

Professor Ching Ren-Chang (秦仁昌 Qin RENCHANG), who died on 22 July 1986, was the founding father of Chinese pteridology and one of the founding fathers of Chinese botany. Based at the Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, he was Secretary General of the *Flora Reipublicae Popularis Sinicae* project. His research interests included pteridophytes and *Rhododendron*. Altogether he published some 165 books, book chapters, translations, papers, and articles, including over 3,400 nomenclatural novelties. He is remembered by the 81 generic and specific names of ferns and seed plants named after him.

Professor Ching was born on 6 February 1898 in Wujing County, Jiangsu Province, to a family of farmers. He went to Jiangsu First Agriculture School from 1914–1919, where he studied with Dr. Chen Rong (陈嵘), then President of the school, and Prof. Qian Chongshu (钱崇澍 Chien Sung Shu) and became interested in botany. In 1925, he earned a Bachelor's degree in forestry at Jinling University in Nanjing. From 1929 to 1932, he studied ferns under the supervision of C. Christensen in Copenhagen and visited major herbaria in Europe, photographing many type specimens of Chinese plants. His 18,300 photographs were a great treasure for Chinese botanists, before they had access to western herbaria. In 1933, he married Zuo Jingfu (左景馥), a great granddaughter of Zuo Zongtang (左宗棠), a famous general in the late Qing Dynasty. In 1934, he founded Lushan Arboretum and Botanical Garden, the first botanical garden in China. He made the most important achievements of his career between 1930 and 1940 and published his iconic paper summarizing his ideas on the genera of leptosporangiate ferns in 1940. As R. E. Holttum commented in 1988, "... it is a contribution not excelled by any other person during that period." Simultaneously with his systematic studies he also produced four parts of *Icones Filicum Sinicarum*, the first part in collaboration with Dr. Hu Hsen Hsu (胡先骕 Hu Xiansu); a fifth part was added in 1958, the whole work illustrating about 250 species. He was elected in 1955 to the Chinese Academy of Sciences. In 1984, he published a Chinese translation of W. T. Stearn's *Botanical Latin*, greatly influencing Chinese botany in the following decades. His 1978 classification of pteridophytes of China, which won him the first prize of the National Natural Sciences of China in 1993, was adopted in *Flora Reipublicae Popularis Sinicae* vols. 3–6 (1990–2004).

Although our understanding of relationships among different taxa of pteridophytes, as with other groups of plants, has been much advanced since the classifications of Ching, especially with the advent of molecular phylogenetics, many of the taxa he circumscribed are still recognized. In consideration of his contributions, the Joint Editorial Committee unanimously agreed to dedicate Volume 2–3 of the *Flora of China* to the memory of Prof. Ching Ren-Chang.

IN MEMORIAM



PROF. CHING REN-CHANG (秦仁昌)
(6 February 1898 – 22 July 1986)