

中國-猶太學院

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The Sino-Judaic Institute is a non-denominational, non-profit, and non-political organization which was founded in 1985 by an international group of scholars and laypersons with the following goals:

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

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Points East

中國-猶太學院

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MARTIN BUBER AND TAOISM, Part II

by Irene Eber

excerpted from *Monumenta Serica, Journal of Oriental Studies*, Vol 42, 1994

PART II. Buber recorded his initial reflections on Taoist thought in a brief essay which he later appended as an "Afterward" to the 1910 translations from the *Chuang-tzu*.⁴ Whereas the *Chuang-tzu* text was twice revised for the 1918 and the 1951 editions, the essay has remained in its original form. In later years Buber distanced himself from this essay, describing it as belonging "...to a stage that I had to pass through before I could enter into an independent relationship with being. One may call it the 'mystical' phase..."⁵

The Four Taoist Concepts

The Taoist concepts that Buber sought to explain in this essay are the meaning of *Tao* [way] and those which he considered associated with *Tao*: non-acting (*wu-wei*), the One (unity or oneness) (*yi*), and knowledge (understanding) (*chih*). In Buber's view an inherent interrelationship exists between the four concepts... *Tao* cannot be named and it cannot be investigated for it has no attributes. The presence of *Tao* in the phenomenal world, stated Buber, is as oneness where it is neither recognized nor known; *Tao* is lived, *Tao* is acting; *Tao* manifests itself in the genuine existence of the sage. Knowledge consists in being, not in the knowledge of external matters or objects. But knowledge is also acting. It is the deed. Yet genuine acting is non-acting because it originates in "a gathered unity," or oneness. To experience *Tao* directly means being one with *Tao* and means also being unified within oneself... *Tao* in relationship to the human being is what interested Buber, not *Tao* as an abstract idea, and it is, no doubt, for this reason that he chose to discuss the interrelationship of these particular concepts...

As pointed out by Benjamin Schwartz, common to all mysticism is the ineffable ground of reality which is accessible only to a higher kind of knowledge (*gnosis*), beyond commonly used language. Also commonly held is the assumption that only some human beings (perfected in their essence) can attain to oneness with the ultimate source.⁶ Buber's concept of the *tzaddik*, developed in his works on Hasidism at that time, was thus not only the result of his reflections concerning mysticism, it was also indebted to how he interpreted the significance of the sage and the genuine person in Taoist thought. According to Hans Kohn, Europe's philosophical discourse was undergoing changes in the first decade of the twentieth century, precisely when Martin Buber had his fateful encounter with both Hasidism and Taoism. By means of Hasidism, writes Kohn, Buber found and developed his own teaching, while Taoism (Kohn does not specify which

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BNAI MENASHE RECOGNIZED AS JEWS AFTER 2,700 YEARS

excerpted from articles by Peter Foster in *Aizawl*, filed 17 September 2005 and Baruch Gordon, *Arutz Sheva Israel National News*, 21 September 2005

With a cry of "*Mazel tov*" and a Rabbi's congratulatory handshake, hundreds of tribal people from India's north-east were formally converted to Judaism this week after being recognized as descendants of the 10 Lost Tribes exiled from Israel 2,700 years ago.

A rabbinical court, dispatched with the blessing of Israel's Chief Rabbi, traveled 3,500 miles to Mizoram on India's border with Burma to perform the conversions using a *mikvah* - ritual bath - built specially for the purpose.

There were emotional scenes as the Oriental-looking hill people professed their faith, repeating the oath from Deuteronomy: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One."

Over the next five years up to 7,000 members of the Bnai Menashe are expected to emigrate to Israel after years of pleading their case were met with official recognition.

Since the 1950s a small group of tribal people, who live in the jungle-clad hills that straddle Burma, India and Bangladesh, have claimed descent from the Lost Tribe of Menashe, the remnants of which are said to have found their way to China, Thailand and north-eastern India.

Their claims gathered force in the 1980s when amateur anthropological studies purported to have discovered similarities between their ancient animist rituals and those of Old Testament Judaism.

Although the claims are still treated with great skepticism by Mizoram's majority Christian population - and have never been examined by professional anthropologists - the Bnai Menashe are unshakeable in their belief.

"This is the greatest day of our lives, a wonderful new life is now beginning for us," said Pe'er Tlau who, along with his wife and three sons, plans to emigrate to Israel as soon as formalities allow.

Mr Tlau, an electronics engineer whose father fought for the British during the Burma Campaign, successfully proved his Jewish credentials before the rabbinical court, answering de-

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FROM THE EDITOR

I am going to break with tradition here to inject a little of my personal life into this newsletter by way of explaining why the publication of this issue has been delayed.

After a five-year struggle with leukemia, and after three final grueling months, our eldest daughter, Amy, died in September. She was 35 years old. She leaves here a husband and two young boys, ages 3-1/2 and 7. It is the kind of experience that leaves one reeling—and that is all I can say about the matter for now.

In the meantime, after sitting *shiva* (the stay-at-home Jewish custom of mourning) that I can only explain as being a communal embrace similar to that of a billowy aunt, which is at once comforting and suffocating, we have all returned to careers and school. Life resumes its routines and ultimately, it is hoped, time will work its healing magic.

So...here is *Points East*, better late than not at all.

Shana tova—a healthy and happy Jewish new year to you all!

Anson Laytner

TO THE EDITOR

Shalom,

I live in Israel and grew up in Hong Kong in the early 1960s. I am an old book collector in various fields, one of them, a growing collection of books and publications on the Jews in the Far East.

I happen to have a double copy of the very rare Responsa book of RABBI KISILEV: MISHBREI YAM, Harbin 1926. I would like to offer it to one of your members.

I have another book of R. SAUL ABDULLAH of Hong-Kong, printed in Vienna 1923. He was a scholar who specialized in medieval Jewish poetry - this book being a commentary on R. YEHUDA HALEVI's poems. There is a short preface in English on the author, his Far East origins, and a photo too.

Both these rare books are offered for sale. Photos can be provided upon request.

Could you forward this message to potential members who might be interested. You may forward my email for contact: mcaplan@013.net.

Many thanks & best regards,
Menashe Caplan

Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

Points East is published by the Sino-Judaic Institute, a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. The opinions and views expressed by the contributors and editor are their own and do not necessarily express the viewpoints and positions of the Sino-Judaic Institute.

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fully hosted the International Symposium on Jewish Culture.

V The Shalom Library

The Institute Library, called the Shalom Library, houses about 3,000 English books. Many of the books are donated by overseas friends. Among the major contributors are: Mr. Len Hew, Dr. Jerold Gotel, Kaufman Silverberg Library in Winnipeg, Prof. Michael Zand of Hebrew University, Prof. Joshua Schwartz of Bar-Ilan University, Professor Irene Eber of Hebrew University and Mr. Emmanuel Pratt, the Association of the Former Residents of China in Tel-Aviv. These books have laid a very solid foundation for the Institute to become an important research and training center for the Jewish studies in China.

VI The Training of the Students

At present the Institute has 11 graduate students in the M.A. program. Two of these students will finish their master's degrees and one of them will go to Nanjing University for PH.D Program in Jewish history and culture. One female student received an Israeli Government Scholarship and in September will go to Bar-Ilan University for further study.

Professor Zhang Qianhong has published five monographs and series of papers on Jewish history and culture. She is well-known for her work in the academic circles in China. Under her guidance and influence, many students at Henan University are becoming more and more interested in Jewish history and culture, and some students have published articles and papers on Jewish topics. Each year at least 60 undergraduate students choose the course of Jewish history and culture.

We are proud of the many accomplishments the last 3 short years and look to the future with confidence and optimism. We firmly believe that our Institute will play a critical role in the increasingly important promotion for greater mutual understanding and appreciation between the Jewish and Chinese peoples.

Language News and Notes from Taiwan

excerpted from *JTA* articles by Dan Bloom

A new "Jew"?

A human rights group in Taiwan is calling on Chinese journalists and academics around the world to stop the "discriminatory" way that the characters for "Jewish people" are written in Mandarin.

"There are many Chinese characters for 'you-tai,' or Jew, but the combination that is currently being used refers to an animal of the monkey species and has the connotation of parsimoniousness," Chien Hsi-chieh, the director of the Peacetime Foundation of Taiwan, said recently.

Chien's remarks at a news conference in Taipei, complete with illustrations of the offending characters and the new characters he recommends, were widely reported in Chinese-language media across Taiwan and China.

Chien said the biased Chinese characters were devised by Christian missionaries in China around 1830, when they were translating the Hebrew and Christian Bibles into Chinese and needed a term for "Jews."

"A better choice for the word 'Jews' in Chinese writing would be one that is pronounced the same but written with a more neutral character," he said...

Chien first brought the matter to the attention of the Taiwanese government in 2003 and again in October 2004, where it was discussed by officials in the Ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs and the Government Information Office, according to Dennis Lin, a public relations official at the Peacetime Foundation.

The Taiwanese government under President Chen Shui-bian said it would help promote the new way of writing the term for Jews in books, newspapers and on the Internet if local civic groups continued to put forward the idea. But the government hasn't taken any concrete action yet, Lin

said, noting that the government prefers to let the Peacetime Foundation, a private, nonprofit group, lead the international campaign...

