

中國-猶太學院

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- 2) To assist the descendants of the ancient Jewish community of the city of Kaifeng, Henan province, in their efforts to preserve and maintain the artifacts and documents they have inherited from their forebears, as well as in their efforts to reconstruct the history of their community.
- 3) To support the establishment and maintenance of a Judaica section in the Kaifeng Municipal Museum.
- 4) To promote and assist the study and research of the history of early Jewish travel in China and in the rise and fall of the various Jewish communities that were established in China over the past millennia.
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- 6) To serve as a briefing and information center for those interested in Sino-Judaica, and for travelers to Kaifeng and other centers of Jewish interest in China.
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Points East

中國-猶太學院

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HOW WEN-JING BECAME 'SHALVA'

by Michael Freund
excerpted from the *Jerusalem Post*, 21 June

This past Sunday, Jin Wen-Jing, an 18-year-old student at the Yemin Orde youth village, went before a Haifa conversion court under the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate.

After administering an oral examination aimed at assessing her commitment to Judaism as well as her knowledge of Jewish law and tradition, the three rabbis comprising the *Beit Din* [rabbinical court] informed Wen-Jing that they had decided to accept her as a Jew.

Speaking in fluent Hebrew, Wen-Jing was quick to express her joy, and relief, at the court's decision. "I was very nervous, but now I am very happy," she said. "This has always been my family's dream – to return to our roots."

Wen-Jing arrived in Israel four years ago with her parents. Her father, Jin Guang-Yuan, who now goes by the name Shlomo, is a direct descendant of the Jewish community that existed for nearly a thousand years in the city of Kaifeng...

Wen-Jing's father still carries with him a copy of his internal Chinese identification card, which lists his nationality as "Youtai," or Jew. He and his wife hope to follow in their daughter's footsteps and undergo conversion soon.

Since her arrival in Israel, Wen-Jing has been studying at Yemin Orde under the guidance of the youth village's director, Dr. Chaim Peri, as well Rabbi Zev Rubens, an educator who oversees the school's conversion program, both of whom accompanied her to the *beit din*.

She has decided to adopt the name Shalva (serenity), which is the Hebrew translation of her Chinese given name. Currently in the midst of her matriculation exams, Wen-Jing will shortly enter the National Service (*Sherut Leumi*) program for religious girls, and will perform her national service at Shaarei Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem.

Why did she decide to convert?

"G-d chose the Jewish people to be His nation, and I wanted to be a part of it," said Wen-Jing, smiling. "G-d has performed many miracles for Israel," she said, adding, "The fact that I have come here from China, and made it all the way here, back to my people – that too is a miracle."

SAVING JEWISH SHANGHAI, BLOCK BY BLOCK

by Sheridan Prasso
excerpted from the *New York Times*, 31 May 2004

Every morning at 5 Christopher Choa gets up for his daily run, logging 8 to 10 miles on his trip to and from the North Bund, which includes the old Jewish ghetto in Shanghai.

A New York architect who moved to Shanghai three years ago, Mr. Choa became enchanted by the area and its history. So when he learned that the North Bund was facing redevelopment, he decided to try to save as much of the old ghetto as possible.

"The history of the Jews in Shanghai is so compelling," said Mr. Choa, who is Roman Catholic, but whose great-grandmother was a Sephardic Jew. "It's really worth preserving. It's part of the fabric..."

Almost all the Jews, except a few descendants of mixed parentage, resettled in New York, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv and elsewhere as the Communists took power in 1949. They left behind a charming neighborhood with row houses, schools, a synagogue, a park and even a Little Vienna Cafe. The district is now inhabited by working-class Chinese, some of whom live in rooms lighted by a single hanging bulb and with three or more families sharing a kitchen and bathroom. When Shanghai officials announced urban renewal plans for the North Bund almost two years ago, they said they envisioned turning the area into a masterpiece of the 21st century, a modern business and residential district with skyscrapers, apartment buildings, cruise ship docks and even an enormous Ferris wheel.

The gleaming metropolis that city planners had in mind did not leave room for a quaint old neighborhood. Officials had earmarked about 400 historic buildings for preservation citywide, but in the old ghetto only the Ohel Moshe Synagogue and a block or so of row houses made the list.

Mr. Choa had a different idea. He and his New York-based architecture firm, HLW International, entered a competition to design a master plan for the new North Bund. HLW, along with two other firms, the Cox Group of Australia and RTKL Associates of Baltimore, won.

Mr. Choa, who had already restored the Art Deco lobbies of the Park Hotel and the Peace Hotel annex, architectural jewels from the era when Shanghai was known as the Paris of the East, has experience in environmentally sensitive design. The centerpiece of his plan is creating a memorial park around the syna-

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SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	232
China	17
Israel	14
Canada	9
England	8
Japan	5
Hong Kong	4
Australia	4
Switzerland	2
France	2
Germany	1
Indonesia	1
Italy	1
South Africa	1
Taiwan	1
TOTAL	302

FROM THE EDITOR

Chinese Jews in Israel, Chinese Jews in China, Chinese Jews in Canada, Chinese Jews in the U.K., Chinese Jews in the U.S. of A. Sometimes it seems to me, from my vantage point as editor of Points East, that the whole world is crazy for the subject!

Actually, what it tells me is that interest in this subject brings together people from around the world, a small subset to be sure, but impressive nonetheless.

And just as diverse as the people devoted to our subject are the articles in this issue of Points East: several reports from the field, some history, a few book reviews, a little on the Chinese Jews, a little on Western Jews, a little on Indian Jews. It reminds me of the flowers in our garden, now in bloom. I've pruned and weeded, cut a bouquet and now I present it to you for your enjoyment.

Anson Laytner

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FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

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

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unique period in Chinese and Jewish history."

Mr. Maor also takes this opportunity to emphasize that "over the years, China in general and the city of Shanghai in particular proved to be a welcoming environment for Jewish guests and residents alike" and that during the "dark era of

World War II, the people of Shanghai proved themselves to be true and honest friends to the Jewish people. There were very few cities that opened their doors and their hearts to the Jewish refugees, who were trying to flee the Nazi persecution in Europe. In the worst years in Jewish history, the city of Shanghai became a safe haven for tens of thousands of Jewish refu-

gees, many of them from Germany and from Austria."

