊《现代吴语的研究》是首个关于中国某个重要方言的详细的语音调查报告。除了很多他亲自撰写的方言调查报告以外，他还规划了后来由他人实施的方言调查，所有这些调查合起来覆盖了中国的大片区域。他对中国语言学的各个方面都感兴趣，从方言音系到书写符号，从历史音韵大势到个别语音演变，从词汇结构到逻辑及其他符号系统。

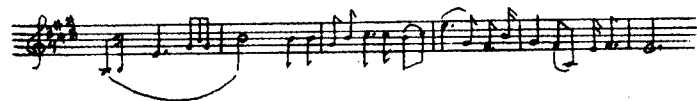
赵先生是结构语言学家的代表人物之一。他在1934年发表的《音位标音法的多能性》一文中，提出了音系描写中没有唯一正确的方案的观点，该文是那个领域的经典论文，在其后的几十年中是音系学方面最有影响力的论文之一。汉语的音节，由于界限明显、结构均衡，因而是了解音位学原理的极佳的参照物。在上面的论文里，汉语音节中的韵腹与韵头及韵尾的复杂关系第一次得以澄清。赵先生从十几个实际音值中概括出一套简洁的只由三个不同高度的元音的构成的系统。

他1941年发表的关于上古汉语音节特征的文章，实际上是对汉语音节历时变化理论的进一步探讨，独到地揭示了音节结构对韵头的限制作用。但是在此文中，就像他的其他学术研究一样，他有一个更广阔的视野。虽说他是结构主义音位学的奠基人之一，但是他的视野不局限于结构主义，他是最早能够理解区别性特征的深层含义的学者之一。他1954年发表的对区别性特征理论的评论直到现在仍然令人信服。

1968年是赵先生研究成果异常丰富的一年，共有四本书出版，包括剑桥大学出版社出版的《语言与符号系统》和加州大学出版社出版的《汉语口语语法》。在前者中，赵先生充分发挥他特有的宏观视角来分析语言学问题。该书大概是语言学家所写的第一本通论性的、既涵盖了描写语言学及历史语言学一般都会谈到的话题，又纳入了关于诸如语音合成和机器翻译等技术性话题的睿智的探讨的著作。该书影响所及的领域非常广泛，超过了几乎任何语言学论文所能达到的。《科学美国人》上有一篇热情洋溢的评论文章。该书已被翻译成了几种语言。

《汉语口语语法》是一本超过八百页的皇皇巨著，描写既细致，分析又清楚，被张琨先生誉为“结构主义语言学的扛鼎之作”。该书足以作为汉语语法参考书，这对其他语言来说异常少见，因此该书今后仍将具有参考价值。为了让世界上的读者了解汉语，赵先生用英文写作了该书。现在，该书已被翻译成两个汉语译本了，以便汉语读者了解。一个译本为北京中国社会科学院语言研究所所长吕叔湘先生翻译，另一个译本为台北中央研究院历史语言研究所所长丁邦新先生翻译。两种译本的存在，也意外地足以说明两岸目前分治的政治背景。但是，与此同时，汉语语言学界却没有更好的方式来表达他们对这位老人以及对他的贡献的崇敬与爱戴。

根据赵先生的遗愿，他的骨灰被撒进太平洋。太平洋两岸的世界都是他的故乡，他也为她们奉献了如此之多，他将长眠于此。当我在中国还是一个中学生的时侯，我最喜欢的歌曲中有一首就是赵先生谱的曲。虽然我仅仅是在十几年后才有机缘跟赵先生见面，但是其后多年的（尤其是在伯克利大学共事期间）友谊大大地丰富了我的生活，当然也丰富了无数其他人的。下面摘录的是赵先生的一段音乐，歌名为《教我如何不想他》。



啊
这般的也似的 教我如何不想他
zhè bān mǐ yě sì de yǎn yè jiāo wǒ rú hé bù xiǎng tā

王士元

加州大学伯克利分校

[发表于《语言》(Language) 1983年9月第59卷第3期第605-607页]

Yuen Ren Chao

Yuen Ren Chao was born in Tianjin, China, on November 3, 1892. He died on February 24, 1982. His was a long, charmed life-brimming with joys and achievements.

