

Points East

people of Zhao clan still chose to remain with the one given to them by the Song emperor.

After standing for 700 years, the Jewish synagogue exists no more, with only its water well remains inside of the neighboring hospital's heating room. Having been always well-preserved by successive Chinese governments, the water in the well still silently witnesses the passing time.

[Guo Yan is appealing to readers for financial support to complete her museum project. Please note that SJI has taken no position on this project but we are publishing information about it as a way of connecting interested parties in shared endeavors. If you wish to contact Guo Yan for more information about her project or for information regarding the transfer of funds, she may be reached through email: yisrael-kaifeng@hotmail.com, skype: [kaifeng-yisrael](https://www.skype.com/kaifeng-yisrael), blog: (Chinese) <http://hi.baidu.com/yisrael> or (English) <http://kaifengjews.blogspot.com>.]

Project Budget of Kaifeng Jewish History Memorial Center:

Project Budget of Kaifeng Jewish History Memorial Center					
1		Unit Price (¥/m ²)	Amount (m ²)	Sum of Money	
				RMB	Dollar
Construction Investment	Construction	420	160	67200	
	Credentials	120	160	19200	
	Decoration	375	160	60000	
Total:				146400	
Explanation:					
Total floor space: 160 m ²					
1. Main showroom: 130 m ²					
2. Underground showroom: 20 m ²					
3. Balcony: 10 m ²					
2		Material	Amount (pieces)	Sum of Money	
				RMB	Dollar
Relic Reconstruction	Reconstructed model of the Synagogue	Wood	2	10000	
	Tablet carving etc.	Stone	4	12000	

Hebrew University East Asian Post-doc Fellowships Available

The Louis Frieberg Center for East Asian Studies offers post-doctoral fellowships for the year 2010-2011. The post-docs are open to scholars in the humanities and social sciences specializing in East Asia, especially China, Japan and Korea.

Fellowships are granted for one year or one term with the possibility of extension for an additional year. The starting date of the visit should not be later than four years after receipt of the Doctoral Degree; the fellow must hold a valid Doctoral Degree no later than April 2010.

The fellowship consists of a monthly stipend (tax free) of \$1,250 and a housing allowance of \$100. Payments are made once in three months in Israeli Shekels and are linked to the "representative rate of exchange." Fellows are entitled to one airline ticket (economy class) for

a direct flight from their hometown to Israel and back.

The fellows may teach one or two courses in the Hebrew University (for additional payment, according to the Hebrew University regulations). The ability to teach a course in Hebrew is welcome, but is not a prerequisite for attaining the fellowship. The fellows are also expected to actively participate in the life and activities of the Louis Frieberg Center for East Asian Studies. The fellows will present their research at the department seminar of the East Asian Studies Department, and possibly at other relevant forums. Any work outside the Hebrew University would be allowed only after specific approval by the Frieberg Center.

Applicants should submit three hard copies and an electronic copy of their application to the address below, no later than May 23rd, 2010. The application must include CV, research plans, a sample of the applicant's publications (if relevant) and two letters of recommendation. The applicant should indi-

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Contact: The Sino-Judaic Institute, Prof. Steve Hochstadt, Dept. of History, Illinois College, 1101 West College Ave, Jacksonville IL 62650 shochsta@ic.edu

cate the names and positions of the recommenders, but the letters of recommendation should be sent by the recommenders direct to the address below.

The Frieberg Center will announce its decision by July 2010. The academic year at the Hebrew University begins on October 10th, 2010 and ends in mid-June 2011; the fellows are supposed to arrive in Israel no later than October 8th, 2010. The one-term fellowship will end on February 1st, 2011, or start on February 14th 2010 and end on June 30th, 2011.

The Lewis Frieberg Center for East Asian Studies, Faculty of Humanities, RM 6328, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Mt. Scopus 91905, Israel. Phone- 972-2-5881371. Mail: eacenter@mscc.huji.ac.il

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**Points East**

THE SINO-JUDAIC INSTITUTE 中國猶太研究院 מכון סיני יהודי

Vol. 25 No. 1
March 2010

A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute

**AND THE WINNERS ARE:
THE 2009 SJI AWARDS**

This year, the Sino-Judaic Institute made a number of important grants to further Jewish studies in China. Many thanks to our Grants Review Committee: Chairman Den Leventhal, and members Steve Hochstadt, Albert H. Yee, Mary-Anne Graham, Seth Garz and Ondi Lingenfelter for all their hard work!

First and foremost, we gave \$5000 to Dr. Fu Xiaomei for her proposed library development project at The Center of Judaic and Chinese Studies, Sichuan International Studies University (SISU). The Center's purpose is to help change the misunderstanding of and confusion about Judaism and Christianity among Chinese college students and teachers in the study of Western literature and culture, so as to promote a better understanding of the Jewish people and Jewish culture in China. After conferring with the SISU administration (and with their agreement), she has committed to focus initially on a Library Development Program since this will benefit directly both their graduate students and various other researchers. This program focuses both on the acquisition of books on Jewish subjects and the translation of select volumes into Chinese. Her second area of focus, for institutional development purposes, will be an international conference on Jewish studies, hopefully to coincide with SISU's forthcoming 60th anniversary celebrations.

The importance of our grant to this new Jewish studies center in SW China is reflected in the fact that SISU leaders will support Prof. Fu's application to China's National Social Sciences Fund for an additional grant that will support both national and international conferences, as well as costs for visiting scholars who will lecture in SISU's graduate program in Jewish studies. In effect, whatever we give to this fledgling program will be the springboard to ensure adequate resources for generating another locus for the dissemination of sound knowledge of the Jewish people and culture in China. So impressive is Dr. Fu's proposal, not to mention the credentials she brings to her work, that SJI Board member Rabbi Marvin Tokayer independently donated another \$10,000 through SJI to her work! Thank you, Rabbi Tokayer!

Second, we have begun making an annual scholarship available to students of Jewish studies. In this, its inaugural year, we have donated \$1000 to the Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University in Kaifeng. This grant has two parts.

**SOME THOUGHTS ON THE
ENHANCEMENT OF THE
SINO-JUDAIC RELATIONSHIP**

by Zhang Qianhong

[This article first appeared as a speech given by Dr. Zhang at a panel on "Geopolitical Developments and their Impact on the Jewish People" during the Israeli Presidential Conference "Facing Tomorrow", which took place on October 20-22, 2009 in Jerusalem.]

How can closer and more intimate relations between an emerging China and the Jewish people across the world and particularly in Israel help both the Jewish people and China, and in the long run, even contribute to peace and stability in the Middle East? How can China's better knowledge, historic understanding, and cultural affinity contribute towards this goal? It would be an error to believe that geopolitics consists only of hard power facts: military and economic strength, energy resources, and geographic advantages. But soft power including sympathies, culture, and historic memory also play a role in most countries and particularly in China. For example, it has never been forgotten in China that Israel was one of the first countries to recognize the PRC three months after Chairman Mao proclaimed the new nation. In fact, it was the first country in the whole Middle East to do so and policy makers occasionally still mention this fact to this day.

The friendly contacts between the Chinese and Jewish people started a long time ago. The existence of the Jewish communities of Kaifeng, Harbin, Shanghai, and Tianjin is telling evidence of this. In the wake of China's reform and more open policy, especially after China and Israel established diplomatic relations in 1992, the connections between the two peoples became even closer. The last 5 years have seen a steady improvement of relations between China and Israel, and it can be hoped that this trend will continue. Today, most of Chinese people are fully aware of and appreciate the exceptional Israeli achievements in agriculture, military equipment and innovative technologies, as well as Jewish contributions to world civilizations in pre-modern times, not to forget to mention the large number of current Jewish Nobel laureates.

Although China is a country essentially without Jews, there is a genuine desire for understanding the Jewish people and for encouraging closer connections with them. They tend to view

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SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	195
China	22
Israel	13
Canada	12
England	6
Australia	4
Germany	2
Japan	2
France	1
Indonesia	1
South Africa	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	1

TOTAL: _____
261

FROM THE EDITOR

A quarter-century—25 years—of *Points East*. It is certainly a milestone for rejoicing, but one that also makes me, its editor, feel rather old.

I want to thank my friend and colleague, Charlene Polyansky, for producing *Points East* so faithfully year after year. When we began, all articles came in via the postal service. I did a lot of cut-and-pasting by hand. Sometimes I had to type handwritten submissions. Charlene typed the articles on a Selectric Composer, printed them out and pasted up a draft with rubber cement so she could move articles after I'd reviewed it. *Points East* was printed on a huge, noisy printing press. Then, in 1989, we entered the computer age. Today, almost every article submitted comes via email, editing and layout is a snap, and layout as easy as pie. What a difference it is today!

The times in China have changed too. 25 years ago, we wondered if there were any descendants of the Kaifeng Jews still aware of their ancestry. Today we wonder how we might best help them learn about their ancestral culture. Then, Chinese-Israeli relations were a distant dream; today the relationships between the two countries, and the Jewish and Chinese peoples, are stronger than ever, even if stances on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are not always in consonance. Two and a half decades ago, Jewish studies in China were a pipe dream; now there are more than half a dozen such programs and Chinese scholars and students in this field regularly study in Israel, America, Canada, Europe and elsewhere.

Absolutely amazing!

To all our friends who celebrate the Chinese New Year: Best wishes in the year of the tiger!

Anson Laytner

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Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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or to: Rabbi Anson Laytner
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FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

SJI members interested in receiving a copy of the annual financial report should send a self-addressed envelope to: Steve Hochstadt, Treasurer of the Sino-Judaic Institute, Illinois College, 1101 W College Ave., Jacksonville IL 62650.

