

Significantly, these texts and images are never treated naively as unproblematic “evidence,” but are understood both critically and discursively as a part of how a “Kongzhai effect” was created and sustained in the face of (often) indifference and (occasionally) hostility.

This is in some ways a record of failure, of things that didn’t happen, plans that didn’t come off (quite literally; some of the most fascinating illustrations are hand-drawn plans for unachieved renovation in the 1840s, from the archives of the Confucian headquarters at Qufu). Kongzhai was clearly never as famous, never as prominent, never as *loved* as its most dedicated supporters felt it should be. Some readers may find themselves calling to mind the poignant chapters in the great Qing novel *Ru lin wai shi*, itself set in the mid-Ming, which deal with the ultimately unsuccessful attempts of a group of local literati to institute a cult of Tai Bo, legendary founder of the Kingdom of Wu. Despite the grand ceremony narrated in loving detail in chapter 37, by the end of the novel, his temple too is “falling down.” There may perhaps have been many such failed enterprises across the Ming–Qing ritual landscape, reminding us that history is not only written by the winners, it is written *about* the winners. There are sites of forgetting, as well as *lieux de mémoire*.

Perhaps appropriately, the few surviving material fragments that have survived the wreck of Kongzhai’s fortunes have now been relocated to become embedded in one of the rebuilt “classic gardens” which are a very visible “newly old” (*xin jiu*) manifestation of a “traditional Chinese culture” in the contemporary urban landscape. This very welcome study shows just how fluid and contingent that “traditional Chinese culture” really was, far from the monolithic and triumphalist presence taken for granted in so much contemporary official discourse, which might have plenty of room for the celebration of Confucius (in his place), but which has, it seems, no place for Kongzhai. In showing us how this situation was arrived at, and the many twists and turns that led there, Julia Murray has provided an outstandingly rich and thought-provoking account, which will be of enduring value.

From Rural China to the Ivy League: Reminiscences of Transformations in Modern Chinese History.

By Yü Ying-shih. Translated by Josephine Chiu-Duke and Michael S. Duke. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press, 2021. \$114.99 (cloth); \$49.99 (paper)

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Professor Yü, who passed away in August 2021, published this memoir in Chinese (as *Yü Ying-shih hui yi lu* 余英時回憶錄) in 2018 at the age of 88. He tells us at the outset

that the book was “not something I intended to write,” immediately challenging the reader to ask not only “Why did he write it?” but also “Why should I read it?” On the surface, the simple answers are that a journalist from Guangzhou started interviewing him in 2007, getting him to think about reconstructing the memories of his own experience as an academic, and that he came to hope that his recollections might help his readers to understand the historical developments of the period he had lived through, and further to hope that these recollections would be “utilized as a kind of reference by a new generation of young friends seeking knowledge” (5). After wading through the academic details and reflecting at some length, I believe some younger readers may find beneath the surface some answers that are a bit more profound.

In 1985, Yü Ying-shih wrote a poem honoring his mentor, the eminent historian Qian Mu, on the occasion of Qian’s ninetieth birthday. A photographic copy of the poem, dated 2018 in Yü’s own calligraphy, graces the preface of the Chinese version of the memoir. The typically elegant and accurate translation by Michael Duke and Josephine Chiu-Duke graces this volume. In the poem, Yü Ying-shih recalls standing with his mentor near New Asia College, Hong Kong, in the 1950s to view the wind roiling the sea, admiring Qian’s lifelong dedication to the preservation of Chinese classical learning in tumultuous times, and promising to continue his mentor’s effort despite his own shortcomings. Further reflection leads the reader to see how Yü’s memoir resembles Qian Mu’s, which was completed in Qian’s eighty-eighth year (*Shi you za yi* 師友雜憶 [Memories of Teachers and Friends]). In the first two-thirds of Yü’s book, he reflects on what he learned during the war of resistance, the civil war years, and the post-war era before landing at Harvard in 1956. Like Qian Mu, he writes of teachers whose lasting influence mattered in greater or lesser ways not only for his scholarship but also for his life choices and, ultimately, for his self-knowledge.

These subtly interacting realms of learning cannot easily be separated from one another. For example, having lived and attended school in his father’s isolated ancestral village between 1937 and 1946, Yü was striving to assimilate to the New China as a college student and member of the New Democracy Youth Corps at Yanjing University in 1949 when a visitor from the village, who was a Christian pastor, reported to him that life for poor people there was becoming more difficult under the new regime. Yü tells us that he interrupted the pastor, “loudly and sharply” refuting his factual statements with a “boilerplate propaganda message” he had picked up. The point of this story is that the shame of verbally abusing the pastor haunted Yü for the next sixty years; he tells the story here for the first time. But he also writes that the lesson he learned helped him understand the young Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution (105–6). The reader can also hear the resonance between these memories, his memories of Qian Mu’s influence on him, and his memories of his colleague Gao Youguang’s “mantra” on self-improvement (250). In the spring of 2022, a reader cannot help but feel the resonance between this lesson and contemporary reports of boilerplate propaganda challenging factual reports elsewhere in the world.

