

## **Trip to Shandong Province, China August 20 – September 4, 2009**

It started out as a couple of missionary kids from the Swedish Baptist Union wanting to return to their roots in Qingdao, Gaomi and Jiaozhou. As word got out, several others wanted to join in this pilgrimage. Alice Rinell-Hermansson (Lally) and Marianne Jansson Hagbarth were the initial instigators! Then Bertil Strutz and Barbro Strutz Kärnbo decided to join in, as well as Barbro's daughter Eva and her husband Örjan Renström. Word got to the US and I, Margareta Rinell Jonell, decided that I would join the group and then Carey Rinell Holmquist, son of my cousin, Doris Rinell Holmquist Brown, thought it sounded like something he'd like to do! In the end we were 8 travelers. And what a time we had!

I flew from Denver, via Los Angeles and Seoul, Korea. Korean Air is a very fine airline with good service. Flying into Qingdao was quite amazing. The city is beautiful from the air. Most of the old architecture with red roofs seems to have been carried over to some of the modern buildings – lots of red tile. The city looks very large and spread out from the air – and it is!

My luggage arrived in one piece! I found a taxi and the drive through crazy traffic took about an hour to the hotel. I was the first to arrive, so had a few hours to make myself at home in the hotel. The rest of the group from Sweden arrived around 5.30 PM.

We met at the Home Inn Hotel on Tai Ping Jiao 3 Lu, No. 2 in Qingdao. It was a modest, rather inexpensive hotel where we were the only foreign guests. The arrangements had been made by Martha Dong, a friend of Marianne's. After a long day of travel, we met in the hotel restaurant for jiaozi and then turned in early.

Sunday, August 23

After a hotel breakfast Carey, Lally and I set off to go to Christ Church for the morning service. The place was packed, so we weren't able to get a seat inside. Lally sat on her little stool and eventually an usher gave us small stools to sit on. There were many people standing or sitting outside. The service consisted mostly of the sermon and a few hymns. We learned later that they had had 30 minutes of singing before the service officially began.

Rev. Dong Yan Ling preached. I had met him in 1999. We met with him after the service. He had been part of a delegation that had gone to Sweden a year or so ago. Bertil had also been at the service.

After the service we began our trek to the places that were significant to our family through old Qingdao. We saw the building behind the church where Bud and Doris first met, as well as the Tsingtao American High School and elementary school. They are

located on the same hill as the church. John attended the elementary school and Lally attended TAS for two years.

We walked to see Faberkrankenhaus – the birth hospital of all us Rinell kids as well as most of the other missionary kids. This is still a Qingdao hospital. We naturally took some pictures of “our” window where we first saw the light of day!

Carey and I walked up to the old Baptist Church where Bud began his Youth for Christ meetings when he was a Marine. This is now a youth hostel – Old Church Youth Hostel. The outside of the building still has the large pillars and looks like a church.

We saw the old German style governor’s building and also Park Pension where our family stayed when on trips to Tsingtao. This building is located right on the water front.

The four of us found a restaurant where we ate noodles. Great food! Many others in the restaurant ate seafood and left piles of shells on the tables. After lunch Lally and Bertil headed back to the hotel and Carey and I continued our walk! It was a very hot and humid day, but we walked out on the pier with hundreds of Chinese tourists. We were stopped many times by people who wanted pictures taken with us. On the pier we bought a can of Tsingtao beer to prove that we had been there! We bought a ticket to go inside the pavilion to see some underwater creatures. That proved to be nothing to see – but we did find some souvenirs!

We continued walking along the beach and saw thousands of people swimming and collecting shells and shell fish. Qingdao is a very popular tourist destination for the Chinese, but we seemed to be two of very few westerners roaming the city.

In the evening Martha Dong came to take us to her church. Unable to get three taxis we hopped on a city bus for 1 Yuan a piece (13 cents). Her church is quite a long distance from our hotel, and a long walk at the other end of the bus line. The church was packed. The minister, another Rev. Dong, was a very dynamic young speaker and he really held the attention of his very young congregation. The singing was fantastic. They had a 20 voice choir of young people, dressed in white robes. Great voices!

After church we were hungry! Beside the church there was a “hole in the wall” (or basement!) restaurant. We were shown a rather dingy room in the basement. We ordered a couple noodle bowls and some soup. Not real tasty, but it satisfied our hunger.

A taxi ride home and we were ready for a long night’s sleep!

Monday, August 24

This morning Lally and Marianne set off to spend the day with the Gong family. Pastor Gong had been killed in 1946 in Wangtai and his son, Dr. Gong, was going to talk about his life after his father’s death. Martin Jansson (Marianne’s father) wrote a book about

this incident and Marianne has wanted to learn the rest of the story of what happened to the family.

So, Carey and I set off (in the wrong direction!!) to find our family's Iltis Huk house. We walked through a park by our hotel and saw many bridal couples posing for photographs. We continued our search – and finally found what we were sure was the correct property. It just happens that it is within two blocks of our hotel! But we had a nice walk anyway!

The old house is not there – and the whole block is now a military sanatorium. We walked the whole property and could only imagine how great the house must have been for our family. In the corner of the property were some large rocks (not there during our time). The property was beautifully landscaped with shrubs, flowers and trees. We later learned that several blocks had been torn down and new buildings built as part of the military sanatorium. Because of the war I may only have been at Iltis Huk one time and I have no memories of the place. The amazing thing was that “our house” is located just two blocks from our hotel and it is just a couple of blocks from the beautiful beach.

