

Historical Note – Dr. Chin Chum Li

1989 interview by Sherret Spaulding Chase (SSC) with Dr. Chin Chum Li – population geneticist (1912-2003)

The interview took place October 24, 1989, in the office of Dr. C. C. Li, Professor in the Graduate School of Public Health, Department of Biostatistics, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15261; population geneticist, Cornell graduate, and contemporary of Dr. C. H. Li. Recorded and transcribed with the assistance of my daughter, Alice R. Chase Robeson.

The purpose of this meeting with Dr. C. C. Li was not to interview him on his own experience but to seek his advice on how best to advance my nomination of Dr. C. H. Li (Li Jing Xiong, 1913-1997) for the World Food Prize. Both C. C. Li and C. H. Li had their careers interrupted by Lysenkoism and I was concerned that I not create further problems for C. H. Li by my recommendation. C. H. Li) directly enabled the feeding of about 100 million Chinese by pioneering the breeding and production of China-adapted hybrid maize. His accomplishments are today well-known in China; a statue has been raised to him at the Agricultural University in Beijing. He opposed Lysenkoism at a crucial national meeting (see also Master of Arts thesis, Alice R. Chase (Robeson), "The influence of Lysenkoism on China's genetics: the importance of the Qingdao symposium," 1993, Library of the University of Maryland Baltimore County). He is a hero of the current generation of crop breeders. For more concerning C. H. Li's accomplishments, see *Crop Science* 39:1-3, 1999.

CCL: I'm seventy-seven; I retired in 1982, so this is almost seven full years. This coming January will be my eighth year of retirement and they would not let me have the office much longer. Occasionally I publish small papers; I am still reading some things and writing some things. It is hard to change my life – a whole life's habits. When I think – sometimes I like to write a small paper. My wife is here and I have only one son and one daughter.

The best single paper on Chinese Lysenkoism is this paper [Genetics in China: The Qingdao Symposium of 1956]. This is by a woman, P. Li (Li Pei shan). She is working at the Institute of Natural Sciences History of China. She is about seventy years old; I never met her. When I was in Beijing, she was a graduate student in biochemistry and later she joined this Institute. According to this description, she was also at Qingdao – she knows the conference very much in detail.

The most important point she makes is this: in 1956, Chairman Mao declared a new policy – "let one hundred flowers bloom, let one hundred schools of thought contend." Now, this has a double hundred meaning. What I did not know is why he proclaimed this policy. One of the reasons behind it is genetics. He assigned a number of people to study the problem. He knew the story about me. He said, C. C. Li left Beijing University simply because of his disagreement with genetics, but why? Mao appointed a number of people to investigate the problem; the people [investigating] are not geneticists, they are Party [Chinese Communist Party] people. Li Pei shan was one of these people and her boss – Yu Guang yuan – who recently was arrested, he is also in his seventies. These are all Party members – but Mao wanted to study this.

The Party members have this advantage – they have all of the Soviet literature. All of Lysenko's paper, speeches, meetings – the information was all shipped to China. Remember the timing. Lysenko enjoys the highest power in 1948. In 1948, that big meeting at the Academy of Agricultural Sciences [in Russia] – it was at that meeting Lysenko announced that "my speech was approved by the Central Committee of the Communist Party." And China was liberated in 1949. See the timing – very close. In 1949, there are a number of Soviet Lysenkoists visiting China. They begin to tell us what to do – and how to do it. They are teaching and directing – the result is not good. Such as cotton: we in China have been breeding cotton for years before Lysenko. The Lysenkoists said – cotton should be dense planted. The cotton plant is quite big. We said – the distance between the plants should be two feet and between rows should be more

than three feet – so that you get flowers and cotton. The Lysenkoists said – no, there is no competition between members of a species, they are brothers. The planting was dense; the result was a lot of leaves, no cotton. Foolish things like that!

But anyway, the Chinese Party committee studied the problem; I've heard they made a report stating that there were serious problems with Lysenko. This is hard to track down from Party people. Only the Party can convince Chairman Mao. If I explain to Chairman Mao, he would probably say "you are an American spy. I cannot trust you!" This has to be done by Party people. The Party people, Yu (Yu Guang yuan) and Li (Li Pei shan) and all have seen these doubts about Lysenko. Although they are not geneticists, they read Lysenko's stuff and they read our stuff and realize there is no comparison. It is due to this that they urge Mao to let the Mendelians present their stories. This is why "the hundred schools can contend." At least, "we cannot persecute them" – as is what happened in Russia.

