

as he sees it, is that their culture was a source of capitalism and at the same time the seedbed for revolutionary thinkers such as Marx who were its enemies. In the end, Gu concludes, it is the fusion of a venerable tradition and extreme modernity that makes it a model for China. The author concludes with some trenchant remarks on the nature of Gu's thinking, positive and negative, and the possible role the "Jewish option" may have in the "modernization" debate among Chinese intellectuals.

Huang Lingyu, *Research on Judaism in China*, is a bibliographic essay that covers some of the same ground as that of Yang Haijun, mentioned earlier, the two should be used in conjunction since some

items are not listed in both. There are also some discrepancies in the citations. The bibliography gives evidence of an impressive amount of Chinese scholarship, translation and publication devoted to Judaism in many fields.

Xu Xin's, *Some Thoughts on Our Policy toward the Jewish Religion — Including a Discussion of Our Policy toward the Kaifeng Jews*, is a document written by Xu Xin for submission to various Chinese governmental agencies to argue that Judaism be given the same official recognition now enjoyed by Buddhism, Daoism, Catholicism, Protestantism and Islam. This English translation, prepared by this reviewer, originally appeared in *Points East* 15.1 (March, 2000).

The volume concludes with a general index combined with glossary, unfortunately not complete. This collection of papers varies a great deal in interest and new contributions to our knowledge of the Jews in China. The section on Kaifeng has little that is new, and while some of the papers are a useful summary of what has already been published elsewhere, in general it would appear that the subject has been pretty much exhausted. On the more recent history of Jews in China, some of the papers do provide new information and new perspectives. The subject is one that continues to engage the interest of a wide range of researchers, and many interesting historical facets, as well as its significance in terms of survival of tradition and identity still remain to be explored, as evidenced in this valuable volume.

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# Points East

## 中國-猶太學院

Vol. 17 No. 2  
July, 2002

A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute

### THE DESCENDANTS OF KAIFENG JEWS IN THE 20TH CENTURY

by Zhang Qianhong & Henry Mullish

#### 1. Historical Review

The history of the Jews in ancient China is quite obscure. There was no specific reliable record regarding this issue in either Chinese or western historical materials before the 13th century. Arab sources give us the first evidence on this issue. Towards the end of the Tang dynasty (618-906), the Arab traveler Abu-Zaid Hasson contributed the first item of information about the existence of Jews in China. He mentioned that during Huang Chao's attack on Khanfu (Canton), 120,000 Muslims, Jews, Christians and Mazdaists (Persian Zoroastrians) who lived in this city were killed in 878 C. E.<sup>1</sup> Another Arab traveler Ibn-Wahab claimed to have visited the capital of China, Chang'an, in the late 9th century and was granted a lengthy audience by the emperor. He was greatly impressed by the emperor's intimate knowledge of the tenets of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Some other Arabs also mentioned the trade route along the Silk Road taken by the Jewish merchants known as Radanities. Arabic sources indicated that most likely Chinese Jews originated in Persia, travelling primarily overland along the Silk Road with numerous Muslims to trade in the "Middle Kingdom" (China) as early as the late 8th or early 9th century C. E. Another possible route which Jews took to get to China is a southern route through the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea to Canton and other coastal cities.

During the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368), when a number of Middle Easterners and Southern Europeans returned with the conquering Mongol armies, more Jews arrived in China. By then, it is highly likely that many Chinese cities including Luoyang, Xian, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Beijing, Nanjing and Ningxia hosted Jewish communities. However, it was only in Kaifeng, the capital of China during the North Song dynasty (960-1126), that the Jewish community left its records and had a consecutive history of about 800 years. Maybe it was the most active and important Jewish community in Chinese as well as in world Jewish history.

The history of the Kaifeng Jewish community can be traced back to the 10th or 11th century. We lack documents and literature about them and their life. We do know that they arrived during the Northern Song dynasty, bringing an entry tribute of western cloth. The Emperor said: "You have come to our Central Plain. Preserve your ancestral customs and settle in Bianliang (Kaifeng)." The Jewish merchants came to Kaifeng for several obvious reasons. First, during the Song Period, Kaifeng was a multifunction center of more than one million people. It was a commercial and cultural city, at the hub of an overland and river communi-

(continued on page 4)

### TALES OF THE DEAD

by Bao Diwen

excerpted from the *City Weekend*,  
Shanghai April 11-24, 2002

The late Yachne Peliack's gravestone was impressive – a prominent Star of David at its head, three candles at its side, and the year of her death (1951) engraved on the stone in Hebrew script. Rayzel Abramowich's headstone was much older and less elaborate. Below the Hebrew inscription, her details were engraved in Russian indicating the country of her birth.

What the two graves of Jewish women had in common was that although photographs existed, nobody actually knew where the headstones were. Like a detective story waiting to unfold, the email, to which the photos were attached, said that the graves had been seen on sale in a small Shanghai antique shop. But in the 16 years since the Cultural Revolution, nobody knew what had become of the city's four Jewish cemeteries, or any of the Jewish graves. Until now, that is.

After Liberation in 1949, little was heard of Shanghai's Jews, and the community gradually drifted away, out of China. In the 1950's, Jewish graves were transferred to an international cemetery in a western suburb of the city, and buried alongside Christians and foreigners of other religions.

With the onset of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), grave-stones were uprooted, some smashed and others removed entirely. The sites of the cemeteries became parking lots, parks, and a cement factory. Few of the elderly residents have any memories of what once stood there. Only four Jewish graves remained undisturbed – those of deceased luminaries: Sir Elly Kadoorie, his wife Lady Laura Kadoorie, Charles Aharon and Yosef Sasson – in the famous cemetery that also houses Soong Ching Ling, now the Soong Ching Ling Memorial Park.

Over recent years, however, there has been a steady stream of visitors to the city trying to locate the graves of their forefathers. Many ended up knocking at the door of Georgia Noy, a local Jewish history expert, who also conducts historical tours of the city. But with the destruction of the international cemeteries, and few accurate records of deaths among the foreign community prior to 1949, there was little help she could offer.

By the time Noy and I arrived at the antique shop where Peliack and Abramowich's headstones had been seen, the shop owner said that he had sold them a few days earlier to a Chinese buyer. Neither seller nor buyer had any idea what the inscription on the stone had meant, and he had no idea for what reason the buyer

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Time after time I am amazed that, in this tiny field of study of ours, we continue to be blessed with new materials: memoirs, conference proceedings, reviews of new books, articles, videos. What is particularly exciting, at least to me, is the diversity of our correspondents. Many are American, but then too we have Chinese, Israeli, German, and more.

Just in time for summer (or winter) reading, our latest issue features exciting news from Kaifeng and a host of memoirs of China in the days of the Second World War.

As always, your comments and thoughts are welcome.

With best regards,

Anson Laytner

## In Memoriam

**Oscar V. Armstrong**  
**April 19, 1918 - March 8, 2002**

by Rena Krasno

Several years ago, I met Oscar Armstrong in Washington D.C., where he invited me for lunch in a Chinese restaurant. It was indeed inspiring to meet an Old China Hand who was so well informed about China. Armstrong - who insisted that all Old China Hands simply call him Oscar - had served many years in the U.S. Foreign Service, mainly in Asia.

Old China Hands know Oscar as the initiator of the quarterly newsletter, *The China Connection*, which he issued single-handedly and distributed to its subscribers. Oscar explained to me that his interest in China remained deep, that he wanted to help Old China Hands maintain contacts with each other, with their memories and with the country where they had spent so many rewarding years.

Oscar's interest in China's politics, economy, history, art, never waned. He had lived in Xuzhou, in Canton and in Beijing from 1964-1966, he served as U.S. Consul in Hongkong. He had graduated the Shanghai American School in 1935, and always remained in touch with the school's alumni who were particularly dear to his heart.

A true gentleman, always loyal to the Chinese people, to whom he had become so attached, Oscar Armstrong will be sorely missed by all those whose lives he had touched.

## Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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tioning that there were over thirty newspapers and magazines published by the refugees in German, Yiddish and Polish. He also gives information on the Zionist activities during those years before the end of WW II. Paul U. Unschuld, "Ärzte aus Deutschland und Österreich in der Emigration in Shanghai zwischen 1934 und 1945," brings up a subject not heretofore discussed in any depth, the organization of health and medical care, and uses as his source the diaries, letters and writings of three doctors who were among the refugees. Taking up the story of another doctor, Gerd Kaminski, "Dr. Jakob Rosenfeld: Mensch und Mythos," provides a biography of Jakob Rosenfeld, an Austrian doctor whose life turned around after being imprisoned in concentration camps and fleeing to Shanghai in 1939. There he became acquainted with some Marxists and, through humanitarian concerns, rather than political, left Shanghai to offer his skills to the Communists' New Fourth Army. He also became acquainted with Liu Shaoqi and Chen Yi, coming to write their biographies as well as those of other Communist generals. He became a member of the party in 1942. After he returned to Austria in 1949 to see what remained of his family, he was unable to obtain permission to return to China; in 1951 he went to stay with a brother in Israel, and died there the next year. In 1992 in Junan, Shandong where he had served, a hospital was named after him and a statue erected, and in recent years biographies that glorify him and idealize his contributions to the struggle have come to be written, even to the point of inventing for him a wife that served alongside him. As Kaminski concludes, in much of this, the real man and his service is lost.

The next three pieces deal with more cultural themes. Chang Shouou-Huey, "China und Jiddisch: Jiddische Kultur in China, Chinesische Literatur auf Jiddisch," deals with the appearance of China in Yiddish literature and the translation of Yiddish literature into Chinese, and its reception both on the mainland and in Taiwan since 1949. As early as 1920 Zhou Zuoren translated a play by David Pinski, through the intermediary of an English version, and later, through Russian. Translations of Perez, Sholem Aleichem, Kobrin and Pinski have followed. Since 1949, Sholem Aleichem's works were appreciated because of what

were perceived as anti-capitalistic statements and Perez because he spoke for the workers. Alexander Knapp, "The State of Research into Jewish Music in China," cites a sizeable literature on the music that the Jewish refugees brought to China. Françoise Kreissler, "Ein Journalist im Exil in Shanghai: Adolph J. Storfer and Die Gelbe Post," discusses the career of the publisher of a journal that focused on the art and culture of East Asia, without a political bias. Storfer had had a long journalistic career in Germany before arriving in Shanghai and had been prominent in the field of psychology, having edited an important journal in that field in Vienna. He managed with difficulty to produce a few numbers but, unfortunately, despite the excellence of the publication, it did not address the needs of the potential readership, faced as they were with a daily struggle to survive; they were understandably also primarily interested in information about the European war, which was not carried in the Gelben Post. Storfer managed to leave Shanghai in 1941 for Australia where he died a year later.

