





## A brief biography of Prof. WU Peng-Cheng

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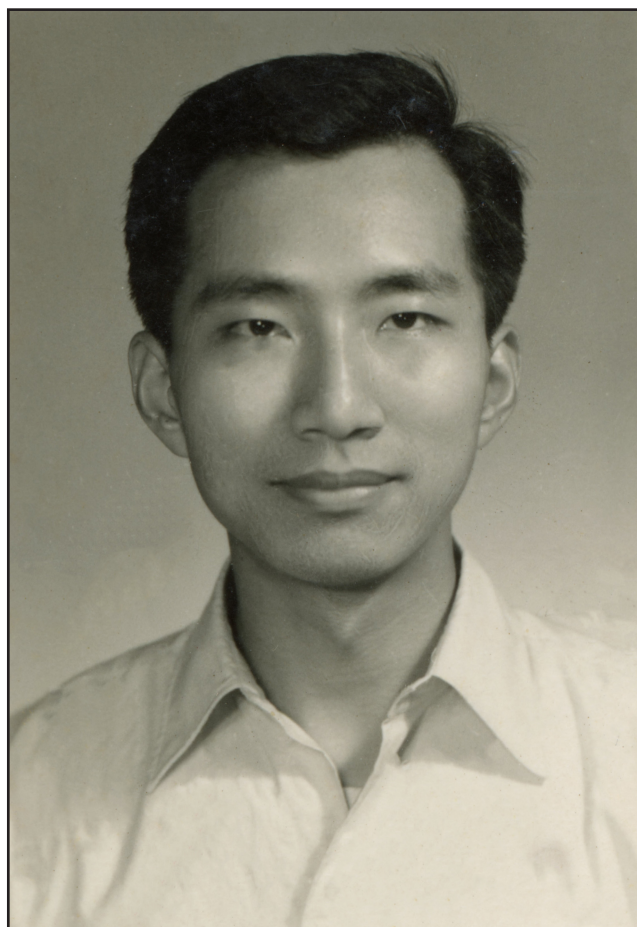
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WU Peng-Cheng was born on June 5, 1935 in Haining, Zhejiang Province, as the second child among three siblings. In 1937, his parents relocated their entire family to Shanghai to escape the war. During his childhood, he was often ill, but his life was relatively comfortable as his father was a dentist. At the age of 17, he was admitted to the Department of Biology at Fudan University in Shanghai, a top institution in China.

In 1956, Prof. Wu graduated from Fudan University (Figure 1) and was assigned to work in Beijing at the Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences (IBCAS). Considering the development of the botanical discipline, Prof. Wu was further assigned to study bryophyte taxonomy. At that time, despite his limited understanding of bryophytes, he was aware that this field was relatively small and challenging, so he was not prepared to devote himself to it. While hesitating, he met Prof. Chen Pan-Chieh (1907–1970), the founder of Chinese bryology. Their conversation inspired Prof. Wu and made him determine to devote himself to bryology. He received strict and comprehensive training under the guidance of Prof. Chen, and assisted Prof. Chen in his work for nearly ten years, including the compilation of the *Genera Muscorum Sinicorum* (1963, 1978).



**FIGURE 1.** A photo of Prof. Wu when he just graduated from university in 1956. Photographer: A photo studio staff member.

In the early stage of Prof. Wu's career, he studied the bryoflora of Mt. Huangshan in East China and the taxonomy of epiphyllous liverworts from South China, publishing two high-quality papers that still important references in the field today (Chen & Wu 1964, 1965).

Afterwards, his bryophyte research unexpectedly stalled, and he was assigned to work as a doctor in the infirmary of IBCAS where he remained for eleven years. Although he participated in bryophyte research on a few occasions during this period (Figure 2), it was not until 1978 that Prof. Wu officially returned this field, and continued his mentor's unfinished cause.



