

to adapt the short story into a play. A Rockefeller Foundation grant was awarded Yamauchi, and in 1976 the story was turned into a play. “I was sort of pushed into playwriting” says Yamauchi.

Converting prose to drama was in itself a daunting task. Dialogue had to be added and this meant a creation of a different kind of poetry. Yamauchi is of the opinion that her writing has a sense of the Japanese *enryo* or self-restraint. Say less, be simple. She feels she is more “earthy” in her writings as compared to the intellectual acumen of her friend Hisaye Yamamoto: “Every story reflects its economic and political times. Nothing is in a vacuum.”

*And the Soul Shall Dance* won the Los Angeles Drama Critics Circle Award for best new play of 1977. The following year it was shown as a television film on PBS and was repeated on the Arts and Entertainment Channel in 1987. Intergenerational bonding and collective action versus individual self-interest form the basis of Yamauchi’s work. She is firmly of the opinion that “Every story reflects its economic and political times. Nothing is in a vacuum. I simply felt the need to put down a few footprints of our sojourn here.”

This play was followed by *12-1-A* (1982), which like *Soul* addressed the issues of economics, power, racism, and the new specter of war. The characters were simple but not of simple minds. The society and politics of the time were vividly captured by the playwright. This is also very evident in *The Music Lessons* (1980) (based on her short story *In Heaven and Earth*), which preceded *12-1-A* and again addressed the issues of being a woman and growing up in the harshness of the Imperial Valley. Yamauchi’s next effort was a departure in theme. *The Chairman’s Wife* (1990) focused on a public figure; in this case the wife of Chairman Mao. But here again the woman in question is faced with the challenges posed by power.

Yamauchi did return to prose with the seminal *Songs My Mother Taught Me* (1994), a looking back at a writing career spanning over four decades. Her simple, lyrical plot structures were a testament to her growing up during the Great Depression. As she herself stated, “We are a tribe of wanderers remembering a garden we’d left or looking for an Eden that waits.”

Yamauchi’s writings seem to follow a timeline of Japanese American history, early immigration and rural settlement, World War II and the camps, and postwar readjustment.

The East West Players and The Mark Taper Forum have staged readings of Yamauchi’s *Shirley Temple*, *Hotcha-Cha* and *Songs That Made the Hit Parade*. The East West Players have also premiered one-act plays, *A Fine Day*, *The Trip*, and *Stereoscope*. Yamauchi has won the American Theater Critics Regional Award for Outstanding Play (1977) and two Rockefeller Foundation playwriting fellowships (1979, 1985).

In October 2010, the University of Hawaii Press published *Rosebud and Other Stories*, a collection of short stories by Yamauchi. Commenting on the book, Professor Paul Spickard of the University of California, Santa Barbara, wrote: “It is not often that we get to hear a voice of an older Asian American woman in fiction, and that voice is richly present here in stories that celebrate change, memory, relationships, things that are lost . . . and kept.”

