

Join 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. Our annual dues structure is as follows:

Benefactor	\$1,000	Regular membership	\$ 50	Corporate Sponsor	\$ 250 to \$ 499
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Sponsor	\$ 100	Senior citizens & students	\$ 20	Libraries	\$ 50
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I wish to become a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute and to receive **Points East**. Enclosed is my cheque for \$ _____.

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THE JUDEO-CONFUCIAN TRADITION

by David J. Fine

Introduction

In the Confucian literature we are told of the classical "way":

Yao taught it to Shun, Shun to Yu, Yu to T'ang, and T'ang to kings Wen and Wu and the Duke of Chou. These men taught it to Confucius and Confucius to Mencius.¹

In the Talmud, the main canon of Classical Rabbinic Judaism, there is the following:

Moses received the Torah from God at Sinai. He transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets, the Prophets to the members of the Great Assembly.²

In the original Hebrew for the citation above, the word used for "transmitted" is *m'sarah*, which is virtually the same word as the noun for tradition (*m'sorah*). The meaning of tradition is that which is transmitted through the generations. Tradition has been transmitted through the generations of the peoples of China and Israel. Few peoples have survived as long as these two peoples (three thousand years) and maintained a continuous identity. There are many similarities between these two peoples which can be drawn, but it is certainly the tradition which is responsible for the survival of national identity through the ages. An exploration of the specific nature of these two traditions would shed light on the understanding of the value and place of tradition in cultural and political history.³ This paper will present a brief survey of what such research might entail.

I. Historical memory has always been of grave importance to the Chinese and Jewish peoples. Beginning with the oldest texts, Moses tells and retells the story of the Exodus while Confucius dwells on the righteousness of the sage kings and of the Chou founders, and of the evil of the later Hsia and Shang tyrants. All of this is told for posterity, told so that lessons could be learned from the past. The sacred quality of retelling and remembering history is best exemplified in the writings of Han dynasty historian, Ssu-ma Ch'ien. Retelling history is a sacred cause, one which is taken very seriously throughout Chinese history. Similarly, it is obligatory upon each and every Jewish parent. The memory of the past connects us with the past as the liturgy for the Passover Seder (the Jewish ritual dinner commemorating the exodus from Egypt) states:

In each generation, every individual should feel as though he or she had actually been redeemed from Mitzrayim ([i.e. Egypt]).⁴

(continued on page 3)

SHANGHAI SEPHARDI JEWS' EFFORTS TO ASSIST EUROPEAN REFUGEES

by Henrietta Reifler

Because I have long felt that the Shanghai Jewish community has been unfairly maligned concerning its efforts to aid the difficult lot of European Jewish refugees entering Shanghai, I was delighted to read in the November 1994 issue of *Points East* Reno Krasno's discussion of the heroic efforts of Shanghai Ashkenazi Jews to save the European refugees that were pouring into the city. I wish now to round out the picture by presenting the efforts of the Sephardi Jewish community to ameliorate their difficult living conditions.

When the number of European refugees began to increase and were too many to absorb easily, Rev. Mendel Brown (technically not a Sephardi, but serving as minister of the Sephardi Ohel Rachel Synagogue), who was an excellent fund raiser, set about raising much needed funds. A sum of \$310,000 Mexican dollars was raised to which Sir Victor Sassoon contributed \$150,000 Mexican dollars to set up a revolving fund to enable new arrivals to become self sufficient by setting up small businesses. ("Shanghai Jewry's New problem: Tackling a Flood of refugees", *The Jewish Chronicle* (London), March 1939, p. 36).

In November 1938, when it became evident that the two committees initially set up were inadequate to cope with the increasing number of arrivals, a meeting was held in the office of Sir Elly Kadoorie. A community wide committee, Committee for the Assistance of European Refugees in Shanghai (CFA), comprising leaders of all sections of Shanghai Jewry, took their place. Sephardi members serving on the committee were Messrs. D.E.J. Abraham, R.D. Abraham, E. Hayim, S.E. Levy, and Rev. M. Brown, who served as joint hon. secretary with his Ashkenazi counterpart, Dr. Karl Marx.

The CFA set up various subcommittees to deal with the various problems. The subcommittee with the most intractable problems was the Housing and Disbursement subcommittee. The Sephardi contributions in this respect were the following:

1. E.D. Sassoon & Co. placed at the disposal of the Committee the lower floor of their Embankment Building, which was used as a clearing house, where new arrivals were accommodated until they had been registered and new lodgings found.
2. The Sephardi leaders placed at the disposal of the Committee their lovely Beth Aharon synagogue in Museum

(continued on page 6)

From the editor:

Every issue of *Points East* points to the growing number of Sino-Judaic and Indo-Judaic organizations and publications. On the one hand this fills me with joy since it means that more people are interested and involved in our arena of endeavor. On the other hand I worry about the duplication of effort and the competition not so much for dollars as for time. If I were my counterpart in China, I know I would not like to have to correspond with the representatives of a half dozen friendly foreign organizations.

At a Board meeting long ago, I suggested that the Sino-Judaic Institute change its name to reflect the diversity of its interests in Jewish-Chinese, Jewish-Japanese, and Jewish-Indian relations. I thought each category of nationality should have its own "Institute" and that collectively we should be called something more inclusive.

While I still think this makes sense, it must be acknowledged that we have yielded our advantage to lead. Excluding the Igud Yotzei Sin, we may have been the first in this field, but now there are many others. I think that the time has come for a "summit meeting." Every sort of Jewish-Asian interest group should be invited to this gathering, whose purposes would be to coordinate activities through a number of institutes, to publish one or two quality publications, and, if possible, to unite under a single umbrella organization with various national chapters around the world.

"Let a hundred flowers bloom" — but all from the same plant. Why crowd the garden with competing plants, when all could draw nourishment from one root system?

What do you think?

Anson Laytner

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IN THE FIELD

- **XU XIN IN CINCINN.** (and Chicago) SJI member Xu Xin, professor at Nanjing University and also president of the China Judaic Studies Association, currently in the United States for a year of study at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, visited the Chicago area last Passover to give three lectures on Jewish diasporas in China and on intercultural communication.
- **LAURA MARGOLIS HONORED** This past March, Brandeis University presented a special award to Laura Margolis, a long-time American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee professional. She was recognized for distinguished professional service for her role in assisting Jews to escape the Nazis in the late 1930's in Shanghai.
- **ISRAELI WRITERS VISIT CHINA** Headed by A.B. Yehoshua, an Israeli Writers' Delegation visited China from Aug. 26 to Sept. 3, 1994,

at the invitation of the Chinese Writers' Association. During their visit they met with the vice-minister of culture, participated in the 5th Beijing International Book Fair and attended a Hebrew Literature Seminar. Chinese translations of *Three Days and a Child* by A.B. Yehoshua and *Apples from the Desert* by S. Liebrecht were among the books exhibited.

- **CHINESE JUDGES VISIT ISRAEL** A delegation of judges from China visited Israel from Dec. 25 to Dec. 29, 1994, on the initiative of the Israel-China Friendship Society and at the invitation of the Israeli College for Advanced Judicial Studies. The delegation of four was headed by the Chief Judge of China, Mr. Sun Bosheng of Beijing. A group of supreme and District Court judges from Israel is to go to China on a return visit in September 1995.
- **ISRAELI PHILHARMONIC IN BEIJING** According to the *China Daily*, the IPO debuted in China on Nov. 23, 1994 "with unyielding fortitude before 9,000 fans in the Great Hall of the People (in Beijing). "The concert was directed under the baton of world-famous conductor Zubin Mehta in co-operation with renowned violinist Itzhak Perlman."
- **HOLOCAUST SEMINAR IN TOKYO** Trying to bridge the cultural gap between Japanese and Jews, a leading Tokyo publishing house and the Simon Wiesenthal Center held a three-day Holocaust seminar in Tokyo last June. The session was organized by the Bungei Shunju publishers to help counteract the effect of the publication of a Holocaust-denial article by one of its magazines. (No information was provided as to who or how many attended. —ED.)
- **CHINESE ACADEMY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES DELEGATION VISITS ISRAEL** A delegation of members of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, headed by Prof. Xu Xin, Vice President of the Academy were the guests of Tel Aviv University President Prof. Yoram Dinstein. The visit took place to reciprocate the visit made to the Academy by the TAU Howard Gilman International Workshop in China a year ago. The Chinese delegates met with academic staff members, attended the Porter Super-Center International Conference on "The Peace Process and the Environment" and toured the country.

- Publication in the CJES newsletter off notices to search for fellow former residents of Shanghai;
 - Offering opportunities to make oral-history interviews; and
 - Recommending suitable institutions to which Shanghai-related material may be donated.
3. **Services to researchers** They are planned to include at least the following:
- An annotated master list of oral-history interviews (audio taped and video taped) that have been done with former Shanghai residents;
 - A collection of brief overviews, prepared by scholars using various archives, of the materials related to the Jews of Shanghai that they found in a given archive;
 - Publication in the CJES newsletter of requests for information about documents, individuals, and for assistance on specific projects; and
 - Help by CJES, on request, in gaining access to collections of relevant documents.
4. **Relations with museums** Museums with collections related to the Shanghai refuge are being contacted and asked to exchange information about these holdings. They will be offered the cooperation of CJES in preparing exhibitions and publications on this subject.
5. **Relations with archives** Archives are being contacted to learn about their holdings related to the Shanghai refuge, to explore the directions in which they intend to expand their collections, and to offer assistance by CJES, where appropriate, in their work.
6. **Relations with Chinese agencies** Discussions with agencies of China's national government and the Shanghai municipal government have begun to explore such issues as the preservation of buildings connected with the Shanghai refuge, the restoration of Jewish cemeteries, and the development of markers and guide materials to the sites of the refuge.
- Officers** The current officers, each a former refugee in Shanghai, are Ernest G. Heppner, president; Joan R. Deman; Kurt Jacoby; Walter H. Silberstein; and Ralph B. Hirsch, executive director.
- Advisory Committee of Scholars** A distinguished group of leading inter-

national scholars in the fields of history, Judaica, Chinese studies, and information science has been assembled to provide guidance to the Council.

Membership and funding All former Jewish refugee residents of Shanghai are automatically members of CJES, without membership fee. For other individuals, and for institutions, a structure of modest fees will be announced in 1995. Financial contributions toward the work of CJES are welcome; they may be sent to the address below.

You are invited to participate!

Individuals and institutions are invited to get in touch with CJES at this address: Ralph B. Hirsch, Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai, 3500 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104-4925, USA. Fax: 1.215.386.1270. An E-mail address is expected to be available in 1995.

CALL FOR PAPERS**INDO-JUDAIC STUDIES**

...an annual academic journal published by the Society for Indo-Judaic Studies dedicated to analyzing the affinities and interactions between Indic and Judaic civilizations from ancient through contemporary times.

Each issue will feature:

1. **New scholarly research** into such areas as: comparative studies of Judaisms and the religious of India, with attention to implications for the field of religious studies; historical studies of the cultural and commercial links between India and Israel; social scientific studies of Jewish communities in India and Indian communities in Israel; comparative Diaspora studies of Jewish and Indian communities, especially in North America; literature studies, including analyses of images of India in Jewish writing and images of Jews and Judaism in Indian writing; political science studies of diplomacy between India and Israel; approaches to secularism vs. traditionalism in contemporary Indian and Israeli politics; etc. (3 or 4 articles per issue).