Jews are not the only people that written Chinese discriminates against, Chien added. He also recommended that the Chinese world community replace the current term for Islam, "hui," with a better combination of characters, "yi-si-lan," because the current term has a negative connotation of paganism.

Yiddish Spoken Here

S.H. Chang is a Yiddish specialist at Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages in Taiwan. She may be one of a kind — after all, you don't find many Chinese academics in Taiwan studying and writing about Yiddish. A soft-spoken Taiwanese woman in her early 30s who has written about and researched the Yiddish language—she speaks it as well—Chang is one of the few Yiddish philologists in the Chinese-speaking world. She heads the department of German at Aiwan College in the subtropical, southern part of Taiwan...

"When I set about learning Yiddish, I was merely opening up a new door for myself," the professor says. With a doctorate from Germany's Trier University under her belt, Chang has gained world renown as an expert in German and Jewish literature, delivering academic papers around the world. In addition, she has become a Jewish historian for the Chinese and Taiwanese people, as well as a philologist of German and Yiddish...

Chang plans to write a book for the reading public in Taiwan, explaining the nuances of *Yiddishkeit* and the history of the Jewish Diaspora — and the meaning of such words as *kvell*, *chutzpah* and *nachas*, she said.

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It was hard to believe that two days ago we had been in Shanghai, riding up and down elevators in modern skyscrapers and languidly sipping cool drinks. Within a period of 36 hours, we had been uprooted, lifted thousands of feet above the earth, taken across seas and jungles, dropped on a desert runway and...we had found people who despite differences in background, education, ideas, thoughts, were dedicated Jews, were part of us.

Bags of oranges were handed to us. A battered car rolled in bringing ice and water, for which we craved, as well fresh delicious sandwiches - not the unpalatable food we had been served since we left Shanghai.

The semi-nightmare of the flight was forgotten. The heat, the lack of ventilation, the presence of seriously ill passengers in the overcrowded plane, the traumatic departure from China, our only home, belonged to the past.

Most of the Yemenite Jews who, within half an hour would leave for Israel, were young, full of life and hope and their eyes shone like stars. I had never seen such brilliant eyes, such long sweeping lashes. They danced the 'hora' on the sand and dragged us to join them. We were clumsy and embarrassed but they did not appear to notice carried away by their own effervescence and kindness. And they insisted on teaching us a Hebrew song. There stood their plane, ready to take off and here we were, exhausted from a bewildering trip. We must have been a little crazy, because we did try to repeat a few Hebrew words and follow the dance steps they showed us.

But they had to leave. Climbing up the steps into the plane, they kept turning back and waving frantically to us. They shouted but we did not understand. Still, we knew they wanted to meet us again in Israel.

And, after this meeting in Aden, we the former "Old China Hands" continued our journey with lighter hearts. The feeling of being forsaken and forgotten somewhere in the skies had vanished. We knew we would be welcome in Israel.

The American pilot who had stood watching the scene near the plane, said with wonder in his voice:

"You Jews sure are one big family!"

Update on the Institute for Jewish Studies at Henan University

by Zang Deqing

The Institute for Jewish Studies of Henan University, in Kaifeng, was founded in 2002 with the encouragement and help from Mr. Len Hew, a Chinese Canadian. Thanks to the help and moral support from many friends received since its inception, this very small center has had a very impressive growth indeed. Now the Institute includes 4 full-time instructors/researchers, namely Zhang Qianhong, Yang Haijun, Zang Deqing and Zhang Ligang. We have also 6 honorary professors. They are: Mr. Clive Marks, the former chairman and now the board president of London Jewish Cultural Center; Mr. Teddy Kaufman, the president of the Association of Former Residents of China; Dr. Jerold Gotel, the overseas director of London Jewish Cultural Center; Dr. Shalom Salomon Wald from Paris, France; Mr. Henry Mullish from New York City; and Professor Xu Xin from Nanking University.

Since its founding, the Institute has the following accomplishments:

I The Len Hew Scholarship Program

The Hew Scholarship Program was established in 2002 by Mr. Len Hew, who is the honorary director of the Institute. Annual awards are made to both undergraduate and graduate students who are interested and/or engaged in the studies of Jewish history and culture. Since its establishment, 10 graduate students and 48 undergraduate students have got the scholarships, amount totaling 80,000 RMB. In addition, an American teaching couple, Mr. & Mrs. Farrington, has also established a scholarship which is only open to undergraduate students.

II The Len Hew Jewish Essay Competition

In order to stimulate students' interests in Jewish history and culture within Henan University campus, Mr. Hew has also established the Len Hew Jewish Essay Competition. The funds of the Competition are allocated from the Yun Nan Project Hope,

which was also founded by Mr. Hew. The Competition is held every year at Henan University. Entries must be on Jewish topics or have Jewish content. So far, we have hosted the Competition three times. In total, 270 students in Henan University have participated in it. Four students got the first prize, 14 students got the second prize, 34 students got the third prize, and 210 students got consolation prizes.

III Lecture Series

In order to broaden students' intellectual horizons and to promote academic exchanges, the Institute has invited renowned scholars and distinguished guests to give lectures. They are Mr. Len Hew, Mr. Clive Marks, Jerold Gotel, Dr. Shalom Salomon Wald, Mr. Gustavo D. Perednik, Professor Xu Xin and Professor Yin Gang, the fellow researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. One person needs special mentioning here: Dr. Jerold Gotel has come to Henan University to give lectures for seven times, with topics covering Jewish history, Jewish culture, Middle East issues and the Holocaust. His lectures are always vivid, lively, humorous, interesting and full of knowledge.

IV Academic Exchanges

In order to promote exchanges and to foster co-operation with other academic circles, the Institute has hosted and participated in many academic activities.

1. From August, 2004 to June, 2005, Professor Zhang Qianhong attended the Hebrew University, in Jerusalem, Israel as a visiting scholar.
2. In May, 2004, Professor Zhang Qianhong, along with her two graduate students, Zhao Guanggui and Liu Bailu, attended the International Symposium on Jewish Culture held at Shangdong University, Shangdong province, China.
3. In September, 2003, Professor Zhang Qianhong and Zhang Ligang, one of the researchers with the Institute, flew to Mainz University, Germany to attend the International Symposium on Chinese Jews.
4. In October, 2002, Zhang Ligang was invited to attend the Symposium on Judaism and Society held in Nanjing University, Nanjing, China.
5. In May, 2002, our Institute, together with Nanjing University, success-

IN THE FIELD

• Old China Hands Hold the Date

The "Old China Hands" organization is holding a grand world-wide reunion in Portland, Oregon, USA, September 10th to 13th, 2006.

Co-Organizers: Ed Immergluck, Shanghai (1940 - 1946 , PTH, Aurora; and Tavy Levenspiel, Shanghai native, WDPS, Aurora, both live in Corvallis, Oregon, 85 miles south of Portland. It happens that one of Portland's principal industries is tourism, hence it is ideal for a reunion! It is a large city (1.7 million , yet maintains a small-town charm! It is a Pacific Rim international trade hub with a large Chinatown, which is adjoined by a city block-sized Classic Chinese Garden. Portland's International Airport serves 17 airlines and there is accessible, affordable, frequent public transit from there to the city center.

Who is providing guidance, advice and help? Bob deVries, organizer of

the 1990 Reunion in Anaheim; Peter Stein, organizer of the 2000 Reunion in Phoenix; Zoya Shlakis, attendee at all reunions, and organizational participant at most; Prof. Robert Gohstand, organizer of CSUN OCH Archive gatherings in 2002 and 2005; and Joe Jedeikin, master mailer.

Will you come? An accurate, early count will enable the organizers to secure the best rates at an appropriate hotel and for group events. For more information, please e-mail immer0808@msn.com.

• Their Man in Beijing

The American Jewish Congress, which has been working in China for the past two years, recently retained Dening Wang to represent it in China. His office is in Beijing.

• Now Open for Business

The largest synagogue in the Far East, the 800-seat synagogue in Harbin, built in 1921, has been opened to the

public after a year-long, \$600,000 renovation.

• Appeal for Support

The recent monsoon floods in Mumbai, India on 26 July 2005, which killed more than 3000 people when they took the city unaware, also devastated the Beth-El Synagogue in Panvel. Six *sifrei Torah* were totally damaged by the floods along with the prayer books, the *Bima*, roof and some furniture.

The "Indian Jewish Congregation of USA", based in New York, is launching a drive to revive this synagogue by purchasing, transporting and insuring the delivery of a replacement Torah scroll to the congregation. The cost is about \$25,000 for a single scroll.

Please make your check out to "Indian Jewish Congregation of USA" and mail it "Attention: Romiel Daniel", 98-41 64th Road #1G, Rego Park, NY 11374.

Learning About China, Taiwan, and Israel in Shanghai

by Jonathan Goldstein

SHANGHAI, August 24. Last week I visited Shanghai to participate in an academic conference on "The Jews of Asia." The differences between what I saw in that city thirty years ago and what I observed now were extraordinary. And the conference itself revealed much about recent changes in China and its relations with Taiwan and Israel.

