
**Memorial Resolution of the Faculty of the University of Wisconsin–Madison
On the Death of Professor Emeritus Kang Chao**

Professor Emeritus Kang Chao, distinguished economist and Redologist, died at home on Saturday October 23, 2021, in Pleasanton, California. He was 92.

Born in Harbin China in 1929, Chao was a pre-eminent scholar bridging the East and West on two fronts, the history of China's economic development and the Dream of the Red Chamber - one of China's Four Great Classic Novels.

He began his undergraduate studies at Qinghua University and graduated from National Taiwan University in 1951. There he met and married schoolmate, Chung-ye Chen, later known as Jessica Chao. Their lives were so intertwined that one cannot be summed without the other.

In 1955, the couple journeyed 40 days and nights on a cargo ship from Taiwan to California, to begin their Ph.D. studies in Economics at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. After completing his Ph.D. in 1962, he began his distinguished teaching career at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor) and the University of California (Berkeley). In 1966, Professor Chao joined the Economics Department at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) where he wrote most of his groundbreaking publications, until he retired in 1998.

Professor Chao published 11 books in English on the economic history of China in the Ming and Qing dynasties and the economic effects of land reform in Asia. Stanford University Press considered his publication Man and Land in Chinese History to be a "bold and sweeping economic analysis of two millennia of economic development in traditional China." He published 10 more books in Chinese and over 66 monographs, journals and essays about China's economy, and his other passion, Redology. Nine of these books he co-authored with his life and work partner, Jessica Chao, including their award-winning book in Chinese, whose translated title reads, The History of the Land System in China.

His wife, Jessica, completed her M.A. at the University of Michigan (Ann Arbor), researched and edited side-by-side with her husband while raising two daughters. She shared her husband's determination to bridge cultures and encourage a greater appreciation of Chinese culture by teaching Chinese (University of Michigan, Wellesley College, and Madison Chinese Language School) and by introducing the art of Chinese cooking to generations of Madisonians.

In the last two decades of his academic career, Kang Chao focused on deepening ties between the scholars at the University of Wisconsin and top research institutions in Asia. In 1980, on the invitation of Mr. Shih-Chieh Chiang, Professor Chao returned to Taiwan to co-found and chair the Chung-Hua Institution for Economic Research's division focused on the economic development of mainland China. For over a decade, the couple split their time between UW-Madison and Asia. During this time, he established National Tsing Hua University's Department of Economics and served as its founding department chair.

During his tenure at UW, in addition to publishing his pioneering research in the history of Chinese economic development, teaching, and advising, he wrote extensively on the classic Chinese novel, The Dream of the Red Chamber. The Hong Lou Meng (as it is known in Chinese), is a novel with great literary and socio-political significance in China. In this way, he combined his love of economics with his love of history and literature.

In 1979, as a world-renown Redologist and a bridge between the East and the West, he recognized the opportunity to promote cultural and scholarly exchange when the U.S. restored full diplomatic relationships with Mainland China. He co-chaired and co-hosted the First International *Hong-Lou Meng* conference at UW-Madison, June 1980. Eighty of the top Redologists from Mainland China, Taiwan, U.S., and Europe, including translators Sohei Itoh from Japan and David Hawkes of Oxford, came to Madison to present papers, exchange ideas, and tour the campus.

In 1998, the writing duo retired from Madison to the San Francisco Bay Area to be closer to their children and grandchildren. In 2017, Kang and Jessica donated their entire collection of rare hand-bound Chinese research materials to the Ricci Institute at the University of San Francisco for the benefit of future generations of Redologists.

On November 5, 2020 Jessica Chung-yee Chen Chao passed away. The death of his beloved partner and constant companion of 70 years was a crippling blow. Eleven months later, on October 23, 2021, Kang Chao slipped away peacefully to be reunited with her. He leaves daughters Tonia Chao Hsieh (UW-Madison 1978) and Constance Chao, sons-in-law Michael Hsieh and Steve Onishi, and grandchildren Karina Hsieh, Mason Hsieh, Alex Onishi, and Alanna Onishi.

To honor Kang & Jessica Chao's commitment to bridging East and West cultures, the family created the *Angel Farm*, a bilingual workforce pipeline of Chinese and English-speaking caregivers trained to serve as home care, hospice, assisted living and private duty aides to provide culturally-competent care with respect and dignity. It is run by the non-profit Diversity Health Training Institute.

Memorial Committee
W. Lee Hansen