

About The Sino-Judaic Institute

The Sino-Judaic Institute is a non-denominational, non-profit, and non-political organization which was founded in 1985 by an international group of scholars and laypersons. Its goals and purposes are as follows:

- 1) To promote friendship and understanding between the Chinese and Jewish peoples and to encourage and develop their cooperation in matters of mutual historical and cultural interest.
- 2) To assist the descendants of the ancient Jewish community of the city of Kaifeng, Henan Province, in their efforts to preserve and maintain the artifacts and documents they have inherited from their forebears, as well as in their efforts to reconstruct the history of their community.
- 3) To support the establishment and maintenance of a Judaica section in the projected municipal museum of Kaifeng.
- 4) To promote and assist study and research in the histories of early Jewish travel in China and in the rise and fall of the various Jewish communities that were established in China in the course of the past thousand and more years.
- 5) To publish general information and scholarly materials dealing with all aspects of the Chinese-Jewish experience.
- 6) To serve as a briefing and information center for those interested in Sino-Judaica, and for travelers to Kaifeng and other centers of Jewish interest in China.
- 7) To cooperate with other groups whose interests lie in Sinitic and Judaic matters.

Membership in the Institute is open and we cordially invite you to join in supporting our endeavor. See enclosed envelope for membership information.

LANGUAGES OF THE HEART: A CHINESE-JEWISH ENCOUNTER AT ULPAN AKIVA

by Vera Schwarcz

Empathetic understanding through the powers of speech took place at Ulpan Akiva, Israel's major center for the teaching of Hebrew and Arabic in Netanya. On Friday night, January 14, 1994 (the second day of Shevat, 5754 according to the Jewish calendar), Shulamith Katznelson, the Director of the Ulpan and Nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, hosted a Shabbat evening in honor of the Chinese Ambassador to Israel, Mr. Lin Zehen. There is an ancient Chinese saying, which dates back to the last chapter of Confucius' *Analects*: "**Bu zhi yan er bu zhi ren xin.**" It means: "If you do not understand language, you will never understand the human heart." Classical Chinese, being a condensed tongue, expresses this thought with simplicity. Eight ideograms summarize cultural attachment to **yan**—which, literally means "words", but refers here to the power of human speech more generally. **Xin**, too, is literally "heart," but in keeping with Chinese philosophy refers both to the seat of emotions in the chest and to "mind"—the capacity of empathetic understanding so highly valued by Confucius.

Ambassador Lin Zhen, an heir to China's Confucian tradition and the representative of the People's Republic of China in Israel, did not arrive alone. He was accompanied by his wife Zou Lin and six young staff members from the Chinese Embassy in Tel Aviv. In his opening remarks, the Chinese Ambassador pointed to his aids and told us that the future of Chinese-Israeli relations rests on their shoulders. These were simple words that conveyed a strong message: A culture long used to venerate the aged and to reserve for them the privileges of power was ready to groom and empower the young.

The diplomats from the Ambassador's staff looked like recent college graduates but they had already shouldered professional responsibilities in the opening year of Chinese-Israeli relations. One political attache had learned Hebrew in 1985, from a Berkeley woman who was teaching at Peking University—before Israeli instructors were allowed into China. Another Foreign Ministry graduate spoke Arabic with an Arab woman teacher, one of the first Ulpan Akiva graduates in the 1970s, who is inspector of Hebrew in her native Gaza. The Ambassador's secretary, a former ballet dancer, is learning Hebrew on the job in Tel Aviv.

For the Director of Ulpan Akiva this was "the fulfillment of a childhood dream" in which China had been surrounded by legends and myths. On Friday night, myths and legends gave way to concrete encounter. As an American China scholar and former Ulpan student I was part of the welcoming delegation along with Xu Xin, the first senior Chinese intellectual to be enrolled in formal language study in Israel. Before coming to study at Ulpan Akiva last month, Xu Xin had finished translating the Encyclopedia Judaica into Chinese. He had also organized the first major exhibit on the Holocaust in China last year and is just finishing a book on anti-semitism. Having begun his career as a professor of English literature, Xu Xin has emerged as one of the most informed leaders of Jewish studies in China. On Friday night, Professor Xu sat as one ulpan student among others.

The "power of speech" that the *Analects* praise came alive in the remarks of the Zou Lin, the Ambassador's wife. First, she spoke in English about her own

(continued on page 4)

CONTACTS BETWEEN JEWISH AND INDO- TIBETAN CIVILIZATIONS

by Nathan Katz
reprinted from *Tibet Journal*,
(Winter 1991)

Jewish journalist Arthur Magida once related a conversation with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In the back seat of a car, the Dalai Lama commented: "The fifth century [BCE] was the time of the Golden Age of Greece and of the Buddha and of Isaiah. And yet, there was little—if any—contact or cross-fertilization between the religions of the West and the Indian religions. Amazing!"¹

What is amazing is not that this cross-fertilization did not take place, because it did take place. What is amazing, in the sense of losing ourselves in a maze, is our lack of memory of these ancient linkages. The Greeks knew about the Buddha and other Indian philosophic schools as well. And ancient Israel knew about India. But today very few people know that the Buddha and King Solomon share legends; that Sanskrit words are found in Hebrew scripture; and that Jewish martyrs at Masada were encouraged upon hearing about Indian attitudes towards death.

Memory raises perplexing philosophic problems, especially since memory is constructed in the present in such a way as to create a past, an identity and a history. That what we remember constructs who we are is an insight shared by contemporary western philosophy and classical Buddhist thought. What we need to add is that what we forget also makes for our identity. And both of us, Jews and Tibetans, have forgotten that we go back a very long way together.

(continued on page 5)

From the editor:

I had already written something cheerfully glib about this being the first issue of volume nine when it hit me. It made me stop and think, then to tear up my first column.

"It" is the fact that the Sino-Judaic Institute is now approximately in its tenth year of existence. That makes us the longest-lived organization in history devoted to the subject of the Jews of Kaifeng. But the key to our longevity is our diversification.

What began with an interest in Kaifeng Jewry has grown in interesting ways. In the past, organizations like the Shanghai Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews focused on saving a remnant of the Kaifeng community. Today, while we still would be thrilled to see an autonomous revival of the Kaifeng Jewish community, our focus has shifted to working with Chinese scholars on subjects of mutual interest, be they the Kaifeng Jews, the Holocaust, Jewish literature, Chinese-Israeli relations, or anything else. What was some seventy years ago a project vaguely connected with European imperialism in China, and smelling a little of "missionizing" and "white man's burden," today has become something mutual and cooperative. It is a remarkable and most significant change when one thinks about it.

Today the SJI is not only concerned with the Jews of Kaifeng but with Jewish communities throughout the region. We work with scholars, both Jewish and non-Jewish, from many countries on a host of subjects. Similarly, Points East's articles travel the "Far East," from India to Singapore and from China to Japan, looking at Jewish life, history, culture, religion, Jewish/non-Jewish relations, contemporary diplomatic, cultural and commercial relations between various countries and Israel, and miscellaneous curiosities. This diversity keeps us going strong.

Your contributions, both written and monetary, are what make the Sino-Judaic Institute and Points East what they are. Keep sending in your articles, reviews, announcements and letters. And please consider sending us a contribution in the envelope enclosed in this newsletter. I will thank you for the former, Norm will thank you for the latter, and Al will thank you for both.

Anson Laytner

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IN THE FIELD

• **SHANGHAI SPECIAL EVENT PLANNED**

The Foreign Affairs Office of the Shanghai Municipal People's Government, the Shanghai People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, the People's Government of Hongkou District of Shanghai, and the Center of Jewish Studies, Shanghai, plan to erect a monument at the original Jewish refugee camp in Hongkou district, Shanghai, in April 1994. The program is as follows: April 19, unveiling ceremony and tour of Hongkou district; April 20, visit of old Jewish sites in Shanghai and tour of Pudong New Area; April 21, seminar on "Jews in Shanghai"; April 22, symposium on the economy and trade of Shanghai. From April 23 on, those who are interested may tour other cities in China. For more information, contact: Wang Mingming, Tel: 2531725; Fax: 2562527; Address: 1418 Nanjing Rd. West, Shanghai, China 200004.

• **SHOLEM ALEICHEM IN CHINESE**

Prof. Yao Yi'en, of the Shanghai Literary Translators Association, has published an extensive number of translations and studies of Sholem Aleichem. He is asking for contributions of the following materials to facilitate his further studies.

1. Reminiscences of relatives and contemporaries concerning Sholem Aleichem.
2. Criticisms of his work.
3. Picture albums concerning Sholem Aleichem.
4. Introductory material concerning research on Sholem Aleichem.

Materials in English and Russian are especially useful, but other languages are also welcome. Materials may be sent to the Sino-Judaic Institute to be sent to Prof. Yao, or may be sent directly to him: Prof. Yao Yi'en, Apt. 1508 #4, Lane 455, Maotai Road, Shanghai, 200305 China

• **SHI ZHONGYING, KAIFENG PATRIARCH, DIES**

Wendy Abraham reports a call from Shi Xingguang, eldest son of Shi Zhongying, that his father, a member of the Jewish community of Kaifeng, has recently passed away. (See Eulogy, p. 15)

• **BEGIN'S BIOGRAPHY IN CHINESE**

Menahem Begin is the first Israeli to have his biography published in Chinese and sold throughout this vast country. The book was originally written in English by Harry Horowitz, one of the late premier's aides. It was translated into Chinese at the initiative of the Kunming University.

• **RESEARCH DIRECTORY STILL AVAILABLE**

The Directory of Individuals Interested in the Jews and the Jewish Communities of East, Southeast and South Asia (first edition, March 1993; viii, 44p.), compiled and edited by Frank Joseph Shulman, is an extensively indexed, alphabetically-arranged listing of 216 individuals and ten organizations worldwide with an expressed interest in some aspect, past and/or present, of the Jewish experience in Asia. It has been published in July 1993 in conjunction with the international conference "Jewish Diasporas

BOOK NOOK

THE JEWS OF DYNASTIC CHINA A CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY by Michael Pollak

Michael Pollak, the author of the well-received study of the Jewish community in Kaifeng, *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries: The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire*, has brought his erudition to bear on the compilation of a new bibliography. In format this is a continuation and supplement to his previously edited volume, *The Sino-Judaic Bibliographies of Rudolf Loewenthal*, but the extensive annotation in this new work makes it much more than a bibliography. Written with style and wit, the critical narratives appended to the bibliographic items reveal the hidden stories and adventures related to the study of this community in the Asian diaspora.

The Sino-Judaic Bibliographies of Rudolf Loewenthal consists of a reprint of three important bibliographies compiled by Rudolf Loewenthal, a pioneer in the field, and published originally in China between 1939 and 1946. The new bibliography includes a composite index to the contents of both volumes, and the two volumes now make a handsome set.

The Sino-Judaic Bibliographies of Rudolf Loewenthal (Hebrew Union College Press in association with the Sino-Judaic Institute, 1988), 208 pages, ISBN: 0-87820-910-7, \$16.00.

The Jews of Dynastic China: A Critical Bibliography (Hebrew Union College Press in association with the Sino-Judaic Institute, 1993), 225 pages, ISBN: 0-87820-911-5, \$20.00.

The two volumes may be purchased either separately, or as a set at the special price of \$30.00.

To order, write: The Sino-Judaic Institute, 232 Lexington Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025.

A LAST LOOK: WESTERN ARCHITECTURE IN OLD SHANGHAI by Tess Johnston and Deke Erh

An evocative overview of Western architecture and expatriate lifestyle in Shanghai. Included are listings of Shanghai's apartment house, banks, clubs.

This is a soft-cover book of 120 pages with 212 colored and 42 historic black and white illustrations. This is a beautifully compiled volume which will appeal to former Shanghaianders.

Available from: Old China Hand Press, P. O. Box # 54750, North Point Post Office, Hong Kong.

U.S. \$35.00 + \$5.00 postage, or HK \$270.00 = HK \$40.00.

Make checks payable to Old China Hand Press.

COMMENTS ON ESCAPE TO SHANGHAI

Escape to Shanghai: A Jewish Community in China, by James R. Ross. New York: The Free Press, 1993. 298 pages, b&w photographs, \$22.95.

Escape to Shanghai tells the still relatively untold story of the Jewish refugee community in Shanghai during the years of World War II. Ross recounts this history through the eyes of four individual refugees, tracing their roots in Europe, their escape from the Nazis, and their adjustment to life in Shanghai. Drawing on over 200 interviewed with surviving members of the Shanghai Jewish community as well as a richly diverse documentary record, Ross blends investigative journalism with history and narrative nonfiction to provide a remarkably vivid and detailed account of this brave and beleaguered community.

COMMENTS ON VEDA AND TORAH: TRANSCENDING THE TEXTUALITY OF SCRIPTURE by Barbara A. Holdrege, State University of New York, 644 page, \$19.95 pb. ISBN 0-7914-1640-2, \$59.50 hc. ISBN 0-7914-1639-9

"In this book Holdrege has set a high standard for comparative work and has made an important contribution to both Hindu and Jewish studies. She has looked at Veda and Torah not simply as 'scripture,' but as systems of meaning, symbol systems, each with its own affiliated meanings, each with its symbolic context, and each with its history of interpretation. By addressing the whole complex in which Veda and Torah have been transmitted and by seeing their uses and interpretations in the traditions that they enliven, Holdrege has problematized and expanded the usage of the term 'scripture' and has enriched the possibilities for significant comparative study." — Diana L. Eck, Harvard University

"This book is a remarkable piece of scholarship. The way in which the author employs traditional, text-based methods to enlarge scholarly understanding of what 'texts' are is revolutionary. The author demonstrates that scriptures are not just texts, one kind of religious medium alongside others, but constitute parts of religious and cultural life in ways that have been previously unappreciated and that will clearly be of interest to anthropologists and semioticians as well as to historians and comparativists of religion." — Thomas B. Coburn, St. Lawrence University

Barbara A. Holdrege is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She is a comparative historian of religions specializing in Hindu and Jewish traditions.

has developed since the Harvard conference: an index of individuals concerned with the Jews of East, Southeast and South Asia, and two Sino-Judaic bibliographies: a short version to accompany the Harvard conference volume and a larger, comprehensive version to be published separately. Li Renchuan of Xiamen University's Institute for Taiwan Studies chronicled Ming and Qing Dynasty trade with and commercial settlement in South-east Asia. Pan Guang, Dean of Shanghai's Center for Jewish Studies, and Maruyama Naoki, of Tokyo's Meiji Gakuin University, each analyzed the early twentieth-century development of Zionism in Shanghai. Chiara Betta of Fudan University described yet another Jewish intellectual response in China: Silas Aaron Hardoon's (1851?-1931) metamorphosis in Shanghai from a Baghdadi Jewish entrepreneur into an empathizer with Chinese culture. By the time of his death Hardoon had endowed both Confucian and Buddhist universities and had moved closer to the culture of his adopted homeland than to that of his birthplace. Lastly, Dennis Leventhal, Chairman of Hong Kong's Jewish Historical Society, offered a statistical analysis of the interactions of Hong Kong's Jews with their Chinese environment.