Now, how to implement this one hundred flowers bloom policy? They suggested one way to implement this policy is to call a conference. Let the Lysenkoists and the classical geneticists all come to the same room and debate; with no persecution under the conditions there; nobody can be called an American spy – we will just talk about genetics. Such a meeting was called – at Qingdao in Shandong in eastern China, in August of 1956. This meeting played an important part in the double hundred policy – a hundred flowers bloom at this meeting, a hundred schools contend at this meeting. There are a number of people who were absent; I don't know why. C. H. Li was there. But I know several other prominent geneticists who were not there. And the Lysenkoists' leader was not there either.

This is the historical background – this article by Li Pei shan is the most complete article in English that I know of. The English literature is this article and Laurence Schneider's "Learning from Russia: Lysenkoism and the Fate of Genetics in China, 1950-1986." They are all I know. The others are mine. This is my report in 1961 at the AAAS (American Association for the Advancement of Science) – they wanted me to review this. The National Science Foundation and several other universities at that time began to exchange scientific literature with China. Finally, they accumulated several tons of literature, mostly in Chinese. They do not know what to do. Their solution is to distribute it to various people for them to review and to hold a symposium. About genetics – they found me. They sent me about this much [hand gesture indicating an immense stack]. I could not find this stack now – this was about thirty years ago. This is the only report in English about the activities of the Lysenkoists in China. And I wrote a review of the Qingdao conference proceedings; that is, I wrote a book review of this, Schneider's booklet. And this is my book review in the Journal of Heredity. I outline and review the major outline of the debate at the meeting – a straight-forward review of the several topics, and how useful the Marxism and Leninism philosophy is to natural science. They say that you can get guidance – if you study Leninism, you can find the right experimental material and select the right method. This paper [held in hand] came out last week. This is a University of Pittsburgh staff writer, David A. Petechuk, who wrote about my life and my difficulty with Lysenkoism in China.

And now we come to this question – you know the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to a monk leader in Tibet, the Dalai Lama. To this information, the Beijing government reacted very strongly. First they protested – they called the Norwegian ambassador in Beijing to their Ministry of Foreign Affairs and protested – "what are you people doing?" The ambassador explained to them that the government cannot control the Nobel Prize committee – that committee is an independent committee. It is not a government agency – the government has no control over it. If the Nobel Prize committee decides the award goes to Mister A, it goes to Mister A. The government has no say about it. This the Communist Party did not believe; in China, everything is decided by the party; what do you mean – that what your people did, your government cannot control? Later on, the Chinese communists protested again. They said, since the award was announced, nothing could be done about that now – but in December when there is the ceremony of giving the award, government officials, especially the king of Norway, cannot attend. This the Nobel Prize committee cannot accept. They said, from the very first year, during the awarding

ceremony – the government officials and the king attend. So, the Chinese do not know how to solve this – their way of thinking is extremely anti-foreign.

Do you know the name of that rich man in New York? He is a Jewish person from Eastern Europe. He donated one million dollars per year – not just one million dollars – to subsidize some publications and some research work in the social sciences. Now, every Chinese scholar can come to the United States; and they can do their research in China. This money supports the research, supports the publication, so forth. Those who received the grant from this organization have all been arrested! The government says, you are all CIA spies! Why this money is not from the CIA. I forgot the name [George Soros]; he threatened to sue the Chinese government. He said, that is my money! He not only gave to China; he gave money to Hungary, Poland, to every country where they do not support social research. Anybody who receives help from the United States will be investigated; not necessarily put in jail – but the government will watch; they will interfere.

Of this I am afraid; if we nominate C. H. Li this year, at this time, it is more likely to cause him trouble than honor.

[SSC indicates here that the initiating nomination of C. H. Li has already been made by the president of the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences and has been seconded by several key Chinese individuals.]

CCL: I did not know that; this then is all right! He was nominated in China! We are just helping, with a seconding nomination. This is OK – I thought that this was without the consent of the Chinese authority.

CCL: Since this is initiated by the Chinese side, we can second; yes, yes – we can second. I wouldn't dare initiate him, since their reactions might be negative. We mean to honor this man – the communists might take it otherwise. Yes, this is OK I think; yes, this is OK.

