



Dear Readers:

*Shana Tova Umetukah!* Much has happened in the months since the last issue. As anticipated in our last issue, over the summer I participated in the Schusterman Foundation's ROI Summit where I met incredible people engaged in Tikkun Olam work worldwide.

Though in the Far East, we as Jews often are removed from the major arteries of Jewish life, but at ROI, Asia was certainly a hot topic. At the summit, Caylee Talpert and Michalya Schonwald Moss discussed their experiences as volunteers in Nepal for Tevel b'Tzedek, while Ira Merzlykh introduced her vision for /clean.in/ a project that will invite Israelis to become eco-volunteers and eco-educators in India. I was also connected with Diarna, which works to preserve access to endangered sites and Jewish history using photographs, video, database technology and digital mapping. Additionally, I met those who work to create contemporary Jewish community, even in the Far East, like Moishe House that includes Moishe House Beijing in their network.

And this issue takes us another whirlwind tour throughout the region. We start with China, taking you to Kaifeng and then to the Kotel to meet Yaakov Wang in Michael Freund's article *From Kaifeng to the Kotel- A Chinese rabbi in the making*. Also out of China, we bring you Susan Blumberg-Kason's interview with Daniel Asa Rose about his book, *Larry's Kidney: Being the True Story of How I Found Myself in China with My Black Sheep Cousin and His Mail-Order Bride, Skirting the Law to Get Him a Transplant—and Save His Life*. And yes, that is really the title – not an excerpt. When I first heard about *Larry's Kidney*, I immediately purchased it on my Kindle on a Sunday morning. It's an absolutely hysterical adventure, sprinkled with commentary and keen observations. By that evening, still unable to put the book down, I knew AJL had to sit down with Rose to hear more.

Also from China, we bring you a very unique perspective in Jocelyn Eikenburg's piece *Chosen Women Choosing Chinese Men - A tradition of love?* Eikenburg is not

Jewish (even though her name does end in 'burg), but she explores the question, are Jewish women more likely to find love with Chinese men than their non-Jewish counterparts?

For another unique perspective, Thoufeek Zakriya, a Muslim from Cochin, India, explains how he became a Hebrew calligrapher in *The Hebrew Calligrapher of Cochin- An Indian Muslim's love for language*.

Also from India, in our Writer's Desk section, author Sophie Judah shares her fictional story, *Customs* with us. *Customs* is the extremely moving tale about a Bene Israel woman and the sometimes harsh realities of living in a world where personal choice is strictly limited by communal and familial custom.

Another creative writer, Eliyahu Enriquez, shares his poetry again with us. Enriquez, a Jewish-Filipino lover of words and spirituality, was also featured in AJL's Summer 2010 issue. His work is highly emotional and complex. Please take the time to explore what he has to say.

This issue then takes you to Japan where our *Best of Asian Jewish Life* feature takes a look at the continuing aid that IsraAid is providing in the aftermath of the quake and tsunami. IsraAid has been involved in humanitarian aid projects around the region, though Japan is their current focus in the Far East.

We also hear from Akira Ohiso, a Jewish-Japanese American. We take a close look at his work, *Surviving. Surviving*, produced by Akira and his wife Ellie, is a beautiful collection of art, language, correspondence, vignettes and photographs that chronicle his conversion. The reader/ viewer steps into his heart and feels what it is like to be a Jew-by-choice.

Last stop before the New Year is Cambodia. AJL Books Editor, Susan Blumberg-Kason, reviews two very different books that bring together Jews that narrowly escaped the Holocaust with Cambodians who narrowly escaped the Khmer Rouge. Finally, writing in from Cambodia's tiny contemporary Jewish community, Craig Gerard looks at life in Phnom Penh in *Playing Jewish Geography in Phnom Penh- The redevelopment of a community*. To read more about Jewish life in Cambodia, have a look again at Craig's article in AJL's Spring 2010 issue, *Raising a Jewish Child in Cambodia*.

Have a good and sweet New Year!

**Erica Lyons**  
Editor-in-Chief

## ASIAN JEWISH LIFE

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**When Past and Present Collide**  
Reshaping the future of the historic Shanghai Ghetto  
**From Kaifeng to the Kotel**  
A Chinese rabbi in the making



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