To bring these varied diaspora experiences into comparative focus, Wang Gungwu, of the University of Hong Kong and arguably the world's authority on Chinese communities of Southeast Asia, introduced the concept of communities as "sojourners" rather than as "immigrants" in a strict sense. Additional commentary was offered by Donald Daniel Leslie of the Australian National University, Chan Sui-jeung of the University of Hong Kong, and Hebrew University Japanologist Uri Eppstein and Islamicist Nehemiah Levtzion.



Wang Gungwu addresses ICANAS panel on Kews in China and Chinese in Southeast Asia. Left to right: Chiard Betta, Pan Guang, Lin Renchuan, Chan Sui-jeung, Wang Gunwu. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Goldstein.

In the late afternoon of August 23 the ICANAS seminar informally recessed to the Hong Kong Jewish Club. There Professor Betta gave a much-expanded version of her Hardoon talk to an audience of visiting academicians, diplomats, and Chinese and Jewish Hong Kong residents. Pan Guang and Jonathan Goldstein commented. David M. Sassoon, President of the Jewish Club, organized this second event and hosted a dinner for visiting scholars, as Chan Sui-jeung did later in the week. Messrs. Sassoon and Chan deserve the gratitude of the scholarly community for their most generous sponsorship of these events.

Messrs. Pan, Maruyama, Betta, Shulman, Leventhal and Goldstein each spoke at the Fairbank Center's 1992 "Jews in China" conference and have also contributed to publications emanating from that meeting. Hopefully, the 1993 ICANAS diaspora seminar and Jewish Club symposium will result in additional publications that will offer fresh perspectives on comparative diaspora experiences.

PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE THROUGH THE SINO-JUDAIC INSTITUTE

Michael Pollak, ed. *The Sino-Judaic Bibliographies of Rudolf Loewenthal*. Hebrew Union College Press, in association with The Sino-Judaic Institute, 1988. 208 pp. \$20, members \$16.

Michael Pollak, comp. *The Jews of Dynastic China: A Critical Bibliography*. Hebrew Union College Press, in association with The Sino-Judaic Institute, forthcoming. (A continuation of the Loewenthal bibliographies.) \$24.95, members \$20. With the item above, 2 vols., \$30.

Sino-Judaica: Occasional Papers of the Sino-Judaic Institute. Vol. 1 (1991). \$15 (\$9 to members) plus \$2 postage/handling.

Frank J. Shulman, comp. *Directory of Individuals Interested in the Jews and the Jewish Communities of East, Southeast and South Asia*. Carrollton, GA, 1993. \$10, \$15 foreign (incl. postage).

Points East: A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute. Published three times a year. Back issues, \$5 each, \$15/year, plus \$2 postage and handling.

Wang Yisha, *Zhongguo Youtai Chungiu* (Annals of the Chinese Jews), in Chinese. Hardcover, \$5, soft cover \$2, plus \$2 postage/handling.

Xu Xin et al., comp. Chinese version of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, \$30, plus \$10 postage and handling. Nanjing, forthcoming.

Michael Pollak, *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980. Paper, \$7.50, plus \$2 postage/handling.

The Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, slide set with cassette. 30 minutes. \$50 (members \$45).

Same as above, videotape. \$75 (members, \$68).

in China: Comparative and Historical Perspectives" convened at Harvard University in August 1992. Copies of this directory have recently been distributed to selected university and research libraries in the United States. Additional copies are available @ \$10.00 postpaid within the U.S., \$15.00 for overseas requests) from the Sino-Judaic Institute, 232 Lexington Drive, Menlo Park, CA 94025. Individuals and institutions who wish to be listed in an expanded future edition of the directory may request a questionnaire directly from Frank Joseph Shulman, 9225 Limestone Place, College park, MD 20070-3943. (A copy of the questionnaire was enclosed in the last issue of *Points East*.)

•MICHAEL STEINBECK DIES

Long-time member, Michael Steinbeck, of the Sino-Judaic Institute, died on January 14 in Palo Alto at the age of 90.

FROM OUR READERS:

To the editor:

In the October 1993 issue of *Points East*, under the heading "Two Americans in China," an article about me by Lindsey Shanson . . . appears side by side with an interview of Sidney Rittenberg by Nick Gallo . . .

I am an American who has lived in China since 1947, and became a Chinese citizen in 1963. I was appointed to the Chinese People's Political Council in 1983, and am still a member. I am not, as Shanson's article maintains, the "only foreigner ever to achieve such eminence." There have been about a dozen . . .

My purpose here is not to talk about me but about Sidney Rittenberg. Nick Gallo's article does not review his book, but only repeats what Rittenberg asserted in their interview.

Sidney Shapiro, Beijing

[The rest of the letter goes on at length to criticize and denounce Rittenberg in a personal and abusive manner. It was our decision that our publication would not provide a forum for such remarks although we wanted Shapiro's views noted for the public record. ED.]

To the editor:

In the latest edition of *Points East* (Vol. 8, No. 3), page 21, you quote Dr. Alfonz Lengyel as saying: "The Chinese (. . .) know that Jewish culture developed about (. . .) 6000 years ago." No, Judaism did not start until much later, about 3800 years ago at the time of Abraham. This mistake is unfortunately very common! The current Jewish year is 5754. The Christian and Moslem years correspond closely to the age of Christianity and Islam respectively. So, many people think that the Jewish year also roughly corresponds to the age of Judaism. However the Jewish year is supposed to represent the age of the world! Jewish culture could surely not have started 2000 years before Judaism!

*Sincerely yours,
Theodor Katz*

To the editor:

Are there Jews in Xining?

Several years ago, Dr. Goran Malmquist, then professor of Sinology in the University of Stockholm, told me that in 1949 he had met Jews living in Xining, the capital of the province of Qinghai in northwestern China. They spoke Chinese, but did not look Chinese. I had never heard of this and found his account most fascinating. In and near Xining, Catholic and Lutheran missionaries were active at that time. So I contacted several persons and organizations with a good knowledge of the relevant facts. However I never got the slightest confirmation in response to my inquiries. Hopefully some readers of *Points East* will shed light on this odd report.

Theodor Katz, Stockholm

To the editor:

Without the scholarship of Sydney Shapiro, our knowledge of Jews in China would be severely diminished. However, his assertion in a reprint in *Points East* (Oct. 1993 - Sydney Shapiro: For the Sake of the Revolution, p. 10) regarding the Tian An Men massacre was that ". . . there were provocations, perhaps (instigated) by Taiwan . . ." has absolutely no basis in fact. Not a "scintilla" of evidence has come forth to support such an allegation. As Lu Xin said of the 1926 massacre: "Lies written in ink will never erase the Facts written in blood."

*Shalom,
Michael and Diane Rabinowitz*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING THE YEAR 1993

*by Albert Dien
President, SJI*

In 1993, the Sino-Judaic Institute carried to completion a number of activities initiated in earlier years and laid the groundwork for its agenda in the future. Increasingly, the Institute is recognized as a leader in its field of endeavor and an important resource to whom people turn for information and guidance. Some of the achievements of 1993 are listed below; several were entirely the work of the Institute, others were facilitated by financial support from the Institute.

1. The Chinese abridged version of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, edited by Prof. Xu Xin of Nanjing University, and funded in part by the Institute, has just appeared. It is a handsome volume of over 800 pages, copiously illustrated. A donation by William Fern, through a philanthropic fund bearing his name, has made possible donations of the encyclopedia to fifty libraries in China and fifteen in this country. At the request of Mr. Fern, the project was administered by the Sino-Judaic Institute.

2. A new bibliography, *The Jews of Dynastic China: A Critical Bibliography*, compiled by Michael Pollak, has just been published by the Sino-Judaic Institute in association with the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. This fully annotated volume combines with the previously published *Sino-Judaic Bibliographies of Rudolf Loewenthal* to form a set, and the second volume includes a composite index to the contents of both volumes.

3. An arrangement has been made with the Hoover Institution Archives Stanford University to house archival material donated to the Sino-Judaic Institute concerning the Jewish communities in China. Among the items already deposited there is the register of the Polish Consulate in Nanjing and later Shanghai which lists the names, religion, age, etc. of all Polish citizens who arrived in either Shanghai or Nanjing between Jan. 9, 1934 and October 29, 1941.

4. Through a grant made to the Sino-Judaic Institute by Mr. Raymond Frankel, Mr. Wu Guifu, now deputy director of the Institute of Strategic Studies, of China's National Defense University, spent about a half-year at the Harry Truman Institute of Hebrew University. This is the first of what is hoped to be a series of such projects to enable outstanding potential leaders of China to carry out research or other scholarly activities at the Truman Institute or at the Jaffe Institute of Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv. The Sino-Judaic Institute is seeking funding for such projects.

5. The Sino-Judaic Institute continues its books presentation project to scholars and institutions in China, supported by funding from the Pacific Rim Institute of the American Jewish Committee. Among those who have received such materials are the Shanghai Judaic Studies Association, Yao Yi'en, specialist on Sholem Aleichem, and the newly established museum in the former Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Hongkou District, Shanghai. Letters offering such materials are frequently sent when potential recipients are identified. The latest to be added to the list is the newly established Center for Judaic Studies, Harbin.

6. The Institute made several grants to support travel by Chinese scholars. These include one to Prof. Xu Xin who is at present in Israel, and to Prof. Zhao Xiangru, Institute of Minority Studies, Beijing, to enable him to attend the conference on the Diaspora in Asia recently held at Harvard University. A number of members of the Institute took part in that conference. 7. The Institute has hosted a number of persons involved in Jewish studies in China, some of whom gave lectures while in the Bay Area. The visitors include Prof. Pan Guang, Prof. Shirley Wood (Henan University), Ben Levaco (resident in Tianjin and Shanghai before and during WW II), Ernest Heppner (author of the recently published *Shanghai Refuge*), Wang Qingyu, a private scholar at Yale University who has published on the Jewish refugees in Shanghai, and Sidney Shapiro, longtime resident of Beijing and member of the Chinese People's

Political Consultative Council.

8. *Points East*, the newsletter of the Institute, continues to appear three times a year under the able editorship of Rabbi Anson Laytner. The Institute also continues to distribute relevant publications as a service to its members and other interested parties. The latest to join the list is Dr. Frank Shulman's *Directory of Individuals Interested in the Jews and the Jewish Communities of East, Southeast and South Asia*. In many cases, the Institute absorbs the cost of distribution.

9. Albert Dien, president of the Institute, has compiled in draft form *A Guide for the Jewish Traveller in China* to be sent to persons planning to travel in China. We receive many letters asking for the addresses of Jewish communities (synagogues, community centers, etc.) in all of Asia, and we try to respond as best we can.

10. Meetings were held with Seymour Frommer and his staff of the Judah L. Magnes Museum, Berkeley, to explore the feasibility of sending photographic exhibits on Jewish and Israeli themes to China. We are also considering organizing a conference on the diaspora in Asia at the Museum in conjunction with a special exhibit.

The foregoing were only a part of the activities of the Institute. There is a constant stream of inquiries concerning relatives who had lived in China, letters from people writing books or planning to do films concerning Jewish history in China, and requests for materials of one sort or another. The Institute is widely recognized as the sole organization which is engaged in many of these areas. The chief limitation on the scope of the Institute's activities is the shortage of sufficient funding for a number of major projects. Contributions to these or other projects would be welcome.

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LANGUAGES OF THE HEART: A CHINESE-JEWISH ENCOUNTER AT ULPAN AKIVA

(continued from page 1)

desire to understand Jewish culture better and about her delight in the natural beauty of Natanya. Then, prodded by the many Russian immigrants in the room—former and current students of Ulpán Akiva's special programs for those coming from the former Soviet Union—Zou Lin spoke in Russian. She had mastered that tongue in the late 1950s, when she was one among many young Chinese intellectuals sent to the Soviet Union for technological and political training.

More than three decades after leaving the USSR, after the long split in Sino-Soviet relations during the Chinese Cultural Revolution, after the collapse of the Soviet regime itself, a Chinese intellectual was reaching out to Russian Jews in Israel in their native tongue. The faces of these recent immigrants shined with delight and recognition. Nowhere but in Israel (with its large Russian speaking population and its enthusiasm for Chinese culture) could such a celebration of Chinese-Jewish contact take place in Russian.

At the end of the festive Sabbath dinner, during the ceremonial exchange of gifts, the Chinese Ambassador presented Shulamith Katznelson with a carving in corkwood. Framed in a glass oval was a world of traditional Chinese aesthetics: white cranes, a symbol of integrity and fidelity, soared above fragile trees. In the center stood a delicate bridge. When I pointed out to Shulamith Katznelson that the bridge could be viewed as a symbol of cultural contact, she and the whole ulpan broke out in spontaneous song: *Kol haolam kulo gesher zar meod, vехаikar shelo yefached klal*. "All the world is but a narrow bridge, but what matters most is not to be afraid." These words are from the Chassidic master, Rabbi Nachman from Bratslav. Though the link between the Chinese and Jewish nations has only recently been established, a crossing between hearts and minds and words has begun.

from the tribe of Menashe, the son of Joseph. They sing the following traditional song:

We observed the Sipkui festival,
Crossing over the Red Sea running dry before us,
and the walking enemies of mine,
the riding foes of mine,
were swallowed by the sea in the thousands.

We were led by fire at night
and by cloud in the day.

Thou art Manmasi (Menashe),
begot forefathers
coming from beyond the river,
Following the rivers and streams
Passing through the mountains
and hills,
Brought us thou into the land of strangers.

History

According to the Shinlung the tribe of Menashe settled in Persia and were eventually driven eastward to Afghanistan and then to China. Around 600 C.E. (some say during the time of the Mongol invasion) religious persecution forced them to flee from China and settle in Vietnam, where they lived as cave dwellers (shinlung). During that time the Shinlung were continually in a state of fear and of hunger and found it impossible to rest on Shabbat.