SSC: This is still a question – nominations for the World Food Prize are to be made by organizations. In addition to the Academy of Agriculture nomination from China, there are organizations/companies which would or will nominate him. Do you think it would be better for the U.S. nominators to simply reinforce the Chinese nomination? Separately, I am listed by the Academy of Agriculture as a seconding individual nominator.

CCL: Yes – a seconder, a supporter; that's fine. That's fine so far. In addition to that, you want organizations – in this country? On the phone you mentioned an association of corn geneticists?

SSC: Well, the company that I worked for is where this started. ... Now, Pioneer has had a number of scientists in their top administration. William Brown became the president and later chairman of the board. His junior is Don Duvick and Duvick is now, my guess, a candidate to be president in the next round. I will be in touch with him next week, if possible. He was out of the country. When I get back myself, I will approach him about the possibility – it would be interesting if the Pioneer organization would endorse this nomination also. They already have an association with Dr. C. H. Li. Pioneer hybrids are already being tested in China. Again, this political business worries me. For example, would it be better for a U.S. nominating organization to be a primary nominator or should they endorse – second – the nomination of the Academy? Of course, a U.S. group might not even know, at this stage, that there will be an initiating nomination from the Academy.

CCL: Everything in China is political – there is no such thing as the individual.

SSC: I was wondering if you could give me some idea of the sorts of difficulties that C. H. Li faced during his career. I know he has faced many difficulties. I have a picture of him as a young man,

carrying a little pot of millet, of *Setaria* [actually a wheat-rye hybrid, *Triticale*!]. Apparently, he was moving in advance of the Japanese. He wanted to save his research material – for further cytogenetic study. That was the period of the Japanese takeover. And later, just as he went back home after his period of graduate studies in the United States, the communists took over. There was that period of turmoil; then Lysenkoism came in. Then there have been a number of other changes, then the Red Guards and the period where intellectuals were “sent down” to work in the country - “to learn from the peasants.” He too went down to the country to work. He worked rather well, he was used to working with his own hands on the land with the peasants and was able to continue his corn breeding work successfully, but he still was forced “to go down.” I was just wondering if you could list the sort of challenges which he must have had to overcome in order to function.

CCL: The details of course I have no way of knowing, but I know his general attitude. His general attitude reflected very well at the Qingdao meeting [the decisive Qingdao conference in 1956]. C. C. Tan spoke several times at the conference; every time he emphasized that the two schools of geneticists should get together and compromise, “we should learn from each other.” First, he said, “The Lysenko School and the Morgan School are both very young; so, the two young schools should get together and learn from each other.” He spoke along this line three times and finally, according to the meeting report, two conferees – one is C. H. Li and one is Wu (whom I also know) – Wu Zhongjian – were against this philosophy, and against C. C. Tan’s suggestion. They said there could be no compromise. C. H. Li said “what precisely do you mean by compromise? You accept half of Lysenko and let them accept half of a gene? Precisely what do you mean by compromise? In all natural sciences, there is only one language. And there is only one truth. I don’t want to fight, but I don’t understand what you mean by compromise.” So, I know C. H. Li’s attitude is tough, very tough. Both C. H. Li and Wu, an animal geneticist – here I marked it off for you – Wu and C. H. Li stood their ground. We were together in the same department for a short period because, when the communists came, three agricultural colleges – Beijing University; the Agricultural Institute of Tsing Hua; and the Communist Agricultural College – all three merged into one. They became the Independent Beijing Agricultural University. At that time, Li and I were in the same department. This was in 1949 and 1950. Since I was under attack, we couldn’t get together and talk. That was forbidden. If you are under investigation, you are socially isolated. You see nobody and nobody sees you. So, I couldn’t see him.

You see, this is a communist tragedy. It is very interesting. When the communists want to attack something, they always pick a target. They are not against all geneticists, because there are too many of them. They concentrate on one, and if they can liquidate this one, then all the others would be quiet. And the one they choose is me – because I was the Department Head of Agronomy. I was teaching genetics and biometry. I was also the Director of the Agricultural Experimental Station. Li was not – and the other geneticists were in the Academy of Sciences. They had nothing to do with agriculture, so they chose me. During that period, all these people have to stay away from me. And at that, I have a choice – I can turn over; I can change my color; I can say Lysenko’s genetics is new, progressive – it is the ultimate truth; all Morgan stuff is reactionary. I could have said that. If I said that – I could have kept my position. I would probably have other good jobs too. But I just could not say that. To say something against your own – what you understand to be true, it is very difficult. Without knowing it, I got myself in an argument – once, twice, we argued all night and the communists say, “Li is hopeless. Now we have to get rid of him; he is resistant to learning.” That means I do not learn new things!

