

中國-猶太學院

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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 with the following goals:

- 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 Kaifeng Municipal Museum.
- 4) To promote and assist the study and research of the history of early Jewish travel in China and in the rise and fall of the various Jewish communities that were established in China over the past millennia.
- 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.

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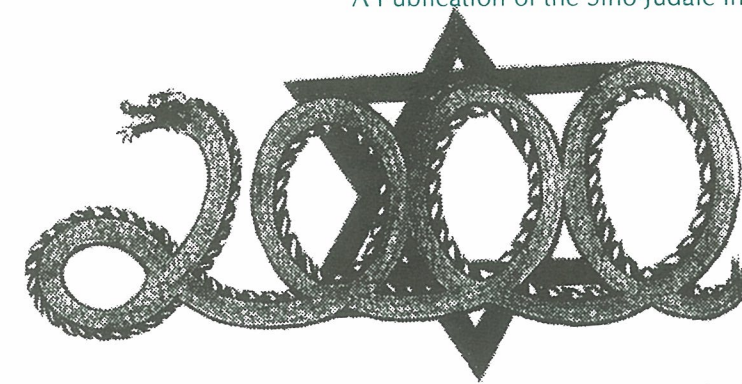


Points East

中國-猶太學院

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Alfred Luk

SOME THOUGHTS ON OUR POLICY TOWARD THE JEWISH RELIGION – INCLUDING A DISCUSSION OF OUR POLICY TOWARD THE KAIFENG JEWS

by Xu Xin

[This document was submitted by Prof. Xu to various Chinese governmental agencies to argue that the Jewish religion be one of the officially recognized religions. At present, only Buddhism, Daoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam are so recognized, albeit with certain restrictions. Al Dien, translator.]

Since the beginning of the Openness Policy, the relationship and interaction of our country with the Jews has continuously grown. Because of the distinctive characteristics of China and of the Jewish people, and because of the fascination Chinese society has for the Jews, more and more Jews have come to China to visit, to invest, to do business, to work, to study and to live. According to incomplete statistics, at present more than a thousand Jews already live in Beijing and Shanghai. Quite a few other cities have a number of Jews living in them. With the unique quality of Jewish culture and their particular customs, because our country lacks facilities connected with the Jewish religion, Jews who have come here to visit, to work and to study, especially those who have brought their families here to live, feel that there are great inconveniences. It is this point which to some degree has restricted the number of Jews who wish to come to China to visit, to work and to study, and especially, to live in China. In order to preserve their own cultural practices and tradition, a number of Jews who live here have already organized and at set times carry out activities connected with their religion. On the approach of every Jewish festival those who have come to China to visit enquire about and seek Jewish places of worship. I hope that Beijing and Shanghai, those great cosmopolitan cities, will be able to have regularized and formal places of worship organized by the Jews

WITH CHANCELLOR SCHROEDER IN OHEL RACHEL SYNAGOGUE

by Pan Guang
translated by Luo Ailing

On November 3, 1999, at 5:30 p.m., German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder arrived in Ohel Rachel Synagogue in Shanghai and became the first German leader to visit this historical site. I had the honor of escorting him for the fifteen-minute visit.

Founded by Sir Jacob Sassoon in his wife's memory and consecrated in 1920 by Rabbi W. Hirsch, Ohel Rachel Synagogue was once a religious center of the local Jewish community. The building opposite to the synagogue was the famous Shanghai Jewish School founded by Mr. Horace Kadoorie in 1932. As the largest remaining synagogue in the Far East, Ohel Rachel Synagogue can hold almost 1,000 people for services. In 1998, the Shanghai municipal government spent 600,000 RMB on restoring the temple. Since then, many distinguished guests, including the US First Lady and the Israeli President, have visited the synagogue and the photo exhibition "Jews in Shanghai" inside the synagogue designed and made by our Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai (CJSS). But the German Chancellor's visit is especially significant because the majority of Jewish refugees in Shanghai during wartime came from the Nazi Germany and its occupied area.

The Chancellor headed for the synagogue quickly as soon as he got off the bus. It is very unusual for a state leader to tour in a foreign city by bus. Taking advantage of the less than two-minute time, I gave a brief introduction to him about the history of the temple. Entering the synagogue, Mr. Schroeder looked around for a few seconds. Then he walked toward the photos. According to the pre-arrangement with the German side, I first took three minutes to say a few words about the general history of the Shanghai Jewish community, and then took seven minutes to give an introduction in detail about the Jewish refugees from Central

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SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	311
Israel	14
China	12
England	11
Canada	6
Hong Kong	5
Australia	5
Germany	3
Taiwan	2
Japan	2
Indonesia	1
Italy	1
South Africa	1
Switzerland	1

TOTAL: 375

FROM THE EDITOR

Kicking off volume 15 of *Points East* and the Y2K Year of the Dragon issue is a compelling article by our friend, Prof. Xu Xin, in which he advocates a re-evaluation of China's official policy toward Judaism and the Kaifeng Jews. Also on the front page is an account by another Chinese friend, Prof. Pan Guang, describing the visit to Shanghai of German Chancellor Schroeder. In my opinion, these two men are central to the work being done in China by Chinese scholars on various aspects of the Jewish experience there. Each in his own way has established a strong, vibrant program that combines education, publications, and advocacy. They truly are our partners and colleagues.

But think, for a moment, how much more effective these two great men and many others would be if a single entity could be formed in China that would deal with the Kaifeng Jews, the Shanghai/Harbin/Tianxin experience, China-Israel relations, publications, higher education, and other matters. Wouldn't their efforts be strengthened if they were somehow to establish such an association? Of course, I do not know the realities of the situation in China or how things operate in their cities and institutions, but, in my ignorance, this idea seems to make sense. There is strength in unity – and there can be diversity as well.

At the same time, turnabout is fair play, and we must ask ourselves about the proliferation of organizations based outside China that seek to do similar things. There is our wonderful Sino-Judaic Institute, the China/Judaic Studies Association, the Igud Yotzei Sin (Association of the Former Residents of China), the Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai, and others too. Wouldn't things be easier for our Chinese friends if they could communicate through one central address? Wouldn't it be easier for researchers, travelers, and assorted web-surfers to access us collectively rather than separately?

My hope for the next millennium – just to make sure we give ourselves enough time – is that, both in China and abroad, those with an interest in the intersection of things Chinese and Jewish will be able to transcend factionalism and build strong, collective, mutually supportive organizations.

Anson Laytner

Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

SJI members interested in receiving a copy of the annual financial report should send a self-addressed envelope to: Shelton Ehrlich, Treasurer of the Sino-Judaic Institute, 755 Northampton, Palo Alto, CA 94303.

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BOOK NOOK

of China and the Middle East, 1949-1998 by Anthony Alexander Loh; *The Israeli Communist Party's Policy toward the People's Republic of China, 1949-1998* by Aron Shai; *The Hong Kong Connection in Sino-Israeli Relations* by Reuven Merhav and Yitzhak Shichor; *The Crucial Year 1991* by E. Zev Suffot; *The Establishment of People's Republic of China-Israeli Relations: Broader Implications for Southeast and South Asia* by Moshe Yegar; *South Asia and People's Republic of China-Israeli Diplomatic Relations* by P.R. Kumaraswamy; *The Chinese Factor in the Middle East Security Equation: An Israeli Perspective* by Yitzhak Shichor; *Conclusion: From "Peoplehood" to "Nationhood": An Uphill Battle for Chinese and Jews* by Jonathan Goldstein, *A Selected Bibliography on Sino-Israeli Relations* by Jonathan Goldstein and Frank Joseph Shulman; Index.

Jonathan Goldstein is Professor of East Asian History at the State University of West Georgia and Research Associate of Harvard University's John K. Fairbank Center for East Asian Research. He is the author of *Philadelphia and the China Trade 1682-1846* and editor of *America Views China: American Images of China Then and Now* (1992) and *The Jews of China* (1999).

To order, call toll free, 24 hours a day, 1-800-225-5800 (in USA) or www.greenwood.com.

New Edition of *Strangers Always – a Jewish Family in Wartime Shanghai*; author: Rena Krasno; publisher: Pacific View Press, Berkeley; Format: Pocket Book 5-1/2" x 8-1/2"; Includes photographs; price \$19.95; Tax (only for California residents) \$1.60; Shipping and handling in US: \$2.50; Overseas: \$3.50.

Please order from Rena Krasno, 255 S. Rengstorff, apt. 106, Mtn. View, CA 94040, USA, Telephone/Fax: 650-967-8948.

New Publications on Shanghai from *Refuge in Shanghai*, Oct. 1999 published by the Council on the Jewish Experience in Shanghai

Far From Where? Jewish Journeys from

Shanghai to Australia, by Antonia Finnane. Melbourne University Press, 1999. ISBN 0-522-84846-X. Paperback, 256 pages, \$29.95.

Strange Haven: A Jewish Childhood in Wartime Shanghai, by Sigmund Tobias. University of Illinois Press, 1999. ISBN 0-2520-2453-2. Hardcover, 192 pages, \$23.95.

Die Gelbe Post, Herausgeber A.J. Storfer. Reprint of the first seven issues (1939) with notes by Paul Rosdy. Verlag Turia & Kant, Vienna, 1999. ISBN 3-85132-210-X. Paperback. 160 pages, 298 Austrian schilling.

Shanghai, a novel by Michele Kahn, translated from the French by Stefan Linster. Ullstein Verlag, Berlin, 1999. ISBN 3-550-08274-6. Hardcover, 450 pages, DM 48.00.

Japanese Diplomats and Jewish Refugees: A World War II Dilemma, by Pamela Rotner Sakamoto. Praeger Publishers, Westport, CT 1998. ISBN 0-275-96199-0. Hardcover, 216 pages, \$39.95.

Fluchtort Shanghai: Erinnerungen 1938-1948, by Ernest G. Heppner, translated from English by Roberto de Hollanda. Weidle Verlag, Bonn, 1998. ISBN 3-931135-32-2. Paperback, 283 pages, DM 42.00.

Zwischen Theben und Shanghai: Jüdische Exilanten in China, Chinesische Exilanten in Europa, edited by Hajo Jahn. Oberbaum Verlag, Chemnitz-Berlin, 1998. ISBN 3-928254-06-5. Hardcover, 255 pages, DM 36.00.

Knapp davongekommen: von Breslau nach Shanghai und San Francisco, by Wolfgang Hadda. Hartung & Gorre, Konstanz, 1997. ISBN 3-89649-090-7. Paperback, 258 pages, DM 39.80.

David Ludwig Bloch, *Holzschnitte-Woodcuts, Shanghai 1940-1949*, edited by Barbara Hoster. Monumenta Serica. Sankt Augustin, 1997. ISBN 3-8050-0395-1. Paperback, 249 pages, DM 65.00.

Nicht einmal einen Thespiskarren: Exiltheater in Shanghai 1939-1947, by Michael Philipp and Wilfried Seywald. Hamburger Arbeitsstelle für deutsche Exilliteratur, Hamburg, 1996. ISBN 3-9802151-3-X. paperback, 142 pages, DM 20.00.

Arbeitsstelle für deutsche Exilliteratur, Hamburg, 1996. ISBN 3-9802151-3-X. Paperback, 142 pages, DM 20.00.

10-Article Colloquium Conference Volume Published

Sino-Judaica: Jews and Chinese in Historical Dialogue, the outgrowth of an international Colloquium initiated by the Center for Jewish Studies at Nanjing University, co-sponsored by Nanjing University and Tel Aviv University, and held in Nanjing, October 11-19, 1996, was recently published by Tel Aviv University.

The conference volume, edited by Aharon Oppenheimer, co-director of the conference and professor of Tel Aviv University, includes a selection of 10 papers delivered at the conference. The first five papers deal with the Chinese, Jews, and Judaism. The second section covers turning points in Jewish history.

