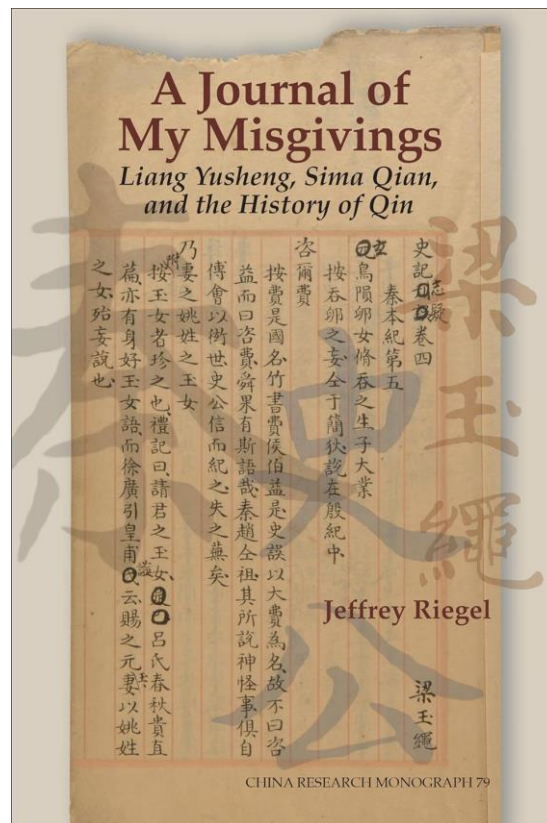


Readings from
*A Journal of My Misgivings: Liang Yusheng,
Sima Qian, and the History of Qin*



Professor Jeffrey Riegel

(University of California, Berkeley & University of Sydney)

2pm, 26 Oct (Thursday), 2023 (in-person only)

Room LG18 (Law Faculty, Sidgwick Site)

Abstract

Praised and occasionally criticized by Qing dynasty scholars as well as contemporary authorities, the *Shiji zhiyi* 史記志疑 of Liang Yusheng 梁玉繩 (1744-1819) is a detailed analysis and critique of Sima Qian's famous *Shiji*, the ancient Han dynasty account of China's earliest dynasties and ruling houses from legendary times until the second century BCE. Over the last seven years I have been closely reading the *Shiji zhiyi* and have produced a book-length study that focuses on Liang's comments on the *Shiji* passages that relate to the slow rise and precipitous fall of Qin, the first empire, and that weaves Liang's scholarship into a revision of Sima Qian's narration of the transformation of Qin from marginal state to hegemonic power. The book provides an account of Liang's life and methodology before turning to revisions of what the *Shiji* says about Qin's origins, the state's ruling lineage, and its later kings and emperors, as well as the geography of the Qin state and empire, and the numerous battles from which Qin emerged as ultimate victor in 221 BCE. The foundation of these revisions is the *Shiji zhiyi*. But on occasion I supplement and correct Liang's scholarship by referring to the numerous archaeological discoveries that have dramatically altered our understanding of what happened in the history of early China. In my presentation I provide the examples of Liang's methodology and the more dramatic revisions his scholarship suggests. My point is that, while there are imperfections in Liang's work and points where his revisions are outdated, ill-founded, or incomplete, the translations and studies that ignore them or otherwise render, interpret, and adopt the *Shiji* "as is" are at best misguided.

Speaker



Jeffrey Riegel is retired from professorial positions at the University of California, Berkeley (1979-2007), and The University of Sydney (2007-2017). Jeff has published widely on early Chinese thought, literature, and archaeology, has been a visiting professor at Fudan University, Renmin University, and the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and still occasionally gives talks in China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Japan, Australia, and North America. Jeff's publications include *The Annals of Lü Buwei* (Stanford, 2000) and *Mozi: A Study and Translation of the Ethical and Political Writings* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, 2013). His articles appear in major sinological journals. A selection of them has been translated into Chinese and collected into a volume forthcoming in 2023 from the *Zhonghua shuju* in China. His recently-completed book-length study of eighteenth-century Chinese historiography on the rise of the Qin empire will be published by Berkeley's IEAS in the autumn of 2023. Jeff spends most of his time at his homes in Siem Reap, Suzhou, and Palm Springs.