



# Live Confucian

The Newsletter of the Confucius Institute at Pace University



## Extending Friendship in a Time of Chaos



CI Director Joseph Lee leads a Q&A with producers René Balcer and Carolyn Hsu-Balcer after the screening of “Above the Drowning Sea” (Robert Klein)

This fall, the Confucius Institute at Pace University (Pace CI) held a number of lectures and events exploring the Jewish experience in China. During the week of Oct. 8 we were honored to host a week long residency of the pre-eminent expert on the Jews of China, Dr. Jonathan Goldstein, retired from Western Georgia University. Goldstein gave two lectures, “Singapore, Harbin, and Manila as Points on the Compass of Asian Jewish Identity,” and “The Jews of Shanghai” and participated in a panel

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## Chinese Opera Inspires The Next Generation

One of the major events on the Pace CI’s yearly schedule is the Winter Cultural Exchange Festival, co-hosted with the New York Chinese Opera Society (NYCOS), one of our oldest partners. The Festival, now in its Eleventh Year, takes place in the late fall-early winter, and features a Chinese Opera performance in the Schimmel Center for the Arts. This year, the featured opera was the “Story of Su San,” performed on Sunday, November 5, 2017.

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Students from New Milford High learning basic Chinese Opera dance moves. (Robert Klein)

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# Letter from the Director

Dear Friends:

2018 marks the ninth anniversary of the founding of the Confucius Institute at Pace University (Pace CI).

We are going to celebrate the anniversary on Friday, May 11 with a series of special presentations on China that will bring together students, faculty and friends into an inspired environment.

Dr. Liliane Willens, author of *Stateless in Shanghai* (2010), will talk about the history of Russian migrants in Harbin, China during the early 20th century and Dr. Joseph Ho, Assistant Professor of History at Albion College, Michigan will lecture on US-China encounters highlighted in private photographs and films. We will also recognize our Chinese language students' outstanding accomplishments. We hope you can join us!

In addition, Pace CI has launched several community outreach programs like sponsoring a Confucius classroom at New Milford High School in New Jersey and running satellite Chinese Language Testing Centers in Long Island, Westchester and New Jersey.

These initiatives make Pace CI a major player in promoting cross-cultural understanding between East and West. Please visit our website, subscribe to our email list, and come to our events.

Dr. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee  
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The Pace CI is dedicated to providing Chinese language and cultural education, resources, and services to meet the needs of people from all backgrounds.

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# Extending Friendship in a Time of Chaos

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discussion on “Religious Minorities in China,” exploring the history of the Jews of Kaifeng. For much of history the Chinese people have extended their hospitality and friendship to the Jewish people, a theme which Goldstein explored.

The most generous act of kindness in this relationship, however, may be the welcome that the Jews of Europe experienced in Shanghai during World War II. The Pace CI had the privilege of screening “Above the Drowning Sea,” a documentary on this subject on Nov. 8, 2017 in the Schimmel Center for the Arts. Produced by René Balcer and Carolyn Hsu-Balcer and narrated by



One of the young Jewish refugees with her Chinese friends.

Julianna Margulies “Above the Drowning Sea,” explores the personal narratives of a few families of Viennese Jews who escaped to Shanghai along with their Chinese neighbors during this tumultuous time. The film compares this to how refugees are treated in the contemporary world.

## An Unlikely Savior for the Jews

In the late 1930s, as the Nazis consolidated power in Germany and Austria and brought their brutal anti-Semitism with them, Germanic Jews came under increasing pressure to leave their homelands. However, no other country would take in these refugees, despite the crisis and their alleged sympathy towards the Jews. Jews in Vienna, Austria tell of going to every single embassy to get an exit visa, only to be turned down by every single consulate. However, China was in no condition to enforce keeping refugees out. The Chinese Nationalists, who were nominally in control and had support from Nazi Germany, were fighting an armed insurrection of communist forces internally and a Japanese invasion from Manchuria. The Nationalist official policy was not to give visas to Jewish refugees, but in all the

