IN MEMORIAM

ROY E. TEELE

Professor Roy Teele was born in Albia, Iowa, on the 29th of June, 1915. He grew up in his hometown where he attended Albia High School, graduating in June, 1932, and Albia Jr. College, which he left in 1936 to complete his B.A. at Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa. He then entered the Graduate School at Columbia University in 1939, and obtained his M.A. in 1940. From his early youth, Dr. Teele concentrated primarily on literature but with a keen interest also in art, music, and the theater. But later he geared his education to becoming acquainted with various languages and their cultures. After Latin and French in high school, he studied German as well as Anglo-Saxon and Middle English in college, also learning Italian, Middle High German and Old Norse on his own. In graduate school he improved his knowledge of French and added Old Irish and Old Welsh, studying under Roger Sherman Loomis, who was his mentor for two years while he concentrated on medieval literature, especially the Arthurian legends. His M.A. under Patterson and Tindall was devoted to 17th century studies.

He worked as an instructor in English for a year at Ohio State University, but World War II changed the orientation of his career. After spending a year and a half in Boulder, Colorado, studying Chinese at the U.S. Navy Language School, he went as a language officer to China where he was discharged from the service in 1946 with the rank of Lt.(j.g.) He served briefly in China as an interpreter and then returned to Columbia University on a Sino-American scholarship. His dissertation, "Through a Glass Darkly," a study of English translation of Chinese poetry, was printed privately and favorably referred to in Reuben Brower's On Translation and in the American University's Field Staff Select Bibliography
for Asia. For quite a time it was required reading in schools as diverse as Cambridge University and the University of Chicago. While completing his Ph.D. he took a position as an educational missionary at the University of Nanking, China, where he taught English in 1947–48 and was Chairman of the Foreign Language Department. Upon his return he was granted his Ph.D., in 1949, and did post-doctoral work under Charles Fries at the University of Michigan. In 1950, he left for Japan where he took a position as Professor of English at Kwansei Gakuin University. He remained there for ten years. During this period he studied Japanese intensively at the Kobe Naganuma Japanese Language School from 1950–53. The position that he took in Japan required teaching graduate courses in English for non-native speakers, and, in this context, Dr. Teele taught courses ranging over the whole field of English literature, while he himself continued to explore Japanese literature and culture, especially Noh singing, dance, and aspects of the theater, attending the Fukuio Noh School in 1954, and again from 1956–60. During a one year leave of absence in the United States, in 1955–56, he did further post-doctoral work in literary Japanese under Serge Elisseev at Harvard. Finally in 1960 he left Japan, for family reasons, to take a teaching post at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas.

In 1961, The University of Texas was building up an Asian Center under the directorship of Dr. Edgar Polome who approached Dr. Teele to invite him to participate in the establishment of this Center by expanding the already existing South Asia offerings to the field of East Asian languages and literatures. Dr. Teele, appointed Visiting Associate Professor, gave a particularly strong impulse to the then established sub-committee on the Asian concentration in the College of Arts and Sciences and initiated courses in Chinese and Japanese languages as well as in Chinese and Japanese literature in translation. He also taught the history of the English language. Dr. Teele remained a Visiting Professor until 1963, being reluctant to cut his ties with Southwestern University in Georgetown. In the meantime he was very active in Japanese Studies, publishing papers on the Noh plays and editing an issue on Japanese literature for Literature East and West, whose editorship he soon took over.
In 1963, he returned full-time to Southwestern University in Georgetown to assume the Chairmanship of the English Department, but in 1965 the Center for Asian Studies at The University of Texas was able to prevail upon him to return to join the faculty of the Department of Linguistics as a Visiting Professor, with a joint appointment in English. In the meantime, he had achieved major accomplishments at Southwestern University where he had restructured freshman and sophomore English by broadening the curriculum and focusing on a world literature approach. Back at The University of Texas he tried to concentrate on comparative literature, but was also involved in building up the Japanese and Chinese language programs. In 1967, his appointment in the English Department was discontinued and he became a member exclusively of the Linguistics Department and of the Center for Asian Studies. However he continued to teach linguistically oriented courses in English besides taking care of the first and second year of Chinese. After directing a National Defense Education Act Summer Program in Chinese and Japanese in 1968, he was given tenure on the professorial level and joined the Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures as a full time member when this department was established in 1969-70. His activities continued to be focused on Chinese and Japanese though he also inaugurated an introductory course in Asian Studies on the freshman level, giving it a broader scope and a more attractive form. He also initiated a number of graduate courses in East Asian languages and served as Acting Chairman of the Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures and Acting Director of the Center for Asian Studies in the Spring of 1970. From then on, as editor of Literature East and West and of the Japanese Series for Twayne's World Author series and as reviewer for Books Abroad and Poetry he became a major contributor to the diffusion of knowledge on Chinese and Japanese literature. He was called upon to chair panels at various national conferences and to serve as bibliographer for these topics for the MLA Bibliography.