2. **Republication** of pioneering Indo-Judaica, classical studies in the field which are not readily accessible, such as Kunst's study of comparative logic, or Mandelbaum's ethnographies of Cochin's Jews. (one per issue).
3. **Translations of primary documents** such as the Urdu hagiography of Said Sarmad, or Hebrew travelers' accounts by Reinman, Saphir and Hillel, or Pierre Loti's French descriptions of Cochin's Jew Town, or such "philo-Semitic" writings as Jamyang Norbu's Tibetan *History of Israel*. (one per issue)
4. **Translations of modern scholarship** in Hebrew, Yiddish, Hindi, etc. (one per issue)
5. **Interreligious / inter-ethnic dialogues**, including theoretical aspects of dialogue as well as "dialogical statements."
6. **Book reviews.**
7. **News and notes.**

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The SJI has provided funds to assist in covering the publication costs of a translation into Chinese of Chaim Herzog's *Heroes of Israel* by professor Fan Yuchun. We thank member Marvin Josephson for his contribution of a significant portion of the funds provided.

JEWISH STUDIES IN JAPAN FOR UNIVERSITY TEACHING OF JEWISH CIVILIZATION

The Israeli Embassy in Tokyo recently provided the International Center for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization with a list of members of the Japan Association for Jewish Studies. Total membership is listed at 65. Professor Ichiro Nakata of Chuo University, Tokyo, is director of the association.

A partial list of members, indicating their area of specialization follows:

Tsukuba University, Tsukuba-City; Professor Tomoo Ishida, Jewish History and Thought, and Hebrew Language - Dept. of History.

Associate Professor Yutaka Ikeda, Hebrew Language, Dept. of Languages; and Associate Professor Toshio Tsumura, Hebrew Language, Dept. of Languages.

Tokyo University - Tokyo; Associate Professor Hiroshi Ichikawa, Judaism, Jewish Thought, Dept. of Religion.

Osaka University of Foreign Studies, Osaka; Associate Professor Yoshiyuki Takashina, Hebrew Language, Arabic Language Dept.

Osaka City University, Osaka. Professor Yasushi Yamaguchi, Antisemitism in Europe, Law School.

Kyoto University, Kyoto - Professor Akira Kogoshi, Jewish Thought and Inquisition, Dept. of Liberal Arts.

Hyogo University of Education, Hyogo Prefecture, Professor Nobuo Mizuno, Jewish Music, Dept. of Art Education.

Akita University, Akita City, Associate Professor Kiichi Tachibana - Jewish Thought, Dept. of Education.

Kumamoto University, Kumamoto-City. Professor Mitsuo Kowaki, Hebrew Language, Dept. of Literature.

Hokusei Gakuin University, Sapporo City; Professor Yasuoki Yamazaki, Biblical Studies.

Dokkyo University, Saitama; Professor Masao Takahashi, Biblical Studies, Dept. of Liberal Arts.

Chuo University, Tokyo, Professor Ichiro Nakata, Jewish History, Dept. of Literature.

Hosei University, Tokyo; Professor Toshikazu Takao, Jewish Thought, Dept. of Social Sciences; and Professor Tetsu Kohno, Jewish Literature, Dept. of Liberal Arts.

Keio University, Tokyo; Professor Hideo Ogawa, Archeology and Jewish History, Dept. of Literature.

Rikkyo University, Tokyo; Professor Kenichi Kida and Professor Akio Tsukimoto, Biblical Studies, Dept. of Literature.

Rikkyo Women's College, Tokyo; Professor Teruo Akiyoshi, Jewish Thought.

Showa University, Tokyo; Professor Koichiro Ishikawa, Jewish Thought and Archeology, Dept. of Liberal Arts.

Waseda University, Tokyo; Professor Kazuo Anzai, Jewish History in Europe, Dept. of Literature, and Associate Professor Chizuko Takao, Jewish History in Russia, Dept. of Literature.

Tenri University, Tenri City; Professor Hiroshi Kaneseke, Archeology, Dept. of Liberal Arts.

Doshisa Women's University, Tokyo; Professor Masanori Miyazawa, Japan's Antisemitism, Dept. of Literature.

Kyoto Art College, Uji City; Professor Yuzo Arai, Jewish Thought.

Fukuoka University, Fukuoka City; Professor Kazuo Ueda, Yiddish Language, Dept. of Humanities.

Seinan Gakuin University, Fukuoka City; Professor Sadao Sekiya, Biblical Studies and Archeology, Dept. of Theology.

Japan Luther Theological College, Tokyo; Professor Naohiro Kiyoshige, Biblical Studies and Archeology.

Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, Tokyo; Professor Yoshi Sakon, Hebrew Language, Dept. of Theology.

Hiroshima Shudo University, Hiroshima, Professor Naburu Kondo, Jewish Thought.

Institute of Developing Economics, Tokyo; Mr. Akifumi Ekada.

Imperial Household Agency, Prince Makasa Institute, Tokyo; Prince Makasa Takahito, Jewish History and Judaism.

Kanasi University, Osaka; Professor Hajime Yamashita (Honorary Professor of Tokyo University), Jewish Thought, Dept. of Literature.

Professor Shuichi Kato, Jewish Thought, Tokyo.

[In the March issue of *Points East*, mention was made of a new organization on the Jews of Shanghai. The following is excerpted from their leaflet. Ed.]

INTRODUCING THE COUNCIL ON THE JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN SHANGHAI

What is CJES? The Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai (CJES) is an international not-for-profit, non-governmental organization. Its goals are to safeguard and develop the historical evidence of the Jewish refuge in Shanghai, to promote scholarly research and public information about the refuge, and to foster contact among the participants in that experience. CJES does not seek to develop a collection of its own, but instead will work with archives and museums all over the world to make sure that documents and materials are placed in institutions that are properly equipped and suitably staffed.

Current activities Formed in January 1994, CJES has begun to create a comprehensive list of all surviving former Shanghai refugees, now scattered around the world. (Major groups are in North and South America, Australia, Israel, and several European countries.) Drawing on that list from time to time will be various projects, e.g. to gather information from these persons about their recollections of Shanghai, or to offer them guidance on preserving and disposing of documents and other materials relating to their period in Shanghai. A broad range of activities is being developed; following is their current status:

1. **Publications** Beginning in 1995, CJES will publish a newsletter three to four times a year, designed to draw attention to books and reports already published and to work in progress, to aid in searches (for people and for information), to announce exhibitions, reunions, seminars and conferences, and in general to publicize work related to its goals. CJES will consider sponsoring various types of publications — both popular and scholarly — about its area of concern.

2. **Services to individuals** They are planned to include at least the following:

FROM OUR READERS:

April 10, 1995

To the Editor,

Two days ago I received the latest issue of *Points East* and, as always, I greatly enjoyed reading the articles, news items and letters - particularly those relating to China. In fact, I'd like to refer to two letters (page 3) and the Excerpts of Minutes of a recent Board Meeting (pp. 15-16) which especially attracted my attention:

(i) I fully endorse the views of Andrew Nulman of Providence, Rhode Island (whom I don't know personally). A full international membership directory, listing the 300-plus subscribers to the Sino-Judaic Institute, would be extremely useful to those of us wishing to connect with other individuals who share a keen interest (whether as professionals or as lay-persons) in Chinese-Jewish matters. While respecting the feelings of those who prefer not to risk any invasion of privacy, I'd in fact be very happy for my name, office and home addresses and telephone/fax numbers, experience and interests, to be printed in such a listing; and I'd gladly complete a questionnaire sent out by the Board to facilitate this process. Most organizations and societies with which I'm presently involved provide this service; and I believe that the advantages would far outweigh the disadvantages.

(ii) As a professional musician, musicologist, and ethnomusicologist, I was also delighted to see the letter from Guy Shaked, in which he gave an outline of his study of the 'Masoretic Accent Tradition of the Chinese Jews'. I've now written to him direct in order to learn more about his research. If you know of other scholars who work in the field of Jewish music in China, any information as to how I may contact them would be most gratefully received. (I've had the pleasure of meeting Professor Xu Bu Zeng in Shanghai, and intend to get in touch with Mrs. Harriet Rosenson of New York at the earliest opportunity.)

(iii) Rabbi Tokayer's suggestion about a current bibliography of Masters and Doctoral Dissertations and HUC Papers on Chinese-Jewish subjects is excellent, and I trust that it may soon be compiled and made available for sale to the SJI Membership. A list of locations where Chinese Torah scrolls and other manuscripts are housed would also be very useful for research purposes.

I have one further request: I'm trying to trace a Mr. Norman Maxwell, who may be a member of SJI. He used to live at 503 Buena Vista Avenue, Redwood City, CA 94061; telephone and fax: 415-365-8734. He's a friend of Dr. Cynthia Tse Kimberlin (Co-Executive Director of the Music Research Institute, P.O. Box 362, Point Richmond, CA 94807).

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— Look for Prof. Knapp's article on his trips to China in the next issue of *Points East*. —

To the Editor:

Along with about 20,000 other Jewish escapees from the Nazis, I spent the years 1939-1947 in Shanghai. I was 17 when I arrived in that exotic city and luckily was hired as a draftsman, though I had no previous experience, by a Russian-Jewish architect, Gabriel Rabinovich. One of the several Chinese draftsmen turned out to be quite friendly and eventually invited me to his home. Even though his modest living quarters were bare of all but the most basic necessities, he insisted I accept his gift of a songbook - I even remember the name, after all these years: "One hundred best songs".

Another Chinese friend I made, also in the building trade, was a young man with whom I ventured into several simple construction projects. Our agreement was to share any future profits, but, after our first successful venture, he insisted on treating me to a lavish dinner, the cost of which was somewhat in excess of the modest profit we had realized.

How did I learn to speak tolerable Shanghai dialect? It was the custom that, while a building was being constructed, the masons and carpenters would live on the site which, after dinner, I would visit. These simple workmen, with good humor and tolerance, were responsible for my picking up a fair knowledge of basic conversational Chinese.

Once I got past the natural reserve and reticence of the Chinese, I found them to be hospitable and generous people.

Joseph P. Weber

To the Editor:

Information is sought about the following people who lived in Shanghai:

Karl Rosenberg born 9/1904. From Vienna. Lived in Shanghai from late 1930's until his death in 1943. He may have worked as an architect. 1940 address was 958 Bubbling Well Road. Married Syma in 1940.

Hanns and Emmy Rosenberg. Hanns was Karl's older brother. Worked as an architect and did not leave Shanghai until 1950.

Anyone with information should contact:

Robert Lowy
6305 Stardust
El Paso, TX 79912

To the Editor:

Seeking information about **Martin Baer** from Berlin. Lived in Shanghai during the 2nd WW.

Bernard Gibbs
805 Cranbury Road
Jamesburg, NJ 08831
Tel: (908) 521-1413

THE JUDEO-CONFUCIAN TRADITION

(continued from page 1)

Historical memory implies an intention to maintain a certain identity through time. There are many cultural aspects which help perpetuate a people through millennia besides the transmission of memories. The sacred quality of the national land, the sacred quality of the national language, the sacred quality of the commitment owed to family and society, the sacred texts and a sacred exegetical tradition, religiousness, and sacred ritual are common to the Jewish and Confucian traditions.⁵ China and Israel are lands as well as peoples, and as lands they are holy lands. Chinese and Jews have traditionally sought to be buried in their holy lands, whether or not they had actually lived in China or Israel. Chinese and Hebrew are holy

languages which are learned by Chinese and Jews respectively regardless of the language which they happen to speak where they live. The concepts of filial piety and duty towards society are dominant in these two cultures. The sacred texts of Confucianism and Judaism play a special role in that, unlike the texts of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism, they go through an eternal process of exegetical interpretation and are learned by the common people as well as the elite. There are profound similarities between the religiousness and ritual of these two cultures which will be elaborated below. Finally, there is a strong desire among the people to carry on the tradition. The tradition is not something enforced by an aristocracy for political purposes,⁶ but a beloved treasure of the people.⁷

In general, we can observe an element of sacredness in the constitutional make-up of these cultures. Sacredness has been defined as establishing a certain thing to be distinct from other things. In this vein, Jews see themselves to have been chosen as a "holy people," and Herbert Fingarette has described Confucianism as a religious system which sets up the "secular as sacred,"⁸ establishing Chinese civilization, as Jewish civilization, as a sacred or *distinct* civilization.