Background: Shanghai Then and Now

My first visit to Shanghai occurred at the tail end of China's "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." A portrait of an Arab in a *kaffiyeh* headdress hung over the entrance to the city's main railroad station. He was linked arm-in-arm with a hodgepodge of Asian, African, and Latin American revolutionaries. The accompanying inscription read: "We have friends all over the world." Signs elsewhere in the city exhorted Chinese on the "renegade" is-

land/province of Taiwan to "return to the peaceful embrace of the Motherland."

My visit to Shanghai last week could not have been to a more different world. The banner is gone from the railroad station. Most overseas visitors now enter Shanghai via its ultra-modern Pudong International Airport. The welcoming sign in the airport terminal directs visitors from Taiwan to special processing lines. While Taiwanese are still technically coming from a province which has yet to reconcile with the Chinese Communist revolution of 1949, they now overshadow Japanese, Americans, and South Koreans as the largest overseas investors in the People's Republic. There are an estimated 1,000,000 Taiwanese working in China now and spurring on its booming industrial growth. Skyscrapers line the Pudong district, replacing the street corner salesmen who once hawked Chairman Mao's "Little Red Book" of revolutionary slogans.

At the time of my visit thirty years ago the People's Republic of China was also offi-

cially hostile to the State of Israel, even though Israel had made repeated overtures to China and was the first Middle Eastern nation to recognize the People's Republic. A member of China's National People's Consultative Congress—the closest thing the country has to a functioning Parliament—told me then that the creation of Israel even as a refuge for Holocaust survivors was "an unfortunate mistake."

China and Israel Come Together

Sino-Israeli relations warmed significantly in the late 1970s. Both countries came to recognize that they shared a common enemy, the Soviet Union. Israel's Prime Minister, Menachem Begin, held a visceral hatred for the USSR since his years in a Siberian labor camp. He longed for the day when the USSR's walls would come tumbling down and thousands of Jews would leave for Israel. China's leaders stared down the barrels of Soviet-made weapons on China's 1,500 mile long border with Russia as well as along China's Laotian, Mongolian, and Indian frontiers. In 1978-79, China faced off against Soviet weapons in a bitterly-contested bor-

der war with Vietnam. China sought a reliable source of advanced weapons that had been combat-tested against those of the Soviet Union. By a process of elimination, she found Israel. In 1979, with the mixed blessings of Israel's Menachem Begin and China's reform-minded Deng Xiaoping, the two nations concluded a multi-billion dollar arms deal whereby Israel would upgrade the Chinese armed forces.

China's ongoing pro-Arab rhetoric was an ideal way to conceal military relations with Israel. The Palestine Liberation Organization [PLO] was allowed to keep an office open near Beijing's Great Wall Hotel. In 1982 China made a much-publicized \$1 million contribution to the PLO. At precisely that time China's clandestine arms purchases from Israel were many times that amount.

By 1991 the Berlin Wall had crumbled, the Soviet Union collapsed, and, most importantly, the Palestinians themselves were directly negotiating with Israel as part of the Jordanian delegation to the Madrid Peace Conference. There was no rationale for Sino-Israeli relations to remain clandestine. Indeed, China had much to gain as active player with open access to all parties in the Middle East. In January 1992 clandestine arms sales gave way to full diplomatic relations between Beijing and Jerusalem, with embassies established in both countries.

Diplomatic Relations Affect Scholarship

There was an immediate academic impact in that Judaic and Israeli Studies became officially respectable in China, which was quick to produce Judaic Studies specialists. In August 1992, in an expression of this new openness, six PRC Judaic Studies experts, all of them ex-Arabists or English professors, were permitted to leave China and meet with 151 Israeli, Japanese, and Western counterparts at a Harvard University conference organized by this author. Judaic Studies programs have been established with full administrative approval at universities in Harbin, Kunming, Nanjing, Shandong, Shanghai, and, most recently, Kaifeng, the site of China's thousand-year-old Jewish community. Hebrew is now taught at Beijing University and commonly heard in the Forbidden City and other sites frequented by Israeli tourists. It had previously only been taught at China's tightly supervised Protestant Theological Seminary in

Nanjing, and there only as a Biblical language.

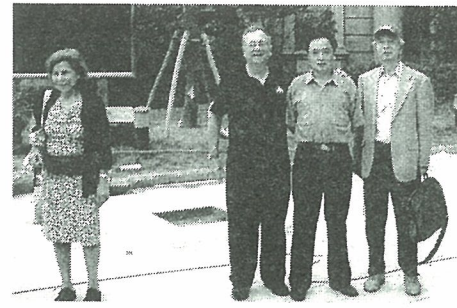
Learning About China, Israel, and Taiwan at the Conference

Between August 20 and 22, 2005, in perhaps the most recent expression of this new openness, Professor Pan Guang, Dean of the Center for Jewish Studies at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, organized and chaired a seminar in Shanghai on "Jews in Asia: Comparative Perspectives." The seminar was held in conjunction with the fourth International Convention of Asian Scholars. This Convention had previously hosted Sino-Judaic and Judaic Studies panels in its meetings outside of China, as has its counterpart International Congress for Asian and North African Studies [ICANAS]. There have also been significant Sino-Judaic symposia in Antwerp, Beijing, Minneapolis, and Munich as well as at Harvard. But Pan's was the first international scholarly conference of its kind within China proper. Apart from its geographical uniqueness, it was distinct in several ways.

First and foremost, the Shanghai conference brought new perspectives to traditional concerns about Jews in China. Professor Xu Xin of Nanjing University and Dr. Salomon Wald of the Jewish People Policy Planning Institute gave overviews of the history of China's traditional Kaifeng Jews and their Confucianization over time. Xu's and Wald's talks were part of an ongoing dialogue with Hebrew University Professors Irene Eber and Andrew Plaks and Mr. Michael Pollak (of Dallas, Texas), all of whom participated in the Harvard conference and are represented in my anthology *The Jews of China* [1999, 2000].

Breaking beyond the existing dialogue, Yin Gang, of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and Xiao Xian, of Yunnan University, compared the experiences of Chinese Jews and Chinese Muslims. Both communities entered China at approximately the same time. The Muslims have grown to 11,000,000 while the Jewish population has become almost extinct. If Chinese toleration of minorities was the reason for the disappearance of China's indigenous Jews, why did the Muslims also not disappear? Professor Yin challenged the conference delegates to a follow-up seminar exclusively on this question. Given the openness of China to this kind of debate, it would not be surprising

if Professor Yin's institute hosts such a conference in the near future.



Left to right: Maisie Meyer, Jonathan Goldstein, Xiao Xian, and Maruyama Naoki outside Shanghai's Ohel Rachel Synagogue. It was built by Sir Jacob Sasson (1844-1916) in his wife's memory.

A second characteristic of the Shanghai conference was its inclusion of comparative perspectives on Jews within Asia as a whole and not only with reference to China. This author contrasted the appearance of Zionism in the Baghdadi Orthodox Jewish community of Singapore with its rise amongst the assimilated heterogeneous Jews of the Philippines. Professor Maruyama Naoki, of Meiji Gakuin University, covered the history of the Jews of Japan. Maisie Meyer, formerly of Calcutta and now of London, compared Baghdadi Jewish settlement in India and China as she had done at the Harvard conference. She provided new information from her book *FROM THE RIVERS OF BABYLON TO THE WHANGPOO* [2003]. Joan Roland of Pace University and Shalini Saksena of the University of Mumbai spoke about the remnant of Jews in India today, the large Indian-Jewish diaspora in Israel, and the relations between the two communities.

Implicit in the speeches of Professors Roland and Saksena was a third characteristic of the Shanghai conference: its ability to include a panel on the Jews of West Asia, i.e. Israel, and that nation's relations with other parts of Asia. This had previously been done at a 1996 ICANAS panel in Tokyo organized and chaired by Professor Maruyama. Papers from that discussion appear in my book *CHINA AND ISRAEL, 1948-98* [1999]. But such a public scholarly panel had never been held before in China proper. I first presented an overview of Sino-Israeli relations summarized above. Then Professor Aron Shai, Chairman of Tel Aviv University's East Asian Studies Depart-

City of a Thousand Faces

by Hans Cohn

[Note by Rena Krasno: Hans Cohn is a very well-respected Cantor. Born in Berlin, he spent years of his childhood as a refugee in Shanghai, where he lived with his parents under Japanese occupation in the 'Ghetto' of Hongkew. This is an extract from a chapter in his forthcoming book, "Risen from the Ashes: Tales of a Musical Messenger".]

A new element of culture was added to Shanghai by German and Austrian Jewish refugees who arrived in 1939. Little orchestras sprang up, and Viennese waltzes were heard in coffee houses and bars, creating among us stateless Jews, a nostalgic yearning for the homeland left behind. Jewish comedians entertained the refugees and, for a short-time, laughter made people forget their troubles. Many refugees worked as musicians, waiters, nurses, and clerks in export houses.

Being musical, I had both an ear and a love for languages, so my Chinese continued to improve mainly from listening to people in the street. After a while I became fluent enough to act as an interpreter. Dr. Glaser, a German-Jewish physician proficient at treating venereal diseases, hired me to translate for his Chinese patients. I came to his office two afternoons a week, and he paid me ten percent of his fee.