Carey and I then took a cab to find a tourist bureau to see if we could find out how to get to Qufu to see Confucius' temple. The office was not very helpful because it wasn't really the right tourist bureau. We continued to the train station to see if we could find information about trains, but the lines were very long, so we gave up on that thought.

We found an outdoor restaurant between the station and the beach and ordered jiaozi! Although the place didn't look very sanitary we enjoyed our lunch! The second meal with jiaozi! So far we think that the jiaozi we make taste better than the ones we have eaten here!

We were in search of Chinese souvenirs – and walked up and down many streets and found nothing worth buying. Qingdao doesn't cater to foreign tourists. There are many Chinese tourists in town for the Tsingtao Beer festival and they seem to like to buy beads, cheap jewelry and sea shells dyed in many colors. Most of the things sold along the beach were gaudy in our eyes! Carey and I began thinking about a real tourist shop that would cater to westerners – post cards, real Chinese things, brocade, silk, damascene, books about China, etc. etc.

We sat at a bank where Carey needed to take out some money – however when he finally got up to the window they told him they could not help him. So, we went down to another bank where he had no trouble getting his needs met! It was hot so we made a brief stop at McDonalds for a chocolate shake and a Coke. We walked up to the Catholic Church but were not able to get in. Outside the church were many wedding couples having their pictures taken in very artificial poses. The wedding dresses were mostly ivory or rather dingy looking white and we found out that there are many wedding photo shops that specialize in taking pictures of couples long before the wedding. The pictures are then enlarged and displayed at the wedding.

We went home for a brief rest and then we met up with the group to eat dinner. Together with Lally we went to see if the church was still standing about a block from the Iltis Huk house. We found it – and I think it was an emotional “find” for Lally. She said, “I went to Sunday School here and even sold bricks to raise money for the church!” Of course we took many pictures! The main entrance to the church had been built in, but the side steps led to the old sanctuary. The floor of the sanctuary was slanted toward the front. Today the sanctuary is used as storage for the military sanatorium. A young military man let us see the inside – row upon row of metal shelves with sheets and other supplies. As Lally told him that this was originally a church, he seemed quite interested.

We ate dinner across the street from the beach. It was an outdoor restaurant covered only by umbrellas. The host who helped us order was “on top of” Lally – closer than a glove fits on a hand!! In spite of his forwardness (to western standards) we ended up with an awesome meal of skewered barbecued pork, barbecued shrimp on a scower and a vegetable dish. They also served delicious freshly baked bread. The meal cost us about 35 Yuan (\$5) each, including 5 bottles of Tsingtao beer! We’ll have to go there again!

When we returned to the hotel, Mrs. Gong and her elder daughter, Guan Qing Mei, were there. They had brought us a watermelon, peaches, apples, tomatoes, and grapes the night before, which we had split up among us. Tonight they wanted to have us go to Huangdao to see Mrs. Gong’s brother, Gong Shou Dao, who also has a history in Wantai. It was decided that the group may go there on the day when I leave.

Tuesday, August 25

After our breakfast of pickles (about 8 different kinds), small boaboa, noodles, veggies and tea, we left for a full day of sightseeing in Qingdao with Rev. Dong of the Christ Church. He came with a 15 passenger bus and spent the whole day with us. A very generous gift to us.

First he took us to the old part of the city. We went up to the sightseeing mountain with the red domes. The views were spectacular! We hiked up to the top of the dome and saw Qingdao in a 360 degree bird’s eye view. Qingdao never is very clear because of the ocean, but it was a good day to see the sights all the same

Then we went to the Catholic Church, where one of the church leaders met us and told about the church. The inside of the church was very ornate and the paintings were done in very vivid colors. We decided to sing a song – How Great Thou Art, in Swedish – and the acoustics were incredible. The two crosses on the church towers had been removed during the Cultural Revolution, but replaced in 1983. Outside the church we saw many bridal couples having their pictures taken! Quite the fad.

Then off to see the Poet’s Park – Baihuayuan Garden. This was the site of the international cemetery where Grandfather JA Rinell was buried, as well as a Strutz family baby, Erik Thong and some others that our families knew. Lally remembered the funeral procession for Farfar entering by a wrought iron gate. We don’t know the exact location

of the grave, but feel good that the area is a lovely park. At one time the authorities wanted to build houses on the property, but the Chinese people did not want to live on an old graveyard. Carey picked up some rocks (he gave one to me) and I picked a few leaves from a maple tree that I will press.

Then it was time for the Olympic Sailing arena. It was basically a long pier, but lovely with all the flags and Olympic emblem decorating the area. This is in the new part of Qingdao – this whole modern part of the city has been built in the last 20 years. We strolled out on the pier to get better views of the Qingdao coastline.

Time for lunch! And what a lunch it was! We had a private room with a very formally set table. We must have enjoyed at least 25 different courses. First they came in with a variety of pickles, vegetables, beans, peanuts in a wonderful sauce, seaweed, octopus, sashimi on a beautiful platter etc. Then they brought a large piece of beef grilled with a delicious marinade – to be eaten with a knife and fork. That was followed by several other varieties of dishes. Rev. Dong kept on “gambei-ing” us with Qingdao beer, thanking us for coming, for our mission’s part in the old days, for our interest in the Chinese church movement, etc. Very formal!

Rev. Dong Yan Liang is the vice president of the Shandong Christian Council and the President of the Qingdao Christian Council. He is obviously a high-up leader in the Three Self Church. Last time when I met him he always had a political person with him. This time we spent the whole day with only him. He is well known in Qingdao – which we observed on our next stop!