Mr. T. Kaufman, President of the Israel-China Friendship Society expressed the hope that "efforts will be made to bring this exhibition to Israel so as to enable us, the Israeli people, to see it too."

Visit by Israeli Delegation to China

An Israeli delegation headed by Defense Ministry Director-General Amos Yaron visited China in late March 2004. It was the first such visit since Israel cancelled the sale of Phalcon early-warning planes to Beijing in 2000.

Dead Sea Scroll Expert and ex-Shanghailander, Sam Iwry, Dies at 93

by Rena Krasno

In September 1941, a group of Polish refugees from Nazi Europe arrived in Shanghai. Upon their arrival, most of the Polish newcomers made every effort to acquire lodgings in the French Concession, where many Russian Jewish old-timers had settled. Unlike the German and Austrian Jewish refugees who mostly spoke only German, many Polish refugees knew at least some Russian and could thus communicate with members of the local Ashkenazi Jewish community. Indeed, a number of Poles spoke and wrote Russian very well.

At that time, my father, David B. Rabinovich, was the publisher and editor of the Jewish Russian language magazine, Nasha Jizn (Our Life). He soon met a number of Polish refugees, among whom were writers, lecturers, actors and musicians. They soon made an important contribution to Shanghai's cultural life. Several Polish newcomers started writing articles for Nasha Jizn and became regular visitors in our home.

One such person, whom my father highly regarded, was Samuel Iwry, a young man born in Bialostok, Poland, a brilliant graduate of the Warsaw University's Higher Institute for Judaic Studies. His Russian was very good, and his knowledge of Hebrew remarkable.

On May 8, 2004, Samuel Iwry died at the age of 93. After surviving the Japanese occupation in Shanghai, Iwry had immigrated to the United States and eventually became one of the world's most renowned Hebrew scholars. His obituary in the New York Times of May 15, 2004, states:

"Iwry, a Professor Emeritus of Johns Hopkins University, was one of the world's leading Hebrew scholars. An endowed chair in Near East Studies, an Honorary Doctorate of Hebrew letters degree at Baltimore Hebrew University, an annual lecture at Johns Hopkins, and a University of Maryland faculty fellowship fund all bear his name..."

Iwry played a prominent role in authenticating the Dead Sea Scrolls and in establishing their historic significance. He often lectured in Israel to enthusiastic audiences, who never failed to comment on his literary, smoothly flowing, pure Hebrew.

Iwry's autobiography "To Wear the Dust of War: From Warsaw to Shanghai to the Promised Land," is due to be published this summer.

family. Morris was an undisciplined youth who finally landed in a reform school for London's Jewish delinquents. Upon his release, his parents made arrangements to ship him out to a Jewish agricultural colony in Canada. Not surprisingly, life there was not to Cohen's liking, and he soon made contact with a clandestine Chinese brotherhood, among whom he gained the reputation of being loyal, fearless and very tough. Since he proudly bore arms, he was given the nickname "Two-Gun Cohen". This led to his first appointment as bodyguard to Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, a man he grew to idolize. From then on, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen and his cause became the center of Cohen's life.

In his introduction, Dr. Alderton tells us that in the late 1950s Morris Cohen made frequent trips to China to conclude business deals between Communist China and the West. He writes: "...Each time he slipped in and out the Bamboo Curtain, he would make a brief stop-over in Hong Kong, and it was on these occasions that he made contact with my father."

Alderton was present at many meetings between his father and Two-Gun Cohen, but one in particular left a lasting impression on him. It happened in 1959, when Cohen visited the Alderton home. Dr. Alderton writes:

"One Saturday afternoon, my father had quite unexpectedly arrived home in the company of his friend, Morris Cohen. They had met up earlier that day somewhere in the city, and, during the course of their conversations, they had decided to visit a site on the Stanley Peninsula where civilians had been held prisoner by the Japanese military during the Second World War. General Cohen had himself been interned there for just under two years, and my father, eager to gain some first hand knowledge of this place of historical interest so close to our home, had persuaded the General to accompany him on a tour of the area. As my father and his friend set off on foot from our house, I was invited to tag along...."

Alderton, whose interest in "Two-Gun" has persisted throughout the years, writes in his conclusion:

"...Morris had often been called upon to give service to Dr. Sun and his cause. He had acted at various times as a political organizer, a fundraiser, a procurer of contraband arms, a trainer of soldiers, a leader in battle, a trusted envoy, and as

a devoted bodyguard and genial companion. In all these instances he had complied with his leader's requests, and thereby upheld his solemn secret society oath.

Now (*upon the death of Dr. Sun Yat-Sen*) in fulfillment of the doctor's deathbed wish to be buried in the shadow of the glorious Ming ancestors, Morris would personally deliver his leader's earthly remains to their final resting place on the southern slopes of Nanking's Purple Mountain."

Note by Rena Krasno: *According to my own research (*Strangers Always, a Jewish Family in Wartime Shanghai, 1992, Pacific View Press, page 49*), during World War II, Cohen had gone to Hongkong to rescue Mme. Sun Yat-Sen. She had established in Hongkong the China Defense League, an umbrella organization for charitable, medical, and welfare programs. Cohen later said: "I felt this might be the last service I could do for Dr. Sun". The Japanese arrested him and interned him. In spite of dreadful conditions in the camp, Cohen managed to survive.

Two new publications have just been released regarding China's Jewish history.

From Asian Rare Books: In early April we expect to receive copies of a substantial (3 + lbs.) well-illustrated book with English and Chinese text: **The Jews in Harbin**, Editors: Qu Wei, Li Shuxiao, Harbin: Social Sciences Documentation Publishing House, Heilongjiang Provincial Academy of Social Sciences 2003. Price \$ 48.50 + postage.

We are now accepting reservations for the limited number of copies we are able to obtain. Payment will be requested only before we are ready to ship the books.