Dr. Glaser's patients were not pleasant to look at, but I soon learned the Chinese medical terms for their conditions: syphilis, gonorrhoea, emissions, blisters, pus, and rash. Dr. Glaser treated most cases in a similar way, and I particularly remember the injections he used—Salvarsan (Lo-Ling-Lo 606—a substance invented by Dr. Paul Ehrlich, a German Jew who discovered a cure for syphilis. It was only after 606 tries to remedy the dreaded disease that Ehrlich came up with a cure that eventually won him the Nobel Prize in 1908.

By 1941, after struggling for a year to keep our restaurant going, my father sold it, finding the effort too difficult to continue without his wife (Note: Mrs. Cohn had died of amoebic dysentery). Instead, he located work as a watchman and I, in addition to translating for Dr. Glaser, became a cook in a European-style restaurant with a bakery. The bakery's

specialty was *salzstangen*, a breadstick sprinkled with salt. I arranged with the owner's brother, the baker, to purchase at cost about thirty *salzstangen* and, after work, I packed the pastries in a breadbasket and went out to sell them.

The small profit I made helped a lot because the restaurant pay was so low. Although the smoky air around the hot ovens never agreed with my voice, my minimal earnings were hardly enough to pay for the singing lessons I took with Mr. Kalischer, a Jewish musician and voice teacher. When he introduced me to Schubert's *Lieder*, a whole new world opened up for me.

In the meantime, however, I further improved my culinary and pastry skills. I seemed to have the right touch as well as an active imagination. I often thought of my mother as I prepared gourmet dishes, wondering if I had inherited her gift for cooking. I too had an intuitive sense of how to prepare and combine foods without following a recipe.

The cooking talent I developed in the slums of Shanghai helped my father and me to survive the bitter war years that were just ahead. Shanghai was neither hell nor paradise, but it was where I learned to swim, to hold my head above water to keep from drowning. For me, Shanghai was a place of survival. While many others suffered and died from malnutrition, my father and I were fortunate to have enough to eat. I was able to negotiate with the restaurant where I worked to bring father a hot meal every day after work. Often he would wait up for me and eat at midnight.

A Death Recalls a Flight from Shanghai to Israel

by Rena Krasno

On June 10th, 2005, Robert McGuire Jr., died at the age of 94 at his home in Northridge, California.

After the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, McGuire, a pilot for Alaska Airlines, flew thousands of Jews out of Shanghai. Later, he helped the American Joint Jewish Distribution with the Magic Carpet Operation that transported oppressed Yemenite Jews to Tel Aviv.

Yemenite Jews believed the prophecy in the Book of Isaiah: "They shall mount up with wings as eagles". Thus, the airline decided to paint an eagle with outstretched wings on the door of each airplane transporting Yemenite Jews. Most of the passengers had never seen an airplane before and were convinced that the biblical prophecy had come true.

In April 1949, my parents, sister and I flew from Shanghai to Lydda (now Ben Gurion airport) with other stateless Russian Jews. A month later, Communist troops entered Shanghai, where most of the passengers had been born and spent most—if not all—of their lives.

A month or so after our arrival in Israel, I wrote a short article about our flight, which was published in a South African newspaper. After reading an obituary on McGuire, I found an old clipping of this article and would like to share it with our readers, who I hope might be interested in this direct eye-witness report.

Meeting in Aden

Our lives in Shanghai already belonged to a distant past. We were afraid to land in Aden. Our stopovers in Siam (Thailand) and India had been like walking into overheated ovens. We tightened our seat belts and the plane glided smoothly down to Aden - till now, a mere spot on the map. It was not hot. Two camels stood in motionless silhouettes in the distance. The passengers stumbled down the plane steps feeling shaky after the long ride. Further down, another plane took off causing a miniature sand storm. And then we saw them, the Yemenite Jews.

In Shanghai, most of us hardly knew of the existence of Yemenite Jews, but they - the illiterate Yemenite Jews - had somehow heard that Jews from a mysterious, distant city in China, were flying to Israel. Before we had time to grasp the situation, we were surrounded by well-wishers. Eager men and women, boys and girls, clasped our hands with love and welcome in their eyes. They spoke no English and we spoke neither Hebrew nor Arabic. But it did not matter. Nothing mattered except the amazing fact that here, somewhere in Arabia, somewhere in a desert airfield, strangers were reaching out to us with joy. Nothing mattered but the fact that this simple greeting delineated far more clearly than any brilliant speech or well prepared film the brotherhood of Jews.

BOOK NOOK

China and the Jewish People: Old Civilizations in a New Era.

by Shalom Salomon Wald. The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute. 120 pages. \$16.

reviewed by Michael Pollak excerpted from *Congress Monthly*, May-June 2005

This slim volume...contains a mere 120 pages. Of these, only 79 are devoted to its basic text...The book, issued in November, 2004, is identified on its cover and title page as a 'Strategy Paper.'

The essential aims of the work are to sum up the current conditions, needs, and aims of the Chinese and Jewish peoples, and to recommend certain policies the two should embrace in order to position themselves advantageously throughout our rapidly changing world and, more specifically, *vis-à-vis* each other.

Wald has also crammed into this small book a persuasive exposition of how and why...the family customs and national ways of life of the Chinese and the Jews are more alike than would be the case if they were compared with the corresponding traits in the worlds of the Christians or the Muslims. While this appears to be a demographic generality stemming from the anecdotal and has never been proven factually, it concurs with numerous similar observations previously made by other qualified historians besides Wald.

The publisher of the book is The Jewish People Policy Planning Institute (JPPPI), which was established in Jerusalem in 2002 under the chairmanship of Dennis Ross, who served both President H.W. Bush and President Bill Clinton as chief Middle East peace negotiator until 2001...

JPPPI's role is that of an independent think tank "whose mission" (as its statement of policy reads "is to contribute to the continuity of the Jewish people and Judaism and their thriving future."...

According to [this book], a growing number of the more educated Chinese, whose knowledge of politics and history is overwhelmingly superior to that of the bulk of their countrymen and who will ultimately rise high enough in political power to determine the policies of China—see Jewish history as akin to their own in the sense that, although the two people have suffered domination and persecution by foreign conquerors, both have managed to survive, and even to reacquire territories that were in times past taken from their forebears.

These Chinese intellectuals...in fact respect the Jews for the successes they have achieved and look upon them as models to be emulated, rather than considering them as a people deserving to be chastised for rising so high.

They also look upon the Holocaust as a gruesome interlude in human history, comparing it to the horrors that were inflicted on their own people—e.g., the genocide carried out against Chinese civilians by the Japanese in Nanjing in 1938—when they themselves lay under the thumb of foreign powers.

A large portion of these more sophisticated Chinese therefore feel, according to Wald, that the sensible thing to do is to work toward creating a loftier state of cooperation with Israel than the one that now exists, so that China can take full advantage of the technological, scientific, commercial, and other aid and counsel that Israel is capable of rendering to their nation.

In short, these individuals have developed both pragmatic and emotional reasons that have persuaded them that it would be in the Chinese people's interest to foster a feeling of friendship and to encourage increased cooperation between a growing, successful Israel and their own country.

For their part, the Israelis see China as a vast market...a potentially valuable ally in global political matters, and a nation that could assist them...in toning down the inimical actions of their Islamic enemies...

He urges the Jews to establish a single agency made up of coreligionists from all parts of the globe and authorize it to represent them in such a manner as to improve the relationship between the Chinese and Jewish people of the world...An international Jewish agency of this kind...could provide the Chinese educational system with the reading and other learning materials that will give large numbers of students...the opportunity to learn who the Jews are, what they have done throughout their history, what they want to accomplish, and how they are going about getting this done. This process, it should be observed here, is presently being undertaken with Jewish help in several Chinese universities...

Wald also stresses the importance of having the citizens of Israel learn as much as they possibly can about the saga, present situation, and ideological leanings of the Chinese people...

Wald tells us several times that what he recommends will take a very long time to achieve...We may not agree with all of the author's recommendations, but many of the readers...will conclude that the least that should be done is to make a beginning in as short a time as possible to sort out and begin working on those recommendations that obviously demand a priority rating.

Also Noted

Shanghai Remembered...: Stories of Jews Who Escaped to Shanghai from Nazi Europe. Berl Falbaum, compiler and editor. Royal Oak, Michigan: Momentum Books, L.L.C., 2005. Hardback, 229 pages, \$27.95, ISBN 1-879094-73-8.

ment and author of five books about China's international relations, discussed Israel's relations with Southeast Asia, especially Burma, the origin of the first Israeli mission to Beijing in 1955. He also discussed one of his research specialties: the irrelevance of Israel's Communist Party to the establishment of Sino-Israeli relations, despite the Party's valiant rhetoric.

Finally Uri Gutman, Israel's Consul General in Shanghai, surveyed Israel's relations with India, Japan, and Korea. Mr. Gutman's public lecture may be the most noteworthy aspect of Pan's conference. The very existence of an Israeli consul in Shanghai, discussing Israeli policy in a public forum, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Israel briefly established a consulate in Shanghai before the founding of the People's Republic in 1949 and reopened it only after the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992. Even more significantly, Mr. Gutman was formerly Israel's unofficial ambassador—the head of Israel's economic and cultural office—in Taiwan. A public speech by an ex-representative from Taiwan would have been unthinkable in Shanghai thirty years ago. Pan's conference bodes well not only for future educational and cultural ties between China and Israel, but even between China and Taiwan.