II. The study of texts was a major aspect of Confucian and Jewish cultures. All were encouraged to study the Confucian Classics or the Torah. Motivated students would go on to study the great wealth of commentaries on these texts and, if they proved worthy enough, they became "ordained" as rabbis or scholar-officials. The rabbi, like the Chinese scholar-official, was granted vast authoritative powers over religious and secular law,⁹ though the power of these positions, in both cases, has diminished in modern times. There is a passage in the *Analects* of Confucius which portrays the emphasis on study in ancient Chinese life:

The Master said, 'At fifteen I set my heart on learning; at thirty I took my stand; at

forty I came to be free from doubts; at fifty I understood the decrees of Heaven; at sixty my ear was attuned; at seventy I followed my heart's desire without overstepping the line.¹⁰

There is a similar saying from the Jewish tradition:

[Yehuda ben Tema taught:] At five years of age—the study of Bible, at ten—the study of Mishnah, at thirteen—responsibility for the mitzvot [commandments], at fifteen—the study of Talmud, at eighteen—marriage, at twenty—pursuit of a livelihood, at thirty—the peak of one's powers, at forty—the age of understanding, at fifty—the age of counsel, at sixty—old age, at seventy—the hoary head, at eighty—the age of "strength," at ninety—the bent back, at one hundred—as one dead and out of this world.¹¹

Though the Jewish version is less optimistic at its close, it does, like the passage quoted at the opening of this paper, correspond to the Confucian passage in a remarkably similar style. We should note that the two passages agree that forty is the age "understanding," i.e. "freedom from doubts." The two passages make evident the emphasis on study in the regular life of the peoples of these cultures.

Similar attitudes were also held regarding how one studied. Tu Weiming, in his excellent study on Confucian religiousness as exemplified in the *Chung-yung*,¹² explains that "Traditional Chinese and Japanese scholars have assumed that since the integrity of the text as a Confucian classic is beyond question, the scholar's task is simply to write exegeses on it."¹³ Exegesis was the traditional form of Jewish scholarship as well. Barry W. Holtz writes:

For the rabbis of the tradition, Torah called for a living and dynamic response, and each text in turn becomes the occasion for later commentary and interaction. The Torah remains unendingly alive because the readers of each subsequent generation saw it as such, taking the holiness of Torah seriously, and adding

their own contribution to the story. For the tradition, Torah *demand*s interpretation.¹⁴

Compare this with the following account by Charles O. Hucker of Confucian scholarship in the Han dynasty, which was contemporaneous with the Talmudic Era of Jewish history, the period of Rabbinic flowering:

Han bibliomania so infected the Chinese spirit that throughout subsequent history Chinese intellectuals learned their classics by heart, wrote ever newer and more complex commentaries on them, brought classical allusions into their discourses on every subject, and in general steeped themselves in the classics.¹⁵

It is not only amazing that these two traditions are so similar, but that they seem to have flourished at the same time.

The exegetical nature of Confucian and Jewish scholarship reflects the adoration of the scholarship of the past. Creative scholarship only takes root out of older scholarship, not in opposition to it. Thus, because of the emphasis on tradition, a scholarly system developed which preserved the words of the past as if they were written in the present.¹⁶

III. A major religious concept of Confucianism is the reanimation of the old, a yearning to return back to the days when righteousness prevailed. In Jewish tradition this is best expressed by the closing plea of the scriptural Book of Lamentations, later incorporated into the rituals for the reading of Torah:

"Take us back, O Lord, to Yourself, And let us come back; Renew our days as of old!" (Lam. 5:21)

A major concept in Jewish religiousness is that of *t'shuvah*, which means "turning," the doctrine that anyone can mend one's ways and return to righteousness. This seems to be the plea of Confucius throughout the *Analects*. It is represented by his concept of *ren*, "humanity," and often, "reciprocity." By this Confucius hoped that people would behave towards other people with righteous-

THE BENE ISRAEL: A FAMILY PORTRAIT (continued)

number of Indian Jews has never exceeded 30,000. Today, there are less than 6,000 Jews left in India. Indian Jewry is divided into three groups, each with its own respective history and customs: the Bene Israel, the Cochins, and the Baghdadi Jews.

What is so remarkable about India as a whole, is its ability to accommodate and assimilate peoples of diverse cultures and religions. This film is a testimony to the harmonious and even symbiotic lives the Jews in India live with their Muslim and Hindu (among other) neighbors. In light of today's global events, they are quite inspirational, and we hope to raise consciousness on a community that needs to be documented before it vanishes completely. Because of large-scale emigration to Israel caused by both India's independence and the emergence of the State of Israel, the numbers of these communities has been in decline, and continues to dwindle at a rate that threatens their very survival.

"The Bene Israel: A Family Portrait" is an initiation to the Bene Israel community through the eyes of one family: we meet the grandparents, Diana and David Wakrulkar, their son Daniel and wife Daisy, and their granddaughter Mili. Through stories, songs, family prayer and community ritual, we are immersed in their daily lives. We also meet Saul Thalker, the 'Hazan' of their synagogue. "The Bene Israel: A Family Portrait" focuses on several contemporary issues, including:

- The State of the Community Today - despite their dwindling numbers, the lack of Rabbis and intermarriages, how this specific family is flourishing and practicing Judaism in an Indian context
- Integration - exploring how the Jews and their neighbors of other beliefs live in a state of amity and accord
- Today's Faith - documenting traditional modes of observance as well as customs particular to the Bene Israel, such as 'malida'.

This is a highly personal film. Its style is human revelation rather than reportage. The filmmakers lived with the Wakrulkar family for over one month before they even picked up the camera. They did not want to simply document their lives, and the result is an intimate story, told by the family members themselves, in Marathi.

Call or write for details:
(617) 899-7044
National Center for Jewish Film
Lown Bldg. 102
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Waltham, MA 02254-9110

JOSEPH NEEDHAM: IN MEMORIAM

by Leo Gabow

On Wednesday, March 29, 1995, Professor Joseph Needham died. He was an eminent scientific historian, a well-known biochemist and a Sinologist of the first rank. He was 94 years of age.

His activities were so varied that he could lay claim to possessing, not simply an encyclopedic mentality, but to being a renaissance man as well.

He researched, wrote and edited a monumental work, *The History of Science in China*, and in terms of scope, his work has been compared to Darwin and Gibbon.

He was known to the medical community as the author of a three volume work, *Chemical Embryology*. This work, plus a companion piece entitled *A History of Embryology*, are still regarded as definitive works. In the area of supplying a linkage between biochemistry and embryology, he achieved a marked success.

His interest shifted to the *History of Science in China* in 1942, when he traveled to China as head of the British Scientific Mission in the war torn capitol of Chungking.

His crowning achievement was the publication of 16 volumes consisting of tens of thousands of pages. Entitled, *Science and Civilization in China*, Needham absorbed and analyzed disciplines totally foreign to him. Subjects such as Navigation, Mechanics, Engineering, Botany, Mathematics, etc., became part of his endeavors.

Needham held a Doctorate in Biochemistry and taught at Cambridge for many years. He also developed a reputation as a left-wing rebel and was banned from entering the United States for many years after charging that the United States had used germ-warfare during the Korean War.

Apparently, being advised, or concluding himself, that he had given insufficient attention to the influences played by Judaism in the development of the ferment of ideas in China, Needham wrote the following in *Science and Civilization in China*, Volume III, Cambridge University Press, 1959.

"Insufficient justice was done in the first volume of this work to the part played by Israel in the traffic of ideas and techniques between East and West. Opportunity may be taken to repair the omission at this point." In his Addenda, "Israel and Khazaria," he devotes space to a discussion of the Radhanites and their travels between China and Europe, and the impression these travels had on both East and West. He also wrote about the Jewish Khazar Kingdom and the highly strategic position the Kingdom had on the trade routes to China.

Needham also makes mention of the Jewish community in Kaifeng and advances the notion that "They may well have started as Radhanites who settled in China."

The world has lost a scholar; one who was not afraid to venture into other intellectual backyards.

WE THANK MEMBER MARY KOGAN OF SINGAPORE, for her contribution of \$100 to the SJI. In her letter to Rena Krasno, she stated that the contribution was "for the wonderful job the SJI is doing in disseminating information to all China Hands and others."

BOOK NOOK (continued)

Nakasone's, revival of Shintoist nationalism and his extolling of the superiority of Japan's monoracial society. In that sort of swamp, fear of the quite invisible, but powerful, Jew will thrive. And instead of Nazis, the image of the Jew is being supplied by Arab propagandists and American neo-fascists. What is a little disturbing is that the author of "The Secret of Jewish Power That Moves the World" is a prominent politician and that "The Expert Way of Reading the Jewish Protocols" (which went through 55 prints in its first year) was written by a recognized scholar with strong academic credentials.

However, there may be a bit of light coming through the anti-Semitic haze in the Land of the Rising Sun. A recent book sums up some of the growing reaction to the Japanese taste for both Jewish conspiracy theories and wallowing in an ultranationalist past: "If You Spend Too Much Time Thinking About the Jews, You Won't Understand Anything."

* * * * *

THE FIRST CHINESE-HEBREW DICTIONARY by Boris Mirkin; *Excerpted from Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin in Israel; Jan.-Feb. 1995*

Recently a unique volume appeared in the bookstores' show windows: the first in the World - Chinese-Hebrew Dictionary. The compiler of the volume is our compatriot, Emmanuel Pratt, or, as he is better known amongst our "Chinese" family, Monia Pirutinsky.

Monia was born in Vladivostok. At the end of the civil war in Primorie, he was taken by his parents first to Harbin, then to Mukden. Once Monia told me how, being a boy of 7, he went to the nearby train station to buy fresh "shao-bin" rolls for breakfast and became a witness to a historic event: the blowing up of the train of the Manchurian warlord, Marshall Chang Tso-lin.

The Pirutinsky family moved back to Harbin and then on to Tientsin, where Monia graduated the Tientsin Jewish School. His best languages

still are Russian and English. In his Harbin childhood he joined Beitar and still fondly remembers Sungari, Kitayskaya, and the Beitar sports grounds on the Vodoprovodnaya. He considers himself a Harbinetz.

During the war Monia gave Russian and English lessons to Japanese children, and, when the war was over, joined a Chinese-American import-export firm. At the same time he sent stories and poems to the Harbin Beitar Magazine Hadegel. Later, in 1948, while awaiting a possibility to go to Israel, he edited the English pages of the Shanghai Beitar magazine, Tagar.

Monia came to Israel in 1948 with the first group of the Chinese Irgun Zvai Leumi boys, and had a chance to see the last of the Negev operations.

The Negev played an important part in Monia's Israeli biography: for some years he wandered in the Southern desert as a hydrometric surveyor of the water resources in that region. Here he met the then editor of the Haolam Haze, Uri Avneri, who gave him a lift to Tel Aviv. At the end of the trip Monia Pirutinsky became Emmanuel Pratt and a member of the staff of Uri's newly acquired magazine. Later, his coverage of the Kastner trial became the nucleus for his book (in Hebrew), The Kastner Case.

Monia worked on his Dictionary, which he dedicated to the memory of his parents, for seven long years. The idea entered his mind while he studied Chinese language and history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (after having retired from the Israel Television, where he worked since its emergence). In his "mission impossible", he turned for help to his old-time friend, Uri Grause, a well known connoisseur of the Chinese classical literature and philosophy, another compatriot of ours. At first Uri was rather sceptical: "You'll give up after the first hundred characters," he said. But, evidently, Monia did not give up—until the last of the 7136 characters (in their classical and simplified forms) was entered into the new book.

Monia's calligraphic hand in Chinese is no less artistic than in Russian and

English, but this was not enough. A friend made a contribution of a powerful computer and a Chinese programme, without which the work would not have been accomplished till today (if at all). A prestigious Israeli publishing house, KARTA, showed interest in the project and the book was born—in attractive imperial Yellow with red Chinese characters and black Hebrew lettering.