The final section of the volume is entitled "Europe, China and the Jewish Paradox" apparently a kind of catchall. Claudia von Collani, in her "Cabbala in China," discusses the attempt of the Figurist school, headed by the French Jesuit and mathematician Joachim Bouvet (1656-1730) to explain the cabalistic content of such Daoist works as the Daodejing, convinced as they were that these works not only contained explicit hints to Christianity and could therefore be used for evangelization, but that they also had been revealed and thus could complement the Bible. This effort was cut short by the Holy Office in 1742, thus ending the effort to convince the Chinese that Christianity was not a foreign religion but a part of their own tradition.

Rita Widmaier, "Zur Frage der Juden in China in der Korrespondenz von G.W. Leibniz," writes that the news of the existence of the Jewish community in Kaifeng and the possibility that their version of the Old Testament was one uncorrupted by rabbinical intervention aroused great interest in Europe. That interest motivated Daniel Ernst Jablonski (1660-1741), to send a list of 59 questions concerning the Kaifeng community to Leibniz, asking him to forward these questions to the missionary Bouvet (see above). The questions, in their original Latin, are appended to the article.

Marian Galik, in "The Old Testament of the Bible in Modern Chinese Literary Criticism and Creative Literature," admittedly involves an interest in the Bible in modern Chinese literature that is devoted to its Christian rather than its Judaist legacy. The author reviews the works of Zhou Zuoren and Zhu Weizhi as they related to influences from the Old Testament, translations of the Book of Songs and other parts of the Bible, and pieces by Mao Dun and Qian Zhongshu that drew on themes from that source. Galik ends with a survey of several conferences that have been held on his topic in recent years.

Since the conference was held, the next author, Zhou Xun, "Youtai: A History of the Jew in Modern China," has published a book on the subject: *Chinese Perceptions of the Jews and Judaism: A History of the Youtai* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000). It is an excellent study of the concept of the "Jew" in China and how that image has been adapted to the ideological changes in China itself. The book was reviewed by this writer in *Points East* 16.2 (July, 2000).

Joël Thoraval, *Chinese Intellectuals and The Jewish Paradox*, writes "The Jewish fact is a part of Chinese history, tenuous and marginal though it may be." This piece was reprinted from *China Perspectives* No. 11, May/June 1997. He makes the point that there is a fascination in China with world Jewry, and especially as it is evidenced in America, because of a perception that there are shared concerns. The author notes that there is now emerging some young Chinese intellectuals who are motivated by their dissatisfaction with their own culture to turn to a theoretical search for values that are transcendental and independent of context. The paper then focuses on one example of such an intellectual, Gu Xiaoming, who has made a study of Judaism and written a book in Chinese, *The Jews - A Deeply Paradoxical Culture* (Hangzhou, 1990), hence the title of this paper. For Gu, the paradox consists of the capacity of the Jews to survive through the ages despite the different societies in which they have lived, a fact that cannot be explained by economic, materialistic, or social causality. Gu also found that the Old Testament culture had a profound influence on modernity in the West, leading him to see the potential virtues of an absolutist ethic, in contrast to the relativism of Confucianism and Marxism as well. The paradox,

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Germany	1
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Italy	1
South Africa	1
Taiwan	1

**TOTAL: 319**



## BOOK NOOK

**Review of *From Kaifeng...to Shanghai: Jews in China***

by Al Dien  
reprinted with permission from the *Journal of Chinese Religions*

Roman Malik, ed., *From Kaifeng . . . to Shanghai: Jews in China*. Monumenta Serica Monograph Series 46. Sankt Augustin: Joint publication of the Monumenta Serica Institute and China-Zentrum, 2000. xii, 706, (iv) pp. ISSN 0179-261X, ISBN 3-8050-0454-0.

The volume consists of thirty papers, with a general index and 59 illustrations, stemming from a conference held on Sept. 22-26, 1997, with scholars from many countries brought together to explore issues of intercultural encounters, preservation of identity and demarcation. The volume's Introduction, by Roman Malek, is especially marked by extensive bibliographic references. The papers are divided into three sections: the ancient Jewish community in Kaifeng, the more recent presence of Jews in China, primarily in Shanghai but also in the northeast, and a more general consideration of the topic of intercultural exchange.

The first section, "From Kaifeng . . ." opens with Herbert Franke's "Der Weg nach Osten: Jüdische niederlassungen im alten China," laying out what is known historically of Jews in China. This is a short general overview, but one that touches on all the main points, and his bibliography has some items not generally known. Donald Leslie, "Integration, Assimilation, and Survival of Minorities in China: The Case of the Kaifeng Jews," reviews the literature on the subject and repeats some of what Franke said about the history of the Kaifeng community, but he focuses more on the process of assimilation. He maintains that the religious syncretism and pluralism of the Chinese allowed for an accommodation, but this very accommodation made a dilution of Judaism inevitable. Still, he maintains, the question to be answered is not, why their observance of the religion did not survive, but rather, why these practices survived as long as they did.

Michael Pollak, *The Manuscripts and Artifacts of the Synagogue of Kaifeng: Their*

*Peregrinations and Present Whereabouts*, is written with his usual magisterial command of the subject and he traces in detail the fate of the thirteen Torahs originally kept in the Kaifeng synagogue, as well as a number of other artifacts. Leo Gabow contributed an interesting description of his attempts to uncover the details of the transaction that transferred the property on which was located the synagogue to the Anglican Mission headed by Bishop Charles White, but without success. Xu Xin, of Nanjing University, emphasizes the dedication that the community had toward their religion and their present self-identity of Jewish descent. Zhang Qianhong and Li Jingwen, "Some Observations on the Descendants of the Jews in Kaifeng," in Chinese with an English abstract, present some interesting data on numbers and occupations, and conclude that recent history has lessened the large clan and family ties, so that the younger generation has lost all sense of a community. Nathan Katz's piece is a comparison of the Judaisms of Kaifeng and Cochin, India: this is basically the same paper read at a previous Harvard conference and published in Jonathan Goldstein, ed., *The Jews of China* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1999-2000). The problem he faces is, that while there is much known about the Cochin example, there is little to say about the beliefs and practices of the Kaifeng community. Finally, there are two essays on research concerning the Jews of Kaifeng, the one by Hartmut Walravens on German bibliography going back to 1830, and that by Yang Haijun on research carried out by Chinese scholars.

The second section of the volume deals with Jewish communities in the modern period. Fang Jianchang and Avraham Altman, in separate essays, use Japanese sources to discuss the Jewish communities in the northeast and Mongolia. Zvia Bowman focuses on the large community in Harbin that largely dispersed after the Japanese gained control of the area. She and Altman disagree on the extent to which the Japanese manipulated the Jewish community for their own purposes. The focus shifts to Shanghai in the piece by Rena Krasno, "History of Russian Jews in Shanghai," an account of the Russian Jewish community in Shanghai, from its very beginnings in the 1880's down to its end in 1949. Based in large part on personal ex-

perience, interviews and unpublished memoirs, this paper avoids the tendency in some of the contributions to merely re-formulate previously published material. Maisie Meyer, "The Sephardi Jewish Community of Shanghai and the Question of Identity," emphasizes the significance for that community of being classified as Sephardi from India, rather than as Baghdadi Jews, and by extension, recognition as British subjects, because it afforded them all sorts of economic and social privileges that Turkish identity did not carry. The paper probably represents an abstract of her forthcoming publication, *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Whangpoo. A Century of Sephardi Life in Shanghai*. One of the most interesting and controversial personages of those years was Silas Hardoon, the landowner tycoon, and Chiara Betta has drawn on her doctoral dissertation to discuss the way he, his Chinese wife and the fabulous garden that they created appeared in the Chinese press and popular literature. David Kranzler, whose book, *Japanese, Nazis and Jews: The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai, 1938-1945* (New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1976), is the standard work on the subject, has drawn on that work with some new material to give an overview of the Shanghai Jewish community. He covers the subject in a brisk and expertly written account. Irene Eber contributes a new take on the subject of the flight to Jewish refugees to Shanghai in 1938-39, exploring its relevance to Germany's trade with China and its shift to a pro-Japan policy. She also makes the point that the reason there was no passport control when the refugees began to pour into Shanghai is not as generally stated that it was an open port, but that the Nationalist government that had once been in charge of immigration there had ceased to exercise that function when the Sino-Japanese war broke out, and no other country represented in Shanghai had that authority. There was also a reluctance on the part of those countries to have the Japanese take it on. The Japanese themselves were reluctant to refuse entry to those carrying German passports since Germany was an ally. All of this brings to bear a new perspective on the whole history of the Jewish flight to Shanghai. Pan Guang, who has made this subject a specialty of his, provides a general review of Shanghai as a refuge for the Jews of Europe, men-

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

I am writing with regard to the Sino-Judaic Institute article online pertaining to the Kaifeng Jewish community.

As an observant Jew with an interest in genealogical research through DNA studies, I submitted a sample of my own DNA to a private company called Family Tree DNA, Inc. in Houston, TX, USA, whose research is also connected with the University of Arizona. During the course of my initial search in their old database for Y-DNA matches, I was surprised to make the unexpected discovery of a very close match who was listed in their database under the ethnic origin label "Chinese Ethnic Minority", alongside an EXACT match to that same individual who was listed as an Ashkenazi of "Unknown" national origin.

The Chinese individual matched 10 out of 12 Y-chromosomal DNA markers to

myself perfectly. The six "Modal Haplotype" markers matched mine precisely on five points and the other six were likewise a 5 out of 6 match! DYS Markers #19 and #439 differed from my own DNA by only one allele point, whilst DYS loci # 385a & b, 389-1&2, 390, 391 392, 393, 426 and 429 were all EXACT MATCHES to myself. This is close enough to place a common patrilineal ancestor within the period of the Baghdad Caliphate!

Due to privacy issues, Family Tree DNA, Inc. will not release contact information unless an EXACT, 12 out of 12 point match exists, however a search of their surname-based research database showed that there was ONE (1) individual named "Chinn" (possibly a corruption of "Jin", though I'm only guessing) and ONE (1) individual named "Li" listed in the database.

What I am asking is this:

(1) Do any of the Kaifeng Jewish clans have any oral legends - or even documented

history - that indicate descent from the Davidic line? I ask this because I have also happened across two families with near-matches to myself (the Shealtielim and particularly an offshoot family bearing the name Charlap) who not only claim direct patrilineal descent from the Exilarchs (and therefore the House of King David), but actually possess the documentation to prove it.

(2) Is it possible to contact (by e-mail) any member of the Jin and/or Li clans who have attempted genealogical research into their patrilineal origins and have submitted Y-DNA samples in support of any such research efforts? If so, I would like to hear from any or all of these individuals, and am hereby giving permission for my e-mail contact information to be passed along to them.