Stephen Feldman, Asian Rare Books (New York City), www.erols.com/arbs, phone 212 316 5334 // fax 212 316 3408. Credit Card remittance preferred.

Jews, Opium and the Kimono: The story of the Jews in the Far-East by Ezra Yehezkel-Shaked published by Rubin Mass Ltd., Jerusalem, 2003, 288 p., ISBN 965-09-0166-3, cat.# 114658, price US\$22 (+ \$10 airmail delivery)

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The cruel destiny of the persecuted, wandering Jews led them to the stormy region of the Far-East. Determination, cunning, courage and initiative all fused in the political and military struggles engulfing continental East Asia in the modern era. The first Jewish settlers left Babylon (Mesopotamia) in merchant vessels for an unknown world. Some, wrapped in cloaks, rode elephants far and wide in their daring adventures in search of trade in far-flung corners of the huge continent. Later, they laid the foundations of Jewish community life in various areas in the lands of Buddha and Shinto.

The importance of the Jewish presence in the Far-East is still unknown. Among other aspects, Jews played a central role in building Shanghai and Hong Kong, in helping create the Chinese Army, in introducing Communism to the Chinese people, in arming the Japanese forces in their war against Russia (1904-05) and in discovering in Bombay and spreading the vaccine against cholera and the plague throughout the Far-East, and in many other hidden events.

The trek of escaping Jewish refugees from the burning countries of Europe and the advancing Holocaust, to China, India and Japan, is attested to by the strong and brave souls who survived by the skin of their teeth and seized the anchor of salvation offered them in a strange, unknown world.

This book throws light on the great Jewish contribution and effort on behalf of the countries of the Far-East.

ART

Shanghai Exhibit of Ink Drawings entitled **"The Jews in China."**

by Rena Krasno

Talented artist Lu Zhide is exhibiting in Shanghai, 32 of his ink drawings illustrating the history of Jews in China. In his preface to the Catalogue accompanying the showing, Ilan Maor, Consul General of Israel in Shanghai, states that these fine drawings "enable us not only to enjoy the beauty and artistic aspects of Mr. Lu's work, but also open a window to a

TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor,

I was most interested in reading Bernard Grossman's article in the March 2004 issue of Points East.

I was more specifically drawn to the profile of "Old Mr. Dinaburg". My interest is that "Dinaburg" is my mother's maiden name and the entire family (consisting of fourteen brothers and sisters) settled in Manchuria and later Harbin. Starting in the 1920's little by little the Dinaburgs left Harbin eventually settling in Canada, United States, Australia, Europe and Japan.

I would be most interested in knowing if Mr. Grossman has any more details about this Mr. Dinaburg. What was his first name? Did he eventually move to Japan? In what year? Where did he live before that? Did he have any another family? Where was he born? Did he die in Japan?

Any information would be helpful in filling some holes in our family history.

Many thanks.

Dr. Henry Strage
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To the Editor

While reading and enjoying some of the articles on your site, I was surprised to read in the article "My Visit to the Bnei Menashe Tribe in India" by Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, that the areas of Manipur and Mizoram are located in southeast India. This is repeated more than once. In fact they are in northeast India as can be confirmed by looking at a map of India and should also be obvious to anyone seeing pictures of members of the Bnei Menashe tribe, who are very similar in appearance to other people in this region of the world, as opposed to other people living in southeast India.

Yours truly, Dr. Brian Braude

To the Editor,

Thank you for printing Jonathan Goldstein's review of my book *From the Rivers of Babylon to the Whangpoo: A Century of Sephardi Jewish Life in Shanghai* in *Points East*, Vol.19 No 1 March 2004. I am pleased to clarify some of the points he raises.

With regard to the label Sephardim, I explained in the book, that Baghdadis deliberately chose the title "The Sephardi Jewish Community of Shanghai." It was how they wished to be identified and I have suggested various reasons for their preference. (pp.34-8)

The Baghdadis wished to differentiate between themselves and the Russian Jews, (their first encounter with an Ashkenazi community) who began arriving in Shanghai in 1895. The "Sephardi" label balanced with the "Askenazi" one.

With regard to the question of opium, I specifically made it a point not to mention the names of the Baghdadi families involved in the trade, as it served no useful purpose and would have been insensitive to the feelings of their descendants.

The debate on the propriety of the pernicious opium trade was outside the scope of the book, which merely examined the Baghdadi involvement in it.

Heppner's statement regarding aid to the refugees is flawed. Heppner himself noted, "every effort was made to alleviate the refugees' suffering and restore their dignity". ("On the Relations" draft paper for Harvard Conference p.1.) He seems to overlook the fact that although some Baghdadis were conspicuously wealthy, the majority of this community, which numbered some 1000, was poor. Many Baghdadis tried to alleviate the plight of the refugees on a personal level - individuals provided discreet help, gifts of fruit, furniture, tea, and most notably invitations for meals. (p. 209 cites Israel's Messenger 9 June 1939 p.13). However, because of the vast number of refugees any relief work was just a drop in the ocean. As the ripples affected only a few, many were of the opinion that nothing

was being done.

David Kranzler has pointed out (*Japanese, Nazis and Jews, The Jewish Refugee Community of Shanghai 1938-1945*, pp. 454-5) that about one-third of the "Sephardi" (notice he uses this label) Jews had chosen British protection or citizenship. Some 340 Baghdadis were considered "enemy nationals" and placed in detention camps with British, American and other civilians. These included the wealthier members, who were the community leaders at the helm of refugee relief organizations. They were therefore unable to give the refugees any further assistance.

Regarding "Jewish residents" who were not interned or in the ghetto. These stateless Baghdadis and those with Iraqi citizenship were overwhelmed with their own struggle for existence in the war torn city. Many middle class Baghdadis lost their jobs. Their assets were confiscated and with their bank accounts virtually frozen, it became impossible to conduct private business. They were reduced to selling their possessions to survive and envied Baghdadis in the camps. They, nonetheless, graciously sent food parcels, to their interned relatives. Some Baghdadis "created" jobs for the refugees to enable them to get passes to leave the ghetto. (pp.222-223)

As Kranzler pointed out, (Japanese, p.454), the United States, the chief source of funds for the refugees, was at war with Japan after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee was unable to remit money and broke off contact with the Shanghai refugees till December 1943 (Japanese, p.462) Heppner seems to have overlooked this important fact.