Ambi Harsha

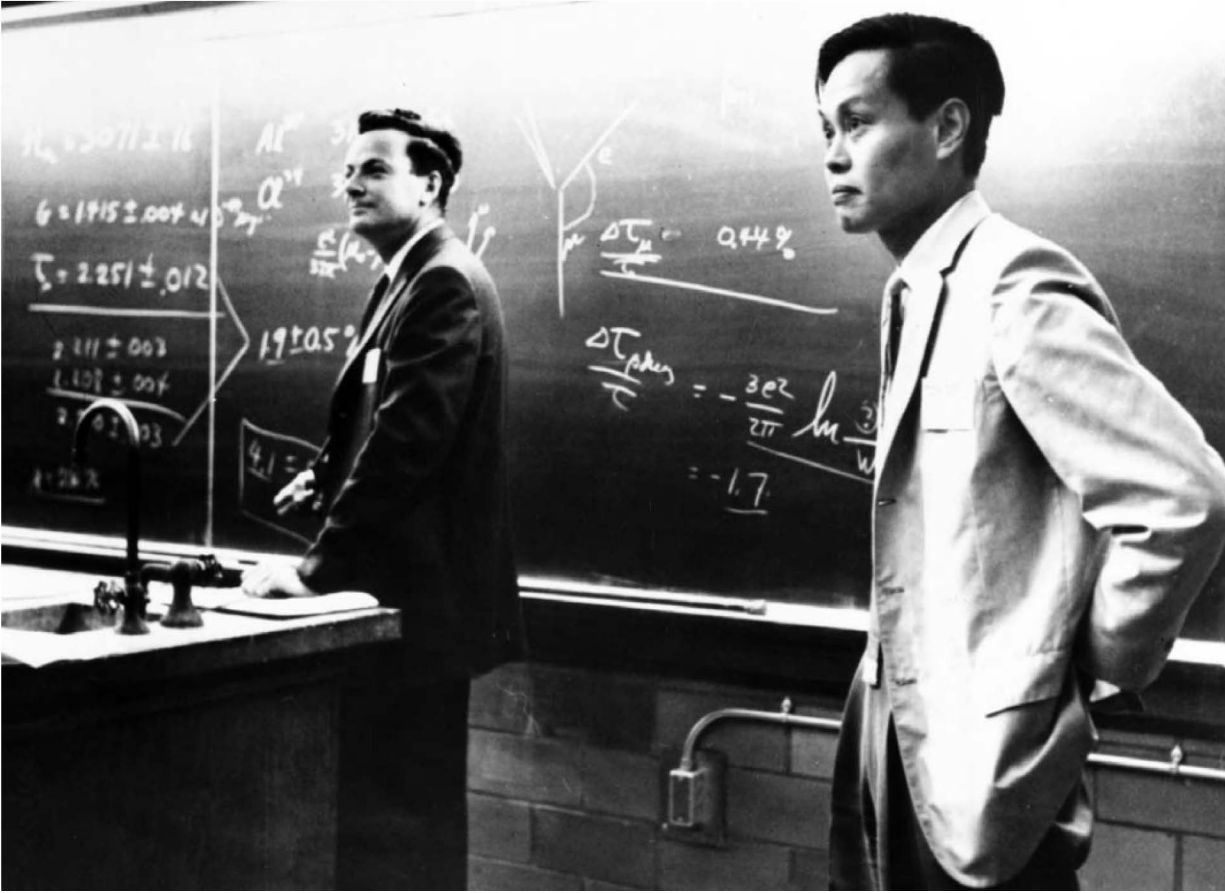
*See also* Chan, Jeffery Paul; Chin, Frank; Inada, Lawson Fusao; Spickard, Paul Russell; Wong, Shawn

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### Yang, Chen Ning (1922–)

Chen Ning Yang is one of the leading theoretical physicists in the world and an influential leader in the Chinese American scientific community. Sharing the Nobel Prize in Physics for 1957, he has played a key role in facilitating U.S.-China scientific and educational exchanges and in promoting basic scientific research and education in mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and the rest of Asia.



Chinese American Nobel Laureate Chen Ning Yang with Richard Feynman in 1955. (SSPL/Getty Images)

Chen Ning Yang was born on October 1, 1922, in Hefei, Anhui, China. His mother, Luo Menghua, taught him to read, and his father, Yang Wuzhi, received a PhD in mathematics from the University of Chicago and became a professor, eventually at the prestigious Qinghua (Tsinghua) University in Beijing, where the family moved in 1929. Yang excelled in school but his sheltered environment collapsed when the Japanese invaded China in the mid-1930s and his family joined the refugees eventually to Kunming in Southwest China.

In 1938, Yang enrolled in the Southwestern Associated University in Kunming, which combined the three most prestigious Chinese universities (Beijing, Qinghua, and Nankai). Yang at first majored in chemistry but soon switched to theoretical physics, finishing with a bachelor's in 1942 and a master's degree in 1944, impressing his professors with his talent in using

mathematics to solve physics problems. After teaching in a middle school in Kunming for a year, Yang won a Boxer fellowship, which enabled him to follow in his father's footsteps to the United States to pursue a PhD at the University of Chicago, where he gave himself the English name "Frank" in honor of Benjamin Franklin. He initially worked on experimental physics under the eminent Italian American physicist Enrico Fermi, but in the end proved to himself and others that it was not his cup of tea. "Where there is a bang, there is Yang," his friends joked. He returned to theoretical physics but remained in close touch with experiments. He collaborated with Tsung-Dao Lee, a fellow student from Southwest, on a paper on the so-called "weak interactions" among subatomic particles. Both of them also took classes with the Indian American astrophysicist Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar on Chicago's faculty. In 1948, Yang finished a theoretical paper on

nuclear reactions under the supervision of the Hungarian American physicist Edward Teller and received his PhD.