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search and preservation of Kaifeng Jews' culture, I am constantly pondering how to read out from this culture the immortal essence of China and Israel, how to use these various Chinese methods of cultural preservation in order to preserve Hebrew culture.

Kaifeng is actually a city on top of cities; under contemporary Kaifeng are said to be 6 ancient cities buried on top of each other. 3 meters below is Kaifeng of the Qing times, 6 meters below is that of the Ming, 8 meters below is Dongjing ("The Eastern Capital") of the Song era, all the way down to Daliang city of the Warring States, 13 meters below. We have lived here, on top of this spiritual intersection for a thousand years. What did we await? Why did we stay here? Why did we die? Why did we revive our religion?

I do not know, but this bizarre city, changed again and again through floods, sure makes me think: chaotic wars, natural power, endless time, dried-up bones... looking at Kaifeng's remaining old houses, going over the published material about Kaifeng Jews, imagining the city's destruction, and sighing over Kaifeng Jews dying in solitude, I cannot but constantly worry, cannot but intensely hope that, on one world's edge, in Kaifeng, extremely remote from our homeland Jerusalem, a Torah and a Hebrew culture can be preserved.

4. Making a CD
In the year 1605, after Matteo Ricci, a Jesuit located in Beijing, redirected information of the existence of Jews in Kaifeng and the shocking news reached Europe, western missionaries started coming to inquire. Yet in reaction to unfortunate events with Christians, Qing emperor Yong Zheng has decided to cut off relations between Inner China and missionaries. Between 1724 and 1850, western missionaries have kept only the most fragile relations with the Kaifeng Jews, which were mainly based on letters, inquiring whether the Bible held by the Jews was compatible with the version of the Bible in Amsterdam, and regarding the current situation of the Kaifeng Jews' faith. However, today's solely remaining document is a letter from Kaifeng Jew Zhao Nian Zu to James Finn, dated 20th of August 1850, which was received in April 1870 by Finn.

After 1850, Christians have gradually re-established relations with Kaifeng and its Jews, and even took two circumcised

Kaifeng Jews, Zhao Jin Cheng and Zhao Wen Kui, to interviews in Shanghai. Saving the dying-out Kaifeng Jewish society was appealed for, but the program to teach Hebrew was shelved. The situation of the Kaifeng Jews got ever worse, incomplete analects got sold, property rights for the now ruined synagogue were sold, and a stone tablet retelling Jews' arrival in China and its religious faith was given away... confronting curious visitors, the Kaifeng Jews didn't have nothing to give other than their existence.

After China's opening reform of 1978, visitors of different nationalities, ethnicities and religions came to Kaifeng, bringing the Kaifeng Jews English and Hebrew versions of the Torah and teaching Kaifeng Jews Hebrew. My cousin, along with other middle school Jewish descendants, was granted financial assistance to study religion and language in Israel.

Since I have begun working as a guide showing the remnants of the synagogue and Teaching Torah Lane, I have met diverse visitors, and went through various cultural exchanges, making me understand how special this all is. These days I am beginning to collect their questions in order to make a CD with the answers and retelling the efforts of many people to preserve our culture.

5. The Planned Memorial Center
At the same time I am working to raise the "Kaifeng Jewish History Memorial Center", to bring out the wonder that these two ancient cultures' – Hebrew and Chinese – have coexisted for one thousand years, and to show the great solicitude from different people from all over the world and to preserve our heritage for the coming generations.

The Kaifeng Jewish History Memorial Center (KJHMC) formally purchased a plot from the ancient Kaifeng synagogue site in November of 2008. This site was long the Zhao family's ancestral home. Although we only recently acquired this site, we have a long history of preserving Kaifeng Jewish culture. I am the center's chairwoman, a descendant of the Zhao clan of Kaifeng Jews. My grandfather was Zhao Pingyu, whose grandfather was in turn Zhao Zifang, the same man who historically met with Mr. David Brown. My grandfather, Zhao Pingyu, dedicated his life to collecting lost relics from Kaifeng's ancient synagogue and I grew up with a great pride in knowing that I was descended from the noble Jewish

community of Kaifeng, so I eventually resolved to continue my grandfather's work in restoring Kaifeng Jewish culture.

Our organization's mission is two-fold:
i. to educate the outside Jewish world about Kaifeng Jewry's rich and ancient culture. Although it is not possible at this time to regain all of our ancient relics, we hope to gather as much information as we can about them.
ii. to build relationships with the various museums which have taken care to preserve our ancient culture. Although we are not able to recover much of our community's ancient artifacts abroad, we implore those museums to help us study that which we have lost by giving us artifact copies.

To date, with the Center's reacquisition of the Zhao family site in 2008, we made a big step in spreading awareness of Kaifeng Jewish culture. At present, our center is fairly humble and only consists of a couple rooms; sadly, this space is too small to house all of our center's exhibition pieces. Currently, we are forced to use other locations to display most of our items. However, we aspire to build on the ancient Zhao family quarters in the hopes of being able to adequately showcase our center's cultural pieces as well as the artifact copies that we hope to obtain from foreign museums. We thank those museums for taking care of our lost texts, scrolls, etc., but we request that they help us regain access to our cultural heritage.

We are aware that all this will cost money and we invite foreign support of our privately-held museum. Our proposed project budget is shown on page 16.

6. Conclusion
Our ancestors came from India to Kaifeng at the time of the Northern Song dynasty – at that time the world most flourishing metropolis. We have presented the emperor with cotton cloth, which made him extremely happy, and he promised we could "come to our China, keep your custom, and stay in Bianliang" (Kaifeng's former name). This respect towards the faith and customs of a people otherwise having to wander around the world was so important for us that, up to the time of the building our synagogue, we did not adopt the ruling Jin dynasty's calendar, but remained loyal to the Song dynasty one; and similarly, despite having gotten an honorary surname from the Ming emperor for helping him, the

prejudices and eradicating developing stereotypes before they take hold.

Unlike other academic centers engaged in the study of Jewish or Israeli issues, our target audience is not only professional academics but also the general population. The beneficiaries of these projects include two groups: 1) teachers and students of SISU who are interested in Jewish culture, 2) scholars and university students in China whose study and/or research focuses, or is relevant to Jewish culture and all of whom at present unfortunately derive part of their knowledge of Jewish history and religion from confusing and erroneous sources.

This is a real challenge for us because we are perhaps the first in China to devise special strategies for this large audience. Fortunately, we have got enormous enthusiastic support and collaboration from a number of Jewish institutions and scholars in China, Israel, and the United States. With the first Sino-Judaic Institute-sponsored funds and under the guidance of SJI scholars and other professors from Harvard, Tufts and Shandong University, we are confident about developing our center into a bridge of friendship between Chinese and Jewish people.

Programs in the Works

1. Work with the Sichuan Arts and Literature Publishing House on the translation of great Jewish fiction, the first group of volumes will come out in April 2009.
2. Translating a series of books that highlight the contribution of Jewish culture to civilization. We are honored to get a US\$10,000 grant from Rabbi Marvin Tokayer via the Sino-Judaic Institute and the publication effort is now in progress.
3. Start a publication effort with a Dictionary of Jewish Terms by assembling a board of contributors and translators, with a commitment to a realistic publishing schedule. (We are eager to get suggestions and participations of experts and professors from SJI and other institutions.)
4. Organize an International Conference on the basic elements of Jewish history & Judaic religious culture, the papers from which would be translated into a single volume for instructional purposes.
5. Set up a Library Development Program, with the help of a volunteer advisory board from SJI, to recommend texts appropriate to the proposed curriculum content of the center. The Program will start soon with a US\$5000 grant from SJI.

6. Develop a university infrastructure that supports a program of disseminating knowledge about Jews, Jewish history, and Judaism as a religious culture.

Dr. Fu Xiaowei is professor of English Literature and director of the Center of Judaic and Chinese Studies at Sichuan International Studies University. She can be reached at fu-xw@vip.163.com.

The Preservation of Jewish Tradition in Kaifeng

by Guo Yan

1. Introduction

I, Guo Yan, the writer, a Kaifeng Jewish descendant, am female, born on the 6th of October 1980. Having graduated from the Chinese department of Henan University, I worked as a Chinese literature teacher in a junior high school. After my marriage, I decided to undertake research for the preservation of Jewish tradition in Kaifeng.

My husband, Yang Wen Jiang, is Han. After marrying me in 2008, he invested money to buy back part of the Zhao clan's ancestral temple site in Kaifeng Jewish synagogue area and plans to raise funds to build "The Kaifeng Jewish History Memorial Center (KJHMC)".

2. The Turning Point

In 2008, a Christian touring party visited us, among which was a certain Mr. A., who donated 200 dollars to me. My husband and I regard this contribution as a turning point and decided to start preserving the historical material on hand. These materials are kept at the moment in a provisional exhibition hall, which presents a model of the Jewish synagogue, four Jewish memorial scriptures, a horizontally-inscribed board of the synagogue, prayer tools and more. The most precious artifact will be a Torah book written in Hebrew, English and Chinese.

3. Meaning

Since their arrival in China during the 10th century A.C., the Kaifeng Jews have lost many of their texts (Torah scrolls) due to reoccurring floods. Furthermore, due to an almost millennium-long existence as an isolated island in China, they gradually lost the texts and the ability to read their own alphabet. Eventually in the 19th century there was no one who

could understand the texts' content. The language was forgotten, the texts sold, the faith weakened. It is for these reasons that people from all over the world believed the Jews of Kaifeng had been fully assimilated.