Rev. Dong asked if we would like to drive out to Laoshan. Of course we did! This is the home of the Daoist Temple. The drive to Laoshan goes along the coast where we could see fishing boats and fish nets laid out in the ocean. It takes a little over an hour to drive there from Qingdao. Since being here 10 years ago, they had made some changes in the traffic allowed on the mountain. Rev. Dong spent some time talking with the parking authorities where all the buses were required to stop – and before long our bus was headed up the mountain with a special pass in the window. In fact, when we approached the temple, the gates of the temple opened for us and we drove right into the main temple area! Evidently, Dong knows one of the monks here.

The temple and surrounding area, nestled among trees on the mountain side, felt very mysterious – the humidity was high and it was hot – it seemed like we could watch the moss grow! Of special importance are the 2100 year old trees on the temple grounds. Many large and small buildings were the homes of various gods. Many people lit incense and worshiped. We were surrounded by hundreds of tourists and a large group of red-clad Canon camera representatives.

After the temple visit we continued to Dong’s childhood home village in the mountains. This drive took us on a winding coastal road where we could see the rows and rows of tea bushes growing. A very pretty sight which reminded me of Japan. Laoshan tea is considered to be the best in all of China.

We drove straight to Dong's childhood church in Nanbeiling. Dong's father, a deacon in the church, met us there. Mr. Dong Sr. is very proud of his son being a pastor. Their family has been Christians for 6-7 generations. A Presbyterian missionary, Hunter, came 138 years ago and began this church. Many people in this village are Christians and the crime rate is very low. Rev. Dong said that people don't lock their doors because it is so safe in this village.

Then it was time to eat again! We stopped at the Jusco department store, in the restaurant area, and sat in the "show window" where people on the outside watched this group of hungry westerners devour soup and jiaozi! Dong kept on ordering more jiaozi – so that finally he had to take some home in a plastic "doggy bag".

Dong left those of us who had energy to shop at the Jusco store, while he returned to the hotel with those of us who preferred to go to the hotel. Carey and I went shopping. Carey was looking for a backpack and both of us thought that we might find some souvenirs. The only thing we found were some Tsingtao Beer festival t-shirts for Dave and Kevin. I also found 2 panda t-shirts for Maia and Alexandria. Otherwise we were disappointed because we have seen nothing real Chinese that you would find in a tourist city like Beijing. Carey and I definitely think we could do a bang up business by developing tourist items that people would want to have from Qingdao!!

Wednesday, August 26

Breakfasts are getting a wee bit boring! I toasted some bread for a change and ate a hard boiled egg, but will probably go back to my regular Chinese meal with boaboa, pickles, noodles, and watermelon tomorrow!

We all decided that we wanted to go to a temple where there are some stores hoping to find a souvenir or two! The temple was interesting. Many people were there to offer prayers with huge candles and incense. One room was filled with various gods for each of the twelve astrological signs. One room was for fortune telling; one room was for individual prayers.

There were some stores. One thing I found was a yellow tiger or dog, very colorfully painted, that was similar to a toy I had as a child. I bought it! Also I found a cloth stuffed tiger that was also like one of my old toys. One store sold paper cuts and I found a framed horse that I bought since I am born in the year of the horse.

All of us then took two taxis to the Zhongshanli shopping street – but we ended up in two different places! Carey, Eva and I ended up at the Qingdao Arts and Crafts Co (where we were supposed to go!) – and the others ended up north and east of there. After a few phone calls back and forth we found each other.

We had lunch in another hole in the wall! We ate veggies and sweet sour pork and rice. We were all very satisfied – again for about 20 Yuan each. We certainly aren't spending money on food!

We separated to do our own shopping. Carey and I went up and down, aisle upon aisle, of stores that sold pearls, jade, shells, beads, luggage, watches etc. But there were hardly any “Chinese” things – although everything there was made in China.

I did make a few purchases with the help of Carey’s expert bargaining power! I found a watch that tells two times (good for when I travel); a red white and blue small scarf (that I’ve looked for for years!); 3 little brocade outfits for James and Jessica Fischer’s 3 new babies; and then a black pearl necklace and earrings to match. I was happy with my purchases.

Then the dark clouds opened up and it poured! It took a long time for us to find a taxi, but finally, drenched, we were able to get home! Humidity was 100% on this day!!!

One other thing we saw that caught my attention was skateboards that bent in the middle and had one wheel on each half rather than two wheels. I filmed some boys who were riding on them and asked them where you could buy them. They showed me a stand where a woman was selling them. The boys (my grandkids, that is!) would love these!

We ate dinner at a nearby restaurant – then went to the beach to get some sand to take home! Qingdao sand! From “our” beach!

Two other ladies are joining our group so Lally sat and waited for their arrival. They are Maria Ernestam and Lina Forss. Both are authors. Maria wants to write about Erik and Thora Thong because she is distantly related to them. She writes fiction and wants to incorporate their story in her new novel which may be called “På andra sidan solen” (On the other side of the sun).

Tomorrow we anticipate an interesting day as we will be visiting Gaomi and Jiaozhou, two of our mission stations.

Thursday, August 27

The big day of memories! We were picked up in a van, arranged by Martha, and off we went! Our first stop was Gaomi, an hour and a half ride. The hardest part was getting out of the Qingdao traffic. The highways are in good shape and not too busy.