Goldstein misquotes Joan Roland's statement referred to in the book - "many Shanghai Baghdadis had become the "Rothschilds of the East." In fact the comparison was made solely to the Sassoons. [p.32]

Finally, Haroon was probably the only Westerner interested in promoting Chinese technology and preserving China's rich cultural heritage", (IM, 3 June 1927;

July 1931). This statement clearly applies to the time in which it was written and may well not be true currently.

I take this opportunity to tell you that I look forward to reading Points East, which has maintained an excellent standard.

With best wishes, Maisie Meyer

To the Editor,
We enjoyed the long article on *Chinese Policy Towards Judaism*. It was quite thorough and detailed.

My husband, Jordan M. Phillips, M.D., and I were in China in the beginning of 1979, as soon as the signing of the Open Door Policy. Early in 1973, my husband was supposed to go with a delegation from the U.S. State Department for six weeks. Being in active practice, he could not go. He would be abandoning his patients. So we went later.

We were told by a friend in China, Sidney Shapiro, author of *Jews in China* and other books, that there would be a Shabbat service by a couple of business ladies in their home. This was the start of a long-standing relationship.

Since we traveled to other countries throughout the world, we found a Torah in a used shop in Moscow. We bought it, brought it home, had it koshered, and then hand-carried the scroll and shipped the spindles in a box separately to Beijing. This is the first usable Torah in China since 1949.

Once in Beijing, the Torah was hand sewn with sinew to the spindles by myself. I really felt the power of the Torah. The following Shabbat we gave the Torah to Roberta and Elyse. They have been responsible for keeping the Torah and its use, as you mentioned in your excellent article.

Sincerely,
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News from the Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan U, Kaifeng

by Dr. Zhang Qianhong

1. The 2nd Jewish Essay Competition and Scholarship Awards Ceremony

The Institute of Jewish Studies, College of History and Culture, Henan University, Kaifeng celebrated its Second Annual Jewish Essay Competition and Scholarship Awards Ceremony in the afternoon of April 14, 2004. The function was well attended and memorable. Among its audience were the leaders of the College of History and Culture, including the party secretary, Li Wen-San, and Dr. Zhang Qian Hong, the Dean and also the Director of the Institute. Mr. Len Hew, honorary director for the Institute, and his wife came from Canada for the special occasion.

After welcoming the Hews and thanking them for traveling all the way from Canada for this occasion, Dr. Zhang gave a brief introduction about annual Jewish essay competition and scholarships that had been initiated for the Institute by Mr. Hew. Since they were begun two years ago, the scholarship program has grown from only 2 graduate scholarships for students of the Institute of Jewish Studies to include scholarships for undergraduate students interested in studying Jewish studies in the future. This year the Institute will be giving out 3 graduate scholarships and 15 undergraduate scholarships, all from money raised overseas by Mr. Hew.

As for the Annual Jewish Essay Competition, the 2004 essay competition was another success story, she added. Last year there were about 30 entries from across the campus; this year there were more than 90 entries, a growth of more than 300%. Dr. Zhang expressed her belief that the task of the Institute—to promote greater awareness and learning of Jewish history and culture in China for fostering greater friendship between the Chinese and Jewish peoples—thus far has been carried out with success.

After presentation of the awards, the ceremony

concluded with speeches by both Mr. Hew and a representative of the students: Mr. Hew encouraged students to work harder so that they would be useful citizens and better human beings in the future; the student representative expressed their appreciation and gratitude to Mr. Hew for what he had done for them.

2. Special Lecture by Mr. Clive Marks

Under the invitation of the College of History and Culture, Henan University, a cultural exchange group from the London Jewish Cultural Center, England visited Henan University under the leadership of Mr. Clive Marks, its former chairman and current president. The visit included a special guest lecture by Mr. Marks.

Before the lecture, Mr. Marks led his group to visit the Shalom Library of the Institute of Jewish Studies. In a simple and solemn ceremony, Mr. Marks received appointments both as Honorary Director and Honorary Associate Professor of the Institute of Jewish Studies. Before the visitors left to begin the lecture, students from the Institute sang, to the utter amazement of everyone present, the Hebrew song "Haveinu Shalom Aleichem".

The special lecture on music delivered by Mr. Marks was very well attended. The audience included the leading Jewish expert in China, Dr. Xu Xin of Nanjing University. Mr. Marks is an expert of the music from the 30's to the 50's of the 20th century. In his lecture entitled "Art, Identity and Suffering", Mr. Marks pointed out that music is the common language of humanity. He also pointed out that the Jews and the Chinese people have gone through a lot of suffering and thus have strong group identity. Because of his new perspective on the topic and the exciting way he delivered it, Mr. Marks received resounding applause. During the question period, the students raised many questions on Jewish people and their history and culture. Even after the lecture was officially over, the students continued to have discussions in the venue with their Jewish visitors and with Mr. Marks in particular, until the visitors had to leave.

BOOK NOOK

Amir Aleksandrovich Khisamutdinov. *Russian Emigration in China Encyclopedia*. (in Russian) Vladivostok: Publication of the Far Eastern University. 2002. (358 p., illus.)
reviewed by Rena Krasno

The connection of the Sino-Judaic Institute with the Hoover Institution is indeed a fortuitous one. The outstanding co-operation of the Hoover staff has led us to assemble an ever-growing collection of material on Jews in the Far East.