They were eventually driven from Vietnam by a Chinese king (at that time China controlled Vietnam, and the Vietnamese were fighting for independence). They lost their Sefer Torahs and were forced to follow their traditions by memory. They wandered around Thailand and then through Burma for hundreds of years. Their priesthood was preserved until the middle of the 19th century, when Christian missionaries, supported by foreign troops, were able to end their traditions. In 1854, the American Baptist Mission was established in Manipur. By 1890 Presbyterian missionaries were also active in the region. By 1990, 90 percent of the tribal people in Mizoram had been converted to Christianity.

Thirty years ago a local prophet named Tanuma of Manipure began preaching to the Shinlung, saying that they would be destroyed if they did not go back to their old Jewish faith. He told them that they were all destined to return to Israel. The return to Judaism started in Churachandpur in south

western Manipur and has since spread throughout the area. Small synagogues have been established around towns in the Imphal area. Those who have returned to Judaism but have had exposure to Christianity may still have some belief in Jesus, while others with less exposure will not have this belief. The Shinlung who presently want to go on aliyah do not have this belief and are eager to study Judaism.

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FROM TEL AVIV TO TOKYO

by Helen Kaye

excerpted & reprinted from the
Jerusalem Post, July 5, 1993

Call Zvika Serper when he's not home and the recorded message is in Hebrew and Japanese.

At 40, the lean, curly-haired actor/director is one of the few Westerners who has made it in the world of classical Japanese theater. He lived and studied in Japan from 1980 to 1985 and speaks the language perfectly.

Supported by scholarships, he worked with the great masters of Noh, Kabuki and Kyogen (the comic version of Kabuki), and performed in all three styles.

Born and raised in Givatayim, Serper became fascinated by Japanese drama while still an undergraduate at Tel Aviv University. He earned his masters degree during a season onstage with the Cameriteater and his doctorate in classical Japanese theater during his years there.

He says he plans to go back to Japan next year for more research, to meet and work with his teachers and to appear on the Noh and Kabuki stages.

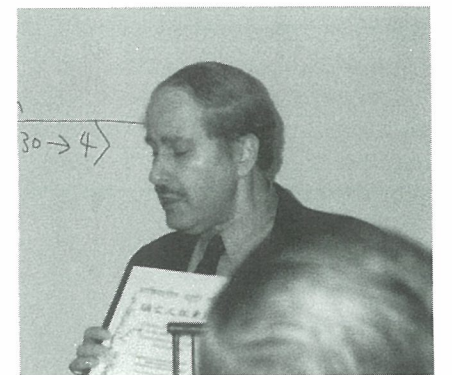
"What I'd really like to do," he says, "is to bring contemporary and classical Japanese theater here."

TWO HONG KONG SEQUELS TO HARVARD UNIVERSITY'S 1992 "JEWS IN CHINA" CONFERENCE

by Jonathan Goldstein
Harvard University Fairbank Center/
West Georgia College

On August 23, 1993, two scholarly sequels to Harvard University Fairbank Center's "Jews in China" conference were held in Hong Kong.

The first occurred at the International Congress of Asian and North African Studies (ICANAS) at the University of Hong Kong. ICANAS' quadrennial meeting is the largest international gathering of Asianists and traditionally attracts large numbers of Chinese, Japanese, Australians and Israelis. The Sino-Judaic seminar held at ICANAS in 1993 went beyond the 1992 Harvard conference in that in Hong Kong a comparison was made between Jewish diasporas in China and Chinese communities of Southeast Asia. Anthony J.S. Reid of the Australian National University and Jonathan Goldstein opened the ICANAS seminar with theoretical overviews of ways of comparing entrepreneurial minorities. Presentations followed on specific aspects of Sino-Judaic or overseas Chinese communal history. Association for Asian Studies Bibliographer Frank Joseph Shulman described research tools he



Association for Asian Studies bibliographer Frank Joseph Shulman describes Directory of individuals interested in the Jews of Asia. Photo courtesy of Jonathan Goldstein.

his kind help in checking this paper; Irene Eber, Professor at the Institute of Eastern Asian Languages, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, made comments which modify a few words in the paper.

2 See Donald Leslie: 'The K'aifeng Jew Chao Ying-ch'eng and his Family', *Studies of the Chinese Jews*, Hyman Kublin edit, New York, 1971, p. 144

3 Li An-hau: "The Jews in the Ancient China", *Mingzu Jiacyue* (Education of the Minorities), Chengdu, No. 2, 1986, p. 45

4 Many different sources, mainly the genealogies kept by the descendants of Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din have described this historical event. See Ma Zhu's *Qingzhen Zhinan* (A Guide to Islam), reprinted in 1885, reedited by Xining in 1989, p. 26; *Liu Fa-xiang: Xiangyang Wang Fu Dian Gongji* (Prince Xiangyang, Pacificator of Yunnan), Kunming printed in 1684; *Saidianchi Zhangsiding Jiapu* (Genealogical Tree of Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din) Quoted from *Yunnan Huizu Shehui Lishi Diacha* (Investigations to Society and History of the Hui in Yunnan), Kunming, 1985, vol. 2, pp. 13-44; *Zhengshi Jiapu Shouxu* (Preface of the Lineagy of Zheng Clan), a manuscript, cited from *Lun Zheng He Xia Xiyang* (On Zheng He's Journal to Indian Ocean) Beijing, 1985, pp. 22-24 etc. papers.

5 Rashid al-Din: *The Successors of Genghis Khan*, Translated by John Andrew Boyle, New York, 1971, p. 6 See "Studies of Religions, the Eight" *Xinzuan Yunnan Tongzhi* (A Newly Compiled General Annual of Yunnan), vol. 108, pp. 17-18. The recording was extracted from *Yishibao*, a newspaper in Kunming, on "Religion and Culture", No. 15th new issue, April 2, 1938

7 Donald Leslie: 'The K'aifeng Jew Chao Ying-ch'eng and his Family', *Studies of the Chinese Jews*, Hyman Kublin edit, New York, 1971, p. 137. But in his other book *The Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book of the Jewish Community of K'aifeng*, Li Guangg-zuo's career as the Supervisor of Education in Yunnan is not mentioned. See his book, *ibid*, Canberra, 1984, p. 195.

8 In the book *Studies of the Chinese Jews* edited by Hyman Kublin, it said: "The most interesting point is that the Chinese Jews designated the Rabbi by the Persian word *ustad* ('teacher,' 'master'), used in the same sense by the Persian Jews; thus, our earliest inscription speaks of a Lie-wei Wu-se-ta, "Rabbi Levi." (*ibid*, New York, 1971, p. 164)

9 "The Fourteenth: Pray Forgive for Parents", *Zeyao Zhujie Zaxue* (The Selected Annotations to the Miscellaneous Knowledges), rectified by Ma You-Lin, printed in Chengdu in 1888, reprinted in Beijing in 1982 by the Islamic Association of China, p. 151.

10 Coggin Brown: "A Lisu Jew's Harp from Yunnan", *Journal & Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. VI, No. 11, Dec. 1910, p. 589.

11 See "Biography of Kublai Khan", and "Biography of Buluheda", *Yuanshi* (A History of the Yuan Dynasty), composed by Song Lian etc. reprinted by the Chinese Printing House, Beijing, 1976, vol. 2, p. 269, vol. 8, p. 2543 and vol. 11, p. 3208.

12 Yang Zhi-jiu: "A Further Probe to the Question of Tanmachi Army", *Mingzu Yanjiu* (Studies of Ethnology), no. 1, 1981, p. 23

13 For term of *Semu Ren*, there are two explanations for its definition: one is referring to its literal meaning, namely, the peoples with the coloured eyes, specially the blue eyes; another also with its literal meaning is the various registered peoples. Anyway both the definitions hold *Semu Ren* were the people included the Muslims, Christians and Jews, etc. Foreigners migrated from Central Asia and the southwestern Asia served in the Mongol armies after the Mongols conquered the above regions.

14 "Samarkand", *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Jerusalem, 1971, vol. 14, pp. 785-9

15 "Bukharah", *ibid*, vol. 4, p. 1470

16 According to *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, "there was a large Jewish community in Herat".

17 See *Yunnan Huizu Shehui Lishi Diaocha* (Investigations to the Society and History of Hui in Yunnan), Kunming, 1985-1987, vols. 1-4

18 Raphael Israeli: "Islam and Judaism in China: The Merger of Two Cultural Sub-systems", *Asian Profile*,

vol. 5, No. 1, p. 42

19 See "Biography of Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din", *Yuanshi* (A History of the Yuan Dynasty), composed by Song Lian etc., reprinted by the Chinese Printing House, Beijing, 1976, vol. 10, pp. 3063-6.

20 "Regulations of the Census Register, Marriage", *Daming Huidian* (The Collected Decrees of the Great Ming Empire), Peking, 1587, vol. 163, p. 22

21 "Part Twenty-two: the Ministry of Revenue, Miscellaneous Taxes", *Yuan Dianzhang* (Decrees and Regulations of the Yuan Dynasty), cited from *Huizu, Huijiao, Huiming Lunji* (Treatises of Hui People, Islam, and Muslims), edited by Bai Shou-yi & Jin Ji-tang, Hong Kong, 1974, p. 10

22 Fu Tong-Xian: *Zhongguo Huijiaoshi* (A History of Islam in China), Taiwan, 1968, p. 224

SJI ARCHIVES STARTED MATERIALS SOUGHT

Through special arrangements with the Hoover Institution Archives of Stanford University, the Sino-Judaic Institute has set up its own archives. This means that those of you with archival materials on Jewish life in China, such as organizational documents, personal papers, newspapers, magazines, commercial histories, etc., may donate them to SJI for preservation at the Hoover Institution Archives. Access to your materials will be strictly controlled, both by your wishes and by the rules of the Archives, but in general they will be available for scholarly research. For more information about donating materials to our archives, contact the SJI office.

JUST WHO ARE THE SHINLUNG?

by Jack Bresler
reprinted from the
[Amishav USA](#), Autumn 1993

Background

The Shinlung are a group of tribes of approximately 2 million people that reside in several northeastern Indian states, including Manipur, Mizoram, Assam and Nagaland. They also reside in the Chin mountains of Burma and the Chittagong tracts of Bangladesh. "Shinlung" is the Chinkuki word for "cave", while some say Shinlung means "closed valley." The Shinlung have also been called "Mizos," from the state of Mizoram, but "mizos" also happens to mean "spread out" in Hebrew.

Members of the Shinlung tribe believe they are descended from Menashe, and many wish to come back to their true Jewish roots and

migrate to Israel. About 5,000 to 10,000 of these tribe members are actively involved in practicing Judaism, trying to follow the Torah and perform the mitzvot. But these members of the Shinlung say they find it difficult to live as observant Jews in their local setting.

The Shinlung were "discovered" about 100 years ago by Christian missionaries, who became excited when they realized that these people were probably Jews since they had customs very similar to the Jews, and felt they had the chance to convert these Jews to Christianity. With the help of British troops, these missionaries were able to rob the Shinlung of their religious treasures and destroy the Shinlung religious hierarchy, thus preventing their religious leaders and people from performing their own Jewish religious customs and practices.

One problem the Shinlung face is that their neighbors deride them for acting like Moslems (such as wearing kipot) in an area where Moslems are hated. It was recently reported that in Burma huge numbers of Moslem villages were destroyed and their populations killed, forced into manual labor, or deported to Bangladesh. It has also been reported that members of the Shinlung tribe are sometimes murdered by other inhabitants of the area. Another problem the Shinlung face is not being accepted as "real Jews" and not being given priority over non-Jews in studying at training facilities such as the ORT in India.

Customs

The Shinlung call their god Y'wa, although some use the term Pathien. They have feast days corresponding to the Jewish holidays and an elaborate system of animal sacrifices resembling the Jewish sacrificial system. They practiced levirate marriage (a man marries his deceased brother's widow), buried their dead simply (no cremations) and maintained the patriarchal system of inheritance. On the eighth day a newborn boy was sanctified. They also slaughtered an animal and drained its blood before eating it, and wore blue and white tsitsit.

At the heart of the Shinlungs' identification with Judaism is the belief that all 2 million are descendants

CONTACTS BETWEEN JEWISH AND INDO-TIBETAN CIVILIZATIONS

(continued from page 1)

It was relatively recently that we forgot one another. With the rise of European empires came a division of the world into a mutually-inscrutable "east" and "west." But "east and west" are recent fabrications. Underlying this convenient, political deception is a continuity of cross-fertilization dating back thousands of years. Before the coming of the Europeans in the sixteenth century, a constant flow of goods and ideas followed caravan routes and monsoon winds, from India and China to Israel and Greece. The historic Tibetan-Jewish dialogue during October, 1990, was not the beginning of something new, but the rediscovery and celebration of these ancient linkages.

Hints in the Hebrew Bible

The First Book of Kings and Second Chronicles describe the opulence of the tenth-century BCE Court of King Solomon, an opulence which the Bible suggests derived from the India trade. I Kings 10:20² reads

And all king Shelomo's [Solomon's] drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Levanon were of pure gold; none were of silver: that was considered nothing in the days of Shelomo. For the king had at sea a ship of Tarshish with a ship of Hiram: once in three years the ship of Tarshish came, bringing gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks. So king Shelomo exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.

No one knows with certainty the referent of the name, Tarshish. Was it the personal name of a shipping magnate, or was it a type of ship?³ Was it a port in the Yemen, where goods from India were received and then sent by camel caravan to Israel, Egypt, and later Greece? Or north-east Africa, or even Spain? Or was it an Indian port, as suggested by three Hebrew words of obvious Indian origin: *shenhabim*, ivory, a literal translation of the Sanskrit *ibha-danda*, "elephant's tooth"; *qopeyim*, apes,

from the Tamil *kopi*; and *tukiyim*, peacocks, from the Tamil *tuki*.⁴ Where was the Ofir mentioned in II Chronicles 8:18? Might it be the Indian port of Supara, near the mouth of the Indus River?