Table of Contents:

1. The Chinese, the Jews, and Judaism
1. Confucianism and Judaism: A General Comparison, by Fu Youde, Shangdong University
2. *Chinese Research on Jews in China*, by Xu Xin, Nanjing University
3. *A Distant, Putative Pair: Chinese and Jews in Jewish Perspective*, by Yaacov Shavit, Tel Aviv University.
4. *The Chinese People's Knowledge of Jews in the First Half of the Twentieth Century*, by Xiao Xian, Yunnan University.
5. *On the Early History of Hebrew in China*, by Shelomo, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

1. The Turning Points in Jewish History
1. Exile and Restoration: The Biblical Tradition of the Ten Lost Tribes, by Yair Hoffman, Tel Aviv University.
2. *Judaism: From Temple to Text*, by Aharon Oppenheimer, Tel Aviv University.
3. *What Difference Does It Make Whether the Torah Was Revealed Through Moses or Through Ezra?* By David Weiss Halivni, Columbia University.
4. *The Merkavah Tradition and the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism*, by Rachel Elijior, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
5. *Some Effects of the Holocaust on Israeli Society and Foreign Policy*, by Dina Porat, Tel Aviv University.

BOOK NOOK

Japanese Diplomats and Jewish Refugees, by Pamela Rotner Sakamoto; Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 1998. Xvi, 188 pp. \$39.95.
reviewed by David G. Goodman, U of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
reprinted from *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 8:3, Aug. 1998

More than 21,000 Jewish refugees survived World War II in Japanese-occupied Shanghai. Despite deprivations and insecurity, they lived tolerably well and created a rich cultural life, operating seven *yeshivot* (religious academies), organizing left- and right-wing Zionist groups, and publishing a journal titled *Unzer Lebn* (Our Life) in Yiddish, Russian, and English.

How did these refugees get to Shanghai? Why did the Japanese allow them to come? There have been a variety of answers to these questions. In his pioneering work, *Japanese, Nazis, and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community in Shanghai* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1976), David Kranzler suggests that the Japanese had what in effect was a "pro-Jewish policy." Hillel Levine, in his *In Search of Sugihara* (Free Press, 1996), postulates a "conspiracy of good" that may have been afoot. On the Japanese side, veterans like Inuuka Koreshige, the prolific anti-Semite and navy captain who was responsible for the Jews in Shanghai between 1939 and 1942, insisted after the war that Japan had always been a "friend of the Jews." And recently (March 31, 1998), the *Sankei shimbun* argued that because the Japanese military had treated Jews so humanely, it was inconceivable that they had been guilty of the Rape of Nanking and other atrocities in China.

Much of the speculation about Japanese motives has focused on Sugihara Chiune (a.k.a. Senpo, 1900-86), who served as Japanese consul in Kaunas, Lithuania, from November 1939 through August 1940. During his tenure, he issued 2,132 transit visas, fully one-third of all the transit visas issued by Japanese diplomats in Europe between January 1940 and March 1941. Transit visas allowed refugees to traverse the Soviet Union and, ideally, find safety in the West. In fact, most made it only as far as Japan, where they stayed briefly before being transferred to Shanghai. but sur-

vive they did, and for this Sugihara was proclaimed a Righteous Gentile by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem in 1985, the only Japanese ever to be so honored.

But what do Sugihara's actions actually reveal about Japan's treatment of Jewish refugees during World War II? Very little is known about Sugihara's motives. He never elaborated on them, nor, after the war, did he make any attempt to follow up on those he had helped. Among Jews, Sugihara's reputation rests on the view that he was a renegade who risked his life to issue visas to Jews by disregarding explicit orders from the Japanese Foreign Ministry forbidding him to do so. In Japan, by contrast, Sugihara has increasingly come to be viewed as exemplary, a diplomat who carried out the fundamentally humane policies of the Japanese Empire.

What is at stake in this issue of Jewish refugees in Shanghai, therefore, is nothing less than our understanding of the character of Japan's behavior during World War II. Pamela Rotner Sakamoto's clear-headed new book helps settle this issue. Based on primary research in the Foreign Ministry archives, this dispassionate and meticulous work makes clear that the influx of large numbers of Jewish refugees to Shanghai via Japan on the eve of the Pacific War was the result, not of any "pro-Jewish policy" or "conspiracy of good," but rather of the rudimentary state of Japanese immigration policies, Japan's overestimation of Jewish influence in the United States, and poor coordination among various branches of the Japanese government. In this context, Japanese diplomats were forced to respond *ad hoc* to challenges as they appeared. Some, like Tsutsui in Bucharest, were overtly anti-Semitic; others, like Yamaji in Vienna, were punctilious; and still others, like Nei in Vladivostok and Sugihara in Kaunas, were sympathetic.

Sakamoto points out that Sugihara did not technically defy government orders by issuing visas to Jews, nor was he punished with dismissal from the Foreign Ministry after the war for doing so, as his family and advocates have claimed. She in no way denies Sugihara's contribution in saving Jewish lives, but she does contextualize it; and while she does not exculpate Japan

for its wartime policies, she does show that there were altruists among Japan's diplomatic corps who sometimes interpreted Ministry directives to the benefit of those in need. "Many Japanese diplomats issued visas that saved Jews," Sakamoto writes, "but only a few like Sugihara saved Jews by issuing visas" (p. 4).

The image of wartime Japan that emerges from this study is therefore appropriately complex. Sakamoto describes an isolated nation run by a poorly informed, disorganized, and badly overextended government that encountered challenges it was unprepared to meet which it addressed with uncoordinated stop gap measures. These measures frequently caused great harm, but occasionally, as in the case of Japan's treatment of Jewish refugees, they resulted in some good. This may not be the most satisfying conclusion, but what makes Sakamoto's book so good is that it is probably very close to the truth.

China and Israel, 1948-1998, A Fifty Year Retrospective
Edited by Jonathan Goldstein; Praeger Publishers, Price \$65.00 ISBN 0-275-96306-3. 256 pages.

This is the first-of-its-kind analysis, in any language, of the trilateral relationship between Israel, the People's Republic of China, and the Republic of China. It is also the first comprehensive analysis of the relations between the founders and early statesmen of the ROC and the founders of modern Israel before the proclamation of the Jewish state in 1948. It includes eyewitness testimony from five of the key players involved in the trilateral relationship; historical analysis from Chinese, Israeli, Arab, and East Indian perspectives; and a multilingual bibliography.

CONTENTS: Abbreviations; *Preface* by Jonathan Goldstein; *The Republic of China and Israel* by Jonathan Goldstein; *Statement on China's Abstention on the United Nations Vote to Partition Palestine, November 22, 1947* by V. K. Wellington Koo; *"I Was There": The Viewpoint of an Honorary Israeli Consul in Shanghai, 1949-1951* by Isador A. Magid; *The People's Republic of China and the Arab Middle East: Arab Perspectives* by Lillian Craig Harris; *The Hegemonic Motif: The People's Republic*

Excerpts from the Minutes of Sino-Judaic Institute Board Meeting, Menlo Park, December 19, 1999

I. Treasurer's Report

The first order of business was the treasurer's report for the year of 1999. Of gifts received, the Blackman Foundation grant through our member M. Nissim was to enable Rena Krasno to attend a meeting of the Post-Holocaust Dialogue between Jews and Christians which took place on Long Island, where she showed a film on Jewish refugees in Shanghai, the Duldner Foundation grant was to support an event at the Asian Art Museum, of which we were a co-sponsor (discussed below), the Littauer and Yad Hanadiv grants were to support the workshop organized by Prof. Xu Xin, the Jewish Historical Tours grant was based on contributions from participants of the April-May tour organized by Wendy Abraham, and brings the total thus far contributed by the JHT to \$4,400. The administrative costs this last year, \$2,272, was less than the \$2,605 reported for 1998. The negative outflow is primarily due to the lower amount received from membership dues (\$12,099 against \$17,639 last year) and the expense for the Kaifeng Show. The Kaifeng Show expense is explained below.

A report on the assets of the Institute indicated that as of December 31, 1999, these stood at \$35,582, a loss of \$555 as compared with the preceding year. Again, the outlay for the Kaifeng Show made the difference. We expect to recover that outlay.

II. Publications

Sino-Judaica III – The production of this volume is underway. A list of the contents follows. Donald Leslie is the editor of this issue. A student from Stanford is at work formatting the material and it should be printed before long. There have been a number of enquiries, especially from libraries and distribution companies asking when it would appear.

Proposed Contents:

Lin Meicun, "A Study of the Evidence of Jews Entering into China" (from *Wenwu* (Cultural Relics) 1991.6, pp. 74-80).

Erik Zurcher, "Eight Centuries in the Chinese Diaspora: The Jews of Kaifeng."

Mathew A. Eckstein, "Identity Discourse and the Chinese Jewish Descendants."

Donald D. Leslie, "China and the Jews: Prospects for Research."

Steve Hochstadt, "Revealing the Holocaust through Oral History: The Necessity

of Interviewing Survivors."

III. Activities

A. Exhibit on the Kaifeng Jews Museum Exhibit

This has finally been installed in a theme park based on the famous Song painting, "Qingming shang he tu;" *Points East* has had a report on it written by Matt Trusch, edited by Prof. Xu. There are three rooms, the first of which is based on the so-called legends of the Kaifeng Jews about their origins. Women guides are dressed in Song costumes, they are on duty Fri-Sun. On other days groups have to make previous arrangements. The other two rooms contain the material we sent but supplemented by rubbings of all three stelae and a model of the synagogue. The labels are in Chinese and English, thanks to Prof. Xu, so foreign visitors can understand it. All in all, a successful exhibit, and in much better shape than it was in April when Art Rosen visited it. Mark cautioned that the exhibit might lead Chinese viewers to believe that Judaism is a thing of the past, to museumify Jews. Ron suggested that a simple handout in Chinese might contain information on Judaism that would indicate that it is still a living faith. Rena felt that it would have more impact if it were visual.

2. Domestic: Exhibit Put on a Professional Basis

The second copy of the exhibit, meant for display in this country, has been exhibited twice, in Palo Alto and at Hilo, Hawaii, but it was beginning to show signs of wear, the foam core backing was not holding up. About this time, Cynthia Zeiden, program manager at channel 60 came aboard. We met her at a lecture by Pan Guang in San Francisco; she is enthusiastic and has experience in this area. With her guidance, we had the whole set framed with plexiglass cover, the cost of which came to over \$6,000. What encouraged us to make this expenditure was her assurance that we could recover the money. The Portland Jewish Museum is paying \$2,000 for their April display of the material, plus shipping. (We pay \$40/month for storage, so the more it is on loan, the more we save.) We have not yet advertised the availability yet, but Cynthia is having a brochure gotten up that we will distribute.

Because smaller organizations would not be able to pay amounts in that league, for example, Arnie Belzer wanted a display at a Hillel in North Carolina, the Hebrew Union College wanted a few when

Mike Pollak was being honored (see below), Al Dien made up a smaller set of 16 pictures which can be used for that purpose, one that we can send for shipping costs and some handling. This has not been used yet, but it is almost ready to ship out. Josh Stampfer said that we could easily charge \$250 for a showing of that set. Josh also suggested that the Association of Jewish Museums, at the Jewish Museum, New York, be contacted concerning the availability of the exhibit.

B. Co-Sponsorship of Chen Yifei Film Showing

Rena Krasno reported on this event. This was a reception at the Asian Art Museum on November 17, co-sponsored by SJI, Bechtel Corporation, and the San Francisco-Shanghai Sister City Committee. The reception consisted of a premier showing of a documentary film on the Shanghai Jewish community, *Escape to Shanghai*, followed by drinks and hors d'oeuvres and an informal meeting with the filmmaker, a noted artist who lives in Shanghai and New York. The Marlborough Fine Art Gallery of London provided two original oil paintings by Chen, but these were for display only and not for sale. The movie was excellent, the food good, it was all in all a very good event. We displayed samples of our publications and had a handout, so it was good publicity for SJI. There was no cost to SJI, although a generous contribution was made by our member Kurt Dulner, a former Austrian refugee in Shanghai.

C. Hoover Archives

Rena reports that she continues in her endeavors to gather material for SJI files on Jews in China. These have recently included copies of three films: *Sanctuary Shanghai* by Chen Yifei, *Escape to Shanghai*, also by Chen Yifei and *Exile Shanghai*, by Ulrike Ottinger. There were also videos on former Shanghaianders given her by the San Francisco Holocaust Center and of interviews conducted by the Spielberg Holocaust Center. One donor, an attorney in San Francisco, gave a box of personal documents of historic interest. For example, one of the items is an album illustrated by Jewish children in Hongkew where his mother had worked as a volunteer at their school. Another item consisted of papers and photos of Vladimir Jabotinsky. Rena also interviews the donors so that the researchers who read the files can place the papers in context. In one case of a Holocaust victim who later reached Shanghai, the interview took 40 hours due to many emotional interruptions. All this documentation is now preserved in numer-

ous boxes and is studied by local and foreign researchers. David Kranzler came to Hoover to gather material for a new work he is now completing on the history of Jews in China, and Marcia Ristaino contacted the Hoover for material on her new book.