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chaos, a few Chinese diplomats in Europe, in their humanity, decided to go against their own country's policy and gave out visas anyway, rescuing thousands of Jews in the process. One of these diplomats was Ho Feng-Shan, the Chinese Consul-General in Vienna, who had risen from a life of poverty to be a top diplomat. His Confucian and Christian values made him feel sympathy for the Jews of Europe and he had befriended many during his time mingling with the cultural elite of Vienna. At the Consulate, Ho began to give out

freedom, but at the same time they were leaving their homeland and the people they loved. And though they may not have known it, with the coming of the Holocaust, it was the last time they saw many of their relatives. After a journey halfway around the world by boat, these refugees landed in Shanghai, and for the first time nobody even looked at their papers. Welcomed by Russian, Indian, and Iraqi Jews who had already lived in Shanghai for years, these Jews set up businesses, created social organizations, and built synagogues, especially in the neighborhood of Hongkou. Chinese from the surrounding

neighborhoods would frequent these businesses and their children would play in the streets with the refugees' children.

### Japanese Occupation

This relatively peaceful period suddenly ended when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. As part of the Japanese offensive, Shanghai was bombed and invaded and under pressure from their Axis allies, the Japanese

restricted Jews to a small ghetto in Hongkew. The time period of the Japanese occupation was terrible for both Jews and native Chinese, as bombings, starvation and disease affected both populations alike. As the Chinese in this documentary tell us, the Japanese viewed the Chinese population as rats, very much the same way that the Nazis viewed the Jews of Europe. Because of this, the Chinese felt sympathy for the



A View of Modern Shanghai.

visas to any Jew who asked for one. When the Gestapo and the Chinese government pressured him to stop, he continued to do so in the back of a restaurant.

### Arrival in China

Leaving Vienna was a bittersweet moment for many of the people profiled in the film. They were finally getting to a place where they could live in

Jewish refugees and felt that they were in the same boat.

## The Lasting Impact

With the Japanese surrender in 1945, the horrors of the occupation ended, but soon, with the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, most of the Jews left China, moving on to the United States, Canada, South America and Israel. The Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution, from the 1950s to the 1970s, cut China off from the rest of the world and most of the Jewish refugees lost contact with their Shanghainese neighbors and friends. It has only been recently that Jews have begun to reconnect with their Chinese brethren and a museum has been built in Shanghai to commemorate their shared experiences. In addition to the first person

narratives, "Above the Drowning Sea," shows both former refugees visiting Shanghai to see their childhood homes and Shanghainese visiting the Jewish families they were neighbors with, often for the first time in more than half a century.

Following the screening, the two producers of the film came to the stage for a Q&A, moderated by CI Director Joseph Lee. In response to questions from the audience about why they made the movie, despite there being other documentaries made on the subject, the two responded by saying that in the past, films have only focused on the Jewish experience in Shanghai, without looking at how the Chinese viewed their new neighbors. "Above the Drowning Sea" is truly a story of collaboration between two groups of people who, despite having so many differences, came together under friendship in a time of crisis.

# Chinese Opera Inspires The Next Generation

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## Plot of the Opera

In the opera, courtesan Su San (Yu Tang Chun) falls in love with Wang Jinlong, son of the Minister of Rites, and they vow to be together forever. However, Wang Jinlong squanders all his money and is evicted from the brothel by the evil Madam. He wanders around and eventually ends up in a temple. Su San goes to meet him and gives him money to return to his hometown of Nanjing. The madam then tricks her into being sold to Shanxi business tycoon Shen Yanlin as his concubine. Su San, however, finds out that Shen's wife Pi is having an affair with Zhao Jiansheng, a secret that Pi does not want Shen to know. Pi poisons Shen to death and accuses Su of the crime. The judge in the case is bribed beforehand, so he falsely sentences Su to death. The escort Chong Gongdao guards Su from Hongtong to the capital Taiyuan for a retrial and, enroute, she pours out her injustices to him, and he soothes her. Upon arrival at the Taiyuan court, the judge is Wang Jinlong. Wang can't control himself when seeing her and is unable to make judgements, so the jurors Pan Bizheng and Liu Bingyi run the proceedings instead. Wang secretly enters the prison to meet with Su and bumps into Liu Bingyi. Persuaded by Pan Bizheng, Liu finally vindicates Su San, who at last reunites with Wang Jinlong and they marry.

