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weiren, *weisbi* and *weixue* in China. Traditionally, conducting oneself well was considered far more important than knowledge and expertise in a field. As a scholar linking past and future, he was regarded as a leader in his field with the publication of over twenty books and more than eighty academic papers. His contributions to anthropology are internationally recognised and earned him honorary membership of the British Royal Anthropological Society. As a man, he is remembered as friendly and kind-hearted towards everyone, be they his elders, people of the same generation or his juniors. At home, he is remembered as a considerate husband, a loving and respected father and a kindly and amiable grandfather. He juggled and fulfilled his multiple roles of husband, father and son-in-law with all his heart, especially in difficult periods of his life. In the book, you can read how Song looked after his ill wife in the May Seventh Cadre School and his father-in-law in the 1970s when their family of five lived in a house of 30 square metres. Attention is also drawn to his benevolence towards his cats, which at one time numbered eleven.

Song gave his last lecture to teachers and students from the University of Houston in June 2004 when he was eighty-one years old. The same year he died peacefully in America. When his family members put in order the things he left behind, they found that, except for the books he brought with him, there were only lecture notes. These were a full and perfect finish to Song's life as an ideal teacher.

This book will allow Song's life story to remain fresh in the memory of his family members, colleagues, friends and students. That is the sacred place where his soul should reside forever.

MARTIN CHANGZHU ZHANG
Taylor's College, Sydney

Failure, Nationalism, and Literature: The Making of Modern Chinese Identity, 1895–1937, by Jing Tsu, Stanford University Press, 2005, xii + 329 pp, ISBN 0 8047 5176 5.

This is a very interesting book. The author, a literary scholar, begins by asking how often we think of cultural humiliation and failure as strengths. This calls to mind a Chinese proverbial saying, 'Knowing shame is close to being brave' (*zhibi jinbu yong*). Defeat can sometimes be turned into victory, failure into

success, if one feels shame in humiliation and finds ways of turning things around. Knowing shame leads to self-reproach, which is a prerequisite to self-improvement and regeneration. Certainly one has to say that the answer to the question posed by the author is 'not often'. And that is why she has written the book, to demonstrate that during the period of nation and state building from 1898 to 1937, many Chinese literary figures felt humiliation and failure intensely and eventually managed to turn them into strengths, in the process helping to forge a modern Chinese identity and contribute to the making of Chinese nationalism.

Chinese nationalism has been extensively studied by historians, political scientists, literary scholars and others, each approaching it from a different perspective that reflects a particular discipline. Jing Tsu's *Failure* differs from earlier scholarship in that it adopts an interdisciplinary approach towards conceptualising the relationship between nationalism and cultural identities. She draws on a range of sources in cultural and intellectual history, political theory, elite and popular literature and, above all, psychology, to show how Chinese writers responded to the nation's humiliation at foreign hands and to the suffering that followed. The salient feature of Tsu's methodology is Freud's psychoanalysis, which provides the framework within which she examines the issues of victimisation, failure, suffering, masochism, femininity, self-reflection, self-reproach and revitalisation. Tsu views victimisation, humiliation and failure as a modality of cultural identity, that is, as a cultural experience that generates specific passions, nationalistic and racial sentiments. She is concerned with the making of modern Chinese identity in its national, racial and cultural configurations.

Her basic argument is that embracing injury and humiliation spawns deep passions and love for the nation, that sustained suffering generates something helpful to the making of collective identity, that the victim claims an otherwise undeserved cultural recognition and that humiliation, despite its initial pains, turns itself into a condition for national and cultural identity. Humiliation is consecrated in the service of nation building and identity making. In this way, the nation is built on collective memories of humiliation, injury and failure. A sense of shame and a desire to redress the wrongs done to the nation lead to self-reproach, to a faulting of the national character, to a preoccupation with what's wrong with the nation, as a prerequisite to resurrecting the atrophied national spirit and to saving the nation.