The Evidence from the Jataka

We find a parallel reference to this ancient sea trade in the *Baveru Jataka*, a Buddhist text which refers to ancient trade between India and Babylon, *Baveru* in Sanskrit according to some scholars.⁵ In this text, which was probably redacted between the fifth and first centuries BCE but which recounts events much earlier, we read ". . . of Indian merchants who took periodic voyages to the land of *Baveru* (Babylonia)." Similarly, in the *Kevaddhu Sutta*, a Pali text which according to Buddhist tradition was spoken by the Buddha during the sixth century BCE and which was redacted during the first century BCE, ". . . we read of how long ago merchants sailed far out of sight from the coast, taking 'shore-sighting birds', which were released from time to time, in order that they might guide the mariners to land."⁶ Not only is the verse reminiscent of the Biblical Noah story (Gen. 6:9-11:32), but these Buddhist texts tend to indicate a much earlier use of the Indian Ocean sea lanes than is commonly believed to have been the case.

There is one more connection between King Solomon and the Buddha, this found in the *Mahoshadha Jataka*, where we read about a *yaksini* (demoness) who stole a baby from its mother, intending to eat it. The mother confronted the *yaksini*, but was rebuked by the demoness who claimed the baby as her own. Arguing, they happened to pass the judgment hall of the Maharaja of Kasi (Benares) who was none other than the Buddha in a previous birth. The text reads:

He [the Maharhja] heard the noise, sent for them, inquired into the matter, and asked them whether they would abide by his decision. And they agreed. Then he had a line drawn on the ground; and told the yakshini to take hold of the child's arms, and the mother to take hold of its legs, and said "The child shall be hers who drags him over the line."

But as soon as they pulled at him, the mother, seeing how he suffered, grieved as if her heart would break. And letting him go,

she stood there weeping . . .

Then he said, "Whom do you think is the mother? She who has the child in her arms, or she who has let go?"

And they answered, "She who has let go is the mother."

The tale concludes happily. The child was returned to the rightful mother and the remorseful yaksini vowed to follow the five basic ethical precepts of the Buddha.⁷

The legend of the Buddha, of course, is strikingly similar to the judgment tale of King Solomon (Kings 3:16-28):

Then came two women, that were harlots, to the king [Shelomo], and stood before him. And the one woman said, "O my Lord, I and this woman dwell in one house; and I was delivered of a child with her in the house. And it came to pass the third day after I was delivered, that this woman was delivered also . . . And this woman's child died in the night; because she lay upon it. And she arose at midnight, and took my son from beside me, while the handmaiden slept, and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom. And when I arose in the morning to give my child suck, behold; it was dead; but when I had looked closely at it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, that I did bear." And the other woman said, "No; but the living child is my son and the dead one is thy son . . ." Then said the king, "The one says, 'This is my son that lives, and thy son is dead'; and the other says, 'No; but thy son is dead and my son is the living.'" "And the king said, "Bring me a sword." And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, "Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other." Then spoke the woman whose child was the living one to the king, for her love was enkindled towards her son, and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, but do not slay it." But the other said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it." Then the king answered and said, "Give her the living child, and do not slay it; she is the mother." And all Yisra'el heard of the judgment which the

king had judged; and they feared the king; for they saw the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment. So king Shelomo was king over all Yisra'el.

The Buddhist tale comes from a very popular genre of literature known as the *Jataka*, or birth-story. These homilies are very beloved in all Buddhist countries, told and retold from generation to generation. They are believed to have been spoken by the Buddha himself during the sixth century BCE, which would make them about one hundred years younger than the Book of Kings is believed to be. As usual, however, matters are not quite so simple. The Solomon story, according to Jewish tradition, related events of the tenth century BCE, and the Buddhist *Jataka* literature was not written down until the first century BCE at the earliest. All of this makes it impossible to say with any certainty who is borrowing from whom, or whether both Jews and Buddhists were borrowing from a yet older, common source, or whether this striking similarity was simply coincidental.

However, there is another very significant *Jataka* connection which links Buddhists with Jews, this one very much later and quite accessible to historical inquiry. The entire *Jataka* literature was made known to the western world by Jewish merchants of the early middle ages. The pioneering scholars of Palli and early Buddhist literature, Thomas William Rhys Davids, wrote somewhat condescendingly on this subject in 1880.⁸

[The Jews] were naturally attracted by a kind of literature such as this—Oriental in morality, amusing in style, and perfectly free from Christian legend and from Christian dogma. It was also the kind of literature which travellers would most easily become acquainted with, and we need not therefore be surprised to hear that a Jew, named Symeon Seth, about 1080 A.D., made the first translation into a European language, viz. into modern Greek. Another Jew, about 1250, made a translation of a slightly different recension . . . into Hebrew; and a third, John of Capua, turned this Hebrew version into Latin between 1263 and 1278. . . At about the same time as the Hebrew version, another was made

direct from the Arabic into Spanish, and a fifth into Latin; and from these five versions translations were afterwards made into German, Italian, French, and English. The title of the second Latin version just mentioned is very striking—it is "Æsop the Old."

To complete a cycle which reveals not only the sustained cultural intercourse between India and the west, but also the pivotal Jewish role in that intercourse, late last century Æsop's fables were translated from English into Sanskrit,⁹ a return to their original cultural and linguistic home.

Early Jewish Historical Writing

There are references to the ancient linkages between India and Israel in Jewish historical writings, as well as in the Talmud, the authoritative rabbinic compositions of the first through sixth centuries CE. Of Jewish historical writers from ancient times, the preeminent was Josephus, the first century Hellenized Jew who left us some of our best knowledge of the late Second Temple period.

Josephus is by no means an entirely reliable source. It is said that he was as likely to inject his views of what ought to have happened, as he was to report accurately what did happen. Therefore we cannot claim any literate sense of history from him. What we get is a good sense of his cultural milieu, the assumptions his society held, and the general world-view he imbibed.

Of particular interest for us is Josephus' account of the martyrdom at Masada. He put his views into the speeches of Eleazar, the leader of the rebels at the impregnable, hilltop fortress at Masada, but who were under Roman siege. Dramatically, as the Romans were about to overrun the defiant Jews, Eleazar argued that mass martyrdom was preferable to capture. He presented a variety of arguments, but the one which convinced his audience to take the fateful step was a comparison of Jews and Indians. Josephus had Eleazar saying:

We . . . who have been brought in in a discipline of our own, ought to become an example to others of our readiness to die. Yet if we do stand in need of foreigners to support us in this matter let us regard those Indians who profess the exercise of philosophy, for these good men do but unwillingly

undergo the time of life, and look upon it as a necessary servitude, and make haste to let their souls loose from their bodies: nay, when no misfortune presses them to do it, nor drives them upon it, these have such a desire for a life of immortality that they tell other men beforehand that they are about to depart; and nobody hinders them, but every one thinks them happy men, and gives them letters to be carried to their familiar friends [that are dead], so firmly and certainly do they believe that souls converse with one another [in the other world]. So when these men have heard all such commands that were to be given them, they deliver their body to the fire; and in order to their getting their soul a separation from the body in the greatest purity, they die in the midst of hymns of commendations made to them; for their dearest friends conduct them to their death more readily than do any of the rest of mankind conduct their fellow-citizens when they are going on a very long journey, who at the same time weep on their own account, but look upon the others as happy persons, as so soon to be made partakers of the immortal order of beings. Are not we, therefore, ashamed to have lower notions than the Indians/ and by our cowardice to lay a base reproach upon the laws of our country, which are so much desired and imitated by all mankind!¹⁰

Josephus wrote that the Jews at Masada were convinced by this argument, and the martyrdom then proceeded. But this tantalizing story raises nearly as many questions as it answers: How could Josephus have known what Eleazar said? Were there survivors of Masada who gave reports, as his translator, William Whiston,¹¹ suggests? Was he describing events, or was he propounding his view of what events should have been? How did he become knowledgeable about Indian beliefs and religious practices?

Some scholars emphasize that Josephus was a very Hellenized Jew, as were many from the educated classes of his day. He modeled his histories after the Greek histories, especially Thucydides, and the Greeks held India in the highest re-

However, Yunnan was quite different from Kaifeng. A peripheral province, it was the poorest and most underdeveloped region in China even as it is today. The majority peoples in Yunnan up until the Republic were the aboriginal tribes. In the Mongol time, the native peoples in Yunnan were Lo Sham (today's Thai) and Kawa etc. They believed in primitive religions or worshipped totems and practised "savage customs" according to Chinese historical sources which always described them as "barbarous peoples". When Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din Umar was nominated by Kublai Khan as governor of Yunnan, the aboriginal peoples in Yunnan at that time did not have their own written languages, no knowledge of social etiquette and even¹⁹ did not know how to cultivate crops. The gap between the Jews and them in religion, culture and social customs was so wide that it was impossible for the Jews to adopt the tradition and way of life of aboriginal peoples in Yunnan, or to be assimilated with them. But the Muslims in Yunnan were the ruling class and enjoyed the political and economical privileges of society in the Yuan and Ming dynasties. As the pioneers and forces of progress, the Muslims even promoted many social and cultural reforms to improve the social life and to integrate Yunnan society with the superior culture of inland China. The Jews were catalogued by the Mongol empire as one tribe of "the Semu Ren" and were granted the same privileges as the Muslims. The number of the Jews in Yunnan was much smaller than in Kaifeng, if in fact they were there.

From our knowledge of the theories of anthropology and ethnology, it is extremely difficult for a tiny minority to survive and resist assimilation when surrounded by a strong, powerful majority. After a long historical transformation, the Jews who had mingled with the Muslims in the migrations to Yunnan found no other choice except to melt with the Muslims who had traditions and living customs close with the Jews and shared the monotheistic idea in religious belief. The assimilation happened perhaps after the first Ming emperor issued an edict which prohibited the marriage among the *Semu Ren*,²⁰ and prohibited the *Semu Ren*

from using their own languages, wearing their national clothes and observing their special customs. Such severe restrictions by the empire accelerated the process of the Jews being absorbed by the Muslims in Yunnan.

Another possibility is that the Jews had merged with the Muslims in Central Asia before they were forced to migrate to Yunnan in the Mongol dynasty. According to *Yuanshi*, there were some Jews who served in the Yuan imperial administration with Muslim names like Alawa al-Din, Mahmud, and Yusuf etc.²¹ As we know, the author of *Jama Talikh*, Rashid al-Din, was a Jew who converted to Islam, and served as the premier minister in the Persian Il-Khan dynasty (1256-1349).

Hardoon and the Quran's Translation in Shanghai

Hardoon, a British Jew whose original country was Iraq and who migrated to Shanghai at the end of the 19th century, donated a large sum of money for a Chinese translation of the Quran in 1927. Hardoon was the richest Jew engaged in real estate in Shanghai. Nearly all the old large buildings on Nanking Street, the most commercial center in Shanghai, were owned by him. Hardoon Garden was one of the most beautiful gardens in Shanghai. Perhaps because he developed a close link and friendship with Muslims in his business career, Hardoon invited several scholars to do the Quranic translation work which began in May of 1927. Akhond Li Nu-Chen first rendered the Arabic Quran into Chinese, then Fan Hong-Fu, a Chinese linguist, and Xie Zhi-Ming, a scholar of Arabic language jointly checked Li's translation version. After that, Hardoon proof-read their work on the basis of the English version done by Muhammed Ali. About 20 volumes of the Quran had been translated into Chinese when Mr. Fan died, so Fan's work was continued by Zhong Ren-Fu who polished the whole version. Mr. Xie carefully examined and checked the work once more. The translation was completed in two years. This Chinese version of the Quran was published in Shanghai in March, 1930. The new version of the Quran sponsored by Mr. Hardoon was mainly translated from the Arabic version but at the same time referred to the English version and the Japanese version translated by Sakamoto Kenichi. A Chinese Muslim scholar

recalled that the newly published Chinese Quran was a fine printed book with an elegant hard cover. However, since it had many points which did not agree with the original meaning of the Arabic version, the Hui Muslims did not hold it to be a standard version Quran.²² So it was not widely used by the Chinese Muslims.

A Summary

I have produced these notes during the period of my studies in the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for Advancement of Peace, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. They do not represent a substantial study on the Jews in China since I am not a specialist. It is perhaps too early to claim that we know all the facts. But if some information I have offered is useful for scholars in the academic world, I think it worthwhile that the following points are underlined:

First, the date of the Jews entering China is a little earlier than the popular hypotheses in academic circles if what I have put forward gains confirmation from further scholastic studies.

Second, the date of the Jews entering Yunnan must be much earlier than the established gazetteer recordings of the scholars since more than a few proofs and traces can affirm this fact. The Jews not only entered Yunnan, but also in fact settled down in Yunnan permanently. The possibility of the existence of Jewish communities is very strong and the hypothesis of the building of synagogues and having rabbis to lead prayers cannot be ruled out in Yunnan.

Third, different from the Jews in Kaifeng who chose to melt into Chinese culture, the Yunnanese Jews mixed into the Muslim ranks because of the special social environment and conditions.

Fourth, the publication of one of the earliest Chinese versions of the Quran was supported by a Jew through his large financial donation and his close relations with the Muslims.

The last two points show that the Jews and Muslims in particular areas of China could enjoy friendly and harmonious relations in past centuries.

Footnotes:

1 The paper is written during my study at The Harry S. Truman Research Institute for Advancement of Peace when the Columbia Foundation granted me a scholarship. I am deeply indebted to Lachlan Shaw, the journalist of the *Canberra Times* in Jerusalem, for

the clergymen from Yunnan to take the position of Imam or Akhond at the mosques in Chengdu because the Islamic education in Yunnan had ascended to a very high level, and the Yunnanese *akhonds* were well known for their Quranic and Arabic knowledge. Even some mosques in Chengdu were built with funds donated by the Yunnanese Muslims since many Yunnanese youths passed by Chengdu on their way to north-western China for religious study. So Chengdu actually was the hub of communications between the Muslims in Yunnan with their brothers in Gansu, Shannxi and Chinese Eastern Turkistan. It was the relay station for exchange activities of Islamic education between Yunnan and northwestern China. Both regions were the main centers of religious education for the Chinese Muslims in past centuries. By these contacts, the Yunnanese Muslims had a strong influence over the Muslims in Sichuan.