At the Gaomi church we were met by Rev. Zhang and a city representative (a party representative). Rev. Zhang is in his 40’s, who seems to have a lot on the ball. We were first welcomed with water, fruits and peanuts. The fruits, peaches and plums, were as hard as rock! They told us about their church and all the programs they have.

Their old church is located right beside the new one, which is in the process of being built. The new church costs 7 million Yuan – and it is already paid for by the members. They have 10,000 members. The new sanctuary will seat 2500. Currently they have

three services – 5.30 AM, 7 AM and 5 PM. The new church has a parking garage on the street level – and the sanctuary is on the second floor.

The church is also building a new old folks' home for 50 residents. We went to see that site as well. They had brought the 99 year old Pastor Li in a wheel chair to meet us. He had worked with Martin Jansson – so it was very touching to see Marianne greet him. He is both blind and deaf – so I don't know if he had any idea what was happening. He gave no reaction. He is the only resident now in the home and the church members take care of him because his family is not able to do so. Ten years ago when we were here he was still preaching every Sunday!

The new building surrounds the old Gaomi missionary residence where both the Janssons and the Thongs had lived. This is where the Thongs lived when Thora got the word that her husband, Erik, had passed away. He had been accidentally shot and was recovering. But when he stood up to go back home, he had an embolism which killed him. Imagine the shock when Thora thought they were bringing him home healthy, and finding out that he had passed away. She was left with their two year old son, Carl Erik. We were able to walk around in the old part of the building and saw their old rooms and veranda.

The church also has a bible school with 24 students. Most students come from the country side, so they live in one part of the building and have classrooms in another.

We were then taken to the countryside to see an old dilapidated church, surrounded by tall overgrown weeds and some vegetables. The choir director woman who followed us said that she had come to school in this building. This church was built by a Swedish pastor.

We were then taken to a restaurant for lunch. At the table we found out that two of the men who had been with us were from the “party” from Jiaozhou!

The visit to Gaomi was over and we headed to Jiaozkou, a very different atmosphere!

We were immediately taken to the government building where we were met by Ms. Zheng Wen, the United Front Work Department. She has only had this job for one year. She had a cute little 23 year old interpreter, Eileen, who was new to the job. She was one of 4500 applicants for the job! We were videotaped during our whole stay in Jiaozhou and one can wonder what they did with these tapes!! On the screen in the official room they had put up a sign that read “Welcome Lally and Swedish friends”!

Ms. Zheng told us all about the wonderful things that Jiaozkou has done to become a modern international city. Lots of propaganda – especially about freedom of religion. She said that there are five major religions: Protestants, Catholics, Buddhists, Daoists and Muslims. There are approximately 719,000 people in the Jiaozhou area, including 13 towns and 5 communities. She stated that there is one Three Self church and 29 preaching places. Jiaozhou is going to be an international city.



We were taken upstairs to see a display of future plans for the city. There was one display of old pictures of old Jiaozhou that were taken by our dad, Egron Rinell. No credit was given! They showed us a very impressive video of the city plans.

This visit took a long time and we were anxious to see what we wanted to see – the church and our property! We drove to the church and were welcomed by Pastor Wang and Chung Yu Whau who had been a teacher at our Rui Hua school. Later Chung became a doctor and was now an elder in the church. The choir was there – dressed in their robes – singing for us. They had set a table with tea and fruit. Pastor Wang was a bit too jovial and demonstrative! He really seems to have to impress the party boys!

After a group picture outside the church we tried to get away to see Oscar and Hellen's old house! Carey and I scurried around to take pictures. We asked if we could see the inside – and we were allowed to go in through what used to be the kitchen. Then we saw the old dining room and living room. All other areas were blocked off! Bertil, who had also lived in the house, and Lally felt right at home. It was great to get into the house. We took many pictures and I picked up some stones from the yard!

Pastor Wang evidently felt that he needed to give each of us a gift. So he gave each of us a two volume book which we thought was Christian literature. We only found out later that they were books on general health and hygiene!! Not very useful for us!

We made a stop at the north and south man-made lakes that are being built and filled with water. Huge fountains will one day be spraying water up in the air. The site was quite impressive and I can imagine that it will be a Jiaozhou sightseeing destination. We were also told that there is a bridge in the process of being built between Qingdao and Jiaozhou and another city west of Jiaozhou. On the way home we saw the beginnings of this bridge. A tunnel is also being built under the bay. The bridge will make travel time between Qingdao and Jiaozhou 20 minutes! The old Jiaozhou is no more!

We were taken to a very nice restaurant for dinner – not that we were hungry since we had had a big lunch in Gaomi. Ms. Zheng, who had not gone to the church with us, hosted this meal. Again we had about 30 courses, and I can't even begin to describe all the food. Cold plates with nuts, pickles, raw vegetables, sea food, meat etc. Then many warm dishes such as whole fish, snails, pork, mushrooms, and jiaozi. One specialty in this region is sea slugs, often served in a soup. Not my personal favorite!! Ms. Zheng kept toasting us throughout the meal.

Lally was presented with a beautiful book with old pictures from Jiaozhou – and all the pictures, with the exception of maybe five, were pictures from Egron's albums. Several years ago Lally had scanned in his pictures and made CD's and sent them to some people in Jiaozhou. These were now in a publication – however, no credit was given to the photographer!

The day in Jiaozhou was good, however we were always under the leadership of the party folks. No church representatives were even invited to the dinner. This was our “official Jiaozhou day!

We were tired and a little frustrated after our long day, so we enjoyed taking it easy in the van on the way home.

