

# Mr Chan Wen-tung

## Doctor of Literature honoris causa

### Citation

Mr Chan Wen-tung is one of a few local writers who have earned a prominent place in the history of modern Chinese literature. Throughout his career as a writer for over half a century, he has published literary genres under various pen names. For example, he is known as Liang Huiru (梁慧如) for his historical fictions, Feng Yuning (馮瑜寧) for his random notes, Madam Li (李夫人) for his newspaper column answering letters from readers, and Chen Lu (陳魯) for his Chinese chess strategies. Yet it is in martial arts fiction that he enjoys worldwide renown. Under the pen name Liang Yusheng, he is celebrated as one of the “founders of the new school of Chinese martial arts writing” along with Jin Yong and Gu Long.

The style of Mr Chan’s prose writing has often been considered “encyclope” in that it runs the gamut from landscape, personalities, history, poetry, couplets, anecdotes, and the art of Chinese chess and Weiqi (圍棋). In these he is a true “pro”. At the age of nine, he learned how to write couplets from his grandfather. His two-volume *A Treasury of Famous Couplets* (名聯觀止) contains the findings of his in-depth research into the subject, which, according to Chen Yinge (陳寅恪), is the most typical of Chinese literary genres. *Essays on The Six Topics* (筆花六照) is a collection of articles published in Hong Kong and Taiwan. His sophisticated style and rich knowledge in history are well represented in these Collections.

What is even more remarkable are Mr Chan’s achievements in martial arts fiction. From *The Duel of Dragon and Tiger* (龍虎鬥京華) published in *the New Evening Post* in the early 1954 to *The Wudang Sword* (武當一劍) in *Ta Kung Pao* in 1980, he has written a total of 35 novels, comprising 160 volumes. Among them, *The Seven Swords from Tianshan* (七劍下天山), *The White Hair Demonic Bride* (白髮魔女傳), *Shadows of the Wandering Knights* (萍踪俠影錄), and *The Misty Sea and the Jade Bow* (雲海玉弓緣) have attained canonical stature in martial arts fiction. Each narrative is strategically interspersed with such components as incidental poems, songs, proverbs and couplets. Employing elegant and evocative language, he has dramatized the dreams and reality of the colorful worlds of martial arts fiction that continue to haunt our imagination:

I have long been a wandering man.  
Let me tell you the old scores from where they began,  
Though love and hate never end.  
Blurred by clouds and mist, my eyes can’t tell where.  
In Tianshan I slash the sword through the chilling autumn air.  
On a remote peak in Mountain Er Mei someone grieves in despair.

The ci at the end of *The Seven Swords from Tianshan* (七劍下天山)  
to the tune of *Silk-washing Stream*

The duckweed drifts on calm water.  
The leaves gather at the water lily.  
In whom should I confide my 30-year troubles?  
The gleam of the sword shades the red candle.  
Nothing material shall taint my enlightened soul!  
Dew gathers on crimson grass.  
The night-blooming flower hides in the mist.  
As love in the River and the Lake tends to end for naught,  
I can’t bear to look at the past.  
In the capital, the Dragon and the Tiger will clash at dusk.

The ci at the beginning of *The Duel of Dragon and Tiger* (龍虎鬥京華)  
to the tune of *Treading on Grass*

It is customary for Mr Chan to blend history and legends into his narratives. His stories, in which history and legends co-exist in a complimentary manner, are embedded with details about the past, the land, the people, and the religion, helping to create a surrealistic world vibrating with the sound of music, chess, poetry, calligraphy, painting, dances, herb medicine, divination, and astronomy. As such, his fictional writings have at times been acclaimed as “the work of genius” or “the scholar’s novels”. Such acclaims are well deserved.

Mr Chan’s martial arts fictions have been highly popular and well-received among the general public. Starting from 1957, many of his works have been adapted for the screen and TV drama series. In November 1984, *the Shadows of the Wandering Knights* (萍踪俠影錄) became the first Beijing opera performed in the People’s Republic based on a martial arts novel. The popularity of Liang Yusheng had remained unabated in the 1990s, when a new screen adaptation of *The White Hair Demonic Bride* (白髮魔女傳) was shown in local cinemas. It reaped high honors at the Paris International Sci-fi Movie Festival (巴黎科幻國際電影節). His undiminished popularity is further attested to by the fact that the famous director Tsui Hark is making a film based on his *The Seven Swords from Tianshan*. (七劍下天山)

Mr Chan graduated from Lingnan University in Guangzhou in 1949. He studied chemistry at first, but later switched to economics. However he had revealed his uncommonly keen interest in literature early in his student days. In a talk called “Chan Wen-tung Theory”, which he delivered as a student, he decoded his name in an ingenious way. “Chan” according to his theory, stands for ‘chenshu’ (to present), while ‘Wentung’ means literary tradition, similar to words like ‘daotong’ (orthodox tradition). So ‘Chan Wen-tung Theory’ can be understood as a discourse on classical Chinese literature. He also noted in his talk that when dealing with classical literature, one should “remove the worthless and imbibe the essence”. The principle has been observed in his works, and it has also exerted great influence on Chinese martial arts writing in general.

Although it has already been 50 years since Liang Yusheng made his debut in *The Duel of Dragon and Tiger* (龍虎鬥京華), the passions he depicts in his works have not subsided. Mr Chan’s feelings, as quoted below, illustrate the nobility and profundity of Chinese culture:

God is dead.  
So are the knight-errants.  
It seems that both East and West  
Have missed their passion.  
Some say that martial arts fictions  
Are but absurd dramas of a different kind,  
And the chivalrous ones exist only in dreams.  
But I believe they are real,  
For on the new generation  
I have seen the chivalrous spirit aflame.  
Youngsters today are products of their own imagination  
They are no slaves to other’s mindsets  
They dare to look at the world with pride as the knight-errants used to.

