

Prof. Andrew Plaks – CV

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Professor Plaks was born in New York in 1945, and educated in the standard track of American public education. He earned both his B.A. and PhD. at Princeton University. During his undergraduate years he spent an extended period at Tokyo University and National Taiwan University, where he acquired professional mastery of Chinese and Japanese, both Classical and Modern. In pursuing his doctorate at Princeton, he transferred to the Department of Comparative Literature, with a dissertation on the greatest masterwork of Chinese fiction in the light of literary theory and Western works of the Medieval and Renaissance periods. He taught in two departments at Princeton: East Asian Studies and Comparative Literature for over 34 years, the last 25 of them in a special split arrangement with one semester each year at Hebrew University and Tel-Aviv University. There he gave courses on comparative analysis of essential concepts in Chinese and Western (including Jewish) texts, as well as advanced directed readings with the most advanced students of Chinese and Japanese. He served as a Visiting Professor in many universities in America, Europe and East Asia.

Over the years, the central focus of Professor Plaks' interests shifted from literary works of the Imperial period to seminal texts in the history of Chinese Thought. The most important among his publications are his major study of the "Four Masterworks of the Ming Novel", collections of traditional commentaries on major Chinese texts, and translations of two of the canonic "Four Books" of the Confucian tradition. He is currently nearing completion of a monumental Hebrew translation of the 18th century masterpiece "Dream of Red Mansions".