

## Citation for Prof Anthony C Yu

Your Honour,

A Chinese proverb says, "In talking about the Twenty-Four Histories, we don't know where to begin." This aphorism may well apply to our attempt to rehearse the eventful life of Prof Anthony C Yu, although he has yet to reach the age of three score years. We may begin with the education he received during childhood, because that experience undoubtedly has had a profound and transforming influence on Prof Yu as a person and as a scholar in his later years. During his early teens, it was his grandfather who took pains to train him in the rudiments of writing classical Chinese verse. Across the years, what he learned in childhood has deepened into a cherished hobby. Only recently, he finished a poem in lyric meters to the tune of "A Sky of Partridges" that might have been the result of viewing nightfall on Lake Michigan near his Chicago home:

A light warmth the cold thaws and the night air lifts.  
The moon's silver orb hangs high on city towers.  
The silkworm spins dry, but the feelings linger;  
The cuckoo calls vainly, for the dreamer wakes.  
With shortened beats  
I sing farewell --  
A few clear lines of secret, bitter grief.  
Let not the east wind the fading reds disperse;  
I'll press them for book-marks to keep for life.

From the point of view of his entire career, the family education that Prof Yu received during his childhood not only has provided him with a convenient means to express his feelings, but it has also exerted a great impact on his formal academic pursuits.

Born in Hong Kong, Prof Yu received his secondary and tertiary education in Taiwan and the United States respectively. In 1960, he graduated *Magna Cum Laude* at Houghton College in New York, majoring in History and English Literature. In 1969, after taking the doctorate at the University of Chicago, he was appointed to teach in the Divinity School of that University as a result of his academic excellence.

Since 1968, Prof Yu's writings have appeared almost annually as scholarly publications in the United States. Understandably, these publications have focussed on his teaching fields of religion and comparative literature. Two examples of his early scholarship worth citing are "Faulkner's Hightower: Allergy to History" (1970) and "O Hateful Error: Tragic *Hamartia* in Shakespeare's Brutus" (1973).

What may be of interest to our present audience is that part of Prof Yu's early education involved reading a great deal of popular Chinese fiction treating mythical heroes, monumental conflicts, and fantastic adventures that included both martial-arts novels and such canonical classics as *The Three Kingdoms* and *The Journey to the West*. Although the human priest, T'ang Monk, of that last novel might not have appealed to a young reader, characters such as Monkey (Sun Wu-k'ung) and Pigsy (Chu Pa-chieh) were destined to inhabit a large part of Prof Yu's imagination. In the '60s and the '70s, if his mind was pre-occupied by Homer, Dante and Shakespeare during his daytime teaching and research, at night these Western figures might well have been replaced by the monsters and immortals populating *The Journey to the West*.

Prof Yu began translating the Ming classic in late 1970s, and Vol 1 of *The Journey to the West* appeared in 1977. The completion of the whole narrative would take another six years (1983), and as a published work, this first complete English rendition of a particular Chinese classic has a distinctive meaning for both Prof Yu's scholarly development and the development of sinology.

The four-volume translation is distinctive in many ways. Not only is it a plenary translation of every phrase and sentence, but it is also a fully annotated translation. In the history of sinological translation in the West, it might have been the first of its kind in which nearly one fourth of the text is devoted to detailed annotation of names, places, sources, and abstruse literary and religious terminologies. Together with a long critical and interpretive introduction, these textual features validate the work's designation as a "scholarly translation."

Prior to the publication of *The Journey to the West*, American universities seldom took translation as a qualification for tenured appointment, because that sort of work was not considered a form of scholarship. Yu's publication helped to remove some of that prejudice, for no European or American Sinologist could still maintain that literary translation was a scribe's trifling skill. Despite its contribution to sinological scholarship, the translation was but a milestone in Yu's overall career. As mentioned earlier, his early teaching and writing efforts concentrated as well on western literature and religions. Had Prof Yu proceeded exclusively in that direction, he would have been more than equal to the task, given his language training and ability.

In recent years Yu's fondness for one particular text of the classic Chinese novel instilled through his grandfather's story-telling apparently grew into an inclusive love for Chinese literature. From 1980 onward, Prof Yu has steadily shifted a major portion of his research interest to Chinese studies. Added to his many publications will be his major work of criticism, *Re-reading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in "Hongloulou"*, which will be published in 1997 by Princeton University Press.

It has often been noted that Chinese literary scholars teaching in Europe or America may need a lifetime of labour to produce a couple of books on Homeric or Shakespearean studies. Great and valuable such publications may be, they merely enlarge and adorn a voluminous body of extant scholarship devoted to the Western canon. On the other hand, a complete English translation of a Chinese masterpiece such as *The Journey to the West* and a new study in English of *The Story of the Stone*, another monumental Chinese novel, that utilises contemporary critical theory may be regarded at least as innovative and courageous acts of cross-cultural scholarship. The choice of scholarship in such cases, therefore, may also indicate different academic aspiration and personal values. After all, Prof Yu, as mentioned earlier, has composed these lines:

The silkworm spins dry, but the feelings linger;  
The cuckoo calls vainly, for the dreamer wakes.