IV. Report on China-Related Matters

A. Kaifeng Report

Al Dien reported on a meeting with Moishe, a.k.a. Zhang Xingwang. He was instrumental in setting up the Kaifeng exhibit in Kaifeng, seems really dedicated, and hopes in a few years when he retires to go to Israel to study and then to go back to China to pass on what he has learned. Al thinks that he may later apply for a grant to carry out this plan, but as of now, he gave no indication of doing so. He is now doing research in local newspapers, and he may come up with some useful material.

B. Shanghai Community

While in Shanghai last September, Al tried to make contact with Mat Trusch, but was not successful; Tess Johnston was in the US, Pan Guang was in Canada. A notice in the Yotsei Bulletin for Nov-Dec 1999, gives new addresses for officers of the Jewish community there, but Wendy Abraham thought this list was out of date, and will supply an updated one. We will have to change the "Addresses in China" form which Al sends out to travellers going to China who want to connect up with Jewish communities there. Mark Cohen spoke of his experience there the last few days, how difficult it was for them to have a minyan, despite there being a community of over 200 Jews. Mark is planning to give the rabbi, Shlomo Greenberg, a membership to SJI.

C. Distribution of Books

Mark brought to the meeting a volume from a series of translations in a series entitled Translations of Famous Works on Jewish Culture Translated into Chinese (Hanyi Youtai wenhua mingzhu congshu), by the Center for Jewish Studies, Shandong University (address: 27 Shanda South Road, Jinan, Shandong, 250100, and being published by Shandong University Press. These include a translation of *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages* by Hyam Maccoby, who is Head Librarian at the Leo Baeck College, London. Other works include those on the Talmud, a history of the Jews, and on Jewish religious movements. These are the types of books which would be so useful in the distribution project. The Institute will attempt to establish contact with that cen-

ter, as well as to obtain copies of the published volumes.

D. Summer Workshop on Judaism in Nanjing

Prof. Xu Xin's second workshop for teachers of history in Chinese universities has been another great success; the report was printed in the Points East issue before last (July 1999). He has also written a memo for distribution in official circles arguing that Judaism be recognized in China. Our participation in the summer workshop, in addition to providing a means for contributions to be made for its financing, was to provide each participant with a set of relevant books, including the Chinese version of the Encyclopedia Judaica.

E. Harbin

Three items were reported here.

1. A symposium was held on January 23, 1999, at UCLA on the subject of "Paris of the Orient? The Worlds of Harbin, 1895-1945." Which included at least two papers on the former Jewish community there, one of them by a member of SJI, Prof. Peter Berton. Prof. Boris Bressler, also a member, was discussant.

2. Al brought a copy of an article in a Chinese journal on Jews of Harbin, (Beifang wensu 1992.2, pp. 90-93) that while it did not contain anything new, was interesting as an indication of Chinese scholarly interest.

3. Board member, Judy Green, has met a Mr. Thatcher of the Latter Day Saints who discussed the possible microfilming of Harbin archives with her. Al suggested she contact Prof. Bressler who had earlier expressed an interest in this matter. It is something which needs to be pursued, and it could possibly lead to the filming of the Shanghai archives as well.

V. Report on State-Side Matters

A. CD Rom Project

The Hebrew Union College is a major participant of a project to record in CD form all the Kaifeng texts. This is planned to take one to one and a half years, the CD disks (2) to sell for \$25 to \$50. It will include all the 50 or more texts in the HUC Library, the Genesis booklet in the ROM, Toronto, the Torah fragment from the Scriptorium, and the Torahs at the Bridewell Library, SMU, the American Bible Society and the Jewish Theological Seminary, both of New York; that in Manchester is not yet certain, but that at Cambridge is. The Torahs at Oxford, Vienna National Library and the British Museum will be reproduced from microfilm.

B. Prof. Jonathan Goldstein Grant

The grant, which was approved at our last meeting, was to purchase released time for him to do a book on Jan Zwartendijk, the Dutch consul in Vilna who issued the passes to the Dutch colony in the South Seas which made it possible for the Japanese visas to be issued. Goldstein has a report in the last issue of Points East.

C. Enquiries

We receive a constant stream of enquiries, and distribute a variety of materials, including our Travellers Guide (still in draft form), various bibliographies, and correspondence, for example, a member recently asked about the Mensashe Jews, someone whose son is marrying a Chinese woman wanted something with Chinese/Jewish significance.

D. Matthias Messmer Enquiry

Dr. Matthias Messmer is a Swiss scholar who specializes in Jewish studies in China and in Europe, and who has an extensive publication record, wants to research the perception of Jews in China toward their Chinese experience. He will apply for a grant in Switzerland but needs a letter from a sponsoring institution here if he is to come to do research at the Hoover. He asked if we could write such a letter but Al thinks the Center for East Asian Studies at Stanford would be a better choice, and there should be no problem in obtaining for him the necessary affiliation.

E. Photographer Enquiry

William Tyler Smith is an independent documentary filmmaker and photographer, and is asking for help to locate funds to research a project on lesser known Diaspora communities. The suggestion at the Board meeting was to suggest that he apply to the Spielberg Foundation.

F. Research Projects

Al Dien suggested that SJI undertake two projects which could be accomplished by hiring a student research assistant. 1) an annotated bibliography of the Jewish community in Shanghai, covering all languages; 2) a list of those who died in Shanghai, based on the list published in the *Aufbau*, a newspaper published in New York. Our copy is a poor xerox one. Such a list would be helpful when people write to us concerning their relatives who died in Shanghai, and secondly, if the grave site material is ever recovered, this could be used as a check list. There was general agreement that these were worthwhile projects.

Jews and during the very same time Shanghai had saved 25,000. Few Chinese knew about this important event. As a Chinese artist from Shanghai, Chen was drawn to the Jewish people and decided to use his talents to make a contribution; he painted history with his movie camera.

Escape to Shanghai is a documentary film. It reflects the empathy of the Chinese people towards escaping Jews and the deep friendship formed ever since. Amongst the refugees, there were many talented people who are still alive today. Heinz Grunberg was featured in the film, anchoring the historical significance and his return to Shanghai after almost half a century. Grunberg now is a well-known violinist with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra. He and his family narrowly escaped the Holocaust when he was five. Grunberg learned to play the violin from Prof. Alfred Wittenberg, another Jewish refugee. After the war, Prof. Wittenberg remained in Shanghai dedicating his life to his Chinese students until his death.

Chen's documentary film was very sensitive. I was moved when I saw Grunberg, violin in hand and heavy with the weight of his past, walking with painstakingly slow steps towards his old attic where he lived some 50 years ago. Grunberg's facial expression needed no words to describe. Even now, closing my eyes, I can almost feel that he was me, a Chinese, in that part of the historic film. In the film, Grunberg performed with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra as first violinist. In my heart, I gave him a standing ovation and sang together with the chorus when the Orchestra played the Beethoven's Symphony No. 9. It was like an epic about the history, love and friendship between the Jews and the Chinese people. It was a song of joy encouraging young people today from all over the world to hold hands in peace.

After the film, a reception was held at the Asian Art Museum. People who had a chance to meet and to share their feelings about the movie, spoke to Mr. Chen and wished him continued success. I hope that he'll make arrangements with the Holocaust Museum in Israel so more people have a chance to see the documentary.

Chinese Archives in Jerusalem

reprinted from the China/Judaic Connection, Summer 1999

Emanuel Pratt, writing in the Bulletin of *Igud Yotzei Sin* (the Association of Former Residents of China), details the history of the Chinese Archives in Jerusalem, now permanently housed in the basement of the Shprinzak Building at the Hebrew University, Givat Ram Campus. Hadassah Assouline is Director of the Archives.

In 1983, at the 10th World Conference of *Igud Yotzei Sin*, the Central Committee began steps to collect and preserve all the archives of the Jewish Communities in China. Due to lack of funds the project faltered. In 1991, Professor Boris Bresler volunteered to organize and store them at Peit Ponve, and a draft catalog of the holdings was prepared. Later, they decided to store all the archival material in Jerusalem, and the Tientsin Archive, which had been stored at the memorial Synagogue in Ramat Gan, was recently transferred to their permanent home.

These papers include records of the Tientsin Hebrew Association and the transfer of the Jewish cemetery to a new site after the original site became an industrial park. Pratt touchingly notes, "the Jews buried in Tientsin did reach the homeland that they longed for all their lives and found a sanctuary in the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People in Jerusalem – forever and ever!"

The first documents in the Harbin Jewish Community Archives date from 1903. From the start, the leaders of the Harbin community were conscious of their significance, and by mid 1940's they were cared for by a professional archivist, Mr. Prusac, and housed in two rooms of the Old Synagogue Building.

Just before the Red Army Occupation in the summer of 1945, the leaders removed some of the documents in fear that the Soviets might use the material to arrest, try and "liquidate" some members of the community.

Shortly after the Russian occupation, a representative of the Soviet consulate did come into the Synagogue and ask to inspect the archives. Teddy Kaufman showed him the vital statistics – births, deaths, marriage, divorces, etc. – but the Russian was not interested in these. He wanted information on the correspondence between the Harbin Jewish Association and worldwide Jewish organizations, Jewish

periodical collections, and various reports published in Harbin, such as the minutes of meetings of organizations. He never learned that these were neatly stored next door.

When the Jews departed Harbin, there was no possibility to ship out the entire archives. Part was packed in crates and brought to Israel by Kaufman. The rest was requisitioned by the Chinese and is now stored with the Archives of Heilung-kiang province. Negotiations are currently underway with the Chinese authorities to permit copying the archival documents and bringing copies to Israel. So far the negotiations have not been successful.

The Bulletin of *Igud Yotzei Sin* can be obtained by writing the Association of the Former Residents of China, P.O. Box 1601, Tel Aviv, 61015, Israel (Phone/FAX (03) 517-1997).

VIDEO CORNER

Escape to the Rising Sun: by Belgian film maker Diane Perelsztejn
Available in 95 minute 16 mm film or 60 minute video. For information contact: National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University, Lown 102 MS 053, Waltham, MA 02454; Phone: 781-899-7044.

The Port of Last Resort: by Joan Grossman & Paul Rosdy
Available in 79 minute 16 mm film and video. For information contact: National Center for Jewish Film, Brandeis University, Lown 102 MS 053, Waltham, MA 02454; Phone: 781-899-7044.

A Place to Save Your Life: Produced by Karen Shopsowitz
Available in a 52 minute video. For information contact: Filmmakers Library, 124 E. 40th Street, New York, NY 10016; Phone: 212-808-4980.

Escape to Shanghai: Produced by Shanghai Yi Fei Cultural Film Co.
Shanghai Yi Fei Cultural Film Co., Room 1907, Bldg. 3, Lane 791, Lin Lin Road, Shanghai, China 200030.

Exile Shanghai: Directed by Ulrike Ottingers
A 4 hour 16 mm film covering all three of the Jewish Communities that inhabited Shanghai. For information contact: Pacific Cirie Centre, 1131 Howe Street, Vancouver, BC, V6Z 2L7 Canada.

He had come home with the idea of fostering relations between Austria and China, but the frigid climate of the Cold War, and the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, prevented that.

There was nothing left for him in Austria, but his efforts to return to China were stonewalled by the Chinese consulate in Bern. To this day, nobody knows why. He then attempted to join his brother in the US, but as a former general in the Chinese communist army, he was turned down.

So he came to Israel.

"Of course I remember him," says David Neumann, 85. Neither he nor his wife, Miriam, is related to Jakob Rosenfeld, but Yoschi Rosenfeld was married to Neumann's sister, Bertha (Beba).

"We met perhaps half a dozen times," Neumann continues. "He was tall, about 1.80 meters, solidly built and on the edge of being overweight. He was pleasant to talk to, and had an impressive personality. But I can't really judge him, because I'm German and he was Austrian.

"I have never liked the Viennese mentality. Despite everything he'd gone through, he seemed to take everything lightly. He never spoke of his past. I learned that he had been in Dachau only from (Kaminski's) book.