He had a classical Chinese education at home, while the household moved around north China according to the requirements of the grandfather's job. His love of language came early-in large part, no doubt, because of his linguistic talents. In his linguistic autobiography, he recounts how, at age four, he already spoke an impure form of Peking Mandarin and a pure form of the Changshu dialect, and read only with the pronunciation of Changchow, Kiangsu.

His considerable ability was recognized early. In 1910 a national scholarship sent him to study in America. After degrees from Cornell and Harvard, he taught at the best campuses: Qinghua, Harvard, and (from 1947) at the University of California, Berkeley. His distinguished career won him the highest honors. He was a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was elected President of the Linguistic Society of America (1945) and the American Oriental Society (1960), was awarded honorary degrees by Princeton (1946), Berkeley (1962), and Ohio State University (1970). In June, 1981, Peking University appointed him Honorary Professor,

this final accolade must have pleased him especially, coming from the city of his youth.

As a child, he received the gift of music from his parents. His mother sang Kunqu, and his father taught him to play the Chinese flute. From this early start, he went on to write many dozens of musical compositions, including some pieces that whole generations of Chinese have sung and loved. This dual talent for language and music has been passed on to his daughter, Professor Iris Pian, who teaches both subjects at Harvard.

Life at home was a happy one. His marriage of some 60 years, to Dr. Buwei Yang, was a remarkable balance of complementary characteristics-her mercurial outgoingness with his quiet humor. They provided a warm social nucleus for their own extensive family, and for an international circle of friends and students. There was, of course, a secret to this long successful marriage. As Chao would explain, it is critical that an understanding be reached at the very outset: the man would make the major decisions in the family, while the woman would make the numerous minor ones. In their many decades together, he would add with a twinkle, there had never been any decision to be made.

Chao had an incessantly active mind that produced pioneering work in many different directions. Scanning his long bibliography, as collected by Anwar Dil in *Aspects of Chinese Sociolinguistics*, essays by Yuen Ren Chao (Stanford, 1976), one is immediately struck by the extraordinary range of the man's interests. In 1915, he wrote on wireless telegraphy and the discovery of Neptune; in 1919 he published a note on continuous mathematical induction; in 1922, his much admired translation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* appeared; in 1928, the Chinese government officially adopted his scheme for romanizing Chinese (Gwoyeu Romatzyh),

which ingeniously spells the four tones with consonants and vowels, and hence uses no diacritics; in 1936, he published a booklet for the Chinese Ministry of Education on *What a Radio Broadcaster Should Know*; and on and on. Intermingled with these are numerous scholarly contributions to linguistic and musical theory. Enough intellectual bounty to satisfy a dozen lesser men!

More than anyone else, Chao laid the foundation of linguistics in China. His monograph, *Studies in the Modern Wu Dialects* (1928), is the first detailed phonetic report on an important speech area of central China. In addition to the many reports which he wrote himself, he was primarily responsible for the basic design of dialect surveys which were to guide teams of investigators in all its aspects, from its dialects to its writing systems, its history and its ontogeny, the structure of its lexicon, and its relation to logic and other symbolic systems.

Chao was a leading scholar of structural linguistics. His article on the non-uniqueness of phonemic solutions of phonetic systems is a classic within that perspective, and was one of the most influential papers on theoretical phonology for many decades. The Chinese syllable, because of its isolability and symmetric structure, is an excellent site for understanding the principles of phonemics. In that 1934 paper, the intricate relations between the nuclear vowel and its neighboring glides and consonants were clearly revealed for the first time. An elegant vertical system of three vowels was extracted from a dozen or so phonetic qualities.

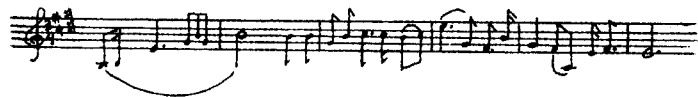
His study of the distinctions within Ancient Chinese (1941) is really an extension of the same theoretical considerations to the diachronic aspects of the Chinese syllable, showing especially the constraints that the phonological context exercises over the medial glide. But here, as in most aspects of his

scholarship, he had a broad vision. Even though he helped to found structural phonemics, he was among the first to understand the deeper implications of distinctive features; his comments on this theory (in *Romance Philology* 1954) are still very cogent.