Friday, August 28

At 9 AM we met with James Kuster, who is a “missionary” here in Qingdao. They are under Campus Crusade, but work under the umbrella of working with families and human resources. James and Kari and their children met Meilynn and Dodo in Washington last month and that’s how we connected with them. James is very interested in the old China and had many questions for Lally who could tell him about Qingdao and missions in the old days. Their three children attend an International School in Qingdao. They have lived here for 7 years.

At 11.30 AM Pastor Dong’s driver came to pick us up for lunch. More food! We were taken to a very beautiful restaurant. It was our group and 4 Chinese men. Three of them were pastors who had made a trip to Sweden last year. They had three party people with them on that trip! Rev. Gao was one of the pastors and he seemed very nice and sincere. He loved Sweden and even Swedish food!!

Again we had a huge meal. We began with goose liver on toast – not my personal favorite and not very Chinese! The courses kept coming – two types of whole fish, several cooked and raw vegetables, cold sashimi, clams, snails, cooked peanuts, candied “svart rötter” with sesame seeds, chicken feet, raw green onions, soup, and fried rice at the end! Again Tsingtao beer and tea!

Then Pastor Gao drove us to town for shopping. We ended up at the same place where Carey and I had shopped the other day – so we decided to go to the Shandon art center. It was a beautiful and expensive state-run store! Marianne and Maria both bought Chinese silk dresses. Carey shopped and I looked. Lally and Marianne went back to the hotel. Maria, Lina, Carey and I shopped along the main road up from the pier. I made a CD of my pictures to make sure I don’t lose any! Evidently I didn’t have my camera on the right setting so I hope the pictures will turn out okay in my Shutterfly album I plan on making.

In the evening the four of us went to the Tsingtao International Beer Festival. It was wild!! Lots of singing on many stages and snake dancers too! Maria bought 20 masks for a masquerade party she’s having this fall. All for 120 Yuan. She was thrilled! We ate some baozu and a pitcher of beer – that was our supper!

In the Tsingtao beer pavilion we finally found some Tsingtao souvenirs. I bought a shirt for John. Carey went gung-ho and bought some pitchers, t-shirts, a hat and some glasses. We took a cab home -- tired after a lot of walking!

Saturday, August 29

Our hotel breakfasts are getting a little old!!! Some of our group isn't feeling great. Marianne's cold seems better, but Barbro and Örjan had upset stomachs and Barbro didn't join us for the rest of the day's activities.

Lally and Carey took Lina and Maria around to the old city and to the park (graveyard) to see the sights that were important to our mission history. Maria needed to see the burial place of Erik Thong for the book she is writing.

The rest of us, or actually Marianne, Eva, Örjan, and I, went to the home of Martha's parents for a full day of preparing jiaozi. Mrs. Gong had already prepared the dough and the meat fillings. I learned the "new and faster" way of putting jiaozi together with just a squeeze of the hands. I really like my old way better and they turn out prettier!! I did learn how to roll each piece of dough individually with a small rolling pin. You have to flatten the dough with your hand, then use the rolling pin to make it flatter – with your left hand you keep turning the dough to make it round. The middle needs to be thicker and the sides need to be thinner! I was able to do it, but my large rolling pin is faster, although not as authentic!

While we were making the jiaozi, the uncle – Gong Shou Dao – was preparing many other dishes. He is an amazing cook and he prepared 8 other dishes, including a fried whole fish, a goat meat and vegetable dish, two different kinds of leek with chicken and pork, and a potato dish with shrimp. Everything was very tasty.

The jiaozi – and the other food – were the best we have had on this trip. It is amazing how much good food could come out of that small kitchen. The mother, Mrs. Gong, kept on filling our plates with jiaozi until we were ready to pop!

The Gong family lives in a very nice and large apartment. They had four rooms and a kitchen. The father, Guan Feng Gang, worked for the communist party and it was obvious that they take care of their own. He does a lot of painting and he showed off some of his work.

At the end of the meal they gave each of us gifts – a framed picture and a jade necklace. The Swedes gave each of our hosts a gift as well.

After eating watermelons we came back home – very full. I began writing my journal, and then Rev. Dong came up with gifts for each of us. He gave us each a beautiful box of Laoshan tea, some Laoshan pears and grapes. The Chinese are so generous with their time, food and gifts.

Some of us had a bowl of egg drop soup and fruit in the dining room. Lina and Maria joined us. They will be leaving for home at 5.30 AM tomorrow. We said our good byes.

I need to explain the Gong family – and write down their names and “family tree”. Their daughter, who calls herself Martha, is Guan Qing Zhu. She is the one who has made all the arrangements for us through Marianne – hotel and taxis for long trips.

Father = Guan Feng Gang (had worked for the government)

Mother = Gong Xiu Lan (her uncle was Pastor Gong who was killed in '46)

Martha = Guan Qing Zhu (daughter)

Sister of Martha = Guan Qing Mei (she has a 20 year old daughter)

Uncle = Gong Shuo Dao (Mother's brother)

The old grandfather of the Gongs was a pharmacist and was quite well-to-do. He was one of the first Chinese Christians in our mission. He found some property for the mission to buy. When we were in the home of Gong Xiu Lan she became very emotional when “farmor” was brought up and said we could not talk about her. It was never clear to us why we should not talk about her.

