

Memorial of Oen Ing Soen 1928–1996

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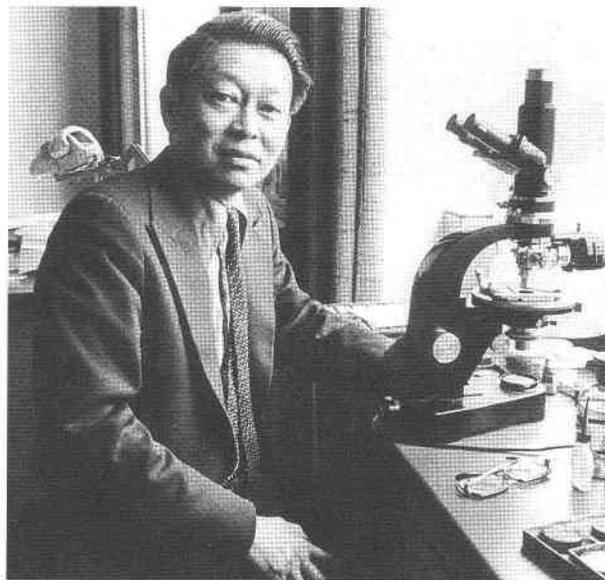
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Oen Ing Soen died October 14, 1996. He was emeritus professor of petrology, mineralogy, and ore geology at the University of Amsterdam and the Free University in Amsterdam.

Oen was born June 30, 1928 and raised in Semarang in the former Dutch East Indies. In September 1948, he entered the University of Amsterdam and started studying geology under the guidance of H.A. Brouwer and J. Westerveld. From September 1953 to July 1959 he worked as Westerveld's assistant in the department of economic geology and ore geology. Oen received his Bachelor's degree in June 1951 and his Master's degree in February 1956. Thereafter he continued with graduate work in Westerveld's department on petrological and ore geological topics. On May 28, 1958, he received a Ph.D. degree on the thesis: "The geology, petrology, and ore deposits of the Viseu region, northern Portugal." In 1959, Oen moved to the Geological Survey of Greenland and accepted a position as instructor of ore microscopy at the University of Copenhagen. He was recalled to Amsterdam in October 1961 by Westerveld to fulfill the position of senior researcher in ore geology. After the death of J. Westerveld in August 1962, Oen joined the department of petrology, ore geology, and mineralogy of W.P. de Roever who had taken over the discipline ore geology from Westerveld. After the retirement of de Roever, Oen became his successor on July 1, 1976. When the geological faculty of the University of Amsterdam was closed in 1985 and fused with the Faculty of Earth Sciences of the Free University in Amsterdam, Oen was attracted to the chair of petrology, ore geology, and mineralogy at the Free University in September 1988. Until his retirement on July 1, 1993, however, Oen remained a professor of the University of Amsterdam.

Oen was a remarkable, many-sided scientist. Although his scientific interest was focused on ore geology, petrology, and ore mineralogy, he also possessed a profound knowledge of many other geological fields. He was like his teacher H.A. Brouwer, a "general geologist" in the best sense. Visitors would often find him in his office at his large wooden desk writing in his characteristic, clear, small handwriting—Oen never touched a computer and rarely a typewriter—or working with his ore microscope at which he was a true maestro. But he was always looking forward eagerly to the coming field season. Fieldwork with students took place in Spain, Tanzania, Sweden, Sri Lanka, and Portugal. His work in the Swedish Bergslagen ore region resulted in a generally accepted rift model for the geological evolution of that area.

By virtue of his versatility, Oen was an ideal teacher, both in the laboratory and in the field. His qualities as instructor and mentor resulted in 11 doctoral theses. He possessed the rare gift of evaluating a manuscript in a very short time, able to point out mistakes and weaknesses at a glance. He then came up with meaningful corrections that resulted in a comprehensible and clear publi-



cation. With his almost encyclopedic knowledge of many disciplines of the Earth sciences, Oen was a true support to many of his students and colleagues.

Notwithstanding his many tasks in the management of the faculty, he always remained active in science and was the author of 70 scientific publications. He was a member of 10 geological societies and was elected as a fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America in June 1989.

Oen, a modest and amiable man, never imposed his views on anyone. He had an aversion to heated and loud discussions, emotional conflicts, and irrational arguments. In his low, often hardly audible voice, his well-considered arguments were put forward, and he always tried to find a solution in which all parties were content. Oen was the ideal mediator in several seemingly inextricable conflicts. Because of his expertise and charm he was a member of various university and national commissions in the Earth sciences.

The closure of the sub-faculty of geology and geophysics of the University of Amsterdam was a grievous event in Oen's life. He felt it as a personal loss that "his" sub-faculty, of which he had been chairman nearly uninterruptedly since 1979, would vanish. However, at the Free University Oen continued his teaching and research with full dedication. In 1995, a new mineral from the Bergslagen area was named oenite, CoSbAs, in his honor, so his name will be perpetuated in geology forever.

The best way by which one could get acquainted with Oen and learn to treasure his personality was during a personal talk in his room or during the monthly informal gatherings of "De Aardse

Kring” (“The Earth’s Circle”). There he enjoyed, together with friends and colleagues, wine, food, and the latest topics of the Dutch geological world.

Geological society has lost an eminent colleague, his many friends a real support and his family a dear husband, father, and grandfather. We wish Peppy and her two daughters much strength.

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