If we are allowed to construe these lines to be somewhat self-referential, we should not be surprised by Prof Yu's aspiration or his values.

From 1968 to 1974, Prof Yu served as Assistant Professor in the Divinity School of The University of Chicago. Since 1990, he has been named the Carl Darling Buck Distinguished Service Professor in Humanities. It is a multi-disciplinary chair, the holder of which may offer courses in the Divinity School, and in the departments or subjects of East Asian Languages, English, and Comparative Literature.

Prof Yu is a highly accomplished and acclaimed scholar in his field. May we now have the honour to present Prof Yu for the award of the degree of Doctor of Literature *honoris causa*.

## 余國藩教授贊詞

代理總督閣下：

中國人有一句俗話：「二十四史不知從何說起」。余國藩教授尚未到耳順之年，但我們面對他多彩多姿的一生，亦有不知從何說起之感。或者，我們不妨從他童年教育開始。因為童年的經歷，對他日後為學、做人有潛移默化的影響。更值得一提的是，他孩提時在祖父耳提面命所受的中國詩詞訓練，使他可以日後在芝加哥家居面對密歇根湖落日餘暉，情懷激動時，低吟《鷓鴣天》：

小暖消寒暮藹清  
一輪銀月挂層城  
絲蠶吐盡情猶續  
怨宇啼空夢已驚  
憑短拍 譜驪聲  
幾行幽恨苦分明  
東風莫掃殘紅落  
留壓餘篇伴此生

童蒙時代的家庭教育，從余教授整個學術生涯觀點看，給予他的，不僅是「遺悲懷」的方便，更重要的是他人到中年時對從事學術研究取向的影響。

余教授香港出生。在台灣中學畢業後赴美，一九六〇年以 *Magna Cum Laude* 特優榮譽畢業於紐約 Houghton College，主修歷史與文學。一九六九年余教授在芝加哥大學取得博士學位後，因成績優異，留校任教，在神學院開課。

自一九六八年開始，余教授每年都有論文在歐美學報發表，內容也大多與他教學的範圍有關：神學與西方文學。譬如說，"Faulkner's Hightower: Allergy to History"（一九七〇）和 "O Hateful Error: Tragic *Hamartia* in Shakespeare's *Brutus*"（一九七三），就是其中兩個例子。

余教授的兒時教育，可想當然的一部份是通俗文學演變出來的童話故事。《西遊記》中的唐僧，不會與小孩子有什麼緣份，但孫悟空和豬八戒這類角色，一定在余教授當年和日後的想像空間，佔有極大的份量。如果在六、七十年代他白天教學或寫作，思維完全被荷馬、但丁、莎士比亞所佔據，一到晚上，說不定《西遊記》中的「怪物」就會一一出現，迫他們讓位。

一九七七年余教授的《西遊記》英譯第一冊，在芝加哥大學出版。無論就余教授個人學術研究的方向、或世界漢學的發展來說，他六年有成就的 *The Journey to the West*，都有不尋常的意義。

*The Journey to the West*全文共四冊，最後一冊於一九八三年出版。余教授的翻譯工作意義不尋常。簡單的說，第一，因為這是在注疏工夫上做得鉅細無遺的全譯本。在西方漢學翻譯史上，像余教授這樣以接近四分一的篇幅去注疏內文典故和隱喻的，可說得未曾有。*The Journey to the West*是名符其實的「學術翻譯」。在余譯面世前，美國大學的中文系，一般都不把翻譯看作評審終身職資格的標準。理由不外是：翻譯與學術研究，不能相提並論。

余國藩教授的譯作出現以後，這種偏見不復存在。今天歐美漢學界，再不會有人把學術翻譯視作雕蟲小技。英譯《西遊記》出版，對世界漢學是一大貢獻，在余教授個人來說，是一個里程碑。前面說過，余教授拿到博士學位後，最初的幾年，所授的科目是清一色的西方文學和哲學，出版的論文亦如是。這也是說，如果余教授的研究方向，繼續瞧這路子走，以他的語文訓練和能力，應該游刃有餘。

但余教授顯然難以忘懷少時因聽「西遊」而與中國文學結下的那份情緣。自八十年代中開始，余教授的研究方向逐漸「東移」。他下一部的重頭著作是 *Re-reading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in "Honglougong"*，年內將由普林斯頓大學出版。

中國人在歐美大學教書，窮一生之力出版了一兩本研究荷馬或莎士比亞的專書，是錦上添花。英譯《西遊記》和從西方的文學理論去探討傳統小說如《紅樓夢》，是雪中送炭。無論在個人或對學術界而言，這二者間之取捨，都代表了不同的價值觀。余教授所填之《鷓鴣天》有此二句：「一輪銀月掛層城，絲蠶吐盡情猶續」。因此余教授選擇了雪中送炭，我們不覺得奇怪。

余教授自一九六九至七四年是神學院助理教授。一九九〇年開始，他是 Carl Darling Buck Distinguished Service Professor in Humanities。這是一個跨學系的講座教授名銜，可以在神學院、東亞語文、英文和比較文學等學系開課。

余教授實至名歸，他願意接受嶺南學院榮譽文學博士學位，我們與有榮焉。