

Obituary

S. Y. TENG (1906–88)

Ssu-yü Teng, a founding member of the AAS who ultimately became university professor emeritus at Indiana University, contributed prolifically to research and documentation on modern Chinese history for more than fifty years. Born in Hunan in 1906, he took his B.A. at Yenching University in Peiping in 1932, earned his M.A. in 1935, and was an instructor in history in 1935–37. He participated in the modernization of Chinese bibliographic technology then being led by William Hung in the production of the pathbreaking Harvard-Yenching Institute Sinological Index Series. The sixty-four publications in this stupendous project gave modern scholars mastery for the first time over the details in the Chinese classics and histories. In Hung's lecture courses and seminars, Teng joined the select company of a score or more of Chinese historians trained at Yenching to establish control over the basic facts, biographies, bibliographies, and other reference works of Chinese history. Teng joined the Division of Orientalia at the Library of Congress in Washington and in 1937–38 wrote for Arthur Hummel's Ch'ing biographical project thirty-three studies of leading political and military figures in the last half of the nineteenth century.

In this transfer of sinological technology to America, Teng collaborated with several American pioneers in Chinese studies, who benefited immensely from his energy and erudition. With Knight Biggerstaff he produced *An Annotated Bibliography of Selected Chinese Reference Works* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950; 3d rev. ed., 1971); with John K. Fairbank (under whom he earned his Ph.D. at Harvard) he produced several studies on the Ch'ing administration of foreign relations and *China's Response to the West: A Documentary Survey 1839–1923* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1954); and with H. G. Creel a series of Chinese-language textbooks for specialized training in wartime.

After arriving at Indiana in 1950 Teng focused his research on the mid-nineteenth century rebellions and soon published *The Nien Army and Their Guerrilla Warfare, 1851–1868* (Paris: Mouton, 1961), *Historiography of the Taiping Rebellion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, East Asian Research Center, 1962), and *The Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971). He also pursued the data on secret societies and in 1981 published *Protest and Crime in China* (New York: Garland Press), a collection of some four thousand references and rare materials on secret associations, organized crime, and peasant risings. Teng's many other books and articles ranged broadly over such subjects as the Chinese examination system, the Confucian family rules, Chinese diplomacy at Nanking in 1842, and even the growth of Japanese studies on Japan. His many works on the nuts and bolts of source materials, reference compendia, and historiography contributed to Chinese historical studies just at the time they were most needed.

Teng lived an exemplary life reminiscent in many ways of the leaders of late Confucian China about whom he wrote—persistently optimistic, unflinchingly cour-

teous, indefatigably assiduous. Less exotically, one may see him as simply a Christian gentleman and helpful teacher.

J. K. FAIRBANK
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