Yet is that really so?

During my research of Kaifeng Jewish culture, I realized that exactly when the old scriptures were being sold, they became the material for us to understand ourselves; due to the fact that as our faith got muddled, so were we able to experience deeply our surrounding belief-systems – Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Islam – and furthermore, understand what is common and the different between them and Judaism. It was exactly through this situation that I acquired a unique impression and understanding when I received the Torah anew and read it. Just like an infant, I breathed in a new, simple spirit after the death of a long accumulated culture. [As I read the stories in the Bible, about God's ongoing love for humanity despite the sins we committed] I reflected back on a thousand years of experience – the wisdom of the Kaifeng Jews, their forgetfulness, their demise and their return – I dare not conjecture whether these occurrences were all God's determination.

God says He gives Israel as *"the light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth"* (Isaiah 49:6). I don't know whether it is for this reason that we have walked a thousand miles to come here, that we have spent a thousand years waiting in this isolated city. Also I, as every Kaifeng Jew, was instructed from cradle about our "different" social position. As a child, I still did not read the Torah, and still did not know God spoke of all of his children returning to Jerusalem. Yet already at that time, I have felt we shall indeed one day return to our land. Therefore, already as a child I grew to deeply appreciate every day of living in China, and therefore chose Chinese literature as my major. I marvel at China's five thousand years of continued vitality, a wonder totally different from the Hebrew culture, which was reborn from its ashes. Hebrew culture's simplicity did not allow it to be untarnished by the invasion of foreign cultures, whereas China's culture fearlessly converges, and seeks mutual understanding and acceptance—all make me an aficionado of both. Since having begun re-

IN THE FIELD

♦ Our Expanded Website

Be sure to visit our greatly expanded website: www.sino-judaic.org. It not only features information on the Kaifeng Jews, past and present, but also articles on Jewish life in Shanghai, Harbin and Hong Kong; Jewish studies programs in China; listings for all functioning synagogues and Jewish sites in China; important information about Sino-Judaic Institute; travel suggestions; a basic English bibliography; and great links. **SJI Members:** Email info@sino-judaic.org to receive the user name and password needed to access the current issue of Points East on-line as well as all past issues going back to 1985!

♦ Shi Lei To Lecture in US

This spring, Kulanu is delighted to host Shi Lei of the historic Jewish community of Kaifeng, China. Shi Lei is a descendant of one of the original Jewish families. An accomplished and experienced speaker, Shi Lei will present the history of this remarkable community, offering insight into the ability of some remnants of the community to survive under difficult, even impossible, circumstances.

Shi Lei is a graduate of Henan University in the province of Henan, China. From 2001 to 2002, he studied Jewish history and religion in Israel at Bar-Ilan University, continuing his studies at Machon Meir Yeshiva in Jerusalem. Now a tour operator and national tour guide, Shi Lei leads private and group tours to Kaifeng and other Chinese cities with Jewish sites of interest, including Beijing, Harbin, Xi'an and Shanghai.

This year's Kulanu-Kaifeng speaking tour will run from April 23 through May 24, 2010 and is presented in cooperation with the Sino-Judaic Institute. If you are interested in hosting Mr. Lei in your community, please go to: <http://www.kulanu.org/china/kaifengtour2010.php>

♦ Exhibit Planned in Shanghai

Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum plans to organize an exhibition beginning March 1st, 2010. The theme of the Exhibition is "Nostalgia for Shanghai—Second Hometown for Former Shanghai Jewish Refugees". The exhibition will include collections of items used by Shanghai Jewish refugees: photographs, passports and visas, marriage certificates, residence certificates, and other related documents or artworks; materials related to the three Jewish refugees' Shanghai reunions in 1994, 2005 and 2006. This exhibition also will include the experiences of Chinese who were neighbors of the Jewish refugees.

If you have materials that you would like to share with the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum, please contact Mr. Chen at shdfao@163.com or at Changyang Lu 62, Hongkou District, Shanghai, China. Tel: 021 6512-0229 or 021 6541-6312.

♦ New Jewish Publication from Hong Kong

January saw the arrival of "Asian Jewish Life: A Journal of Spirit, Society and Culture". This publication, the brainchild of Editor-in-Chief Erica Lyons, is a free quarterly publication that "reflects the diversity of the Jewish experience in the region, all the while with the aim of building community ties." See it online at <http://www.asianjewishlife.org>.

♦ Willens' Shanghai Memoir Published

Liliane Willens, a longtime SJI member, writes: "As a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute I wish to inform you of the publication of my book *Stateless in Shanghai* by Earnshaw Books (Hong Kong/Shanghai), 2009. I attended the book launch, which was held in November 2009 in Shanghai where I was born."

"[My book] is a memoir which de-

scribes my family (Russian Jewish) and my life during the Japanese occupation of Shanghai, the return of Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese civil war, my stay during first two years of the establishment of the People's Republic of China, and my one year in occupied Japan waiting for my immigration visa to the United States under the Chinese Exclusion Act."

The first printing (600) has been sold out and her book is now in its second printing. The book is available at www.Amazon.com. Congratulations Liliane!

♦ Coming Soon to San Francisco

"The Jews in Modern China" exhibit will run approximately February 25 - May 15, 2010, at The Presidio Former Officers' Club Museum, in conjunction with the "Shanghai: 2010" exhibit at the Asian Art Museum (February - September 2010). The American Jewish Committee, Northern California office is the presenting sponsor; co-sponsors include the Consulate of the People's Republic of China in San Francisco, the Asia Society of Northern California and the Sino-Judaic Institute. There will be an opening event, plus collateral programming and education running throughout the three-month exhibit, targeted to segments of the Jewish and general communities.

♦ China Friendship Exhibit Held in Israel

"Experience China in Israel", an exhibition focusing on friendly relationship between China and Israel, shows the development of China in education, economy, technology and contemporary culture. Pan Guang's Center for Jewish Studies Shanghai was responsible for selecting photos for the exhibit, which was jointly sponsored by the State Council Information Office of China and Israeli Foreign Ministry and ran from Oct. 12th through Oct. 25th, 2009.

TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

My name is Jordana Manley and I am a student at York University in Toronto. I am currently doing a research paper on multi-ethnic Jews and their integration into the Jewish community. I came across your website and the work you do really encompasses what I am focusing on in my research. I would love it if I could [reach out to people through] your organization to ask a series of questions via email to be used for the research. There is not a lot of scholarly material that has been published on this issue which is one of the reasons that I find it so important to research.

Thank you so much, and I look forward to hearing from you,

Jordana Manley
jord_824@hotmail.com

"The Jews of Kaifeng" Could Visit Your Community

The Sino-Judaic Institute's exhibit is a hit wherever it goes!

Educational ~ A great community relations bridge between Jews and Asians
~ Unique programming and public relations opportunities for all age groups
~ Complementary materials and speakers available ~ Affordable ~ Easy to install ~

For scheduling information, please contact:

Rabbi Arnie Belzer
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Savannah, GA 31402
912 233 1547
rabbelzer@aol.com

Introduce a friend to SJI
by giving a free copy of
Points East.

Simply send an email to
laytner@msn.com
and a sample will be sent.

Remembering Rena

[By some strange coincidence, the day Rena Krasno died, I had sent her an email. I received the following message back: "Delivery to the following recipients failed. renakrasno@earthlink.net". She had indeed broken her earthly link although it is clear that she is remembered fondly by many. Here is a sampling of what has crossed my desk. AL]

1. On Account Of Our Fathers' Fabulous Friend

by Michael Alderton

It was a dozen or so years ago when I first discovered that I had a colleague at the Sino-Judaic Institute whose father, like my own, had personally known the fabulous Major General Morris Abraham "Two-Gun" Cohen. The name of that eminent colleague was Rena Krasno, a long-standing and hard-working member of our Institute; and this thing we had in common, fathers who had both met General Cohen in the flesh and who had discovered for themselves what manner of man he really was, has served to sustain the dozen years of correspondence that has passed between the daughter of David Rabinovich and the son of Paul Alderton.

To Rena's father, the Hon. Secretary of the Shanghai Ashkenazi Jewish Community, General Cohen had demonstrated his eagerness to help his fellow Jews in critical times of world turmoil, leaving no doubt that the welfare of the Jewish people was always very close to the good general's heart. For my own father, a decorated veteran of the 1944 Normandy landings, the daring general had, for twenty years, been an immensely important military figure at the storm-centre of events in China between the world wars...

Throughout 2009, Rena and I have been working together on a small number of 1930's German language Jewish newspaper articles proudly commenting on the daring deeds and meritorious acts of their Jewish warrior in China. Then, in early November, I emailed my dear colleague yet another related text for her translation and comments; but on this occasion my email was curiously bounced back to me unanswered – soon after, and following my reading of the November edition of *Points East*, I was to understand why.

So now I must sadly bid farewell to our colleague, Rena Krasno. Over the years

you have been a dear and good colleague to me. I will sorely miss your many years of practical help and encouragement, your sharp intellect, your generosity of spirit, and your sweet giving nature. A fond farewell to you, dear colleague.

Michael Alderton, of Australia, is a long-time admirer and historian of "Two-Gun" Cohen.

2. In memory of Rena

by Matthias Messmer

Dear friends and colleagues,

It is with deep sadness, that our friend Tess has informed us about the passing away of "our" beloved Rena.

Some of you I don't know, some of you are friends of us. We all share the loss of a person who was truly a "mensch", full of a warm heart, full of generosity and full of energy.