THE SHANGHAI DIARIES OF FRED MARCUS

by Audrey Friedman Marcus

Upon the death of his mother in Berlin in 1938, fourteen-year-old Fritz Marcus and his father, Semmy, began to talk about leaving Germany. Kristallnacht, which occurred in November of that same year, convinced them that they must act speedily. Father and son sat together on the floor with maps spread out between them and considered the destinations that remained possible at that late date—Madagascar, South America... Shanghai. They consulted their encyclopedias to determine national products, climate, economic potential, etc. Eventually, it was decided. His father would buy steamship tickets for Shanghai, an open port that required no visa or proof of capital, and which—until the doors closed—became a haven for some 20,000 refugees from Nazism.

In March of 1939, Fritz Marcus and his father traveled overland to Genoa where

they set sail for the long journey to a strange and exotic city in the Far East. Their lives would be forever changed by that voyage. Fritz Marcus, a boy who had known only the comfortable circumstances of upper middle class life in Berlin, was suddenly faced with making his way in an unfamiliar culture.

In the beginning, Fritz and his father lived in a dormitory in one of the *heime* (homes established for immigrants by the Jewish community with 50 other men. As soon as they were able to sell some of the beautiful things they had brought with them from Germany, they moved to a one-room apartment in a lane where many Chinese also resided. There was no indoor plumbing. Food, which was mainly obtained at a soup kitchen, hardly sustained the growing boy. Earning a living proved difficult for Semmy, who was 65 years old. Fritz was constantly ill and faced daily uncertainty. When his father died in 1944, he saw himself as an orphan of 20 years old, a stateless refugee, with no prospects, no education, and seemingly no future. It was the nadir of his life.

Fritz Marcus (later called Fred) became my husband in 1974. I soon learned from him that he had kept a diary in Shanghai, written in German. On the day he departed Shanghai for San Francisco, he began to write in English. Because I don't read or speak German, I knew only that the first remaining diary began in 1944 with the death of his father. I often suggested to Fred that he translate the diaries. While he seemed to like the idea, he put off doing it. He offered many excuses. He was too busy with his work. And when not working, he wanted to be with family, to travel, to study, to teach. He didn't have the right kind of tape recorder. He would do it when he retired.

In 2002, Fred died without having done the translation.

What, I wondered, could the diaries reveal about Fred's life as a young man in a strange land? What were the enormous changes and difficulties he had to face? How did he make enough money to survive? Who were his friends, his confidants? What did he do for fun? What was Jewish life like in Shanghai? What was life like during the war? After the war? Why did Fred remain in Shanghai until 1949, leaving just ahead of the Communist takeover? And, perhaps most puzzling, why did he resist translating the diaries? Would

the recollections have been too painful? Were there things in the diaries he didn't want others to know?

It was indeed a great mystery, and one I wanted to unravel. I felt that the diaries, which were written solely for himself, would be the key to Fred's past, about which he had spoken only in general terms. Further, it would be one of the very few day-to-day records of refugee life in Shanghai during the 1940s and a true historical record of those tumultuous times. I decided to seek a translator.

The translation of the diaries, however, presented innumerable problems. I wanted to find someone who would be able to bring to the task a knowledge of history in general and the wartime years in particular. I felt that the person had to be a compassionate individual who would see the translation as both a contribution to family history and refugee Shanghai lore. These qualifications eliminated commercial translation services. What is more, I knew the translator would have to be someone with infinite patience and skill, as Fred's handwriting was extremely difficult to read, particularly in the first diary, which dealt with the trauma of the war years and the internment of the stateless Jews in a Designated Area, commonly referred to as a ghetto. Because during the war, the quality of the available ink was poor, the writing was also somewhat faded.

Fred's lifelong friend Theo Rolf Alexander (later Rabbi Theodore Alexander) and his wife Gertrude seemed to me the obvious choices to do the translation. I sent off some pages and hoped for a positive response. But they were unable to read the handwriting. At that point, I didn't know where to turn.

In January of 2003, I saw a notice in our local Jewish newspaper that someone named Rena Krasno was giving a talk at Congregation Emanuel. Among the many Shanghai memoirs I had read over the years was Rena's book, *Strangers Always*. Thinking she might shed some light on my difficulties, I went to the talk.

There before me was an effervescent, energetic, almost 80-year-old woman, strong in voice, intelligent, and full of interesting stories and facts about growing up a Russian Jewish girl in Shanghai from 1923 to the end of the 1940s. In the course of her talk, she mentioned that she spoke six languages, among which was—German.

She also revealed that she had done simultaneous translations for the United Nations. What could be more perfect, I thought? Here was my translator.

After the talk, I introduced myself to Rena. I bought a copy of *Cloud Weavers*, her latest book, a collection of Chinese folktales. She autographed it, as well as my copy of *Strangers Always*. I told her that I had a personal matter I wanted to discuss with her, but recognized that this was not the moment to bring it up. I asked for and received her e-mail address.

Shortly after this meeting, I wrote to Rena about the diaries and about Fred, his early life and later accomplishments. The idea of reading and translating the diary of a young man that contained daily short notes on the events through which both of them had lived was fascinating to her. I sent her some sample pages. And — she could read (most of) what Fred had written!

And thus began a long collaboration, which blossomed over several years into a beautiful friendship and which will result, we hope, in a book based on the diaries of Fred Marcus. Stay tuned for an update in a year or so!

For more information on Fred Marcus and the annual Fred Marcus Memorial Holocaust Lecture, go to: www.fredmarcusmemorialwebsite.com.

Martin Buber and Taoism, Part II

(continued from page 1)

ideas of Taoism) left a lasting imprint on his theories.⁷ Buber's study of Hasidism between 1904 and 1909...dealt with the men, the *tzaddikim*...who exemplify the teaching in their own lives. Although called by different names, *tzaddik*, sage, or genuine person, the attributes by which they are known are essentially the same as far as Buber was concerned. Therefore, his description of the *tzaddik* does not differ greatly from that of the Chinese sage: for the *tzaddik*, too, thinking (knowing) is being; outer and inner are one; he who has attained wisdom will not lose himself; evil is a lack rather than something in itself and is also worthy of love.

Buber's interest in P'u Sung-ling's stories at that time was similarly related to his preoccupation with Hasidism. In these stories Buber saw the meeting of the divine and the human in mundane existence which he defined as the unity or oneness

(*Einheit*), obvious in Taoism as well as in Hasidism... Buber was apparently little concerned with the divergence of his and the Chinese idea of unity. In Chinese thought the idea of unity is that of an all-embracing order which encompasses this and the world beyond. The two spheres, the socio-political order and the order of spirits and gods are not hermetically sealed off from one another. They interact in often strange and unexpected, though never chaotic, ways. Within this all encompassing order, ancestor worship has a central function...by assigning to ritual the continued maintenance of the human and cosmic order. But Buber's idea of unity developed from an entirely different basis and was motivated by his assumption of a dualism in Jewish existence. The Jew, he believed, forever vacillated between historical and existential contradictions. Therefore, the creative impulse of Judaism lies in the reconciliation of these contradictions and in the attempt to overcome the dualism and to achieve unity.⁸ To Buber and a Chinese reader, P'u Sung-ling's stories certainly suggested multiple and different messages on the nature of unity and order, yet both would have agreed on the importance of unity and order.

The ideas which Buber had first developed in connection with the *Chuang-tzu* and the *Liao-chai chih-i* translations continued to recur in different contexts. He again raised the question of overcoming dualism in existence in a lecture some years later [probably in 1915]. Entitled "The Spirit of the Orient and Judaism," the lecture's message was that Judaism had closer affinities with the Oriental (in his view, Indian, Near Eastern, and Chinese) thought and attitudes than with Occidental ones. Especially remarkable for its day was Buber's assertion that men like the prophets, Lao-tzu, and the Upanishadic thinkers (Buber neglected to include the Buddha) shared a common mission to restore, to regenerate, and to announce a renewal...

Westerners objectify the world and thus draw a distinction between themselves and the objects of the external world. This dichotomization (*Entzweiung*) of the self with the self of the world can be remedied only by reunifying the human personality and by entering into, what he calls, genuine existence. None of the great religious teachings had their source in the Occident, said Buber. These originated in the

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Orient and were received and adapted in the Occident. But as receptor, the Occident has been unable to construct a view of a seamless world together with a supra-rational divine teaching. Lacking in the West, therefore, is "the exclusiveness of the message about genuine existence."...

By genuine existence Buber had in mind a non-bifurcated life, lived both in thought and in deed, in knowing and in acting. Once a person recognizes how the original oneness was severed and distorted, it is incumbent upon him—and this is his mission—to return to the original unity. Oriental thought significantly insists that such knowledge, such a realization, is a matter of life lived. The Taoist, said Buber, recognizes the duality of existence, but he knows that this duality is rooted in the One, the *Tao*. *Tao* assumes reality in the life of the sage by his acting and non-acting which, in turn, permits the emergence of the real significance of the world...