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## Production Features Three Women in Lead Role

In NYCOS's production the role of Su San was performed by three different women, Xiao Zheng, Yanchun Li, and Michelle Ling Yang, representing Su San at different ages in her life, and in three different styles. Jingtao Zhang played the role of Wang Jinling. Yanchun Li performed with the Shandong Weifang Peking Opera Troupe before immigrating to New York. She is nationally ranked as a Paramount Class Performing Artist. Ms. Li masters an extensive repertoire of Peking Operas. She has won numerous prizes at the national, provincial and city levels. She is known for her sweet and powerful voice and elegant acting style. Xiao Zheng is a National Second Class Performing Artist from the Youth Troupe of Beijing Peking Opera Theatre, specializing in



A pivotal scene from the Chinese Opera, "The Story of Su San"  
(New York Chinese Opera Society)

"Qingyi" roles. She holds a master degree from the National Academy of Chinese Theatre Arts and won the "gold prize" in the "National Youth Peking Opera Competition." Michelle Ling Yang is a graduate of the Tianjin Institute of Arts, Beijing Cinema Academy, and Central Broadcast Institute. She is an award-winning Peking Opera star and dancer and teaches Kunqu Opera for

NYCOS. Jingtao Zhang is a nationally ranked First Class Performing Artist. He is known for his handsome makeup, solid operatic skill, and resounding voice.

## Local Students Attend Lecture

In advance of the opera performance, NYCOS held a lecture, "Appreciation of the Story of Su San" the Friday afternoon before. In attendance this year were Chinese-language students from New Milford High School in New Jersey. The Pace CI has been advising their Chinese program and



Preparing the elaborate face painting for traditional Chinese Opera  
(New York Chinese Opera Society)

we hope to soon set up a Confucius Institute Classroom at the school. They had been studying Chinese Opera as part of their Chinese language education and their teacher encouraged them to interact with the actors during the demonstration. The students also had the opportunity to eat an authentic Chinese lunch in nearby Chinatown and learned about Chinese pastimes from CI staff including paper-cut outs, calligraphy, and the game of Weiqi.



Winners of the Seventh Annual NYCOS Essay Competition. Right to Left: Dyson Students Iqra Ahmed, Anna Kralik and Elizabeth Powell. (Rob Klein)

## Award Ceremony

Preceding the lecture, awards were given to the winners of the Seventh Annual New York Chinese Opera Society Essay Competition. The purpose of the essay competition, open to all Pace University students, and co-sponsored by NYCOS, the Confucius Institute and the Global Asian Studies Program at Pace University, is to spur more in-depth research in Chinese culture and increase the interest and participation of Pace students in Chinese cultural studies. Essays can be on any topic related to Chinese art, history, and culture and are nominated by members of the Pace faculty. The essays were evaluated by a selection committee consisting of members of the Pace CI Advisory Board. The three best essays were recommended to the New York Chinese Opera Society for awards. This year, first prize went to Iqra Ahmed for her essay “The Aesthetically Pleasing Fantasy Worlds of Asian Cinema” which our reviewers praised for its professional writing style and sweeping scope. Second place went to Anna Kralik for her thought

provoking analysis of Chinese educational films, “East and West Education: What Children From All Cultures Need Most,” and third prize went to Elizabeth Powell for, “Covert Foreign Involvement in The Second Sino-Japanese War,” viewed by our reviewers as a solid piece of historical research. The first place winner received a \$600 cash prize while the second and third place finalists received \$300 and \$200 respectively. Awards were also given to Xiao Zheng and Jingtao Zhang for Excellence in Art for their performances at this year’s festival and a posthumous award was given to opera star Yingchun Li, who recently succumbed to cancer, for Lifetime Excellence in Art Achievement.

By including the participation of both Pace students and local high school students we hope that this year’s Cultural Exchange Festival was a chance to inspire the next generation of Chinese learners and scholars.



