

# History of the Chinese Garden

Contributed by ori  
úáú, 12 äääñé 2006

It had all begun in one of the classes held by Lin, the university's Chinese teacher. It had been autumn 2001 in the first-year Chinese course, comprised of students who came to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem to study East Asian studies. The class was relatively small, 30 students or so, but Lin had immediately sensed the positive energies of the young students sitting in front of her. After making fun together of the language's awkward tones, and after an hour of studying Chinese characters, the teacher did the same thing she had done in every first-year Chinese class since 1988 (the year she had begun teaching): teach the students a Chinese song called "The Moon Represents my Love". Like all the students before them, the students instantly fell in love with the song and after hearing half of it they already began singing along with the Chinese singer and along with their teacher, whose heart was moved by her adorable students. There was a short, blissful silence after the song had ended, as if everybody needed a moment to pull their soaring minds back down and get back to studying. The teacher whispered to herself: "Perhaps I'll email you the song? But the file is too large...". A student, sitting in the back row, gently said; "We can put the song on the Internet!". The name of that student was Amotz Weiss, now a good friend of Lin!

Three or four days after the lesson Amotz sent Lin a website he had created named "The Chinese Garden". Since then, Amotz spent hours and hours with Lin, showing her a new world she had never known existed. Amotz, who was not a person of many words, often taught Lin "without speaking". Through his silence and inner peace Lin had learned from Amotz (the best teacher she had ever had) about the Internet, computer programming and website building. Every time they encountered a problem they worked long and hard, and when the problem was resolved Lin would leap with joy. Amotz, on the other hand, would remain calm, or at most would say a couple of words: "Ok, good", which would make Lin burst in laughter every time. Lin doesn't remember how many times the Garden was "down". No matter what, Amotz was always there for her throughout four years and the Garden, which had initially contained only stale exercises by Lin, had begun to bloom: among the flowers were forums, chats, personal messages, movie clips, music... Amotz, who was a brilliant student, had studied Law in addition to East Asian Studies. He was Lin's student, but from him Lin had learnt that you can teach and be taught "without words", one of the most magnificent gifts Lin could ever wish for. In 2004 Amotz completed his studies and entered another phase of his life. Without many words, he knows that Lin blesses him, wherever he is, and Lin knows he'll still be there for her when she'd need his help.

Lin had done her best to take care of the Garden without busying Amotz. When Lin had built her first site alone (in English) she had felt she had gotten the most glorious gift when Amotz said to her: "way to go!".

Right after Amotz left the university Heaven had sent another gift to Lin, a very intelligent student named Yossi Na'ar. Yossi found a better place on the Internet and they had transferred the Garden to there. Like Amotz, he had sent Lin a complete new Garden, which was a very moving surprise. Yossi gave Lin many wonderful ideas, one of them being encouraging students to write in Chinese on the Internet. After several language lessons Yossi left, but he was there for Lin whenever she had needed his assistance.

On October 2005, when Lin had returned from her long summer break, she was devastated to find out that the Chinese Garden has been ruined. What's worse, she forgot to back up all the stories which her former students had sent her. Lin was very sad, she felt bad for not listening to Amotz's advice, but fortunately, because of his concern, he had saved most of Lin's student's files and clips. For several days Lin was glued on to the computer. Nearing the end of her work, Lin encountered a technical problem which prevented her from returning the Garden to the Internet. Amotz was in a phase in his life in which Lin did not permit herself to disturb him, with Yossi she hasn't been in touch for half a year and didn't even know where he was. Nonetheless, Lin sent a hopeful message to Yossi which was answered immediately. In the very same day Yossi had solved the problem and the Garden was once again running. Amotz sent her the following words after seeing the new Garden: "Good makeover, way to go". Had he seen Lin leaping with joy, he probably would have said in his quiet voice: Ok, good".

Why is the site named "The Chinese Garden"? The reason for this is very simple. In Lin's eyes every student is a rare flower. Flowers grant their beauty and fragrance to whoever passes by, without asking "do you want it or not?". In their last class with her, Lin used to say to her students words which were without logic, as they come from the heart: "I'll keep loving you like I did during the three years we have spent together. Perhaps in a different way, but I will keep loving you". One of Lin's ways to love the students who have completed their studies is loving the new students - in this way Lin "keeps in touch" with all the wonderful people who had been with her in the University. Perhaps there really isn't a need to stay in touch? At least not in the ordinary sense? Do you need to keep in touch with the mysterious beauty of the moon? With the sun's heavenly light? With the flowers' generous fragrance? There connection is there whether you

"keep" it or not. The Garden came about from a song of love, and as such is everybody's garden.

Love,

Lin.