

会员通讯

Newsletter of Chinese Historians in the United States, Inc.

Special Bulletin, Summer 2008

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On June 21 and June 22, 2008, Chinese Historians in the U.S. and the History Department at Shanghai University jointly conducted an academic conference on the campus of Shanghai University. The theme of the conference is “Historical Studies in Retrospect: Reflection and Future Prospect.” About two dozens of CHUS members participated in the event and presented their work at the conference. A roughly equal number of our colleagues from major research institutions and universities throughout China also shared their research with us during the conference.



Professor GAO Zheng presents his paper

The format of the conference conformed to the norms widely used in academic gatherings in the U.S. and was hence familiar to CHUS members. There were a total of twelve panels, each presided by a chair, a commentator and three to four panelists. Each panelist was allocated 15 minutes for presentation, followed by another 15 minutes for comments, response, and questions from audience. If there were any differences between this conference and a typical academic conference in the U.S., it was the enormous hospitality exhibited by the host - the officials at Shanghai University, the Dean of the College of

Humanities and the colleagues in the Department of History. Shangda’s luxuriously equipped conference rooms and the availability of the conference papers to the participants (made possible by the hard work and generosity of the organizers) also made this conference compare favorably.

More substantial than the good meals, courtesy lodging and the impressive physical environment of the Shanghai University campus, however, is the fact that the discussion of issues and exchange of ideas were quite frank and honest among the scholars who came to the conference, in both formal sessions and in private conversations. CHUS members may have taken academic freedom for granted, but it takes moral and professional courage for our colleagues from the other side of the Pacific to be unconcerned about “political correctness” or deviating from official line. Both sides exhibited genuine interests in each other’s work, eagerness to learn from other people’s research and willingness to listen to different voices and opinions.



Professor NI Ting Presents her paper

The conference is the first academic “joint venture” between CHUS and an academic establishment in China. As such, its successful conclusion is particularly encouraging. For those who have been following the development of the event, the gathering represents a culmination of years of hard work that involved a great deal of preparations, fund raising efforts, negotiations, and logistic considerations. To those individuals and organizations who contributed to the success of this conference



Professor SUN Yi chairs a panel

and to all CHUS members who supported the conference, we wish to express our sincere gratitude. Without the collective efforts, the conference would not have been such a success. As an indication of the positive impact of the conference, CHUS and Shanghai University are already in discussion for organizing a similar conference next year.

The conference has also led to some other promising developments, which we want to bring to members' attention. First, the publishers at Shanghai People's Press have expressed a strong interest in publishing the conference proceedings. Currently, CHUS, Shanghai University and Shanghai People's Press are in the process of working out the specific details. CHUS members who presented their work at the conference and are interested in publishing their

papers in this edited volume should be prepared to make editorial changes to their submissions. Needless to say, some of the submissions are already quite polished, but others will need revisions in order to be included in this book.

In addition, CHR editor, WANG Xi, and CHUS president, YAO Ping, are in negotiation with a publisher in China interested in publishing a book about CHUS members. More specifically, this publisher wants to put together a book that may shed light on the relationship between identity and scholarship. He wants to do so by profiling CHUS members' personal lives and intellectual journeys and how their identities and experiences abroad have shaped their scholarship. At this point, the publisher envisions this book to be a collection of select individual autobiographies. Professors WANG Xi and YAO Ping are working with the publisher on CHUS behalf to iron out the submission guidelines and will share further information with members when it becomes available.