

WEN-CHEN CHEN MEMORIAL SERVICE

SEPTEMBER 11, 1981

WE HAVE MET HERE TODAY TO MOURNE A COLLEAGUE. THIS COLLEAGUE, WEN-CHEN CHEN, HAD HIS LIFE STOLEN FROM HIM BEFORE HE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO REACH THE FULL HEIGHTS WHICH HIS ABILITIES MADE POSSIBLE. TO THOSE OF US WHO HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE LONGER, WHO KNOW THE SWEETNESS OF LIFE AS WELL AS ITS BITTERNESS, HIS DEATH IS PARTICULARLY TRAGIC.

OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHIES GO TO HIS WIFE AND HIS CHILD WHO MUST REMAKE THEIR LIVES IN HIS ABSENCE. IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT WHEN A SCHOLAR DIES BEFORE HE HAS HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO UTILIZE HIS FULL CREATIVE POWERS, THE WORLD IS ALSO DEPRIVED OF THAT KNOWLEDGE.

THUS, WE ARE ALL POORER IN SOME WAY FOR THE DEATH OF OUR COLLEAGUE. HIS DEATH ALSO SERVES TO REMIND US ONCE AGAIN OF THE FRAGILITY OF HUMAN LIFE AND OF THE TEMPORARY NATURE OF OUR EXISTENCE. THUS, WE SHOULD ALL REDEDICATE OURSELVES TO THOSE OBJECTIVES THAT WE HOLD IMPORTANT IN OUR EXISTENCE AND WE SHOULD ALL ONCE AGAIN EXAMINE OUR LIVES TO SEE IN WHAT WAYS WE CAN HELP MAKE THIS UNIVERSITY - THE ORGANIZATION WHICH SHELTERED AND HELPED HIM GROW - INTO A MORE EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION.

WE MUST LOOK INTO THE NATURE OF SOCIETY AND SEEK THE WAYS IN WHICH WE CAN HELP CREATE SOCIETIES IN WHICH THE BRUTALITY OF MAN CAN BE REDUCED. WE MUST FIND WAYS IN WHICH INDIVIDUALS CAN LIVE THEIR LIVES TO BENEFIT ALL HUMAN BEINGS. WE MUST HAVE SOCIETIES THAT CAN REMAIN VIABLE WHILE NURTURING FREE THOUGHT,

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FREE DISCUSSION AND FREEDOM OF ACTION.

WEN'S DEATH IS A SYMBOL TO THE NEED TO REDEDICATE THE ENERGIES OF ALL AMERICANS TO FIGHT FOR A DEMOCRATIC WAY OF LIFE FOR ALL OF MANKIND. DEATH BRINGS HOME AGAIN THE MEANING OF JOHN DONNE'S THOUGHTS IN "FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS." ALL OF US HAVE DIED A LITTLE WITH HIS DEATH BECAUSE WE KNOW THAT HAD WE BEEN IN HIS SHOES, HAD WE HAD HIS LIFE, WE WOULD HAVE FELT AS STRONGLY ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-GOVERNMENT AS HE. IT TAKES VERY LITTLE IMAGINATION TO KNOW THAT UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, HIS DEATH SYMBOLIZES OUR OWN.

THE SADNESS OF THIS OCCASION CAN EASILY OVERWHELM US, BUT WE MUST NOT LET IT DO SO. WE MUST PLEDGE OURSELVES TO CONTINUE TO FIGHT TO UNRAVEL THE MYSTERY OF HIS DEATH. WE MUST FIGHT TO SEE THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DEATH ARE PUNISHED, AND WE MUST DEDICATE OURSELVES TO ACTION THAT WILL PREVENT OTHER TAIWANESE WHO BELIEVE AS WEN DID FROM SUFFERING HIS FATE.

LONG AGO, ON ANOTHER OCCASION, THE CREATORS OF AMERICA "PLEDGED THEIR SACRED HONOR" FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM. THOSE OF US WHO WERE COLLEAGUES OF WEN'S CAN DO NO LESS. WE MUST PLEDGE OUR SACRED HONOR TO PRODUCE A SOCIETY IN AMERICA WHERE PEOPLE FROM ANY COUNTRY, WHETHER CITIZENS OF THE U. S. OR NOT, CAN LIVE IN REAL FREEDOM. INTIMIDATION WHICH ROBS A PERSON OF FREEDOM OF ACTION MUST BE ELIMINATED. FINALLY, WE MUST

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PLEDGE OURSELVES TO FIGHT FOR THE ELIMINATION OF THE POLICE
STATE THAT NOW EXISTS IN TAIWAN. WE MUST BECOME A PART OF
THIS FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE THAT A SMALL NUMBER OF TAIWANESE
ARE NOW MAKING AS A PART OF THE TRIBUTE TO A COLLEAGUE WHO
WAS MURDERED FOR BELIEVING IN DEMOCRACY.