I've known Rena since 2001 (and I called her "my Jewish auntie" since those days), and I have seen her the last time when she was here in Shanghai two years ago.

This morning, in Rena's memory, we lit a candle for her and listened to a lovely klezmer song called Rejzele by M. Gebirtig. We are convinced that Rena will be blessed with all our good memories off to her new journey.

In today's autumn afternoon, we paid a visit to her former home in Shanghai...

Matthias Messmer is a writer, essayist, fine art documentary photographer who has been living in Shanghai for five years. His latest piece on Jewish history - "China's Realities from the Viewpoints of 'Foreign Experts'" - was published in: The Jewish-Chinese Nexus. A Meeting of Civilizations (Ed. Avrum Ehrlich), Routledge (2008).

3. From her "Chinese Grandson"

by Michael Li

I first got connected to Rena in late 2004 when I was doing research for a book related to a Jewish refugee in Shanghai. She was such a uniquely wonderful person - warm, loving, full of passion for life, and generous with her time and help. Soon we became very close and communicated frequently by emails and phone, and whenever I was in the San Francisco

On the other hand, there emerged a sort of ever-increasing Jewish fever in the past two decades due to the discovery of the contributions made by many eminent Jews and persons of Jewish origin to modern Western philosophy, culture, science and economics. With that discovery came a curiosity about and admiration for Jewish wisdom. For millions of Chinese who are desperately seeking success and money in a rapidly changing society, images of successful and rich Jews have become their inspiration. Catering to the readers' desire to seek the secrets of Jewish success, many booksellers sought to sell so-called Jewish wisdom books. Though all the wisdom or secrets of Jewish success appear in a favorable light, a lot of information comes from the pirated Japanese books on Jewish success, especially their ability to manipulate the financial system of a country.

These, together with my informal interviews with college teachers, middle school teachers, tour guides, and business persons who had met or not met Jews led me to find that new distorted stereotypes of Jews among the Chinese are emerging: that Jews are a people born with genes for business, that their God is money, that the secrets lie in their business Bible and Talmud, and they can manipulate the world with money. As most Chinese believe that Jews and Christians believe in Christianity and share the same holy book, they tend to attribute the Jew's enviable talents in business and in manipulating the world with money to the real cause of the western anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. These new emerging stereotypes are closely related to the success of these popular books and to the confusing of Judaism and Christianity in translated materials. This is even beginning to have an effect in the academic world.

If we cannot find effective countermeasures to correct and eradicate such prejudice, it will not only obstruct the introduction of Jewish culture and misguide those seeking real Jewish wisdom, but also undermine the friendship between Chinese and Jewish peoples.

Countermeasures and the Establishment of the Center

In order to establish a proper relationship between Chinese people and the Jewish world and a normal relationship between China and Israel, it is vital to

improve Chinese understanding and knowledge of Jews and Judaism. The task is a challenge since neither the government nor the academic world appears aware of the seriousness of the situation and the need to eradicate developing stereotypes before they take hold and replace them with a rich knowledge of Jewish life and culture. Therefore, special strategies need to be devised to cater to the much larger group, many of whom claim to know or to be interested in Jewish culture, but find the introductory books designed for Western beginners difficult or somehow irrelevant to their interests.

There are a number of Institutes of Judaic Studies (sometimes existing as a part of "Middle East Studies") to be found at Shandong University, Henan University, Nanjing University and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences. Scholars from these institutes, working fulltime and specializing in Jewish and Israeli history and culture, have done a great job in bringing a sophisticated knowledge of Jewish culture. However, they are few and much of their work is professional research, not aimed at popular readers.

It is against this background that I set up the Center of Judaic and Chinese Studies at Sichuan International Studies University, aiming to promote a better understanding of the Jewish people and Jewish culture in China.

The Mission of the Center

As I have described, the idea of establishing a center of Judaic and Chinese Studies at SISU developed directly from my discovery of a disturbingly widespread misreading and prejudice against Jews and Jewish culture among some Chinese scholars and the general population alike. Thus its goals and purposes are as follows:

- To change the situation of and to provide a powerful antidote to the misreading and misrepresentation of Jews purveyed in the Chinese popular book market that ramifies among Chinese college students and even their teachers.
- To promote a better understanding of the Jewish people and Jewish culture in order to improve friendship and understanding between the Chinese and Jewish peoples.

Accomplishments to Date

The Center was officially approved with a very small budget. Initial funding amounted to only 3000RMB, about

\$430. Nonetheless, through the joint effort of myself, 3 part-time teachers and 14 graduate students, the Center has made some achievements since its establishment in 2006.

1. Education and Training

Lectures on Jewish topics are given at regular intervals and internet forums have been set up for students interested in Jewish culture at SISU. We also send students to attend summer schools in Shandong University and invite professors and scholars to help with students' essays on Jewish topics.

2. Research

In order to probe into the relation between new emerging distorted stereotypes of Jews and the confused understanding of Judaism and Christianity, we made two investigations in the universities and the academic circles. One is a survey of college students' views of Jews and Judaism carried out through questionnaires in 12 universities around China. The other is a survey of how Judaism is understood (by searching such key words as Messiah, Jesus, Virgin Mary, Sabbath, Resurrection, Judeo-Christian and Hebraism) in the essays of Chinese scholars who are not in the field of Judaic Studies published in the past three decades.

The results of the two investigations show that faux "Jewish wisdom" books and a misunderstanding of Judaism and Christianity in the academic world have not only caused the gap in the study of Jewish culture but also produced ambivalent images of Jews among college students and scholars. The pervasive prejudice of taking Judaism as part of Christianity in the academic world – not including the few scholars of Judaic studies and those who got their systematic studies in Humanities in the West – has caused people to 1) equate Hebraism with Christianity and thus to ignore the uniqueness of Judaism, 2) to limit their interest in Jews and Jewish culture to Jews' talents in business and science, and 3) to ascribe the causes of the western anti-Semitism and the Holocaust to some special weakness of the Jewish people and their attempt to manipulate the world economy.

Target Audience

As the goal of our center is to help eliminate misunderstanding and to achieve real mutual communication and understanding between the Chinese and Jewish worlds, the projects we are doing now and plan to do in the near future are mainly aiming at correcting the existing

In New York City, I was admitted into the 2009 Educational Program on Yiddish Culture (EPYC) Educators Seminar at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in the latter half of June. A series of invited lectures delivered by distinguished scholars highlighted the major aspects of Eastern European Jewry and their repercussions in America. Special sessions—including a concert of Yiddish show tunes and a walking tour of the Hasidic sections of Brooklyn—were really eye-opening. Many materials that I gathered from this seminar, such as photos, CDs and DVDs, can be readily incorporated into my undergraduate survey course on Jewish civilization.

New York was the place to renew old friendship. Professor Fred Lazin of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, with whom we had an exchange program of students, was on sabbatical leave at New York University. We talked about the extension of the program, the arrangement of his upcoming visit to China, and the translation into Chinese of his award-winning book on Jews and American politics. I joined Fred as his guest when he lectured on current Israeli politics at a Reform synagogue of Philadelphia, and therefore availed myself of this chance to have a glimpse of the attitudes within a local American Jewish community toward Israeli issues.

Professor Samuel Heilman of Queens College visited the Nanjing Institute several times, most recently as a Fulbright Senior Specialist in American Judaism. He unfolded me the saga of New York from a New Yorker's perspective, and, of course, guided me through the Orthodox topography, including a foray to Borough Park of Brooklyn on a Sukkot night to observe the celebrations of the split Bobover Hasidim and Munkatcher Hasidim. In the huge, packed Bobover *sukkah* on 45th Street, as soon as a curious young hasid standing nearby started a conversation with me, I realized it difficult to determine the best way to explain Reconstructionism to him. He looked at me in perplexity: "Why not study in a yeshiva?" I answered, "You see, I am not Jewish." He breathed a sigh of relief. In the end, he bid me farewell with "Meet you in Jerusalem."

Three days before I left the US, Sam called me while I was packing. Our common friend Professor Menachem Friedman of

Bal-Ilan University was in New York. They had just finished collaborating on a biography of the last Lubavitcher Rebbe and intended to collect some photos for the new book in Queens and Crown Heights tomorrow. "Will you join us?" How could I miss such an opportunity?

Six years earlier, in a street of Tel Aviv, I had been given a card with the Rebbe's portrait and the Seven Noahide Laws on it. Since then, this "King Moshiach" and his avatars seem to manifest themselves repeatedly, like the seeds of dandelion, on the street walls of Hebron, in the eager question of "Excuse me, are you Jewish?" that I overheard before the Western Wall in Jerusalem and at Times Square on Christmas Eve, and in his emissary in Shanghai. The time was ripe to visit the Rebbe's headquarters.

We went to his graveyard in Queens first, watching pilgrims praying and delivering notes. I delivered my own, as I did before at the Western Wall. In the visitation center near the Ohel, I picked up a brochure entitled *The Rebbe: An Appreciation*—the official presentation of him, I thought. Then we washed our hands and drove to Crown Heights on the very road he took to pay his monthly visits to the gravesite of his predecessor, side by side with whom the Moshiach lies now. After some time, we finally found the house at 770 Eastern Parkway. It was from here that the Rebbe directed his emissaries' work and involved himself in details of blowing his dandelions. We all took photos of this house.