The Jew, Buber declared, was and has remained an Oriental in spite of using Western languages, in spite of martyrdom and oppression...However, where the Chinese accepts the duality of existence by realizing its unity in *Tao*, the Jew consciously decides and engages in restoring unity and completeness. The Jewish belief that the deed's absolute value consists in the decision to act is, therefore, a distinguishing characteristic, according to Buber.

In this lecture Buber skillfully wove together strands of the *TTC*'s ideas with his own reflections on how to give meaning and substance to Judaism. The ideas he had deemed important in his earlier encounter with Taoism, oneness and duality, acting and not-acting, were translated in this lecture into coherent views on the meaning of Jewish existence. A mystical oneness continued to figure in his thought, but this unity was already more action-oriented and was combined with the conscious act of deciding. And decisions were based on knowing.

thoughts on Tao and non-acting. By then, the "mystic phase," as he had called it, was behind him, and his preoccupation with the Bible, his concerns with God, the life of dialogue, and the world, led him to locate spiritual endeavors in the "living reality of every-day."⁹...In a radical departure from his views of sixteen years

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ing expected to break out in Israel. This took place Pesach 1948.

The original concept, as devised *inter alia* by Eliahu Lankin, the commander of the Altalena, who too was of "Chinese" origin, Eytan Livni, Etzel operations chief, Arie Ben Eliezer and others of the Irgun High Command, was to transport the volunteers from China and from surrounding areas, as well as some from the West Coast USA by sea from a Chinese port. For this purpose they were to purchase a LCT or similar vessel in Shanghai, and obtain arms, which were readily available from American WWII surplus equipment stockpiles in the region. The plan included the enlistment of another ex-China hand, who had served in the US Navy, and by this time was a naval captain with American President Lines, and with the assistance of other American and local (China) sailors and military volunteers, the ship was to sail with about a battalion strength of fully armed and prepared troops and land in Aqaba, to join up with IDF forces from the North. The operation was headed by a young woman who was the China delegate to the Zionist Congress in 1946 in Basle Switzerland, and head of the Betar movement in China, Ms. Judy Hasser, later to become Ms. Ben Eliezer. This idea was well advanced, but collapsed for a number of political reasons, and needs to be told in detail on another day.

The problem now facing the volunteers from China was to obtain appropriate traveling documents. Initially we forged authentic looking European passports, the writer does not want to mention the country, for obvious reasons. However since any itinerary from China to Europe...and hence to Israel required passage through Arab controlled territories, it was considered too risky, so other alternative means were devised and finally the two groups were ready to leave.

The first group of five boys left Shanghai by plane in October 1948 and traveled on a *Laissez Passer* issued by a clerk in the French Embassy in Tianjin, who was a Jewish boy from France and going around (and finally married) one of the local girls. Jean Pierre was eventually fired

from the French Foreign Service for this episode and always thanked us, since after leaving the French Foreign Service he became a successful businessman and very well off. The *Laissez Passer* indicated that the traveler was going to join the French Foreign Legion and the authorities enroute were asked to provide their assistance. One of the group's stops was Basra, in Iraq, where they spent 4 hours including lunch and haircut. Two of the boys in the first group were of Iraqi origin and spoke Arabic and had a hard time controlling themselves.

The second group of eight men traveled on Soviet papers, except for Harry Marinsky who still had his Polish passport. They flew via Damascus in Syria, in mid December of 1948...The existing danger of transiting Arab countries, at war with Israel, was dwelt upon as were the dangers involved in these journeys, but there was no other alternative to reach the war in progress in Israel.

The first group consisted of: Samby Muller, group leader, now in Kfar Shmaryahu; Al Jacobs, now in Australia; Johnny Jacobs z"l (Israel); Joe Pittel, now in Netanya; Sammy Poliak, now in Neve Monosson (Efraim). The second group consisted of: Harry Marinsky z"l (Israel), group leader; Bobby Bershadsky, now in Jerusalem; Vova Dichne, now in Zurich; George Kanpol (Kanzepolsky), now in Savyon; David Kopievker, now in Jerusalem; Emmanuel Pratt (Pirutinsky), now in Jerusalem; Aaron Rothfeld, now in Australia; Boris Silberg, now in Ramat Chen.

Both groups initially landed in Paris, the first group was temporarily arrested overnight (at the airport) and met next day with Jules Moch, then Minister of Interior, who wanted to see how 5 guys traveled on a sheet of paper, without a picture, half way around the world. The boys were released, the Irgun had good French connections, and given temporary French papers. The volunteers arrived in Haifa via the Marseille staging area, and were inducted in Tel Litvinsky. The first group arrived in early December '48; the second group arrived about 3 weeks later.

Since the boys were all fully drilled and

combat trained, they were sent directly to the Southern Front, and participated in the liberation of the Negev. They were stationed for some time in Ein Husseb, which was the farthest outpost of the IDF in the Western Negev-December 1948. The two groups, with some South African Machalnikim in main, and a spattering of American and French volunteers, formed a company, which was commanded by Captain Grisha Vernikoff, who himself made aliyah from China in the early '30s. We all were a happy and highly professional bunch. The whole Chinese detachment was later incorporated in the 8th *Gdud* (battalion) of the Negev Brigade (Palmach). Towards the end of the Independence War in April '49, and the disbanding of the Palmach, some stayed on in the army in different other units, others demobilized and went their ways in civilian life.

It is worthwhile to point out that in the main, all the initial volunteers from China made *aliyah* and remained in Israel, occupying different positions in Israeli society. The group still meets from time to time and remains good friends, telling tall stories of times that were.

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was promoted to the post of Oberarzt in charge of daily affairs. As Munich suffered heavy Allied bombings, the part of the University Hospital was evacuated to Bad Toelz, some fifty kilometers from Munich. It was a place with less bombings. The site of this affiliated hospital of 200 beds (with Dr. Qiu in charge) was formerly a sanatorium.

One day in the spring of 1945 a group of concentration inmates (about 30 in number, with many Jews) were escorted by German soldiers passing Bad Toelz and they had a rest at the square in front of the hospital. They were said to come from the nearby Dauchau concentration camp to be transferred to other places. They were lean and shackled. Out of pity and sympathy Qiu gave false information to the German officer that the prisoners were sick and might be affected with typhoid fever which was epidemic. He said he would like to take them in and cure them. Unexpectedly the German officer agreed. Not long after this Germany capitulated and the prisoners were saved, surviving the massacre.

Dr. Qiu seems to be another Schindler or the Chinese diplomat Ho Feng Shan who were rescuers of Jews from the Holocaust. Qiu is ninety one years old and in good health. He is the academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the honorary President of Tongji Medical University in the Central China Metropolis of Wuhan. He lives with his German wife (formerly his pupil) there.

Dr. Qiu also told me that in 1985 the chancellor of Germany Mr. Kohl visited the University, met with Dr. Qiu and said, "We are schoolmates. You are the honorary doctor of the Heidelberg University (in 1982) and I graduated from the same University. We Germans will never forget our old friend who offered us a helping hand in the hard times (meaning the rescuing the masses of German civilians wounded in the Allied bombings during the Second world War)." For this, Dr. Qiu was conferred the Grand Cross of Germany. It was the first medal of State rank ever awarded to a Chinese scientist.

Dr. Qiu told me further that in the early 1980s when he revisited Germany he had met in Munich and Bad Toelz many of his former patients (including the son of the head of Bad Toelz Sanatorium whose knee cyst Dr. Qiu had cured). Dr. Qiu also

met the girl who had worked in the bakery at Bad Toelz which provided Qiu's hospital with bread. If she is living, she may be approaching eighty.

On the occasion of world-wide celebration of victory over fascism, to publish Dr. Qiu's brave act at the risk of his own safety and even life seems more meaningful than ever.

[Postscript by Prof. Xu: I phoned Dr. Qiu in mid-September and he told me since the publication of Johnny Erling's report on his rescuing the Dachau inmates in the May 27 issue of the German magazine *Die Welt* he has received messages and congratulations from his old friends and colleagues in Germany. Among them is a lady who worked in the laboratory of the Bad Toelz Hospital headed by Dr. Qiu and she witnessed Dr. Qiu's brave and humane act. Dr. Qiu has been and still is famous as one of the best surgeons in China. He has been the academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, a post of the highest academic rank in China. In spite of his ninety-one years of age, Dr. Qiu still works from morning to late evening.]

MACHAL Volunteers from China

by Samuel Muller
excerpted from *American Veterans of Israel Newsletter*, Winter 2003

[Editor's Note: The following article was accompanied by a hand-written note from SJI member Arthur Bernstein, of Peabody, MA.]

During the summer of 1946 I was a deck officer on the ship "Ulua" bound from the US to Marseille to be fitted for running Jewish DPs (Displaced Persons) through the British blockade. A crewman had been a US marine and regaled us with stories of encountering thousands of Jews in Shanghai living on the edge. As befits young American Jews, we drew up a plan to evacuate them. Simple—purchase a Liberty ship and equip it for a desert landing just as the US Armed Forces had been doing. Proceed to China, load up our people, and establish a beachhead in Akaba, the Red Sea port. Boring long night watches at sea provide much opportunity to lay plans.

