PERSONAL PROFILE

Zhang Bingxi, IUGS Vice-President and the first member of the Union's executive from his country, belongs to the small group of Chinese geologists who studied in the West in the years immediately following the Second World War. Like many senior Chinese scientists of his generation his career has combined research, teaching and administration. Indeed when questioned about his responsibilities he confesses to being "rather confused myself." As Chief "Engineer" (Geologist) in the Department of Sciences and Technology of the Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources, Dr. Zhang acknowledges that his title "sounds administrative enough, but I have to visit field parties frequently to see the geology, and to collect specimens. I also make laboratory examinations together with geologists of the young generation, discussing with them, giving advice, direction and sometimes lectures."

Chang Ping-hsi, as his name was written before 1979, developed an interest in geology when he was in "middle school" in Beijing, then Peking. He subsequently studied geology at Peking University, and after graduation during the war years he worked as a teaching assistant in the same department. At this time he also carried out geological reconnaissance mapping in many districts of Yunnan with special interests in petrology, mineralogy, structural geology and ore deposits.

From 1946 to 1950 with the help of a Tsinghua University scholarship, he carried out post-graduate work in the Department of Mineralogy at Harvard University, earning his A.M. degree in 1948. Two years later he was awarded a Ph.D. for his thesis on the structure and metamorphism of the Bridgewater-Woodstock area of Vermont. These post-war years were exciting, for Harvard was full of veterans and there were many foreign students from Canada and South America and even a few from Europe, all linked by their hatred of war and their determination to work hard.

Upon his return to China in September 1950, Dr. Zhang became an Associate Professor in the Department of Geology, Beijing University. Two years later, the Government reorganized the universities in order to cope more effectively with the demand for specialists to take part in the big push for China's reconstruction. As a result, the Beijing College of Geology was established out of the existing geology departments of several of the older universities in North China, including Beijing, Qinghua, Beiyang and Tangshan. Dr. Zhang became Professor and Chairman of the Department of Geology and Exploration of Mineral Resources of the new College, teaching courses on mineral deposits. At that time, the Beijing College also contained five other Departments: Geology and Field Mapping, Geology and Exploration of Oil and Gas, Hydrogeology and Engineering Geology, Geophysical Exploration, and Exploration Engineering. The total enrollment around 1960 was close to 6,000. Later, in the early 1970s the college moved to Hubei Province to become the Wuhan College of Geology, with its graduate school remaining in Beijing (see article by Chi Ji-Shang, in *Episodes*, 1982/4, p. 26-27).

In 1960, a switch in career came for Dr. Zhang with his appointment as Chief Engineer in the Department of Geology and Mineral Resources of the Ministry of Geology. In this capacity he took charge of exploration for and geological work on uranium, rare metals, and special non-metallics such as diamond and piezo-quartz. It was during this period that primary diamonds were first discovered in China. Then in 1972 his international work began in earnest when he became advisor to the Chinese Delegation to the Law of the Sea Conference, continuing in this position until 1975.

Zhang Bingxi

IUGS Vice President

This side of Dr. Zhang's career blossomed when from 1980 to 1982, he was Chief of the Natural Resources Division of ESCAP. The Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific is a powerful UN agency based in Bangkok, which plays a leading role in developmental activities in the region. The Natural Resource Division assists member countries in the exploration, assessment, development and management of their water, mineral and energy resources. Among the special arms of ESCAP are CCOP, described elsewhere in this issue by Chung and Ten Cate, and the Regional Mineral Resources Development Center in Bandung. As a member of these groups, China has played an active role in recent years, especially through its co-sponsorship of ESCAP's international symposia on tungsten deposits (1981), remote sensing (1984), and tin deposits (1984).

Dr. Zhang sees a vast potential for cooperation between IUGS and ESCAP, "provided we can find sufficient financial support and formulate good enough programs." As regards the relationship between IUGS and China, "I should think there exists an objective in common, to promote the advancement of geological sciences. China is a developing country on the way to modernization, and Chinese geologists are fully loaded with important tasks, both academic and practical. Many problems in Chinese geology are of global significance, so that close cooperation with IUGS will certainly benefit not only Chinese but also other geologists." Indeed Chinese geoscientists are active in many Commissions and affiliates of IUGS, as well as in many IGCP and ILP projects. With the current open policy of the Chinese Government, Dr. Zhang says he "would be very glad to make every effort to strengthen the link between China and IUGS."

Following his "retirement" from ESCAP, Dr. Zhang returned once more to the Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources as Chief Geologist in its Department of Sciences and Technology, where he also acts as Vice-Chairman of its Advisory Committee. His main duties as Chief Geologist are to review the scientific programs of the Department, to advise on new activities, and to participate in the many conferences of both the Ministry and the Geological Society of China. He also chairs the organizing committees for various international symposia held in China, and especially those co-sponsored by ESCAP. Elected to the *Academia Sinica* in 1981, Dr. Zhang continues as Councillor of the Geological Society of China and the Association of Continuing Engineering Education of China.

Zhang Bingxi's varied experiences have led him rather understandably more and more into the study of history, for "it seems to me that in order to understand the present world, one has to look back into the past - just the reverse of the doctrine 'the present is the key to the past'. Perhaps we have to combine these two opposites into a more comprehensive approach." In a fitting counterpoint to his very full career, Dr. Zhang has now become a practitioner of Taijiquan - Chinese shadow boxing!

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