Pastor Gong Zing Johng was one of three children of the old grandfather, as was the father (or mother??) of Gong Xiu Lan. Pastor Gong was killed in 1946 together with 8 other people in Wangtai. Not all 9 were Christians, but several were. Wangtai was a very negative place for Christians at that time. At his death he left three children – a son who was just a few weeks old, a 2 year old son who became Dr. Gong, and another daughter who was about 7 years old at the father's death. The youngest child died within a short time of his father's death.

Dr. Gong was blacklisted during the Cultural Revolution. He left a wife and child and fled from Jiaozhou in order to protect his family. He went to a place near Harbin where he remarried and had three daughters. He later returned to Jiaozhou where he has a medical clinic together with two of his daughters.

Sunday, August 30

On Sunday morning at 8.30 AM Lally, Carey and I were met by Judy Xiu and her sister Annie, who is a doctor. They were going to take us to Jiaozhou to visit some of our house church friends.

Judy Xiu has an interesting story. She became a Christian very recently. She read some of Yin Ying's books and became interested in the past history of missionaries in Jiaozhou. Her grandmother had told her stories about our dad Egron and uncle Oscar. She has had phone and email contact with Yin Ying in San Francisco. She is in her 30'ies. In a very short time she has learned very much about people involved in the house church movement and had contacted many of our old friends for us to meet.

Our first stop, after some searching, was at the home of the only still living teacher from our Rui Hua school, Gao Wei Yi. Dr. Gong also was there, as well as Mr. Gao's son and daughter-in-law. Mr. Gao belongs to the house church and this being Sunday they had just had a service in this very room. We sat in a large room and they served tea and fruit.

Mr. Gao was very open about talking about the Three Self church that “serves two masters”, the party and God. He has very definite views. He preached a little sermon to us about putting our faith in one God. Mr. Gao has cancer of the esophagus, but seemed to have energy while we were there. He had taught music and chemistry in the Rui Hua school. He sang for us from a Christmas program he had led in 1945 – singing each part and directing with his hands! He was thankful for mother who had taught music and led a choir in the church. I gave him a CD collection of hymns. I hope he has a CD player! He did speak some English. After a prayer and a group photo session we left for Rui Hua School, No. 1 High School of Jiaozhou. We were met by the Principal Mr. Liu. However, because we needed to see the school with the others in our group who were coming later, we went to lunch first.

They took us to the same restaurant where the “party” had taken us before – even the same room. Again we were given a huge meal – sea slugs and all! I gave my slug to Feng who appreciated it more than me!

What was nice about the lunch was that, in addition to three officials from the school, we also had Fengs with us. Feng Tian Min (or as he was called before, Feng Yua Han) is the oldest brother of the Feng family. Their father was a teacher at the school during our time in China. Also Feng Yua Nan, my playmate, and his wife were there. Elder Feng’s grand-daughter and her husband, both who work for the city government, were also there. They were probably in their 20’s.

Principal Liu was very animated – and perhaps a little filled with beer – kept on cheering us for various things – thanking our family and mission for contributions made, etc.

We went back to see the very impressive school. We were taken to a conference room on the third floor – on the table set with bottled water and fruit – was also a Chinese and Swedish flag. We had to wait for the other group (Marianne, Eva, Orjan, Bertil and Barbro) to come.

Some information about the No 1 High School of Jiaozhou:

Principal – Liu Wen Zheng

4000 students

The highest three grades of high school

In 1894 there were only 5 students

Moved to new campus in 2002

Property is 300 acres

340 teachers and staff

In keeping with the old traditions of Rui Hua they have many famous graduates

Japanese occupation was the most difficult time

Under Principal Wang, no Japanese language or culture was taught, nor Japanese flag flown above the school

School is known for its good teaching in Shandong

Good relations between school and S. Korea and the US

Have had exchange students and teachers to these countries

In the 100 year old tradition they want to do better and better  
Reminded us of the Rinells and others who made education possible in China

Other information about education:

800,000 students test for entrance to universities in Shandong

Only 200 accepted each year

Many study in Australia because they can't get into university in China

No school fee for kindergarten through grade 6

9-12 grade has a 1600 Yuan fee per year

At No. 1 High School the fee is 3900Yuan, plus cost for food, etc.

Cost of university is 20-30,000 Yuan per year

Pollution, water and increasing population are the main problems for China.  
Development is happening very quickly and that causes problems. Western China is not developing as quickly as Shandong.

After hearing about the school we were taken on a very interesting tour. First they took us to the historical room where they had huge pictures of Dad (Egron), Farfar (JA Rinell) and Principal Wang. They had a large picture of our family (I was 5) and they gave credit to Farfar and Dad for starting Rui Hua school. Actually it was Farmor Hedvig who began the school! There were also pictures of the old school. It was very interesting to see this room. We continued on to see some classrooms and the martial arts rooms. New students had been divided into groups and were learning to march in squadrons like soldiers. We continued walking through the campus and noted that they had some ponds and beautiful trees and shrubs throughout the campus.

We were all very impressed by the school and very happy that we were able to see it.  
Dad would have loved to see this place!!

We next headed to see Principal Wang's grave. Although he died in 1989 his students have recently inscribed a poem on the back of the stone in his memory. We had asked Judy to buy some flowers to place on the grave. The whole group, including some of the school staff, went to the grave. There were hundreds or thousands of white identical tomb stones lined up in neat rows. We found Principal Wang's grave. On the front was the inscription of his name and dates and even a small picture of him. In front of the stone was a wooden cross, the only cross we saw! We looked at the engraving by his students, in red writing. We gathered around and sang, "Härlig är jorden" (Fairest Lord Jesus). It was a very special and heartfelt moment for all of us.