1968, an especially prolific year, saw the publication of four books, including *Language and Symbolic Systems* (Cambridge University Press) and *A Grammar of Spoken Chinese* (University of California Press). The former work deals with linguistics at large from Chao's unique interdisciplinary vantage point. It is probably the first general book by a linguist that includes intelligent discussions of such language technology topics as speech synthesis and machine translation, as well as the usual coverage of descriptive and historical linguistics. The book has reached a much wider audience than most linguistic essays (thanks in part to a warm review in *Scientific American*), and has been translated into several languages.

A Grammar of Spoken Chinese is monumental in scope—some 800 pages of detailed description and careful analysis. It has deservedly been called “structural linguistics at its best” (K. Chang, *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* 10.387, 1982). It is as good a reference grammar as can be found for any language, and as such will surely remain useful for years to come. Chao wrote his grammar in English, in order to reach an international readership; and now it has been twice translated into Chinese, for the people whose language he was describing. One translation is by the director of the Institute of Linguistics in Beijing; the other is by the director of the Institute of History and Philology in Taipei—an accidental commentary on the political reality of China today, to be sure. But, at the same time, there is no finer way of showing the affection and esteem that the field of Chinese linguistics holds for the man and his contributions.

His ashes were deposited in the Pacific ocean, according to his wishes—a fitting resting place for a man who claimed both worlds, and gave so much to each. When I was a schoolboy in China, one of my best-loved songs was one composed by Chao. Though I did not have the privilege of meeting him until a decade or so later, his friendship over many years (especially as a colleague at Berkeley) has deeply enriched my life, as it has countless others. One line of his melody is reproduced below. The song is entitled Jiào wǒ rú hé bù xiǎng tā? *How can I not miss him?*^①



啊
 这寂寞也似的深夜 教我如何不想他
 a ----- zhè bān mǐ yě sì de yín yè jiāo wǒ rú hé bù xiǎng tā

William S-Y. Wang

University of California, Berkeley

Language, Vol. 59, No. 3, (Sep., 1983), pp. 605-607

① [For help in presenting this musical example, the Editor of *Language* is grateful to Mr. Tsun Y. Lui and Mr. Peng Chen, both of UCLA.]

补 记

焦立为博士请我为他翻译的赵元任教授的口述历史写篇序言，这使我想起了我为赵先生写的悼念文章，发表在美国《语言》杂志 1983 年第 59 卷第 605~607 页。那篇文章是应《语言》杂志当时的主编威廉·布赖特 (William Bright) 之邀而作的，也正是布赖特教授特别要求印刷人员在文章的最后加上赵先生的一行音乐。我们都认为，悼念赵先生的时候，如果不加上赵先生的一行美妙的音乐，那绝对是少了一些内容。

借此机会，我愿意在这儿追加一些个人的回忆。那是 1973 年年初，《中国语言学报》(Journal of Chinese Linguistics) 刚刚开始创办，第一期就是敬献给赵元任教授的，他被大家誉为“汉语语言学之父”。赵先生的家位于加州伯克利的一座小山上，我驱车沿克莱格芒特 (Cragmont) 大街前往赵先生家献书。听到这个消息，赵夫人马上走上二楼，从浴缸里舀起一条活蹦乱跳的大鱼，然后为我们做了一顿美味的晚餐来纪念这个令人欣喜的时刻。

一般来说，赵家楼上的浴缸里总养着几条活鱼，客人们也总是不期而至。赵家的热情好客是众所周知的，当然菜肴的味道也无以伦比。随着年事增大，二位老人在家中自己做饭也越来越不容易了，于是我有机会就会非常愉快地开车带他们二老到旧金山市里他们最喜欢的饭馆儿吃晚餐，从三和饭馆儿的便餐米粥到百老汇大街上羊城餐厅的高档菜肴，

等等。有时候赵先生的老朋友们也会跟我们同行，比方说著名逻辑学家阿尔弗雷德·塔斯基教授（Alfred Tarski）和梵文大师默里·伊曼纽教授（Murray Emeneau）。

还是在1973年年底，我在离开中国25年以后将第一次回国。我被吕叔湘教授和朱德熙教授邀请到北京大学作一系列学术讲座。就在我启程前，赵先生递给我一封密封的亲笔信，叮嘱我要把这封信亲手交给他在北京的一个学生——王力教授。