Thus, it happened one day that Ron Bulatoff, whose dedication to the Hoover Archives never wanes, called me with the news that a professor from Vladivostok was studying our files, and expressed interest to learn more about my father, D.B. Rabinovich. Of course, it was a delightful surprise for me and I rushed off to meet him. It turned out, as Khisamutdinov writes in his Introduction that:

"....Some time ago, when I did research on Russians in Shanghai, my attention was drawn to the name "David Rabinovich". After having lived in Vladivostok, Rabinovich left for Shanghai, where his talent as an active member of the Jewish Community was soon evident. He became the editor of a newspaper, and the author of a volume of good poetry. He spent his last years in Israel. I had read about him in Russian publications from Shanghai and Tel Aviv, that is why I was sincerely glad to meet his daughter...The time I spent with Rena Krasno was not in vain. She not only generously shared her memories, but also rare documents and photos..."

Professor Khisamutnidov is a man passionately dedicated to his work. He was born in 1950 in the Krasnoarsk Region. He is a man of adventure, a graduate of the Vladivostok Marine College, who later turned to history. The positions he held are too numerous to mention, as are the list of his books, articles, reviews, academic awards and honors.

One of the subjects that fascinates him today is how Russian culture traveled from the Russian Far East to China. Thus, his research centers on Russians of various backgrounds in China, including Russian

Jews. (We would like to remind our readers that Russian Jews in China led a very active cultural life, published a number of Russian language newspapers, and translated into Russian books by famous Jewish authors.)

Should any of our readers be interested in contacting Professor Khisamutdinov, he can be reached at:
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Professor Khisamutdinov speaks and writes English, so non-Russian speakers would have no problem communicating with him.

An additional pleasure, when I met Professor Khisamutdinov at the Hoover Institution, was to be introduced to Patricia Polansky who had arrived at the same time. She is the Russian Bibliographer of The Russian Collection at Hamilton Library, the University of Hawaii, in Honolulu.

Polansky, who is most charming and cooperative, has sent me a list of the Russian Collections in her library and, among them, are publications that would surely be of interest to our readers, such as:

- "Russkaia pechat" v Kitae: city of Shanghai (International Association of Orientalist Librarians Bulletin, 1990, nos. 36-37, p. 41- 85)
- "The Russian Press in China: Shanghai"
- "A history of libraries and publishers in the city of Shanghai, accompanied by an extensive bibliography of Russian books, journals and newspapers printed in this city".

Our readers may also be interested in the catalog Polansky and Khisamutdinov published together:

- "Patricia Polansky, *Russkaia pechat v Kitae, Iaponii if Korea: Katalog sobraniia Biblioteki imeni Gamiltona Gavaiskogo Universiteta*"
- "*Russian publications in China, Japan and Korea: catalog of a collection at Hamilton Library University of Hawaii*", edited by Amir Khisamutdinov, Moskva: Pashkov Dom, 2002, 201 p.: illus.

Among other positions, Polansky has been Director of the Center for Russia in Asia, School of Hawaiian, Asian and Pacific Studies, at the University of Hawaii. She is a member of the International Association of Orientalist Librarians. Polansky can be reached at:

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FILM

The Pedlar and the Doctor, a short film treatment by Paolo Frere
reviewed by Rena Krasno

The Sino-Judaic Institute always welcomes direct communications from its members. Dr. Michael Alderton, who lives in Australia, is one of our loyal members who has written us on a number of occasions, especially with regard to General Morris Cohen, popularly known as "Two-Gun Cohen".

Some weeks ago, I was delighted to receive from Dr. Alderton a 'film industry pamphlet' *The Pedlar and The Doctor* (1977), which is based on the early life of Morris Abraham Cohen (1889-1970). Of course, since the *The Pedlar and the Doctor* was written years ago, Alderton warns us that "it should not be mistaken for the latest word in historical research". Nevertheless, I found Dr. Alderton's pamphlet most interesting, especially with regard to Cohen's meetings with his father.

Paolo Frere is the *nom-de-plume* Dr. Alderton chose for himself for this specific project. On this point, the author emailed me that "no great mystery about that other name, as it is only used so that I can disassociate my academic work from my commercial work, chosen to bring to mind my late father Paul, who told me the first stories that I had ever heard about General Cohen's amazing life".

In the pamphlet, Dr. Alderton informs us that Morris Abraham Cohen was born in East London to a poor Orthodox Jewish

ing months, most are expected to leave Shavei Shomron, but they are likely to land in other settlements where they have relatives or friends.

The local Bnei Menashe now number about 800, with most of them clustered in three West Bank settlements and one in Gaza...

Amishav, the group that champions the Bnei Menashe, want to bring all of them to Israel.

"They work hard, serve in the army and raise good families," said Michael Freund, director of Amishav, which means "my people return" in Hebrew. "They are a blessing to this country."

Mr. Freund said he would gladly settle the immigrants wherever they could be accommodated. They gravitate to settlements because housing is cheaper, and the tightly knit settlement communities are prepared to absorb newcomers.

But Peace Now, an Israeli group that monitors settlements, says the recruitment of far-flung groups with questionable Jewish ancestry is part of an effort to raise the number of settlers and to increase the Jewish population relative to the Arabs...

Mr. Freund acknowledges that his group wants immigrants for demographic reasons. But he also insists that the commitment of the Bnei Menashe to Judaism is deep-rooted and predated plans to immigrate to Israel...the group has long had traditions that resemble ancient Jewish practices, said Mr. Freund, a former prime ministerial aide.

Jewish Life Flourishes in China

by Buzzy Gordon
excerpted from the *Jewish Press* 3 Oct. 2003

Beijing—The number of Rosh Hashanah celebrants in the Jewish communities of Beijing and Shanghai swelled significantly this year, as individual Jews from remote cities like Kunming and Shijiazhuang joined with the Jewish residents of mainland China's two most important cities to pray.

And even in China, Jews had their choice of three congregations—Chabad-Lubavitch centers in each city, and Kehillat Beijing,

which, while unaffiliated, identifies with the World Union for Progressive Judaism, a Reform movement. Perhaps no less important than the High Holiday services were the milestones marked by each of the two communities on the Sunday preceding Rosh Hashanah.

In Shanghai, the community welcoming the first Torah to belong to a synagogue in that city since Jews started returning there after World War II refugees had departed. In Beijing, meanwhile, a *mezuzah* went up on the first Jewish preschool the city has ever seen...