Yours cordially,

William Salte  
[email: rrspro@hotmail.com]

**Did You Know?**

by Kirstie Archer

excerpts from *A Celebration of Chinese and Jewish History*, an article on the Sydney Jewish Museum Exhibit Crossroads: Shanghai and the Jews of China

. . . The Jewish community's fortunes changed when Japan lost the war. Chiang Kai Shek announced that stateless refugees would be expelled. For most people repatriation was not an option and the future was uncertain. It is disturbing to remember that after World War II, Jewish refugees were unwelcome nearly everywhere. The first major exodus to Australia took place in 1946, but officials halted the flow in mid-1947 when a report from the Australian Consul-General in Shanghai, quoted in the exhibition, described the city's Jews as people with "pasts unknown and unspeakable, their intentions obscure". Nonetheless, those Jews carrying British passports had no trouble traveling to Australia . . .

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## Shimon Peres' Visit to Beijing in Historical Perspective

by Jonathan Goldstein

After Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' visit with his Chinese counterpart, Tang Jiaxuan, in March of this year, another episode was completed in a complex relationship between Chinese and Jews that dates back centuries.

Jews have been present in China since at least the eighth century A.D., when some voyagers left Hebrew inscriptions on cave walls in Dandan Uiliq and Dunhuang. A modern Zionist movement became active among Jews and non-Jews in late imperial China. It was spearheaded by N. E. B. Ezra (1887-1936) of Shanghai, who wrote in 1914 that "the future of world Jewry is safe in the hands of our worldwide movement. The time is fast coming when we shall recover our Jewish state and be proud of it once more." Zionists subsequently won support from the Chinese Republican government, whose founder, Sun Yatsen, wrote Ezra in 1920 that "all lovers of Democracy can not help but support the movement to restore your wonderful and historic nation, which rightfully deserves a honorable place in the family of nations." That enthusiasm translated into China's concrete support in both the League of Nations and founding conference of the United Nations for the re-establishment of a Jewish State.

The early friendly ties between Zionist leaders and the Chinese Republican government ended abruptly in November 1947, when China abstained on the critical United Nations vote to partition the British territory of Palestine into Arab and Jewish states. China's desire to be accepted among an increasing number of independent Arab and Muslim states led it to a more and more pro-Arab stance. Walter Eytan, the first Director General of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, felt that Israel had "no special cause for gratitude" to the Chinese Republican government for its diminishing support. On January 9, 1950, Israel therefore recognized the People's Republic of China as the legitimate, and by then the de-facto, government on the Chinese mainland. On that same date PRC Foreign Minister Zhou Enlai cabled back

his "welcome and thanks."

Despite the fact that Israel was the first Middle Eastern country to recognize the PRC, the PRC did not reciprocate recognition for forty-two years. It inherited the same political realities as the Republican government: an increasing number of influential Arab and Muslim states, and a socialist world which, for the same rationale, became increasingly hostile to Israel.

Between 1950 and 1992, apart from an occasional flurry of arms sales, there were virtually no official contacts, trade, or relations between Israel and China. Relations began to warm between the two countries following the 1989-90 collapse of the Soviet Union and most other socialist regimes, and Israeli-Arab negotiations following the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference. According to former Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban, the PRC discovered that "competitive non-alignment was no longer a doctrine or a practice. There was nobody with whom not to align."

Extensive Sino-Israeli commercial, scientific, and military cooperation began in January 1992. It included the establishment of non-stop air service between Beijing and Tel Aviv, a Sino-Israeli Dry Lands Research Center in China's westernmost province, and the sale to China of Phalcon aerial reconnaissance planes. The latter sale was aborted in August 2000 under intense pressure from the United States, which feared China would use the aircraft against Taiwan. Unlike earlier Sino-Israeli crises, the "Phalcon" flap was precipitated by an external power and was in no way a product of Sino-Israeli animosity. Israel was especially anxious to promote the deal to revive its ailing economy, and China to promote its long-term military development.

Israel has now paid China compensation for the cancellation of the Phalcon deal, and Foreign Minister Peres' visit helped bring closure to hard feelings that may have been generated. Almost simultaneously with the cancellation of the Phalcon deal, Israel and China signed an equally valuable deal wherein Israeli-made HK 1 and 2 satellites will broadcast the 2008 Beijing Olympic games.

## Descendants of Kaifeng Jews (continued from page 1)

cation network. A vigorous import-export trade connected Kaifeng to the eastern seaboard and to the delta of the Yangtzu River. Second, the Song Dynasty followed the policy of opening towards foreign countries. Commercialism was highly promoted by the government, which took many effective measures to attract foreign merchants and also showed great tolerance towards foreign religions and culture. Third, in Jewish history, the Middle Ages were the urban epoch. As early as the 8th century, agriculture no longer provided a livelihood for most Jews. Money gradually gained importance and trade began to expand in the 10th or 11th century. The tendency towards urbanization continued in China and most Chinese Jews mainly pursued city life so Kaifeng became a natural attraction.

In 1163, Kaifeng Jews erected their synagogue southeast of Tu Shi Zi Street and named it the Pure and True Temple. From then on, Kaifeng Jews lived on a friendly basis with the local people. They kept their regular Hebrew festivals and fasts and practised circumcision, refrained from eating pork and described themselves as the members of the "Sinew-plucking Religion". Because Kaifeng Jews and the Hui Muslims lived close to each other, shared many ritual similarities (both abstained from eating pork, practised circumcision, and observed the same method for manual ablutions) and used several terms in common (zhangjiao for religious leader, libaisi and qingzhensi, both for mosque and synagogue), local people often confused the Jews with Moslems and referred to both of them as "Huihui." The people of Kaifeng also called Jews "Lan Mao Hui Hui" or "Qing Hui Hui" (Blue Hat Muslims), because during their religious ceremonies they wore blue caps, as distinguished from Muslims who wore white. Kaifeng Jews erected four tablets (stone monuments) in 1489, 1512, 1663 and 1679, on which they inscribed the history of their creed and experiences in China. Three of the tablets sit in the Kaifeng Municipal Museum today.

Unfortunately, since the middle of the 17th century, Kaifeng Jews began to be assimilated into Han, Hui and other nationalities. By the mid-19th century, the last rabbi of the community died without a successor. The synagogue was then unattended

receive a title of Chinese nobility.

Another Jewish tycoon was Sir Elly (Eliezer) Kadoorie, who was born in Baghdad, and gained his wealth through land and banking, trading in rice, rubber, tobacco and engaging in shipping trade. Together with his brother, Eliahu, he founded many schools throughout the world in cooperation with Alliance Israelite Universelle ("Kol Yisrael Haverim") organization, among these was the Kadoorie Agricultural School in Israel. He married Laura Sassoon and, together with his sons, contributed funds for the acquisition of land to build the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He built a palatial mansion called "Marble Hall", which was considered one of the most beautiful buildings of its kind in the Far East. Today it is used as education center for children.

N.E.B Ezra, one of the community leaders, in 1904 had founded an English newspaper, "Israel's Messenger", in which he published many articles on Jewish life in Baghdad and Bombay. In 1909 the Shanghai Jewish Communal Association was established.

The Baghdadi Jews spoke Iraqi Judeo-Arabic dialect among themselves, but educated their children in British schools and many of the wealthier families used to send them on to complete their studies at universities in England. It was the British who set the tone in Shanghai and the Babylonian Jews quickly adapted themselves to their style of living: their dress, their homes and the family life style were those of well-to-do English families. They also set up clubs and social centers, as well as various public institutions such as schools, hospitals, old age homes and shelters. The Babylonian Jews created their own style of traditional Jewish life within the family circle and another for their social and community life in the outside world. They were thus able to enjoy both styles of living at the same time.

During the 1930's, when the foreign community in Shanghai flourished, the Babylonian community numbered about 1000 people, many of them extremely wealthy. At the end of the 1930's these wealthy Jews were involved in the rescue of thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria and Poland.

When the Japanese occupied Shanghai, the community was split into two:

1. Those holding British passports were sent to various internment camps with other British and American people in

Shanghai.

2. Those who kept up their Iraqi citizenship were considered neutrals, but were forbidden to leave the house except for essential purposes and not allowed to remove anything from it. The Japanese took over the Ohel Rahel Synagogue and turned it into a weapons storehouse. When the war ended, many of the community began to disappear. In 1949, Chinese Communists entered Shanghai and took over all the business firms and property that remained in foreign hands. Whoever could, left for the U.S.A, England, Austria, Canada and Israel.

**The Singapore "Baghdadi" Community**  
The Singapore "Baghdadi" Community began to get organized around 1838. Most of them came from the "Baghdadi" community that settled in the cities of Serat and Poona in India. Like those in Shanghai, the first settlers in Singapore were clerks of David Sassoon & Co. In 1841 the community acquired a plot of land in order to build a small synagogue that would serve 40 people and a second plot to serve as a cemetery for the community. In 1877 the community leaders decided to build the Magen Avot Synagogue, due to the growth of the Baghdadi population.

According to Eli Solomon, in 1905 the Hesen El Synagogue was built by Sir Menashe Mayer, one of the community leaders, who was born in Baghdad, acquired his education in Calcutta, and in 1873 founded an import-export trade in Singapore. He donated to the establishment of a Talmud Torah school and founded a number of businesses, built hotels and luxury housing as well as the Rafalsy College for Natural Sciences. Because of his wide range of activities, he was knighted by the Queen of England. During the 1890s he served as a member of the Municipal Council and was a member of the Currency Board.

Menashe Mayer served as president of the Zionist Society in Singapore, which was founded in 1922, and hosted many meetings and fund raising gatherings in his own house. That year, when Albert Einstein visited Singapore in order to raise funds for the establishment of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, he was a guest at Sir Mayer's house. After his death, his daughter, Mozelle Nissim, continued his Zionist activities.

After the rise of the Nazi Party to power in Germany, many Jewish refugees arrived in Singapore. By 1930 the community numbered 2500 people. Singapore was occupied by Japan in 1942 and many of the

community members fled to India and Australia. In 1942 hundreds of Jews, as well as citizens of America, England and France, were imprisoned and those who were not arrested survived in conditions of extreme hardship. Many of the older generation died of malnutrition or from diseases.

Shortly before the collapse of the Third Reich in 1945, the entire community was taken prisoner. After the surrender of Japan there were great changes in the lives of the "Baghdadi" community: some of the wealthy people who had fled before the Japanese occupation decided not to return to Singapore, and the released prisoners were granted the option of either remaining in Singapore or of joining their relatives in India or Australia.

World War II had a great impact on the Zionist activity of the community. Youth movements such as "Habonim" were established and later some of its members immigrated to Israel. When the movement was dissolved, the "Menorah" Club was set up to continue Zionist activities.

An important leader who arose after the war was Atty. David Marshal, who joined those supporting the independence movement for Singapore. He became the leader of the Labor Party, which won the 1955 elections. He then served as the Prime Minister of Singapore but resigned after 15 months in office.

After Singapore had received its independence, the Jews began emigrating to Los Angeles and to Australia, partly because of the economic competition and partly in order to find marriage partners for their children. It is important to note that anti-Semitism never was a factor in Singapore and that the relationships between the Jews and other residents—Chinese, Malaysian, Indian, Arab and others—were and remain very good.