But the importance of this quotation in the book is a clear sign that some Muslims in Yunnan had Jewish parents or Roman Catholic parents. **D.** Another evidence of Jews living in Yunnan was one of the Jewish musical instruments being found in Western Yunnan. A British man in his missionary work at the beginning of this century discovered that "a bamboo Jew's harp of peculiar construction is a favourite musical instrument of the Lisu tribes of Yunnan and the Burma-China frontier."¹⁰ Although the Lisu people, an ethnic minority in Western Yunnan, used the Jew's harp, given the consideration that in this area in which the Lisu inhabited also lived the Yunnanese Hui and that this area was a location on the passage of Spice Trade between the Near East and Inland China, can we speculate that it was the result of exchanges and interactions of different cultures? The way of Spice Trade began at the seaports on the Persian Gulf on the one end, through ship's voyage to the coast of Burma, then up along Irrawaddy River at the Bay of Bengal to Mandalay, even to Bhamo beyond on the other end. The cargo was unloaded there and was transported to Western Yunnan from which to the center of China. The interesting thing is that the Yunnanese Muslims took

the journey in opposite direction for their pilgrimage to Mecca begun in the middle of the Ming dynasty. Maybe there were some links of the Jewish merchants in the Middle East with the Lisu or the Jews who mixed with the Muslims contacted with this ethnic minority in such an historical activity. **Jews Levied into the Mongol Armies and Settled in Yunnan as Farming Soldiers**

In my paper "Origins of the Hui in Yunnan, A Historical Survey", I have cited many quotations recorded in *Yuanshi* (A History of the Yuan Dynasty) about the locations of the homeland of the Muslims who were enforced by the Mongols to migrate to Yunnan in the 13th century after the Mongols conquered the Khwarizm state, the Abbas Caliphate in Bagdad and other Islamic states in Central Asia. Based on a lot of historical data from the annals of the Chinese empires, the gazetteers of the Yunnan local administration, the lineages and some scattered Arabic and Persian recordings which have been translated into English, my conclusion of the origins of the Hui in Yunnan is that the forefathers of the Muslim Huis in Yunnan were mainly Turkish people and Persians who came from Central Asia and the northeastern part of today's Iran rather than many of the Huis' view that their origin is from Arabia. Although there were some Muslims from Arabia, their numbers were very small, even less if we compare them with the Mongol numbers in the forebears of the Hui. In my textual research work, I find two pieces of information that two detachments of the *Tanmachi* Army were deployed in Jinchi (today's Baoshan), a region in the western Yunnan bordering Burma for re-enforcements in quelling restless aboriginal tribes.¹¹ *Tanmachi* in Mongolian means "gather, come together".¹² In the 13th century, the term *Tanmachi* Army referred to a pioneer troop composed by different tribesmen, not only from the Mongol tribes but also included the *Semu Ren* who were levied into the imperial troops after the Mongols conquered Central Asia and Southwestern Asia. The composition of *Semu Ren*¹³ was very complex, as they were drawn from thirty-two tribes and among them there were Muslims, Christians and Jews. Since the regions in Central Asia conquered by the Mongols had considerable Jew-

ish communities, according to *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, for instance: Samarkand¹⁴, Bukharah¹⁵ and Herat¹⁶ etc., we have every reason to assume that Jews were also drafted into the *Tanmachi* Army which was deployed to Yunnan as one of the widespread military campaigns launched against the Chinese empire by the Mongols. Further evidence of this view is the fact that not a few cultural traces connected with the Persian and the Central Asian Jews have been found among the Muslims in Yunnan, and that Baoshan was an area with a concentrated Muslim population before the Hui Uprising in the 19th century. Coincidentally, the Huis today in Baoshan call their Imams *ustad*.¹⁷

The Social Background of the Jews Merged into the Muslims in Yunnan

Why were Jews absorbed into the Muslims in Yunnan? It is well known that the Jews in Kaifeng melted into the Chinese society and became the Chinese instead of Muslim Huis, though there were big Hui communities with six mosques in Kaifeng. To answer this question we must refer to the differences between the social context of Yunnan and that of Kaifeng.

Kaifeng was the capital of the North Song empire, and located in the center of China where the Han culture was in the overwhelming position. The Han literati class and gentry in Kaifeng surely were the ruling class and elite group. But the Muslims were the minority and their culture was quite alien to the Han Chinese people there. Although the Jews shared more similarities in religious tradition, cultural and social customs with Islam, in the environment of the religious toleration adopted by the Chinese regime, the Jews more possibly preferred to adopt the Chinese tradition than the Islamic tradition because of "the memory of their subordinate *dhimmi* status in the Islamic world"¹⁸. As a small group among the minorities, the Jews were quickly assimilated by the Chinese by participating in important social activities like the imperial examination and serving in the imperial civil administration etc. As a result, such an adoption of Chinese culture by the Jews could have brought a significant change in their social status and material life.

guard as the home of the greatest philosophers. In both Greek and Indian literature, we read of exciting philosophic dialogues occurring regularly, especially in the wake of Alexander of Macedon's invasion of India during the fourth century BCE. One of the best known of these ancient dialogues was recorded in the Buddhist text, the *Milindapanha*, in which a Greco-Bactrian king posed questions to the Buddhist monk, Nagasena.¹² Therefore, it could be argued, inciting India as the paradigm of philosophic courage, Josephus was doing no more than reflecting a Hellenized world-view. On the other hand, if there had been such sustained commerce between India and ancient Israel for so long—despite an interruption caused by the breakdown of the Persian Empire during the fourth century BCE—then Josephus' account might not be entirely Hellenized in its viewpoint. Whether via Greece or via direct contact, it is clear that Jews during the late Second Temple period were aware of Indian spirituality and regarded it highly.

Scattered Talmudic References

The Talmud contains four references to India. The first refers to the ancient pepper trade. Commenting on the Biblical verse—"I planted vineyards: I made gardens and orchards, and I planted trees of all kind of fruits." (Ecclesiastes 2:5)—to which was added "even peppers," Rabbi Abba Bar Kahana asked: "Solomon made use of winds (*ruhot*) and he sent to India."¹³ Barbara Johnson suggested that *ruhot* ought to be read as "winds" rather than as "spirits," as is common practice. She argued that Rabbi Kahana ". . . is thought to have come from Babylonia, so he must have been . . . aware of the Indian origin of pepper. Though *ruhot* is interpreted and translated by all the commentators as 'spirit', I would suggest that it could also refer, in its more common meaning of 'winds', to the Hippalus monsoon winds."¹⁴

A second Talmudic reference to India comes from a later era. In *Pirquei Avot*,¹⁵ the term *pilpul* first was used for the sharpening of the wits through vociferous debate, a characteristic of traditional Jewish education, or

yeshiva education, to this day. (Intriguingly, among all the world's religious traditions, only Judaism and Tibetan Buddhism have developed debate as a religious practice.) The Hebrew term for debate, *pilpul*, derives from the Hebrew for pepper, *pipel*, which is the Sanskrit *pippali*. Pepper was the most prized product of India in the Greek and Roman Empires. In fact, an alternative word for *pippali* is *yavana-priya*, "beloved of the Greeks/Romans," and it is said that the Roman Empire bankrupted itself due to its love of pepper imported from India, which quite literally was worth its weight in gold. Certainly during medieval times, and quite likely from ancient times as well, much of the pepper trade between the Malabar Coast of India and the west was in the hands of Jewish traders at Cranganore, and later Cochin.

In the early tenth century, the great rationalist interpreter of Torah, Saadia ben Joseph (882-942), known as Saadia Gaon, made passing reference to the Jewish India trade: ". . . one will find that the ignorant people of our town [Sura in Babylonia] are of the opinion that everyone who goes to India becomes rich . . . There exist many more ridiculous opinions like these"¹⁶ Finally, the great eleventh century French commentator, Rabbi Shelomo bar Isaac (1040-1105), better known by the acrostic, Rashi, mentioned one Rabbi Judah from India, whom Rashi considered a convert. Several Talmudic travellers' tales were attributed to this Indian rabbi.¹⁷

Christian Sources

Jews have lived in India since early in the common era, and perhaps even earlier. Indian Christians tell their founder, the Apostle Thomas, came to India in the year 52 CE because he wanted to tell his fellow Jews about his purported messiah. While the literal truth of this story is doubtful, nevertheless the discovery of the monsoon winds in the year 45 CE made such travel possible and greatly enhanced trade. The fall of Jerusalem to the Romans in 70 CE propelled Jews to seek new homes spanning the globe, including India.

The third century Christian bishop of Caesaria, Eusebius, wrote of Jewish settlements in India as early as the first century. In his *Ecclesiastical*

History, he discussed an Alexandrian stoic philosopher by the name of Pantaenus, who "was sent as far as India" to evangelize "the heathen in the East." Pantaenus, also known as the tutor to Clement of Alexandria¹⁸ and Origen,¹⁹ made his journey just after the reign of Marcus Aurelius, which would place him in India around 181 CE. Eusebius continued: ". . . he found there that among some of those there who had known Christ, the Gospel of Matthew had preceded his coming; for Bartholomew, one of the apostles, had preached to them and had left them the writing of Matthew in Hebrew letters, which was preserved . . ." According to G.A. Williamson, "This seems to imply that Bartholomew found a Jewish community."²¹

While Eusebius' comment raises many questions, at a minimum we may gather that during the third century in Israel, it was believed that there had been Jews living in India for at least two centuries. This is the earliest bit of external evidence for Jewish settlements in India. Not too much later, the fourth-century Christian St. Jerome mentioned Jewish trading colonies which stretched from Mauritania in Africa to India.²²

Medieval Links in Trade and Culture

Jews were a trading link between Christian Europe and Hindu-Buddhist India. In those days, trade carried with it culture. For example, an eighth-century Muslim caliph named Es-Saffah sent a Jew to India to learn mathematics.²³ Because of his mission, the western world came to learn about integral numbers, the basis of modern arithmetic. In fact, in the west we misname our numerical notation system as "Arabic numerals" when, in fact, they were brought by Jews from India via the Middle East to Europe; they get their name from a mistakenly perceived Middle Eastern source. The ancient spice trade followed land and sea routes between the Middle East and south India. The famous silk routes, which may date from as early as the second century, linked Europe with China. Muslim travellers' diaries from the ninth and tenth century testify to the prominent role of Jews in both these trades.

Although Christian missionaries proclaimed the discovery of a Jewish community in Tibet as early as 1833,²⁴

these early reports were without foundation. Missionary Thomas Torrance caused quite a stir among the Royal Asiatic Society of Shanghai when he enthusiastically reported that the Chiang tribes of western Sichuan were a lost Israelite tribe.²⁵ Torrance promulgated his "discovery" in 1939, a tale which was put to rest only very recently.²⁷

Despite enthusiastic tales of Jews on Tibet's borders, it is a curiosity that we know of no Jewish settlements in Tibet proper. Part of the problem is that Indic languages do not distinguish among "western peoples." The Sanskrit *yavana* is the term for all "foreigners," even though the term originally meant any Greek.²⁸ We do, however, know about Jewish settlements virtually encircling Tibet.

Jews to the South, in India

According to indigenous traditions, there have been Jewish communities in India since the beginning of the first millennium. When the Second Temple was destroyed by Roman conquerors and Jews were dispersed to the four corners of the world in 70 CE, a small colony near Cochin, on the Malabar Coast, was established. Cochin, near the very southern tip of India, is very far from Tibet. Yet it is intriguing that when Jews from Amsterdam wrote a letter in the late eighteenth century to Yechezkel Rahabi, leader of Cochin Jewry, one of the questions they posed was whether he knew of Jewish communities in China and Tibet. Rahabi knew of the former, but as to the latter he wrote, "Regarding your query whether there are Jews in Tibet, I beg to inform your Eminence that this place is unknown to us . . ."

Some time later, Jews who may have been fleeing persecution²⁹ in Persia were shipwrecked near Bombay. They became known as the "Bene Israel" and are India's largest Jewish community. Today, Bene Israel are found as far north as Delhi, where they interact well with the capital's Tibetan community.

Later still, Persian-speaking Jews became courtiers of the Mughal emperors at Agra and Delhi. One of them, an eclectic Kabbalist and poet, became tutor to their heir to the Throne, Dara Shukoh, but he and the prince were executed when Aurangzeb seized power in a coup.³⁰ The mystic, Sarmad by name, is assumed by most to have been Muslim, and his popular *dargah* (shrine) is just beside

the main entrance to Delhi's Jama Masjid.

During medieval times, many Jewish traders plied land and sea routes, bringing tin to India for repair and returning west with spices and linen. Their ships plied the seas from Spain to China, visiting ports near Bombay and Cochin, as well as in Ceylon, and were the only group which could " . . . pass with impunity through the otherwise impenetrable barrier which separated Christianity from Islam."³¹ Ibn Battuta, one of the great medieval Muslim geographers, travelled these same routes and described Jewish and Muslim ships unloading and reloading cargo in the thriving harbors of India and China.³²

Arabic-speaking Jews from Iraq came to Indian port cities to seek their fortunes in trade during British times, and at least one of their families traded directly with Tibet through Kalimpong. Those felt hats of which Tibetans were so fond were imported from Italy by the Sopher family of Bombay. Another member of this community, this one a Kabbalist who hailed from the Yemen, made his home in Darjeeling.³³ Hyeem Hyeem was a schochet (ritual slaughterer) and prolific author. Another Jewish mystic of Darjeeling (rDo-rje-gling) was Asher Hallevy (1849-1912), Austrian by birth and cobbler by trade. Among Hallevy's mystical works are an autobiography, a treatise on psychology and religion, a book of visions, and commentaries on Psalms and the Book of Esther.³⁴ Both Hyeem's and Hallevy's manuscripts need to be examined for any mystical cross-fertilization from their Tibetan neighbors in Darjeeling.

