

Benjamin Elman, Gordon Wu '58 Professor of Chinese Studies, Professor of East Asian Studies and History, and Chair of the Department of East Asian Studies, was selected by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for its Distinguished Achievement Award in 2010. According to the foundation, the awards, bestowed annually on three to four scholars nationwide since 2001, are intended to enable notable scholars in the humanities to work under especially favorable conditions and to underscore the decisive contributions the humanities make to the nation's intellectual life. Elman is the sixth long-term Princeton faculty member, and the first historian of China, to be accorded the honor.

Elman works at the intersection of several fields. His five monographs cover Chinese philosophy, the examination system in late imperial China, and the history of science. His most recent book is *A Cultural History of Modern Science in China* (2009). He has edited or coauthored seven other books, including the textbook for world history produced by members of Princeton's Department of History, *Worlds Together, Worlds Apart* (2008/2011). Six of his books have also appeared or will be published in Chinese translation.

For the work supported by the Mellon Foundation, Elman will be investigating the margins of present historiography and reexamining the frameworks for understanding Asia between 1500 and 1800. Using new sources, making new connections, and reexamining old assumptions, he and his collaborators will be asking whether and why China, Japan, and India should be called "early modern" and explore whether European modernity is an appropriate standard for Asia. The individual and collective effort aims to establish linkages between the societies of East and South Asia without making a priori assumptions about the areas' internal structures or the genealogy of their connections.

The Mellon Foundation designs the Distinguished Achievement Awards to recognize the interdependence of scholars and their institutions. Accordingly, the award will help to fund two multi-year postdoctoral fellowships in early modern Chinese studies at Princeton and to sustain an academic consortium between Princeton, Fudan University, and Tokyo University. Elman and his collaborators plan on holding annual symposia, promoting scholarly exchanges and visits for research and study purposes for faculty and graduate students, and developing an information-sharing system through websites and newsletters.

Benjamin Elman received his Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1980. Prior to coming to the Departments of East Asian Studies and History at Princeton in 2002, he taught at Rice University (1985-86) and UCLA (1986-2002), besides serving as the Mellon Visiting Professor of Traditional Chinese Studies in the School of Historical Studies at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Princeton from 1999 to 2001. He has received fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies, the Chiang Ching-Kuo Foundation, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Fulbright Foundation. During 2011-14 he is also Chair Professor of Chinese Studies at the National Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies at Fudan University. For further information, see his profile, interview, publications CV, and related links at http://www.princeton.edu/history/people/display_person.xml?netid=elman.