# Debunking Chineseness

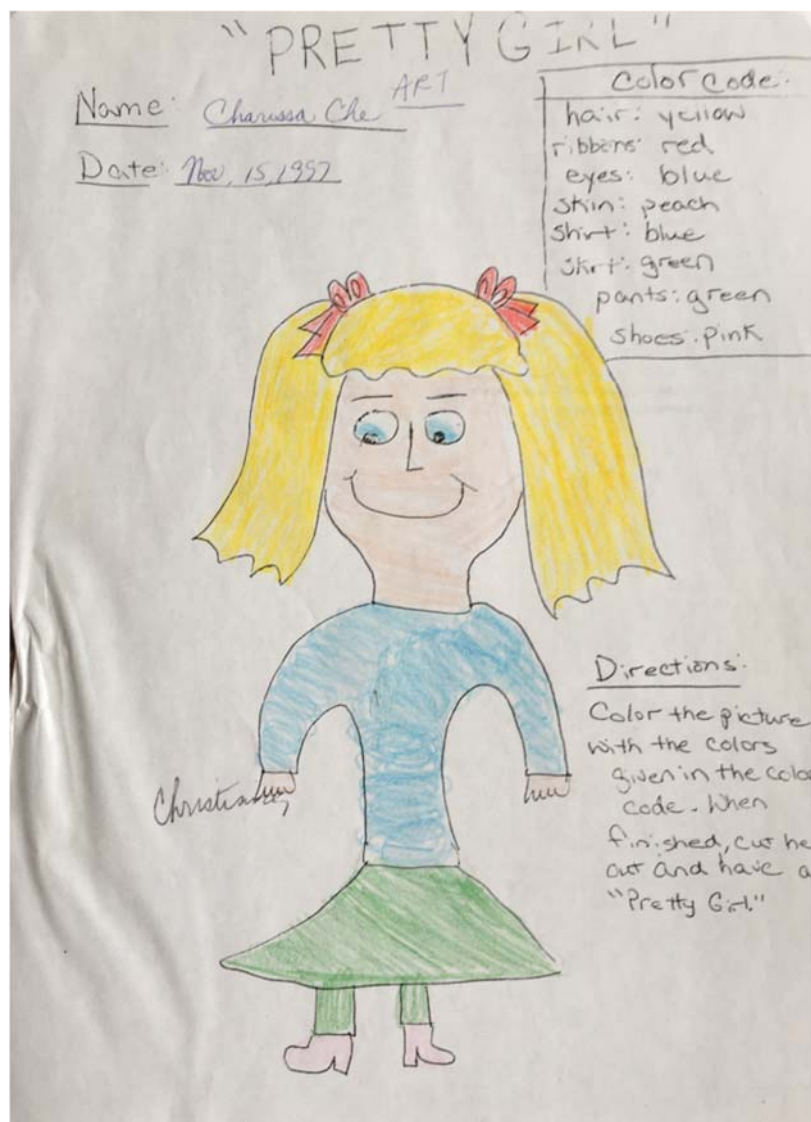
It is not every day that a former Pace undergraduate student comes back as a mature PhD candidate presenting her research at the Confucius Institute at Pace University (Pace CI). That is what happened on Friday, September 29, 2017 when Charissa Che, a doctoral candidate in writing and rhetoric studies at the University of Utah, who took classes with History Professor and Pace CI Director Joseph Lee during her time at Pace, presented a lecture, “Debunking ‘Chineseness’: Third Place and Identity at the US University,” based on her dissertation.

## Challenges for Chinese Speaking Students

Che delved into the challenges facing Chinese-speaking students at American universities, such as learning a new language, dealing with what other may view as a “foreign” accent, racism in language pedagogies and policies and a shift from Chinese to American values. Language plays a major role in all of this, as attitudes towards learning English and maintaining Chinese language are directly correlated with cultural and psychological adjustments. Negative effects of this include feelings of marginalization, deficiency in academic work, a reluctance to contribute in class and loss of both the Chinese language and their identity. For Che, this is not just an academic exercise—she wants to be able, in her words, “to foster more culturally-inclusive pedagogies in the American university writing classroom, as they involve Chinese-speaking students.”

## Use of Ethnographic Studies

For part of her research, Che drew on her own autoethnography. Che is a second-generation Chinese-American, whose parents immigrated from Cantonese-speaking communities in Malaysia



A coloring book page that Charissa Che created in primary school that idealizes the notion of a what a “pretty girl” is.



and Myanmar to New York City. Though born in the United States, Che spent a number of her formative years growing up in Malaysia. In her American classrooms Che was often caught between American and Chinese values. In art class, Che found it difficult to draw a self-portrait of herself as she felt ashamed of expressing her Chineseness. She wanted to identify more with a friend of hers, a blond-haired, blue-eyed girl. Che also struggled with creative writing assignments as American culture values creativity more than Chinese culture, which emphasizes being correct.