"He lived in a half-room apartment near Joschi, in the home of a French family who took in immigrants. He never complained, although he was already ill. He was very attached to his family: being with his family seemed to fulfill him, and he was very emotional about them . . .

Like those who knew him in China, Miriam Neumann, 75, speaks of Rosenfeld's generosity, and agrees with her husband that "he was no booster. He never spoke much of what he had done in China. He wanted to learn about Israel."

Israel, he wrote to his brother Adolf, "is no bed of roses for a newcomer." In a letter he wrote to Sabina in London he said "There is a fervent desire to build the country, and the young generation are physically and emotionally healthy, and aesthetically enchanting."

But Rosenfeld's heart condition was worsening. Sure that in the US he could be op-

erated on successfully, he applied again for a visa, and was again turned down.

He died on April 22, 1952. Rosenfeld did write a book about his experiences in China, but the manuscript was lost. We'll never know what he thought about his life there, but his memory lives on all the same, enshrined in the hearts of the Chinese who accord him the veneration almost of an ancestor.

The exhibition opened at the Vienna Military Museum in 1993, and has been mounted in Israel with the collaboration of the Austrian and Chinese embassies, and thanks to the efforts of attorney Daniel Friedman of the ICFS.

An Unforgettable Evening

The Premier of *Escape to Shanghai* — November 17, 1999
by Yeng-Fong Chiang

Human history is like the Yangtze River of China, long, winding and eternal. Chinese and Jewish people are like the favored children of the Yangtze River; they are tough, and are meant to be forever at God's will. Chinese reside in the Eastern Hemisphere and the Jewish people emerged at the far end of another ancient civilization. Though born different peoples, they shared remarkable qualities as human beings in wisdom, value, and heritage. Both the Chinese and the Jews are known to be intelligent; they have high respect to their ancestors, tradition, naturally unified and proud about their heritage. Most of all, they all have a strong belief in life and their own religion.

When these two peoples met, it was like two streams had formed naturally into the Yangtze River. I have had many Jewish friends and colleagues in the past, but it was not until I met Rena Krasno, that my understanding about the two cultures reached another level.

It was during the Jewish Film Festival last year in San Francisco that I first met Rena. I invited myself to the seminar of *The Last Resort* and Rena was chairing the session. I didn't feel comfortable to begin with since I was perhaps the only non-Jewish person who walked in. I met Rena and she made me feel at home in a group experience that I had not had before.

Rena explained that in order to escape from the Nazi persecution in the 1930's, many

Jewish people were searching for a nesting place, but found very limited open doors due to the discriminatory policies. Shanghai at the time, the third largest city in the world after New York and Chicago, welcomed the escaping Jews with open arms and without any fears. There was no Visa, no capital required, and no pre-restrictions on creating an asylum for God's people from far away. The newly arrived Jews began to organize their own community and co-existed with the neighboring Chinese peacefully until the war was over. They all left with unforgettable memories.

There were Jews who had arrived much earlier. They eagerly provided at least one hot meal per day for the refugees. It is important to note that many Chinese during the war suffered severe hardship, and did not even eat one meal a day. Nevertheless, there were no hard feelings from the Chinese towards the neighboring Jewish refugees and friendships developed. Rena's feeling about Chinese is very real and very earnest.

In autumn 1999, the Sino-Judaic Institute and the San Francisco – Shanghai Sister City Committee hosted a premier of the film *Escape to Shanghai*. A world-renowned Chinese artist, Chen Yifei, directed the film. I saw Chen's oil painting exhibition at the Shanghai Museum a few years ago. Chen's artwork is widely collected by major museums and private collectors. The film premiered at the San Francisco Asian Art Museum on November 17th and was an overwhelming success.

Ironically, upon first impression, Chen resembles a successful international businessperson more than an artist. A few years ago on the streets of New York City, a lady with gray hair stopped Chen. The old lady was Jewish and she asked Chen "Are you from Shanghai?" in Shanghai dialect. Amazed, Chen asked the lady how could she possibly speak such a pure Shanghai dialect. That was the beginning of Chen's desire to film *Escape to Shanghai*. The old Jewish lady was one of the refugees in Shanghai during the wartime and she learned to speak the Shanghai dialect then and still practiced it when she had the chance. Chen was discovering a piece of Shanghai history that he himself as a Shanghai native had never heard before. Chen was stunned and thought about Steven Spielberg's film, *Schindler's List*. Schindler spared the fate of a thousand

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the editor:

Sympathizing with those who were upset by Prof. Zhang Qianhong's article in *Points East*, July 1999, I would like to add to the worthy comments by the editor and Al Dien (*Points East*, November 1999). A Chinese-American (4th gen.) who worked 43 years in America and East Asia (mainly as a professor of psych & educ), perhaps another perspective will be welcome.

My debate with Zhang's article is that it focuses on the questions of what makes a Jew Jewish and on their "commercial character" from a limited framework. Although I have no doubt that the author meant to be positive and objective, the questions actually resemble topics posed by those who have hated and tormented the Jews. My assessment is not that the work is politically incorrect in modern usage, it just does not get to the critical human and historical factors that have influenced the behavior of Jews and those who have dealt with them. If the author and his colleagues had only turned the same focus, i.e., Chinese commercialism and financial acumen, onto their own people, they might have dismissed it out of hand. They know that the Chinese are far more complex and diverse than to assess them from such assumptions, like the tale of the blind men

explaining what an elephant is. Yet, we should recognize their good will, as Dien and Laytner did; for the Chinese, as all peoples, view other groups stereotypically, truly respect and admire the Jews and their achievements most highly. From my viewpoint, it speaks volumes of themselves and their aspirations.

Anson Laytner and I offered (*PE*, April 1999, p. 3) a copy of the final proofs for our 26-paged article in press, "Chinese and Jewish Characteristics: Preliminary Analyses." We found it helpful to use historical and social-psychological factors to tease out similarities and differences of the Chinese and Jewish peoples. In contrast to Prof. Zhang's article, our work attempts to reach core ground and set a firm foundation before construction begins. Sad to say, as I've written about the first, those who study the Chinese and to a lesser extent the Jews, unwittingly contribute to the misunderstandings of the public and foreigners by neglecting social-psychological concepts and approaches.

Albert Hoy Yee
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To the editor:

For the sake of historical accuracy, I have a comment about your review of "The Good Man of Nanking" in *Points East*.

I don't question Rabe's heroic efforts, but the review, especially the first few sentences of the second paragraph, might suggest to a reader that Rabe was alone in these efforts. Iris Chang, in her definitive "The Rape of Nanking" published in 1997, states that it was a Presbyterian missionary, W. Plumer Mills, who first suggested establishing a Safety Zone in Nanking. The book states, "Mills and some two dozen other people (mostly American, but also German, Danish, Russian and Chinese) ultimately designated" a site. Elsewhere I read that the members of the International Committee asked Rabe to head the committee because they thought that he, as a German, could deal more effectively with the Japanese.

Oscar Armstrong
The China Connection
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Schwartz, Scholar of Chinese Intellectual History, Dies

Benjamin Schwartz, Leroy B. Williams, Professor of History and Political Science Emeritus and an influential scholar of ancient and modern China, died of cancer at his home in Cambridge in Nov., 1999. He was 82.

Benjamin Schwartz was born in Boston on Dec. 12, 1916. He came to Harvard as an undergraduate in 1934 and stayed for most of his career until his retirement in 1987.

From 1942 to 1946 he served in World War II, intercepting Japanese messages in the cryptanalysis section of the U.S. Signal Corps' Intelligence Branch.

In 1950 Schwartz began his Harvard teaching career as an instructor in history and government and in the Russian Research Center. In 1951 he was named assistant professor. Less than a decade later he was promoted to full professor, and in 1975 he was named Leroy B. Williams Professor of History and Political Science.

He was the author of several influential books, including *Chinese Communism and the Rise of Mao* (1951), *In Search of Wealth and Power: Yen Fu and the West* (1964), and *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (1985).

Schwartz was the Senior Scholar at Harvard's 1992 "Jewish Diasporas in China" conference, which was co-sponsored by the Sino-Judaic Institute. He contributed the essay, *Jews and China: Past and Present Encounters* to Jonathan Goldstein's anthology *The Jews of China. Volume One: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Armonk, NY and London: M.E. Sharpe Publishers, 1999). A graduate of Boston's Hebrew Teachers College, Schwartz had lectured on *Chinese Inscriptions: Speculations on Judaism in China* and *A Layman's View of Judaism*, both in 1988.

IN THE FIELD

◆ **Hong Kong Hosts Jewish Conference**

A conference entitled "The Lion Roars – the Dragon Stirs – The Asian Jewish World in the 21st century" was held in Hong Kong March 2-5, 2000. The conference is under the auspices of The World Union for Progressive Judaism and The Australia, Asia and New Zealand Union for Progressive Judaism, and was hosted by the United Jewish Congregation of Hong Kong. The venue was the Hong Kong Jewish Community Centre, 70 Robinson Road, Mid-Levels, Hong Kong. Keynote speakers were Rabbi Richard Block, Jerusalem, President of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, and Professor Xu Xin, Nanjing, China, Professor of Jewish Culture, Nanjing University. Other participants included Rabbi Jordan Cohen, Hong Kong, Rabbi John Levi, Melbourne, Australia, The Honorable Uri Halfon, Consul General of the State of Israel, Robyn Helzner, Washington, D.C., world renowned Jewish musician, and Professor David Zweig, Professor of Social Studies at Hong Kong University.

◆ **U.S. Holocaust Museum to Open Exhibit**

When World War II began following Germany's invasion of Poland in September 1939, one small group of Polish Jews – numbering 2,200 – survived through a fortuitous sequence of events involving the unlikely complicity of a diplomat representing a country soon to be formally allied with Nazi Germany – Japan. During an extraordinarily brief window of opportunity in the summer of 1940, Chiune Sugihara along with Dutch diplomatic representative, Jan Zwartendijk, provided these refugees with the official documents that would enable their escape to freedom. That escape would come just a few months before the mass killings of the Holocaust began.

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has spent several years creating a major special exhibition that tells this remarkable story of survival through photographs, archival film footage, oral histories, and artifacts. *Flight and Rescue* introduces the diversity of refugees who spanned the spectrum of Jewish life and explores their experiences as they traveled to unlikely destinations of refuge in the Far East. The exhibition also highlights the actions of Sugihara and of Zwartendijk and other Dutch diplomats who provided what proved to be life-saving travel papers at a time when most opportunities for escape from Europe no longer existed.

The Museum plans to open *Flight and Rescue* to the public on May 4, 2000.

◆ **All India Jewish Conference Held**

Erna & Sam Daniel of New York report that the American Joint Distribution Committee in Mumbai had organized the All India Jewish Conference on October 24, 1999. This conference was attended by 110 members of the community. There were six representatives from synagogues in Mumbai and Thane. There were representatives from synagogues in Ahmedabad, Pune, Calcutta and New Delhi. The representatives of the Women's Group and the Youth Group also participated and made contributions. This was a successful conference.

Jewish community leaders will now be actively involved in holding regular meetings to plan and find solutions to the various 'Issues Facing Indian Jewry Today and In The Millennium.' Community Leaders will be assisted by Mr. Robin F. Robbins, Sales Training Manager of Hindustan Lever Ltd.

◆ **Art Collection Donated**

A Vienna-born psychiatrist, Paul Singer, who died in 1997, has donated his 5,000 object collection of Chinese antiquities, valued at some \$60 million, to the Smithsonian Institution's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. Singer, who was born in 1904, began collecting Chinese art when he was 19. In 1938, he fled Austria and Hitler for America. An eccentric collector and individual, he stored his entire collection in the two-room, Summit, NJ apartment in which he also lived.

◆ **Rickshaw Reunion Held**

Former Shanghailanders, their families and friends, gathered October 16-17, 1999 for a conference in Philadelphia. Of the 288 who attended, 191 were former Shanghailanders, 252 came from 25 US states, and 36 from 8 foreign countries. Guest speaker was Prof. Antonia Finnane, author of the new book, *Far From Where? Jewish Journeys from Shanghai to Australia*. Artist David L. Bloch was recognized for his life's work; the new documentary *The Port of Last Resort: Zuflucht in Shanghai* was screened; and an authors' forum was held. A team of interviewers from the Gratz College Holocaust Oral History Archives collected testimonies during the weekend as well for inclusion in its collection.