Yang stayed on for another year at Chicago as a physics instructor before moving to the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton where he married Du Zhili, one of his former students from Kunming in 1950, and gained the prestigious status of a “Permanent Member” of the institute in 1954. That same year, Yang spent the summer visiting the Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island where he devised, with a graduate student Robert Mills, the so-called Yang-Mills gauge field theory to describe patterns of interactions between elementary particles. It has since become one of the most fundamental theories in physics with far-reaching impact even in mathematics. In fact, Yang would later recognize that the mathematical framework of his theory is the so-called theory of connections on fiber bundles, an area pioneered by the Chinese American mathematician Shiing-Shen Chern, Yang’s former teacher and lifelong friend.

Yang’s best-known work on the breakdown of left-right parity in the microcosm derived from his renewed collaboration with T. D. Lee in the 1950s. In 1956, the two studied the problem of theta and tau, two so-called “strange particles” that shared everything except for their decay patterns, which puzzled physicists. There was one solution to the problem, but it would lead to a violation of parity conservation. In physics, when a physical system and its mirror image behave identically and follow the same laws, it is said that parity was conserved. In all of physics up to that point, it was widely believed that all processes in nature obeyed this law of parity conservation.

Yang and Lee, however, decided to check whether parity conservation was ever explicitly tested in a relatively new process in physics—weak interactions that governed how a particle from an atomic nucleus decayed into others. To their surprise, they found that parity conservation had never been experimentally established for weak interactions as for the other three fundamental forces in nature: the electromagnetic, gravitational, and strong interactions. They published a paper entitled “Question of parity nonconservation in weak interactions,” suggesting that parity conservation was violated in weak interactions and proposed

several experiments to test their hypothesis. Against widespread skepticism, Chien Shiung Wu, Lee’s Chinese American colleague at Columbia, conducted an experiment with scientists at the National Bureau of Standards in Washington, D.C., and proved Yang and Lee to be right. The news electrified the world of physics as a fundamental law of physics was overturned. Yang and Lee received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1957 “for their penetrating investigation of the so-called parity laws which has led to important discoveries regarding the elementary particles.”

Lee and Yang continued their fruitful collaboration when Lee visited Princeton in the early 1960s. In 1962, however, personal friction developed and their collaboration stopped, partly over a dispute about credit for their famous discovery. In 1966, Yang accepted an invitation to become the Albert Einstein Professor and the founding director of an Institute of Theoretical Physics at the new State University of New York at Stony Brook. His work in this period led to the so-called Yang-Baxter equation with widespread applications and growing importance in both physics and mathematics.

In 1971, Yang became one of the first Chinese American scientists to visit the People’s Republic of China. Yang felt strongly about the need to modernize his country of origin and sought to help revitalize Chinese science and technology partly by re-establishing U.S.-China scientific exchanges. He pushed for reforms in science and education policy when he met with Zhou Enlai, the Chinese premier, during his 1971 trip, and with Mao Zedong, the Chinese communist leader, in 1972. In the United States, he became a prominent voice in promoting U.S.-China reopening of relations. In 1977, he became president of the National Association of Chinese Americans and pushed for the reestablishment of U.S.-PRC diplomatic relations, which finally took place in 1979. Traveling frequently to mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, Yang became an influential advisor to policy-makers and a popular lecturer on science and culture in the greater China. He retired from SUNY in 1999, and in 2003, after the death of his wife, moved to Qinghua in Beijing where he works as a professor and lives in a special residence built for him by the university with his second wife, Weng Fan, whom he married in 2004.

*Zuoyue Wang*