Che's own struggle is reflected in the six Chinese speaking students that she studied in the ethnographic study. The participants, students at the University of Utah, were evenly split among first generation, first-and-a-half generation (born in China but raised in the United States), and international students. They were asked about how they self-identify, how they experience using both English and Chinese languages and how they handle the divide between American and Chinese cultures. In their responses, the students did not see themselves as completely American or Chinese, but rather trapped somewhere in between.

### Self-Expression in “Third-Places”

These students may not be able to express themselves fully with standard English in a university classroom but may instead be able to do so in so-called “third places.” These “third places” are alternative spaces to the academy where people can subvert the dominant practices the language, form new self-identities and build solidarity among other marginalized people, while at the same time maintaining their own heritage. For Asian-Americans examples of these include J-Pop, “raplish” (popularized by the Japanese rap group Rip Slyme), and Japanese manga comics.

### Strategies for Inclusion

Che believes that to have a more inclusive writing pedagogy in a university setting third places should be better integrated into the curriculum. Instead of focusing on the “correct” English language and mainstream points of view, professors should instead use the third places that students are interested into to aid students acculturation into American culture, contribute to the classroom experience and help to foster intercultural communication.



A page from the *Marmalade Boy* manga, volume 1. Manga is one example of a “third place,” an alternative space to the academy for Asian-Americans.

# A Model for Advanced Chinese Learners

**A**t the Pace CI we strive to teach using the most advanced methods and the most recent teaching strategies.

However, we do not believe ours is the best method and we often look elsewhere for best practices. On November 10, the Pace CI held a lecture, "Advanced Chinese Learners: Theory to Case" by Dr. Xiaolin Peng, a Chinese teacher from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

Peng Xiaolin has many years of experience in teaching Chinese. This lecture was conducted on

the basis of her research topic, "Advanced Chinese Learners' Collocation." During the lecture, Peng Xiaolin explained the influential factors for advanced Chinese proficiency from theoretical analysis to case demonstration. She believes that to acquire advanced Chinese proficiency involves various factors are involved such as age, motivation, personality, learning environment, learning style, whether or not formal education is accepted, and how various factors interact with each other and interact with each other.

## A Mid-Autumn Festival For All

**F**or this past year's Mid-Autumn Festival the Confucius Institute had the honor of co-hosting three different celebrations. The events were a chance for American students to learn more about an iconic Chinese celebration while for Chinese students it was a chance to feel the warmth of home in a foreign country.

### Coffee, Tea and Mooncakes

On September 28, the Pace CI held a special session of Pace International's Tea and Coffee Hour, celebrating the Mid-Autumn Festival.

Traditional mooncakes, dumplings, and spring rolls were served and CI teachers Xingzhi Sun and Qin Zhang had the students try to name the specialties served in Chinese. Program Manager Qiqi Wang introduced the Pace CI's activities offered throughout the fall semester while Dr. Wenqin Wang told the folk origins of the Mid-Autumn holiday. Students learning Chinese also had the chance to explain why Chinese is such an important language to learn. One beginning student shared his purpose and achievements in learning Chinese: "With the rapid development of China, learning Chinese will be very beneficial to our future work."



Two Pace students enjoy mooncakes in celebration of the Mid-Autumn Festival. (Lindsay Bennett)

## Party in a Moonlit Garden

On the eve of the Festival, the evening of October 3rd, when the moon is at its brightest the Pace CI along with Pace's Chinese Students and Scholars Association held a Mid-Autumn Festival garden party. Both the Chinese and American students in attendance enjoyed mooncakes, games and riddles. There were chances to win colorful stamps and prizes and photo opportunities to remember the night by. Students were also able to use a calligraphy brush to write Festival blessings and to express their best wishes for the new semester.

## Mid-Autumn Festival 101

On October 4, staff from the Confucius Institute co-hosted a "Mid-Autumn Festival—Taste Mooncakes and Gain Knowledge" with the Chinese Language Program at the New Milford High School in New Jersey. Upon arrival, Wenqin Wang, the CI's Chinese Director, along with some of our teachers were welcomed by paper lanterns, created by students in the halls of the school. The lanterns illustrated, in both Chinese and English, the Festival's food, legends, poetry and songs.