Finally, a mysterious group of tribals from the far northeast of India recently have claimed Jewish ancestry. In their legends, they went from ancient Israel to China, and passed through Tibet en route to Mizoram, Burma, and Tripura, where several thousand have recently undergone Orthodox conversions to Judaism.³⁵

Jews to the West, In Kashmir

To the West, there was a Jewish community in Kashmir. Many Kashmiris to this day claim to be descendants of Israel. The great Muslim geographer, al-Beruni, commented on the Jewish presence there: "It is very difficult to have any commerce with [the Kashmiris] . . . In former times they used to allow one or two foreigners to enter their country, particularly Jews, but at present they

do not allow any Hindu whom they do not know personally, to enter, much less other people."³⁶

Interestingly, al-Beruni noted a theological similarity between Judaism and Hinduism, an emphasis on God's transcendent ineffability:

The Hindus begin their books with OM, the word creation . . . The figure of the word OM is ॐ . This figure does not consist of any letters; it is simply an image invented to represent this word, which people use, believing that it will bring them a blessing, and meaning thereby a confession of the unity of God. Similar to this is the manner in which Jews write the name of God, viz. by three Hebrew yods. In the Thora the word is written YHVH and pronounced Adonai; sometimes they also say Yah. The word Adonai, which they pronounce, is not expressed in writing.³⁷

To the North, at Silk Route Oases and in the Court of the Mongols

It is fairly well known that Jews frequented the trading centers along the silk routes, which may have been established as early as the second century CE. Stein reported on a Judeo-Persian document from the very early eighth century found by D.S. Margoliouth at Dandan-Uiliq, near Dunhuang, Turkestan,³⁸ and in the Cave of a Thousand Buddhas at Duanhuang, Pelliot " . . . found a Hebrew prayer written on paper, which the experts also date as 8th century. Because only China had paper at that time, it must have been . . . written by a Jew within China, since it couldn't have come from the outside. These two artifacts prove that in Xinjiang along the Silk Route between Asia and Europe there are traces of Jews in a number of cities, especially in Dunhuang."³⁹

Khotan, a Tibetan provincial center at the time, was such an important trading center that most medieval geographers thought it was Tibet's capital.⁴⁰ A Muslim travelogist of the tenth century mentioned Jews living in that multireligious city: "In 941 a Muslim traveler, Abu Dulaf, came to a tribe in Tubat (probably Tibet, or more specifically the oasis of Hotan [Khotan], which had belonged to Tibet), where he found a large city built of cane, and inhabited also by

nity in Kaifeng in the North Song dynasty (960-1126), we can find without any difficulties that the time of Sofir's arrival coincides roughly with the time of the settling of the Jews in Kaifeng, and the valleys of Huai and Si rivers are close to Kaifeng geographically. Thus the possibility exists that the Jewish community in Kaifeng in the North Song dynasty had links with the Jews who accompanied Sofir to China. We hope more information and historical data will emerge to further justify such an historical hypothesis.

Jews in Yunnan

In Gazetteer of Yunnan Prefecture (Yunnan Fuzhi), and Gazetteer of Yiliang County (Yiliang Xianzhi), the biographies of officials show that the Jews Li Guang-Zuo and Zhao Ying-Dou had served in the civil administration in Yunnan in the early period of the Qing dynasty.⁶ Li was born in Xiangfu in Henan province. In 1649 he passed the imperial examination in the provincial level and in 1660 he was nominated as the Supervisor of Education in Yunnan. He was succeeded by another person in 1662. During his official period, education in Yunnan got a boost, the Gazetteer recorded. Li's Jewish identity is not in doubt since the inscription on a newly set monument in 1663 in Kaifeng's synagogue described his merits as a Jew. Zhao Ying-Dou, the son of Zhao Guang-Yu and the young brother of Zhao Ying-Cheng, was from a famous Jewish family in Kaifeng. In Gazetteer of Yiliang County, Zhao was the county magistrate in 1667. Before that he was the county magistrate of Kunming county from 1663-67. In the same inscription of the monument aforesaid, the merits of the Zhao brothers and their father were praised for their achievements as Jews.

Prof. D. Leslie introduced the information of the two gazetteers in the book on the Chinese Jews edited by Hyman Kublin. However, my hypothesis is that the time of Jews entering Yunnan may have been much earlier. The proofs for this are following:

A. The Yunnanese Muslims were well aware of the contents of Torah (Pentateuch) and *indjil* (Arabic, gospel), the holy scriptures of Judaism in the Ming dynasty 91368-1644) and the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Ma

Zhu, a descendant of Sayyid Ajall, cited several stories from Torah, and made mention several times of Moses, the Prophet of the Jewish religion, in his work Qingzhen Zhinan (A Guide to Islam), which is one of the most famous works written by Chinese Muslim scholars. This at least provides the proof that the Muslims in Yunnan had wide contacts with the Jewish people. If no Jews lived with the Muslims side by side in Yunnan, I cannot see the possibility of such familiarity with the Jewish scripture and legends by the Muslim people in a region remote from the rest of the Islamic world.

B. The Yunnanese Muslims in some areas called their clergymen *ustad*, a Persian word meaning 'teacher' or 'master'. In Central Asia, this word was used by the Persian Jews as a name for their Rabbis⁸, or the guardians of the synagogue. The word itself was rendered from the Persian. Everywhere in China, you find the Chinese Muslims or the Huis named their clergymen '*akhond*', another Persian word (meaning teacher and master, or theologian). So the Yunnan Muslims in some areas using *ustad* is really an abnormal phenomenon. It seems to be possible that the forebears of these Yunnanese Muslims were Jews, and their descendants kept some remaining elements of the Jewish tradition after they were merged into Islam religion and became Muslims. If this hypothesis can be established, usage of *ustad* means that some Jewish rabbis taught in Yunnan, thus indicating a clue that perhaps there were Jewish communities and synagogues in Yunnan.

C. Now we go further to reaffirm the hypothesis of the Jews melting into the Muslim ranks in Yunnan. In southwestern China, a religious book has been circulated and is still very popular among the Jui Muslims. With the title of Zeyao Zhujiexaxue (The Selected Annotations of Miscellaneous Knowledges), the book introduces basic religious knowledge of ritual ablutions, prayer, marriage, funeral services and moral behaviors etc. Many passages of the book are Arabic verses from the Quran, and the Arabic prayer words with Chinese transliteration and Chinese explanations. In a chapter of "Loyalty and Filial Piety", it says to the Hui Muslims whose parents were Jews and Christians:

Although the parents were juhuda (Persian and Turkish: Jews) or tarsan (Persian and Turkish: Christians), you should not be conceited. You should try to pray and forgive your parents. When visiting your parents' tombs, you can weep with the extreme sadness.

Please notice the two words of *juhuda* and *tarsan*, both words are old Persian terms. The first word was used by the Persians to name Jews in the Middle Ages; its Arabic equivalent is *yehuda*. That the Chinese Muslims called Jews by the old Persian words really reflects the historical fact: the forefathers of the Hui mainly were Persians and also Turks who borrowed many Persian words in their cultural contacts with the Persians in a long historical process. The second word *tarsan* is a term describing Christians before the time of Martin Luther's religious reform, so the *tarsan* actually refers to Roman Catholics. In the modern Persian, the word *nasara* is for Christians. So the term *tarsan* also reflects the fact that the forebears of the Hui came to southwestern China in the Yuan dynasty, the time preceding the Protestant movement of Christianity.

Now allow me to say a few words about the background of the above religious pamphlet. The book has been circulated in the Muslim communities in Yunnan and Sichuan provinces at least for three to four centuries according to its preface. It was reprinted in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province in 1888. The author was anonymous. However, Akhond Ma You-Lin who did the proof reading job for this book was from Yunnan, and was invited to and worked in a mosque in Chengdu in the late half of the 19th century. It was very common in later Qing dynasty that many Islamic pamphlets published in Yunnan were reprinted in Chengdu. For example, many religious works written by the great Akhond Ma De-Xin (1794-1874, he had a styled name Ma Fu-Chu which is more familiar to Western scholars), a famous Muslim scholar with more than 30 titles of books in Arabic and Chinese to his name, and one of the main leaders in the Muslim Uprising in the 19th century, were reprinted or published in Chengdu. And usually, the Muslim community in Chengdu invited

he was sent home and was not allowed to return to school for one week.

Shi Zhongyu's grandfather had been a County Mayor. His father died when he was a child.

He is survived by his Han Chinese wife, two sons and a daughter, all married. As descent is patrilineal, his children consider themselves to be Jewish.

Returning regularly to Kaifeng I was struck by Shi's thirst for knowledge of his ancient history and traditions and hope that Kaifeng Jewry will not be forgotten and their descendants will be able to learn about their long and remarkable history and transmit it to their children.

When I was in Kaifeng last summer, Shi Zhongyu's children told me their father had been asking for me every day, knowing of my imminent arrival. He had a stroke two days before I arrived. He lay in a cottage hospital on an iron bed covered with a towel. The temperature was in the 40's. A drop was attached to his arm and an oxygen mask was over his face. He was in a coma. I had brought him a gift of a Menorah and placed it beside his bed, deeply conscious of the symbolism and wanting him to have it as a token of his roots.

This week a letter arrived. He had lost the fight, but I shall long remember the many happy and informative hours we spent in discussion. The pleasure he had when my mother sent him my late father's gold hearing aid to replace his trumpet, and the hospitality he and his family gave me over many years. As with the other Kaifeng Jewish descendants he knew little about Judaism but nevertheless there was this constant desire for knowledge about his rich past.

Shi Zhongyu was cremated and the ashes buried in his family plot where we stood three summers ago amongst the sweet potatoes that grew alongside the ancient burial mounds.

HISTORICAL NOTES ON JEWS & MUSLIMS IN CHINA¹

by Jianping Wang

This paper does not deal with the general history of the Chinese Jewry about which there are many works by both Western and Chinese scholars. In my work of studying the historical texts and records of the Muslim Huis in China in general and in Yunnan society in particular, I have come across a few pieces of material concerning the Jews in Chinese history and their relation with the Chinese Muslims.

The Earliest Date of the Jews Entering China

Generally, the Western academic world refers to the Jewish community in Kaifeng as the earliest Jewish community in China. The time of their arrival was around the 11th century in the reign of the North Song dynasty. In the book edited by Hyman Kublin, *Studies of the Chinese Jews*, one author holds that the ancestors of the Chinese Jews came to China during the Han dynasty, viz, 58-76 A.D. from Persia, according to tradition.² However, one Chinese author writes that it was believed that about several thousand Jews came to China during the period of 25 A.D. to 221 A.D., namely in the East Han dynasty. The first groups of Jews coming to China were merchants from Samarkand in Central Asia and from the region of the Persian Gulf.³ The author does not supply the substantial source citations for such a declaration, but given the context of the Tang dynasty (617-907) in which a large number of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish merchants in Canton and Yangzhou were massacred by the Chinese in a big peasant rebellion which led to social disorder, we perhaps can see a gleam of light shed upon his argument.

The Jews with Sofir's Tribesmen

From a genealogy of Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din, the governor of Yunan province in the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) we learn that Sofir, the grandfather of Sayyid Ajall, in the sixth generation, was the Amir of Bukharah, and he left his country for China in 1070. According to this genealogy, still kept by the descendants of Shams

al-Din in Yunnan in the 1950s, Sofir came to China with his five thousand tribesmen and citizens of Bukharah and many camels for a tribute mission. The true reason for his migration to China is that there was a threat of factional fighting in Bukharah state at that time. To avoid bloodshed, Sofir decided to give up his amirship and move to China for permanent settlement. The Chinese emperor was very glad of Sofir's tribute, and awarded him the title of 'Prince of Tribute', and granted him and his fellows the land in valleys of the Huai and Si rivers in Central China.⁴

The reliability of this sort of genealogy seems to be in doubt, because there are no records in Chinese official annals of the Song dynasty and the subsequent dynasties have not affirmed any such large tribute activity from the foreign countries in Central Asia. However, the hypothesis of Sofir's coming to China with his large group cannot be excluded since many Muslims who scattered in different regions in China had kept similar lineages to that of Sayyid Ajall Shams al-Din for at least three centuries, not only in private genealogies, but also in the printed books and pamphlets published by Chinese Muslim scholars. And the name of one figure among Sayyid Ajall's forefathers descended from Sofir is recorded in Rashid al-Din's book *Jama Talikh* (A Collection of History)⁵ in which the name of Kumaru al-Din was mentioned. Kumaru al-Din was the father of Sayyid Ajall. The same name can be found in the genealogy. Another name of one grand-uncle of Sayyid in the lineagy has been confirmed by a tombstone inscription collected by Qian Da-Xin, a historian in the Mongol dynasty. So we have some reasons to regard the genealogy of Sayyid Ajall as being of historical value.

If that is true, now the concerned question is were there any Jews among the tribesmen of Sofir? The possibility cannot be ruled out.

First, the Bukharah state in which Sofir ruled had very old and big Jewish communities, for example, in cities like Samarkand and Bukharah etc. If Sofir did come to China with his big groups of tribesmen or citizens, it is possible that Jews were mingled among them. If we consider the time and location of the Jewish commu-

inhabited also by Muslims, Jews, Christians, Magians, and Hindus. He also found Jews in neighboring Bahi (Bai or Pima?).⁴¹

Some Jews attained high position at the Mongol court. According to very recent research, a Jew from Shanxi Province named Zhou Zhuhu (Zhou the Jew, derived from Persian) became a close advisor to Genghis Khan during the thirteenth century. Interestingly, we know about Zhou only because of the virtue of his wife, Cui. In *The New Yuan [Dynastic] History*, a nineteenth century work, Cui, a Jewess, is lauded "as the perfect Confucian woman." At the death of her husband, Cui gave away all her possessions, supported herself by spinning and weaving and conducted herself so decorously that later Confucian historians claimed her for as one of their own.⁴²

To the East, in China

As we have seen, there were Jews in the northwestern part of what is today China at least from the eighth century. There were Jews in China proper, as well. A Chinese historian who specializes on the Jews, Pan Guandan, argues for a Jewish presence in Guangzhou (Canton), Ganpu and Hangzhou during the late Tang dynasty, or the ninth century, as well as medieval communities in Ningbo, Beijing, Quanzhou, Ningxia, Yuangzhou and Nanjing, as well as the famous community at Kaifeng, during medieval times.⁴³

Tibet, then, was virtually encircled with Jewish settlements, however small, in India, Kashmir, Turkestan, and China. It appears that Tibet at one time controlled a city, Khotan, with a Jewish community, during the eighth century.

Religious Interactions

All of these historical fragments hint at ongoing Jewish-Tibetan contacts, preceded by millennia of varied Jewish-Indian and Jewish-Buddhist connections.

Even more difficult to establish than contacts between Jews and Tibetans are the mutual influences between Judaism and Tibetan Buddhism. We have noted the similarity between legends about King Solomon and of the Buddha. There seems to be another religious link as well, this between Jewish messianism and the Tibetan Kalacakra system. In this case there does not appear to

have been any direct influence; indeed, both Jewish messianism and the Kalacakra seem to stem from a common source in ancient Persian religion, probably Zoroastrian.⁴⁴ What we can learn from this mediated interaction between Judaism and Tibetan Buddhism is that a religious spirit may reverberate differently in differing cultures, but the original religious impetus for these developments may remain identifiable. Rather than looking for a mechanistic, one-to-one borrowing, scholars must address a more fluid model for interactions among religions. The history of the religious impetus which expressed itself in both Kalacakra Tantra and in Jewish messianism ought to be analyzed from the perspective of such a fluid model for interreligious interaction.

