

WHO WAS PENG-CHUN CHANG (ZHANG PENJUN)?



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Chang served as a delegate of China and vice-chairman of the HRC during the drafting of the Declaration. A philosopher, playwright, and diplomat, Chang helped bridge conflicting views of human rights.

Peng-chun Chang represented China in the United Nations during the negotiation of the Declaration. Born in China in 1892, Chang was a playwright, educator, musician, and philosopher. He was educated in his home country, and in 1910 he traveled to the United States and attended Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, as an undergraduate student. He went on to study at Columbia University, where he eventually completed his doctoral degree under the supervision of progressive philosopher John Dewey. Chang made a name for himself as an expert on Confucianism and through his dramatic writings and productions. Before his selection for the Chinese delegation to the United Nations, he served as a diplomat in Turkey, Chile, and England. In his diplomatic career, he displayed a deep curiosity about the world's cultures and an

almost "missionary zeal to promote understanding of Chinese culture abroad."

When the United Nations set up the Commission on Human Rights and its members elected Eleanor as the commission's chairperson, the organization also chose Chang as the vice-chairman. Well versed in both Asian and Western philosophy, Chung was able to bridge cultural gaps between various members of the commission. He promoted the Chinese idea of ren, or "two-man mindedness," which can be translated as sympathy or the understanding of another person's point of view without giving up on one's own.

Chang, who believed that the Declaration should be a unifying tool for the world's diverse cultures, proved a savvy negotiator. Drawing on his knowledge of Chinese philosophy, he often helped conflicting parties reach a satisfactory compromise, and in doing so, he greatly helped the Human Rights Commission complete its mission. Chang remained on the Chinese delegation during the communist takeover of the Chinese mainland and the establishment of the communist People's Republic of China. He retired from his work at the United Nations in 1952 and died in 1957.