One old Party member by the name of Chang [he died several years ago] was an associate professor and also a Party member. He was sent to see me after supper. I knew there was something – after supper we talked over a pot of tea. We talked until midnight, his suggestion is - “Dr. Li, you just recant.” Recant means I criticize myself, say I was wrong in everything; from now on I will be a new man and learn new things. He said, you simply recant and your problem is over. We will not get you anymore if you recant; on the other hand ... As a Party member and as a colleague, he was an associate professor in Veterinary Sciences – he

knew genetics. That's why they sent him over to see me. He said, if you don't, you will force the Party to do something. I will feel sorry for you. And his final question to me, "you tell me why you are so confident of this Mendelian ratio business?" I said, "Take the human group – if the mother is of a certain group and the father of a certain group, we know what are the possible groups for the children, and the impossible groups. If the child belongs to an impossible group, I can say – your wife has another man. This is a very serious accusation, but I have no other choice. I can say this, because I have this much confidence in Mendelian Law." Chang's color changed and he said, "You say that, that's almost hopeless." He stayed almost all night, because that was his mission. Probably the best thing for me to do was recant – but that was the last straw. After that – I knew I had to get out. Yes, yes – no more compromise.

SSC: How did you get out?

CCL: I really couldn't say goodbye. I made up my own mind. I didn't even tell my wife during my planning stage. I just sat in my office and thought it out myself. I had no underground – we had no connection with an underground. I did everything myself. This was taking a big chance. First, I had to wait until a time when I had an excuse to travel – my family home was in Shanghai and in the winter time, when the semester is over, we had about three weeks winter vacation. That covers Christmas and Chinese New Year – between the end of the first semester and start of the second semester. My mother was in the hospital. I wrote a letter to the Dean saying, "Since this was the three-week vacation, I want to go to Shanghai to see my mother." They didn't suspect anything. In China, when your mother is sick and you want to see your mother, the reason is very strong. This was the first thing – to choose the proper time. The second thing – willingness to sacrifice my home. I did not pack. If there had been any packing, they would say, "This is only a short train trip, why bother to pack?" Only two days before leaving did I tell my wife. I said "Don't take anything." We sacrificed everything. "Just you and me – we want to save the people, not the things." I suggested, "I will put up a picture of Mao on the wall," but she disapproved of that – said that was overdoing it. Finally, I did not pack anything – the curtains, the carpeting; the most important thing we left was the rice. I had a big bag of rice. All was left there – my bags, my books, the rice – everything as if nothing had been touched. [SSC : The bag of rice has special importance. To reduce peasant fear of starvation, the communist government required that each household store sufficient grain for one year.]

Early in the morning we went. I had bought the tickets. So, early in the morning we called a rickshaw and we went to the train station. I didn't say goodbye to anyone. I told only two people. One was Lin – I knew he wouldn't sell me out. That was at one o'clock in the morning. When I knocked on their door, they came out in pajamas – very annoyed. "Do you know what time it is!" I said, "I know we are intruding, but I have only one thing to say: I'm not going to see you anymore. Yes, I'm leaving tomorrow."

It is this way I got off. I got to Shanghai. My mother was very happy to see me at the hospital. I didn't lie. Everything I told them was true. My mother is in the hospital. I went to the hospital. The hospital people told me that I could take my mother back home. There was nothing they could do for her – she may die in a few days; she may not die. So, the next day, I took my mother to my father's home in Shanghai. Then, I said to my mother, "I am leaving tomorrow." My mother disliked that very much – "you haven't been home for several years; you just got home and you want to leave tomorrow!" I said, "I have my reasons." I told them, people will come into your house to search for me. The next day, against my mother's wishes, I bought tickets for Canton, and my wife and I then crossed to Hong Kong. My mother and father didn't believe that. After a week, communist agents came – "where is Li Ching Chun?" My mother said he went to Hong Kong. "Left? No, he couldn't be there – he must be here. We know the day he arrived. He couldn't just go away so soon!" "No," she said, "he really left." They searched the house. My Shanghai house had four stories – basement, first floor, second floor, attic – the attic is a full attic with a bedroom. They searched all the way from basement to the attic – they found my old books with my name. "See, all his things are here, so he must be here!" My mother tried to convince