◆ **Old China Hands Reunion**

Peter Stein is organizing an Old China Hands Reunion, October 19-22, 2000 at the Ramada Valley Ho Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona. To reserve a place, call or fax 1-800-632-7797 in the US; or 480-945-4603; or e-mail measys@primenet.com. Attendance is limited to 350 and the conference is already 75% full. Speakers and program information is available by phone or by sending a blank e-mail to OCH@mailback.com.

friends and former patients. The sinologist is Prof. Gerd Kaminski, who wrote a book about him, *General Luo Nicknamed Longnose*.

The Chinese friends approached officials in Junan in the late Eighties. China was then beginning to open up to the West, and it was hoped that the story of the Viennese doctor who'd been active in the region during the war years would put the district on the map, and lead to recognition and prosperity.

The official celebrations were held in Junan in 1992 on what would have been Rosenfeld's 90th birthday.

The Israel connection stems from those same years, when Israel and China were establishing diplomatic relations. The first Chinese delegation that arrived here asked to visit his grave, but Teddy Kaufmann, head of the Israel-China Friendship Society, had never heard of Rosenfeld, and when he found the grave, it was a ruin. It was restored with ICFS funds, and has become a place of pilgrimage for visiting Chinese.

Jakob Rosenfeld was born in Lvov in 1903. Seven years later, the family moved to Wollersdorf, a small village in central Austria, where they were the only Jews. Rosenfeld's father, Michael, a former junior officer in the Habsburg cavalry, became a prosperous milliner following the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the First World War.

The family was deeply involved in Wollersdorf village life. His mother's charity work, and his parents' concern generally with the needs of the poor, made medicine a natural career choice for Rosenfeld and his sister, Sabina.

He studied in Vienna, specializing in urology and gynecology. For a time after his graduation in 1928, he worked at the Jewish Hospital in Vienna, but soon opened a private clinic. He was a good doctor with a warm approach to people. He became a success, and enjoyed a good life with a fine apartment, good clothes and, of course, access to the museums, theater and concerts that he loved.

Jakob was considered a congenial, generous individual, with a sense of humor and aristocratic manners. He wasn't politically active, but supported the Social Democrats' struggle to improve the living conditions

of the worker. He loathed fascism and the Nazis, and said so, loudly. The Gestapo arrested him eight days after Germany annexed Austria, on May 23, 1938. He was sent to Dachau, and later to Buchenwald. He was released a year later, and given 14 days to get out of Austria. "Wherever you go, we'll get there," the clerk in the emigration office told him cynically.

Of course he had no passport, and the only place that required no visa in those dreadful days was Shanghai, then still in the hands of the Nationalist Chinese.

His father had died. His brothers and sisters had scattered; one fled to Paris and then to the US. Another went to Canada. A third went to the Ukraine, and Sabina to London.

Rosenfeld sailed for Shanghai on June 13, 1939, where his brother Josef (Joschi) joined him a few months later, the same Joschi with whom Rosenfeld found refuge in Israel when, ailing and with no place to go, he came here in 1950.

Characteristically, as soon as he arrived in Shanghai, Rosenfeld opened a clinic, appalled by the want and disease among many of the 20,000 or so Jews who flooded into the city, as well as among the native population.

Nobody, says curator Rachel Arbel, really knows why Rosenfeld joined Mao. He had a friend, a fellow Jew and refugee called Heinz Shippe, who was a communist, and who persuaded Rosenfeld to join the Marxist discussion circle in his home.

But in 1941 the Japanese were closing in on Shanghai, and for Rosenfeld, they were the enemy. He really didn't know anything about communism, says Arbel, quoting Kaminski. "Rosenfeld had social-democratic leanings and had no way of knowing Mao's communists were neither socialists nor democrats. He joined Mao because he despised both fascism and Japanese militarism."

Thanks to Shippe's contacts, Rosenfeld slipped out of Shanghai and joined Mao's army in March 1941.

They loved him. He treated them, taught them, set up clinics and public-health systems, delivered their babies, worked with the officers, soldiers and peasants alike,

never grumbled about the scarcity of drugs, medical equipment, proper food and primitive living conditions, and never asked for any favors. He worked long hours, often under gunfire, and "dismissed all concerns for his safety, saying 'I'm no visitor here! I'm a soldier in a white coat!'"

He loved to sing, and encouraged by a fellow officer who had once sung in Shanghai's Bach Choir, would sing Schubert lieder to the Chinese. He sang the revolutionary songs too, and even composed a few, both words and music, which were published in the Red Army paper.

Unable to pronounce his name, they called him Luo Shente, nicknaming him "longnose." He never got much beyond basic Mandarin, but the Chinese regarded him as one of themselves . . .

He was also very hairy, and so the children gave him another nickname – Gorilla. Gorilla, he would say, is like guerrilla, so that's fine.

Although he could have returned to Vienna in 1945, Rosenfeld chose to stay in China. he saw the rottenness of the nationalist regime at first hand, and perceived the Red Army as idealistic. He admired the soldiers' fortitude and dedication, and he felt needed.

From 1945 to 1948 he served on several fronts, his duties ranging from carrying for the top command in Harbin to improving hygiene in the northeast. He was with the army when it marched triumphantly in to Beijing in 1948.

The People's Republic of China was declared on October 1, 1949, and later that same month Rosenfeld left for Vienna to visit his family.

Why did he leave?

"Perhaps he felt superfluous," suggests Arbel, "like people here who struggled and struggled for the birth of the nation, and then felt at odds when people's concerns changed. The fighting was over. It was time to go."

In Vienna, Rosenfeld was reunited with two of his siblings, but learned that his mother, whom he had desperately tried to bring to Shanghai, had died on her way to Theresienstadt.

bassador leads services in Hebrew, a language the head of the community does not know. The last rabbi had left the country more than 20 years ago.

Moses Samuels, with obvious pride, shows us around the synagogue built in 1897. The whitewashed inner room with blue columns bearing the women's gallery, gleams in the lamplight. The wooden ceiling is decorated with fine decorations and overhead lights. The stained glass windows made of old Chinese glass create a particularly festive ambiance. Israeli tourist posters hang on the walls and, at the entrance, is a board with the dates of this year's holy days: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Chanukah, Purim, Pesah, Shavuot and Tisha b'Av. The most precious things in the temple are behind a white and gold velvet curtain – the last two of more than 120 Torah scrolls formerly in Burma. They are encased in fine, antique, Iraqi silverwork. The museum-like empty room, says Moses Samuels, must remain a functioning house of prayer. With shining eyes, he tells us about his son's Bar Mitzvah celebration in the synagogue, attended by more than 500 people, among whom some Moslem friends from the neighborhood.

Moses Samuels' main responsibility as Community head is to reply to letters from overseas Jews seeking information about their ancestors who once lived in Burma. A birth register has been maintained since the end of the 19th century, and the first inscription dated October 3, 1892, belongs to "Nissim Sassoon, son of Mordechai Salah and Mozelle Tob born in Moulmein," today Mawlamyine, capital of Mon state, once the main port exporting teak wood.

Samuels' further duty is to contact potential contributors, such as for example a businessman from Geneva, who gave a generous donation towards the renovation of the synagogue. No matter how small the contribution, Samuels prepares an official receipt so that the finances of the Community carefully kept and ready to be checked at any time by the authorities. Detective work is needed when the Israeli Embassy turns to the head of the community for help regarding "emigration to the Holy Land": apparently, it has happened that Burmese claimed Jewish origin to facilitate emigration possibilities. A glance into the above-mentioned birth register sufficed to clarify these cases.

Today, the greatest dilemma facing the 50-year-old Trustee of the synagogue is the plan by the Yangon authorities to transfer the old Jewish cemetery now located in the center of the city, so big economic investors may build a shopping center. No, this measure is definitely not a result of anti-Semitism, Samuels hastens to add. Other religious groups, such as the Sunnis, the Shiites, the Parsees and the Hindus must also move from that part of the city. Since December 15, 1997, they are forbidden to conduct burials in their old cemeteries. Moses Samuels is at a loss what to do should a member of 'his' Community die. Indeed, there is a project to build a new cemetery outside of the city. However, for religious reasons – according to Jewish religious law graves may not be moved – as well as financial ones (costs would amount to \$60,000) this would be extremely difficult to carry out in the near future. Moreover, the location indicated by the authorities at this time, has no infrastructure whatsoever.

In spite of the burst of a strong tropical storm, we request Moses Samuels to accompany us to the old cemetery. At first he refuses, claiming he must trim the wildly growing thicket after the rainy season, otherwise no graves will be visible, but he relents after we firmly insist. At the spot, the sight is both wonderful and impressive: 300 stone graves stand tightly together in close rows surrounded by homes and palm trees. It is not usual to see graves above the earth in Jewish cemeteries, but Burma's wet and muddy soil made this unavoidable. The oldest grave dates back to 1876. There are older gravestones in Mandalay, Burma's second largest city, as well as in Maymyo (today Pyin Oo Lwin) the former British Hill-Station where during colonial times some Jews worked on the railroad.

The graves, stone witnesses of the past, are slowly decaying due to the high humidity, lush green plants, moss and lichen. Snails and mollusks crawl over the Hebrew and Latin lettering carved in precious black marble, that grave robbers constantly chiseled out during the last century. Loud prayers from a nearby mosque and the calling of the Muezzin drown the gentle sounds of twittering birds. Buddhist novices stare at us curiously from a Buddhist monastery on the other side. As they see Moses Samuels, they give a friendly wave – he is a good friend of 'their' monk who

has a view of the Jewish cemetery from his cloister. Finally, it is a Christian who lives with her four children in a miserable strawhut, who takes care of the cemetery. Her son gets a few kyats from Moses Samuels to clear the grass between the graves. The Trustee lights a candle and we sit around the warm light as he prays. The dead souls appear to spread peace among the living who belong to various religions. Hope arises, and not for the last time, that also the Burmese military authorities will not be able to deprive themselves of this power in future. Indeed, at the end of the 18th century, King Alaungpaya prudently renamed the capital Yangon, meaning 'the end of controversy.'

The Red Army's Jewish General

by Helen Kaye
excerpted from the *Jerusalem Post Magazine*, 15 Oct. 1999

"He was a good doctor and a good man," says his relative by marriage, Miriam Neumann. That seems to sum up the general opinion of Dr. Jakob Rosenfeld, physician to Mao Zedong's People's Liberation Army from 1941 to 1949, and supposedly the only foreigner ever to attain the rank of general in the Chinese army.

He died in Israel in 1952, and his story was forgotten for many years. His grave in Tel Aviv's Kiryat Shaul cemetery lay neglected.

No more.

Today there is a white marble statue to him in the town of Junan in China's Shandong province and a wing of the local hospital is named after him. There are books about him. He has, as is proper for heroes, become a myth, and on exhibition. The Chinese Saga of a Viennese Doctor was shown at Beth Hatefutsoth (the Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora) on the Tel Aviv University campus at Ramat Aviv.

It comprises photographs, drawings, artifacts, personal belongings, and a documentary film made by the Austrian Broadcasting System.

Rosenfeld was redeemed from obscurity because of an Austrian sinologist, Chinese

Some Thoughts on our Policy Toward the Jewish Religion . . .

(continued from page 1)

themselves so as to meet this heartfelt issue on the part of the Jews who live here and of those here on a visit.

In the summer of 1998 when President Clinton made his historic visit to China, one of the items on his itinerary was a visit to the site of the Ohel Rachel Synagogue in Shanghai. The Shanghai municipal government spent several hundred thousand yuan to repair the synagogue. This visit of President Clinton, his wife Hillary, and the American Secretary of State immediately became a hot item in the Jewish journalistic media all over the world. The status of the Jewish religion in China soon became an open and lively topic of discussion and an issue which attracted attention. As I understand it, before this, at the bidding of President Clinton, in February and march of 1998, Rabbi Arthur Schneier, the leader of a delegation of American religious and human rights delegates, at a meeting with Chairman Jiang Zemin formally raised the question of the status of the Jewish religion in China. One can expect that following the expansion of the policy of openness to the outside and the increase in personnel contacts, that in the not too distant future increasingly there will be Jews coming to China to invest and to visit, and that there would increasingly be Jews coming with their families to work and live in China. China and the Jewish people, in every aspect, including culture and religion, would increasingly have contact. In these circumstances, it is clearly necessary for China to reflect on this question of policy toward the Jewish religion.