After the introductory first chapter, Tsu explores the question of race as China's survival as a nation was at stake. She analyses the writings of Kang Youwei, Liang Qichao, Tang Caichang and Lin Shu to show that each in his own way was concerned with the place the yellow race was to occupy in the world. The Han Chinese as a race was facing extinction from imperialist aggression, but, once regenerated, they were destined to be on a par with the white race. Tsu's writers viewed the threat as a sign of opportunity, and present weakness a source of strength. Where the West saw a 'yellow peril' from the East, they took delight in it, gleefully anticipating that China would play that role after the flaws of the national character had been remedied. In this way, anxiety about national extinction became a redeeming power, offering the prospect of rebirth.

Improving the race brings into sharp relief the relationship between eugenics and nation. Tsu examines the writings of the eugenicists, especially Pan Guangdan and Zhou Jianren (the youngest brother of Lu Xun), which reveal their consciousness of the genetic defects in the Chinese race that had failed the nation so much. They excavated the flaws of the national character as a first step towards finding a remedy. The excavation underscores the theme of Lu Xun's famous novel *The Official Chronicles of Ah Q*. While Ah Q embodies all those flaws, he leaves a legacy that assists in building a modern Chinese identity.

The notions of femininity and masculinity play a part in failure and suffering as strengths. In the chapter on the quest for beauty and notions of femininity, Tsu explores the sexologist and women's liberation advocate Zhang Jingsheng's idea of a society of beauty, the New Woman project of the 1920s, Mao Dun's short-story collection *Wild Roses*, Pan Guangdan's study of narcissism in the life of Feng Xiaoqing, a well-known seventeenth-century figure who died at the height of her despondency at the age of eighteen, and the works of Ding Ling and Xiao Hong. The works of the last two writers demonstrate how the torment of femininity reinforces the necessity for a self-imposed sacrifice that underscores the literary representation of national allegiance.

A separate chapter deals with the questions of confessions, masochism and masculinity as a community of expiation. Tsu illustrates the relationship between male masochism and national allegiance through the fiction of Yu Dafu, Guo Moruo, Wen Yiduo, Zheng Boqi, Zong Baihua and Tian Han.

The final chapter looks at *kumen*—variously translated as suffering, agony, mental anguish, or depression—as torment both in an individual and a societal sense through the works of Mao Dun, Ye Shengtao, Zheng Boqi and Lu Xun. Influenced by the Japanese literary and cultural critic Kuriyagawa Hakuson, Lu Xun translated his collection *Kumon no shōchō* (Symbol of angst) into Chinese. Lu, Tsu tells us, had a vision of China ‘not set in the future but fixed on the suffering of the present’ (p. 214). Others treated *kumen* as a condition for the birth of Chinese literary modernity. *Kumen*, then, is embodied, sustaining suffering, without which there could be no conviction of the nation’s survival.

Failure is a fascinating book. Its greatest strength lies in its originality, especially in its use of a critical and psychoanalytical framework to study questions of culture, race, identity, nation and nationalism. It is refreshing, offering an innovative way of looking at Chinese cultural nationalism and literary modernity. Tsu’s insightful analysis deserves the attention not just of scholars of literary and cultural studies but also of historians and political scientists who have an interest in fathoming the intricate relationship between Chinese cultural identity and nationalism.

EDMUND FUNG

University of Western Sydney

The Men Who Governed Han China: Companion to A Biographical Dictionary of the Qin, Former Han and Xin Periods, by Michael Loewe, Leiden: Brill, 2004, xiv + 666 pp, €152, ISBN 9 0041 3845 5.

The title says it all. This heavyweight work is essentially a by-product of the biographical dictionary edited by Michael Loewe and published by Brill in 2000. The focus is strongly on government, its primary ideologies and institutions; there is little of civil society and there are few ladies present. The reader gets what he is told he is getting.

Loewe explains in his preface that in compiling the biographical dictionary he ‘encountered a number of problems which required investigation’, the results of which could not be included in the dictionary itself and so were put together for publication separately. With this sort of genesis there is always a risk that the contents will be rather miscellaneous, and so it is in this case. While the central theme is government, the individual chapters deal