There are about 250 people in the Singapore community today, a small number in relation to the economic influence that they exert in the country. They are prominent in the business community and especially in the fields of fashion, diamonds and optics.

The community maintains its Jewish traditions. They have a rabbi, a Talmud Torah school, a minyan at the synagogue, and a retirement home, but even so, the Iraqi culture and tradition is rapidly weakening because very few in the community today speak the Judeo-Arabic dialect of the Iraqi Jews.



to local news on our long wave radio sets. I was forever going back and forth on the radio dial in an attempt to catch long wave broadcasts from far away. At nighttime I found I had my best chance of success and, on occasion and in good weather, was able to get good reception from a radio station in Chungking in Free China. That station often relayed broadcasts from San Francisco and I was overjoyed when I was able to hear a voice stating: "This is Sidney Rogers (or sometimes William Winter) broadcasting from radio station KGEI atop Nob Hill from the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco". It was particularly thrilling when I heard a relayed broadcast from Paris, France on the day of its liberation in August 1944. Listening to the sounds of jubilation coming from that recently oppressed and occupied city brought me great joy but also wistfulness with the realization that I was at that moment in a far less fortunate situation.

We lived in a high rise apartment building in the French Concession. Four months before the end of the war, the Japanese Army, fearing an American invasion of China at Shanghai, ordered all residents out of the building in order to occupy it and to station machine and anti aircraft guns on its roof. I recall that my dad then purchased a small residential building from a Chinese owner with a gold bar that he had hidden under the floor in our apartment. We moved to that new residence with the help of a Japanese Army truck and 2 Japanese soldiers, who were made available to us by the Japanese army. I mention that to indicate that despite the reports of so many cruelties by the Japanese armed forces during the war, this is one incident in which the Japanese treated us stateless persons well.

1945 was a great year. First the good news from Europe, Hitler's suicide and the surrender of Nazi Germany. Then the screws were turned on Japan. It was all in the atmosphere and you could literally feel it. Japan was alone now. First Italy and now Germany were defeated. Japan alone at war with the whole world. No longer was it a question of how the war would end, only when.

I was 18 years old now, old enough to serve in the Pao-Chia, the civilian air-raid wardens type of organization. This was mandatory duty for all civilian males 18 years and over, decreed by the Wang Ching Wei government, i.e. the Chinese puppet regime put in place by the Japanese. I was furnished a Pao-Chia armband and had to report on a regular basis to my local Pao Chia ward. My commander was

a Russian Jew named Sam Jaffe, a friend of my uncle Samuel. I had to patrol the streets during air-raid alerts and help out anyone in trouble, as well as herd people into shelters and perform similar such duties. Air-raid sirens were heard more and more frequently now.

In the spring of 1945, in broad daylight, I witnessed a huge silvery plane flying over Shanghai, a B-29 bomber, so famous for its long distance capabilities. The Japanese anti aircraft batteries shot at it furiously and I could clearly see the puffs of the shells exploding not even half way up to the plane which was flying at approx. 30,000 feet. It was a pathetic spectacle, displaying how Japanese technology was so completely outstripped by America's. On another occasion my sister and I were downtown when the sirens came on and we quickly sought shelter in the basement of a large office building. We heard the roar of aircraft flying over, followed by the sound of anti aircraft fire followed in turn by the loud noise of bombs exploding, repeatedly. It was quite scary as the bombing sounds appeared to be quite close and all of us in that "shelter" looked at one another in fear and uncertainty. In due course, the all clear sounded and we left the shelter to return home. On one of these bombing raids, the Hongkew area was mistakenly hit and several Jewish refugees were killed, including a Mr. Kardegg who was a former employee of my uncle Samuel Jedeikin.

I graduated from my Public and Thomas Hanbury School in June. It was a great day, not only the event of our graduation itself, but also the world situation at a cross road with peace looming ahead and with it, a new dawn, a new beginning, especially for me as young boy at the beginning of his adulthood, his career and his opportunities. I felt good and looked forward to the future with so much more optimism and good feeling as I had ever felt before.

## The "Baghdadi" Jewish Community in Shanghai and Singapore

by Orly Baher

**The Shanghai "Baghdadi" Community**  
The "Baghdadi" Jews arrived in India at the end of the 18th century and during the 19th century spread to other countries in the Far East. In the beginning, wealthy merchant families arrived and later others came looking for new living sources.

The Shanghai "Baghdadi" community began to get organized at the end of the 19th century through the efforts of the Sassoon family from India, which began trading with the Far East and which trained young men of their community in Bombay to be sent as clerks to work for the Sassoon firm in Shanghai. Those who were sent soon brought over their families and later many of them left their jobs with the Sassoons to establish their own business enterprises.

According to Rebecca Toueg, who was born there, the Babylonian Jews came under the influence of British culture and had assimilated themselves with the language, literature and social traditions of the English people. Shanghai was a city of tremendous opportunities, an international city open and free to all who wished to come there and make a quick fortune.

The Babylonian Jews took full advantage of this and were extremely successful. They were part of the foreign population, but they guarded their separate identity. Most of them lived in the French Concession, which was the most prestigious part of the city. Elias Sassoon was the first to come to Shanghai and founded a branch of David Sassoon & Co. He was the son of David Sassoon, the patriarch of the dynasty, that had fled from the tyranny of the Turkish Pasha in Baghdad and founded an international commercial empire in Bombay.

Elias built the first Jewish palatial mansion in Shanghai International Settlement, within it was a private synagogue. According to Aviva Shabi, in his era the name Sassoon was used by the Chinese as a synonym for the word Jew. The most prominent personality in the social and business life was Sir Victor Sassoon, Elias's grandson, who erected the most magnificent buildings in Shanghai, the most famous of them being the Cathay Hotel. The Sassoons, who were called "the Rothschilds of the East", also built the Ohel Rahel Synagogue.

Another important personality in the community was Silas Aaron Hardoon, who was born in Baghdad and came to Shanghai in 1880. He had become a multi-millionaire and was soon called "the wealthiest man east of the Suez Canal". Whole streets in Shanghai belonged to him and he even had a street named after him – "Hardoon Way". The palatial home he built is used today as the Chinese National Museum. Hardoon built the Bet Aharon Synagogue, which was later destroyed by the Communists, and become the only foreigner to

and collapsed, and the community virtually ceased to exist, even though the descendants of individual Jews still live in Kaifeng. The reasons leading to Jewish communal decay and to total assimilation have been disputed for a long time. The main viewpoints are listed here: (1) China was relatively tolerant towards foreign religions, and in such peaceful, tolerant circumstances, the cohesive force of the Jews was reduced. (2) The ethical notions of Confucianism were similar to Jewish moral traditions. Kaifeng Jews took the Chinese civil exam, leading to the Confucianization of intellectuals, thereby gradually abandoning their religious beliefs and modes of living. (3) The Kaifeng Jewish community was isolated from the rest of the Jewish world since the time of the Ming dynasty. Kaifeng Jews didn't have qualified rabbis and couldn't read Hebrew for a long time, so it was very difficult for Judaism to continue its existence. (4) Their intermarriage with the Chinese people caused acculturation and the loss of their characteristic physical appearances. (5) Natural disaster also accelerated the assimilation process.<sup>2</sup> The history of the Kaifeng Jewish community has stirred interest in the Western world since the beginning of the 17th century, and a considerable number of books and articles have been published. But many questions still require further study and discussion. Based on recent investigations in the following topics, I will concentrate on introducing the subject of the situation of the Kaifeng descendants in the 20th century.

### 2. Population Distribution

During the climax of the Kaifeng Jewish community, the figure rose to "70 surnames and over 500 families". Some Chinese scholars claimed that the "70" figure in the 1489 tablet is a careless error for "17", because only 17 surnames are actually listed in the stele inscription. Chen Yuan was the first person who stated these points:

The Israelites who first came were said to include 70 surnames such as Li, An, Ai, Gao, Mu, Zhao, Jin, Zhou, Zhang, Shi, Huang, Nie, Li, Jin, Zhang, Zuo and Bai (Zhang, Jin and Li appear twice), but the number "70" might have been an error in transcription for the figure "17."<sup>3</sup>

In the middle of the peasants' uprisings, led by Li Zicheng, the dikes of the Yellow River were breached and Kaifeng city was

flooded. Many Jewish families managed to escape to the northern side of the river but only 7 with the surnames Li, Zhao, Ai, Zhang, Gao, Jin and Shi returned to Kaifeng after the flood. Antonie Gaubil reported in 1723 that there were only 7 clans (surnames), with about 1,000 persons in Kaifeng. During the 19th century, western missionaries gave us different figures of Jewish descendants. Qiu Tiansheng and Jiang Rongji reported 200 persons; Dr. W.A.P Martin believed the figure to be 300-400 persons; Bishop Schereschewsky mentioned 100-400 families (I think that this probably should have been 100-400 persons).

Since 1949, the new government has not given detailed statistics on the number of the Jewish descendants. In February of 1957 Timoteus Pokora, a Czech Sinologue, visited Kaifeng for a few days. He counted "about 100 families with 200 dependents (presumably children) who classified themselves as Jews".<sup>4</sup>

The Jewish descendant Shi Zhongyu said that there were 300 persons living there in the 1980s. According to Wang Yisha, until the late 1980s there were still at least 263 families (638 persons). Of these, 133 families (348 persons) live in Kaifeng, and 130 families (290 persons) have moved to other parts of China. Wang added that this is a very conservative estimate. He estimates that about 400-600 Kaifeng Jewish descendants who moved to other places of China are not included in the number mentioned above, because they had lost contact with Kaifeng for a long time.<sup>5</sup>

Following Wang Yisha's clues, Yang Haijun and I conducted some interviews among the Jewish descendants of Kaifeng on behalf of the Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University during the last three months. Most of them recognized their identity openly and welcomed our visit. They were pleased to receive us, answer our questions and take photos with us. But there are still a few persons who denied their Jewish roots. One of them (he didn't permit us to publish his name) told us: "Maybe you have some information to prove my identity (from my mother's side), but I think I am Chinese. My mother told us nothing about Judaism and Jewish history. My father and grandfather are both Han by nationality. We observe only Han customs and festivals. So I only acknowledge I am a Han Chinese and not Jewish, not to mention my children." According

to our survey, we think Wang Yisha's number is higher than the factual number. We believe that there are 6 clans, only about 200 persons in the urban district. The Jin clan only has one family in the city. We have not found any of the Gao family in Kaifeng. At the beginning of the 20th century, some people reported that Gao clan lived here, and Gao Chunbao was a famous dentist. It was said that the Gao clan left Kaifeng during the anti-Japanese War. One family settled in Xi'an, one is in Qinghai. Now, half of the descendants in the urban district have a connection with our Institute. In our estimation, about 150-200 persons live in other counties and cities of Henan Province, such as Weishi, Qixian, Tongxu, Kaifeng (country), Zhongmu, Lankao, Gongxian, Mixian, Xunxian, Wuzhi, Shangcai, Changyuan, Yuxian, Zhengzhou, Luoyang, Xinxiang, Anyang, Shengqiu, Pingdingshan, Luohe, Sanmenxia, Jiaozuo, and so on. They reside especially in counties close to Kaifeng, such as Qixian, Tongxu, Zhongmu, Weishi and Kaifeng (country), where they mostly do farming work. There is no doubt that Kaifeng Jews have kept moving to other parts of China. Besides Beijing and Shanghai, they are also distributed in Hebei, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Shandong, Hubei, Gansu, Jiangsu, and even Sichuan, Qinghai, Guangxi and Xinjiang. We estimate that the numbers in all these provinces does not exceed 100 persons. (We haven't investigated those descendants yet because of a lack of sufficient funds).