1. The Jewish Religion and the Relationship of the Jewish Religion with Jewish Culture

In the thinking about the policy toward Jewish religion, it is necessary to explain a bit the relationship between Jewish culture and the Jewish religion, because this relationship is different than that of other religions. As is well known, the Jewish religion is a religion founded by the Jewish people. The object of their devotion is God (called J—h), and the devotees in their synagogue worship a monotheistic deity and also see Him as the creator of their church. The Jewish religion now has a history of over 3,000 years. It is the earliest monotheistic religion and had a great influence on Christianity and Islam which are also

monotheistic. Because of the uniqueness of the history and culture of the Jewish people the nuances of the term Judaism are very broad. Its basic meaning is "all Jews," but in fact it includes the whole of Jewish civilization. So the Jewish religion does not just mean the religious beliefs of Jews, but also the visible shape of the culture of the Jewish people, and so it is frequently used to indicate generally Jewish culture or the kernel of Jewish culture. This is similar to the term Confucianism which in reality points to the heart of Chinese culture. Further, in the course of a very long history, Jewish thought, spirit, religion, and culture – all aspects of the people were bound together and it would be very difficult to separate them. It is often said, "The Jewish people cannot separate from their religion, for if they do then there would be no Jewish people." Even more, the Jewish religion is for the Jews the manner of their life, the life of the Jews (whether believers or not) is inextricably bound up with their religion, for their eating and drinking and everyday life to marriage and death, all are connected with their religion. Whether the New Year, Passover or other holidays, all are seen as religious festivals, and can also be seen as a part of their cultural life and customs. And according to tradition, these festivals are to be celebrated in their synagogues. The synagogue, therefore, becomes something which is inseparable from their daily life. Even further, the teaching of the cultural tradition and customs to the Jewish boys and girls is the responsibility of the rabbi who undertakes the duties of the synagogue; the various activities such as circumcisions, bar mitzvahs and marriages all must be performed in the synagogue. It is very important to recognize this. It would help us to understand the importance of the synagogue to the Jews, that in fact it goes beyond the bounds of religion and the requirement of the Jews for a Jewish synagogue proceeds from the basic roots of Jewish culture and is not based on religion, and so in deliberating on this question and formulating policies one should not be constrained by the fetters of religion.

2. A Review of the History of the Presence of Jews in China

When discussing the policies concerning the Jewish religion we should first review the history of the presence of Jews in China. The appearance of Jews in Chinese history can be traced back to the Tang if not earlier, similar to that of Christianity

and Islam. Possibly the Jewish religion was first brought to China by Jewish merchants coming over the Silk Road. At Dunhuang a prayer in Hebrew was discovered (dating from the 8th century) indicating that the Jewish religion at that date had already come to China. In the Song capital at Kaifeng there was a definite Jewish community and that community in 1163 openly set up a record of a Jewish synagogue which indicates that at that time the Jewish religion had already taken root in China. In the subsequent 700 years, the Jewish religion continued and developed without a break. Besides this, other cities, such as Ningbo, Ningxia, Hangzhou and Yangzhou all probably had Jewish communities of some size. Some of these Jewish communities over a considerable period of time maintained a mutual connection. The Jewish religion had obviously been passed down in these cities.

At the close of the Opium War in the mid-19th century, the gates to China were thrown open, and Jews who were scattered around the world, especially Jewish merchants, also streamed into China to do business and to invest, so the Jewish religion had a resurgence in China. Synagogues were built at various times in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Harbin, Tianjin, Dalian and Qingdao. The Jewish religion then became an integral part of the life of the Jews who were carrying on business, living and even taking refuge in China. During World War II Jewish refugees coming to China dramatically increased, and the activities of the Jewish religion, especially in Shanghai, became even more frequent. The number of Jews living in China sharply declined in the late '50's, the synagogues one after another closed, and the religious activities subsequently ceased, but still the Jewish religion survived in Hong Kong without a break. So in 1997 when Hong Kong reverted it means that the Jewish religion in fact still exists within the territorial sovereignty of China, and that it has achieved the formal status of a religion. From this perspective, the Jewish religion from its first arrival in China until now has never ceased to exist.

3. The Policy of Our Country Toward the Jews through History

Although the Jewish religion has existed in China continuously for such a long time, what has been the official policy toward the Jews historically? Looking at the historical sources, the dynasties or the governments have instituted lenient policies

toward the Jews, permitting them to exist within the country and to develop normal religious activities, including erecting synagogues. The Kaifeng Jewish stele records that the Song dynasty emperor made a few simple rules for them to follow, and the best expression of that policy is a horizontal inscribed plaque granted them by a Qing emperor, as well as vertical plaques and scrolls with couplets given them by local officials which hung in the synagogue. The authorities in the Republican period also permitted them to establish Jewish organizations and synagogues. Just after Liberation our government, and especially the Shanghai municipal government, instituted a very liberal policy toward the Jewish religion, permitting the Jews to organize and to expand their regular activities, and the Jewish religion was recognized at that time as one of the approved religions; the Shanghai new Synagogue (at Xiang Yang South Road) closed in 1956 (because the number of Jews had decreased so dramatically), but prior to that it was a place where the regular rituals of the Jewish religion were observed all along. The liberal policy "to observe your religion and to not change your customs" (in the words of the Song emperor) carried out by our governments through history is the polar opposite of the anti-Semitism promulgated by other countries in the world, and this has earned for China and the Chinese people an honorable place in the hearts of the Jewish people. It must be pointed out that the Jewish religion is not a proselytizing religion, and the policy pursued throughout Chinese history did not lead to the spread of the Jewish religion in China. If we were to continue this traditional attitude toward the Jewish religion, I believe that it will not bring with it any negative influences, it will not lead to the Jewish religion spreading in China, and it will not cause any problems with the religious policies presently being observed. On the contrary, the initiation of this policy very probably will lead to some unexpected positive effects (these will be discussed in section six of this paper).

4. On the Question of Whether or Not There are Chinese Jews

The questions discussed above concern foreign Jews, but when discussing the policy toward the Jewish religion there is still another question which must be broached: that is whether or not there are Chinese Jews. Although officials in the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Civil Affairs on different grounds have expressed

the point of view that China has no Chinese Jews, still I believe that this view does not necessarily fit the facts. Strictly speaking, since antiquity (at least from the Song dynasty), from the time that Jews stepped onto the soil of China and increased and propagated, their existence in China has continued without a break. Since there was no concept of nationality before modern times, there is no way of illustrating whether or not the Jews who lived in China had Chinese nationality. But just speaking of the fact that they have lived in China for generations without a break, there is no doubt that they ought to be seen as Chinese Jews, such as the Jews who live in Kaifeng. In the present century the Jews who through legal procedures have obtained Chinese nationality are not a few in number. I have examined the documents on this matter in the Shanghai Archives, and even in the 60's and 70's, even when we had the attitude of completely isolating ourselves from the outside, Jews did not entirely cease to live in China. Aside from the Jews who remained in Shanghai and Harbin, there were members of the national Committee of the Chinese Political Consultative Conference, such as Israel Epstein and Sidney Shapiro, who were one hundred percent Chinese Jews. Further, Hong Kong has had Jews living there since the middle of the 19th century, quite a few of whom have lived there for generations. When Hong Kong reverted to China on July 1, 1997, according to the law a good many of the Hong Kong Jews have become Chinese citizens or have long-term residence rights. According to the statistics of the Israeli embassy, as of February, 1998, there were 2500 Jews living in Hong Kong, which makes it rank as 53rd in the number of Jews who live in countries around the world. According to the count of the Hong Kong Jews themselves, there are 3,500 at present in Hong Kong. So, no matter from what perspective, the belief of those who consider that China at present has no Jews does not fit the facts.

One must point that the question of the number of Chinese Jews does not stop here. Since the 1980's, the number of Chinese Jews (here I mean those of Chinese blood) has begun to rapidly increase. This increase is primarily based on two factors: marriage with Jews and the adoption of Chinese orphans by Jews. According to one report, Chinese abroad who marry Jews and convert to Judaism (these are primarily women) are to be counted in the thousands; I, myself, have met hundreds while

teaching and visiting abroad. Yang Xiaoyan, the famous international bridge expert, is one of these (because her previous husbands passed away, she married an industrialist, Mr. Sender, and converted to Judaism). In 1995 when I was a guest at their home, she showed me the certificate of conversion to prove that she had already become a genuine Jew. In the last decade Chinese orphans who have been adopted abroad number in the tens of thousands, and not a few have been adopted by Jews (some have estimated the number is 30% to 40%). Based on my own preliminary estimate I would say that up to now the number exceeds 3,000. Many of these orphans (mostly female) from the time of the adoption have undergone the ritual of conversion to the Jewish faith, will receive a Jewish education and will become genuine Jews of Chinese blood. Observing the present trend, the number of these two sorts of people will only increase rather than decrease. Although a number of these have become the citizens of other countries, their Chinese blood is not affected, and they are still Chinese who have converted to Judaism, and therefore, our policies ought not ignore the Jewish status of these people, but should rather acknowledge their present status and include them, allowing them to contribute to our foreign contacts and economic development.

5. The Question of the Kaifeng Jews

Of course, when discussing the Chinese Jews and our policies toward the Jewish religion one cannot avoid touching on the Kaifeng Jews. The existence of the Kaifeng Jews is a historical fact, and Chinese and foreign historians have discussed this many times, so I will not repeat it here. On the basis of the material which we have, the Kaifeng Jewish community, which had an unbroken history of over 700 years in Kaifeng, fell apart only in the 19th century, but the dissolution of the Kaifeng Jewish community cannot be taken to mean that the Kaifeng Jews have completely vanished, for there are examples in every country of the world of the Jews continuing to survive even without a community. In fact, some members of that original Kaifeng community have all along considered themselves to be Jews. This point can be ascertained from the results of periodic censuses. Whether it is the census of the 1920's carried out by the Nationalist government or that of the early 1950's carried out by the People's Republic, there were those in Kaifeng who identified themselves as Jews; it was so entered in their house-

(pentatonic) scales, and he stayed with them until about 1940, when he began to experiment with some Indian modes.

His Chinese-style melodies he combined with other, secondary lines, using simple meters, such as 2/4, much of the time. He also incorporated Chinese type ornaments, the grace-notes and slides, which are very idiomatic on the flute (ti-tze) and the fiddle (er-hu). When he supported his tunes with chords, three-note groupings of every-other-note in the scale, he found that if he did this in the five-tone scales, some rather interesting and unusual chords emerged – especially in the minor keys.

Almost all his compositions, however, involved the western orchestra. Coming from the generation of Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Ippolitov-Ivanov, he very naturally absorbed a fine skill at orchestration – brilliant, colorful, evocative. As to form, when he came to writing symphonies and concertos, he followed the classic/romantic models, with two thematic groups, development and re-statement – at first in the time-tested key-relationships, but later more often in distant and unforeseeable juxtapositions.

With this palette, and a temperament both romantic and poetic, he created a considerable output in the course of more than thirty years' composing. His primary aim, of course, was to produce works that were highly personal. But a secondary goal, which he expressed in numerous articles and talks, was to encourage Chinese musicians to cherish and develop their own musical heritage, and not to jump on the bandwagons of jazz, fox-trot, barroom and show-biz music, but to find ways in which to evolve a new kind of Chinese-ness.

This attitude was evident in his relations with Chinese artists as well. When I came to China for the celebrations of his life work, I was met at the Beijing airport by a number of his past associates. Among them was Han Chung Jie, now a famous conductor, who, with spare English, told me, by way of self-introduction, that he had played the 'ti-tze' in my *Father's Great Wall* in 1943; that Avshalomoff had insisted Han play the first part and his European flute teacher play second - out of respect for Chinese musicians.

Visiting Jewish Cultural Remains in Burma

by Dr. Matthias Messmer
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translated from the German by Rena Krasno

2,500 Jews once lived in Burma, most of them in the capital Yangon. The majority came from Baghdad, others from Teheran and India. Today, only some two dozen remain in one of the most isolated countries in the world.

The Musmea Yeshua synagogue is not indicated on city maps of the capital Rangoon, now called Yangon by Burmese authorities – since 1989 the name of Burma too, in a return to pre-colonial times, has been changed to Myanmar. Since regular tourists are wont to wander mainly among Buddhist cultural sites, the Musmea Yeshua synagogue is not part of their sightseeing duty. And yet, the history and architecture of this Jewish temple are more than a mere curiosity and a visit is indeed warranted.