In the introduction to the book Monia writes: "This is the first attempt to give a Hebrew-speaking student of Chinese a tool to enable him to find and pronounce a Chinese character he is bound to encounter in the texts, both ancient and contemporary." With the influx of students in the East Asian faculties of the Israeli universities, we hope and believe that Monia's book will be a success.

We congratulate Emmanuel Pratt—Monia Pirutinsky on his valuable achievement and a realization of a dream, and wish him success in his future ventures. Knowing this tireless man as well as I do, I suspect that the Dictionary won't be his last book. What will it be then? An autobiography? A novel on China? Or will he simply go back to painting and sculpture? Monia does not answer, just shrugs his shoulders and smiles.

THE BENE ISRAEL: A FAMILY PORTRAIT India, 1994, 33 min., video/color; Marathi with English subtitles; Directed & Produced by Karen Nathanson and Jean-Francois Fernandez; Co-produced by Tanya Blumstein; Edited by Diane Maroger

The story of the Indian Jews has been, and continues to be, the least known within India and elsewhere in the world. This may be in part due to the small size of the Jewish community. Of a population of 900 million, the

ness, the way they would like to be treated in return. "Confucius repeatedly spoke of his 'one unifying principle' . . . reciprocity, which Confucius once said was the one word that might guide one's conduct throughout life,"¹⁷ writes Y.P. Mei. There is a similar doctrine in the Jewish tradition, that the scriptural directive to treat one's neighbor with "reciprocity" was the most important principle in the Torah.¹⁸

The Confucian (and Jewish) doctrine of reciprocity was not restricted to the societal level. It is applied to the political level, preaching for benevolent government.¹⁹ On an even deeper level, it is applied to humanity's relationship with heaven. "Reciprocity," writes Tu Wei-ming, "is not only the human way of entering into communication with nature and establishing a dialogical connection with Heaven."²⁰ Tu uses this to define "the Confucian way of being religious as ultimate self-transformation as a communal act and as a faithful dialogical response to the transcendent."²¹ Humanity and Heaven become partners in the creation²² so that the result is "a pattern of mutual dependence and organismic unity between Heaven and humankind."²³ In summary, Tu explains Confucian religiousness as entering a "variety of reciprocal relationships . . . for the fulfillment of a 'covenant!'"²⁴

This does seem remarkably similar to Jewish religiousness. In Judaism one enters into a "covenant" with God which reveals the proper way to behave in relationship to God and other human beings. Humanity is seen as God's "partner" in the cosmos. The Torah is the document of God's covenant with Israel. In reciprocity for God's creation of the world and saving of Israel in history, Israel obeys God's laws. Of course, the Confucian *Ti'en*, Heaven, is far more abstract than the Jewish God, who is often given a human-like personality. The Jewish belief in a personal God is a major difference between the two traditions, but just as Confucianism focuses more on *ren* (civilization) than on *Ti'en*, so does Judaism focus more on the Torah (God's commandments) than on God.

IV. The common core of Confucianism and Judaism is the emphasis on tradition. Tradition is transmitted most concretely, most visibly, and most effectively, through ritual. Ritual for Confucius consisted of *li*, the strict order of rites and music. Confucius claims in the Analects that if only people would order their lives according to *li*, then *ren*, (here, righteousness) would be achieved. We must note that Confucius did not care much about the divinities. It wasn't so much to please them that he emphasized the rites, which were often sacrificial, but to fill a need of the people, to give them a systematic code of behavior with which to regiment their lives. "A good society is held together by the moral force of *li* and music,"²⁵ writes Benjamin I. Schwartz. "A world governed by the unspoken routines, rituals and habits of good behavior would decidedly not be a mindless or spiritless world."²⁶

The *li* of Confucius is without a doubt analogous to the *halakhah* of Judaism. *Halakhah* is the body of Jewish law, and has been the defining characteristic of Jewish religious practice throughout the ages. As Louis Ginzberg writes, "It is only in the *halakhah* that we find the mind and character of the Jewish people exactly and adequately expressed."²⁷ Similarly, in the Analects, Confucius regards *li* as a basic guide to the benevolent life.²⁸ *Li* refers to rituals proper, but also to conduct in general. The *halakhah* of Judaism is just as central to the life of the traditional Jew. "The halakhic system," writes Joel Roth, "is an all-encompassing system and . . . there is no subject that is, by definition, outside of the theoretical purview of halakhah."²⁹

Halakhah, like *li*, is a system of rituals which, again like *li*, in its highest expression is coupled with music. Scholars do not know much about the ancient Confucian music of rites, but any observer of a Jewish prayer service or home ritual will notice specific chants for various occasions. There are different melodies for reading different sections of the Bible, for the prayers of weekdays, sabbaths, and holidays, and for the evening, morning, and afternoon services of sabbaths and holidays. There is such

close attention to detail that any Jewish ritual theoretically will look and sound the same anywhere around the world at any time in history.

Though everyone is capable of performing the *li* and achieving *ren*, Confucius nevertheless holds that the ideal can never be completely reached:

The way of the profound person functions everywhere and yet is hidden. Men and women of simple intelligence can share its knowledge; and yet in its utmost reaches, there is something which even the sage does not know. Men and women of simple intelligence can put it into practice; and yet in its utmost reaches there is something which even the sage is not able to put into practice.³⁰

This element of striving for the ideal as a life's ambition corresponds directly to the approach to *halakhah* in Judaism. The following comes from an official Statement of Principles published by the Conservative movement, the largest of the three major arms of the Jewish world today:

. . . the ideal Conservative Jew is a *striving Jew*. No matter the level at which one starts, no matter the heights of piety and knowledge one attains, no one can perform all 613 *mitzvot* (i.e. commandments) or acquire all Jewish knowledge. What is needed is an openness to those observances one has yet to perform and the desire to grapple with those issues and texts one has yet to confront.³¹

We see here that rituals are observed not so much for a concrete and definite end, but rather as a means to order the life of a people and root it in tradition. In explaining the purpose of the rites, Tu Weiming writes, "Ceremonies are concrete manifestations of the ethicoreligious intent underlying an established rite . . . Ceremonial acts . . . symbolize desirable behavior patterns."³² And as Neil Gillman, a rabbi rather than a Chinese exegetist, writes:

"Rituals . . . confer identity.

That's how they create communities, for who we are depends in large measure on where we belong. They garb the social experiences of everyday life in the distinctive values of a particular group. In the process, a group acquires a distinctive identity, separate from others . . . The ultimate goal of the entire Jewish ritual system, then, is . . . to capture in our personal lives an elaborate cosmic order which extends to God Himself as the ultimate cause and embodiment of that order.³³

Li and *halakhah* are the same.

Conclusion Tradition is that which is transmitted. What is the nature of this tradition, this "Judeo-Confucian" tradition which has kept the identity of two great peoples over three thousand years? Confucius himself said, "I transmit, but do not innovate."³⁴ The same thing is said of Moses: "The Book (i.e. The Five Books of Moses) is named after him because he was its transmitter, not because he was its creator."³⁵ It can be no coincidence that in these two greatest of all traditions, even the founders are but "transmitters" of truths greater than any of their own making.

The nature of the "Judeo-Confucian tradition," is that it transmits the identity of the people from generation to generation. If that which is transmitted is transmitted well, then continuity and spiritual content are assured. What the famous Jewish essayist Ahad Ha-Am (Asher Ginzberg) wrote about the Sabbath and the Jewish people applies equally to the Chinese people and the Confucian tradition:

He who truly feels in his heart a connection with the life of his people throughout the generations, will find it quite impossible . . . to picture for himself the existence of the people Israel without the "Queen Sabbath." It is possible to state without exaggeration that more than Israel has kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept Israel.³⁶

This idea of transmitted history, of cultural memory, is what makes the cultures of China and Israel so sophisticated. It is the essence of tradition, of a people which exists across time as well as space. It is this characteristic which preserved these two cultures across

the millennia. It is not a characteristic uniquely Jewish or Chinese. It is a universal potential for all cultures, achieved independently by the Chinese and Jewish civilizations.

This paper was originally submitted to Professor Vera Schwarcz at Wesleyan University as part of a course on Chinese history in 1990. I am grateful to Professor Schwarcz for her continued encouragement.

FOOTNOTES

1 Han Yu, "What is the True Way?" from *Ch'ang-ji hsien-sheng wen-chi*, SPTK ed., II:1a-3b. Quoted in Wm. Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan and Burton Watson, *Sources of Chinese Tradition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960), p. 379.

2 Avot 1:1, translation from *Pirkei Avot: Teachings of the Sages*, translated by Max J. Routtenberg. Quoted in Jules Harlow, *Siddur Sim Shalom: A Prayerbook for Shabbat, Festivals, and Weekdays* (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of America, 1985), p. 602.

3 It might be argued the reasons for the survival of the Jewish people cannot be compared to the reasons for the survival of the Chinese people. The Chinese people are here simply because they are great in number. It is only the survival of Israel that is a question. I differ with this position. If anything, it is the survival of China, not Israel, which is more the mystery. Because China was so great, it was very difficult for it to maintain unity. Its greatness was a negative factor for its survival, not a positive. It is because of other factors like the ones we shall examine in this paper that allowed China to survive and other great peoples, like that of Rome, to fall.

4 Rachel Anne Rabinowicz, ed., *Passover Haggadah: The Feast of Freedom* (New York: The Rabbinical Assembly, 1982), p. 67.

5 I use the term "Confucian tradition" over "Chinese tradition," since the Chinese tradition also contains elements of Taoism and Buddhism and aberrational Confucianism which cannot be dealt with in the confines of this paper. While, for similar reasons, "Rabbinic tradition" would be more appropriate than "Jewish tradition," we shall use the latter term since it is more familiar, and the differences between the variant influences upon Jewish tradition are not as complex as those of Chinese history. It should also be noted that whatever various traditions there were, it was Confucianism for China and Rabbinic Judaism for Israel that were dominant throughout most of history.

6 This criticism has been made of both Confucian and Jewish traditions.

7 The Chinese aspect of the above is taken from a lecture given by my teacher Dr. Vera Schwarcz at Wesleyan University on September 6, 1990.

8 See Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

9 "One is struck by the variety of public responsibilities carried out by the rabbi," writes Jacob Neusner in *There We Sat Down: Talmudic Judaism in the Making* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 107.

10 Confucius, *The Analects (Lun yu)* translated by D. C. Lau (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1983), II:4 (p. 11).

11 *Pirkei Avot* V:23, Harlow, p. 651.

12 The Chung-yung is a classical Confucian text.

13 Tu Wei-ming, *Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Confucian Religiousness: A Revised and Enlarged Edition of Centrality and Commonality: An Essay on Chung-yung* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 1.

14 Barry W. Holtz, ed., *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts* (New York: Summit Books, 1984), p. 17.

15 Charles O. Hucker, *China's Imperial Past: An Introduction to Chinese History and Culture* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), p. 198.

16 Tu Wei-ming does point out that since modern scholarship has raised questions as to the authority of the

Classics, the basis of traditional exegetical scholarship can no longer be applied. Tu refutes this by emphasizing that, "a central text in a spiritual tradition, far from being an anthology of isolated statements, is likely to have an organismic unity of its own" (p. 2). The specific origin of the Classics is not so relevant as is the fact that the Classics are the Great Tradition. It is the tradition which makes them holy, not their origin. This same debate can be witnessed throughout the Jewish world today, as most scholars no longer accept the doctrine of Mosaic authenticity of the Torah text.

17 Y.P. Mei, "The Basis of Social, Ethical, and Spiritual Values," in Charles A. Moore, ed., *The Chinese Mind* (Honolulu: East-West Center Press, University of Hawaii Press, 1967), p. 152.

18 Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 31a, in *Holtz*, p. 11.

19 See Tu Wei-ming, ch. 3.

20 *ibid.*, p. 106.

