

# Excursions in Sinology



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作者介绍:

Yang Lien-sheng

The first fulltime Chinese historian in the Department of Far Eastern Languages, Yang Lien-sheng 楊聯陞 (1914-1990) was born in Baoding, Hubei province. He received his undergraduate education at Qinghua University, where he studied economics and completed his thesis under the direction of the historian Chen Yinke. He then came to Harvard University and became one of the first graduate students in the newly formed Department of Far Eastern Languages. He completed his A.M. in 1942 and his Ph.D. in 1946, with a dissertation entitled "Notes on the Economic History of the Chin Dynasty." In the following year, he joined the faculty as an assistant professor, teaching the Chinese language and graduate seminars on topics in pre-modern Chinese history. He remained at Harvard for his entire career, until his retirement as

Harvard-Yenching Professor of Chinese History in 1980.

The majority of Yang's immense scholarly output lay in the field of Chinese economic history. In 1952, he published his influential *Money and Credit in China* (1952), which remains a standard reference work for Chinese monetary history. He was also a major contributor to the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, where he published articles on many aspects of Chinese economic and monetary history. In addition, Yang also wrote about such wide-ranging subjects as Han dynasty bronze mirrors, female rulers, hostages, the ancient game Liubo, and schedules of work and rest in imperial China. Such temporal and thematic range helped to establish Yang as one of the most respected and erudite Chinese historians of his generation. Many of his articles were republished in such essay collections as *Studies in Chinese Institutional History* (1961) and *Excursions in Sinology* (1969). They were also translated and disseminated widely in China and Taiwan.

In addition to his historical work, Yang Lien-sheng also wrote on aspects on Chinese linguistics and, together with Chao Yuen-ren, edited the *Concise Dictionary of Chinese* (1947).

Throughout his life, Yang maintained close contact with colleagues and family in Taiwan and mainland China. His best known acquaintance was the philosopher and essayist Hu Shih, with whom he maintained an ongoing correspondence throughout the 1940s and 50s. The dozens of letters that Hu Shih sent to Yang are preserved in the rare books collection of Harvard-Yenching Library. Yang's work continued to be reprinted after his death in 1990, and his collected writings were recently published in China under the title *Hafo yimo 哈佛遺墨* (Posthumous Writings from Harvard; 2004).

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