The following years were marked by continued studies and translations of Japanese poetry and poetic drama as well as work in Chinese drama. He was closely associated with the relevant comparative literature group of
the Modern Language Association and contributed several papers on this
topic. He also continued as teacher of Japanese and Chinese language and
literature and served as graduate adviser in the Department of Oriental
and African Languages and Literatures.

His gentle and persuasive manner, his genuine interest in students,
and his commitment to following their work step-by-step were highly appre-
ciated and helped considerably in building up the program in Asian Studies
at The University of Texas. A humanitarian, Dr. Teele was also involved
in extracurricular activities in the service of his fellow man, par-
ticipating in the activities of the American Civil Liberties Union and the
local chapter of the American Association of University Professors, while
continuing his strong commitment to the work of the Methodist Church as a
member of the Board of the Southwest Conference of the Methodist Church,
especially concerned with missionary work.

In 1974-75, he was Visiting Professor at Kwansei Gakuin University,
where again he taught courses in English and American literature. He took
advantage of his presence in Japan to do further research on the Manuoshu,
preparing a volume on the work of Otomo no Yakamochi for the Twayne Series
of World Authors. In the meantime, he continued his work as head of the
Oriental Literature Section of the MLA International Bibliography, and as
a member of the Executive Committee of the Asian Literature Division of
the Modern Language Association, expanding and improving representation of
Asian literatures in the program at its annual meetings.

The following years were devoted to the pursuit of the same objec-
tives as he chaired the Division of Asian Literatures of the Modern
Language Association in 1976, and the Section on Japanese Literature at
one of the regional meetings of the American Oriental Society. The papers
he contributed were always rich in content and in scholarship and were
always well received by his colleagues. Constantly innovative in his
teaching, he started several new courses in the graduate program in
Comparative Literature, collaborating with colleagues in English and in
Classics, and continuing to advocate better understanding and knowledge of
Chinese and Japanese achievements in world literature. His last years in
the profession were marked by papers and lectures as he participated in
the Japan scholars travel seminars sponsored by the Japan Foundation and the U.S. Japan Friendship Commission. He chaired several panels on Chinese and Japanese literature at national and regional meetings and continued his research on Far Eastern drama and early Japanese poetry.

When a heart attack struck him in the midst of his highly productive activity, he had to retire prematurely. However, as Professor Emeritus of the Department of Oriental and African Languages and Literatures he continued to visit his office regularly and to help the students with whom he was working, giving generously of his time and energy, sometimes at the expense of his health. His students tried to repay their debt of gratitude with the spontaneous and deep affection they felt for him. He continued to enjoy his favorite pastimes — reading and music — often enjoying pleasant evenings at the opera in Houston or at recitals in the new Performing Arts Center at The University of Texas. Colleagues who visited him during his final illness were struck by his serenity and by the accuracy of his memory as he continued to direct his thoughts to his work and his achievements in the East Asian Program — a program which would not have been so successful without his generous contributions. He passed away quietly on December 5, 1985. He is survived by a son, Nicholas, and daughter, Helen Rebecca, both of Japan, and several grandchildren. His oldest son, Christopher, died a few months after Professor Teele's death.

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William H. Cunningham, President
The University of Texas at Austin

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H. Paul Kelley, Secretary
The General Faculty

This Memorial Resolution was prepared by a Special Committee consisting of Professors Edgar C. Polomé (Chairman), M. A. Jazayery, and Jeannette L. Faurot.