After our vessel, renamed "Haim Arlosorov", was interned by the Brits, I finally escaped and reported to the Mossad "underground" commander and at the debriefing spoke of our China plan. It was dismissed out of hand. But my interest in the Jewish Diaspora was piqued. Hence my membership in SJI.

We have a small group called "American Veterans of Israel" (unfortunately there were not that many volunteers) and I thought you would enjoy this bit from our last newsletters.]

The contingent of volunteers from China, who joined the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and the struggle for statehood, consisted of two groups totaling 13 men, in their early twenties, who arrived in Israel towards the end of 1948. Their story starts far earlier...

The Jewish youth in China, and all of the first groups of volunteers, were mainly organized within the Betar (Brit Trumpeldor) Youth movement, with a few exceptions. Early in 1947, when it became evident that inevitably a military struggle would lead to the formation of a state, and that international Jewry would be called upon to help their kin in Eretz Israel, two youngsters from Tianjin, Harry (Arie) Marinsky z"l and Samby (Shmuel) Muller, who were an exception to the rule, and held valid Polish passports, decided to attempt to reach Eretz Israel. They left China in mid '47 sailing via the Suez Canal to Europe, where they joined the Irgun Zvai Leumi (Etsel) and underwent a number of military and political training courses in Italy, Germany and Czechoslovakia. Both speaking fluent English, they were able to obtain a visa to "Palestine" from the British Embassy in Rome, this to the amazement of the Irgun leadership in Europe, and sailed to Eretz Israel, arriving in early February 1948.

Their joy in reaching Eretz Israel was short lived, following further military training in the Irgun camp at Shuni (near Binyamina), and some actual field action in Jaffa, at that time still occupied by Arabs, the 2 chaps, on specific orders of Menachem Begin and Haim Landau, were ordered to return to China to initiate an Etsel cell there and to mobilize and train Chinese (Jewish) youth, to join the fight-

earlier, Buber's comments did not relate non-acting to either cognition or a special person...Non-acting is genuine acting, it has imperceptible effects, is long lasting, becoming "a part of the life of mankind." Non-acting in this sense is concrete and takes place in the world's arena. *Wei wu-wei*, act by non-acting, which Buber apparently had in mind here, occurs twice in the *TTC*, in chapters three and sixty-three. The latter especially recommends to the sage (*sheng-jen*) a way of life in this world where goals must be achieved, but where the means for achieving them are supremely important and must be carefully chosen. Buber's intellectual concerns had changed and, perhaps as a result, he had reached a more profound understanding of some of the *TTC*'s ideas...

Buber obviously was no longer interested in the *Chuang-tzu*. In part this may have been due to the *TTC*'s popularity as one of the most widely translated works of Chinese philosophy by then...Hermann Hesse compared the book to the Bible, and C.G. Jung considered it a part of the world's literary heritage...Buber's intellectual enterprise at the time was, no doubt, also important in how he interpreted the *TTC*. His major work, *I and Thou*, with its emphasis on the meeting of the human and the divine, was published in 1923, and the issues he had raised in the book continued to occupy him in subsequent years. At that time, furthermore, Buber engaged in wider educational activities outside the university, among these his lectures at the Frankfurt Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus, founded by Franz Rosenzweig in 1920. Thus the 1924 "Ascona Talks" reflected a significantly different approach to the *TTC*'s ideas...

For their *TTC* text, Buber and his small band of devotees used the translation by Victor Friedrich von Strauß und Torney, *Lao-Tse's Tao Te King* (Leipzig, 1870)...finding von Strauß's assumptions and most of his interpretations congenial to his own way of thinking...

Tao and God

The "Ascona Talks" notes indicate that Buber accepted most of von Strauß's notions, building his interpretations in many parts on these. Buber, too, viewed the *TTC* as a religious text which, he apparently believed, must be interpreted in a religious spirit. Although he never explicitly described *Tao* as synonymous with

God, he attributed to *Tao* the quality of the divine (*das Göttliche*)...Buber obviously chose his vocabulary carefully. This can be seen in his references to God and the divine (*das Göttliche*). It can be, furthermore, seen in the uncertainty of precisely how to deal with *Tao* and the tetragrammaton, a subject extensively discussed by von Strauß in his comments to chapter fourteen. According to von Strauß, the issue of the tetragrammaton was first raised in 1823 when the three characters, *i*, *hsi*, and *wei* in the following sentence of chapter fourteen (my translation) were said to represent the tetragrammaton:

Looking at it, it is not seen; we call it by the name "ordinary" (*i*).
Listening to it, it is not heard; we call it by the name "sparse" (*hsi*).
Seizing it, it cannot be grasped; we call it by the name "minute" (*wei*).

Von Strauß, basing himself on the Hoshang Kung commentary, believed that *i* means without colour, *hsi* means without sound, and *wei*, without form. In short, the three characters refer to the same ineffable being the tetragrammaton refers to and which is no other than *Tao*. *i*, *hsi*, and *wei* were probably pronounced differently, argued von Strauß, closer to the original Hebrew pronunciation. Lao-tzu, no doubt, obtained his knowledge of YAHWE from Jews in China who claimed to have arrived as early as the Han dynasty. (Von Strauß must have read the eighteenth century Jesuit accounts about the K'aifeng Jews which, citing the 1512 stele inscription, assign the arrival of the Jews in the city to the Han dynasty.) He supported his argument further by stating that the Jews' reluctance to pronounce the Name occurs also in the *TTC* and, therefore, later generations did not know that the three characters referred to God's name.

Buber did not dismiss out of hand the YAHWE-*Tao* identification. The three characters, according to Buber, express something esoteric, the manner of expression is different, the gist being that the attributes spoken of cannot be investigated except when someone experiences their effects and becomes conscious of them (p.9). Although we cannot know for certain what exactly Buber said, the notes

nonetheless indicate that even if he distanced himself from von Strauß's argument he did not reject it...

The *TTC*, Society and the State

Buber returned to several *TTC* chapters in 1942 when he published a Hebrew translation of chapters 17, 29, 30, 31, 57, 58, 66 and 67.¹⁰ It is not clear toward what end he prepared the translations. He may have translated them for use in his courses and then decided to publish them. Or he may have prepared the translations even earlier, perhaps after his arrival in Palestine in 1938 and before Europe was enveloped in the total darkness of World War II. Except for a brief note on the *TTC* and Lao-tzu, no other comments are attached to the translated text. In any event, Buber's translation of fifty years ago—now long forgotten—is, I believe, the first rendition of portions of the *TTC* into Hebrew.

He obviously did not use von Strauß's text as the source for the Hebrew rendition, and one cannot tell whether he had an English or German original for preparing his translation. A remarkable feature of Buber's Hebrew version is its closeness to the Chinese text.¹¹ Both the sentence structure and the wording—even, for example, the repetitions that frequently occur in the *TTC*—are singularly felicitous to the original. Yet it is highly unlikely that he was able to translate from the Chinese on his own. Nor is it likely that anyone versed in classical Chinese resided then in Jerusalem. The content of the chapters, however, suggests that they were not chosen at random.

All eight have two themes in common, government and the condemnation of the use of force and instruments of war...Buber's choice of these and not other chapters may once again reflect his specific concerns at the time. His courses at the Hebrew University in the forties dealt with society and aspects of sociology...In Palestine, moreover, a new society and a new state were in the making...and he saw himself as a participant in its construction...The concern with society and the state was not new...In Jerusalem, however, he expressed it in a new context and there was an urgency to his proposals. The translated chapters refer not only to the horrors of war, they also suggest the means by which such

horrors can be avoided. These *TTC* chapters about society and the state were in many ways then, as others had been earlier, in accord with ideas which preoccupied Buber.

Conclusion

The emphasis in this essay has been on Buber's contact with Taoist philosophical concepts, which ideas were important to him and how he understood them...In the *TTC*, especially in the von Strauß translation (I would rather call it a "mistranslation"), Buber found affirmation for ideas that he had been formulating. These were ideas of personal oneness or completeness, *Tao*, both as transcendent and immanent, and the personal aspect of the divine.

The *Chuang-tzu's* rejection of political involvement of any kind may have struck Buber as too passive an attitude toward the world's affairs. The *TTC's* combination of mystical questioning with practical advice on how individuals manage in society and society manages in the political state, no doubt, appealed more to Buber...Buber then was drawn to the *TTC's* condemnation of aggression and rule by force. Buber's interest in philosophical Taoism may not have been an isolated phenomenon in pre- and post-World War I Germany. Thus this interest is not significant because it is unique. It is unique, however, because he may have been the first among Jewish philosophers who appropriated ideas from Taoism and integrated these into a specifically Jewish philosophical discourse.¹²

⁴ The English translation, "The Teaching of the Tao," is in Maurice S. Friedman, ed., *Pointing the Way, Collected Essays by Martin Buber* (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), pp. 31-60.

⁵ Friedman, *Pointing the Way*, p. ix.

⁶ Benjamin I. Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 193.

