

# IN MEMORIAM



POCHAN CHEN 陳伯楨  
(29 OCTOBER 1973–28 JUNE 2015)



Pochan Chen at Gaocheng site in Turfan, Xinjiang, June 2012.

Professor Pochan Chen, of the Department of Anthropology, National Taiwan University (NTU), passed away of heart failure at the age of 41 in Shin Kong Wu Ho-Su Memorial Hospital in Taipei on the morning of 28 June 2015. He was interred in a flower burial in Taipei following a funeral service attended by over 300 mourners on Monday, 20 July 2015. He is survived by his parents, brother, and fiancée Lin Kuei-chen.

Pochan was born in Jilong, Taiwan on 29 October 1973. He was raised in part by his maternal grandparents. He was reading newspapers by the age of three, early evidence of what would become a lifelong love of learning. It seems that from that age on he never stopped reading, and his grasp of publications in his fields of study was encyclopedic. He attended Taipei Municipal Neihu High School (臺北市立內湖高中) as a member of one of this school's first cohorts of students, and after graduation was accepted to National Taiwan University, where he matriculated in the Department of Anthropology in 1991. At NTU he participated in his first archaeological fieldwork. After graduation, he spent one year as a research assistant in the Institute of History and Philology of Academia Sinica, before matriculating in the Interdepartmental Ph.D. Program in Archaeology at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1996. There he received an M.A. degree in 1999 based on his thesis entitled, "Rethinking of Austronesian Homeland and Dispersal—From the Perspective of Research Methodology." A revised version of his thesis and research on this topic was published in the journal *Renlei yu Wenhua* 人類與文化 in 1998 (volume 32/33:55–69). In subsequent studies, he turned to topics centered in Mainland China. These studies partly formed the basis for his Ph.D. research, which he completed in 2004 with a dissertation entitled "Salt Production and Distribution from the Neolithic Period to Han Dynasty in Eastern Sichuan Basin, China." As with his M.A. thesis, his dissertation was submitted under the supervision of Prof. Lothar von Falkenhausen.

His dissertation was based on more than a year of fieldwork in the Three Gorges at the site of Zhongba, in Zhong Xian County, Chongqing, which he first visited in the spring of 1999 along with his advisor, classmates, and colleagues from UCLA. This trip, which started in Beijing and included Sichuan and Hubei as well as Chongqing, was formative in many ways for the development of his research. It was his first trip to the People's Republic of China and his first chance to interact with many Mainland Chinese archaeologists who would become friends and collaborators. It was also his first time in Chongqing, the place of origin of his paternal grandfather.

In the fall of that year, he joined a team of archaeologists from the Sichuan Provincial Institute of Archaeology, Peking University, and UCLA. He then helped lead excavations of part of the Zhongba site. His dissertation work was based in part on those excavations and their contextualization within the broader regional cultural and social history. Many of his academic publications, including the book he co-authored with Rowan Flad, *Ancient Central China: Centers and Peripheries along the Yangzi River*, were based in part on these excavations. But his research on the region and related issues were by no means confined to topics narrowly connected to the excavations at Zhongba. He also published archaeological research on so-called "dragon kilns" (long sloping kiln structures used for production of various types of ceramics throughout Chinese history) and wrote about the history of salt production in China. Drawing upon World Systems Theory, he examined the economic value of salt in different historical contexts in early China.

Immediately upon graduating he joined the faculty of his alma mater, National Taiwan University, as an assistant professor. He was promoted to associate professor in 2014, and served on numerous committees, in addition to serving as secretary of the Taiwan Society for Anthropology and Ethnography and Austronesian representative to the Society for East Asian Archaeology, and serving on the editorial boards of *Taiwan*

*Renlei Xuekan* 臺灣人類學刊 [Taiwan Journal of Anthropology] and *Asian Perspectives*. He was an affiliate professor at the Open University of Kaohsiung and Sichuan University and an important advisor for numerous museum exhibits and education and archive projects across Taiwan. One publication in this vein that was particularly exciting to him was the English-language version of a children's book called *A Complete Guide to Archaeology*, illustrated and authored by Chiu Chien-jung and Chiu Pao-ling, which was published by the Shihshanhang Museum in 2013 in large part thanks to his translation work. Likewise, much of the exhibit copy found in the National Museum of Prehistory in Taitung is the result of his hard work. In addition to his term as a visiting faculty member at Sichuan University in 2008 (during which he donated his entire salary to a relief fund for the victims of the disastrous Wenchuan earthquake), he was a fellow at the Harvard-Yenching Institute during the 2010–2011 academic year, when he completed the final manuscript for his co-authored book for Cambridge University Press.