Earlier in the day the Fengs had asked us to go home with them. I really wanted to accept their invitation because they lived right next to our property and I was anxious to have a look at their place as well as maybe catch a peak into our area. But, for some reason they decided it was too late to do this. I was very sad about that.

I gave Feng Yua Nan a three-part CD of Christian hymns. I hope he has a CD player, too! His wife and he still lead the singing in a couple of house churches each week. He seems to be such a nice person – has a charming smile. I just wish I could talk to him.

During the day Lally had the opportunity to talk to Feng Brother #4 who lives in Jinan. He is a doctor there. He was John's playmate as a child.

We said our very sad goodbyes to the Fengs. It was sort of like saying goodbye to the past – our past.

The Feng's son-in-law drove a very fancy car and had Lally in his car with the rest of the Fengs. They drove us to the edge of the city and then we had to say goodbye again!!

What a fantastic day Judy and Annie prepared for us. We were so thankful for all that they did to make our second day in Jiaozhou so special.

Monday, August 31

This morning Carey, Lally and I walked several long blocks to the Hai Tiang Hotel. We had heard that they had some shops in that fancy hotel. Well, here we found some nice Chinese things. I ended up buying two dragon kites for the Jonell and Yarrington families. They look very cool and I think the boys (and their dads) will be excited about them! They each came in a large wooden box and now I have the task of packing them! But they do fit in my suitcase.

We ate a Japanese lunch of udon soup and tempura in a Japanese restaurant in the hotel. It was a nice change from our Chinese fare.

After a few minutes at the hotel the three of us took a cab to go and see our young pastor friend Liu Bu Jun. He is now 27 and has been a pastor-in-training for 4 years. He went to Shanghai Seminary. He is the grandson of Yang Shu Min. Lui Bu Jun and his mother, Zhong Wei Jing, still live in the shack that we had visited 10 years ago.

We brought some fruit for them. Their shack seemed to be in better shape than it was before. Before the Olympics the government helped people make their homes more attractive and as a result this family now have a kitchen indoors instead of having to cook outside. The two of them still live in limited amount of space.

We had an interesting conversation. Lui Bu Jun can't be ordained for another 2 – 3 years. He was careful not to say anything against the government and the Three Self church movement. His mother was quite outspoken and said that she feels there are definitely problems in the recognized church and that the house church is not as free as it should be. She also said that new people who come to the church don't know anything about what early missionaries did for China. It would have been very interesting to have talked with her without her pastor son in the room! Of course she has to support the church her son preaches in!

From their home we took a taxi with Lui Bu Jun to visit his grandmother, Yang Shu Min, in an old folks' home. She is now 82 and looks very old. She was sitting up in a chair beside her bed. She was surprised to see us, and it took a little time for her to recognize us – or Lally! Then she understood. She was introduced to Carey, because Dodo and she had played together as little girls. She even sang “Jesus loves me” in English. The staff stood around and watched. She lives in a room with at least 10-12 beds. Most people were sleeping in their beds.

From there we took a taxi to drive past Farfar Rinell's house, on Guanhai Yilu #3. The street was dug up around the house, but Carey and I found the house and climbed the steep steps to the house. We met a daughter of Yang Li An – the cook for the Jansson family. Her name is Yang Guang Ying and she lives in the house. I just said that I was Lally's meimei – and she was very excited! She wanted us to come back with Lally, but we couldn't right then.

Later in the evening, Yang Guang Ying and two of her sisters, Yang Guang Mei and \_\_\_\_\_ came to the hotel and had dinner with our whole group. One other woman also came, but Lally didn't know her. Yang Guang Ying is a lay worker in the Christ Church. She leads classes for people who want to be baptized as well as Bible classes in the Christ church. Of course they came bearing gifts and fruit! We are well fed and well gifted!

Tuesday, September 1

This morning James and Kari Kuster came to see Carey and me. We went to the park in order to have more privacy from listening ears. They do most of their work through small groups preparing for marriage and using the book “The Five Languages of Love”. They generally speak through an interpreter. They say that there are many jobs available for foreigners who want to teach English conversation.

It was a beautiful day and was probably the clearest day we had experienced in Qingdao. We walked down by the beach and saw many bridal pairs being photographed. These photographers also do picture taking of families, individuals, etc.—sort of like Glamor Shots in the US.

We met up with the rest of the group at the hotel to drive to lunch. We were met by Ting Shou Yi and his wife, Ji So Cun. He was an English teacher before he retired. His wife and Ji So Zhong are sisters. Their third sister died in December. She was Dodo's best friend while growing up. The sisters lived within the inner wall in Jiaozhou and the family was quite wealthy.

The sister, Ji So Zhong, had been a teacher in the Bible school. They invited us to a huge jiaozu lunch with many side dishes! We were stuffed – again!



After lunch we walked to their apartment. It was located near the old folks' home we had visited yesterday. They live three floors up and had a nice apartment. We were served Sprite, fruit and sun flower and watermelon seeds. People are so generous! Mr. Ting sang an opera song for us and a table grace.

We came back to the hotel and Carey and I decided that we needed to go swimming in the Yellow Sea on Beach #3. It was really nice! The others in our group had all gone swimming every day, so they thought it was about time that we also swam! It was a very clear day in Qingdao! The water was warm – the swim was awesome!

After a shower it was time to eat again! The three of us decided to go to our barbecue place along the beach. We ate some of their delicious bread and a vegetable and tofu dish. All was very tasty.