On my plane back to China, I started to read the brochure. Copiously illustrated, it is a product of deep devotion. I turned it back and forth, trying to locate its author, but in vain. It is anonymous. When I looked through to page 34, my eyebrows were raised. The Rebbe once asked a US Senator if he could request a favor. The Senator thought to himself: "Aha, the Rebbe was looking for the payoff." The Rebbe continued: "There is a growing community in Chinatown. These people are quiet, reserved, hardworking, and law-abiding—the type of citizens most countries would treasure. But because Americans are so outgoing and the Chinese are, by nature, so reserved, they are often overlooked. Thus they miss out benefitting from government programs. I suggest that as a US Senator from New York, you concern yourself with their needs." The Senator "was overwhelmed."

I sat motionless, feeling different.

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Chinese Views of Jews and Judaism and the Mission of the CJCS

by Fu Xiaowei

Background: Chinese Views of the Jews

The Center of Judaic and Chinese Studies at Sichuan International Studies University in Chongqing was founded in October 2006. It is committed to broadening an understanding of the Jewish people, and Jewish culture and history, among the general Chinese population.

The founding and goals of the center derive directly from my research on the study and reception of Isaac Bashevis Singer in China. My study of the translation and critical essays of Singer works shows that most of the Singer translators (as many as 50) and critics are not quite clear about the basic differences between Judaism and Christianity or simply take Judaism as one of the many Christian denominations. Thus, when translators come across such word as "virgin", or "holy mother", they would immediately turn them into Virgin Mary or they would associate Messiah with Jesus Christ, or resurrection as the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Critics also tend to explain the behaviors of the Jewish characters with Christian doctrines.

As my investigation extended to the translations of other Jewish fictions and popular books such as *Voices of Wisdom: Jewish Ideas and Ethics for Everyday Living* by Francine Klagsbrun, I found that errors such as found in the Singer translations and critical essays are quite common as well. Worse still, some of these translations were repeatedly cut and copied to become parts of other so-called Jewish bestsellers. The errors in these translations expanded widely and strengthened readers' prejudice against the Jews and added to the confusion about Judaism and Christianity.

Bay area I would make an effort to visit her and listen to her telling me the many stories from her long and exciting life. Shortly afterward, she adopted me as her "Chinese grandson" or CG as she would like to call me, and I would call her my "Jewish grandma" or JG.

To me she loved me and cared for me in every sense of the word as a true Jewish grandma. With her passing last October, there is an irreplaceable void left in my heart and my life that will be felt for a long time to come. On the other hand, for everyone whose life is touched by Rena in some way, he or she will also much inspired by her tremendous spirit and optimism in living life to its fullest with constant curiosity, kindness in heart, and in searching the truth and beauty in life.

Almost exactly two years ago, in October 2007, Rena was in Shanghai during her last trip in the city that was so close to her heart. She paused for a brief moment from busily signing books for the Chinese translation of her well-known book "Strangers Always". She lifted her head and said to me: "CG, this is so much fun and I have so much love for the city and the people, I'll definitely come back again!" That's Rena! We can all be sure that she will visit us again and again, if not physically, then spiritually, and in our collective memories, to tell us to love life and share life as much as she did.

Michael Li works in the technology sector and divides his time between China and the US. He arranged for the translation of Rena's book "Strangers Always" into Chinese.

4. From the Preface to Rena's Last Book

by Pan Guang

In the spring of 1989, I met Rena Krasno in California, USA. Rena was very excited to see me, the guy from Shanghai. She asked me many questions about the city's changes and development. Her love for China and Shanghai moved me, especially when she said, "I really want to go back to my hometown—Shanghai, which I have left for 40 years."

In 1994, I got the chance to help Rena return to Shanghai. At that time, with the support of the Shanghai government, we decided to host the first international academic conference with the theme of

"Jews in Shanghai". As a member of the conference's organizing committee, I suggested inviting Rena to attend and deliver a speech at the conference.

She recorded her feelings about revisiting Shanghai at the end of this book. She said that she could not express in words how excited she was upon receiving that invitation. She was trembling as the plane descended for landing. As soon as she set foot on Shanghai soil, she felt she had returned home. Rena delivered a wonderful speech at the conference. She said, her nationality aside, Shanghai was her hometown, because she was born and raised in the city. How touching is that?

In those days, Rena had been immersed in her memories and recollections. She walked along Huaihai Road (formerly Avenue Joffre) for a long time and never got tired. She revisited Aurora University (Shanghai Second Medical University in 1994) and College Municipal Français (currently Shanghai Science Hall), where had studied. She spent a lot of time in the city's old district and tasted many local snacks, such as bannock, twisted crullers and roasted sweet potatoes. Sometimes, she just sat and watched Shanghai people going about their time, living their lives. She also visited the Tower Apt. (Xiangyang South Road Junction, Huaihai Middle Road) where she was brought up. There, she recalled her parents' love for her again in her "boudoir".

She has visited the city many times since then. I can't remember how many visits she has made to Shanghai, which she called "the city of youth". I am her loyal companion during her visits. Every time, we look around the city and discuss the changes it has undergone. She will tell the graduates in the institute many stories. I will meet her when I visit Mountain View, California. I have forgotten how many times we have sat together for a long talk, without regard for passing time.

Rena is one of the Shanghai people who can't speak the local dialect. The history of Shanghai shows that it has always been an open city. People could come and go freely—sometimes, even without passports and visas. Industrialists started their businesses in Shanghai, refugees found safe haven in Shanghai, and adventurers discovered "paradise" in Shanghai. Different languages, custom, beliefs and people from all races assemble in the city.

As the intersection of cultural integration, the city has become an international metropolis. Shanghai culture has developed under such circumstances. It integrates different cultures of China and other countries, and is characterized by openness and internationalism...

Rena's experience reflects the competition and complementation of multiculturalism, which is developed by adopting a multitude of approaches to life rather than a single one. It's like a long river with many tributaries. Each tributary is distinctive, but they will join together at the mouth to the sea. Such experiences make Rena's works rich and varied. They have the characteristics of different cultures, with the essence of Shanghai culture welling up from deep inside.

Although the stories of Rena took place in old Shanghai, she still feels very excited about the change and development of modern Shanghai...

As a good friend of Rena, I am so proud of her for having written so many excellent works. She is now over 80 years old. But she told me she had another four books to be published later. I know they must contain many stories about Shanghai...

Dr. Pan Guang is professor and dean of Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai (CJSS) at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

The 2009 SJI Awards

(continued from page 1)

First, after consulting with SJI Board member Len Hew, we will add in approximately \$500 to augment the prize money for the annual Jewish essay competition that he has been running independently for a number of years at Henan University. After 8 years of increasing success both in terms of the number of papers submitted and the general quality of these submissions, Professor Zhang Qian Hong and Professor Zhang Ligang are planning to open the competition to all the universities and colleges in China, following requests from students of other universities to be allowed to participate in this competition. Our sweetening the pot thus will further attract the attention and interests of students from better-known institutions across the whole of China. With our gift, we double the prize

money to RMB Y 1,000 for each of the first prizes, and so on for the each of 4 second and each of 6 third prizes, now Y300 and Y200 each respectively). This would serve the objective of SJI to promote greater awareness of, and greater interest in, Jewish studies in China. In the years to come, with your support, we hope to increase this grant.

Second, we donated approximately \$500 to the Institute of Jewish Studies to create three new scholarships for three promising students at the Institute annually. This year, our scholarships were awarded to the following recipients: Ji Zhe, Wang Shangli and Song Jingjing.

As a child, Ji Zhe became very interested in the history of Jews in her hometown of Kaifeng. Consequently, she considered Jewish history quite valuable and decided to focus on related issues during research. In 2007, she took part in the international seminar on Holocaust, which was held by London Jewish Center at Henan University, and wrote an article about Jewish refugees in Shanghai during the World War aI. Then she was admitted to the Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University for the M.A. program in 2008. Two topics captured her interest: the history of the Rothschild family and Jews in Kaifeng. After considerable thinking, she plans to write an essay on the Rothschilds and Zionism for her M.A. program because she sees the Rothschilds as a Jewish family whose members were struggling for civil rights of Jewish people all the time. She is excited to research such a great family. After getting her Master's degree, she'd like to get a Ph.D. and she is eager to be a professional scholar in Jewish Studies in the future. She believes she can do something to promote the development of Jewish Studies in China.

Shang Wanli is in the Masters program as well. He is the student librarian of Institute of Jewish Studies library and web-master of its website. One of the side benefits of his work is that he gets to read as much as he wants in the library. He writes that one of his favorites is Points East because he "learns more from it than other academic journals". (SJI donated a complete set of Points East to IJS last year.) Shang is fascinated by the Greco-Roman era of Jewish history and plans to write his thesis on: *Historiographic Narrative and Historical Consciousness: The Case Study of Josephus's*

Jewish War.

Song Jingjing is also very grateful for the SJI scholarship and is particularly fascinated by Jewish history, the *haskala* (Jewish modernization) movement in Europe, Jewish religion and Jewish law.

Lastly, responding to a request from one of the schools set up by the Kaifeng Jewish descendants for their own edification, we awarded grants of approximately \$1000 for assistance with operational costs (rent, utilities, etc.).

Our ability to make these grants is due to the frugality of the Board of Directors of the Sino-Judaic Institute, who carefully built up reserves over the past 25+ years. But this can only last for so long. With your support of our programs—above and beyond the basic dues—we will be able to continue offering direct support to scholars and students of Jewish studies in China. Please consider making a gift and designating it to our "Grants Programs".

Readers: Visit our improved and greatly expanded website: www.sino-judaic.org.

SJI Members: Email info@sino-judaic.org to receive the user name and password needed to access the "members only" section.