The activities of the festival drew on experiential and interactive learning. Under the guidance of their teacher, Xiaoqing Weng, students took turns leading their class, teaching Chinese songs and the phrase, "Zhongqiu jie kuaile" (Happy Mid-Autumn Festival). Later, the students taught their non-Chinese friends how to say the phrase. While enjoying moon cakes the students had the chance to read about the Festival's legends posted on the wall and to talk with CI teachers. New Milford Principal Louis Manuppelli was also present.

The preparations for this event, completed by Xiaoqing Weng's students, were divided into three learning modules. The first module was knowledge

and literacy, where students learned about the Festival, the legends behind it, and the culture surrounding it. The second module was writing, where the students learned to write Chinese characters related to the holiday. They used this knowledge to create the lanterns. The third module was an immersive "moon cake baking experience," where students created semi-home-made mooncakes for the event.

## Community Outreach Efforts

After the event, Wenqin Wang and the CI teachers held informal discussions with Chinese teachers from several local high schools to exchange information on the status of Chinese teaching in various schools and to lay the foundation for improved cooperation in the future. Wenqin Wang believes that the future development of Confucius Institutes depends on breaking free from the confines of universities and involving the local community. CI's should help local community members learn Chinese language, fully integrate and build on the resources of the locality, and create more interesting cultural activities so that students are more interested in learning Chinese.



New Milford High School staff, teachers, and students pose with Pace CI Staff to wish everyone a happy Mid-Autumn Festival!



# Anthropology as Lens to View Wealth Anxiety

**O**n September 22, 2017 the Confucius Institute hosted a talk by Dr. Yujing Zhu, a visiting scholar at Yale University and anthropologist at Shanghai's East China Normal University, on "Wealth Anxiety in China's Wenzhou City." Zhu's investigation explored the concerns and anxieties of everyday people concerning wealth in the city of Wenzhou. Drawing on her immersive experiences as a native of Wenzhou and as a researcher there, Zhu detailed the complex code of behavior that governs people in Wenzhou as they express their deep ambivalence about China's future.

## Dealing with Anxiety

Before delving into the peculiarities of wealth anxiety in Wenzhou, Zhu detailed how anthropologists view how humans deal with anxiety. According to Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the founders of modern anthropology, when we feel uncertain and anxious, we perform specific rituals to invoke "magical" powers for our safety and protection. However, the English anthropologist Alfred Radcliffe-Brown believes that we perform these rituals just because society expects us to be anxious in certain circumstances. These schools of thought are not mutually exclusive and both of these views are used when analyzing anxiety.

## Coping by Taking Risks

For modern-day Chinese, using the citizens of Wenzhou as an example, one of the most major sources of anxiety is financial. In a rapidly expanding economy, with very little in the way of a social safety net, there are major fears of falling back financially.

In the 2000s people began to invest in riskier and riskier financial transactions in the city of Wenzhou. In 2011 there was a major financial collapse and it was assumed that people would invest more conservatively. However, contrary to popular belief, people have continued to invest in these risky transactions. To deal with their financial anxieties, risky investments, that could lead to great wealth, are being made as rituals to bring financial stability, or at least to show others that they are anxious about financial stability. Zhu illustrated this phenomenon with photos of all the financial services and wealth management businesses that have opened up in Wenzhou recently.

These fears are by no means just a concern in Wenzhou or even just a Chinese one. Upon opening up the discussion for a Q&A session, audience members drew connections to financial concerns in Chinese diaspora communities and to the housing market right here in New York.



Wenzhou's World Trade Center.

Financial anxiety is a major concern for Wenzhou's citizens.

(Pascal3012 - Own work, CC BY SA 3.0,  
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=20911793>)

# A Commemoration of Xu Zhimo

**O**n November 19, to mark the anniversary of the birth of Xu Zhimo, one of the most renowned romantic poets of 20th-century Chinese literature, the Renwen Society at China Institute and the Confucius Institute at Pace University jointly presented a “Commemoration of Poet Xu Zhimo's 120th Birthday.” The event included remarks by scholars on Xu Zhimo’s status in modern Chinese literature followed by a musical tribute and readings of Xu’s poems. Dr. Tony Shanzeng Hsu, Xu Zhimo’s grandson, spoke on his newly published biography of his grandfather, *Chasing the Modern*. Many of Xu’s other descendants, relatives and friends, and local Chinese language and culture enthusiasts attended the event. At the memorial, Columbia University Teachers’ College graduate student Chang Liu introduced Xu Zhimo's life, United Nations translator Aaron T. Hebenstreit read a Xu Zhimo poem entitled “The Sound of the Country,” and visiting scholar at Columbia University and Zhejiang University professor Dr. He Shanyun spoke on Xu Zhimo’s high school experiences in Hangzhou. Others who spoke at the memorial included Liu Chunwu, assistant to the UN Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, Xu Tienchen, a UN translator, Shao Yunyun, a graduate student at Columbia University, Wang Mengyu of Shanghai University, and Wang Shizong, a student from New York University. In tribute to Xu Zhimo, Hu Xuedi sang a number of moving songs. We hope that everyone who attended the event left with an intuitive and comprehensive understanding and understanding of the life of this modern Chinese poet.