21 *ibid.*, p. 94.

22 *ibid.*, p. 70.

23 *ibid.*, p. 107.

24 *ibid.*, p. 107.

25 Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 93.

26 *ibid.*, p. 124.

27 Louis Ginzberg, *Students, Scholars and Saints* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1928), p. 117.

28 See, for example, *Analects* VIII:2.

29 Joel Roth, *The Halakhic Process: A Systemic Analysis* (New York: The Theological Seminary of America, 1986), p. 311.

30 *Analects*, XII:1-2, in Tu Wei-ming, p. 32.

31 *Emet Ve-Emunah: Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary, the Rabbinical Assembly, and the United Synagogue of America, 1988), p. 57.

32 Tu Wei-ming, p. 47, 48.

33 Gillman, *Sacred Fragments* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), p. 229, 236.

34 *Analects* VII:1

35 W. Gunther Plaut, ed., *The Torah: A Modern Commentary* (New York: Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1981), p. 1584.

36 Ahad Ha-Am, "The Sabbath and Zionism," in *Al Prashat Drackhim* (Berlin: Judischer Verlag, 1921), vol. 3, p. 79. [Hebrew]. Translation is my own.

SHANGHAI SEPHARDI JEWS' EFFORTS TO ASSIST EUROPEAN REFUGEES

(continued from page 1)

Road, where a number of women of the community set up a soup kitchen which fed 500 people three times daily. In times of extreme emergency, the building also provided sleeping accommodation. The only surviving Mir Yeshiva was housed here until forced to live in Hongkew by the Japanese gendarmerie.

3. Rev. Brown as chaplain of the Jewish company of the Shanghai Volunteer Force and Sephardi members of the Force were helpful in meeting the arrivals at the wharf and bringing them to the temporary quarters at the Embankment Building where they had arranged for camp beds to be loaned by the military. They also helped at the

BOOK NOOK

**JEWS IN THE JAPANESE MIND:
THE HISTORY AND USES OF A
CULTURAL STEREOTYPE** by David
G. Goodman and Masanori Miyazawa,
The Free Press, 360 pages, \$24.95.

by Joel Lewis; excerpted from
Forward, March 10, 1995

Despite the fact that only 1% of the Japanese population has ever met a Jew (according to a 1988 Anti-Defamation League survey), virtually every Japanese bookstore has a "Jewish corner" stocked with titles such as "The Jewish Plot to Control the World," "I Fought the Jews and Understood the World," "If You Understand the Jews, You Will Understand the World," "If You Understand the Jews, You Will Understand Japan," "The Expert Way of Reading the Jewish Protocols" and "The Secret of Jewish Power That Moves the World." Unlike their American counterparts advertised in the Liberty Lobby's *Spotlight*, these books sell hundreds of thousands of copies and are advertised in mainstream Japanese newspapers and magazines.

"Jews in the Japanese Mind," by David Goodman and Masanori Miyazawa, attempts to understand Japan's simultaneous history of virulent anti-Semitism and wild philo-Semitism. The authors, both academics, write in a manner that gives the book, written in English, the feel of a translation. However, it is an extensively researched study that offers a fascinating portrait of how the Jew is inscribed as an "Other" in a non-Western culture.

The American Jewish community's association with Japanese anti-Semitism is linked with Japan's long-time observance of the Arab boycott against Israel. However, it appears that anti-Semitism was brought into Japan with the introduction of Western culture into a society that long-resisted foreign influence. "The Japanese acquired many of their images of Jews from translated Western literature," note the authors, "but those images were also powerfully mediated by Japanese culture."

One of the most powerful transmitters of Western anti-Semitism has

been Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice," "the first work by Shakespeare to capture the Japanese imagination." In most productions of "Merchant" in Japan, Shylock is a reincarnation of the archetypal miser character of Kabuki theater. "The Merchant of Venice" is a required text in Japan's high schools and is often performed by student theater groups. "The result of this unrelenting exposure to 'The Merchant of Venice,'" note the authors, "has been to render Shylock one of the defining images of Jews in Japan." Even Japanese sympathetic to Jews were strongly influenced by the play's negative stereotypes. "I received the strong impression that the Jews had always been a despicable race like Shylock," wrote journalist Watanabe Minojiro in 1923, "stingy, greedy, cruel, cold-blooded, and heartless."

Anti-Semitism was part of the ultranationalistic rhetoric of pre-World War II Japan. Though mainstream ideology preached that the war in the Pacific was to liberate Asia from Western powers, ultranationalists began to assimilate anti-Semitic propaganda imported from Japan's ally, Nazi Germany. "The Jews are the curse of mankind," declared the Citizen's Reader for Certain Victory. "American democracy has become a Jewish den." Some writers even shared the Nazi view that the new world war was a war against the Jews and that Japan's part in this struggle was to rid Asia of its Jewish presence.

That the Jew in the Japanese mind was more a construct of the ur-for-eigner than a hatred against an actual community was reflected in the treatment of Jews under Japanese control during World War II. A 1938 policy statement specifically orders Jews to be treated as any other foreign national and although German agents protested Japan's fair treatment of Jews, Japanese officials ignored their complaints. "I am the man responsible for the alliance with Hitler," Japan's foreign minister, Yosuke Matsuoka, told a group of Jewish businessmen in 1940, "but nowhere have I promised that we would carry out his anti-Semitic policies in Japan."

It was post-World War II Japan, coming to terms with its militaristic past and the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that helped create a new Jewish stereotype. "The epitome of the innocent victim for the Japanese was Anne Frank, and in the postwar period she joined Shylock as a defining stereotype of the Jews," the authors write. "The Diary of Anne Frank" was first published in Japan in 1952 and has since sold 4 million copies - in contrast to sales of 2.5 million copies in Germany during the same period.

The diary took on a different set of signifiers in the Japanese milieu. Reading it became a rite of passage for most adolescent Japanese girls. "So closely has Anne Frank been identified with puberty in Japan," the book notes, "that in 1961, a manufacturer calling itself Anne Co., Ltd. introduced the first sanitary napkin proportioned for Japanese women and called it 'Anne's Day' (*Anne no hi*), from a reference Anne makes in her 'Diary' to her first three menstrual periods."

As with the case of Shylock, the Anne Frank stereotype is another distortion of the Jew and Jewishness. "Don't make a Jewish play of it," was what Anne's father wrote to Meyer Levin, who was originally slated to adapt the diary for the Broadway stage. The version that made it to Broadway did obscure her Jewishness and made her something akin to a Christian child martyr. The diary's first Japanese translator hoped the book would help the Japanese learn to hate war — sidestepping the issue that the Frank family's attic life was a result of their status as Jews in Nazi-occupied Holland. The obfuscation of Frank's Jewishness is so embedded in Japanese culture that Barbara Rogasky's history of the Holocaust, "Smoke and Ashes," was retitled in translation "Why Was Anne Frank Killed?" as something of a corrective.

Japan's current state of anti-Semitism has something to do with the sense of a decline in the quality of life that began in the mid-'80s and the search for a scapegoat to place problems upon. It also has to do with the former prime minister, Yasuhiro

(there had been a German concession prior to Germany's defeat in World War I). Japan's influence had increased due to that country's military conquests in China since 1937 and Japan now occupied long stretches of territory along the coast as well as inland.

A German refugee travelling from Shanghai to Tientsin had to acquire 2 permits: one enabling him to sail on a Japanese ship (the only navigation lines available at the time) and the second testifying that he had been employed by a foreign firm approved by the Japanese occupying authorities. Wallenstein managed to obtain the necessary documentation.

At the time, the situation in Tientsin - as far as Wallenstein was concerned - was preferable to that in Shanghai: there were much fewer refugees and the housing problem was less catastrophic. Later, in February 1943, Jewish refugees in Tientsin became aware of another far greater advantage over Shanghai: those who had arrived in China after 1937 were **never** restricted to a ghetto by the Japanese authorities.

After Pearl Harbor, the Japanese occupied entire Tientsin, the British and Americans lost all privileges and were later repatriated to their home countries - if they were lucky - or interned in Japanese Prisoner-of-War camps. Italians and Germans, allies of the Japanese, were now the most powerful Western nationals.

Of course, for German Jewish refugees like Wallenstein, the situation became critical. A formal order was published cancelling their German passports and the Japanese were advised accordingly. However, rather surprisingly, the newly appointed German Consul-General Wiedemann agreed to issue to Gerd Wallenstein and his wife a document stating that they were former German Jews whose citizenship had now been cancelled.

Since these documents bore the bearers' photographs and impressive German Consular seals, Japanese sentries who were unable to read it, would wave the Wallensteins on whenever they presented it!

In his unpublished Memoir entitled: Transnational Destiny - A Documentary of a European's Sinification under Adversity with Illustrations of China in World War Two, Wallenstein describes the extraordinary help extended to him by

the Tientsin French authorities.

Wallenstein explains in his chapter Homage to the French, that since he lived in the French Concession, he decided to approach the French Chief of Police with a request to issue him a special residence certificate. The sympathetic Chief of Police discussed the matter with French Concession officials and within a remarkable solution was found: Wallenstein and his wife received imitation passports with their photos, personal descriptions and blank pages for visas. The front covers carried in English, Chinese and Japanese the inscription:

"Identification Document taking place of passport."

Gerd Wallenstein's 'passport' was numbered 1 and that of his wife 2! As far as they knew, only 2 more 'passports' of this type were ever issued! This document enabled Wallenstein to travel to Beijing and when the Japanese looked askance at his 'passport' he would state firmly: *Franzu* (France).

The grateful Wallenstein decided to express his appreciation to the Tientsin French authorities in a courageous manner. When in January 1942 the Japanese occupying forces issued an order to remove shortwave coils from all radios so as to prevent people from hearing 'enemy' broadcasts, Wallenstein offered his technical help to the French Police: he would 'doctor' the radios for them and obtain the necessary Japanese approval stickers on their behalf. He then secretly informed the Chief of Police that he would provide a special substitute coil as well as a gadget that would restore shortwave reception in a very simple manner when so desired. The risk for Wallenstein was very grave indeed and could result in a long prison sentence or even worse should his action be reported to the Japanese military.

When the war ended, Wallenstein received a letter from the French authorities thanking him for "this action that contributed to maintaining good morale under Japanese occupation".

Professor Gerd Wallenstein passed away in California on November 4, 1990. He was an avid collector of rare books and Chinese art. In the 1960's he visited Japan as President of the California Youth Symphony. He became an expert on international telecommunication and was invited to many countries. He lectured at Stanford University in the Department of Engineering-Economic Systems. He published 50 articles and a book on telecommunication standards, a field in which his knowledge was recognized throughout the world.

A KAIFENG QUESTION

*excerpted from The Economist,
December 1994*

Today Kaifeng, a city of about 500,000 in Henan province, holds few reminders of its Jewish history. But the city's leaders, together with descendants of Chinese Jews, are hoping to use Kaifeng's links with Judaism to bring foreign investment to this overlooked corner of China. Jewish businessmen from overseas have been invited to Kaifeng to inspect the opportunities. The city has approved a "Special Economic Development Zone for Overseas Jews".

The prospects are intriguing, but the politics messy. Some people in Kaifeng claim to be not merely descendants, but actual Jews, and have asked the government in Beijing for recognition as a minority. Fifty-five ethnic groups in China already enjoy minority status, which brings with it cash subsidies, parliamentary representation and, perhaps most usefully, exemption from China's strict birth-control policy.

A few descendants of the Kaifeng Jews, a provincial-court judge among them, have been allowed to call themselves Jews in their identity papers. The city government has generally supported the efforts of Jewish descendants to commemorate their history and preserve their meagre collection of relics. But China's State Nationalities Affairs Commission says that in the past it has found no basis for recognizing a Jewish minority and is disinclined to reopen its inquiries. The Kaifeng Jews' assimilation into Chinese culture, says a commission spokesman, has been total. A visitor might agree. Traces of foreign-looking features in the descendants are hard to detect. Some abstain from eating pork, but otherwise their way of life appears thoroughly Chinese.