him, "He left and went to Hong Kong empty-handed. He didn't bring anything." They couldn't find me – they staked agents around the house and just watched the house – for two full weeks – and finally they were convinced I was no longer there. Then, they were convinced I was in Hong Kong, they knew somehow – they knew my brother's address in Hong Kong. They wrote to me in Hong Kong and said, "Come back - what you did will not be damaging. You will come back and work as usual – as if nothing happened." Those letters! I didn't answer. They are still trying to get me back. You see – I had no underground connections. I'm just a professor. I told my wife they could have got me anytime. If they had suspected, that first day there would have been agents at the Shanghai Railway Station. It was that easy – they did not think of that. They thought, "They will come back before school opens again." So, one could escape through an underground organization – or on one's own.

There are many prominent people who came out through protection. There were underground organizations – but I didn't have that connection. I just knew their psychology. If I just do this and this and stay 24 hours ahead of them. When their agent got to Hong Kong, I was already there.

This kind of xenophobia; this is a disease. This anti-foreign feeling is definitely a disease. They don't quite realize what western people did for China; they don't appreciate it. They say, you come here, all you want is a fast buck, that's all. But more than that – the thinking that you do.

SSC: How did C. H. Li do inbreeding during the Lysenkoist period, if Lysenko said "inbreeding" is bad? [Lysenko on inbreeding: "The product of inbreeding is less vigorous than the parent, 'degenerate,' therefore, 'evil,' not a 'progressive step'; therefore, prohibited."]

CCL: Concerning inbreeding, during the Lysenko period – maybe during those years 1949-1951, maybe he didn't do inbreeding and maybe he just didn't call it inbreeding.

SSC: He did continue inbreeding of corn – for development of inbred lines.

CCL: Yes, he called it something else. Fortunately, he wasn't the target – he was on the side.

SSC: How could he avoid being a target?

CCL: The target according to my information from the Party, the first was me. The second, after me was Wu, the animal geneticist; he is also anti-Lysenko. He became the number two target. Since I left, everything got quiet, so the movement just stopped. No particular person was chosen as a target anymore. Because of this, they automatically discontinued their course, no teaching and so forth. After I left, there were many, many things too.

SSC: I know; there was a period during which C. H. Li and I wrote letters to each other. Then, it became difficult because of Lysenkoism and political sensitivities for him to write anyone in the United States, and it was also difficult for me because of the effects of McCarthyism in the United States. I was at Iowa State, on the staff then – a pretty conservative place politically. So, we didn't communicate. We lost touch with each other. It wasn't until 1971, when my youngest daughter Alice went to China, that I had a chance to find out whether he was living. [Alice met C. H. Li. Her group was able to interview him and she personally was invited to the village where his research was based to have lunch with him – at which time he showed her a photo he had carried since his Cornell days when he and I were office mates. This photo was of my eldest daughter who was just a baby when C. H. Li returned to China – and clearly was a heart-felt indication of our warm and enduring friendship.]

Since then we have seen each other a number of times. He arranged for Kenny (my wife) and me, as individuals, to be invited over in 1975.

CCL: In 1975? You visited Beijing?

SSC: Well, yes, the corn belt. We were in Beijing and country districts nearby where corn was being grown. We were also in Shansi Province and up in the north, in and near Kirin and Chang Chun. We traveled by train and car; truck and plane. It was a short trip – two very busy weeks, packed full. We did a great deal, but mostly centered on corn – corn breeding, seed production, corn growing, agricultural organizations. [We also became aware that the two “schools” – Lysenkoism and western genetics – were both being supported at that time – were still “contending.” It is interesting that the U.S. Plant Studies Delegation of the National Academy of Sciences in the report of their four-week survey made in August-September 1974 made no mention of the continuing role of Lysenkoism in China. I think the Chinese being considerate hosts, the itinerary was carefully set up to avoid Lysenkoist contacts.]

CCL: Very good – did you visit after that?

SSC: I was back later in Beijing in 1985. I was not able to travel beyond the metropolitan district. I went for a biotechnology conference.

CCL: I don't think there will be any trouble with C. H. Li's nomination.

SSC: I was reassured by this also. The fact that Liu Xu, the vice-president of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences, was enthusiastic early on was one of the main reasons that I have been encouraged to pursue this. I don't know just what – I'm going to have to talk to Edward Williams, coordinator of the Prize, for advice from him as to where to go now. The information that I showed you, though apparently enough for the Chinese nomination, would not be sufficient in this country to qualify a nomination. More background information will be needed. And the Lysenkoist thing is – could be very important to the thinking here – but it is difficult to deal with at the Chinese end.