It is not difficult to miss Burma's only synagogue, although it lies only a straight stone's throw away from the 2,000 year-old Sule pagoda in the center of Rangoon (a city of 5,000,000 inhabitants), in the middle of the Moslem Quarter and bordering Chinatown. Indeed, we have to search for house #85 on 26th Street – Rangoon was planned in British colonial geometric style – especially since it is twilight and only outlines of cars and rickshaws can be seen. Added to the confusion, women are busy tending small open fires on the pavement of Mahabandoola Rd. and offering passersby Burmese delicacies. We turn away from this kaleidoscope of delicious smells, brilliant colors and exotic sounds and enter a narrow, lively lane where Moslem men with white headcoverings walk toward us. In a friendly way, they enquire where we are headed and point to a building painted in blue. Above its entrance door a seven-armed candelabra stands out in a ceramic frieze, under which white letters indicate the name of the synagogue: Musmeah (actually Matzmiach) Yeshua: Hebrew for 'brings forth redemption'. However, the grating is locked, the night watchman – a Buddhist as we later find out – grants us entry in a friendly manner and requests us to register our names for next morning in the list of the Synagogue supervisor.

At daybreak, it quickly becomes hot in Yangon. We walk along Strand Rd., pass an old hotel (named the same as the street) built in 1899 by the British and run by the Armenian Sarkies brothers. Only a few years ago, when humidity and heat had left their mark on this once splendid building, rooms could be had for a couple of dollars. Today, after its renovation and takeover by a Swiss management company, the 'Strand' reminds one of the good old times when dignitaries, members of British royalty or writers like Somerset Maugham were guests here. The contrast with 26th Street, only a few blocks away, could not be greater: roaming dogs, garbage, sharp smells, spots of red saliva – from the chewing and spitting of betelnuts (a custom foreign to Europeans). Nevertheless, in spite of the surroundings, what remains in one's mind are scenes of laughing children, graceful and charming women their faces often made up with Thanaka paste, men dressed in their long traditional skirt-like Longyi, and both sexes puffing on typical Cheroot cigarettes.

Moses Samuels, 'Trustee' of the synagogue as his visiting card indicates, is already awaiting us. At first, he appears to be a trifle reticent and asks us not to speak about politics. His father, Isaac Faraj Samuels, had immigrated to Burma from England in the 1920's, and for decades until his death in 1978 was the head of the Jewish community. During World War II, Japanese occupation troops dragged him away to prison where he was cruelly mistreated. During the Japanese invasion most Jews (who had arrived mainly in the 19th century from Baghdad, Teheran and India) left Burma where they had worked as traders, businessmen and administration clerks. Others departed later after the 1962 military putsch.

During past decades, marriages between Jews and Buddhists became inevitable and led to the assimilation of Jews. At the end of the 1930's some 2,500 Jews still lived in entire Burma, but today there remain only 20 to 25, most of them in Rangoon. The youngest is Moses Samuels' 18-year-old son, Sammy, who at the moment is spending a year in an Israeli kibbutz. A minyan (minimum of 10 Jews required for services in the synagogue) is seldom available, but during the High Holidays, members of the Israeli Embassy in Rangoon attend prayers – a fact that makes Moses Samuels happy, especially since the Am-

music with a Chinese basis: the boyhood enchantment had not been dispelled. In 1925, he completed and produced his first opera, *Kuan Yin* (Goddess of Mercy). It was presented in the ballroom of the Grande Hotel de Pekin, where a year earlier he had conducted a performance of the G.&S. favorite, *Iolanthe* (I still remember the voices hooting, "I-o-laaan-thee").

Aaron's sister Sarah, who was a fine singer and pianist, came from Siberia (as it was then possible to do); she coached the cast and then sang the role of Kuan Yin.

Late in 1925, my mother, yearning for her homeland and kin, prevailed on my father to venture again to America. Gershkovich at once presented some of Aaron's music, *The Soul of the Ch'in*, guest-conducting the Portland Symphony, and again with the New York Symphony, also as a guest. Aaron himself fared forth to New York where he was able to get a production of *Kuan Yin* mounted at the Neighborhood Playhouse, conducted by Howard Barlow.

After getting seven extensions of the six-month visa, discouraged about getting any more, and only scratching a living in Portland (at the approach of the Great Depression), Aaron finally gave up and decided to return to China.

For the next eighteen years, he again earned his living with books – this time in Shanghai – first with the Chinese-American Publishing Company and then as Chief Librarian of the Municipal Library.

During this period, he composed three more operas, his First Symphony, the Piano Concerto, Violin Concerto, four ballets and numerous small dances. He arranged Chinese fox-trots, counseled young Chinese composers and, during his last three years in China, conducted the Shanghai Symphony. A review in the China Press, January 20, 1936, read, "Mr. Aaron Avshalomoff achieved a new triumph at yesterday's concert . . . he was given a veritable ovation by the audience won by his genius in presenting Chinese musical themes through the medium of the Western orchestra . . . in a mass trek backstage hundreds went to congratulate the composer, pianist and orchestra."

The high point of his career was the production of his music drama *The Great Wall*, which had the patronage of both Mme. Sun Yat Sen and Mme. Chiang Kai Shek – the

two Soong sisters who ended up on opposite sides of the Chinese Revolution. Gala performances of Avshalomoff's masterpiece were given first as a benefit for Chinese artists, and then for the National Assembly and a galaxy of international diplomatic corps and visitors then shining in China.

During the Sino-Japanese War, Aaron, along with his second wife and many associates, was kept under house arrest by the Japanese on the outskirts of Shanghai. After the way, he was invited to emigrate to the Soviet Union, and sometime later was sounded out about heading up the Conservatory in Peking. He declined both, and chose instead to emigrate to the USA, where I had been living since 1937.

In my early years here, whenever I met leading musicians, such as Hanson, Copland, Stokowsky (who also conducted a work of mine in 1952), they would ask whether I was related to the Avshalomoff in Shanghai. Virtually all of his works had been performed and acclaimed in China, but when he came to America that eminence did not translate into a career here. The premiere of his *Dream of Wei Lien* was noted in Slonimsky's *Music Since 1900* and Koussevitzky commissioned his Second Symphony. Albert Goldberg, critic for the Los Angeles Times, began his 1947 interview: "Practically every form of nationalistic folk music has been utilized by composers as the basis of serious composition except that of the Chinese. It is true that the five-tone scale has been employed for characteristic color in . . . novelty pieces, as well as by Puccini in *Turandot*, but apparently no composer has gone in for a profound study of Chinese music and made it the foundation for genuine symphonic treatment until the appearance of Aaron Avshalomoff."

For all these reasons, it was culturally important, and personally moving for me and David, to have been able to record such a substantial portion of Aaron Avshalomoff's music now.

In May of 1986, I was invited to China to participate in the celebration of my Father's 90th anniversary of birth – with concerts and memorial celebrations in Beijing, Wuhan and Shanghai. When I passed through Hong Kong, Heymann was away, but our correspondence touched on the inclusion of my Chinese-influenced *The Taking of T'ung Kuan* in the project, as well as the possibility of my elder son, David,

conducting, if I were not to. But again our plans were forestalled due to "the complexities of Chinese politics."

By coincidence, my younger son, Daniel, was touring in the Orient at about the same time, with the American String Quartet of which he is the violinist. I urged him to look up Arrigo Foa, the Italian violinist who had been concertmaster of the Shanghai Symphony and had played nearly all of my Father's works. He had left China after the Revolution and moved to Hong Kong where he conducted the orchestra and taught violin. Daniel did look him up and, over pasta, Foa asked if Dan would hear one of his Chinese pupils. Hardly waiting for a reply, Foa roused his young man at eleven p.m. to come to Dan's hotel and play for him. I found it very touching that the old concert-master would have his pupil heard by the grandson of his old conductor/composer.

In the course of my two visits to China, I had deposited a hundred-weight of scores and orchestral parts of Avshalomoff's works in Shanghai; they were to form the basis of an Archive. Some of them would now be useful in the recordings being planned.

[In 1997 Jacob Avshalomoff conducted the Moscow Symphony Orchestra that performed his father's music.] It was interesting that this music, composed in China over half a century ago, was completely intelligible to the Russian orchestra before me. This confirmed what I had concluded when conducting the celebratory concerts in China – that the symphony orchestra is an international medium of cultural exchange – like American movies and Chinese food. All that these players needed were some explanations about oriental grace-notes and slides. In Moscow, the harpist took well to my coaching of the *ch'in* solo; the flute and oboe were excellent, the trombones and tuba were strong, and the principal clarinet (with his new mouthpiece) was the most responsive player of them all.

As a guide to Avshalomoff's style, I should explain that what he was trying to do throughout his creative life was to evolve a synthesis of Chinese musical materials and western forms and media. As early as 1924, he began to study not only ancient Chinese classical music, but also folk and temple music, as well as street-cries. The melodies he composed (almost never borrowed) were in the several five-tone

hold registers as well as in the Personal Identification cards of the 1980's. The Henan provincial government and that of Kaifeng are well aware of this, and in the early 1950's they selected representatives from among the Jews to go to the capital to take part in the activities of the various minority nationalities of the entire country. As far as the Jewish religion is concerned, these people probably would not be considered as observant Jews (one needs to say that at the present time, most Jews in the world do not observe the Jewish religion, so one should not use this to make a judgment), but one ought to say that their status as descendants of Jews is without question. To say that Kaifeng Jews over time have intermarried with Chinese and Chinese Moslems and that the blood that flows in their veins is no longer purely Jewish and on that basis to deny them their status as descendants of Jews does not hold up. If one is to admit that viewpoint, then today there would not be the descendants of Confucius, because the members of Confucius' family has for seventy generations married with those of other families, and the amount of Confucius' blood which flows in their veins is not even 1%. So, unless one is able to produce historical proof that the Kaifeng Jews at some period suddenly ceased to exist, or that one is able to explain that these people were entirely without progeny, then their descendants certainly exist in Kaifeng. I believe that listing one's nationality as Jewish in the census of the 1950's was not due to any ulterior motive nor was there any thought of some advantage, but it was simply loyalty to one's family history. As to whether they are recognized by other Jews or whether they conform to the standard of observant Jews is none of our affair, that is something to be decided by Jews themselves.

From the standpoint of principle and of government policy, as of now these descendants of Kaifeng Jews have the right to select their own identity and to continue the traditions of their ancestors, including whether or not to observe the Jewish faith. Of course we have no necessity to encourage them to do so, and it is even less necessary to allocate funds for its support. But if at the present time there are among them some who want to make this choice, it should not be the policy of our government to obstruct or prohibit it. Although the constitution guarantees freedom of religion, although people have the right to choose to believe in Buddhism, Christianity or Islam (please note that all of these

religions are of foreign origin), then these descendants of the Kaifeng Jews even more have the right and the freedom to select the religion which their ancestors had observed – the Jewish religion, let alone since Judaism had spawned Christianity and had a large influence in the emergence of Islam. According to what I understand, at the end of 1997 there was the effort to have those descendants of the Kaifeng Jews who had listed themselves as Jewish in the original household registers and the identity cards to force them to change this to either "Chinese" or "Moslems," that is, to be Chinese Moslems. This in truth would lead one to suspect some semblance of religious persecution, because in substance this was a device to enforce a change in religion, at the least in format even if it was not the original intention in enacting this policy. It is no wonder that the elderly who were forced to make this change shed tears. Fortunately as of now this policy has not been fully implemented, and so has not yet had an unfortunate effect.

6. A Positive Import in Carrying Out a Revision in the Policy in Regard to the Jewish Religion

From the standpoint of history, our country has never persecuted Jews or the Jewish religion, whether those merchants who of long ago (represented by the Kaifeng Jews) or those who came for refuge at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries to Shanghai, Hong Kong, Harbin, Tianjin, and those who came to Shanghai between the two World Wars; none experienced that anti-Semitic persecution which they were certain to encounter in other countries. The policy which our country historically has maintained toward the Jews can be said to be a concrete expression of Chinese civilization's greatness and the Chinese people's cherished magnanimity, and we ought to take it as an extraordinarily glorious tradition. On this point, the Jewish world has not forgotten it and will always bear it in mind; not only that, but time and again they have expressed their sense of gratitude toward the Chinese government and people. One can say that any Chinese who has contact with Jews is able to sense this feeling. This writer has over a long period of time been engaged in research on Jewish culture and has had contact with Jews of many fields in frequent lectures abroad, and I can say that I not only have witnessed this emotion, but that at the same time I have been a beneficiary of it. If the Chinese people have been able in

the past, especially in the difficult times between the two World Wars, to treat so well and so magnanimously the Jews and the Jewish religion, then under such very good circumstances as today they even more ought to do so.