Since Israel and China established diplomatic relations in 1992, several Jewish delegations have come to Kaifeng from abroad but none have concluded any firm business, leading China's hyper-sensitive security apparatus to suspect them of proselytizing. In May last year (1993) a meeting between a group of American Jews and 30 of Kaifeng's Jewish descendants was disrupted by security police. An organizer of the gathering says that the Henan provincial government has now branded him a "politically dangerous element".

Some descendants want to exercise their rights under Israel's law of return, which grants permission to live in Israel to any Jew. Some have formally applied to Israel's embassy in Beijing, forcing Israel to make its own judgment on the validity of the descendants' claims to being Jewish. No applicants from Kaifeng have been approved. "It's a difficult decision for us to make, but, if we give a passport to everyone who tells us they don't eat pork, we will be inundated," says an Israeli consular official.

Museum Road soup kitchen, bringing cheer to the spirits of the downtrodden. 4. The co-chairmen of the Education subcommittee, Mr. Horace Kadoorie and Rev. Mendel Brown, played an important role. Mr. Kadoorie was instrumental in setting up the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association School (SJYA), known as the Kadoorie school and supervised personally by him. There are some in Seattle who as children at the time attended the school and speak of him with great affection. Rev. Brown devised a scheme whereby people would adopt a child for educational purposes and pay the fees for attending the Shanghai Jewish School in Seymour Road.

5. Finally, there were the unofficial acts of kindness on the personal level, employing refugees whenever possible, buying their goods, inviting them to celebrate the Sabbath and holidays.

The generosity of the Sephardi community and in particular the officers of the Beth Aharon Synagogue was recognized by the Association of Jewish Communities in Berlin, who presented to the synagogue a "sepher torah, one of the few to be rescued from the burning synagogue of a small Jewish community as "an expression of gratitude for the help and sympathy given by the latter to stricken immigrants." David Kranzler in his Japanese, Nazis, and Jews: the Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai 1938-1945, p. 141 also pays tribute to the Sephardi community: "The Sephardi magnates were, in fact, both devout and charitable. They were generous to their own community and no less so to China in general and Shanghai in particular . . . They also contributed more than their share to civic, communal, and charitable causes."

One also has to bear in mind that the outbreak of the Pacific War in December 1941 and the consequent invasion of Shanghai by the Japanese army played havoc with the community as the businesses of those who were British citizens were confiscated and the members themselves either repatriated or interned. M.E. Dangoor, who assumed the leadership of the Sephardi community in 1942, pointed out in his September 1945 "War-end Message to the Community: that he and his committee had relieved the distress of 202 persons out of a total community of 370 outside the internment camps (The Scribe: Journal of Babylonian Jewry, October 1986, p.5.) In point of fact, there was great cooperation between

the two communities and Mr. Dangoor testified to this when he wrote: "My thanks are also accorded to the Shanghai Ashkenazi Jewish community, who when the Japanese military authorities took the premises of the Jewish School, Beth Aharon Synagogue and the Ohel Rachel Synagogue, were kind enough to put at our disposal a room in their Synagogue for our daily prayers, and in their hospital quarters housed all the teakwood benches and chairs of the Ohel Rachel synagogue."

"REFUGE IN SHANGHAI" CONFERENCE SPRING 1995

(Based on an item in the Newsletter of the Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai)

Austria Held Europe's First Conference on Jews of Shanghai

Leading international scholars and many former refugees met in Salzburg on 26-28 May 1995 in a conference on *Flucht nach Shanghai* (Refuge in Shanghai). Concentrating on Austrian refugees who fled Nazi persecution, this was the first conference held in Europe on the general subject of the Jewish refuge in China.

Speakers from Austria, Britain, China, France, Germany, Israel and the USA addressed a wide range of topics. These included scholarly reviews such as "Journey's East and West: Some Questions about Shanghai's Jews" by Irene Eber (Jerusalem), "Die 'Flucht nach Shanghai' im Kontext der Osterreichischen Zeitgeschichte" by Francoise Kreissler (Paris and Berlin), and "Central European Jewish communities in War-torn Shanghai" by Pan Guang (Shanghai).

Personal memoirs were offered by several Shanghaianders, among them Ernest G. Heppner (Indianapolis) and Rena Krasno (Palo Alto). A show of paintings by the Austrian artist Friedrich Schiff, himself a wartime refugee in Shanghai, accompanied the conference.

The conference was organized by a team of young Austrian scholars under the auspices of the Gedenkdienst Wien. Six Austrian institutes, the Leo Baeck Institute (New York) and CJES served as co-sponsors. Team members have traveled to China, Israel and the USA in their research work, which will also produce an exhibition in Vienna next year.

According to Thomas Halbeisen, one of the organizers of the Symposium, "In Austria this Symposium was seen as a political event. It was meant to document the role of Austria in World War II, in which

the Austrians are not merely victims (of the occupation in March 1938) but also perpetrators. This 'new look' in the role Austria played in World War II is partly supported by the government. Within the last years the Socialist Chancellor of the Republic, Franz Vranitzky, acknowledged that Austrians were perpetrators themselves (in a speech to the Austrian Parliament and in the Knesseth in Israel). One initiative of Vranitzky was to establish a 'Beauftragte des Bundeskanzlers' who is entrusted to be the Chancellor of Jewish Affairs."

UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS BY CHINESE RESEARCHERS ON THE THEME OF JEWS IN SHANGHAI

by Pan Guang

1. Jewish Politics in Shanghai 1900-1949 Book (Chinese & English) by Pan Guang
2. Jews in Shanghai Album (Chinese & English) by Pan Guang, Zhou Goujian, Den Xinyu and Xu Buzheng
3. Jewish Sites in Shanghai and Their Current Situation Report (Chinese) by Jin Yingzhong and Zhou Goujian
4. The Influence of Jewish Refugees on Social Life of Shanghai. Paper (Chinese) by Xu Buzheng
5. Sholom Aleichem and Shanghai Paper (Chinese) by Yao Yien
6. Papers of the International Seminar on Jews in Shanghai Book (English) by Pan Guang & Chaim Waxman
7. Collection of Memoirs of Shanghai Jews Book (Chinese) by Pan Guang & Zhang Jiazhe
8. Comparative Studies on Jewish Community in Shanghai and Overseas Chinese Communities 1880s-1940s Serial papers (Chinese & English) by Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai. Soliciting cooperative partner (research group or individual)
9. Jewish Resistance in Shanghai 1933-1945 Serial papers or book (Chinese & English) by Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai. Soliciting cooperative partner and memoirs.

TWO PERSPECTIVES ON THE TIENTSIN JEWISH SCHOOL

I.

by Varda Yoran (Rose Granevsky)

At a chance meeting recently three of us graduates of the Tientsin Jewish School spontaneously decided to have a reunion though not all the students who would be interested or able to attend. It wasn't a large school, and the pupils had scattered all over the world. Tracking them down would be a hard but not impossible task.

The TJS came into existence sometime in the 1920's. The Jewish Community of Tientsin began at around the turn of the century, when the Jews who had come mainly from Russia and settled in Manchuria gradually trickled into Shanghai and Tientsin, and set up their own self-contained little world within the huge cities. The main language in the school was English, and Russian was taught because that was the natural tongue spoken at home. Hebrew was taught because it was a Jewish School. Jewish history, based on the Bible, was taught, as well as all the usual subjects like math, geography, world history, physics, etc. Prior to World War II, there were also classes in Chinese, which had to be terminated during the war and replaced by Japanese. The curriculum followed was that set up by the requirements of Cambridge University in England, in all subjects. Classes extended from Kindergarten through Ninth Grade, and before the war those students who did well in their final exams at the TJS could apply for Cambridge Matriculation examinations. The success level at the Cambridge exams was close to 100%.

The Jewish Communities in China were independent in that they received no help or financial support from the Chinese government. Businesses were established. Clubs, synagogues, schools, medical and welfare services were set up, and the communities took care of their own.

The more affluent members of the society supported the school, and those children whose families were unable to pay for their education were taught for free.

Before the war, there were many foreign businesses and communities in the major cities of China, and there were British, American, Russian, French and other schools. During the war, for political reasons, the American and British schools were closed, and the only school with English as the major language was the Jewish School. Even non-Jewish children attended. We had Russian, Korean and Indian pupils as well. They also studied for partial or no tuition if they couldn't afford to pay. A considerable number of Jewish families who had escaped from Europe just as Nazism was rearing its ugly head settled in China and were absorbed into the existing Jewish Communities in the two major cities, Shanghai and Tientsin. During the war we were totally cut off from the rest of the world, and to a large extent even from the other cities in China. Despite the difficulties involved, the school still kept up its high scholastic requirements. One of the unusual aspects in this whole rather unusual setup was the collection of teachers we had, not all of them even qualified or experienced, but willing to take on the challenge. The Parents Committee certainly deserves credit for their involvement and support of the school. (continued)

II.

by Galia Cohen (Gissia Granevsky)

The first school my sister Rose and I attended was a convent school run by American nuns in Dairen. It was difficult for us to understand how we came to belong to the bad race that killed baby Jesus. The Jewish community in Dairen was tiny and, even though we did get to celebrate some holidays at the local club that turned into a synagogue during the holidays, we had no idea what it was all about.

All that changed after we moved to Tientsin at the age of 8 and started attending the Tientsin Jewish School. It was a little school, and the classes were small and cosy. A cute little girl named Lea Ginsburg welcomed us, embraced us warmly and helped us get adjusted. She became our best friend and remained so even after she left for Shanghai. But she was there for us again, in 1949, when we arrived in Israel, this time as Lea Liberman and, with her husband Jack, again embraced us warmly and again helped us adjust.

The school was run by the Jewish community, and once Mr. Izgur, the headmaster, told us that when they decided to open a school, they had to decide which language to choose and deliberated between teaching all the subjects in Yiddish, Russian or English; and they decided on English, thinking it would benefit the children most. For that choice I shall be eternally grateful. Knowing the English language, I was always able to find a job in Israel even before I knew Hebrew. I could get along almost anywhere in the world, and the magnificent world of books in English was open to me and available.

But no less important was the part about Judaism. It was there that I first heard the Bible stories described eloquently by Mr. Izgur, and his readings of Shalom Aleichem stories in Russian will never be forgotten. Mr. Greenfield taught us how to write beautiful round letters, never dreaming that it would come in handy in our generation. He was the one that explained the holidays to us, and when I first heard him describe God in heaven going over everybody's personal file during the period between the New Year (Rosh Hashanna) and Yom Kippur, in order to decide what would happen the following year, I thought he was joking. He made it clear that we could still repent and mend our ways by Yom Kippur, and fasting always helps. So it was to him I proudly went and told that I had managed to fast on Yom Kippur, at the age of nine.

Thinking back of my school days, I remember feeling confident and secure. The teachers did their best to teach us what they knew, and I can't recall a harsh word or physical punishment, and at a time when teachers were still hitting their pupils in other parts of the world, we were always treated with courtesy and respect. I remember saying "that's unfair" to Mr. Nachtman, and he said that nowhere else will we be treated as fairly as at school. Mr. Nachtman was a wonderful teacher and I am very grateful to him for all he taught me. I kept in touch even after I left school, and I corresponded with him from Israel when he was living in New York. (continued)

disclosed that Nissim's employer, E.D. Sassoon, had started to dock his salary for 50 taels each month, from prior to signing of the deed, and had paid the money to Hannah. No mentioned was made of whether Nissim had complained about this, nor of why payment had been stopped, but Nissim had left the employ of Sassoon.