Expatriate businessmen, journalists professionals and students—not to mention Israeli diplomats and company representatives—combine to pour into the bustling cities of Shanghai, with its 16 million people, and Beijing, whose population totals 14 million.

The first congregation to be established was the Kehillat Beijing. Its origins date back to 1979, the year Deng Xiaoping's "Open Door" policy went into effect.

Kehillat Beijing's founders and current leaders, Elyse Silverberg and Roberta Lipson, say that in the early days their efforts focused on getting together for Passover and the High Holidays, which were usually celebrated at the homes of members. The community's first Seder took place in 1980.

Chabad, which is active in Asia, came to its newest outpost in Beijing in 2001. Led by Rabbi Shimon Freundlich and his wife, Dini, formerly of Chabad Hong Kong, the Orthodox Chasidic synagogue operates out of the rabbi's home...

The rabbi says that two or three times a year he brings a *shochet*, or ritual slaughterer, from Australia and a western-style butcher from Beijing to Inner Mongolia, where they slaughter cows and chickens to provide kosher meat for the communities of Beijing and Shanghai.

Freundlich and Lipson are contemplating the rental or purchase of a large house that could be converted into what they say would be the first Jewish community center in the world sponsored jointly by Chabad and a liberal congregation.

Meanwhile, 650 miles to the south, Chabad is the only game in town for the

Jewish community in Shanghai.

According to Rabbi Shalom Greenberg, who arrived in Shanghai with his wife Dina in 1998, more than 200 people attended Rosh Hashanah services...

The small local Jewish community of permanent residents and frequent business visitors, many of whom are Sephardi, has appointed the Chabad rabbi as their community rabbi.

The demand for kosher food is great in Shanghai as well, and the Greenbergs oversee a thriving kosher meal service providing lunches or dinners seven days weeks...

Ohel Rachel...is being lovingly preserved by the community...Last week, it was opened for the dedication of a new Torah, held amid great festivity and to the strains of Jewish melodies performed by Chinese musicians from Nanjing, under the direction of an American Jewish band leader who once played with Shlomo Carlebach...

A Celebration of Cultures Bonds of Friendship Between Chinese & Jews

Tours and Three-Day Festival/Workshop Event, October 2004 Regent China Tours, in conjunction with the Center for Jewish Studies in Shanghai, is featuring A CELEBRATION OF TWO CULTURES: Honoring Chinese and Jewish Bonds of Friendship, Heritage, and History, a special three-day Chinese and Jewish Festive Gathering of Music, Workshops, Discussion, Touring, and Audiovisual Presentations in Shanghai, October 24-26, 2004. Regent Tours will present a 16-day tour that will include this special 3-day Celebration, October 12-27, 2004, visiting Beijing, Kaifeng, Xi'an, and Shanghai. One may register for the full tour and celebration event, or for a week-long stay in Shanghai that includes the celebration event, or for the celebration event only. Tour cuisine is vegan, with Shabbat meals with Chabad. The three-day celebration features glatt kosher meals. The itinerary, costs, and details of the Celebration of Cultures are on the website <http://www.joyfulnoise.net/JoyChina206.html>

Breaking New Ground: 2004 Report on a Trip to North America

by Dr. Xu Xin

Accompanied by my dear wife, Kong Defang, the primary goal for my latest foray—the 2004 U.S./Canada trip—was to learn how to design a curriculum of courses on Jewish religion for my new academic home, the Department of Religious Studies at Nanjing University.

This transfer from the School of Foreign Studies to a newly established department followed my return from Israel after receiving an honorary doctorate from Bar-Ilan University in late May 2003.

One challenge is that now I will shift my pedagogy from Jewish history and culture to Jewish religion. Therefore, it becomes extremely important for me to discover ideas from abroad about university curricula and to generate support for the program. I felt quite fortunate and pleased when I received invitations from both Professor Martin Lockshin, Director of the Center for Jewish Studies, York University in Toronto, and Professor Nathan Katz, Chair of the Department of the Florida International University in Miami, to visit their institutions and share their knowledge and resources.

Many discussions among the three of us, and with other interested professors, centered on teaching Judaism to non-Jews. I sat in more than 15 classes on religious subjects. By the time I returned to China, I had a full and varied selection of programs, syllabi, and materials on religious studies. All will be helpful in breaking this new ground of academic study—promoting the study and teaching of Judaism in China.

As in previous trips, I was invited to deliver a number of lectures. At York University in Toronto, I lectured on "The Jewish Diaspora in Modern China". This attracted more than 200 people although it was a cold wintry Sunday.

As a scholar-in-residence, I spent two days with congregants of Temple Emanuel of Toronto and spoke to them on three different occasions. Many members of the congregation had traveled with me in China in 2003. It brought great happiness to see them again in their synagogue. I felt so much at home.

Thanks to Esther Sarick, I was able to view the collection from the Kaifeng Jewish community, brought to the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto by Bishop Charles White, who lived and served in Kaifeng in the early 20th century. While scholars like me who study the history of the Kaifeng Jews are familiar with those items, it was still amazing to actually view and touch the originals — to see evidence of the historical contacts between the Chinese and Jewish people.

We also made a special visit to the Beth Tzedek Museum to view the renowned Judaica collection of Dr. Cecil Roth, particularly its unique Scroll of Esther illuminated with motifs taken from important Chinese symbols of good fortune and showing the figure of the executioner from the Purim story in the form of an archer. Much has been written about this scroll but nothing can compare to the satisfaction of actually seeing it.

During my Canadian visit, I was also invited to Winnipeg and spoke on "Relations between China and Israel since 1949" and "Chinese Policies towards Judaism" at the Jewish Community Center there. The lectures were co-sponsored with the Jewish Heritage Center by The Yunnan Project Hope of Canada, Inc. headed by Mr. Len Hew, who has provided scholarships for some Kaifeng Jewish descendents. Although we had never before met, we discovered much common ground for a very productive relationship.