Recent Contacts

Anyone familiar with the Tibetan refugee community is well aware of how Tibetans identified their painful experience of exile with Jewish history. As His Holiness the Dalai Lama said during the October, 1990, Tibetan-Jewish dialogue:

When we became refugees, we knew that our struggle would not be easy. It will take a long time, generations. Very often we would refer to the Jewish people, how they kept their identity and faith despite such hardship and so much suffering. And when external conditions were ripe, they were ready to rebuild their nation. So you see, there are many things to learn from our Jewish brothers and sisters.⁴⁵

This sense of affinity has been mutual. Jewish delegates to the dialogue spoke of their identification with the Tibetans' struggle, based upon their own history. More than generalized compassion, it was an identity of suffering "we felt in our bones." When the Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1989, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, representing the Reform sect of Judaism, was the first religious body to offer congratulations.⁴⁶ The American Jewish World Service, a development organization, has worked closely with the Hunsur settlement in South India, and plans to expand efforts in this direction.⁴⁷ And, of course, western scholars of Tibetan Buddhism include a

disproportionate number of Jews.

Conclusions

Jews and Tibetans are two very small peoples, numbering thirteen and six millions respectively. Each has cultivated unique and influential expressions of religion, reaching far beyond their modest numbers to enrich humanity's common spiritual heritage. Far from being strangers to one another, Jews and Tibetans have interacted through the centuries, at times subtly. The recent exile of the Tibetan people cast them precipitously into the modern world, which entails dialogue with other religious traditions. In the course of their dialogue with Jews, one serendipitous discovery has been the antiquity of long-standing connections between these two ancient and holy peoples. We have only hints of the past, but perhaps new evidence remains to be found. Perhaps now scholars, both Jews and Tibetans, can view the past with an eye toward this rediscovery of one another.

Footnotes:

* This article is based on my opening remarks at the Tibetan-Jewish Dialogue, sponsored by H. H. the Dalai Lama's Council for Religious & Cultural Affairs, held in Dharamsala, October 22-29, 1990.

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CENTER FOR JUDAIC STUDIES, HARBIN NORMAL UNIVERSITY, ESTABLISHED

(translated from press release)

1. Purpose of the Center for Judaic Studies

The history of the Jewish people is tightly bound with the histories of Europe and Asia and is deeply connected with the culture of the East and West; the Jewish culture is a precious treasure of mankind's ancient cultural legacy, and also is a valuable resource for the study of the vigorous civilization of the youthful period of mankind. At present it has penetrated into every nook and cranny of the East and West, and it has produced in each country a deep and far-reaching influence. The Jewish religion is the oldest spiritual mother of man's history, with a history of four thousand years, occupying an important place in the history of the world's religions, having had an especial influence on the birth and spread of Christianity and Islam.

At present, a study of a country's culture and religion of whatever area in the East or West, if it does not pay heed to the history of the Jews and the Jewish religion, then it would be incomplete. Coming to the present

history of the modern West and East, the cultures and religions have developed very rapidly, and the sources are firstly Greco-Roman and secondly, Judaism. Unfortunately, some say it must be Greco-Roman, and do not speak of Judaism; this sort of lopsided perniciousness is extreme, and causes the youth to know only a portion of the development of cultures, histories and religions of East and West, and to have an unclear understanding of the development of the entire world.

Harbin is a sacred place in the East where there was a high level of residence and activity by Jews in recent times, one of the three centers in China, together with Kaifeng and Shanghai forming a tripod. Harbin also has the largest Jewish cemetery in Asia, with the graves of relatives of some famous Israelis, of famous entrepreneurs, of Jewish rabbis . . . There are also synagogues, Jewish hospitals, Jewish banks, Jewish schools, Jewish old folks homes, Jewish tobacco factories, and so forth. Harbin's famous scenic spots and the sites of Jewish buildings early became the focus of attention of Israelis and Jews from all over the world.

The Center for Judaic Studies of Harbin Normal University is aimed at the above stated situation and, since it was established on November 9, 1993, to serve as a bridge in order to strengthen the research on the questions of Jewish history, Jewish culture, Jewish religion, the situation of Jews at the present time, and the contributions of Jews to the world, and to create a deeper understanding on the part of our youth concerning the history and culture of East and West, to advance mutual cultural exchange, and to establish relations with the various Jewish research organizations in the world.

2. The Mission of the Center for Judaic Studies

In view of the above, and in accordance with the resolutions of the "Chinese-Israeli Culture Present and Past International Discussion Assembly, which met at the Diaoyutai State Guest House in April, 1992, we hope for Jewish delegations to come to Harbin, to further academic inter-

In order to raise the one million Hong Kong dollars needed to finance the hiring of a new rabbi and expand the community's religious and cultural program, UJC has launched a major fundraising campaign based on the legend of *lamed-vav tzaddikim* (36 righteous ones). They seek 36 donors to give two-thirds of the funds needed.

Meyer points out that Hong Kong's Jewish population is growing rapidly, both in total numbers and in numbers of those affiliated with the Progressive movement. The island now has an estimated 3-4,000 Jews, most from the United States, but many arriving from Europe, Australia, Canada, South Africa, and Israel. In March 1992, for the first time, Hong Kong's progressive community was represented at the WUPJ Convention in Israel.

Relations with the surrounding, largely Chinese community are warm, Meyer says. He predicts most of the island's Jews will remain after the British protectorate expires in 1997 and Hong Kong reverts to mainland rule.

TOKYO'S SYNAGOGUE

The one synagogue in Tokyo is a study in compromise. Men sit on the far left, women on the far right. The middle section is reserved for those who want to sit together.

With seating arrangements and *mechitzot* separating the men's and women's sections, the cause of many schisms in many synagogues around the world, this arrangement is a necessity in Japan. The Jewish community is so small that its members don't have the luxury of one synagogue to go to and another one to boycott.

Tokyo's synagogue is in the Tokyo Jewish Center, the epicenter of Japan's Jewish life. The center also has a mikve, library, Sunday school, kosher kitchen where bread is baked and Friday night meals prepared, and a swimming pool. The center is guarded, when it is open, by Israeli guards who have come to Japan to study martial arts.

The guards are just a precaution, says Walter Citrin, who after 17 years resigned recently as president of the Jewish community. "We've had a

couple of demonstrations in front of the center."

Citrin puts the number of permanent Jewish residents of Tokyo at about 800. There are another handful in the port city of Kobe, where Jews began settling as early as the end of the 19th century.

Of the 800 Jews in Tokyo, about 500 are professionals and business people and their families—primarily from the U.S. and Britain—who usually stay for just under five years. Five years is key, Citrin says, because after this period they must pay tax on their income to both Japan and their home country, and not just in their home country.

The community center was built in 1953. "The majority of Jews at that time were of Russian-Jewish origin from China who were very used to [belonging] to a *kehila* [tight-knit community]," he says. "First the center functioned as a Jewish club. It had a good restaurant and was a social center for the community. If people wanted to socialize, they came to the center. Now people are going outside the community for their social life. The makeup of the community has changed, and so has the center."

Citrin, who owns an import-export firm, came to Japan in 1953 from Shanghai. Some of Tokyo's community came as stateless refugees from Eastern Europe during World War II in search of refuge and remained, and others came in search of business opportunities after the war. The community peaked during the American occupation of Japan from 1945 to 1952, thanks to Jewish GIs in the occupation force. Since the 1970s, the number of "permanent" Jews in Japan has remained close to 1,000.

EULOGY FOR SHI ZHONGYU BORN 1921 DIED NOV. 29TH 1993

by Phyllis Horal

From dust he came and to dust he returned. The magic circle of life was fulfilled by my friend, Shi Zhongyu. A decent and upright man linked within two ancient, and for humanity, important cultures.

The culture of discipline and wisdom of Confucius and the obedience and mysticism of the law of Moses. A

man totally loyal to his country, China, and to his family. Yet a man searching for his ancient roots brought by his ancestors from the Holy Land and Babylon, over a thousand years ago via the ancient Silk Road.

My friendship with him started 15 years ago when China declared an open door policy and one could travel freely within the country. He lived in Kaifeng, once the proud ancient capital of the Northern Song Dynasty and now a sleepy city crossed with narrow lanes and home to Chinese, Moslems, Christians and the Jewish descendants.

When I first met Shi Zhongyu on a hot summer's day 15 years ago, in the city of Kaifeng, I noticed a tattoo on his forearm. He explained that he had asked a school friend to indelibly mark the terrible day in 1937 when the Japanese advanced upon Kaifeng and his school was evacuated to the countryside. When I told him of the forcible tattooing of the Jews in the death camps of Europe, he was deeply moved. Unwittingly he had created a spiritual bridge between sufferers of the Jewish race, divided by thousands of miles. The Japanese, in fact, sent two intelligence missions to the city to decide if the few Jews were a threat to the occupying forces.

He was a slim dignified man, courteous of speech. His eyes were slanted but the cheekbones and large nose denoted the Semitic strain that intermarriage with the Han Chinese over the generations had not eradicated. He was at that time working with the Institute of Minorities.

Shi's father died when he was six years old but he remembered him daubing chicken blood on the doorpost of his house at the time of the Chinese Spring Festival, so that the Angel of Death would pass them by, and that his mother kept a Star of David wrapped in a cloth. He told me that his family served mutton soup with flat unleavened bread during the Chinese Spring Festival which falls around the time of the Jewish Passover.

When he entered primary school he put Youtai (Jew) on his application form, the headmaster queried this, saying he had heard of minorities in China but never of Jews. The boy insisted he was a Jew. As punishment

IN BANGKOK, JEWS HOLD MINYANS AMONG THE PAGODAS

by Alexandra J. Wall
reprinted from the
Jewish Telegraphic Agency

When Yosef Kantor was ordained as a rabbi from the Lubavitch Rabbinical Seminary in 1990, he never anticipated having to slaughter 500-and-some-odd chickens each month. But this is part of the job description of the rabbi of Thailand.

In May, Kantor, who is 24, his wife, Nechama, 21, and daughter Chaya Mushka, 10 months, became the first rabbinical family to serve the Jewish community of Thailand in more than 20 years.

Kantor, who was raised in New York and Australia, served as a rabbinical intern in Ukraine for three months before his marriage, but this is his first post as head of a congregation.

The Jewish community here has sorely been in need of a spiritual leader. It asked the Lubavitch movement for a rabbi to serve during Hanukkah, and Kantor impressed the community as someone who could remain all year.

"During the Vietnam War we had a succession of rabbis who were stationed here to serve the U.S. troops," said long-time Bangkok resident Ruth Gerson. "But in 1974 that stopped, and we've had many temporary people, and sometimes no one at all.

"It is very difficult to attract a rabbi to this part of the world, especially one with a family," she said.

Kantor's two immediate predecessors each lasted less than six months. Both were Israeli, and neither spoke English, which did not fare well with the international makeup of the community.

The 150 families consist largely of businesspeople, attorneys and retirees from the West, Israeli Embassy officials, and several Iranian Jewish families who fled to Thailand when the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini seized power in 1979.

Many congregants are employed in the jewelry industry.

"We wanted someone who spoke both Hebrew and English. But not only

that, we wanted someone who could really communicate well and relate to the people, irrespective of their level of observance," said Gerson.

Kantor admitted that striking a balance that satisfies all members is not easy, but he credits his non-judgmental outlook as one component of his success in relating to his congregation.

"Whenever people ask me if our congregation is Orthodox, Conservative or Reform, I answer 'Jewish,'" said Kantor.

"If someone is less observant than me, he is still my brother, and I treat him with respect because he is a fellow Jew. And in that sense we are family," the rabbi said.

"People really warm to that approach," he said.

"And due to the special nature of our community, people are of course more tolerant than they would be if they lived in, say, New York, where if they didn't like one synagogue, they could go to the next one down the road," the rabbi said.

The synagogues "down the road" happen to be Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan.

The Kantors do not know how long they will remain here. The lack of a Jewish education for their daughter may prompt them to leave when she reaches school age.

Kantor presides over two synagogues. The main Jewish community center, Beit Elisheva, is a three-story building whose top floor is occupied by the Kantors.

For the more observant families, space is rented in a hotel in the gem district, within walking distance of their homes and businesses. The renters move every Shabbat to the hotel.

Outreach to the more temporary people is also a priority of Yosef Kantor's.

The Israeli Embassy estimates that about 30,000 Israelis pass through Bangkok annually. That number may increase with a newly established El Al route beginning in December.

The president of the Jewish community, Michael Gerson, one of the few congregants who was born in Thailand, said it is a difficult community to lead because of its constantly changing makeup.

Rabbi Kantor agrees, saying that sometimes, by the time someone is located, he or she is already leaving.

"But we are a very tight-knit, close community," said Michael Gerson.

HONG KONG'S REFORM CONGREGATION SEEKS PERMANENT HOME

reprinted from the
Reform Judaism, Winter 1993

The Reform community of Hong Kong, although just five years old, is active, growing, and looking for a permanent home. Bob Meyer, executive committee member of the United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong, explains that the community formed in 1988 when the son of a Reform convert was refused access to Hong Kong's Orthodox synagogue at the time of his bar mitzvah.

"We felt it was time for a Reform congregation," Meyer says. He, Bob Green, who publishes the congregation's newsletter, and Chuck Monat launched the new Reform group, which began by meeting for prayers in people's homes. The group mushroomed quickly. Today, UJC has some 260 members. More than 350 people show up for High Holiday and Passover services, and a steady 45 to 50 attend weekly Friday night Shabbat services.

UJC meets at various locations around Hong Kong, including the American Club, the China Fleet Club, and the Jewish Club. As the congregation grows, so does the need for a larger, permanent space.

The congregation's activities are varied, ranging from last year's sponsorship of a Harvard University conference on Sino-Judaic studies to a class on making matzo balls. UJC held its first annual religious retreat in 1992, and has hosted a disco sing-along and a kosher Thanksgiving dinner. The congregation's newsletter serves Hong Kong's entire Jewish community, and UJC is considering creating a Sunday school.