A photo of Xu Zhimo from 1930

## Personal Experiences at Chinese Corner

**T**his past fall, both students and teachers drew on personal experiences at “Chinese Corner.” Professor Xingzhi Sun, who is from the northeast of China, revisited the comforting “soul food” of the wintry stretches of his childhood. Every year as winter approached, his mother insisted that he help out to make the traditional pickled cabbage (*suan cai*). Much like the German sauerkraut, cabbages are put in crocks, salted, and weighed down with stones to ferment, a process that can take weeks. It is a way to preserve the cabbage so that it doesn’t spoil and to make sure that there is source of much needed vitamins to get through the winter. With modern refrigeration and shipping, this is no longer a matter of life



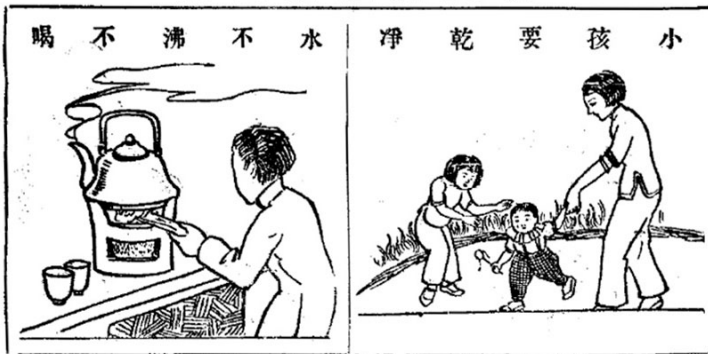
Salted cabbage prepared in a crock to be pressed and fermented to become *suan cai*

and death, as it once was. Sun, as a child, did not like the chore of helping to make the suan cai. Once he moved out of his parents' house, he did not understand why his mother made him come home every year to help make the suan cai, a process not necessary in the modern age. However, now since he is so far away from home and cannot help out in the process, Sun now realizes the importance of passing down traditions, such as making suan cai, even if they are not necessary, to keep the culture of northeastern China alive. As can be imagined, suan cai is used in a number of ways, including as a stuffing for dumplings, a base for a pork stew,

drinking of cold water. Rather, Chinese either drink hot water or tea. Ruifen remembers lining up with the other children to fill up her hot water thermos at school. At many institutions in China there are hot water heaters instead of the coolers we see in the United States. This was not always the case, however. The ancient Chinese used ice storage containers called *jian*, made out of ceramic or copper, to both keep the body and drinks cold, functioning like a combination refrigerator/air-conditioning unit. However, as the modern age approached, with industrialization and more people living in cities, fresh water became contaminated and diseases like cholera spread. In the nineteenth century, as the germ theory began to be accepted, cities in the United States and Europe created municipal water supplies to make sure that the water was safe to drink. However, China was in political and financial disarray at the time and did not have the wherewithal to create a such a public works project. Chinese people began to do the next best thing: boil water to reduce contaminants. At first, only wealthy people, who could afford to boil and drink hot water, and were aware of germ theory, did so, and the vast majority of Chinese continued to get sick from cold water.

Starting in the Republican Era (1911–1949), under the leadership of the Generalissimo Jiang Jieshi (Chiang-Kai Shek), the government began to urge its citizens to only drink hot water as a health precaution, a practice that the People's Republic later adopted. Today, despite the expansion of the clean drinking water supply, the Chinese continue to drink hot water out of habit and preference.

