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Deeply mourn the memory of my supervisor, Professor Peiji Chen

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Prof. Peiji Chen
16.03.1936–09.07.2019

Professor Peiji Chen, an internationally renowned paleontologist, passed away in Xi'an at 4:30 a.m. on July 9, 2019, at the age of 83.

Prof. Peiji Chen was born on March 16, 1936 in Xi'an City, Shaanxi Province, northwestern China. At the beginning of his education, he studied in Qishan East Street Primary School. Then he transferred to the First Provincial Experimental Primary School in Xi'an. In 1949, he passed the entrance examination, and entered the First Provincial Middle School in Xi'an, which is now the Xi'an Middle School. In 1955, he passed the national unified university entrance examination, and began to study palaeontology and stratigraphy in the Department of Geology, Beijing University. He graduated from Beijing University in 1960, and became employed at the Institute of Palaeontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, *i.e.*, now the Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology, Chinese Academy of Sciences, to begin his academic professional career on the study of fossil clam shrimps (Chen & Shen, 1981, 1985; Shen & Chen, 1984; Chen, 1994; Chen *et al.*, 2007; Chen, 2012; Li *et al.*, 2014), tadpole shrimps (Chen, 1985), the branchiopod extinct order Kazacharthra (Chen & Zhou, 1985; Chen *et al.*, 1996) and non-marine Mesozoic stratigraphy (Chen & Chang, 1994; Chen, 2003a, b; Li *et al.*, 2004; Chen *et al.*, 2005; Wan *et al.*, 2007). It has been 65 years since he began to study geology in Beijing University. He was an internship researcher, an Assistant Professor, an Associate Professor and a Full Professor. He also once served as an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Geology, Beijing University and Northwestern University.

Prof. Peiji Chen has been engaged in the fields of palaeontology, stratigraphy, palaeogeography, palaeobiogeography, palaeoenvironment and plate tectonic movement over the years. He published more than 160 academic papers, monographs and edited memoirs. He was rigorous in his study, and had a sharp mind; many of his research results won national, provincial and ministerial awards. Among them, the "Fossil Conchostraca of China" (Zhang *et al.*, 1976), co-authored with his supervisor Prof. Wentang Zhang and junior fellow apprentice Prof. Yanbin Shen, completed the foundation work on taxonomy of fossil clam shrimps from China. It won the second prize of the National Natural Science Progress, this achievement has been widely used and recognized by the international academic circles. "Biostratigraphy and geological evolution in Tarim Basin" (Zhou & Chen, 1990), compiled in co-operation with Prof. Zhiyi Zhou, won the first prize of the Natural Science and Technology Progress of Chinese Academy of Sciences. "An outline of palaeogeography during the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods of China—with a discussion on the origin of the Yangtze river" (Chen, 1979) won the fourth prize of the Jiangsu Provincial Science and Technology Progress. He

had long been committed to the study of the Jehol Biota, and his achievements in the study of the Jehol Biota and its stratigraphy have won the first prize for scientific and technological progress in Jiangsu Province (Chen, 1999a; Chen & Jin, 1999). He had an original opinion on many important scientific problems, such as the evolution and migration of the Jehol Biota (Chen, 1988a, 1999b, Chang *et al.*, 2001, 2003), the large horizontal displacement age of the Tanlu fault (Chen, 1988b, c), the collision between Tarim-South China block and North China block (Chen & Norling, 1994), and the uplift of coastal mountains of southeastern China and the desertification and salinization of lakes in Central China during the Late Cretaceous (Chen, 1997).

Prof. Chen, a researcher who had been active in the international Cretaceous academic circle, was invited to study the palaeontology of fossil clam shrimps in the United Kingdom, Japan, Australia and Harvard University in the United States (Chen & Hudson, 1991; Chen *et al.*, 1993; Chen, 1996; Chen & Suzuki, 1998). Since his first visit to the Uppsala University in Sweden in 1981 to attend the Seventh International Colloquium on the mid-Cretaceous Events, he was constantly active in the forefront of domestic and international Cretaceous research, known by his colleagues as "Cretaceous Chen". He went abroad 36 times in 23 years, visiting 24 countries and regions. In cooperation with the Ministry of Petroleum Industry, he organized two large-scale national meetings on the Cretaceous of South and North China, respectively. He co-operated with Dr. N. Mateer and co-edited the IGCP 245 project of "Non-marine Cretaceous Correlation" (Mateer & Chen, 1988). In addition, he acted as the Chinese regional coordinator of IGCP 350 "Cretaceous Environmental Change in East and South Asia" and IGCP 434 "Land-Ocean Interactions of Carbon Cycle and Bio-Diversity Change during the Cretaceous in Asia". In 1987, he organized the First International Symposium of IGCP 245 in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China. In 1996, during the 30th International Geological Congress, he organized the Fourth International Symposium of IGCP 350 in Beijing. In 1994, as a guest editor, he compiled a special issue of "Cretaceous research in China" in the international academic journal "Cretaceous Research", which made the Chinese Cretaceous research team one of the most advanced in the world. From 1997 to 2000, he presided over the research project "The Jehol Biota", which was supported by a major fund of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and a key fund of the National Natural Science Foundation of China. In co-operation with Zhiming Dong and Shuonan Zhen, he published a paper in "Nature" in 1998 "An exceptionally well-preserved theropod dinosaur from the Yixian Formation of China" (Chen *et al.*, 1998). The taxonomic revision of "*Sinosauropteryx*"

was conducted there. This clarifies that *Sinosauroptryx* is not a bird, nor a direct ancestor of birds, but a theropod dinosaur with a body covered by primitive feathers. This article has been widely cited and reported by scientific journals and news media in home land and abroad, and was awarded the “Classical Citation Award” by ISI in Beijing on 25 September 2000. This is one of the 213 most influential papers, selected from 200,000 accepted Chinese papers published by SCI and SSCI journals in the 18 years from 1981 to 1998. It was also the only selected paper in the field of Geoscience and Biology in China at that time.

Prof. Peiji Chen actively participated in academic organizations, served as a council member and the Deputy Secretary General of the Chinese Palaeontological Association, a member of the Chinese National Association of Science and Technology, the Vice Chairman of the Mesozoic Branch of the Chinese National Stratigraphic Committee and the leader of Chinese Cretaceous Working Group. He had long-served as editorial board members of academic journals, such as “Science in China”, “Chinese Science Bulletin”, “Chinese Palaeontology”, “Journal of Stratigraphy”, and the international journal “Cretaceous Research”. He also actively supervised many students to provide talent reserve for our palaeontology and stratigraphy.

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