The congregation had no permanent rabbi until fall 1993, when Rabbi Sam Joseph, a professor at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, who has traveled to Hong Kong the past four years to lead High Holiday services, began a one-year sabbatical in Hong Kong as the group's first resident rabbi. It is expected that his presence in the region will encourage the establishment of movement congregations in Singapore and Manila.

change, to develop work in all directions and many levels of economics, culture, science and tourism.

Topics:

- 1) Jewish history: ancient, medieval modern and recent history.
- 2) Jewish civilization: ancient and medieval cultural history.
- 3) Research on Jews and Jewish religion in Northeast Asia.
- 4) The contribution of Jews and Jewish religion in Harbin history.
- 5) The role of the Jewish people in world history.
- 6) Outline of Jewish civilization and education.
- 7) A course on the international situation of Israel.
- 8) Research on the Old and New Testaments.
- 9) The role of Jews in the economic development of Heilongjiang Province.

10) The role of Jews in the promotion of educational development in Harbin.

3. The organizational structure of the Center for Judaic Studies

Honorary Head: Prof. Shan Rongfan, Vice-secretary, Heilongjiang Provincial Communist Party; Prof. Xu Guolin, Chancellor, Harbin Normal University

Especially Invited Advisors: Prof. Dai Kangsheng, Vice-Head, Center for Research in World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; Dong Shihe, Asst. Manager, Harbin Engineering Industry Materials Distribution Company (English name: Seager Dong; Zheng Ming, Asst. Head, International Division, Harbin Television.

Advisors: Asst. Prof. Jiang Zhejun, Asst. head, Harbin Normal University, Office of Scientific Research; Asst. Prof. Xiu Pengyue, Chairman, History Dept., Harbin Normal University; Wu Xianzhong, Responsible Person, History Dept., Harbin Normal University.

Chairman, Center for Judaic Studies: Prof. Jin Peilin, Director, Chinese Association of World Medieval Studies; Member, History Dept., Harbin Normal University

Member Units: Teaching and Research Section, Ancient and Medieval World History, History Department, Harbin Normal University;

BURMESE JEWS HANG ON

by Sue Fishkoff
reprinted from the Jerusalem Post
August 18, 1993

Sammy Samuels is 14. His sisters Diana and Khazma are nearly 20. Theirs is a community which is expected to die out, but is resisting. They are the last Jewish children in Myanmar, formerly Burma.

"The community will probably die," says a representative of the Joint Distribution Committee who recently visited the east Asian nation. But he adds, "It's an amazingly resilient community."

At its peak before the outbreak of World War II, the Jewish community of Burma numbered nearly 2,200. Most had arrived in the mid-19th century from Baghdad, Teheran, and the Bene Israel and Cochin communities of India. They worked as traders and merchants in this far-flung outpost of the British Empire. They founded a day school, a Zionist organization and two synagogues, and even provided the capital of Rangoon with a Jewish mayor.

Just before the Japanese invaded in 1942, the Jews fled Burma for England and Australia. Only a few hundred returned after the war. After 1948, aliya, intermarriage and emigration almost shut down the community.

Like most remnant communities, Jews who wanted to leave Burma did so when the doors were first opened, says the Joint representative, Dr. Irving Smoker. He doubts that the 20 who stayed behind will make aliya. More likely is that the final generation will be absorbed into the greater, largely Buddhist, community around them.

Today, there are just 20 Jews — three families — left in Myanmar, most in Rangoon. There are reports of a family of five Jewish women in the town of Bassein and a few Jews in Taunggyi, but contact with them is sporadic.

Brothers Jacob and Moses Samuels are the patriarchs of the Rangoon community. They manage the Synagogue Trust that owns 27

Teaching and Research Section, Modern History, History Department, Harbin Normal University; Teaching and Research Section, Recent History Department, Harbin Normal University

Contact: Professor Jin Pei-lin, Center for Judaic Studies, Harbin Normal University, 24 Hexing Road, Nangang District, Harbin, China 150080.

SJI GRANT SENDS CHINESE COLONEL TO ISRAEL

by Arthur Rosen
Board Chairman, SJI

Senior Colonel Wu Guifu, former submarine commander in the Chinese Navy, returned to China last summer after completing a program of scholarly research at the Harry Truman Research Institute of War and Peace Studies in Israel.

Colonel Wu, a specialist in international strategic and economic issues, was the first recipient of a scholarship under a program that the SJI hopes will become a series. Costs for the first project were underwritten by a grant from Mr. Raymond Frankel of Los Angeles.

Under the arrangements worked out for this project, Col. Wu was given office space and facilities at the Truman Institute, met with a number of Israeli civilian and military officials, and traveled freely to various places in Israel. (How's this for being circum-spect?—Ed.)

He was called back to China shortly before the completion of his six month program to accept an appointment as deputy director of the prestigious Institute for Strategic Studies at China's National Defense University, the principal military "think tank" in China.

Upon his return to China, Col. Wu expressed appreciation for the program in a letter to this writer, and said he would like to work together to develop exchanges and cooperation with Israel, noting particularly his desire to promote Sino-Israeli scientific exchanges.

open-air stalls and nine apartments. The rent collected on the properties provides the income to maintain the community's cemetery and the grand Musmeah Yeshua synagogue, built in 1857 in the heart of Rangoon.

The synagogue is opened every day for visitors, although the last regular minyan met decades ago. For holidays, worshippers are brought from the nearly Israeli Embassy to make a minyan. The Israeli ambassador in Rangoon presided over Sammy's bar mitzva last year.

Smokler visited the community two weeks ago on behalf of the Joint, which sends \$2,000 a year in social assistance for seven of those Jews, including an elderly woman and a disabled young man.

The socialistic military regime that rules Burma tolerates religious minorities, and the Jews are not persecuted. A lack of ritual and educational materials and their own numerical paucity are the greatest impediments to rebuilding Myanmar's Jewish life. Some Myanmarese told Smokler that the government's privatization program and efforts at economic revival might encourage Jewish expatriates to return, but Smoker dismisses that as "wishful thinking."

During his brief visit, Smokler met U Aung Kywe, a Buddhist who was business partner to Isaac Samuels, Jacob's and Moses' father. On his deathbed in 1978, Isaac made Kywe promise to look after the community.

A.K., as he calls himself in English, acts as the Jewish community's administrative consultant, collecting the rents, managing synagogue repairs, acting as liaison with the government and keeping the community's archives.

But A.K. has also taught himself a smattering of Jewish law and ritual, and has become the spiritual heart of the community. He paints scenes of Jewish life that decorate the synagogue and announce upcoming events. And although he speaks no Hebrew, he uses his knowledge of English to negotiate transliterated

Hebrew prayers, and so was able to prepare Sammy Samuels for his bar mitzva last year in this remarkable fashion.

In 1988, anthropologist Ruth Fredman Cernea visited the community on behalf of B'nai B'rith International. Inside the Musmeah Yeshua synagogue, Moses Samuels pointed to where 126 Tora scrolls once stood. By 1988, just two remained. The rest had been taken by emigrating community members.

Although their numbers are small and their future precarious, the Jews of Myanmar are determined to preserve their community's history. Writing about her visit five years ago, Cernea predicted that the community would celebrate no more "simhas."

She has been proved wrong, as Sammy's bar mitzva last year showed. The synagogue is well maintained, and a steady stream of tourists pays its respects, encouraged to sign the monumental guest register on their way out. And the Samuels clan is trying to raise money — and interest — in the Jewish community.

Although the future looks bleak for the handful of unmarried Myanmar Jews, it's almost as if the community will not permit its history to be wiped out, no matter the odds.

BUKHARA JEWISH STUDY FUNDED

A project to study the Bukhara Jewish community has been instituted by Alanna E. Cooper, an advanced graduate student at Boston University. A number of Russian scholars are included in the research team.

Mr. Morton Meyerson, of Dallas, Texas, a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute, has provided financial support via the Institute.

We expect to receive a report on the results of the project when it is completed.

INDONESIAN JEWS: 5,000,000 TO 1

by Lindsey Shanson
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Only two of the 25 Jews in Surabaya, a city of over 2 million, are Indonesian citizens. The others are Dutch or British nationals, though they've never been to Holland or Britain. Except for Albert Elias, at 87 Indonesia's oldest Jew and the community's only Iraqi.

Baghdad-born Elias was brought to Surabaya, about 700 km. (440 miles) east of Djakarta on the island of Java, in 1908 by his parents, via Rangoon in Burma. "We used to travel from place to place, selling eyeglasses, with my father," Elias relates. "There was another synagogue here then, the only one in Indonesia. There were many jewelry shopkeepers. I was an optician."

Surabaya is one of the major cities of Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 1,300 islands with a population of around 200 million people. More than 80 percent of its people are believers in Islam, making it the world's largest Muslim country. And until Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin visited Djakarta on October 15 and met President Suharto, the government toed an Islamic line that was strongly anti-Israel, at least in public. (For the last few years, there have been persistent but officially unconfirmed reports of commercial ties between Indonesia and various Israeli firms, particularly in the high-tech computer and telecommunications firms.) At the same time, a handful of Jews — five in Djakarta, in addition to the 25 in Surabaya — live peacefully with their neighbors, secular Muslims with a deserved reputation for tolerance and kindness.

Surabaya's first synagogue was built in the late 19th century by Jewish immigrants from Baghdad. It was still standing when the Japanese invaded what was then the Dutch East Indies in 1942. Some of the 2,000-3,000 Jews who lived in the country — immigrants from Russia, Poland and Hungary, India and Iraq — fled to Australia.

Those who remained were subject to internment and brutality. Gestapo agents sent by the Nazis to advise the occupiers, persuaded the Japanese to round up the Jews. They ransacked the synagogue, burned the Torah scrolls, and trucked the congregants away.

"When the Japanese came," recalls Albert Elias, his memory and his vision still clear under his flowing white hair, "we were taken to a camp, about 20 of us. Many Jews ran to the hills, but I stayed."

Another Surabaya Jew, Bombay-born Rivka Sayers, who came just before the war, says her father "was badly beaten. They broke his nose." She declines to elaborate.

After the war, there were only 350-400 Jews left in the country; the Ashkenazim were in Djakarta, the Sephardim in Surabaya. The Surabaya congregation raised the money for construction of the new complex — including a synagogue, a community hall, a house and a building now used for lodgings — on Jalan Kayon, a wide thoroughfare in one of the industrial city's suburbs. "Times were good then," recalls Albert Elias, "because we all had jobs. Many became Dutch citizens; I didn't ask to become Dutch because I didn't think about it then."

After Indonesia became independent in 1949, many non-Indonesians left with the Dutch. Those who remained could choose between Dutch or Indonesian nationality. Most opted for the former, which included a right to remain in the country, but not to work—at least not officially.

"We survive," says Hanna Sayers, Rivka's 26-year-old daughter. We make cakes and sell them to friends. Some of us get reparations from the Dutch government." People with Dutch nationality who survived the Japanese camps get a stipend equaling about \$80 a month, sufficient in Indonesia to maintain a simple, but not uncomfortable, life. Over the years still more Jews left, and today there are five Jewish families in Surabaya—Abraham, Aaron, Nassim, Mussry and Sayers.

Hanna Sayers is a fourth-generation Indonesian—even though she was born in Israel, where her parents tried to settle. But life in Israel didn't suit Hanna's Surabaya-born father and Rivka; they brought her back to

Indonesia with them when she was three. Rivka and Hanna live in a large colonial house inside the synagogue complex, with the daughter's family.

Albert Elias is their neighbor in the synagogue complex. So is Burma-born Joe Aaron, a British citizen who has never been to Britain. Nearly 80 now, "Burmese Joe" was a businessman dealing in food, diamonds, eyeglasses; now he spends his days in a small room in the residence.

His daughter Rita, 36, is something of a local celebrity. The only child of a Burmese Jewish father and an Indonesian Jewish mother with Dutch nationality, she was a film star.

She says demurely that it has been a few years since her last role. But in Surabaya, people still stand and gape, or wave, when she passes on the street. She played leading roles in several locally made films; her best-known role was of a reporter who falls in love during the Indonesian war of liberation against the Dutch in the late 1940s.

Rita is not in films anymore, but she's still in the entertainment industry. An executive at a large Surabaya hotel, she also organizes fashion shows.

She and her husband, a Chinese Indonesian, have three sons. They—and three other boys among the tiny community's 11 children—will have to go abroad to have a bar mitzvah, probably to Singapore or Australia, Rita concedes that their Jewish upbringing is scant, confined to occasional trips to the synagogue complex on holidays.

"It's hard to keep the children in Judaism, as they go to the government school and are Muslim-educated," says Hanna Sayers. "My mother asked the parents if they wanted to learn, but they weren't interested."

For her own two grandchildren, Rivka Sayers has taken charge. "I teach them Hebrew, and what I know about Judaism," she says.

Rivka also believes the community has a future—it only needs a rabbi. The parents may send their children away to Holland or America, but they will want to come back," she says firmly. "They like it here."

There's good reason. Anti-Semitism has never existed among Indonesian Muslims. "During the Gulf War," says Rivka Sayers, "lots of

Indonesian people came over and asked us where we stood. But we were not threatened, or afraid."

The conflict raised a good deal of hostility against Israel, whipped up by fundamentalists in the mosques. But no one — not even the city's large Arab immigrant population—lifted a hand. "Some people shouted," Rivka says, "but they have hearts of gold."

In 1991 and 1992, the Chabad movement in Australia sent students to Surabaya for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, to conduct services. Their Orthodox style was unfamiliar to the Surabayans, but it was the first time the sound of the shofar had been heard on Jalan Kayon in 30 years.

Another first this year came on Passover, when a package of matzah arrived from Britain. Customs officials in Surabaya released the parcel only after Rivka Sayers explained its significance to them.

The synagogue does not have a Torah scroll of its own, but it is the center of what Jewish life there is. At dusk, a colony of bats in the palms above the synagogue complex provide an ominous hint of the future.

A few kilometers away, the bustle of Surabaya gives way to the lush tranquility of the East Javan jungle, where Jews are an unknown species. It may not be long before they also fade away in Surabaya. Then the synagogue complex will become indistinguishable from the other crumbling houses nearby—except for the Star of David at the entranceway.

SPEAKING ON CHINESE JEWS? SJI CAN HELP

SJI members who find themselves called upon to speak on the subject of the Jews of Kaifeng, or those of the Chinese coast, or even those of India and elsewhere, should remember that one of the benefits of membership is access to scholars and materials to assist you in your preparation.

If you are planning to give a talk—or if you are looking for a speaker—contact the SJI office for help.