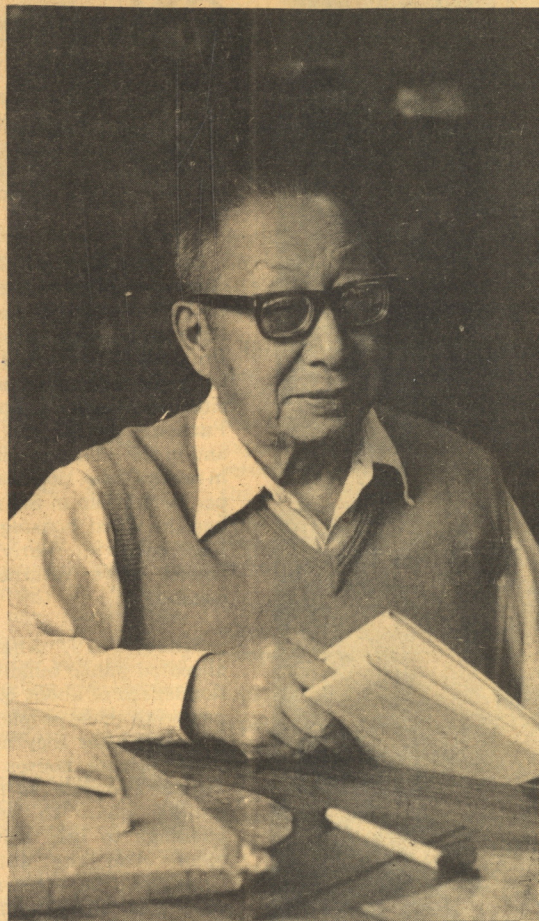


Opinion

The man who is always busy



Chen Hansheng at work.

Photo: Wang Guanmin.

When this reporter called on 84-year-old professor Chen Hansheng at his home, the first thing he learned of was the scholar's heavy weekly work schedule.

Dr Chen was to attend the enlarged conference of the Communist Party organization of the Academy of Social Sciences. He is an adviser to the academy.

Two Commercial Press editors were due to call. As chief editor of the forthcoming "Foreign History Series," venerable Chen, as he is called, must check manuscripts before they go to press.

He had also been asked to write an article for China Reconstructs, of which he is a sponsor. Liu Simu, Director of the World History Research Institute, was to see him. Dr Chen is on the board of the Institute's research committee. He is also a member of various committees at the Institute of Rural Economy Research, the Institute of Intelligence Research, and the Institute of South Asia Research.

An American friend, Steve McKinnon, who is doing research on Agnes Smedley, was to call as Dr Chen was a close friend of the late American writer.

Even when the "Gang of Four" was on the rampage, Dr Chen,

by Hu Sisheng
of Renmin Ribao

assisted by several comrades, compiled the three-million-word volume "Collection of Material on the History of Chinese Labourers Abroad" which is soon to appear.

During 1973-1978, after returning from manual labour, he coached young men and women in English and German. Of the 130 he helped, over a dozen have gone abroad to study.

Versatile

He used reading material from the foreign press which has been compiled into two volumes and published by the Commercial Press under the title "Selected Modern American and English Writing."

The versatile professor is also vice editor-in-chief of the Greater Encyclopedia of China and concurrently chief editor of its foreign history section.

His book "Rural Economic Districts in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh," written in English in two volumes, will be published in New Delhi this year.

Dr Chen returned to China from the United States at the end of 1950 at the request of the late

Premier Zhou Enlai who asked him to serve as a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. He declined, ask-

ing if he could do research. He was appointed an adviser to the Ministry.

Venerable Chen has been a scholar of history, economics and international politics for 60 years.

Born just before the turn of the century, the young Chen witnessed the national humiliation China suffered in the Qing Dynasty. Like others, a strong sense of nationalism was aroused in him. But he was unsure of what action to take.

He then met a Soviet teacher of Russian at Peking College. This Soviet friend recommended that he read "Capital," and introduced him to Marxism. His study of Marxism-Leninism familiarized Chen with the law of historical development.

Factories

Dr Chen began his revolutionary career in 1925 when he did underground revolutionary work with the late comrade Li Dazhao, a founder of the Communist Party of China. Since then his whole life has been tied to the Chinese revolution.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, he was in the United States, the Soviet Union, Germany, Japan, India and other European and Asian countries to study or escape persecution. He has served as visiting professor, research member, or editor of publications in various countries, but China has invariably been his starting point.

He organized many investigations into Chinese society, in factories and rural villages, and has spent time in Guangdong, Jiangsu, Hebei, Henan, Shandong and Anhui provinces.

His works

Dr Chen has published several dozen volumes both at home and abroad. Some were written in English. "Tales of Mankind," "The Relationship of Production in Feudal Rural Villages," "Industrial Capital and the Chinese Peasants," "American Monopoly Capital" are among his works. And, at 84, he is still writing.

He studies history while participating in a movement creating history. He is conscious of his obligation to history and works hard for the state and the nation. He is widely regarded as a living dictionary of Chinese and world history from the 1920s to 1980s.