In discussing the tolerance toward the Jewish religion which we have discussed here it is essential to point out that in the official policy there is recognition of the legality of the Jewish religion in our country, permission to exist in our country, and for resident Jews to build synagogues when they deem it necessary and to develop their regular religious activities; the official policy permits the descendants of the Kaifeng Jews to continue and even to revive their ancestral traditions. Due to the large expense of building and maintaining a synagogue the official policy if it were to be implemented would not lead to the appearance of a large number of synagogues in our country and even more it will not lead to the propagation or spread of the Jewish religion in our country. The reason is that, as already said, the Jewish religion is not one which on its own accord propagates the religion toward others. Our implementation of the existing policy which recognizes the legal status of the Jewish religion could not possibly, and will not lead to an increase in the number of adherents of the Jewish religion in our country (the situation of conversion to Judaism through inter-marriage and adoption mentioned above are a special situation and ought to be viewed as an exceptional cases).

On the contrary, if we implement a policy of lenient treatment of the Jews it will help to raise our international status and image on the question of our country's freedom of religion and human rights. Perhaps some people will be concerned that the implementation of an official policy toward Jewish religion which may lead eventually to the appearance of Jewish synagogues in Beijing and Shanghai, and lead to a renewed Jewish community in Kaifeng would as a result create some new problems concerning nationality and religion. In fact, this concern is unnecessary and even uncalled for. Firstly, because synagogues existed in our country long ago; secondly, even if at present there are no formal synagogues in Beijing and Shanghai, Jews in these two places already use rented quarters as temporary synagogues. As for Kaifeng, if they were able to renew a community of Chinese Jews it would be

an excellent thing, and to the Jews [of the world] it would symbolize the greatness of Chinese civilization, and so it would be completely advantageous without any drawback. But this phenomenon is not one that would emerge quickly; even by the most optimistic estimate, if we were now to make it permissible for the descendants of the Kaifeng Jews to do this, a truly meaningful community could not emerge within the next ten years because the hundred or so descendants have little understanding of their ancestors' culture, and those who are truly enthusiastic about this would not be many. Even if all the descendants of the Kaifeng Jews after a few years came to have an interest in the culture of their ancestors, there would still be no more than a hundred or two, and this would not create any nationality or religious problem. But if we were to expedite this official policy, its positive impact would immediately become obvious. It would possibly, in a concrete and forceful way, demonstrate to the outside world that an official policy of religious freedom had been fully carried out in our country, that the Han nationality had once more concretely manifested toward another nationality, in particular toward the Jewish people, this spirit of friendship. As I understand it, when Rabbi Schneier led that American delegation on religion and human rights to visit China in February, the Shanghai city government permitted the repair of the former synagogue on Shaanxi North Road, and arranged for President Clinton to visit it. After Rabbi Schneier returned to the United States his report on the visit was very favorable to us, and it was seen as a positive accomplishment of President Clinton's visit to China. This shows one example of the usefulness of our official policy toward the Jews.

Jews have been an important tourist resource for China, and how to fully utilize this resource is a topic worthy of study. It has already been demonstrated that just posting signs at former synagogues and former Jewish building sites in Shanghai has increasingly attracted large numbers of tourists. If we were to implement a policy of leniency toward the Jewish religion then it is very possible that it would increase the number of tourists coming to China, especially the number of Jewish tourists, for a considerable number of Jews are not willing to come to China because there is no place of worship on the Sabbath. Because the history of the Kaifeng Jews makes it an important tourist attrac-

tion, to revise the official policy concerning Kaifeng Jews so as to allow them to freely meet with the tourists and to share in carrying out some activities related to Jewish culture and tradition, to carry through on the maintenance of the sites connected with the Kaifeng Jews and to set up a museum on the history of the Kaifeng Jews would have a very positive financial impact on the lagging Kaifeng tourist industry and the economic development of the city. At the same time, this would be excellent publicity concerning our advocacy of minority equality and evidence that the Chinese people encourage the excellent traditional activities of the minority nationalities.

An example of the friendship felt by the Jews towards us can be seen in their investments in China. For example, at present the Jews make up 2% of the foreigners of non-Asian descent in Shanghai, but the scope of their investments is over 30%. If we were to implement an official policy of leniency toward the Jewish religion, it is possible that this would attract even more Jews to come to China to make investments and would expand the scope of Jewish investments here, enable even more Jewish investors to be willing to bring their families there to live, and to develop their investment projects. I believe that contacts, cooperation and friendship between us and the Jews in the areas of world commerce, finances, investment and technology would thereby develop further.

What is most important is that if we implement a more lenient policy toward the Jewish religion it would straightways affect the feelings the Jews have toward China and the Chinese people. Although I do not approve of the sort of biased and exaggerated view of the influence of Jews in the world, still the influence of the Jews does have an objective existence, and their influence especially in America and in the developed countries of the world should not be underestimated. For example, President Clinton is not a Jew but when he visited China, in arranging his schedule he suggested a visit to the Jewish synagogue in Shanghai; this clearly was the result of Jewish influence in America. Another example perhaps is in the question of Jewish savings accounts, the Swiss banks have agreed to make compensation. Although emotions, or feelings, are a difficult thing to control or to clarify, still their influence is quite large. In negotiating problems or in formulating official policies this can lead

to unexpected uses. One should say that the present feelings of friendship of the Jews toward China and the Chinese people to a very large extent stems from the tolerant policy which we have historically had toward the Jews and the Jewish religion and to the absence of anti-Semitism in our country. Speaking frankly, such feelings are not something which any people or country can easily acquire, and it is not something which can never be lost. If we hope that these feelings toward us are to be maintained into the far future it is necessary that we treasure and cultivate them. Therefore, from a long-term point of view, to treasure, to cultivate and to strengthen the feelings of friendship which the Jews have toward China and the Chinese people would have beneficial effects on our modernization reconstruction, our contacts with the outside world and the elevation of our international status.

Earlier in the 19th century the English prime minister Disraeli once said, "God will treat the nations of the world as they have treated the Jews." This writer sincerely believes that selecting a positive policy on the status of the Jewish religion in our country without doubt will be helpful in raising the prestige and the influence of China and the Chinese people in the world, would benefit our modernization reconstruction, and would help to advance the friendship and friendly contacts between China and the Jews, these two peoples who have had such a long continuous history and civilization.

I offer these views for your consideration.

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With Chancellor Schroeder in Ohel Rachel Synagogue (continued from page 1)

Europe in Shanghai during wartime. The Chancellor focused his attention on the Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, not only carefully listening to my narrative, but also coming up with questions several times, such as "How many German Jewish refugees came to Shanghai at that time?" "How did they get along among Chinese people?" When I told him that in the hardest days in Hongkew Ghetto from 1943-45, Jewish refugees and their Chinese neighbours enjoyed mutual help and shared weal and woe, his face was solemn. At last I said that we had received a lot of distinguished guests in the Synagogue, especially the Jewish guests, but today we were particularly glad to receive a German leader on account of the special significance of his visit. He laughed with joy after hearing about it, and held my hands tightly out of gratitude after I presented him the album "The Jews in Shanghai" for his overall understanding of this unique history.

The short visit was coming to an end. Mr. Schroeder sat down beside the table on which the distinguished visitor's book is laid and penned a few lines in it. I noticed that he had made preparation for this by typewriting his comments on a small piece of paper beforehand. He wrote: "A poet once wrote 'Death is an envoy coming from Germany.' We know that many persecutees found a haven in Shanghai. We will never forget this history. Today, we are here to show our appreciation and praise to those who provided every possible relief for the persecutees." When the German interpreter read it loudly in Chinese, there was a burst of warm applause. Mr. Schroeder and Mr. Jiang Yiren (Vice Mayor of Shanghai) shook hands with enthusiasm again, while flashes of the camera filled the synagogue.

Many years ago, when former German Chancellor Willy Brandt, also a Social Democrat, on behalf of German people, knelt down in front of the Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising to plead guilty and show repentance, his behavior created a great sensation. Today, Chancellor Schroeder also shows clearly to the whole world with his own behavior that German people will imprint these historical lessons in their minds from generation to generation. After pro-Nazi right-wing group

achieved a victory in the latest election in Austria, Mr. Schoeder's comments had a more realistic meaning. What attracts the attentions of the major media in the world is that he chose Shanghai as the place for his action. This is actually a thorough affirmation of Shanghai's vital role in rescuing the Jewish refugees and a sincere appreciation for Chinese people.

So every Chinese, especially people of Shanghai, should be proud of it.

Famous "Old China Hand" Musician: Composer Aaron Avshalomoff

by Jacob Avshalomov
edited by Rena Krasno

[Aaron Avshalomoff's son, Jacob, is now writing a biography about his father and himself, the publication of which many are eagerly awaiting. Jacob Avshalomov was an eminent Conductor and Musical Director of the Portland Youth Philharmonic until his retirement in 1995. He is also a much-admired composer and teacher. In August 1999, the National Choral Journal published a lead article on his music.]

Aaron Avshalomoff was born in Nikolaievsk-on-Amur, where that river runs into the Sea of Okhotsk, in October 1895. He was the son of a prosperous fisheries owner, and the grandson of a Gorski-, or Mountain-Jew from the Caucasus who had been banished to Siberia for killing a Persian who had given offense at a wedding. That was in the 1870s; the Russian authorities had only recently taken control after a thirty-year campaign to annex Caucasia, and wanted no internecine troubles. Great-grandfather Avshalomoff was sent into exile with his wife and one-year old baby.

A two year, five thousand mile trek on foot, on horseback, by cart, brought them to Nikolaievsk, at the eastern-most edge of Siberia. There and on the Kamchatka Peninsula, the exile established the fisheries which his son Asher took over. By 1895, when Aaron was born, the third generation included his two older sisters and one younger. They were educated in the local school which, besides the usual subjects, also gave English and mustered a band – which Aaron learned to conduct. The household had books and music, and the local scene was enlivened with occasional performances by a touring Italian opera company.

A cultural influence that in the long run proved even more important was the Chinese colony quartered at the edge of the town. One of Asher's trusted employees was a Chinese, who would often take young Aaron with him on his visits home. The boy was fascinated by the folk-music, street-cries, storytellers, legends and, above all, the ancient Chinese opera. It was an addiction he never lost.

After finishing the 'gymnasium,' Aaron was sent to study medicine in Zurich. A three week ride on the Trans-Siberian Railway took him back over the distance his grandfather had taken two years to trek. Upon reaching Zurich, he found (as had Berlioz) that he couldn't stomach the study of medicine, and instead he bootlegged some months study at a local music school.

Not long after, he was summoned home to escort his youngest sister, Sarah, also to Switzerland. But the Russian Revolution broke out in 1917, and to protect the family's survival, the only son, Aaron, was spirited out of the country, through Manchuria and North China, destined for the USA.

Enroute, in Tientsin, he met and became fast friends with Jacques Gershkovitch – who later established the Portland Junior Symphony (which I succeeded to in 1954). Gershkovitch was planning to go to Japan where he was to conduct an orchestra in Tokyo, while Aaron made his way to San Francisco. There he met and married Esther Magidson, who became my mother. Her parents had also come from Russia and although Aaron felt at home with them, life in America was hard for him and he felt the tug of China, which was strengthened by his transit there. In 1918, he and his unsuspecting bride embarked for China: she not knowing that U.S. law withdrew citizenship from women who married an alien; he stateless through the dissolution of the Russian government of his birthplace. And thus stateless was I born in 1919 in Tsingtao (already famous for its German-built brewery).

Avshalomoff remained in China until 1947 except for a short sojourn (1926-29) in the USA. Leaving Tsingtao in 1921, Aaron and his family moved to Tientsin and then to Peking, where he made his living as a bookman, working first for China Booksellers and then for the Librairie Francaise run by the publisher Henri Vetch.

It was in those years that he began seriously to compose, and inevitably, it was