CoverArt
by Davi Cheng

I love studying Jewish texts, and have been doing so almost every week for the past 18 years at the Torah study class at my shul. Because I am a visual person, I see images as I read these texts. I also love to create art, and along the way I began to create art from Torah texts. I started out just sketching and doodling scenes from the Torah, but when my synagogue Beth Chayim Chadashim (http://www.bcc-la.org) decided to create stained glass windows for the sanctuary, my illustrated design based on the parting of the sea (and other Jewish symbols) was chosen.

More recently, I was honored and excited to be accepted into the *Women of the Book* project – a visual, mid-rashic Torah scroll created by 54 Jewish women artists from around the world. My piece is from the Torah portion Pekudei where the glory of God fills the Mishkan in the form of clouds. It was also heavily inspired by my Hong Kong childhood superhero and images of Chinese clouds. (www.womenofthebook.org)

I've also long had a fascination with calligraphy, especially Chinese characters, its strokes and meanings. For many of my recent pieces, I have used a bamboo brush and ink as my medium, and I have continued with the Chinese and Jewish themes. You can see this in my depiction of the Ram. As it is the Chinese Year of the Ram, I was instantly reminded of the shofar. The sounding the shofar during the Days of Awe resonates deeply with me so I wrote the Chinese character "ram" (羊), drew the head of a ram and a shofar, and noted the three New Years that I celebrate — Jewish, secular, and Chinese.

The cover of this issue of Asian Jewish Life, also shows how I incorporate my identity into my work. I thought about Moses and the burning bush, and thought it would be interesting to put the actual Chinese character for "fire" or "flame" (火) on some branches, and I used the colors of the flame instead of black ink.

I see my art as a means for me to express how the many pieces of me — the Jew, the Chinese, the lesbian — come together and become one. 🕎