In Miami, I lectured at four different sites: each attracting a large audience, before heading to and lecturing at Kennesaw State University in Atlanta, and then back north to Skidmore College in New York.

In New York City, I had many appointments and meetings. Rabbi Arthur Schneier, President of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, former President of Hebrew Union College, and I discussed the development of programs for teaching Judaism in China. Rabbi Marvin Tokayer and I discussed the future of the Kaifeng Jewish descendents and possible assistance we might be able to provide for them.

At the final stop of the whirlwind tour, the talk given at B'nai Jehoshua Beth Elohim at Glenview (a Chicago suburb) turned out to be very special and personal. This is the synagogue of the Friend fam-

ily. Tracy Friend, daughter of Beverly and the late Jim Friend and current vice president of the congregation, introduced me. My journey to Judaic studies has been so closely linked to the life I experienced living with the Friends in 1986. What a great moment, filled with reflection and warm memories.

My last appearance, on the eve of my departure, was before the Faculty and Friends of Hillel organized by the Citywide Faculty Program of the Hillels of Illinois. We watched the documentary "Minyan in Kaifeng" and discussed my filmed experience leading this group of 12 Jews in 1997 to initiate and experience a Shabbat with descendents of the Kaifeng Jewish community.

How lucky we are with the friends we have made over the past 15 years. We are so grateful as we look towards the future—not standing still, but ever breaking new ground.

Saving Jewish Shanghai

(continued from page 1)

gogue, where there are now buildings, and bringing in gravestones of Jewish residents from former cemeteries. He says his idea would symbolically link the park to the Huangpu River on one end and an ornate Buddhist temple on the other.

Yet creating the park would mean saving only a few more of the ghetto buildings than the city required, Mr. Choa said. By tearing down some of the row houses, developers, who would be chosen by the government, could build more profitable high-rises.

"The choice was to keep the housing or put in a park," he said. "Park space was so underrepresented. I thought the park was more important."

"I agonized a lot about what to do in this area," he added, calling the decision a "Faustian bargain."

Mr. Choa said that no matter what he proposed, much of the ghetto could be torn down anyway. "There's no guarantee that even a municipal-preserved building will stay," he said.

But momentum is growing to preserve the entire neighborhood. An alternate plan has been drawn up by two Canadians, Ian

Leventhal and Thomas M. Rado, who are Jewish. They formed a company called Living Bridge that is trying to raise \$450 million to preserve at least 50 ghetto buildings in a nine-block area...

Mr. Leventhal and Mr. Rado, who are working with government-appointed preservation professors from a Shanghai university and a Toronto architect, made a presentation to district officials in Hongkou last Monday. If district officials can be convinced of the financial viability of the Leventhal-Rado restoration plan, which also calls for a boutique hotel, an extensive memorial park and a car-free pedestrian zone, it would then go to the Shanghai city government for consideration when they auction the area to developers.

"In principle the government is supportive, and our next step is to do a more detailed version for presentation early this summer," Mr. Leventhal said, adding that he hoped to set a precedent for heritage conservation and development...

Because Shanghai has not decided which redevelopment path to take, no one knows what, if any, buildings beyond the synagogue and the row-house block will be preserved. All Mr. Choa, Mr. Leventhal and Mr. Rado can do is keep urging government officials to consider the tourism potential of the district so that they in turn might transfer that pressure onto future developers...

A Meeting with Shi Lei

by Lynne Elson

On March 29, 2004, I had the chance to reconnect with Shi Lei, whom I had met in Kaifeng when I was there on my second visit in April 1998 with the Sino-Judaic Institute group led by Arthur Rosen and Dr. Wendy Abraham.

I had been in contact with Shi Lei for about a year via email and we both had looked forward to my visit to Jerusalem this spring. When we greeted each other, Shi Lei recalled that our group in 1998 had shared a Shabbat dinner with him and other descendants and that we had also taken him with us to Shanghai—his first trip away from Kaifeng.

He has certainly come a long way since then. He has a deep interest in learning about his Jewish ancestry...His first year in Israel was spent at Bar Ilan University learning Jewish studies (in English)...

For the past two years, Shi Lei has been at the Machon Meir Yeshiva in Jerusalem. The Amishav organization and Michael Freund have been helping him. He has tried to get a visa to come to the U.S. but has been turned down every time. He feels that, if several Jewish groups would get together and petition the State Department to give him a visa, it might have an effect. I don't know who would be the person or group that could instigate such a movement. Perhaps the Sino-Judaic Institute could look into this. It seems to me that there would be numerous Jewish groups that would be interested in having Shi Lei come and speak about his ancestry and his experiences.

Shi Lei is indeed unique in the Jewish world. There has been a re-awakening among the Jews of Kaifeng because of the visits from various Jewish groups from the U.S.

Shi Lei's interest in Judaism has turned into concrete action by his desire to study in Israel. He deserves more support from those of us in the U.S. who want to reach out to Jews of other lands. Unfortunately, he does not feel totally accepted as a Jew by the Orthodox community in Israel. They are pressuring him to undergo a conversion. When I saw him he said that he hadn't decided what to do yet.

For his future plans, Shi Lei would like eventually to be a liaison between Israel and China — "a middle man in business" he said. He likes Israel very much. Before he came there, he was told, "people think this country is in chaos, but it's not." This is a young man with a most beguiling background and fascinating future possibilities.

I was enriched by my conversation with Shi Lei in Israel and feel that it is important to share what I learned with the members of the Sino-Judaic Institute.

Lynne Elson

The Women of Cochin

by Prof. Livia Bitton Jackson
excerpted from the *Jewish Press Magazine*,
9 May 2003

[In the Biblical era, women sang and composed religious works. Only in Cochin did Jewish women follow in the footsteps of their Biblical role models]...For centuries, the women of Cochin composed religious hymns and liturgy and performed them in their synagogues at community festivals and on holidays...