Gao Youguang (1929–2016) was one of just two Chinese graduate students of about the same age in East Asian Languages and Civilizations at Harvard when Yü arrived, the other being Chang Kwang-chih (1931–2001). Gao’s view that Chinese arts and literature emphasized the “lyrical,” while Western arts and literature emphasized “narrative,” served to strengthen Yü’s developing view that Chinese emphasis on inward transcendence (*neixiang chaoyue* 內向超越) contrasted with outward transcendence (*waixiang chaoyue* 外向超越) in Western culture historically (250). These simple observations resonate at once with Qian Mu’s view that the pattern of Chinese history

differs from that of the West as a poem differs from a drama. Qian Mu offered that view in the introduction to his *General History of China* (*Guoshi dagang* 国史大纲), which Yü had read at Northeast Zhongzheng University in 1947 but first studied in depth with Qian Mu himself in 1950. He then realized that “the path I would take for my whole life was more or less decided” when he first encountered it (80), but also that the deepest impression Qian made on him was not with the content but with the “general attitude toward the pursuit of knowledge” (128). Rather than lecture him, Qian Mu let him find his own way from his early Marxist understanding of the Three Kingdoms to his life-long quest to broaden his knowledge by using the tools and concepts of comparative history, political science, social and cultural anthropology, and archaeology without allowing them to displace the fundamental sense that Chinese culture had produced its own comparable but distinct ways of adapting to the changes that had led to Europe’s own distinct narratives from Renaissance to Enlightenment to modern science and democracy.

The final third of the book, focusing on Yü’s experience at Harvard, tells the story of when and how each of these fields, and the scholars who introduced them to Yü, came to influence his scholarship. Once the reader begins to probe and reflect on them, the details increasingly provide insights into the history of the scholarship and its significance for Chinese studies and for comparative history more broadly. Yang Liansheng (1914–1990) was the predominant influence, from whom Yü learned that the depth and breadth of one’s research and the understanding of context were more important than novel interpretations based on discoveries made by less careful scholars that often excited and distracted younger ones. Yü’s narrowing of the focus of his Ph.D. dissertation to “Views of Life and Death in Later Han China” was a result. His determination to rebut Joseph Needham’s rejection of his discovery of “soul” in China before Buddhism led to his very teachable article, “O Soul, Come Back” (*Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 47.2, 1987). Then came the careful weighing and applying of insights from scholars like Talcott Parsons, Crane Brinton, Erik Erikson, and Benjamin Schwartz. In a seminar with John Fairbank, in which Liu Guangching (K.C. Liu) was the teaching assistant, Yü delved into Late Qing “statecraft thinking” (經世思想) in the writing of Feng Guifen (1809–1874). The account goes on, but for his goal of providing a reference for “a new generation of young friends seeking knowledge,” Yü has organized his narrative around the theme of three periods of Chinese Humanities scholars, by which he means scholars who were ethnically and culturally Chinese, at Harvard—1915–1925, late 1930s–late 1940s, and what he calls “a completely new turn” in the 1950s, the period of his own experience.

For the first period, Yü draws on the diary of Wu Mi to capture the spirit of that cohort, which included Chen Yinke, Tang Yongtong, Mei Guangdi, and others, to show how they gathered together to share ideas across a broad array of fields and learned from one another as they progressed. The theme of collaboration and interaction continues through Yü’s discussion of the second period, when Hu Shi was a major influence and Yang Liansheng was emerging. Chinese students still hoped to return quickly to China, as even Yang said he would do as soon as Hu Shi urged him to. After 1950, Yü asserts, Chinese students tended to stay in the US because “the humanistic tradition was no longer able to thrive on the mainland” while the research conditions and resources in the US were of the highest level (265–66). This was the “new turn,” but Yü wants to explain its significance with reference to his own experience. The story revolves around his friendship with Chang Kwang-chih, who was born in China and came to Harvard from National Taiwan University in 1954. Chang was

more inclined than Yü to accept the legitimacy of the Communist regime. He became the pre-eminent authority on the archaeological evidence for understanding ancient cultures in China and the primary advocate of cross-Straits collaboration in archaeology. What mattered to Yü was their friendship and their collaboration, which was later spoiled by distrust, and by the hurtful academic politics that eventually befell the two men in Taiwan and the PRC. The intriguing details in his account, which may be familiar to many scholars, are too complex to cover in this review, but Yü wanted it to be known that his friendship with and respect for Chang lasted. He devotes a significant portion of this memoir to his explanation, because it is representative of the complex ways in which the politics of the period affected the spirit he hoped to preserve.

This memoir is both a narrative history of modern Chinese “learning” (*xuewen* 學問) from the perspective of a learned scholar, and a point of reference for younger seekers of knowledge. Translated into English, it should serve non-Chinese readers as well. I can only attest to how it relates to my own experience, but in the broad field of humanistic historical studies, it may serve as a point of personal and professional reference for others. I first met Professor Yü when our paths crossed at Yale in 1979. He had just taken up a professorship that he had hoped would enable him to further his collaboration with Chang Kwang-chih, who had been one of my earliest mentors as a graduate student at Yale, but his hopes for closer collaboration were spoiled by Chang’s move to Harvard. As a scholar of cultural and social history, focused on local Chinese communities similar to that of his ancestral village, I told Professor Yü of my research on the Hua lineage in Wuxi. To my surprise, he told me that his mentor Qian Mu had attended the very school that was at the center of my research when he was a young boy. Demonstrating the trust and the spirit of sharing and collaboration represented in this memoir, he gave me a copy of Qian Mu’s *Reminiscences on My Parents at the Age of Eighty* (*Bashi yi shuangqin* 八十憶雙親), which had just been published in Taiwan. The *Reminiscences* became the centerpiece of my study, the oral history which was supported and welcomed by institutions in the US, PRC, and Taiwan. Surely, the field of Chinese studies is populated by very many who have experienced “learning” in the spirit of the Chinese humanists that Yü Ying-shih wants us all, and especially the younger generation, not to forget.