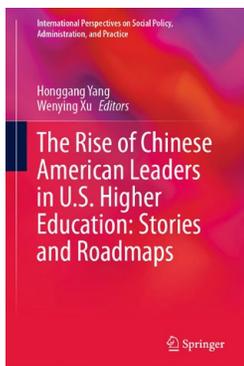


Prominent Chinese American Academicians Tell Their Stories

By Mike Revzin

The *Rise of Chinese American Leaders in U.S. Higher Education: Stories and Roadmaps* is a collection of 36 essays about the lives and careers of Chinese Americans who have obtained leadership positions in U.S. higher education.

A summary from the book's site says, "We live at a time that not only witnesses an increase in Chinese American leaders on U.S. campuses but also mounting incidents of discriminatory treatment of this group."



The 455-page book was published by Springer Nature in 2023. It is available in softcover, ebook and hardcover, for prices ranging from \$109 to \$139.

One of the editors, Honggang Yang, is former dean of the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences and the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at Nova Southeastern University in Davie, Florida. He also served on the editorial boards of *American Review of China Studies*, *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*, and the Lexington Books series *Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Asia*.

The other editor is Wenying Xu, a professor of English at Jacksonville University in Florida. She received her Ph.D. in English from the University of Pittsburgh.

One review of the book on Amazon.com states, "Most of the writers were born in China and overcame great obstacles on their way to becoming top administrators, professors, deans, chancellors, and university presidents. Their essays, ranging from 3 to 15 pages in length, all embrace the theme of how to succeed in the complex world of U.S. higher education."

The reviewer quotes Ching-Hua Wang, who in 2018 became president of Samuel Merritt College in Oakland, California. Her story begins, "I was born and brought up

in Beijing, China. Everything around me was seemingly uneventful until the calamity of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) when... I was among 17 million... students taken from their homes and families to be 'reeducated' as manual laborers on farms and in factories. ... For six years in Inner Mongolia, I lived in a tiny mudroom in a village that had no running water, no insulation, and no electricity.... Two years into my exile, I received a package from my father containing an Oxford English Dictionary that literally changed my life path, leading me to medical school, to the United States, and eventually to my presidency."



Ching-Hua Wang

"Driven by the belief that one's ultimate life goal is to reach one's greatest potential, and influenced by the hardship of my early life in China, I have enjoyed pursuing my American Dream." —Xuemao Wang

Here are descriptions of some of the book's other essays:

Xuemao Wang, Dean of Libraries at Northwestern University, writes, "I was born and raised in China and grew up during the tumultuous period of the Cultural Revolution. After working for an academic library during my undergraduate education in China, I came to the United States... Driven by the belief that one's ultimate life goal is to reach one's greatest potential, and influenced by the hardship of my early life in China, I have enjoyed

pursuing my American Dream."

Frank H. Wu, President of Queens College, contributed an essay titled, "Everything My Asian Immigrant Parents Taught Me Turns Out to Be Wrong." An abstract of that article says that Wu "argues that Asian Americans who wish to attain leadership roles should adapt. He considers the effectiveness of different strategies for success in the Western workplace, comparing traditional collectivist norms of Asian cultures with modern individualistic ideals of the United States. He suggests that assimilation is not necessarily the best approach, especially due to the persistence of racial discrimination."

Another summary states, "Talk to any Berkeley alum from the 1990s, and they will likely have a story about Chang-Lin Tien, chancellor of the university from 1990 to 1997. Known for leading enthusiastic 'Go Bears!' cheers at games and events, he was one of UC Berkeley's most popular and charismatic administrators. As the first Asian-American to head a major research university, Tien helped Berkeley weather the fiscal crisis of the mid-1990s when state funding was slashed by 18% in 4 years."



Chang-Lin Tien

Jianping Zhu, former Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs at Cleveland State University, writes, "After spending two decades in various academic leadership positions, I feel my biggest takeaway is that for Chinese Americans to thrive in America, we need to reach equity in leadership in all sectors of our society. From the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 to the recent China Initiative, the unfortunate reality is that the status of Chinese Americans as an ethnic group in the United States has not fundamentally changed over the last 140 years." 友