The Jews' ancient status in this isolated place may explain the unique phenomenon of having perpetuated the Biblical tradition of women as ritual poets and singers. Their prayers and liturgical hymns in the Jewish dialect of Malayalam, the Cochin Jews' native tongue, a Dravidian language related to Tamil and Sanskrit, have been collected in some 26 notebooks, now turned the color of saffron with age. Every woman had a notebook of her compositions and this book of poetry and song she would hand down to her daughters and granddaughters as precious, personal legacy.

Anthropologists and linguists studying the culture of the Cochin Jewish community are fascinated by the scholarly and poetic quality of the songs. Some scholars and musicologists have undertaken to translate them into English and Hebrew, and to preserve the melodies on tape.

For this purpose, a group of about 30 women descendants of the Cochin grandmothers and great grandmothers have been meeting once a month for several years in order to preserve this precious tradition. The project was conceived by Galia Hacco who invited Cochin women from all over Israel for a meeting in her home, and the "Women's Group for Learning the Women's Songs in Malayalam" came into being.

Galia Hacco was born in Cochin, and came to Israel at age 13 with a massive wave of aliyah of Cochin Jews during the 1950's. Eager to adopt the ways of Israeli Sabras, Galia, like youngsters of her generation, soon allowed her heritage to fade into the background.

"I heard these beautiful songs as a child, but I did not pay much attention," Galia confesses. "These songs in Malayalam

are the voices of our grandmothers," she reminds her friends gathered in her living room. "If we don't act now, these songs will disappear with the last generation that sang them."

Now the group meets once a month at "Avraham Magen," the Indian Synagogue in Rishon Letzion's Ramat Eliayahu neighborhood, to recreate the melodies of some 260 different songs preserved in the notebooks. The women's dedication to the task is remarkable: some travel from as far away as Kiryat Shmona in the north, Tverya in the east, and Beersheva in the south to revive a tradition that is even more ancient than their Cochin culture, a tradition that reaches all the way back to the Bible.

A View from Cochin

by Jana Winter
excerpted from *The Forward*, 3 October
2003

"I feel like an endangered species, like a rhinoceros in a zoo," Joseph Hallegua said with the faint helplessness of an old patriarchal figure slowly losing control over his domain.

The 70-something Hallegua is one of the last Cochin Jews, trying to come to terms with the grim future of his community...The island's Jewish area has become a tourist attraction, complete with palm trees and a picturesque coastline. People like Hallegua live out their days under the curious gaze of voyeuristic visitors.

When Hallegua says his community is dying, he isn't kidding. Only 14 Jewish residents remain, most in or approaching their 70s...

When the British rule over India ended in 1947, Cochin's Jews maintained a high social status and comprised several hundred families.

Where have they all gone? Not without a sense of humor, Hallegua said that they may have taken the saying "Next year in Jerusalem" a little too seriously. The founding of Israel in 1948 proved too tempting to be ignored by the Jews of Cochin as they left in droves seeking new lives, greater opportunity and what they could not get in India: a true feeling of

belonging to a homeland. They made aliyah at a time when assimilation in the fledgling Jewish state would not be hard, when they could feel a part of the founding of Israeli culture. According to Hallegua, those who moved to Israel decades ago have returned only to visit.

They are among visitors from all over the world who have descended on Cochin in recent years...It is no wonder that Hallegua feels like an animal in a zoo...

He has visited Israel but has always returned to India. His relatives in Israel, he noted, "are Israelis now — I am not."

The Jews of Cochin are not entirely isolated; there is a small contingent of Jews living in Ernakulam, a town on the mainland of Kerala across the bridge from Cochin. Nonetheless, there is no religious leader, and only three or four men attend services regularly. (Women attend synagogue only on holidays.) Still, they have a strong community and have recently started to come together to address a daunting subject: their future. When asked about the enormous burden that will face the last person left, Hallegua replied stoically, "Thankfully, I will not be the last one."

Although no final arrangements have been made, a few options have been discussed regarding the preservation of the community's history and influence. Tourism will continue to flourish as long as the synagogue is maintained, making its conservation of interest to the Indian government. Most likely, it will be turned into a historical society supported by either the Indian government or Jewish trustees from the United States or Israel, or a combination of all who possess an interest, one way or the other, in maintaining this ancient site.

But what legacy will survive? What will become of Jew Street, the synagogue?...A dying community reflected in his aging eyes, Hallegua spoke slowly, divulging all he knows for certain: "In eight years, we'll all be gone."

"Lost Tribe" Adrift in the West Bank

by Greg Myre
excerpted from *The New York Times* (International Edition) 22 December 2003

Shavei Shomron, West Bank, Dec. 16 — Sharon Palian and his fellow immigrants from India are still struggling with the Hebrew language and remain partial to homemade kosher curry rather than Israeli cuisine.

But the 71 immigrants, who arrived in June with the firm conviction that they were descended from one of the biblical lost tribes of Israel, feel they have completed a spiritual homecoming.

"This is my land," said Mr. Palian, a 45-year-old widower who left a lush rice farm and brought his three children with him from the Bnei Menashe community in northeastern India. "I am coming home."

Yet by making their home here, over the hill from the Palestinian city of Nablus, they have thrust themselves onto the front lines of the Middle East conflict.

"Israel can bring lost tribes from India, Alaska or Mars, as long as they put them inside Israel," said Saeb Erekat, the chief Palestinian negotiator. "But to bring a lost person from India and have him find his land in Nablus is just outrageous..."

While Israel has been building what it describes as a security barrier in the West Bank, the planned route will not quite reach Shavei Shomron. That would make the community, with its 600 residents, a prime candidate for dismantling if Israel does begin that process.

The immigrants, many of them farmers at home, wear Western clothes, and the men wear skullcaps. The married women cover their hair with knitted caps and wear long skirts, as they did in India.

They live a Spartan existence in mobile homes, with much of their day devoted to language lessons. Some stay in the nearby settlement of Enav and commute to their classes in an armored bus.

They receive a monthly stipend from Amishav, an Israeli group that seeks out "lost Jews" and has been bringing in immigrants from Bnei Menashe for more than a decade...

Most of the immigrants have recently completed a religion course and are now recognized as Jewish by the state, permitting them to become citizens. In the com-