### 3. Occupation and Economic Status

In ancient times, Kaifeng Jews pursued all kinds of occupations. The 1512 inscription tells us:

Some of the Israelites took the imperial examinations and earned glory for their families and themselves; some, within and outside the royal court, benefited the sovereign and the people; some, in defeating enemy aggression, proved their utmost loyalty to the nation; others, by their high moral qualities, were models for the entire countryside; while artisans for their skill, and merchants for their diligence, were famed far and wide.<sup>6</sup>

The American Jew, David A. Brown, visited Kaifeng in November of 1932 with Bishop White, and met representatives of five of the seven clans. In his five-part article, Brown says: "I inquired as to their present occupations, and Mr. Ai said he



was a painter; Mr. Zhang a carpenter; Mr. Li a post-office clerk; Mr. Chao the owner of a small tea and candy shop; the husband of Widow Shih had been a teacher, and her son is a teacher in a Chinese school. She volunteered the information that the Shih family were all scholars, dating back over two hundred years. There was another Widow Shih present, whose husband had conducted a small business and whose unmarried daughter was a teacher.<sup>7</sup>

Wang Yisha listed some of the occupations of the Kaifeng descendants during roughly the first half of the 20th century. His studies show that 20.5% engaged in fairly large handicraft and mercantile occupations as owners; 41.1% serving as workers, handicraftsmen, shop assistants, and teachers. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, says Wang, there was a fundamental improvement in the occupations of Jewish descendants. This is certainly true of women, who now comprise 30.7% of the employed, as against only 2.9% previously.<sup>8</sup>

From March to April, 2002, we investigated 72 Kaifeng descendants of working age by means of face-to-face interviews, telephone or email, including:

Shi Clan	26 persons
Ai Clan	22 persons
Li Clan	12 persons
Zhao Clan	10 persons
Zhang Clan	1 person
Jin Clan	1 person

All of them were willing to tell us their working situation. I am listing their occupations here:

Workers	38 persons
Civil servants	14 persons
Teachers	7 persons (3 middle school teachers, 4 primary school teachers)
Technician	6 persons (1 senior technician)
Researchers	4 persons (1 senior researcher, working in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences)
Druggist	1 person
Unemployed	2 persons

According to my interview, I came to the following conclusions:

(1) In the western reports of the 19th century and the early 20th century, the Kaifeng descendants' extreme poverty was mentioned many times. They were not able

to maintain their religious affairs and lived a very hard life. What we must understand is, as a result of natural and man-made disasters, this terrible situation caused suffering not only to the Jewish descendants, but also to Han, Hui and the whole Chinese society. After 1949, the social and economic conditions of the Jewish descendants improved considerably. They chose their occupations freely and made considerable achievements in different fields. There is no denying the fact that Jewish descendants have made positive contributions to the development of Kaifeng City.

(2) The living conditions of the Jewish descendants' is neither better nor worse than those of the local citizens. They have been living in harmony with the Han and Hui Chinese, sharing the bitter with the sweet, staying on the same economic level. They are one of the common members in our melting pot society.

(3) They hope that scholars and the media will report about their economic status objectively. I met Ai Xiuqin (Ai Fengming's daughter) in the evening of March 27, 2002. She said:

"Some people always say that Jewish descendants of Kaifeng are very poor and have a need for the government to give them special consideration. I don't agree with this point of view. Some of them are really poor, but some are not. This is a situation similar to that of any country. I am only a primary school teacher. I am not rich, but my life is more than sufficient. My sisters and brothers are not in need of any help to support their lives."

Ai Xiuqin's younger sister, Ai Qiaoyun, quite agrees with her sister. She has moved into a comfortable 120 square meter apartment.

#### 4. Jewish Identity

Between the beginning of the 20th century and the establishment of the People's Republic of China, assimilation took place at a quickening rate. In 1919, White and Blackston held a series of meetings among the Kaifeng descendants. They discovered: It was difficult to get the Jews interested at first. They were utterly dispersed with no link to religion, clan register, or even social relationship, to form a point of approach. Most of them, though knowing each other by name, were not on terms of acquaintanceship. Not one of them followed any Jewish practices of any kind.<sup>9</sup>

David A. Brown mentioned in 1933 that Kaifeng descendants "realized they were completely assimilated Chinese." After visiting Kaifeng in 1957, Tomoteus Pokora also reported: "Though individuals may still trace their Jewish descent, they are no longer Jews by race, nor by culture, merely by name."<sup>10</sup>

According to Shi Zhongyu, his father Shi Qingchang (1881- 1928), at the time of Chinese Spring Festival, would dip a brush in red cinnabar and draw a line on the couplet scrolls flanking their doorway in typical Chinese style. This clearly was a remnant of the Passover custom, but only very few still clung to old customs. Most of them have lost all their Jewish religious and cultural heritage. After Liberation, Jewish customs and habits finally vanished. In dress, diet, manner, marriage, funeral, celebrations and holidays, their customs and those of the Han Chinese became identical. Today, most of the descendants in Kaifeng know nothing about Jewish life, religion and culture (only a very few representatives who have opportunities to come into contact with foreigners have some knowledge of their past. They think they are completely Chinese and, of course, profess a strong sense of patriotism to China—their motherland. But, on the other hand, compared with the Han Chinese, they still have a special feeling for their Jewish roots. They do know that they are Jewish descendants and always ask their children to remember this fact. As Wendy Robin Abraham states:

"While in Kaifeng (1985) I was able to speak with six heads of descended families and some of their family members. ... One member of Ai clan could not even recognize the Star of David as relating to Judaism. Basically he knew nothing of the religion or history of the Jews in Kaifeng. He only knew that he was Jewish because his father had told him so, and for some reason, he, too, believed it was important to pass down this knowledge to his sons. This, I surmised, was the more common situation among Chinese Jewish descendants in Kaifeng, as opposed to those who are brought before groups of tourists to recount their family's and people's history in China and religious customs."<sup>11</sup>

After a visit to Kaifeng, Beverly Friend discovered the following:

"Be that as it may, the people we met in Kaifeng clearly were not impostors. On our

sun was legal. Among the indigent Chinese population of some 5 million, there was great poverty, misery and hunger. You could daily see people lying in the street with open sores and wounds. Many died of starvation or froze to death in winter. Among the non-Chinese there were people from many parts of the world living here in addition to the Chinese inhabitants. There were many Russians who had escaped the Communist revolution some 20 years prior, such as my own mother and her family. There were people from the Middle East and India—Jews from Iraq and Egypt—and now there were the about 17,000 more recently arrived Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Most of these refugees from Nazi terror were penniless but the other long-term non-Chinese residents of Shanghai, who had some assets or income, even modest to Western standards, were able to hire Chinese servants, i.e. cooks, amahs, drivers etc.

Then came December 8, 1941, a day that will live in infamy! When you live in China, you're on the other side of the International Dateline so that December 7<sup>th</sup> in America is the 8<sup>th</sup> in Asia. I woke up in the middle of the night to the sound of gunfire. I later learned that the Japanese cruiser Yamoto had fired and sunk the British gunboat HMS Peterel, which was trying to sneak out of the Shanghai harbor. A US gunboat surrendered because its captain was ashore in bed with his Russian girlfriend. After all, it was a Saturday night. At the very moment of Japan's attack on Shanghai, Japan also attacked Pearl Harbor, Hong Kong and the Philippines.

Things changed after that date. The Japanese Army took over the entire City and all enemy aliens, such as Americans, Brits and Dutch were forced to wear red armbands, before being interned in several internment camps. Many friends and all of my teachers were among the internees. The Japanese also issued proclamation after proclamation containing a variety of different prohibitions, such as making it unlawful for anyone to listen to short wave radio broadcasts. (All short wave radios had to be surrendered). As a result we were denied any news from the West concerning the Pacific war and the only news we received was the Japanese version of what was happening every day, i.e. unending victories by Japan against the United States. However news about the war in Europe came to us also through the

a show of hands from all who would be affected by the proclamation, I raised mine. However we had the argument that, because of our family's previous residence in Japan, we were not "stateless refugees who arrived after 1937", within the intent of that proclamation. My father consequently went to see Mr. Kubota, the head of the Japanese refugee office and talked to him in Japanese, without the need of an interpreter. Kubota, impressed by a Caucasian man's fluency in Japanese, readily agreed to exempt our family from the intent of the proclamation and issued a written exemption for our immediate family and, at my father's urging, as well my Aunt Johanna, her daughter Musia and son in law Maxe Thal, who had arrived from Latvia in 1939, and who therefore had no previous residency in Japan.

Despite our good fortune of being exempted from having to move into the ghetto, my dad, ever cautious, hired a contractor to build for us a residential, 3-bedroom house, containing a hidden room accessible only through a trap door. This hidden room was meant for use to our family similar to the hidden attic used by Anne Frank's family in Amsterdam. The house was rented to another Jewish refugee family under a lease which provided that it would have to be released to us in the event our family should ever be forced to move to the ghetto. Fortunately that exigency never occurred.

As we learned later, this proclamation was the result of the visit of a Gestapo official Josef Meisinger, personal emissary of Heinrich Himmler, who had arrived in Shanghai by German submarine. This was a very ominous development and an attempt by Germany to enlist Japan in its "Final Solution of the Jewish problem" as this Nazi wanted the Jews to be killed. Meisinger conducted a meeting with the top Japanese Army and Navy commanders during which he made his pitch for the killing of Shanghai's Jews. The only non-military representative of the Japanese government present at that meeting was vice-consul Mitsugi Shibata. It was thanks to him that what transpired at that meeting became known.