CCL: We don't mention the Lysenko affair. Yes, you know the recommendation – we just mention his work on corn. We don't mention Lysenko.

SSC: Part of his strength is that he did resist.

CCL: That goes without saying.

SSC: In this country, it does not go without saying.

CCL: In this country, you are right. But if you say so, that will embarrass the Chinese authority. I – my idea is we shouldn't mention Lysenko in our recommendation.

SSC: We could mention the period of difficulty.

CCL: We could take it the other way. He continued to work – on his corn genetics and breeding – that indirectly implies he resisted Lysenkoism. This is what the Soviet corn geneticists did. In 1956 – no – in 1955, before the Chinese have the Qingdao meeting, the Soviet Union has a corn meeting too in 1955. They didn't attack Lysenko; they merely talked about corn genetics and hybrid corn, and it was legitimate, because Khrushchev had visited Iowa and brought hybrid corn back. They said, this is Khrushchev's interest – hybrid corn. So, they used that at the corn genetics meeting, without mentioning Lysenko. It was obviously anti-Lysenko – without saying so.

SSC: How about the period of anti-intellectualism? Intellectuals were sent to the country to work with the peasants. Can that be mentioned?

CCL: Yes, that can be mentioned. That was a general policy whether he was a geneticist or not. Yes, that can be mentioned. And their published things can be mentioned – such as his resistance to compromise at the meeting at Qingdao, that you can mention. That's published record. Communists know that too. Yes, but beyond what the communists publish – we don't mention. At the Qingdao conference – he stood on his own ground. There was no compromise. That I think is strong enough.

SSC: More recently, during the anti-intellectual period, C. H. Li was “sent down” to Shansi Province, near DaZhai, and as far as I can interpret the record, what he did was to continue his corn breeding and develop or work with a group – an experiment station. There he did some of his key breeding work on developing corn inbreds and hybrids resistant to the primary corn diseases of China. There he was working – as he was – with the peasants. This was very appropriate, a creative way. There is no problem in mentioning this, and there could be no problem in going back to the Japanese period – when at great risk and difficulty he saved key breeding material for study [the wheat-rye hybrid].

SSC: You have been very helpful to me today.

CCL: As for me, I was worried that if we didn't do it right, we might get C. H. Li in trouble.

SSC: You know the thing cuts both ways. One of the reasons he is such an attractive candidate this year is that Americans would like to honor a Chinese who is not political, who has done something very important for mankind. And one of the reasons for the timeliness of this nomination is that we are opposed to what the Chinese government has just done to so many of its young leaders.

CCL: Too bad nobody has written a history of Lysenkoism in China. We have several books about Lysenkoism in the Soviet Union.

SSC: I have felt this lack, and that was the reason that last summer I wanted to interview C. H. Li about his experiences. It is very important that his experience be documented and those of others. What Schneider has written is incomplete.

CCL: Very incomplete.

SSC: It is a start.

CCL: At Cornell, there is a geneticist by this name, William Provine. This man studied genetics; now he is also in the history department. He is the one who wrote the biography of Sewall Wright. He is awfully interested in the history of genetics. He also wrote this book, this collection of Sewall Wright's reprints. He is part of the time in genetics and part of the time in history. He has a Chinese graduate student who wants to write a history of Lysenkoism in China. Provine encouraged him. He said there is no such history yet, so it is a good thing for him to work on it. This student worked on this for almost two years. He collected many things. He even came to Pittsburgh to see me. But since this change of atmosphere, he changed his object[ive]. He said, I cannot pursue this – if I do, I cannot go back to China anymore, so he changed. I wrote him a nasty letter. What kind of scientist are you? Provine even promised to help him get published by the University of Chicago. Provine has several editor friends. He said, if you devote a few years to writing up Lysenkoism in China, I will help you to get it published. In spite of this promise, he chickened out. Yes!

SSC: You have been very gracious to give us so much of your time.

[Alice R. Chase Robeson: An invitation from China's Prime Minister Chou En-Lai was extended to Carmelita Chase Hinton to bring sixteen young people whom she knew well and were interested in China. Carmelita Hinton said that I could be one of the young people!! The invitation was for three months – it stretched to four months; then four of the young people, including me, stayed for nine months. Carmelita Hinton stayed for about eleven months. My eighteenth birthday was September 16, 1971.”]