



IN MEMORIAM

Michael C. Rogers
Professor of East Asian Studies, Emeritus
UC Berkeley
1923 – 2005

Michael Courtney Rogers, a professor emeritus of East Asian studies who was honored by the Korean government for his contributions to the study of Korean culture, died May 4, 2005 at his home in Grass Valley, California following a long battle with the rare blood disease multiple myeloma.

Rogers, a native of Santa Ana, started college in San Diego, studying Latin and French. He transferred to the University of California, Berkeley, in 1942 and dedicated himself first to Mongolian studies, helping his department chair compile the world's first Mongolian- to- English dictionary. During World War II he learned Japanese and served as a translator and interpreter during the Battle of Okinawa. He served briefly in China after the war before returning to Berkeley in 1946. Here he studied Chinese and Tibetan, and two years later received a Fulbright scholarship to study those languages in China and Tibet. He traveled extensively there, often on foot and alone. He also spent several months living with the monks in a Buddhist monastery in Tibet.

Rogers received his Ph.D. in Oriental languages from Berkeley in 1953. He joined the faculty that year as a professor of Oriental languages, teaching Chinese, Japanese, and Korean at various times, and eventually became chair of what is now the Department of East Asian Studies.

His Outline of Korean Grammar was published in 1956, and an annotated history translation, The Chronicle of Fu Chien: a Case of Exemplar History, in 1968. Rogers wrote extensively about the Koryo Period in Korea from A.D. 918 to 1392, and published many articles on the historical relations between China and Korea. "Rogers was a meticulous scholar and linguist," said Jeffrey Riegel, professor of Chinese, East Asian languages and cultures, and chair of the Center for Chinese Studies. "He had mastered the literary forms of Chinese and Korean, and his translations — as well as his scholarly writings — are exemplars of elegance and clarity." Students appreciated his expertise and generosity.

In 1985, Rogers was honored by the South Korean government with the Bo- Gwan award for his scholarly original research into Korean antiquity. After receiving the award, he and his wife, Francea Branger Rogers, set up the UC Study Abroad Program at Yonsei University in Seoul. Upon their return, they retired to Grass Valley, in the Sierra foothills.

Michael Rogers is survived by sons Daniel and Matthew Rogers, and by daughters Suzie, Camilla and Avian Rogers, and Ame Wauters.

Kathleen Maclay, Office of Public Affairs
with additional information from the San Francisco Chronicle obituary of May 21, 2005, by
Charles Burress