Shibata should never have talked to any outsider about this conference, but as a decent man he became alarmed by what he heard and therefore, in violation of his oath and at considerable risk to himself, alerted several Jewish leaders in the community, including my uncle Joseph Bitker, a well respected businessman and a leader

of the Russian Jewish community in Shanghai, (Bitker was instrumental in securing funds from the American Joint Distribution Committee throughout the war, despite the wartime restrictions of American currency flowing into Japan-occupied Shanghai. That maneuver saved a substantial portion of the Jewish refugees from starvation.) Shibata told Bitker that Meisinger had urged the Japanese military commanders to consider the Jews as their enemies, i.e. that "the Jews are Germany's enemies and hate Germany and therefore they are also against you!"

Meisinger suggested that all Jews be rounded up, stripped of their clothing and possessions and loaded onto several old ships to be towed to the sea and sunk. On hearing this frightening report, several Jewish leaders in Shanghai, at great risk to themselves, managed to get word to a sympathetic minister in the Japanese government in Tokyo to make certain that Tokyo knew what was going on. As a result the local Japanese military commanders were more strictly supervised by their superiors in Tokyo, but they became furious when learning of that contact and the leak that preceded it and these Jewish leaders, including my uncle were arrested and spent time in the infamous Warehouse jail, before being released several weeks later. Not all the arrested persons fared as well as my uncle, one, a Mr. Topas, was severely beaten as was one other. Shibata was terminated as vice consul and recalled to Japan. Thus the Jewish residents of the ghetto in Shanghai escaped the fate of their compatriots in Europe, but I am persuaded however that if the war had gone more favorably for the Germans, the result could well have been quite different.

As can be imagined, our attention was completely riveted on the news of the war, rejoicing at every tidbit of good news, chagrined at every success of the Axis powers. The greatest life-and-death struggle on a daily basis took place of course on the Russian front. I recall we had a giant map of the Russian front pinned on our living room door and followed the daily wartime changes by placing pins and colored markings on those cities and towns where the front line had shifted to. Our source was the daily radio broadcasts of the local Soviet radio station, which featured a baritone voiced announcer who bellowed out the daily orders of the Marshal of the Soviet Union, Stalin.

Though we were not allowed to possess short wave radios, we all of course listened



theory of racial superiority was expounded with such conviction and expressed without any doubt so that though I felt in my heart that, as a Jew, I was indeed not inferior to anyone else, a doubt did start to creep up. It was a feeling almost of becoming somewhat ashamed of my racial identity rather than being proud of it. Even though being Jewish meant that you hold to a religious belief, it was made very clear to me by these Nazis that this was a racial condition, i.e. one that you cannot divest yourself of by simply changing your religion.

Though my summer at Champéry in 1939 was overshadowed by that experience, I did draw some benefits from it. I realized the great danger the Jews faced in 1939 and started to take a much greater interest in political developments than I had in the past. Much later, when I lived in America and at the time of the civil rights movement in the 60's I realized how Black people were feeling and indeed must have felt in the past living through daily experiences of discrimination and how unjust and devastating the entire concept of racial or religious discrimination is.

On September 1, 1939 German troops invaded Poland and a few days later England and France declared war on Germany and WWII began. My parents in New York saw this as an opportunity to stay there rather than return to war torn Europe. My dad wired his secretary with instructions for her to obtain visitors' visas for my sister and I and to send us on the way to New York to join them. We went to the U.S. Consul in Zurich with Mrs. L. Kroik, the secretary and Eugene Burgauer, an English-speaking friend. At first there appeared to be no problem at all. The consul understood that he had previously issued visitor's visas to my parents and that it was simply a ministerial act to also issue visas to 2 minor children so that they would be able to join their parents and visit the United States. At this point, unfortunately, our friend Burgauer spoke up and volunteered the following statement: "In these perilous times the parents will feel safer having their children with them".

Upon hearing this comment, the American consul set down his fountain pen with the brisk statement: "Visas Denied". This abrupt decision by the consul was undoubtedly due to his suspicion (fueled by the Burgauer comment) that the Jedeikin family would probably fail to return to Switzerland and attempt to stay in the

United States past the expiration date of the visitor's visa. (Many years later we all learned that the then Under Secretary of State of the United States, Breckenridge Long had sent a secret and illegal cable to all American consulates in Europe instructing the consuls to issue visas to Jews very sparingly and, above all, to delay issuance of such visas.)

Faced with separation from their children, my parents felt they had no choice other than to return to Zurich, which they did in October of 1939. After a long trip across the Atlantic to Cherbourg on one of the President liners and from there by train via blacked-out Paris, they arrived back in Switzerland and were reunited with us. This was at the time of the so-called "phony war", when the German and Allied forces sat in trenches facing each other without shooting at each other.

My parents had to decide whether to stay in Switzerland and take the chance that it would be safe in that country or leave. They decided that they did not want to remain in Europe since no country appeared to be safe from the Nazis and they therefore decided to leave Europe. America was barred to us and visas to other places were not readily available. Shanghai in China was an open city in the sense that the Western Powers had secured a colony there called the International Settlement, which was administered by several governments, including Britain, Italy, Japan and the USA, all victors in WWI. In addition the French had carved out their own colony in a portion of Shanghai, mostly residential, called the "French Concession". There were no visa requirements to enter that city and we already had many relatives there, such as a grandmother, uncles, aunts and many cousins. It therefore made sense for my parents to decide to exit the cauldron that was then Europe and head for the Far East.

In March of 1940 we left Zurich by train to Venice, via Milan and then boarded an Italian passenger liner, the S.S. Conte Rosso at Venice. (Later we learned that this was the Rosso's last trip as Italy entered the war 2 months later, which sealed Switzerland off. The Rosso was sunk by British air attack.) On leaving Venice, we embarked on a 5 week journey across the Mediterranean to the Suez canal and the Red Sea to Eden, the Indian Ocean to Bombay, to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Singapore, the Straits of Malaya and along-

side the Dutch East Indies, to Manila in the American-held Philippines, to Hong Kong and finally Shanghai, where we docked in April of 1940. (All of the ports of call mentioned above were under British control, except for the Philippine Islands.) This was a most enjoyable and educational trip for a 13 year old to take and I recall breathing a tremendous sigh of relief when our ship left Europe and arrived at the Suez Canal, in the continent of Asia. Arriving in Shanghai we were met for a warm welcome at docks by a huge contingent of our relatives.

I did not speak a word of English, but undeterred, my parents promptly enrolled me in the Public and Thomas Hanbury School for Boys, an English school with a great staff of teachers from England and where we had to wear a school uniform consisting of gray flannel slacks, blue blazer, maroon & blue striped tie on a white shirt and cap with the school's logo. Being thrown into that type of environment, I learned to speak English quite fast. I also found out, to my chagrin, that unlike in the Swiss schools, any type of misconduct on the part of a student here (even as innocuous as talking in line) was punishable by a caning administered by our headmaster with the aid of a large, thin reed.

Life in Shanghai was very interesting. The City was very cosmopolitan and a great commercial center. Everything under the Soviet Russian radio station in Shanghai. Since Japan and Soviet Russia were not at war with one another, that source of news remained available to us throughout the war.

One of the more disturbing proclamations of the Japanese authorities was directed at stateless refugees who had arrived in Shanghai after 1937. All who fit that description were ordered to move into a "Ghetto" area in the Hongkew section of the City. Even though the word "Jewish" was not contained in the proclamation, the directive would obviously not apply to any non-Jew since it was primarily Jews who left Europe for Shanghai after the advent of Hitler. Since we had arrived in Shanghai after 1937, I feared that we would be included in the definition of stateless refugees since Latvia had ceased to exist as an independent country, having been occupied first by the Soviets and then by the Nazis.

I recall attending school that day and when our teacher, Mr. McCorkindale, asked for

last night there, as we celebrated Sabbath dinner with the descendants of Kaifeng Jews, we welcomed this link to our Asia family, so long lost and now- at last- able to learn about and participate in Jewish culture. For those of us who shared that Friday night meal, there was no doubt how strongly these descendants feel their Jewish connection."<sup>12</sup>

Every time that I meet with Kaifeng Jewish descendants, I immediately feel that some of them still have a strong desire & eagerness to learn more about their Jewish history and culture. Most of them are willing to contact Jews who live outside China and hope to know much more information about Jews. As Shi Lei said: "There is nothing left, no sinagogue, no heritage, only a little memory from our ancestry. We know nothing about Judaism or Jewish history and culture. We do welcome Jews from America and Israel to visit China and learn more about the history of Kaifeng Jewish community. Such visits are really very helpful to Jewish descendants in Kaifeng, because they can tell us more about our past." Some knowledgeable people have public appeals to introduce Jewish history and culture among the descendants. In August of 2001, Shi Lei, a Kaifeng Jewish descendant, was enrolled in the one-year program at Bar-Ilan University of Israel where he is studying Hebrew and learning about Jewish history and culture. The event has created quite a stir in the minds of the descendants. Quite a few young students expressed admiration for Shi Lei. In a word, the combination of strong patriotism to China and a distant Jewish consciousness, have formed a kind of complicated feeling in the hearts of the Kaifeng Jewish descendants.

<sup>1</sup> Howard S. Levy (trans. and ed.), *Biography of Huang Chao, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1955, p117.*

<sup>2</sup> Yang Haijun, *Eighty Years of Research on Jews in China, Social Sciences in China, Spring 1996.*

<sup>3</sup> Chen Yuan, *A Study of the Israelite Religion, An Anthology of Chen Yuan's Theses, Beijing, Zhonghua Shuju, 1982, p.27.*

<sup>4</sup> Michael Pollak, *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries, Philadelphia, 1980, p.248.*

<sup>5</sup> Wang Yisha, *Spring and Autumn of the Chinese Jews, Haiyang Chubanshe, Beijing, 1992, p.232.*

<sup>6</sup> Translated by Sidney Shapiro, see Sidney Shapiro, *Jews in Old China, Hippocrene Books, New York, 1984, p.35.*

<sup>7</sup> David A. Brown, *Though the Eyes of an American Jew, see W. C. White, Chinese Jews, University of Toronto Press, 1966, Part 1, p.1*

<sup>8</sup> Wang Yisha, *The Descendants of the Kaifeng Jews, see Sidney Shapiro, Jews in Old China, pp.173-174.*

<sup>9</sup> An attempt to Reorganize the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, *Shanghai, 50:11, November 1919, p.780.*

<sup>10</sup> Donald Daniel Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews: The Jewish Community of Kaifeng, Leiden, 1972, p.74.*

<sup>11</sup> Wendy Robin Abraham, *The Role of Confucian and Jewish Education Values in the Assimilation of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, A Bell & Howell Company, Michigan, 1997, pp.189-190.*

<sup>12</sup> Beverly Friend, *A Visit to Kaifeng, see Roman Malek, From Kaifeng to Shanghai, Jews in China, Santa August, Germany 2000, pp.149-150.*

### Chinese Jew in Jerusalem Seeking Fellows and Mate

I am not descended from Jews in China, as far as I know. My mother, a Chinese from Heng Shui in Hei Bei province, and my father z"l, of Hungarian Jewish origin, met in New York. After taking an interest in Torah I converted (Orthodox).