Throughout these years, Pochan continued active field research in the People's Republic of China. He was a Principal Investigator (PI), along with Li Shuicheng (Peking University), Jiang Zhanghua (Chengdu City Institute of Archaeology), Rowan Flad (Harvard University), and Gwen Bennett (Washington University, St. Louis/McGill University), of the Chengdu Plain Archaeological Survey from 2005–2011. Subsequently, he was PI of the Tao River Archaeological Project together with Wang Hui (Gansu Provincial Institute of Archaeology), Li Shuicheng, and Rowan Flad. Simultaneously, he was constantly involved in an advisory capacity in a number of archaeological and ethnographic projects elsewhere in China and in Taiwan. This research led to publications in numerous academic venues in addition to his coauthored book, including (but not limited to): *Xinshixue* 新史學 [New History]; *Nanfang Wenwu* 南方文物 [Relics from the South]; *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science of the United States*; *Nanfang Minzu Kaogu* 南方民族考古 [Southern Ethnology and Archaeology]; *Kaogu* 考古 [Archaeology]; *Asian Perspectives*; and *Kaogu Renlei Xuekan* 考古人類學刊 [Journal of Archaeology and Anthropology], as well as numerous edited volumes and the aforementioned translation of a children's book on archaeology. He was a frequent awardee of funds from the Ministry of Science and Technology of Taiwan for his research and just before his death was informed that he would be receiving the Ta-You Wu Memorial Award 吳大猷先生紀念獎 in 2015, an award rarely bestowed on scholars in the social sciences and humanities.

He was a regular and enthusiastic conference attendee, participating in many small conferences, including the Society for American Archaeology meetings most years, several meetings of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association, as well as every meeting of the Society for East Asian Archaeology starting with his presentation of a paper at the second SEAA conference in Durham in 2000. He was advising on the planning of the Seventh International SEAA conference recently held at Harvard and Boston University in 2016. His contributions to meetings and conferences were always well considered and inevitably raised the quality of the sessions in which he took part.

Pochan was particularly dedicated to teaching, including public outreach through museums, advising, and classroom instruction. He received teaching awards from National Taiwan University on a number of occasions for his dedication to teaching and to his students. He regularly taught a course load beyond that required; the list of courses he taught at National Taiwan University is impressive in its breadth as well as

its length, including courses in “Physical Anthropology,” “Archaeology of Ancient China,” “Historical Archaeology,” “Computers and Statistic Applications in Archaeology,” “Quantitative Research in Anthropology,” “Archaeology and Contemporary Societies,” “Seminar on the Middle and Upper Yangzi Valley,” “Archaeology of Trade and Diasporas,” “Gender Issues in Archaeology,” “Archaeological Theory,” and “Human Geographic Information Science,” among others.

Pochan’s last trip to China was in May 2015, when he joined the field season of the Tao River Archaeology Project (TRAP) for two weeks during the academic term. He was unable to stay until the end of the season due to teaching responsibilities, but did join the team for work at each of the sites of focus for the season: Dayatou (in both Lintao and Guanghe Counties) and Majiayao and Siwashan (both in Lintao County). The team also visited the Guanghe County seat, where the county government was planning a conference on Qijia culture to occur at the end of July along with the opening of a new museum focused on the Qijia. Given recent work by the TRAP project at Qijiaping, the type site of the Qijia culture, Pochan intended to attend this conference to report on this recent work. In advance of the conference, during this visit, he sat for an interview with the director of the Guanghe Wenwuju. He returned to Taiwan to teach his remaining two weeks of classes about ten days later via Hangzhou, a place he had never previously visited. He was stricken by a heart attack on his way home from a celebration with students marking the end of the academic year.

The impact of his life and career is evident from the emotional series of eulogies given at his funeral. The ceremony started with statements by Jeff Cheng 鄭玠甫 (Ph.D. student at Boston University), Tu Cheng-sheng 杜正勝 (Distinguished Research Fellow, Academia Sinica; professor, Chang Jung Christian University; former Minister of Education of Taiwan and former Director of the National Palace Museum); Tsang Cheng-hwa 臧振華 (Distinguished Research Fellow, Academia Sinica), Chen Jo-Shui 陳弱水 (Dean of Humanities, National Taiwan University), Hsu Fu-Chang 徐富昌 (professor, Department of Chinese Literature, National Taiwan University), and Lin Wei-Pin 林瑋嬪 (Chair, Department of Anthropology, National Taiwan University). These were followed by a series of short films showing images of his life, and more comments by Zheng Yiting 鄭怡庭 (assistant professor, National Taiwan Normal University, Comparative Literature), Rowan Flad (professor, Department of Anthropology, Harvard University), Chiang Chihhua 江芝華 (assistant professor, Department of Anthropology, National Taiwan University); classmates from college (Cheng Jianwen 鄭建文); overseas students (Chen Binghui 陳炳輝); advisees (Chou Meng-jhen 周孟蓁); and his other students (Lai Yiyu 賴奕諭); and finally, his partner Lin Kuei-chen 林圭偵 (Assistant Research Fellow, Institute of History and Philology, Academia Sinica).

Fellowships have been established in his honor at National Taiwan University and UCLA, commemorating the major impact he has had on the field and on his colleagues. Commemorative events have been arranged in his honor at NTU on 25 September 2015, at UCLA on 24 February 2016, at the 81st Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in Orlando, Florida, in April 2016, and at the Seventh International Congress of the Society for East Asian Archaeology in Cambridge and Boston in June 2016. The following publications represent a career with profound impact despite its brevity.

—Rowan K. Flad

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