*Biography of Liang Yusheng* (梁羽生全傳)

Although Mr Chan has stopped penning any more martial arts romances, the chivalrous spirit that pervades in his works will always be remembered, as best attested to by the line: "Worry not that the duckweed is drifting away with the stream, as the spirit will long live in your heart" (from *Shadows of the Wandering Knights*) (萍踪俠影錄). In recognition of his contribution to Chinese literature and culture, Mr Chairman, may I now present Mr Chan Wen-tung to you for the award of the degree of Doctor of Literature, *honoris causa*.

# 陳文統先生

## 榮譽文學博士

### 贊詞

陳文統先生是為數不多載入中國文學史的香港作家，在文化界享負盛名。五十多年來，筆耕不輟，曾以梁慧如之名寫歷史小品；以馮瑜寧之名寫文學隨筆；以李夫人之名寫專欄信箱；以陳魯之名寫棋話棋評；最廣為人知的，就是以梁羽生的筆名撰寫武俠小說，被譽為中國新派武俠小說的開山祖師兼武林長老，與金庸和古龍合稱中國新武俠小說三大宗師。

自言筆下散文“散”得“厲害”、山水人物、文史詩詞、對聯、掌故、象棋、圍棋“幾乎甚麼都有”的陳文統先生，其實是一位多才多藝、博學多識、弦歌不絕的資深寫作人。他九歲開始跟外祖父學做對子，對陳寅恪稱為最具中國文學特色的對聯文學深有研究，歷來精闢的聯話，躍然於《名聯觀止》上；而他在香港、台灣、海外各地發表的文章，亦已輯錄成《筆花六照》，獨特的史識文風盡現在其如燦蓮花舌的筆端。

陳文統先生在武俠小說寫作方面的成就，更是卓越非凡。從1954年初在《新晚報》發表的《龍虎門京華》，到1980年在《大公報》連載的《武當一劍》，他一共寫了35部小說，合計160冊。其中《七劍下天山》、《白髮魔女傳》、《萍踪俠影錄》、《雲海玉弓緣》等已躋身武俠經典行列。其小說文備眾體，散發著詩、詞、曲、賦、歌謠、諺語、對聯交融互涉的藝術魅力。在其典雅洗煉、穩厚綿密的筆調下，江湖的恩怨情仇、俠客的刀光劍影，不時閃現在詩歌的流光溢彩中：

已慣江湖作浪游，且將恩怨說從頭，如潮愛恨總難休。  
瀚海雲煙迷望眼，天山劍氣蕩寒秋，峨眉絕塞有人愁。

（《七劍下天山》卷尾詞，調寄浣溪沙）

弱水萍飄，蓮台葉聚，卅年心事憑誰訴？劍光刀影燭搖紅，禪心未許沾泥絮！  
絳草凝珠，曇花隔霧，江湖兒女緣多誤。前塵回首不勝情，龍爭虎鬥京華暮。

（《龍虎門京華》卷首詞，調寄踏莎行）

除了詩劍合一、文采風流外，陳文統先生的小說在敘事模式上融古為新、亦史亦奇。在以史傳奇、以奇補史的情節中，他載入了大量歷史、地理、民俗、宗教知識，牽引讀者進入一個琴棋詩書畫樂舞醫卜葯星相，肌理綿密而亦狂亦俠半虛半實疑幻疑真的世界。其小說贏得才子小說、學者小說的美稱，絕非浪得虛名。

陳文統先生的武俠小說深入民間、影響深遠。自1957年開始，他多部小說先後被改編拍成電影和長篇電視連續劇。1984年11月，《萍踪俠影錄》成為大陸自1949年以來第一個改編自武俠小說的京劇，在北京公演。九十年代，梁羽生熱並未減退，《白髮魔女傳》再度改編成電影在香港上演，並在巴黎科幻國際電影節中獲全場冠軍大獎。目前由徐克執導的《七劍下天山》影視系列的拍攝工作正進行得如火如荼。

1949年畢業於廣州嶺南大學的陳文統先生，原入讀化學系，後改修了經濟專業，求學期間對文史的興趣從不減退，曾以“陳文統論”作為學生演講的題目，把自己的名字加以巧妙的拆解：“陳，即陳述；文統，如道統、法統，即文章傳統……陳文統論，就是概述中國傳統文學。”（孫宜學：《梁羽生新傳》）他在演講中闡述了一種對古代文學“剔其糟粕，取其精華”的精神，而這種精神正充分展現在他的作品中，使中國的江湖文壇罡風凜凜、俠中見儒氣。

文字有限，俠義無窮。梁羽生第一部武俠小說《龍虎鬥京華》面世剛好五十年，其劍影俠氣卻沒有隨時間飄逝。陳文統先生以下的心跡，無疑是一種深邃崇高的中國文化精神的觀照：

上帝死了  
俠士死了  
西方與東方  
好像都有同樣依戀  
因此有人說武俠小說只是  
分類的荒謬劇  
正派俠士只是理想的夢幻  
但我相信那會是真實的存在  
因為我在現代年青人身上  
看到俠士的襟懷  
因為他們善用自己的幻想  
不是依靠別人的腦袋  
如俠士之敢於傲視世界

（《梁羽生全傳》）

小說擱筆，俠影常在。正是“莫道萍蹤隨逝水，永存俠影在心田”（《萍踪俠影錄》）。陳文統先生在中國文學和文化的貢獻，實非筆墨所能形容。我謹此恭請主席先生頒授榮譽文學博士學位予陳文統先生。