**FIGURE 2.** Prof. Wu in the field investigation in Hainan province in 1977, along with other pioneers in the early development of Chinese bryology. Photographer: A fieldwork guide.

Since then, Prof. Wu, as one of the key bryologists in China, organized the series of the *Flora Bryophytorum Sinicorum* (12 volumes, two remain to be published) and the *Moss Flora of China English Edition* (8 volumes), and conducted taxonomic revisions of some problematic taxa, such as Neckeraceae, Lejeuneaceae and Thuidiaceae. He also sorted out the standard use of Chinese terminology in bryology. To this day, he published a wealth of achievements, including approximately 30 books, 130 papers and over a thousand bryophyte line-drawings. He organized or participated in dozens of field expeditions across China, including seven collaborative expeditions with foreign experts, and collected more than 30,000 specimens of bryophytes, with majority stored at PE and a smaller



number at other herbaria, such as H, NICH, NY and MO. In 1993, Prof. Wu proposed and established the Bryological Committee of the Chinese Botanical Society, prompting collaboration and exchange.



**FIGURE 3.** Prof. Wu with domestic and foreign colleagues in IBCAS in 1983. Photographer: Si-Yu Wang.



**FIGURE 4.** Prof. Wu with foreign colleagues at the Missouri Botanical Garden in 1985. Photographer: Mei-Zhi Wang.





**FIGURE 5.** Prof. Wu at the Chinese University of Hong Kong to complete the Hepatic Flora of Hong Kong in 1997. Photographer: Lin Wu, Professor Wu's niece.



**FIGURE 6.** Prof. Wu at the International Bryological Symposium in Nanjing in 2005. Photographer: A conference staff member.





**FIGURE 7.** Prof. Wu with Mamtimin Sulayman (Xinjiang University) and Hironori Deguchi (Hiroshima University) in 2005. Photographer forgotten.



**FIGURE 8.** Prof. Wu and his wife, with the date and location forgotten. Photographer forgotten.



He established comprehensive collaborations with foreign bryologists, hosting over 100 scholars from approximately 20 countries (Figure 3). In 1983, he led the first delegation of Chinese bryologists to Tokyo to attend the World Bryological Congress, where he gave a presentation entitled “*Fifty years of Chinese Bryology*”. Prof. Wu visited multiple herbaria, either alone or in a group, in Finland, Japan, Russia and United States (Figures 4, 5). He was also the organizer or co-organizer of three international bryological conferences held in China (Figures 6, 7), including the *IAB Symposium on 2000’s Bryology* in Beijing in 1997.

Professor Wu officially recruited only two graduate students, HU Xiao-Yun and JIA Yu (the former did not engage in bryophyte study after graduation, Figure 8). However, he has guided or trained more than ten in-service personnel, such as WANG Mei-Zhi (IBCAS), HE Si (Missouri Botanical Garden), HE Xiaolan (University of Helsinki) and MAMTIMIN Sulayman (Xinjiang University; Figure 7). After retirement, he is also keen on communicating with younger bryologists; especially when they show curiosity about the predecessors, he will talk endlessly about the past.

Professor Wu is passionate about and devotes a lot of energy to bryophyte research, often putting work before family. He has only one child, a daughter, who has long married and settled in the United States, thus being away from Prof. Wu for a long time. His wife has always taken care of his daily life and often participated in team dinners (Figures 8, 9). However, she passed away due to illness in the autumn of 2020.

Professor Wu has seen the birth and flourishing of bryology in China. At the age of 90, he still comes to work every day, mainly to compile the last two volumes of the *Flora Bryophytorum Sinicorum*. When it comes to bryophytes, he remains energetic, with endless stories to tell and work plans to discuss.



**FIGURE 9.** Prof. Wu with his wife and team members after lunch at a Russian restaurant in Beijing in 2009. Photographer: A restaurant staff member.



## Scientific Contributions of Prof. WU Peng-Cheng

### Books

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