



ICHM Co-Sponsored  
*Memorial in Honor of Xu Yibao*

Special Session held during the *6th International Symposium on Ancient Chinese Books and Records of Science and Technology (VI ISACBRST)*

Borough of Manhattan Community College, City University of New York, USA  
4 October 2014

Joseph W. Dauben, CUNY, USA

Nearly half of the participants attending this meeting were historians of mathematics, and the majority coming from Asia were from China; many of them had known Yibao personally, and were called upon to give their own personal recollections of Yibao as both a professional historian of mathematics and as a colleague and friend who some had known since their students days together at Inner Mongolia Normal University. The session began at 3:00 PM, and lasted for nearly an hour and a half, at the conclusion of which a montage of photographs compiled by his family was shown, recounting Yibao's life from his childhood and college years in China, to his graduate work at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where he earned his Ph.D. in 2005, until 2013 by which time he had become a tenured full professor of mathematics at BMCC, CUNY (see a brief biographical description of XU Yibao in page 2).

Joseph W. Dauben (Department of History, Herbert H. Lehman College, CUNY, and Ph.D. Program in History, The Graduate Center, City University of New York): Opening Remarks

**Comments and Recollections:**

Annie Han (Department of Mathematics, BMCC, and former Chair of the Department)

Jean Richard (Chair, Department of Mathematics, BMCC)

冯立昇 FENG Lisheng (Institute for History of Science and Technology & Ancient Texts, Tsinghua University, Beijing)

郭世荣 GUO Shirong (Institute for the History of Science and Technology, Inner Mongolia Normal University, Huhhot)

洪萬生 HORNG Wannsheng (Department of Mathematics, National Taiwan Normal University, Taipei)

纪志刚 JI Zhigang (School of History and Culture of Science, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai)

李文林 LI Wenlin (Academy of Mathematics and Systems Science, Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing)

Karen Parshall (Departments of Mathematics and History, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA): Letter recalling Yibao

Jonathan XU (New York University): Memories of My Father

Photomontage: Remembering 徐义保 XU Yibao



**Xu Yibao** 徐义保 (1965–2013) was born at Poyang, Jiangxi Province, on December 10, 1965. He was hospitalized on Sunday, November 3, after suffering a massive cerebral hemorrhage, a stroke for which he was treated immediately at the Robert Wood Johnson Hospital at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, but from which he never recovered. He died on Thursday, November 7, 2013, 48 years of age. He is survived by his wife, Delia Yongxian Yu, and his two sons, Jonathan Xu and Alex Xu Yu.

Having majored in mathematics as an undergraduate, Xu Yibao went on to study the history of Chinese mathematics from 1988 through June of 1991 at Inner Mongolia Normal University with one of the world's leading masters of the subject, Professor LI Di.



徐义保 **Xu Yibao**  
(1965–2013)

After receiving his Master of Science degree in July of 1991, he worked as an editor at the Editorial Office of Local History of Jiangxi Province. In August of 1995, he was admitted to the Ph.D. Program in History at the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York, from which he was awarded a Ph.D. in 2005 with a thesis devoted to “Concepts of Infinity in Chinese Mathematics.” Meanwhile, he had already joined the faculty of the Department of Mathematics at Borough of Manhattan Community College of the City University of New York, where he was successively promoted from the ranks of adjunct lecturer to Assistant, then Associate, and most recently last year, to the rank of Full Professor. He was subsequently granted tenure, which was to have taken effect in September of 2014. Yibao was also active as a member of his local school board. As a service to his community in Plainsboro, New Jersey, he was elected a member of the West Windsor-Plainsboro Regional School District School Board, for which he served on the Finance Committee and as the Board of Education Liaison to Plainsboro's Planning Board.

A dedicated scholar, among Professor Xu's most recent publications are “Bertrand Russell and the Introduction of Mathematical Logic in China,” *History and Philosophy of Logic* **24** (3) (2003): 181–196; “The First Chinese Translation of the Last Nine Books of Euclid's *Elements* and its Source,” *Historia Mathematica* **32** (1) (2005): 4–32; and “Dialectics of Numbers: Marxism, Maoism, and the Calculus of Infinitesimals,” in *Mr. Science and Chairman Mao's Cultural Revolution*, Nancy Wei and Darryl E. Brock, eds. (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013): 165–196. Xu Yibao was also a member of The American Mathematical Society, The Mathematical Association of America, and The History of Science Society. He also served as Secretary of the *History and Pedagogy of Mathematics* (HPM), Americas Section.

Over the past five years he had collaborated with Professor Joseph W. Dauben to produce an English translation of the most noted mathematical work of ancient China, the 九章算术 *Jiu zhang suan shu* (Nine Chapters on the Art of Mathematics). This work is based upon a new collation of the ancient text and commentaries on the *Nine Chapters* by the leading authority on this subject in China, Guo Shuchun, a member of the Institute for History of Natural Science of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing. The work has just appeared in three volumes, as part of the Library of Chinese Classics published by Liaoning Education Press in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China (2013).