I grew up in Los Angeles and have recently moved to Jerusalem. I speak Chinese and write a little. I am interested in finding fellow Chinese Jews in Israel, and in finding a Chinese Jewess mate (requirements are good heart, love of Torah). My age is 25. Please call (972+ for Israel) 067-415031 or write nissimkaufmann@yahoo.com.

Kov Tov,  
Nissim (Tai Fong)

### Institute of Jewish Studies Founded in Kaifeng

from the Kulanu web site:  
<http://www.kulanu.org>

The Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University at Kaifeng, Henan Province, China, was established on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2002. University Vice-President, Li Xiaojian, Mr. Len Hew (from Canada), Prof. Zhang Qianhong and Prof. Gong Liuzhu all spoke at the opening ceremony. Mr. Hew was warmly recognized by Vice-President Li Xiaojian for his efforts and his contribution that led to the founding of the Institute. A letter of congratulations from Prof. Xu Xin, director of the Center for Jewish Studies, Nanjing University, was read by Mr. Zheng Chuanbin at the ceremony. Prof. Zhang Qianhong was appointed director of the Institute.

After the ceremony, a discussion was held by some scholars and representatives of the Kaifeng Jewish descendants on the subject "Jewish Studies in China." In attendance were Mr. Hew, Prof. Zhang Qianhong, Prof. Liang Gong, Dr. Lu Shirong, and Prof. Wei Qianzhi, who delivered a speech. At the meeting, Mr. Hew pledged to offer each year two scholarships, together with the necessary finances, to promote interest in Jewish studies among the population of university students. The Israeli photo-journalist and videographer, Dvir Bar-Gal (from Tel-Aviv), was also present and reported on the event.

Members of the Institute of Jewish Studies welcome all kinds of donations, including scholarships, research funds, books, and teaching aids (religious artifacts). If you are interested in supporting the Institute, please contact:

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Director, Institute of Jewish Studies,  
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## The International Symposium on the History of Jewish Diaspora in China

by Xu Xin

Ilan Maor, Consulate General of Israel in Shanghai, joined over 40 delegates from China, the United States, Great Britain, Israel, Australia, Japan, and Germany at the successful international symposium "History of Jewish Diaspora in China". The gathering was initiated and organized by the Center for Jewish Studies at Nanjing University, and was held May 5-9, 2002, in Nanjing and Kaifeng.

Twenty-seven papers filled the four-day discussion with topics covering the entire history of the Jewish Diaspora in China, past, present, and future. (Details follow.) Sixty participants and guests attended the May 5 Grand Opening where Prof. Hong Yinxing, Vice President of Nanjing University, delivered the opening speech and hosted a welcome banquet.

Itzhak Shelef, Ambassador of Israel to China, sent a congratulatory letter to Prof. Xu Xin, the conference chairman, stating, "This year marks the first decade of full diplomatic relations between the State of Israel and the People's Republic of China. It is a pertinent opportunity for looking back with satisfaction upon the academic cooperation between universities and research institutes in our two countries. I am happy that your Center is one of the prime sources for the top level academic output, achieved through intellectual pursuit and uncompromising research standards."

The conference highlighted the grand celebration of the Centennial of Nanjing University, founded in 1902 and one of five top universities in China. Participants were impressed by the University's achievements and the Center for Jewish Studies' role in promoting Jewish subjects among the Chinese people during the past ten years.

On May 9, 24 participants traveled to Kaifeng to visit the city, hold further discussions, and meet several Jewish descendants.

## Sessions at the International Symposium on the History of the Jewish Diaspora in China (May 5-9, 2002, Nanjing and Kaifeng, China)

**MAY 6**

### Session I: The Kaifeng Case

The Origin of the Chinese Jews  
Tiberin Weisz, Minneapolis Public School

Issachar, the Jewish Tribal Scholar and the Mandarin  
Mordechai Rotenberg, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Reflections on the Hebrew Names of the Jews of Kaifeng  
Aaron Demsky, Bar-Ilan University

Laws of the Ming Dynasty and the Assimilation of the Kaifeng Jews  
Yin Gang, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Studies on Forms and Etiquettes of the Ancient Kaifeng Synagogue  
Gong Shaopeng, Foreign Affairs College

Minyan in Kaifeng (A Video Show)  
Matraw Trusch, Shanghai Jewish Community

### Session II: The Shanghai Case

Sir Victor Sassoon (1881-1961),  
Maisie Meyer, London School of Economics

Shanghai Would Be Different without Its Sephardim  
Liang Pingan, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences

Laura Margolis and the Jewish Refugees in Shanghai  
Naoki Maruyana, Meiji Gakuin University

Berlin - Shanghai - San Francisco: National and Ethnic Identity Formation and the Shanghai Jewish Exile Community  
Susanne Wiedeman, Brown University

Contemporary Jewish Life in Shanghai  
Rabbi Shalom Greenberg, Shanghai Jewish Community

Shanghai's Ohel Rachel Synagogue: Past, Present and Future  
Seth Kaplan, Shanghai Jewish Community

## Points East

Research and Findings of the Shanghai Jewish Gravestones and Headstones  
Dvir Bar-Gal, Shanghai Jewish Community

**MAY 7**

### Session III: The Harbin, Tianjin, Beijing and Hong Kong Cases

Harbin: Jewish Economic Center in the Orient  
Zhang Tiejiang, Heilongjiang Academy of Social Sciences

A People That Dwells Alone: Russian, Chinese, and Japanese Perceptions of Harbin Jewish Community, 1898-1945  
Zvia Bowman, King's College, University of London

The Tianjin Jewish Community: a Historical Survey  
Wang Lixin, Nankai University

A Look at the Jews in Liaoning Province in Modern Times  
Li Wei, Liaolin Normal University

Contemporary Jewish Life in Beijing  
Roberta Lipson, Beijing Jewish Community

Studies on the History of the Hong Kong Jewish Community  
Xu Xin, Nanjing University

**MAY 8**

### Session VI: Chinese and Jewish Cultures

Memory and Memorials: Some Jewish and Chinese Perspectives  
Vera Schwarcz, Wesleyan University

My Connections with Jewish People  
Mizue Kawashima, Tokyo

The Menorah of Fang Bang Lu  
Andrew Jakubowicz, University of Technology, Sydney

Studies of Judaism in China  
Huang Lingyu, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Modern Chinese Images of Jews: The Uses of Four Stereotypes  
Yang Bo, Nanjing Teacher's University

"Teach Them Unto Thy Children": Jewish Children's Literature Across the Borders of Place and Time  
Lois Ruby, Writer in Kansas

## Points East

## Rickshaw Reunion in San Francisco

by Steve Hochstadt

Since 1980 Shanghai Jews have gathered every few years to remember their difficult years in China and to celebrate their survival. The first reunion met on the West Coast, where the majority of Shanghaiers live. After several reunions on the East Coast, 210 former refugees plus 120 spouses, second- and third-generation relatives got together again in San Francisco on April 19 to 21. These occasions combine the sweet nostalgia of high school reunions with the underlying sadness of lingering Holocaust memories.

Many participants noted the happy, almost self-satisfied atmosphere of this year's reunion. Over 60 years after German-speaking refugees fled Europe for Shanghai, those who can still attend a reunion were teenagers or younger when they arrived in Shanghai, to be greeted by welfare committees organized by the existing Sephardic and Russian Jewish communities. Those who formed the adult community in Shanghai, who constantly worried about feeding families, finding adequate housing, and adjusting to what they considered shockingly primitive hygienic conditions, dominated the early Shanghai reunions. For them, the Shanghai experience had been bittersweet at best. Unlike the relatives left behind in Europe, they had survived, but at the price of a decade of deprivation, humiliation, sickness, and uncertainty. Their children, like youngsters everywhere, had fewer expectations and were more adaptable. The extraordinary efforts of the older Shanghai Jews from all three different communities created academically respectable school systems, Boy Scout troops, sports clubs, and entertainment, often funded by American Jews through the Joint Distribution Committee. Shanghai kids could believe they were living normal lives. Many spoke in San Francisco of having "fun" in Shanghai.

The pervasive optimism and good cheer was also a result of the remarkable accomplishments of these formerly penniless Shanghaiers, who have led successful lives and achieved financial security since arriving in the United States. Michael Blumenthal, former Treasury Secretary, CEO of several major corporations, and the keynote speaker, represents such success. His family lost everything in their escape

from Berlin, but like many other young Jewish refugees, Blumenthal used a combination of intelligence and hard work to reach prominence and fortune. Yet his sober speech warned about romanticizing the Shanghai experience. He reminded his audience of the brutal Nazi policies which drove Jews to the ends of the earth and of the hardships their parents surmounted in China. Blumenthal, now director of the Berlin Jewish Museum, surmised that their difficult childhoods had prepared the Shanghaiers well for lives of individual achievement.

These so-called Rickshaw Reunions attract only a particular slice of Shanghai Jews. They are attended mostly by the German-speaking refugees. The smaller group of more religious Polish Jews, who crossed the Soviet Union with transit visas from sympathetic diplomats like the Japanese Sugihara and the Dutch Zwartendijk, tends not to mingle with the more secular Germans and Austrians, reproducing their distant relationship in Shanghai. Rena Krasno of the SJI was one of the very few Russian Jews present. While her parents opened their home to these desperate souls, she could not share in the stories of the persecution of *Kristallnacht*, the harrowing task of obtaining ship's tickets to China, or the overcrowded life in the Hongkew ghetto. The poorest of the Jews in Shanghai, who never managed to get out of the welfare barracks of various *heime* in Hongkew, who found no work and couldn't afford the most trifling entertainment, are also not well-represented at reunions, nor do they appear in the now numerous films and books on this unique refugee experience. One surmises that they have few positive memories to share.

As exhausting as their gatherings are to plan, attested by the leader of this year's committee, René Willdorff, the next reunion, perhaps in Toronto, is already in the works. Yet these aging survivors were asked to think beyond the next few years and to consider preserving their precious photographic and documentary memorabilia in archives, like the well-established United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Stanford's Hoover Institution, or in the new Old China Hands Archive, organized by Professor Robert Gohstand of California State University at Northridge.

The time draws near when there will be no more living witnesses to the Holocaust and to the exile communities formed by

those who managed to escape. There was much regretful talk about those who could not attend due to recent death or suddenly declining health. But these Shanghaiers, having lived on three continents, cosmopolitan citizens of the world, are wise enough to know how to smile when memories of the past and enjoyment of the present mingle pleasantly. They have persevered through the worst of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are uniquely able to appreciate the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>.

## From Latvia to Shanghai

by Joe Jedeikin

We were citizens of Latvia, the country where my father was born. My parents attended the World Fair in New York City in July/August of 1939, leaving both my sister Mara, age 14, and myself, age 12, in a "summer camp" at Champéry in the Swiss Alps, located in the French speaking canton of Valais, in the southwest of Switzerland.