The Sino-Jewish Relationship

(continued from page 1)

Jews in a seamless web that includes Israel, the Diaspora, and the religious and secular culture. Perhaps even more than some Jews themselves, they view Jews as part of a whole, extending from the ancient past to the present. There is a particular interest in Jewish culture and a desire to understand how they have faced the challenge of world modernization. But not everything is quite so rosy. In parallel with the positive changes, there are still many misunderstandings between Chinese and Jews, some of them are old but some also are new.

I. Some misleading ideas in the Sino-Jewish relationship as far as China is concerned:

Points East

1. The Chinese have always admired and appreciated the success of the Jews. In the eyes of most Chinese, the Jewish people are considered "smart," "rich" and "good at making money." Bookstores in China offer a variety of self-help books titled "How to Make Money Like the Jews," and "The Secret of the Jews' Global Success." Most of these books are superficial and lack a serious analysis of the reasons for Jewish success. They are not written by serious scholars but rather are supported by some publishers whose commercial purpose is very obvious. But we must say that most of these Chinese authors do not have anti-Semitic feelings. They depict Jews rather with an admiring and appreciative attitude. China has always been proud of its traditions, which have invariably been devoid of anti-Semitism.

But in recent years some views on the alleged Jewish control of the world have gained considerable favor. Some of the relevant books came from Chinese scholars. One such book is "The Currency War" authored by Song Hongbing (a young Chinese man who got his education in the US), while other books are translated from the Japanese language. They include "All World Finance Was Plotted by the Rothschild House" and "To Watch Jews Is to See the World Clearly". Japanese readers have often shown an unhealthy appetite for such books. All these Japanese books are variations of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," the Russian forgery first published in 1903. These kinds of books have unfortunately conveyed some wrong ideas in China, which has caused concern in the Jewish world and misunderstandings among the Chinese people.

We need to point out that the reason why the book "The Currency War" is so popular in China is not entirely due to its indictment of and its mysterious description of the Rothschild House. It reflects the eagerness of the Chinese to figure out the function of the world financial system and their deep concern for the future development of the Chinese economy. Therefore, it's unreasonable to take the popularity of "The Currency War" as a sign of growing Chinese anti-Semitism as some foreign media have done. Some other foreign indications of possible Chinese anti-Semitism are equally unconvincing. For example, last year an opinion poll of the PEW Research

Points East

Philadelphia. In New York City, we visited the Museum of Jewish Heritage where he had volunteered as a docent. We roamed through the Lower East Side in which the Tenement Museum, now wedged in part of the Chinatown, still testifies the struggle of the first generation of Jewish immigrants, and tasted the yummiest falafel near Yeshiva University when it was holding the largest Judaica book sale in North America. Toward evening, we arrived at his alma mater, the Jewish Theological Seminary. We sat in the famous library for a while. It was in this quiet enclave that...Elias Bickerman, one of my favorite Jewish scholars, must have labored here, marshalling the ancient sources to compose his leitmotif: Hellenism should not be seen as a temptation to be resisted and the success of Judaism in achieving and maintaining power rests precisely with its ability to come to terms with Hellenism.

Shortly after I arrived in the US, Jake Rubin, then an RRC senior student, asked me to speak at the Hillel of Swarthmore College where he was serving as Jewish Student Adviser. I thus had a chance to observe the operation of Hillel in American campus life. On a Shabbat afternoon, I gave a similar talk at the heartwarming Congregation Beth El, headed by Rabbi Joshua Boettiger and located in picturesque Bennington County, Vermont.

Famous as it is, I did not know about Philly cheesesteak until I was in the city. Before that, I did know Philadelphia was world-renowned for a Jewish center and its orchestra. Thanks to the hospitality of Professor David Ruderman, I was able to sit in the weekly seminars held at the Katz Center for Advanced Judaic Study at the University of Pennsylvania and to make use of its superb library. Addressing the subject of "Jews, Commerce and Culture," these seminars are particularly fascinating in problematizing the stereotypes and exaggerations of the Jewish commercial triumph, characteristics prevalent in today's Chinese society that is also deeply immersed in a climate of economic entrepreneurship.

A fortuitous *manna* from the seminars was to meet David Stern, a distinguished professor of classical Jewish literature and religion and a true intellectual. With permission, I audited his illuminating course on "Akeidah in Jewish Tradition." I not only dined with his family in his

sukkah and recited the Four Questions in Chinese at his *seder* table, but I devoured his essays and reviews published in *The New Republic*, *Commentary*, and *The New York Times Book Review*. He inspired me to open this semester in Nanjing with a new graduate course entitled "Modern Jewish Scholarship," whereby I hope my students can reach a basic understanding of the development of Jewish studies as an academic field, acquire awareness of some of the methodological innovations, and ultimately achieve a broader perspective that may align their own research closer to Jewish studies as a whole. I joined David for a conference on "Rabbinic Literature and the Material Culture of Roman Palestine" at Princeton University, and a workshop of "The Traditional Eastern European Jewish Book, 1500-1900" led by Professor Moshe Rosman at the Katz Center. At my invitation, David and his wife, Kathryn Hellerstein, a professor of Yiddish at Penn, delivered two lectures at the Nanjing Institute last June...

In Washington DC, I took part in the 40th Annual Conference of the Association for Jewish Studies (AJS) in December, which afforded me a panoramic view of Jewish studies as practiced in North America. In January, I was accepted to the 2009 Jack and Anita Hess Faculty Seminar on "The Holocaust and Other Genocides: Historical Contexts, Legal Issues, and Ethical Dilemmas," co-directed by Professors John Roth and Donald Bloxham, and sponsored by the Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. I returned to the same Museum in June for another seminar on "Christianity and the Holocaust: History, Analysis, Implications" led by Dr. Victoria J. Barnett. A week before I arrived, a black security guard was tragically killed in a racist attack on the Museum by an 88-year-old gunman with a violent anti-Semitic past.

Holocaust studies is an integral component of the research agenda of the Nanjing Institute, promoted through translations, dissertations, international symposiums and summer workshops. My experience at these seminars was enormously constructive in designing my own syllabus, which seeks to contextualize the Holocaust within a broader vista of the history of anti-Semitism and of Jewish responses to catastrophe. Moreover, addressing the Holocaust using a compara-

tive perspective—with Darfur and Rwanda in particular—opened for me a new way to understand why there is a growing international concern regarding abuses of human rights. China is becoming increasingly integrated into international society. For the sake of mutual understanding, it will be good to share this view through class teaching and translation.

Invited as International Jewish Studies Speaker of DePauw University in Greencastle, Indianapolis, I was honored to deliver two public lectures on "Teaching Jewish Studies in China" and "Jewish Diaspora in China: Chinese and Western Perspectives" in the middle of March. My interaction with the faculty and students there was truly thought-provoking and agreeable.

In Ann Arbor, I visited Professor Aharon Oppenheimer in early April. He had supervised my Post-doctoral research at Tel Aviv University and was currently a visiting fellow at the Frankel Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. Aharon plans to visit Nanjing in October 2010, and we discussed the proposed topics of his lectures—on the social world of Talmud and Holy War in ancient Judaism.

In Berkeley, I attended the 2009 American Academy of Jewish Research (AAJR) Early Career Workshop in May. Directed by Professors Robert Alter and David Biale, and devoted to the enhancement of the teaching and research of scholars at the early stages of their careers in Jewish studies, the workshop was fascinating in developing ideas and methods of instruction, stimulating scholarly research and writing, and in creating a community of scholars. Every participant submitted for mutual discussion a paper or book-proposal, and a syllabus of a Jewish studies course that she/he had offered, and was, in addition, asked to present an "intellectual autobiography"—to lay out the path to the present. In his own autobiography, Professor Biale recalled interviewing Gershom Scholem after the publication of his book on this master scholar and asking him what new fields ought to be developed in Jewish Studies now that he had put Jewish mysticism on the map. Scholem replied, "The history of Jewish criminals." If any attempt were made to write such a history now, it might fittingly end with Bernard Madoff.

morial books. In contrast, Jews today have abandoned the quest for this kind of traditional memory. Instead, they have turned steadfastly to the pursuit of a profane historical truth. This entails a paradoxical connotation that the more Jews painstakingly restore the historical contexts to the biblical or rabbinic texts the more they become increasingly alienated from the very sacred heritage that they are trying to embrace. Yerushalmi's disturbing observation has called my attention to the fact that until now the study of Jewish liturgy is still not on the research agenda of Chinese Jewish studies. This seems to be an unavoidable consequence of a Jewish studies not bolstered by Jewish identity and, perhaps no less important, without access to the lived Jewish experience.

It also touches off a string of questions. In what terms shall I, as an observer outside of Jewish tradition, approach Judaism and Jewish civilization? Some elements of Judaism, such as prayer, are fundamental components of Jewish tradition but structurally alien to the way we live now in China. How is it possible to present these elements in my own teaching and research, so as to induce enough awareness of their intrinsic value to Judaism and still avoid inciting suspicion that I am trying to ferment faith commitments? Thinking of those countless monographs dealing with each and every aspect of the Jewish past, down to its most arcane minutiae, I begin to wonder what I shall assimilate from this mammoth-size modern Jewish scholarship, especially because, unlike the Christian West or the Islamic East, there is no reason whatsoever in China to quarrel over the authenticity and meaning of any shared books or common spiritual heritage. Moreover, having been nurtured in a historiographical tradition whose superlative model, as defined by Sima Qian about two thousand years ago, is to "investigate the relations between Heaven and human beings, perceive the changes running from the antiquity to the present, and form one's own insights," I cannot help but ponder the future of modern Chinese historiography. As Yerushalmi already sharply pointed out, having faithfully followed the vision and method of Western historicism, modern Jewish historiography cannot but parallel its defeats as well as its triumphs. Will modern Chinese historiography, which by now has been no less faithful in this respect, meet with the same fate? Had I

not stayed at RRC for an academic year, these questions would hardly have become as nagging as they are. I venture to regard them as the most enduring legacy I got from my experience as a scholar at an American rabbinical college.