At this time, in support of the "duress" approach, the defense introduced a new element, that Nissim had been unable to resist the pressure to sign because at that time criminal charges had been brought against him by the British government, and, his counsel declared, Nissim had been told that if he signed and paid the money, the charge would be dropped. King rejected this approach, however, and concluded that Nissim had had good reason to sign of his own volition. The marriage deemed valid and duress dismissed, the judge found for the plaintiff. A fine equal to the plaintiff's costs was imposed.

Later, it became public knowledge that the David Sassoon company had provided free passage for Hannah back to Shanghai on one of its ships, such act showing the nature of sympathy she had in the community. No doubt the action by the Sassoon company, whereby Nissim's pay was docked, reflected the judgment of the community leaders that she be looked after. In contrast to this, Nissim, having learned of her impending return to Shanghai, had placed an ad in a local newspaper to say he was not responsible for her debts.

This ended the second instance of Ezra vs. Ezra, but it was at the third such case that relevant details were made public -- they certainly were well known in the community before this -- and it is to this that we turn.

The case (Rex [N.E.B. Ezra] v. E.I. Ezra) was heard in the Police Court on June 27. Nissim was plaintiff this time, and sought damages. The charge against Edward Isaac Ezra was that the latter had assaulted the plaintiff and struck him on the face with his hand, when they had met on the steps of the British Consulate-General the previous day and

in the presence of witnesses.

Upon being sworn in, the defendant identified himself as having lived in Shanghai practically all his life, and almost all matters of the Jewish community were in his charge. He and the community in general had been interested in the situation of Nissim and Hannah, and especially the welfare of Hannah, who, he said, "is starving in the street today." He allowed that he was happy to have slapped Nissim. It had been Edward Isaac Ezra who had previously posted security for Nissim, perhaps as a routine matter of the community, as it is not clear whether he had any personal interest in assisting (or was related to) Nissim.

The opening statement by the plaintiff's counsel included mention of what certainly had already been a conversation topic in the community: the actual or alleged effort of Nissim to abscond. In court on July 19, the defendant stated Nissim planned to leave on the Pacific Mail steamer *China* that day, even though he had recently started his own new business. A local paper had called him an "absconding debtor" but testimony in court from J.A. David, who was a cousin of the plaintiff, Jacques Blumenfeld (president of the Zionist Association in 1908) who had been a business partner of Nissim in an unsuccessful venture (failure was blamed on India), and Mrs. Flora Ezra, a member of Nissim's household, contradicted such allegations. Strong evidence pointed toward an escape attempt, perhaps by joining the S. Moosa family that was leaving for San Francisco. Testifying that the defendant was thought to be leaving the city were Ellis I. Ezra, Abraham E. Abraham and David M. David (the latter the head of the Communal Association), as well as David E.J. Abraham and S. Abraham.

Edward Isaac Ezra told the judge that after three persons had been asked by Nissim to arbitrate the conflict with his wife in 1908, and they recommended that he treat her better, he refused to do so. Hannah, he said, "fled from his (Nissim's) house in terror....and though later she was nearly starving, he refused to take her back." It was after this that the court awarded Hannah a monthly payment for support.

Nissim, now examined as a witness, related his side of the original problems behind the cases. Antagonism against him in the community, he said, began at the time of a serious difference of opinion among synagogue members in 1898. He suggested that the unfavorable reception given to the newspaper he founded in 1904, *Israel's Messenger*, was because of the effects of the split, that had been related to a violation of Jewish laws -- a community member had come to New Year's services in a carriage. Nissim at the time was seventeen.

The defendant, he stated, had "interfered and slandered" him regarding his marital problem in the presence of his employer. Moreover, the two men were rivals in the opium trade.

Toward the end of proceedings, the court found that the posting of security showed that the defendant was more intent on getting money for Hannah than on putting Nissim in prison, and the judge directed the jury to consider the question of damages the plaintiff may have sustained. In six minutes the verdict was handed down in favor of the defendant.

GERD WALLENSTEIN'S Homage to the French IN WARTIME TIENTSIN

by Rena Krasno

In 1939, when Gerd Wallenstein arrived in Shanghai he and his family were loaded together with other German and Austrian Jewish refugees on large trucks and driven to the Hongkew section of the city which had been severely damaged in the Sino-Japanese conflict. Armed with testimonials on his expertise in radio technology, the young man was fortunate to obtain within 10 days a position with **RCA Victor**. This led in December 1939 to a transfer to **RCA North China** in Tientsin.

At the time, Tientsin like Shanghai was divided into foreign concessions: British, French, Italian and Japanese

EZRA VS. EZRA VS. EZRA; OR, Life and Litigation Among Shanghai's Jews, Circa 1908-1911

by Aaron M. Cohen

In Shanghai in the summer of 1908, relations between Nissim Ezra Benjamin Ezra and his wife Hannah deteriorated to the point that either he threw her out of the house or she fled. The ensuing events present a vignette of life ...and litigation...in the Jewish community in Shanghai. They also disclose some aspects of the life of prominent members of the community.

It was an exciting time for the community, as the Hague Conference had made a favorable decision on Palestine, and the Zionist Association of the city was active and in its fifth year. Nissim Ezra, then a member of the association's committee, according to declassified materials in the Foreign Office archives, subsequently -- in 1922, as secretary of the association -- wrote to the Japanese Government, requesting support for the Balfour Declaration -- and received an affirmative reply. But it is his private life to which we turn, relying on the [North-China Herald](#) reports to reconstruct events.

The marital problem was brought by Hannah to the Police Court (as Rex [Hannah Ezra] v. N.E.B. Ezra), presided over by G.W. King, Esq., Police Magistrate, on July 6, 1908. It was heard on that and the following day, and the summons issued at the behest of the plaintiff was withdrawn on the second day.

As members of the British community, they enjoyed extraterritorial privileges; hence, procedures were in accordance with British law. Members of the Jewish community (A.E. Abraham, S.E. Abraham, E.I. Ezra and D.E.J. Abraham) assisted Hannah at this time.

The couple had been married according to Jewish practices on January 29, 1905, in Singapore. She was 14 and he was 24 or older. Fifteen days later they went to Shanghai and

lived together until April 23, 1908, at 37 Yuhang Road. After several months, they quarreled, but reconciled. Living in the same house were Nissim's parents, sister, brother, niece and nephew. She told the court that her mother-in-law "scolded, insulted and abused" her, that she did not get her meals properly, that the servants were not allowed to talk to her or to obey her orders. In 1907, her husband struck her after she did not call on his mother when she was ill.

In June of 1907 Hannah called her mother to Shanghai. Soon after she arrived, Hannah took ill and had to go to the hospital. After she was released, a meeting was held at which in addition to Hannah and Nissim, David Abraham, Simon A. Levy and Aaron E. Moses were present. This was the first occasion that the community interceded. Some improvement was achieved in the treatment Hannah was given in the house, but this lasted only two months, and then she left.

Nissim later said that the three men sought to entice her away from him, but the situation was much more complicated than just that. For Nissim, it was a difficult time, for this event took place at about the same time that (according to his counsel) a deep division of opinion arose among the members of the synagogue, on Peking Street. Nissim was among the rebels, and invoked a degree of animosity. During the hearings, however, another point was raised, but not pursued: Nissim's involvement with another woman.

From Court records, it is almost certain that the Jewish community leaders intervened a second time, met overnight and devised a solution to the problem, enabling the case to be dismissed.

As a direct result of this, the first of three Ezra vs. Ezra cases in Shanghai, Nissim signed a deed of separation that included a provision for payment of money to his estranged wife, for the support of Hannah and their two children. He later testified that at the time he wanted to marry the other woman, and sought Hannah's consent, implying that he would have sought a divorce. In December of 1910, however, the payments were stopped and Hannah -- who had returned to

to Singapore -- went to court to get her due, that came to 400 taels.

This, the second Ezra vs. Ezra case (Hannah Ezra v. N.E.B. Ezra), came before King, again in Police Court, on June 19, 1911. The defendant had spent 24 hours in the British jail, from 11:30 a.m. June 20 to that time the following day, and had to post security of 550 taels. This was provided by a member of the community but then withdrawn.

The defendant's counsel based his case on the issues of validity of the marriage, and the use of duress to obtain the agreement to pay for Hannah's support. After some dicker-ing in court, the marriage was taken to be a valid one under British law. The defense affirmed that Nissim was married under Jewish law, and that his client wished to respect that law. He would be willing, he said, to pay money for a separation under Jewish law and either provide for the couple's two children (the eldest was a daughter, Moselle, who at the time was in the custody of her father -- or take on their custody and raise them as Jews. The defense offered to submit the case to the Rabbi, but the Registrar did not pursue this. Had the court ruled that there had not been a valid marriage under British law, Nissim would have had to ask for a Jewish divorce, and his counsel could have asked for dismissal of the case on the grounds that there was no legal basis for the payments.

The plaintiff's counsel, replying to a statement that Nissim "does not deny that she is his wife under Jewish law," suggested, "Then take him out and stone him under Jewish law," but the magistrate proceeded in disregard of the latter statement.

During the first hearing, it was mentioned that (1) Nissim had been interested in marrying the other woman, (2) Nissim had been put under intense pressure by his employer to sign the deed, and (3) that at the time of the first Ezra vs. Ezra case, Nissim had maintained that, in King's words, "the husband was entitled to beat his wife because they were Asiatics." This latter point had not been accepted in the first trial as Jews were found outside of Asia.

At the second hearing it was

I. TIENTSIN JEWISH SCHOOL

(continued from page 8)

In 1945, after World War II ended, many families left for other parts of the world. The Chinese government encouraged the foreigners to leave. Within the next few years the size of the Jewish community shrank considerably, and by 1950 the existing members could no longer shoulder the financial responsibility of supporting the school. It was forced to close its gates. In the early 1950's there was no Jewish community left in China. It wasn't destroyed, as hundreds of Jewish communities in Europe were, it simply flew away.

II. TIENTSIN JEWISH SCHOOL

(continued from page 8)

So, to sum it all up, I want to say that I think we had a great community out there in China. People who were kind, gentle and caring. Sometimes, when I am in the company of ex "Chinese" people in Israel, I sense a sort of gentleness about them, and I claim that it is our "Chinese heritage".

THE TIENTSIN JEWISH SCHOOL REUNION

On June 24, 1995 the reunion of the alumni of the Tientsin Jewish School took place as scheduled, at the home of Varda and Shalom Yoran in Kings Point, NY.

Generous portions of joy and nostalgia, combined with the menu that included "diaodze" and Peking Duck and other familiar foods, made it an exciting event.

The 33 guests came from as far away as Texas, California, Canada and Israel, and spanned the entire existence of the school. Mrs. Celia Baeff was among the first teachers, in the 30's. Varda Yoran (Rose Granevsky) was one of the last, in 1949. Mark Lozar (Losser) was in the first graduating class, Mottie Yadin

(Sukenik) was in the last, and Carmella Leipzig (Hutoransky) was among the students who transferred to the Soviet school when the TJS closed its doors.

The celebration was scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. and by that time everybody had assembled. The alumni reconnected with old friends, got to know the others with whom they had shared a school, and introduced their spouses.

The first item on the agenda was a cruise aboard the 48' private yacht, the Modern Ark. The overcast sky and light drizzle didn't faze the captain, Shalom Yoran, or dampen the spirits of the passengers, and they left the dock, to go down the East River and view New York from the water. By the time they reached the Statue of Liberty the sun was out, and the torch atop the statue was glowing golden. Three hours later, the boat returned. The snacks on the boat had contributed to the high spirits, and Sheila Weinbach, who was in charge of the refreshments, asked everybody to carry something down as they disembarked. They all returned to the house, and added the remains of the refreshments to the spread that was awaiting them for the cocktail hour. As they mingled, they ate caviar, smoked salmon, and other delicacies.

There was taped background music — Russian and Chinese songs — until Tolia Hramzoff took over, and played the keyboard. He generated such enthusiasm that people had to sing and dance.

A Chinese dinner was brought in, and buffet style, everyone lined up to fill their Chinese bowls again and again. The chopsticks, naturally, were part of the scene.