### 新生活運動圖解



'New Life Weekly' encourages people to boil water (1934, Vol. 1 (10). National Digital Library of China)

and included in stir-fries. Other, non-pickled delicacies of northeastern China that Sun referenced include frozen tofu, red-bean buns, and chicken with honey mushrooms. During the short summer months, cold vegetable salads and stir-fries with seasonal vegetables such as eggplant and peppers are also featured.

### A Tradition of Drinking Hot Water

One of the biggest and surprising cultural shocks for many Chinese, including Ruifen Guo, the CI's volunteer teacher, when they go abroad, is the



## Disparate Approaches to Education

Another cultural shock that many Chinese face when coming to the United States is the difference in how Chinese and Americans learn in school, an observation that Professor Jiayi Wang has made as both a student and teacher. The stereotypes we have are that Chinese students are completely academic minded and have a disciplined schedule with little room for self-expression. On the other hand the stereotype of American students are that they are more focused on extra-curricular activities and can be a little lazy, but have more room to develop creativity. In Wang's opinion, "quality" over "quantity" education is paid more attention to in the United States than in China. However, she finds both educational philosophies to be useful in their prospective countries for entry into higher education. Typically in China the National College Entrance Exam has been the only path to getting into university and academic credit had been the only criterion. The problem with this is that Chinese students spend all their time



A typical Chinese classroom

studying, often to the point of exhaustion, just to get that little advantage to score higher on the test and get into a top-tier university. In the US, in addition to academic ability colleges also rely on

recommendations, interviews, and essays and give preference to athletes and those with leadership potential. US colleges also strive for diversity in terms of background of students and geographic distribution. The problem with this approach is that colleges are often asking for too much. According to William Dersiewicz, in *Excellent Sheep: The Miseducation of the American Elite and the Way to a Meaningful Life*, "... our kids must have the qualities of an old aristocrat and a modern technocrat." In China, there have been recent reforms to recognize other non-academic achievements of students. Extra credits, weighed in the college admission process, are now given to students who are excellent in sports, the arts, music, etc. The entrance exams also are more varied in subject matter now and give more weight to the humanities than before. And in the US, there is now a realization that in the push for "quality" education, parents were pushing their children to do too much. Now some parents actually find out what their children's interests are. Of course there is no definitive answer of what makes a good education and this debate will continue into the future.

## Connections to the Land

At "Chinese Corner" we have also given the opportunity to professors from other departments to share their experiences in China with us. In October, director and Pace art professor Charlie Ahearn, and his wife, artist and Pace professor Jane Dickson, presented their documentary "Karamay Art Diary." We have had the privilege of collaborating with Dickson on exhibitions and other art related projects in the past but this was the first time we were graced with the presence of

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both members of this artistic couple. The documentary is set in one of China's most ethnically and religiously diverse regions, Xinjiang. The film delves into the rich modern art and cultures of China's largest autonomous region. Karamay, literally "black oil" in Uighur, is one of the main cities in the

region. Karamay Art Diary follows the junket that Ahearn and Dickson went on in Xinjiang, along with other American artists, as part of a cross-cultural exchange program. The group of artists was shown the natural and artistic treasures the region has to offer, from contemporary art galleries to traditional singing and banquets. The artists also had the opportunity to experience the stark natural beauty of the area, inspiring their own art. The film was a chance to see a part of China not usually seen by most Chinese, let alone Westerners.

Along with teachers at Pace, students are also given the chance to show off their personal experiences. In September, Olga Stein (Pang



Jane Dickson and Charlie Ahearn pose with colleagues outside of Karamay.

Ruixue) gave a talk on her travels to the northeast of China. Stein, one of our star students, first started learning Chinese here less than a year ago, but on her trip she was able to communicate quite well. Stein, of Chinese parentage, grew up in St. Petersburg, in the former USSR, and later moved to the US. However, she always wondered about her extended family still in China and decided recently to go back and visit them, hence her reason for taking classes here. On her trip, she met many long lost relatives and rediscovered her roots. She also explored the harsh history of the Japanese occupation of the area in the 1930s and 1940s, where attacks on the rest of China were

made and chemical warfare was tested on the local population.

Whether raised in China, with Chinese roots, or just visiting all our presenters at Chinese Corner this past fall gave us reason to think about how personal experiences can change our perspective on the world.



The warm welcome and beauty that Pang Ruixue experienced in Northeastern China, such as the Harbin Opera House, seen here, was truly life-changing for her. (Jeremy Thompson, flickr.com)