For myself, as an individual, the greatest privilege of being based at RRC is to work and to develop friendship with two rabbinical students who helped me navigate Jewish-American life: Erica Steelman and Boris Dolin.

With Erica and her family, I had a fondly memorable Yom Kippur in Baltimore. On Erev Yom Kippur, we went to a Conservative service held at Beth El Congregation. The *chazan* chanted *Kol Nidre* in a legendary manner—from pianissimo to fortissimo, accompanied by the organ, totally an operatic aria—a manner whose captivating, and once controversial, beauty I had only heard of from books. The synagogue's first female rabbi delivered a skillful sermon in which she made use of the post-biblical interpretations of Abraham to elaborate her theme—the faith lost and faith regained within the post-Holocaust context. The next afternoon, on empty stomach, we drove to downtown Baltimore to attend *Minhah* and *Ne'ilah* at B'nai Israel Congregation. In this Orthodox *shul*, Erica was sitting in one of the separate pews for women...

Before the *Minhah*, I chatted briefly with Rabbi Alan Yuter...A few months later, to my surprise, he invited me to give a talk about "The Long-standing Friendship between Chinese People and the Jews" on an *Erev Shabbat*. I thus had a better opportunity to interact with him and his congregants whose presence that night was more balanced. No longer overwhelmingly male, there were also an African-American convert, a former Presbyterian, and a gay couple. Rabbi Yuter turns out to be an enlightened and progressive Orthodox rabbi—the first rabbi of this sort that I have ever encountered. Notwithstanding, he is above all an Orthodox Jew for whom true Torah learning consists of intellectual explorations in *halakhah*, rather than in the historical quest.

Among other activities that ranged from a naming service to a *shiv'ah*, which Erica and I attended together, two were exceptionally impressive. First was the *bat mitzvah* for Tamar, a Chinese girl adopted by a Jewish family. It was enthralling to

observe her punctiliously read the Torah scroll in Hebrew, present her *d'var Torah* (speech on the Torah portion), and see her surrounded by her friends as they—including many Chinese adoptees of her age and gender—were honored with an *aliyah* (opportunity to say the blessings over the Torah reading). In the subsequent lavish dinner serving Chinese cuisine, a friend of this family, who had also adopted two Chinese girls, informed me that the number of Chinese adopted by Jewish families continues to grow rapidly in the US. I cannot help but wonder what impact these Chinese adoptees may have on American Jewish identity. After the rite of passage, Tamar is not simply a "daughter of commandment," but a sensible woman as well. How will she manage with her natural and nurtured heritages? Pointing to a huge dragon kite decorated on the ceiling and purchased from China, one of her mothers replied, "We are trying to raise her at once Jewish and Chinese in the hope of instilling in her an appreciation of both cultures."

In late March, we attended Gratz College for a lecture by an RRC alumnus. Having fulfilled his service as the only Jewish Chaplain in western Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom 2008, Commander Jon Cutler related his unique role as the Jewish supervisor of 20 Christian chaplains and chaplain assistants and gave an insider's view on what was actually taking place in Iraq. Prior to this, in my own lectures on the diversified functions of the modern rabbi, I had been quite vague about chaplain duties. This lecture, and his photos, not only conjured up a very vivid and authentic picture of the work and daily life of military chaplain, but also deepened my understanding of the significance of well-organized community life in preserving and perpetuating Jewish values and Jewish identity. We lunched together shortly thereafter, and Jon also kindly let me sit in on the *beit din* he supervised for an African-American convert in a Reform Temple. Despite the fact that he is still a reserve chaplain, Jon prefers to be called Rabbi...

Boris is another Jewish American. Born in Portland, Oregon, he hopes to make *aliyah* to his hometown as a pulpit rabbi upon graduation...It was very pleasant and informative to spend time with Boris: to learn the American vernacular, to set up his *sukkah*, to examine bizarre mosaic murals (by a Jewish artist who was his relative), and to visit Jewish sites in

Center asserted that half of the Chinese didn't like Jews. I have great doubts about the accuracy of such conclusions, and don't even know how this poll was taken. Can one really poll the "opinion" of 1,400 million Chinese on such a complex issue? Surely, this can't be taken seriously.

2. Exaggerating the influence of the America Jewish community. Owing to the frequent communications between China and America, it's well known among the Chinese people that American Jews exert considerable influence on American politics, economy, culture and diplomacy. With little knowledge of old and current Jewish history, it's easy for them to form a simplistic equation: American Jewry equals World Jewry, and the success of American Jews is the success of the world Jewish people. Thus, Mr. Kissinger's friendly attitude towards China in their view represented the whole Jewish people, while Steven Spielberg's resignation as the art advisor to the Beijing Olympic Games was, in the eyes of some Chinese, a demonstration of hostility of the Jewish people towards China. This of course is extremely wrong. Kissinger and Spielberg both are first and foremost, Americans. Most Jews, in whatever country they may live and wherever they are accepted as equal citizens, follow the trends of their country and try to be loyal to it. Spielberg, unfortunately for us, represented a strong trend in the US public, but not of the Jewish people.

3. Erroneously equating the state of Israel with the entire Jewish people. In the minds of some Chinese there is another equation: The state of Israel equals the Jewish people. These Chinese will attach the label "Jewish" to any policy and action taken by Israel in defense of its national interest. Some Chinese regard the prosperity of Israel as the success of World Jewry. Or, Israeli policies toward Arabs are seen as the attitude of the "strong" Jewish people towards the "weak" Arab people.

II. Some misleading ideas in the Sino-Jewish relationship current among the Jewish people:

Some Jews with broad knowledge can comprehend and understand China correctly. Many renowned Sinologists are found among the Jewish people. How-

ever, it's also undeniable that there do exist differences in some Jewish understandings of China. Misleading ideas among Jews have different roots. We can distinguish four different types of ideas, although of course they are all connected:

1. Complete ignorance of today's China. Some Jews know little or nothing about China, and certainly not how fast China has changed in the last 30 years. They still see China as fixed in the Mao period, closed, unchanging, hostile and monolithic. They ignore not only China's past vicissitudes and its enormous and still-ongoing efforts to leave the past behind, but also its efforts to create a brighter future for its people and also to integrate into the global world as a positive and respected player.

2. Adaptation to the dominant opinion trends of the home countries of the Jewish Diaspora. In many other cases, Jews follow the dominant opinion trends in the countries where they are living. Some of these opinions are negative, for example, in the United States, where China is often seen as a rival that is taking away American jobs. It is no wonder that Jews who want to be loyal citizens of their countries follow some of these opinion trends. One would like to hope that some Jewish authors and opinion makers would swim against the stream in the manner of Dr. Henry Kissinger. He has written many articles in the American media to explain China to the American public.

3. Declared hostility to China. Before the Olympic Games a very small number of prominent Jews had publicly called for a Jewish boycott of the Olympics, to protest against the troubles in Tibet or Chinese relations with Sudan. Israel and all the important Jewish organizations in the US have condemned these calls, which had no effect, as far as I can see. No Israelis participated in these hostile calls. Unfortunately, the world media have given much space to these Jewish boycott calls, and this has offended the feelings of the Chinese public.

4. Jewish concern about Chinese policies in the Middle East. China's Middle East policy is the source of frequent Jewish concerns. Again many tend to forget how radically China has adjusted its policies in the last three decades, from

almost unlimited vocal and material support of all Moslem and Arab positions, to an evenhanded effort to gain the friendship of all sides, including Israel, and contribute if possible to a peaceful solution of the region's problems. The old ideology has virtually disappeared and been replaced by national interests. However China, like all major powers, has many objectives and it is not easy to reconcile all of them. The conviction of some Jews that China is supporting only the Palestinians is simply wrong, and so is the belief of others that China is a major exporter of weapons to the Moslem countries. China's military role in the Middle East is often greatly exaggerated, as the Israeli scholar Prof. Yitzchak Shichor from the University of Haifa has emphasized.

III. How to strengthen the Sino-Jewish relationship on the part of China and establish correct perceptions of Jews and Judaism

1. Stimulate Academic Jewish Studies in China. In the past twenty years, Jewish studies in China have made great progress. Some research centers of Jewish studies have opened. Dozens of scholars have conquered all kinds of hardships, worked diligently studying and exploring, and thus made great contributions in disseminating Jewish learning and laying academic foundations in China. These people are not only expected to teach students (undergraduate students, graduate students, even PhD students), but also to engage in research work. From now on, there should be more funds directed to sponsoring scholars with professional backgrounds so that they can leave their "ivory tower", publish popular articles and help to guide the masses. In this way they may play an important role in transmitting objective information, improving the national level of perception of Jewish culture and creating correct concepts regarding the Jewish people. It would be helpful to encourage more Chinese students to study Jewish history and culture and thereby create an effective and well-informed academic body in China that could serve as a means of information and advice to both government and business. Programs encouraging student exchanges would go a long way to creating the desired infrastructure.