My own memory of that episode is quite unfavorable because of my interaction with a 15 or 16 year-old German "Hitler Youth" who was also a guest there from Germany and fully imbued with the Nazi racial theories. He was a classic Nordic type, tall, blond and self-assured. There were some other of his friends with him, but he was the only one outspoken on the subject of Jews. He was quite friendly with me at the beginning before he found out I was a Jew and then turned into an abusive bully. As a 12 year old and not ever being confronted by this type of accusation by an older boy to whom I would normally look for guidance and advice, I was not really equipped to counter his arguments. I do recall in particular there was also a German-speaking American boy there, who was not Jewish, about the same age as this Hitler Youth, who challenged him and debated this racist theory trying to reason with him, but the Nazi stood firm and would not be swayed and emphasized the "fact" that Jews were inferior to Aryans and that he had the clear and convincing proof which "had been established by the National Socialists", undoubtedly by such racial experts as Joseph Goebbels and the book "Myths of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century" authored by the Nazi racial theorist Alfred Rosenbaum.

I recall that this experience was a very debilitating one for me, especially since this



## MAY 9

## Session V: Look into the Future: Kaifeng and Elsewhere

Descendants of the Kaifeng Jews in the 20th Century  
Zhang Qianhong, Henan University

Study on Data of a Survey on the Jewish Descendants of Kaifeng  
Yang Hai-jun, Henan University

A panel discussion on the future of Jewish Diaspora in China  
Moderated by Xu Xin, Nanjing University

Meeting and Discussion with Kaifeng Jewish Descendants

Moderated by Al Dien,  
Stanford University

## Tales of the Dead

(continued from page 1)

had purchased it. He believed the stones were boundary markers from recent Shanghai history, and blanched when he discovered what the stone slabs actually were, saying he had no desire to court bad luck by trading in gravestones.

The dealer told us that it was very infrequently that he was fortunate enough to stumble across the stones; but then two days later, he called again to say that he had another headstone in his possession. It turned out to be gravestone of a Christian British seaman, carved with a large anchor at its head.

From there, however, the trail went cold and it wasn't until an antique dealer, surnamed Shu, heard about our hunt that any progress in actually locating gravestones was made. He took us to a village on the western outskirts of Shanghai, where after making inquiries among people in the street, he located a discarded piece of marble – propped up against the wall, with inscriptions in Hebrew and Russian testifying that it was the grave of Zalman Vitanzen (Ed. Note: or Vitenson), who had departed this life at the ripe old age of 73.

While Gao went off to find water to clean off the stone, other people led us down an alleyway, where we found another slab bearing a name in Russian and English. Two more sitting in a cabbage patch, acting as a walkway between muddy veg-

etable plots. Although the younger residents had no idea how the stones had arrived in their newest resting places, older onlookers recalled the slabs being used as stepping-stones across a river that previously ran through the area, and had lain uselessly around since the river dried up. Two old women demonstrated how they used the stones for scrubbing laundry. Someone else said they had arrived from the Moslem cemetery east of the village, back toward the city.

Although there are no longer any Jewish graves in the Moslem cemetery, an old man who was touching up Arabic script on the stones, said he thought there might be more similar slabs in his village. When we arrived at the village, we saw a large unbroken tombstone. A large cross stood at its head. Other slabs littered around the village were in shapes of broken tombstones, although a few carried Jewish names. At the back of the house were slabs that the owner was keeping for future building materials. The bridge over the river also appeared to have gravestones set into its foundation.

The knowledge that there must be many other similar graves drove us to approach the Israeli Consul in Shanghai, Ilan Maor. He agreed to pursue the issue through diplomatic channels. While official channels worked away on the forgotten history, the antique dealer was busy at work locating other headstones and called us about another example he had found. This time, propped up in his yard, was the largest and by far the most impressive Jewish tombstone, carved from red marble, 1.7 meters in height, with vine leaves carved at its top and base. The inscription bore the name of Mrs. Chaya Melike who died in 1910.

The dealer said there were other stones with this one, but that he was unwilling to take us there for fear that villagers would realize foreigners were interested in them and raise the prices. But gravestones were being discovered as fast as we could walk around the villages. A step at the doorway to a house was yet another gravestone.

The Israeli Consulate in Shanghai got back to us and informed us that in response to their discussion, the municipal authorities had promised to assemble the stones in a separate plot, within the Buddhist cemetery. The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs had also been conducting investigations of their own, in the Buddhist cem-

etry, where they unearthed the remains of other Jewish graves and fragments of gravestones.

Representatives from the Israeli Consulate set about collecting large marble stones from antique shops across the city. The antique dealers, meanwhile, were warned by Chinese officials that trading in gravestones was inappropriate and must stop.

For the time being, however, the stones are being stored until a final resting place can be arranged.

## Identification Cards in Shanghai During the Japanese Occupation

by Rena Krasno

We have received a package of interesting material from Erich Callmann of Denver, Colorado, for the SJI archives at the Hoover Institution, Stanford. Among the documents entrusted to us are details about identification cards and passes issued by the Japanese authorities in Shanghai, after their takeover of this city.

### Identification Cards:

The color of the stripe on the top right-hand side of the card served to identify at a glance the bearer's nationality and status.

#### Yellow striped card:

The Nazis used the color yellow to identify Jews, and the Japanese authorities employed this same color for 'German' (stateless) refugees. One must note, however, that in actual fact not all the stateless refugees in Shanghai were from Germany. Some came from Austria and other European countries. Thus the yellow stripe identified all stateless Jewish refugees from Europe.

#### Green striped card:

A green stripe was used to identify all other foreigners, except for Allied nationals.

#### Red striped card:

A red stripe was used to identify Allied nationals, who had not been interned but were considered "No.1 enemies", i.e. U.S., British or Netherlands citizens.



**Pink striped card:**

A pink stripe was used to identify Allied nationals, considered not as "No.1 enemies," Greek citizens, for example.

**Pass Badges:**

A so-called Pass Badge in the same color as the pass had to be worn on the top left of the clothing of the bearer (lapel for men) and had to be clearly visible at all times.

**Blue pass:**

Blue colored passes were issued to certain refugees living in the so-called Restricted Area (ghetto). They bore a map indicating what parts of Shanghai, outside the Restricted Area, the bearer was allowed to visit. Only the most direct route was allowed, and the streets of this route were clearly marked. The designated hours were from 9.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. However, these hours varied according to the situation of the bearer. Validity of the pass was 6 weeks to 3 months. The bearer could request the renewal of the pass. If the renewal was granted and the pass had not expired, the expiration date was deleted and a new expiration dated stamped over it. The request for renewal was usually made 10-15 days before its expiration date.

**Pink Pass:**

If the bearer of a Blue Pass was granted a Temporary Pass, his or her photo was removed from the Blue Pass and pasted on a Pink Pass. The bearer of this pink colored pass was allowed to go to a specific location. The International Settlement and French Concession were divided into 'districts' for this purpose. Mr. Callmann's pass, for example, was marked "1.DIST." The Pink Pass was valid from 1 day to 4-6 weeks.

Mr. Callmann tells the following: "The left side of this pass was blank. However, I made some notation, which, while the pass was valid would void the pass and subject the bearer to punishment. The notation reads:

10 August 23.00 hrs (11 p.m.), 1945  
Friday  
Peace in the World

This was the hour when we heard the announcement that the Emperor of Japan was accepting the conditions for surrender issued at Potsdam."

**The Tombstone**

by Hans Cohn

Arriving in Shanghai was most impressive, as our ship, the Conte Biancamano, laid anchor in the International Settlement, along the Bund, the most famous Avenue of Shanghai, often called the "European Wall Street." It was situated on the shores of the Wang Poo River, near the Yangtze, which enters into the China Sea. The harbor was interspersed with junks and their high pole masts, fishing boats and water rickshaws forming a lively silhouette along the imposing waterfront. The spring air was filled with a fishy smell, commingling with the smoke emanating from the chimneys of the many ships to be unloaded. My parents and I, and hundreds of other refugees disembarked, were processed on the dock, loaded on open trucks and driven to Hongkew, the poorest district of Shanghai.

The Sino-Japanese War broke out in 1937. Within two years, the Japanese army occupied Manchuria and the greater part of Northern China to the outskirts of Shanghai, including Hongkew. After fierce fighting, the Chinese army was defeated. In 1939, the year of our arrival, the Sino-Japanese War came to an end. The International Settlement was unscathed, while Hongkew lay in rubble.

Bombed out buildings resembled the ancient ruins of Athens. A number of houses still survived the onslaught to be used as dormitories (heime) for the incoming refugees. Those who could afford to move to the International Settlement or the French Concession settled to a comfortable life. The majority however was housed under deplorable conditions.

My mother died three months after our arrival. I was thirteen years old at that time. Low in finances, we arranged for a modest funeral. She was laid to rest in the Russian Jewish cemetery on Baikal Road with a graveside service, attended by my father, myself, and a few friends. A little marker, stuck in the ground with the inscription "Ida Cohn, nee Graupner, 1886-1939" was placed on her freshly dug grave. It was a tradition to put up a tombstone a year after burial, intended to show that the deceased had not been forgotten. We were

too poor to erect a fitting monument for my mother at that time. Often, I would go to the cemetery to visit the grave, utter a brief prayer in her memory, and shed a few tears. Standing by myself in a garden echoing the past, surrounded by the many carved stones in honor of those whom death had taken, I glanced at the tiny marker that bore my mother's name. An idea came to my mind.

I would go to search among the Hongkew ruins, in the hope to find a rock that could be transformed into a monument at little cost. The area had no shortage of bombed out houses. As luck would have it, I came across a suitable rock to meet my needs. With the help of a hand wagon I borrowed and, perspiring in the summer heat, I lugged my newfound treasure to a Chinese stonemason. The good man agreed for a small amount of money to carve the stone, engrave it with my mother's name and mount it on the grave. It stood there timidly as a sign of comfort, to celebrate her life amidst the more impressive monuments in the cemetery.

At the end of World War II, in 1945, the majority of stateless Jewish refugees left for greener pastures, primarily to America, Australia and Israel, then-called Palestine. I managed to stow away to Australia in 1946. By 1958, only a small number remained in Shanghai. When the Chinese Communists took over the whole city, they ordered the small Jewish community to remove the four Jewish cemeteries. The graves were to be relocated outside the city limits. Over 1300 graves were removed and I felt sure my mother's remains were among them. No more Jewish cemeteries exist today. I am told, a few relics can still be found in the outskirts of Shanghai.

After 56 years, I am now on my way to China to retrace my footsteps, hopefully trying to find the tombstone that has weathered many storms since it was salvaged out of the Hongkew rubble. I still remember the day my mother died, the place where she was buried, the prayer I said in her memory. The day has gone into oblivion, the place has vanished, but I can still recite the prayer. That has to be sufficient. Her memory is enshrined in my heart; it will always be with me.