

Realizing the Chinese Dream: Leaders of Business Community in China



Life of a Snail

Yu Minhong's

Dialogue with the World

GUO LIANG

Translated by Liu Jun

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俞敏洪的自传

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OF
SNAIL



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Chapter 1

Lao Yu Present Tense

Part One Unpretentious billionaire

Yu Minhong, founder of the New Oriental Education & Technology Group Inc., is arguably the richest teacher of English in China. He cherishes the dream of reforming the country's education system. New Oriental, with striking features of Chinese culture, has remained an icon of the country's enterprises.

Many of those who once took the same path as him, upholding the same ideals, eventually broke up with him and went their separate ways. He was also robbed twice in his own home. Such has been his life. Despite this, he has remained a man of sincerity.

"I only spend about 100 yuan every day, and

it's all on food," Yu said. "The clothes I'm wearing are very ordinary, nothing of the super-expensive type. I have a car, I have a house, I can afford my children's education, and I can cover my wife's living expenses."

He cuts his son's hair and once shaved it all off. Satisfied with the result, he then shaved his head as well. Father and son looked at each other then burst out laughing.

Yu is not just economical on food, clothing and other living expenses, he doesn't have the pompous air of a billionaire either.

He likes to play golf wearing a T-shirt with the New Oriental logo, and such casual wear, complete with a pair of sneakers, is what people see him wearing most days of the year. Yu has a special fondness for sneakers, among which he has a particular liking for New Balance, a little-known brand in the United States with a limited sales volume.

Every time Yu travels to the US or Canada, he will often disappear into a shoe store if he spots his favorite brand. He will try on every new pair of sneakers available and strike a pose if he finds a pair he particularly likes. But in the end, he always buys the cheapest pair that fits him. Clutching the shoes,

Yu will glance over his shoulders from time to time on his way out. His friends all joke that this peculiar hobby might have stemmed from the psychological shadow of not having any shoes to wear during his destitute childhood.

Judging from appearances alone, Yu doesn't seem to live up to his nickname of "The Richest Teacher in China". If you pass him on the street, it is likely it will never cross your mind that this ordinary-looking man is famed as the "Godfather of Overseas Students" with an enormous fortune to his name.

Part Two More than a teacher

To a certain extent, the style of New Oriental is the style of Yu Minhong. Whether humorous or inspirational, the anecdotes and epigrams that he uses in his lectures and speeches are the fruits of the arduous journey that led him to where he is today:

* We may not know how far we can go, what's important, however, is we are going. Longing, aspiration and passion can guide us to new horizons, new worlds. Our destination is forever extending.