1973年中国正处在“文革”当中，很多人由于各种政治原因受到迫害，被关进牛棚。我在北大第一次演讲的时候没有看到王力教授，于是我以赵元任教授的名义要求见王力教授一面，坚决不叫他人转交赵教授的信。一个星期以后，王力教授终于出现在我做演讲的会场，从我手里接到赵教授的信，王教授的眼里闪着感激的泪花。此情此景也让我记忆尤深，因为就在此时此刻我意识到赵教授做事如此细致周到，还有他的人格如此伟大。

虽然我跟赵教授在伯克利大学不在同一个系，但是多年共同在一个校园工作仍给我留下很多温馨的回忆。除了他伟大的人格和广博的学识以外，他还深深地影响了我：做学问应该多角度、跨学科。他在物理学和音乐方面的背景完美地融进他的语言学研究。至今，我仍在努力将这种广阔的视角融入我的研究之中。

我很高兴焦立为博士把赵元任教授这位了不起的学者的口述历史翻译成汉语，给更多的汉语读者带来方便。就像玛丽·哈斯教授（Mary Haas）在她对本采访的简介中恰当地指出的一样，赵元任教授的人生是一件“艺术品”，我们大家都能从中汲取智慧。同时，整本访谈也从一位伟人的视角见证了中国以前曾经经历过的那个多灾多难的年代。

王士元

2009年2月5日于香港中文大学

Afterthought

Dr. Jiao Liwei's invitation for me to contribute a preface to his translation of Professor Chao's Oral History reminded me of an eulogy I wrote for Professor Chao (*Language* 59.605-607). It was prepared at the request of Professor William Bright, who was then the Editor of *Language*. It was Professor Bright who made special arrangements with the printer to have a line of music appended at the end of the eulogy. We both felt that a remembrance of Professor Chao would be sorely lacking without including a few bars of the man's wonderful music.

I would like to add several personal remembrances here, now that Dr. Jiao is providing me with an opportunity. It was early in 1973, and the *Journal of Chinese Linguistics* has just begun publication. The first issue was dedicated to Professor Chao, generally acknowledged to be the "father" of modern Chinese linguistics. I drove up the winding Cragmont Avenue to their home in Berkeley to make the presentation. Upon hearing this, Mrs. Chao went up to the second floor of their hillside house, scooped up a big jumping fish from a bathtub, and made a delicious dinner for us to mark the festive occasion.

Typically there were several fish swimming in that upstairs bathtub, and guests often came unannounced. Hospitality at the Chaos was legendary, and

the cuisine unrivaled. As advancing years made things increasingly difficult for home cooking, I took special pleasure in driving them into San Francisco occasionally for dinner at their favorite spots; from Sam Wo's for congee to Yank Sing's on Broadway for more elaborate fare. Occasionally we were joined at these occasions by Professor Chao's old friends, such as Professor Alfred Tarski, the famous logician, and Professor Murray Emeneau, the eminent Sanskritist.

Later that same year, 1973, I was getting ready to return to China after 25 years abroad. I have been invited to give a series of lectures at Peking University, to be hosted by Professor Lv Shuxiang and Professor Zhu Dexi. Just before my trip, Professor Chao gave me a sealed letter, and asked explicitly that I should personally hand it to his student in Beijing—Professor Wang Li.

1973 was in the middle of the Cultural Revolution, and many people were under various kinds of political restriction—"being kept in cow shed". When I did not meet Professor Wang at my first lecture, I requested his presence in the name of Professor Chao, refusing to give the letter to anyone else. A week later, Professor Wang showed up at my lecture. He received the letter from me with his eyes brimming with grateful tears. It was a memorable moment for me as well, for it revealed to me at once the subtle and effective way Professor Chao did things, as well as his great humanity.

Even though we were never in the same department at Berkeley, the many years of being on the same campus with Professor Chao has left me many warm memories. In addition to his great humanity and erudition as a scholar, he also influenced me deeply to see research in a broad multi-disciplinary perspective. His background in physics and in music were

seamlessly interwoven into his scholarship on language. I try to emulate this broad vision till this day.

I am happy to see that the Oral History of this wonderful man will now be accessible to Chinese readers, through the able translation of Dr. Jiao. As Professor Mary Haas has aptly put it in her Introduction to these pages, Professor Chao's life is a "work of art", from which we can all draw much inspiration. In addition, these pages are also a reflection of the turbulent times that China went through, as seen by a remarkable man.

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