The owner, who had helped us order the first day we ate there, came and sat at our table, beside Lally. He kept asking Lally questions, and we really wished that he would leave! He never did! He almost sat on top of Lally throughout the meal. He seemed to have no understanding of what personal space is!

Wednesday, September 2

My computer won't work today! The server was down yesterday and I may have pressed a wrong button! I used Carey's for a while to check emails..

The rest of the group went to Huangdao and Wangtai today. Together with their guide and taxi driver they were able to find the property in Wangtai where one of our mission churches was located. They had a wonderful day.

As for us, (Lally, Carey and me) we had another jiaozi lunch to go to!!! How many jiaozi have we devoured on this trip? This time we went to the pier to meet a group of students from the old Rui Hua school.

They were all sitting in the shade as we came to our meeting place. We walked up the street to a jiaozi restaurant and they ordered a platter for each person – many different varieties, all very tasty! But what a “feed” it was!

The people who were there had all gone to our mission school. One couple was especially nice. Her name was Helen Wang and her Chinese name is Wang Gin Wen, and husband David Quang's Chinese name is Quang Jing Yuan. They met at school. She walked to school each day and he rode his bicycle. But he often developed problems with his bike, so he had to walk her home! Helen was good friends with the Reinbrechts, American Lutheran missionaries in Jiaozhou. Mazie Reinbrecht drove them in her car on their wedding day! Helen also taught in our primary school – music and English. Her English was excellent. She enjoyed singing in mother's choir. She sang soprano and David sang bass! They have a daughter in New York and one in Germany and two in

Qingdao. One daughter came to the lunch, Quang Mien. David had been the head of the Qingdao electric company.

Another man is Mr. Gao, son of Gao Sheng Han, who was a former pastor in Gaomi. He had his wife along who is from Shanghai. He was very quiet.

Hu Bao Shan is the son of Farfar and Farmor's cook. He has always visited with Lally when she's been here. He was the one who arranged for our lunch today. He married an orphanage girl, but was actually interested in one of the bride's maids. The couple got a divorced and he later married the bride's maid, who was Principal Qi's daughter. She passed away a few years ago. Hu Bao Shan is such a nice man. I had met him 10 years ago at church in Qingdao.

Jiang Zehn was the architectural city planner in Qingdao. Lally gave him an old Jiaozhou map and he was very happy to receive it. He was very hard of hearing. Fu Juan, a woman who sat next to Lally, was also from the school, however Lally did not have memories of her.

It was very nice to meet these old "students" – and special because they all had memories of our family.

This morning Marianne brought us gifts from Martha. We all got tea, but I also received a beautiful scroll from Martha's father, Guan Geng Gang. It will be treasured! There is bamboo on it, a tree frog and lotus blossoms. Very nice!

When we got home from lunch I began my packing, but then Judy and Annie showed up with two beautiful stools, much nicer than the ones we've seen on the streets. One was a dark wood, the other a lighter wood. Both had a very beautifully woven seat. I had asked them where I could find a folding stool like we have seen all over Qingdao. They are used by every shop owner and even as extra seating in churches. The ones we had seen were old and worn. These were brand new and very classy. Then Carey told me that James was coming with a stool tomorrow! He also knew that we had been looking for one!

We all went to dinner at a beach restaurant. The food was nothing special. Judy came along so we had a good visit with her. Lally and I needed to hurry back to the hotel because Martha's mother and uncle wanted to stop by again. They had tea for Lally. The gifts never stop! The Strutz group had been in Wangtai during the day, and the uncle, who was originally from there was very interested in their pictures they had taken with their digital camera. We all had an interesting visit and it was good that Judy was able to meet this part of the Gong family.

Thursday, Sept. 3

This morning I got up early to meet James at 7.45, but when I knocked on Carey's door, James had already been here and had left. He did bring a stool, however! Since I had

gotten the other one I thought that Carey should keep this one! So now the three of us have a stool each!

At breakfast I said good bye to the Swedes in our group.

After packing my suitcase and my extra duffel bag that I had brought along (just in case I needed more space) Lally, Carey and I walked down to the sea shore and sat under an umbrella to have a drink, enjoying the view of Beach #3.

Yin Ying called Lally again today. He has been so excited about us doing this trip and has called Lally and Judy several times. When we were in Jiaozhou I had said that I was interested in coming to the No. 1 High School to teach conversational English. Yin Ying had even heard about that casual remark! Who knows what will happen!!

Judy has made one trip to Europe, but when she asked for a visa to the US she was denied. She may need to be “invited” by someone. Being a new Christian she is on fire and excited about her faith.

I said goodbye to Lally and Carey. The taxi that we had arranged to pick me up drove me to the airport in about an hour. After I checked in and had gone through security I looked around in the stores. This is where all the Chinese souvenirs are – at a higher cost, of course! They even had post cards!

My trip home went without incident or delays. I highly recommend Korean Airlines.

What a trip this was! Having 12 days to “do” Qingdao and surrounding areas was just right. It gave us enough leisure time as well as seeing the places and people that we had come to see. Lally knows everybody!! And they know her! If it had not been for Lally we wouldn’t have seen nearly as many people as we saw, nor would we have been treated with such honor and extravagance. I think all of us were very satisfied with the trip – and we all did pretty well in spite of a few hot and humid days.

What I found interesting – and heartwarming – was that people in Qingdao and Jiaozhou remember the Rinells and other missionaries who worked there for so many years.

Margareta Jonell  
Meta or Beiby!!