

PERSONALIA

The Shining Star of Academician Chen To the 60th Anniversary of Academician Chen Xingcan

Chen Xingcan is a hundred per cent scholar...
Kwang-chih Chang

In China, when choosing a name, people often use various auspicious characters and their combinations. The name Xingcan is made up of the characters *xing* 星 ('star, stars') and *can* 灿 ('shining, fulgent'). Their combination predetermined a brilliant career for the name's owner.

The future academician Chen Xingcan was born on December 12, 1964 in the Changge County, Henan Province. Having graduated from high school, he entered Sun Yat-sen University (Guangzhou), the Department of Anthropology (specialization—archaeology). He graduated from the university in 1985. In 1991, Chen Xingcan defended his doctoral (PhD) thesis, which he prepared under the supervision of a distinguished Chinese archaeologist, Professor An Zhimin, at the Department of Archaeology of the Graduate School of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS). At present, Chen Xingcan has returned to the above-mentioned universities as a professor, to help fostering new experts. He is also a full-time professor at the Oriental Archaeology Research Center of Shandong University (Jinan, Qingdao) and a visiting professor at Jilin University (Changchun). He is the head of one of the China's most famous archaeological museums, the Yinxu Museum in Anyang.

In 1991, Chen Xingcan joined the Institute of Archaeology CASS. He worked his way from the Research Assistant to the Director of the Institute (since 2017). In 2018, Chen Xingcan was elected a full member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. His research interests include the study of sites from the Mesolithic to the Late Bronze Age. Since 1983, he has participated in fieldworks in more than a dozen provinces and autonomous regions of China. In the 1990s, Chen Xingcan undertook his internship and was involved in research works at a number of major foreign universities—Harvard University (Boston, USA), La Trobe University (Melbourne, Australia) and Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, Canada). He has also visited Russia for scientific purposes. In particular, he was a guest of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography SB RAS, and has published articles in Russian journals (*Archaeology, Ethnography and Anthropology of Eurasia, Vestnik NGU. Series: History and Philology*).

Chen Xingcan pays special attention to the evidence of the transition from the Late Neolithic to the Early Metal



Age, since it was at that time that the main civilizational centers on the territory of China were formed. The researcher supervises the section "Society and Spiritual Culture" in the national program "Research on the Origin of Chinese Civilization". He led the following major international projects: "Settlement Types and Environmental Changes on the Zhudingyuan Plateau", "Settlement Types and the Origin of Chinese Civilization", and "Control and Use of Natural Resources in the Early Chinese States". The projects were implemented with the involvement of archaeologists from Harvard University and La Trobe University. As part of these projects, stationary excavations of the sites of the specified period were carried out in Henan Province (Beiyangping, Xipo, Huizui, etc.).

Academician Chen Xingcan has published a number of prominent studies devoted to the methodology of archaeological research and historiography. The

researcher focuses on the socio-economic and ecological reconstruction of life of ancient societies on the basis of archaeological findings. Many of his works describe the issues of agrarian economy and its development (in particular, the domestication of buffalo as the main draft animal, the initiation and spread of rice farming). Among the best-known publications of the scholar are the following: “Study on History of Prehistoric Archaeology in China (1895–1949)” (1997), “Archaeological Essays” (in three parts, 2002, 2010, 2020), “State Formation in Early China” (2003; co-authored by Prof. Liu Li), “China Before China: Johan Gunnar Andersson, Ding Wenjiang, and the Discovery of China’s Prehistory” (2004; co-authored by M. Fiskesjö), “Collection of Articles on the History of Archaeological Research in China in the 20th Century” (2009), “Chinese Classical Archaeology Intensive” (2019; co-authored by Prof. Li Boqian), and others. He also acted as the Editor-in-Chief of the “Complete Collection of Painted Pottery Unearthed in China” in ten volumes (2021).

In 2012, the book “The Archaeology of China: From the Late Paleolithic to the Early Bronze Age” was published. It was co-authored by Chen Xingcan and Liu Li, a Stanford University professor. The book largely

replaced a well-known monograph “The Archaeology of Ancient China” by Kwang-chih Chang (Zhang Guangzhi), which had served as a basic source of knowledge on the Chinese archaeology for the Western scholars for several decades. In 2017, an expanded Chinese edition of the book was published in Beijing. The authors received the Shanghai Archaeology Forum Award in the category “Research” in the same year.

Academician Chen has been active in scientific-organizational and social-political work. Since October 2023, he has been the Executive Director of the Archaeological Society of China. He is also a member of the editorial boards of some of the most important archaeological and social academic journals published in China and abroad. In January 2023, Chen Xingcan was elected to the 14th National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference.

We wish Academician Chen Xingcan further success in creative pursuits so that his star will keep shining brightly in the firmament of the archaeological science.

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