Guo Moruo was a Chinese author, poet, historian, archaeologist, and government official (founding president of CAS). He was born into a landlord’s family in Leshan County, Sichuan Province, in 1892, as Guo Kaizhen. As a boy, he had access to a wide selection of literary works that sparked his lifelong interest in poetry and language. In 1914, after receiving Chinese traditional education, he left China, to study medicine at Kyushu Imperial University in Japan.

Afterwards, he gave up medicine and took liberal arts. His studies at that time focused on foreign language and literature, namely that of: Spinoza, Goethe, Walt Whitman, and the Bengali poet Tagore. Along with numerous translations, he published his first poem anthology, titled The Goddesses in 1921.

After 1924, he accepted Marxism, and advocated revolutionary literature. He was one of the co-founder of the Chi’uanshao Society (“Creation Society”) in Shanghai, which promoted modern and vernacular literature. He joined the Communist Party of China in 1927. He was involved in the communist Nanchang Uprising and fled to Japan after its failure. Then, he went into exile to Japan, engaged in the research into ancient Chinese history and ancient characters, and wrote Research into Ancient Chinese Society, General Compilation of Oracle Inscriptions, and other academic monographs. In 1930, he joined the “Union of Left-Wing Writers”. He stayed there for 10 years studying Chinese ancient history until he returned in 1937 to join the anti-Japanese resistance.

In the Anti-Japanese War, in the Kuomintang-ruled area, he was engaged in the anti-Japanese and national salvation movement, and was appointed Director of the Third Bureau of the Political Department of the Military Committee of the National Government. During that time he wrote The Bronze Times and Book on Ten Critiques. In 1948, he was elected Academician of Academia Sinica. Following the founding of the People’s Republic of China in 1949, he held a number of high-level government posts. He was, among other things, vice-premier of the Government Administration Council, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress and Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, chairman of the China Federation of Literature and Art Circles, president of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. While he handled government affairs, he continued with his literary ambitions, penning the historical plays Cai Wenji and Empress Wu Zetian, the poetry collections Ode to New China, Easterly Wind, and Tides, and the academic work Li Bai and Du Fu.

He was the first President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and remained so from its founding in 1949 until his death in 1978. After the founding of the People’s Republic of China, he was appointed Vice Premier of the Government Administration Council (of the Central People’s Government of the People’s Republic of China, replaced in 1954 by the State Council) and concurrent Director of the State Culture and Education Commission.