Shiing-shen Chern Biography

Shiing-shen Chern

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.



Contents

Shiing-shen Chern Biography.....1

Contents.....2

Biography.....3

Biography

Shiing-Shen Chern has specialized in differential **geometry** and he studied what are now known as the Chern characteristic classes in fibre spaces. This work has relevance in mathematics as well as mathematical physics. Chern also produced a **proof** of the Gauss-Bonnet formula during the mid 1940s.

Chern was born in what is now known as Jiaxing in Zhejiang in China. After initial studies at Nankai University, Chern undertook graduate studies at the Tsing Hua University of Beijing. Despite being offered a scholarship to the United States at the age of 23, he preferred to study at the University of Hamburg; this was due to a meeting two years previously with Hamburg mathematician Wilhelm Johann Eugen Blaschke, whose work he greatly admired. In 1936 Chern moved to Paris to continue working on differential geometry, this time under the guidance of **Elie-Joseph Cartan**. In 1937 Chern was returning to Tsing Hua University as a professor of mathematics when war broke out. This event thrust him into the American system where he produced one of his most famous pieces of work, a proof of the Gauss-Bonnet formula. At the end of the war he returned to China briefly until civil war broke out. To escape this event Chern returned to Princeton where he continued to work with **Oswald Veblen** and **Herman Weyl**. Chern was rapidly made professor of mathematics at the University of Chicago, where he remained for 11 years until, in 1960, he moved to the University of California, Berkeley.

The years following Chern's move to Berkley were characterized by a number of awards including the National Medal of Science (1975), the Wolf Prize (1983-1984), election as a Fellow of the Royal Society of London (1985), and honorary membership of the London Mathematical Society (1986). In 1979 a special Chern symposium was held in his honor. In a lifetime of achievement and awards the one fact that must give Chern the greatest pleasure must be his role in transforming differential geometry from a little studied area into a major topic area in mathematics.

Recent Updates

December 3, 2004: Chern died on December 3, 2004, at his home in Tianjin, China. He was 93. **Source:** *New York Times,* www.nytimes.com, December 7, 2004.