

*At a Meeting of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences on October 4, 2016, the following Minute was placed upon the records.*

PATRICK DEWES HANAN

Born: January 4, 1927

Died: April 26, 2014

On April 26, 2014, Patrick Hanan passed away. He was a gentle man and a gentleman “of the old school,” in the very best sense of that worn phrase. He was also the Victor S. Thomas Professor of Chinese Literature, *Emeritus*, at Harvard University and the former Director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute (1987–1995). He was one of the founders of the field of vernacular Chinese literary studies outside of East Asia and taught generations of students, who have now gone on to teach their own students.

He was scholar of vast erudition and “invention,” the term he fondly linked to his favorite writer, the inventive humorist Li Yu (1611–1680). Professor Hanan’s patent virtues of patience, kindness, and scholarly soundness were enlivened by an undercurrent of wit and the imp of humor. His work is still a joy to read, both the translations and his mature scholarly work. His students often say that they can still hear him speaking in those pages.

It has been sometimes observed that non-native scholars of Chinese humanities have often come from most unlikely beginnings. Patrick Hanan was born on January 4, 1927, in Morrinsville, New Zealand, which now has a population of about 7,000. From there he moved to a farm in roughly the same region of North Island. He rode a horse to a one-room primary school, which reminds one of how far distant, in many ways, that world was. Primary schools are no longer built with attached barns or pastures. He was later sent to a boarding school in Auckland and from there entered Auckland University, where he studied English literature and graduated with an M.A.

Pat Hanan then went on to the University of London, with the initial intent of continuing his study of English literature. There he became interested in Chinese by reading translations and took it in mind to do another B.A., in Chinese. He entered the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London and graduated in 1953. He did not report the reaction of his parents, but in that generation such a decision might have occasioned considerable anxiety in those who hoped that their offspring could be gainfully employed. He next moved on to the graduate program at SOAS and took up the study of the seventeenth-century novel *Jin Ping Mei*, translated now as *The Plum in a Golden Vase*. There was very little scholarship on this novel when Pat Hanan began his work, and he did his apprenticeship by comparing editions, looking for consistency of authorship, and tracing the sources. Now there is a vast ocean of scholarship on this novel, which all looks back to the foundations he laid.

In 1957 he went to China and Japan to do research, by his own account spending most of his time in the great Beijing libraries. He had the opportunity to consult the Chinese scholars who had been instrumental in founding the field of Chinese vernacular literature as an academic discipline.

Professor Hanan completed his dissertation in 1960 and received his doctorate in 1961. Within a few months he received a call from Donald Shively, inviting him to a half-year visiting position at Stanford. This turned into a full-time appointment in 1963. When Professor Shively moved to Harvard, he soon recruited Pat Hanan in 1968.

After his dissertation was published in 1960 as *A Study of the Composition and the Sources of the "Chin P'ing Mei,"* Hanan turned his attention to pre-modern Chinese short stories. Over the course of two books, Hanan moved from composition and dating to a beautifully written overview of the art of the Chinese short story, *The Chinese Vernacular Story* (1981).

Finally, he focused on Li Yu, whose stories he had treated in *The Chinese Vernacular Story*. He chose Li Yu because Li Yu was a humorist; because of his fiction—several story collections and a novel; and because he had what the Chinese call a “literary collection,” with poems, letters, prefaces, and a body of classical Chinese writing that gives us access to a historical person behind the writer of fiction. The scholar who began by comparing very different editions, looking for traces of multiple (if unknown) authors, and tracing the reconfiguration of earlier sources found in Li Yu the kind of “author” who would satisfy a one-time scholar of English literature. Li Yu believed in originality and stamped everything he wrote with his identity as a historical person. *The Invention of Li Yu*, from 1988, playing on Li Yu’s “self-invention” and his inventiveness, is a wonderful book.

It is hard to write a book in English on your favorite author when that author’s work is not available in English. This brings us to the final phase of Pat Hanan’s career. In 1990 and 1992, he gave those inclined to read the works of Li Yu, whose literary biography was so attractively presented to us in 1988, translations of the novel and two story collections. The translator made them as enjoyable as the scholarly monograph had led us to believe they would be. In his last years, before and after his retirement in 1998, Pat did a remarkable series of translations, primarily of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Chinese fiction; he ventured into less well-known territory, including late Qing sentimental fiction and Republican “Mandarin Ducks and Butterflies” fiction. His was a splendid career, awaiting only the last translation, posthumously recovered from his hard drive, the early *Pingyao zhuan*, which he described as the Chinese novel least modified in transmission and closest to the origins of the Chinese novel.

Pat Hanan is survived by his daughter-in-law and three grandchildren. The Chinese often think of scholars in terms of lineages. Pat Hanan clearly founded a lineage of younger

scholars as he helped found a field. Those who “found” him as their teacher think of him always with affection and reverence—as a presence that has shaped a new, now senior generation in the field.

Respectfully submitted,

Edwin A. Cranston

David Wang

Stephen Owen, Chair