After dinner everybody assembled in the living room, and Varda Yoran made the welcoming speech, after which she handed over the job of Master of Ceremonies to Teddy Baron. One by one the alumni came up to the podium and talked about their memories, and brought us up to date on their lives. Most of the speeches were recorded on tape. At some point a photographer and reporter from the local [Great Neck Record](#) and the [Jewish Week](#) came in to interview the guests. Originally they were to stay for an hour, but then one of them remained

unobtrusively almost throughout the entire evening.

After this part of the program, dessert was served, with a chocolate cake in the shape of an open book, decorated with flowers and the letters TJS. The party began to break up reluctantly, at around midnight.

The following day, the celebration continued. At 12:00 o'clock there was a champagne lunch at Scotto's restaurant in Great Neck, which was punctuated with more toasts and reminiscences. Long-forgotten memories surfaced, anecdotes were told, and the warmth and camaraderie was tangible at the long table which was set up for the group, totally apart from the other guests in the restaurant.

The manager of the restaurant, a charming woman named Maria, invited us to have the next reunion, at the same place. The general consensus was not to wait another fifty years, but that there should be a get-together every two years, the exact time and location to be decided upon at a later date.

After lunch everybody returned to the Yoran residence, hung out for a while, and found it difficult to leave all their friends. A reporter from the widely-read [Newsday](#) came and interviewed more people and took more pictures. Our reunion seemed to generate interest in the media as an unusual human-interest story, of a school that existed in a faraway part of the world for 25 years, was dismantled 45 years ago, and still united its alumni physically and spiritually.

TRIBUTE TO TJS

by Varda Yoran (Rose Granevsky)

Once the alumni of the Tientsin Jewish School spread their wings, they covered a wide territory, and not only geographically. Many of them were tracked down and found in all the continents, in varied spheres of activity — medicine, science and technology, music, art, literature, the law, the humanities, psychology, the media, education, business. Some have won

acclaim and made names for themselves in their chosen fields. Most are bilingual or trilingual. Many volunteer their skills, time and efforts for worthwhile causes.

There were those for whom the TJS set the foundation for their education, and those whose formal education did not extend beyond the TJS. There was no gym in the school, no lab, no sophisticated equipment. Would these have been an asset or a distraction? Tools for the teachers or props? Essential in stretching and stimulating young minds? No one will ever know. Judging by the success stories of the alumni, it seems they were pretty well equipped to face the challenges that life dished out to them.

Many of the teachers at the TJS would not be considered qualified enough to take on the job today, yet compared to the level of education in a large number of high schools in different countries now, the scholastic achievements of our school are all the more impressive. Talking about a school that existed for only about 25 years, in a rather unusual setting, and graduated its high school students after the 9th grade, this is quite a record.

TJS, we've done you proud!

[The following is a revised version of the article that was sent to SJI members and well worth repeating in *Points East*. Ed.]

IS THERE JEWISH LIFE IN BEIJING?

by Wendy Wolfe Fine

China is an evolving country that is changing rapidly after years of cultural, social, economic, religious, and political repression during the Cultural Revolution. With the establishment of diplomatic relations with the West and the abandonment of the Maoist self-reliance policies prohibiting foreign investment and joint ventures, foreigners have been coming to China. These events, coupled with the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and China on January 24, 1992, have led to the development

of a small, but predominantly transient, Jewish community in Beijing.

Last fall, my family and I visited Beijing for one week while my husband lectured in a seminar on China automobile industry development. China's transportation system is being completely transformed from one where much of the population relies on bicycles or outmoded vehicles to one where motor vehicles dominate the roadways. In other areas, like housing, China is developing as well; in Beijing, high-rise apartments are rapidly replacing dilapidated shacks.

Similarly, the Chinese people are rediscovering their religions as a result of government liberalization policies. We saw many Chinese, young and old, praying to Buddhas, whereas in prior decades religious devotion was interpreted as disloyalty to Communism. Hand-in-hand with the rediscovery of Chinese religions has come an openness to permitting Jewish religious and cultural activity within China and to learning about other religions and cultures of the world. With the establishment of the Israeli embassy in Beijing, the Chinese people were given a vehicle through which they could learn about world Jewry.

At one time, a sizable Jewish population lived in China. By the early 1930s, the Jewish population numbered 15,000. Some of these Jews had come as entrepreneurs and traders from the West, whereas others were Sephardic Jews whose origins stemmed from Iraq and India. Still others came as refugees from Russian pogroms or fled the Bolshevik Revolution. Between 1938 and 1939, another 18,000 Ashkenazi Jews from Germany, Austria, and Poland fled to China. However, between the end of World War II and the "liberation" of China by the Communists in 1949, most of the Jews in China had emigrated.¹

During our stay, I met with Eyal Propper, the secretary of cultural affairs at the Israel embassy in Beijing², to learn about Jewish life there. Upon returning, I corresponded with Elyse Silverberg, a 15-year Jewish resident of Beijing. Approximately 10 Jewish families reside in Beijing, but this number is inexact because the community is both growing rapidly and very fluid.

Elyse has maintained the community list and gathers names from referrals by different embassies and through word of mouth. Before Jewish holidays, she receives faxes from Jews worldwide asking to be included in community activities.

The long-term Jewish residents of Beijing include two adherents of Communism who immigrated 30 years ago as followers of the late Mao Tsedong, and two families, including Elyse Silverberg's, whose business interests led them to establish their permanent bases in Beijing. The latter have maintained their Judaism in spite of the lack of resources that have existed; the former's commitment to their political beliefs outweighed their religious beliefs until the mid 1980s when they began participating in Jewish holiday services and programs. The bulk of the Jewish people in Beijing are expatriates, either studying there or working in the diplomatic service, varied businesses and projects, the media, or education. They come from Israel, the United States, Canada, Australia, Argentina, and Hungary.

Unlike Singapore and Hong Kong, Beijing does not have a synagogue. Elyse Silverberg and Roberta Lipson (the other 15-year Jewish resident of Beijing) have been organizing Jewish holiday activities in their homes since 1981. Together with the embassy, as a permanent Israeli and Jewish fixture, Elyse Silverberg, and Roberta Lipson provide the transient and permanent Jewish population with opportunities for Jewish holiday experiences in Beijing.

Two measures of the vibrancy of the Jewish community are the variety of holiday activities and their attendance. For each of the last two years, the community Passover *seders* have averaged 130 people per night. Roberta generally leads High Holiday services and follows a mixed Reform and Conservative format, but the community is always receptive to "guest cantors." Together the two families also build a *succah* in their courtyard. Last September, because of the growing number of transient Israelis in Beijing, the Israeli embassy planned a traditional High Holiday dinner with food prepared by

the Jerusalem Hilton; about 100 people attended. High Holiday services were organized by Elyse and Roberta and drew approximately 60 people. Last Hanukkah, both the Israeli embassy and Elyse Silverberg held Hanukkah celebrations. Twelve people assembled in Elyse's home. Her mother made *latkes* and the children lit the *menorah*, opened their gifts, sang songs, and played *dreydel* with local Chinese coins and telephone tokens. In Elyse's words, this was "all in a regular Beijing Hanukkah."

Regular Shabbat services are not available; Shabbat services have taken place on occasion at the homes of Elyse and Roberta, and were held once in the last two years at the Israeli embassy. In addition, keeping strictly kosher in China is impossible; however, several people eat only vegetarian, and efforts are made to provide some Jewish foods. The weekly El Al flight from Tel Aviv to Beijing serves as an important link for Israelis in Beijing to their families, their country, and their religion. Visitors from Israel are often asked to bring kosher and Israeli food. Similarly, since Elyse Silverberg's mother moved to Beijing three years ago, she has served as a "resident bubbly," assuring a good supply of chicken soup, chopped liver, and other traditional Jewish culinary delights. In addition, they make special efforts to bring in special holiday food items, such as *matzah meal*, *matzah*, and horseradish.

According to Elyse Silverberg, the small Jewish community in Beijing is held together by the handful of permanent residents. The absence of resources, a religious leader, and a synagogue to adequately meet the needs of the community concerns Elyse, who works hard to teach her 11-year-old son, Ari, through practice. He is the only Jewish boy his age living in Beijing and will soon be ready for Bar Mitzvah preparation. Elyse will arrange for him to prepare during the summers when he returns to the United States.

There is a fair amount of intermarriage among Chinese and Jews. Elyse's husband, for example, is Chinese, but has been supportive of her observance of Jewish traditions and efforts to pass them on to their son. She describes her son's identity as Jewish, American, and Chinese. (In addition, Israeli, American, and Australian.) Jews have intermarried, with the majority being Jewish

men married to Chinese women. Chinese people, who were brought up after 1949, were not raised in religions, such as Buddhism. In addition, the Chinese local religions, which generally consist of prayers to a variety of spirits as well as ancestor worship, do not require them to believe in one god or spirit at the exclusion of others. As a result, unlike the conflict that might exist in Christian-Jewish households, the Chinese are accepting of other religions. Even so, the Chinese spouse may not actively participate in Jewish religious life. Among Elyse's intermarried friends, several Chinese women have prepared *seders* and other Jewish rituals for their families.

While meeting the religious needs of the Jewish residents is one of the Israeli embassy's goals, educating the Chinese and promoting understanding between Israel and China is an obvious second goal. In May 1994, 1,000 Chinese and Jewish people attended an Israel Independence Day reception. The embassy has published a magazine in Chinese six times a year, edited by Eyal Propper, to educate about Jewish holidays, Judaism, and Israel. (A recipe for *hamantashen* was included in an issue that was published around Purim.) In addition, through a variety of initiatives, books have been translated and published to promote understanding. These include Herzl's *Jewish State*, portions of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, and even the familiar *Facts about Israel*. During the September 1994 International Book Fair in Beijing, Eyal Propper and Professor Xu Xin of Nanjing University published a catalog of about 60 Chinese-language books on Judaism and Israel.

The Chinese government has been receptive to the activities of the embassy, and its citizens have been interested in learning about Israel and Judaism. As a result of a Cultural Agreement signed by the State of Israel and China, for the years 1994 through 1995, "to strengthen friendly relations and promote exchanges in the sphere of culture," the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra gave an historic performance in China in November 1994.

When contrasted with the attacks on foreign culture and xenophobia

launched by Mme. Mao in 1974, this performance is yet another example of China's transformation.

The Chinese government's changed attitude in the last decade toward Jews, Judaism, and Israel is manifested in the current openness of the descendants of the Jews of Kaifeng, who trace their origins to the Jewish community that thrived there over 700 years ago. As a result of the liberal policies of the Chinese government toward religion, these people are declaring and not hiding their roots.

What lies ahead for Jewish life in Beijing remains to be seen. In ten years' time, perhaps the Israeli embassy will have a permanent building. Last year, an Israeli consulate opened in Shanghai, so now yet another bridge exists for Jewish people visiting or living in China. Perhaps the permanent residents of the Beijing community will one day have a synagogue in which to hold High Holiday services, store their Sefer Torah and prayer books, and house a Hebrew school for their children. In one of the largest and fastest growing economies in the world, foreigners are coming every day to try to get a stake. Elyse Silverberg expects the Jewish community will grow as a function of the expansion of business and trade, and other important areas of cooperation, such as research and teaching, of which Jews are a vital part. The hope, she claims, of retaining people in the community for longer periods of time depends on the general betterment of life for expatriates in Beijing, in addition to the provision of Jewish services, such as a Hebrew school. True, a small and predominantly transient Jewish community exists today in Beijing, but given the circumstances of this rapidly evolving country, predictably the Jewish community will expand and become more permanent in ten years' time.

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¹ Leventhal, Dennis A. (1985). *Sino-Judaic Studies: Whence and Whither. An Essay and Bibliography*. Monographs of the Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong, pp. 18-21.

² Eyal Propper is leaving Beijing for a new diplomatic post in July 1995.