2. Inform the Chinese mass media. Mass media are very important. On the one hand, Chinese scholars, as

well as world Jewry, should try to provide the Chinese masses with more information through channels such as television, films, newspapers and the internet, so that the Chinese people can conveniently acquire a more comprehensive knowledge of the Jewish people. On the other hand, they should follow Chinese media reports, publications, and student books relevant to the Jewish people to learn about any old or new misconceptions and expressions of prejudice or hostility affecting the Jewish people, particularly when they have an obviously foreign origin. It is possible to influence the media in more objective and favorable ways to describe not only the Jewish people but also the state Israel.

3. Formulate Jewish and Chinese policy strategies. The Jewish people has already learned about a possible and desirable Chinese strategy in the book "China and the Jewish People" by Dr. Shalom Wald and published by the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute in Jerusalem in 2004. This report is based on a correct understanding of China. It is very systematic, objective and easy to implement. What the Jewish people need to do is to continue to follow this strategy step-by-step. China should also formulate a Jewish strategy on the governmental level. Although the Jewish people is quite small in number, its influence on today's world cannot be underestimated. This influence stems from the multi-national character and the power of Jewish culture over long historical periods. In addition, Jewish influence is also linked to the importance of Jewish and Israeli questions in current international affairs and the effects of the Israeli-Palestinian and the Israeli-Arab conflicts on the situation of Middle East.

Meanwhile, facing the challenge of modernization and globalization, we Chinese should learn from the Jewish people (including the state of Israel), particularly from their high level of technology, their ability of innovation and their international connections. In order to develop a Sino-Jewish relationship with rational and practical aims, China also should enact a sophisticated Jewish strategy, one that would establish relations with various Jewish communities in the world. This strategy should include all relevant political, economic and cultural aspects, so that it can respond rapidly to messages from the Jewish world. They should broaden communication and intensify contacts between the hearts and the wis-

dom of two ancient peoples and develop a healthy atmosphere for the further development of relations between China and the Jewish communities in various countries.

4. Enhance relations with the Jewish communities around the world, but particularly with that in America. At present, America is still the country with the largest Jewish population in the world. Although Jews suffered considerably in the current financial crisis, American Jewish interests remain a dominant factor in the Jewish world. Therefore, it is essential for China to intensify its relations with the American Jewish community, increase common understanding and decrease friction. Similarly, it is vital to establish links with the Jewish communities in other countries: the U.K., France and Canada, for example, and thus achieve understanding and support on a broader international level.

In conclusion, both the Chinese people and the Jewish people have rich intentions and broad prospects for future development. Nowadays, with the parallel developing trends of globalization and pluralism, it appears rather essential to strengthen the connections between these two peoples and imbibe the quintessential parts in each other's thoughts and culture. Reducing divergences, fostering friendship and making efforts to achieve mutual benefit together with a win-win situation, are the common wishes and collective interests of the Chinese and the Jewish peoples. Just as Yitzhak Rabin, the late leader of Israel, said, "the Jewish and Chinese peoples are the most ancient peoples, not only in Asia, but also in the world. Their histories of civilization can be traced back several thousand years. Thus, it's very reasonable for us to learn from each other and enhance mutual cooperation in various fields."

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Only in America: Wally Wong's Story

Wally Wong grew up during the depression in Stockton, California, and cut his musical teeth singing songs for nickels and dimes in public parks.

As a young man, he did a stint in the U.S. Army during World War II, where he performed in USO shows.

After the War, Wong moved to San Francisco, enrolled at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and sang for private and organizational events to make ends meet.

In 1953, he took a job with United Airlines, where he worked for 36 years and produced a variety of entertainment shows before retiring. During this time, he performed in musical theatre, USO shows, night clubs, nursing homes, military hospitals and, on occasion, worked in television and in the Borsht Belt.

And that is where Wally Wong's story becomes a uniquely American, Chinese-Jewish, cultural intersection.

After retiring, Wong first moved to Albuquerque and began taking theater arts and music courses at the University of New Mexico. He also enrolled in Yiddish language classes with the Yiddish Language Association of New Mexico. "I'm interested in Yiddish," Wong said at the time, "because I will be working with Yiddish music and plays and I thought it would be prudent to understand the culture and lifestyle."

In 1990, Wong moved to New York City to help his elder sister, Jadin Wong, in the casting for "Miss Saigon" on Broadway. Jadin was famous in her day as a pioneering Chinese-American actor, dancer, and comedian in Hollywood and on Broadway, and later as a formidable talent agent for Asian-American actors. She is now 96 years old. Like her younger brother, Jadin also knows Yiddish and got Wally his first paid performances in the Borsht Belt.

Wally Wong never left New York. He liked having the opportunity to use his Yiddish and to play the Borsht Belt circuit.

In 1991, at the urging of his sister Jadin, Wong took a class at HB Studios. There he met Roz Dunn, an American-Jewish performer and acting teacher, who was also in the class at the prodding of one of her sons. The two became an item. Roz introduced him to Jewish spiritual ideas and into the synagogues.



In 2002, and then only some 78 years young himself, Wong teamed with Dunn, by this time a great-grandmother of 83, to star in a cabaret show, "She Dunn Him Wong", written and directed by Norman Roth. The show was a Catskills-meets-Canton act that celebrated the cultural clash and collusion between this happy couple.

Wong and Dunn were together for 14 years. Dunn has two sons and Wong, three daughters. All are in the arts. Roz Dunn passed away from cancer in November, 2004. 500 people—some synagogue members, many others from the performing arts—attended Dunn and Wong's final performance held several months before her death. Wong still keeps in close touch with his "adopted" Jewish family. To this day, he takes to heart Dunn's "attitude of gratitude" that kept her going even during the darkest hours of her disease.

Wong is a believer in the ideal of American pluralism: "I believe that if every ethnic group maintained their culture, it would not only be beneficial to them, but it would be beneficial to this whole composition that we call America. Every culture has something that's very beautiful and distinct about it. How terrible it would be if everybody was the same and we all did things the same way and spoke the same language. We wouldn't have the color and texture that makes up the fabric of America."

The American Jewish Mosaic in Chinese Eyes

by Dr. Song Lihong
excerpted from <http://www.oakton.edu/~friend/chinajews.html>

Generously sponsored by Dr. William Fern and the Jewish Community Foundation, I was truly fortunate to spend a year, from August 2008 to July 2009, at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College (RRC) in Philadelphia...

My visit to the US was a logical step after my intensive Hebrew study in Jerusalem in the summer, 2007. Before I set out for Philadelphia, I had two sets of goals: personally, to survey a wide array of contemporary expressions of Judaism in America through conversations, site visits, holiday observances, institutions, cultural events and religious services; and, pedagogically, to collect textual and visual materials in order to enrich and to bring a more systematic approach to my class teaching, and to design new courses of Jewish Studies tailored to the needs of my Chinese students while keeping them abreast of the most recent advancements in this field.

Unlike Israel, in America religion is totally voluntary, and religious diversity is the norm. I can hardly imagine a more ideal base to fulfill my goals than RRC, the heart of the Reconstructionist form of Judaism and a harbinger in many ways of greater changes within American Judaism. Needless to say, to study at a rabbinical college—a seminary for training future rabbis—was adventurous and unpredictable for one who had only been exposed to, and felt at home with, the circumstances of large secular universities.

Therefore, when I joined in trepidation the awe-inspiring morning *davening* at RRC, sat and rose with the group in which women donned prayer shawls (and phylacteries), read and sang parts of the service, I reminded myself, "This is Judaism in practice, rather than Judaism in books." When I took notice of the insertion of the names of matriarchs in the *siddur* and the change of gender from masculine to feminine, I realized that this was a brand of American Judaism that testified to the striving for egalitarianism and the freedom to make religious choices. Whenever I picked up a much-needed book from the "tzedakah desk" in the student lounge

where people discarded their unwanted items, I was excited and thought, "Is this a creative way to carry out the highest degree of charity as defined by Maimonides—so that the recipient may become autodidactic?" When I participated in a *Rosh Hashana* service led by a Reconstructionist woman rabbi, hearing the blasts of *tekiah*, *shevarim* and *teruah* that echoed under a stained-glass roof bearing the huge painted image of a personified Trinity, I concluded that in America a Jewish service could be held in a borrowed Christian church. At the *brit milah* of Shlomo Simchah, with whose mother—an RRC student—I had danced eight days ago at the thronged Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in Manhattan's Upper West Side on *Simchat Torah*, I observed every move of the *mohel*, sensed the breathless interest of other members of the RRC community. I was touched by the charm of the intimate quality of this small seminary. After attending a rich variety of lectures and workshops organized by the school—where topics ranged from Jewish arts to *chazanic* activity, from aging in Judaism to drama, from Jewish food to Jewish crafts—I became ever more aware that these aspects of Jewish life are no less intrinsic to Jewish civilization than doctrines and ceremonies. Surprised to learn that some of the RRC students and faculty members had received their religious education in or ordination by Reform, Conservative or even Orthodox seminaries, I became increasingly aware why in American Jewish religious discourse the term "denomination" has been persistently eschewed while "movement" still prevails—because ethnic ties among Jews continue to transcend doctrinal boundaries and because what ultimately matters is the idea of *Klal Yisrael*...

Now I am back home in Nanjing, re-reading Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's classic *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, which I purchased several years ago in Tel Aviv. This time, I think I have a much better understanding of the antipodal relations he formulated between traditional Jewish memory and modern Jewish history. Jews in the pre-modern period, according to his view, related to their past in an a-historical way. Radically new events, such as the Crusades, were construed through such biblical archetypes as the *Akeidah* and preserved in memory, not in the form of event-based chronicles, but in prayers and me-