⁷ Hans Kohn, *Martin Buber, sein Werk und seine Zeit, ein Beitrag zur Geistesgeschichte Mitteleuropas, 1880-1930* (Köln: Joseph Melzer, 1961), pp. 59, 67-68, 82-83, 86, 280.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 87, 100.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹⁰ Martin Buber, "Lao Tzu al hashilton" (Lao-tzu on government), *Hapo'el Hatsa'ir* 35, nos. 31-32 (May 1942), pp. 6-8.

¹¹ Using a more classical (and by now rather old-fashioned) Hebrew, Buber's text, in spite of the extensive use of pronouns which are, of course, not in the Chinese text, [but are grammatically necessary in Hebrew] nonetheless strikes one as remarkably authentic.

¹² For more on Martin Buber's relationship with Taoism, see Maurice Friedman, "Martin Buber and Asia," *Philosophy East and West* 26.4 (1976), pp. 411-426. See also note 7 above.

Bnai Menashe

(continued from page 1)

tailed questions on Jewish rituals and observance.

Later, after all the male converts had shown they were properly circumcised, the families immersed themselves, naked, in the *mikvah* constructed with the help of detailed plans sent from Israel.

Twice they dipped beneath the ice-cold water, each time receiving the blessing of Rabbi Moshe Klein, a senior member of the conversion authority...The recognition of the Bnai Menashe by the Chief Rabbinate was achieved after a decade of lobbying by a Jerusalem-based group, Shavei Israel, which dedicates itself to finding Israel's scattered tribes and returning them to Israel.

Michael Freund, the group's chairman, said he believed the conversions had closed the circle on almost 3,000 years of history as the Mizo Jews were now able to exercise their right of return to the Promised Land.

Freund added, "This is the breakthrough we have been waiting for, and we will do everything we can to bring this lost tribe home to Zion. G-d is gathering in His people, just as the Prophets foretold, and I am grateful to be playing my small part in this process."

Not everyone in Mizoram is as convinced as Mr Freund, however. Where he sees "deep and extensive commonalities" between ancient Judaism and Mizo tribalism, others see Zionist ambition and plenty of wishful thinking.

Local historians point out that the Mizo tribes were animists whose oral history and tradition was lost forever when the Welsh Presbyterian missionaries arrived in Mizoram in the late 1890s.

Dr. P C Biaksiama, a former civil servant and academic who has published several books on Mizo Christianity, says the similarities have been "discovered" by a people who desperately want to attach importance to their lost ancestry.

The 200 Bnei Menashe who converted last week all plan to move to Israel in the near future, and Freund believes that the remaining members of the community will eventually follow as well.

Charles Bliss: Remarkable Inventor of Blissymbolics

by Michael Li

[Note by Rena Krasno: Michael Li, who is preparing to write a book on Charles Bliss, visited with me at the Hoover Institute Archives to examine some of the Sino-Judaic Institute files on Shanghai. Here is what he says about himself:]

I was born in Beijing and came to the U.S. in 1981 for graduate study at the University of Washington when I was 19 years old. I got my PhD in physics in 1987 and then did postdoctoral research and teaching at the UCLA and University of Maryland at College Park. Thereafter I worked for several hi-tech companies, mostly in Seattle, in medical imaging, software and wireless communications, in R&D and senior management. I am also an affiliated professor at the University of Washington.

My interest in Charles Bliss started when I was studying visual languages and further enhanced when I developed my own synthetic language called EastXi ("Xi" means West in Chinese). I can be contacted at mli@computer.org.]

I became interested in the history of Jews in China, and particularly in the city of Shanghai during the extraordinary time of WWII, by pure accident. In 1999, I was involved in some research and development work related to visual languages and came cross for the first time the Bliss Symbols which is a comprehensive visual language developed by Charles Bliss based on a set of 100 or so elementary symbols that were inspired significantly by both Chinese and English.

From reading some of Bliss' writings, I found out that much of the work for Bliss Symbols (also known as Semantography or Blissymbolics) were done when Charles was a WWII Jewish refugee living in Shanghai between 1940 and 1946. For the next few years, Charles and his symbols has stayed in the back of my mind while my focus has shifted to some other, not quite related technology field in communications. However, since last year, in the process of developing a new synthetic language based on modern linguistic theory and analysis and the combination of essential features in both Chinese and English, I had more time and opportunity to

look again and deeper into the work and life of Charles, especially during the important period that he lived in Shanghai in the WWII.

One thing led to another, and before long I found myself reading all sorts of books on Jews, Shanghai, and WWII, and became absorbed by the historical time, events, and personal stories. They grew richer, bigger, and deeper in my heart and mind, and took me to the deepest and shallowest, darkest and brightest, the most devastating and the most hopeful corner of the human race, and back with fresh understanding and perspective on human nature.

Along my journey of finding out more about Charles Bliss, his wife Claire, and the Jewish history in Shanghai, a number of people have provided generous and valuable help. Among them, Rena Krasno (my "Jewish Grandma") of the Sino-Judaic Institute is always there, ready to give a hand, and has given me excellent advice and wonderful help. Also Beverly Friend of the China Judaic Studies Association has helped me to link up with some of the right people. I am continuing my work to discover more about Charles and Claire's life and to write about them. I hope that I can connect soon with someone in Sydney or Canberra who understands German and who would be interested in helping to translate some of Charles' and Claire's document collections in the Australian National Library.

Charles Bliss's life and personality were as unique as his work on Blissymbolics and his personality. Placed in the bigger historical context of the warring world and turbulent Shanghai, his life's journey became one microcosm which overlapped and reflected the unusual time that he had lived through. Charles was born in the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, on Sept. 10, 1898, as the oldest of four in a Jewish family. He attended the Vienna University of Technology and graduated in 1922 as a chemical engineer. After graduation, he joined an electronics company as a research chemist. But with the invasion of Austria by Germany on March of 1938, Charles was sent at first to the concentration camp at Dachau, near Munich in Germany, and then to Buchenwald. Through the fearless efforts of Charles' wife, Claire, a non-Jewish German, he was released from the Gestapo. But as a condition for his release, he had to depart right

away for England and leave Claire behind in Vienna.

With no possibility for his wife to immigrate to England when the war broke out in Sept. 1939, Charles and Claire decided, as a last resort, to escape to the only city in the world that demanded no visa: Shanghai. Charles managed to reach Shanghai by crossing the Atlantic to Canada, and then the Pacific to Japan. Claire, who had been staying with Charles' family in Czernowitz (Romania), arrived in Shanghai by traveling alone at the age of 58 via Greece, Turkey, Siberia, Manchuria, and the Yellow Sea. The couple finally reunited in Shanghai on Christmas Eve 1940, after almost three long years of separation.

Life in Shanghai was not easy in an unfamiliar environment, relatively poor living condition and the unbearable summer heat and humidity. They tried to make a living by working as filmmakers documenting daily life in Shanghai and trying to market their films abroad. At one point, Claire contracted typhoid fever, which was endemic in Shanghai. After Pearl Harbor, Charles and Claire, together with thousands of other European Jewish refugees then living in Shanghai, were forced into the Hongkew Restricted Area (ghetto) by the Japanese occupation forces in Shanghai.

When World War II ended, Charles and Claire moved to Australia in July of 1946 to join Charles' cousin Karl. For the next 40 years, Charles continued to devote most of his time and effort to further developing his visual language, the Blissymbolics. His wife supported him in all his efforts. In order to focus on his research, Charles bypassed well paying jobs that would leave little time for other things. Instead, he took on a manual labor that gave him more time to devote to his language work.

Charles was as much a philosopher and social commentator, perhaps even more so, as a language designer. Much of his views and values were shaped by WWII and the Holocaust. He had witnessed the Nazi takeover and seen first hand how Hitler and his followers manipulated and hijacked all of Germany with twisted words and distorted reality.

One does not always have to agree with Charles, but his views and opinions are

always interesting, stimulating, and often provocative in positive ways since his heart was always filled with compassion and hope. I believe it was this very spirit that projected him forward with clear vision, total devotion, and determination. It is this same spirit that helped millions of Jews to survive the horrors of WWII and continue to imagine, invent, create and courageously seek new knowledge benefiting the humankind as a whole.

Claire passed away on August 14, 1961. Her death devastated Charles for several years until he was finally able to continue his work and put his language to good use. Starting in 1971, the applications of his lifetime efforts began to be used for disabled and handicapped children with cerebral palsy. Today, Bliss's work facilitates communication between, and with, non-verbal children in dozens of countries. Thousands of children have been helped by this method.

Charles had been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and made a Member of The Order of Australia (A.M.) for services to the community, particularly handicapped children. Charles passed away in 1985. He and Claire had no children of their own, but their labor of love, the Bliss Symbols, have brightened the lives of hundreds of disabled children around the world. Thanks to the hard work and admirable spirit of Charles and Claire Bliss, the world has become a better place.

A Chinese Rescuer in WWII

Germany

by Xu Buzeng

Dr. Qiu Fa Zu (then spelled Tjiu Fa Dsdu in Germany) saved a team of more than 30 Dachau Concentration inmates (many of them were Jews) from likely execution.

In recent months I have watched in the CCTV (China Central Television) and have read Dr. Qiu's article on his ten years of life in Germany his rescuing the concentration inmates, in wartime Germany when Nazism ran rampant.

Dr. Qiu studied and worked in Munich from 1937-1946. He graduated from the Munich University Medical College with doctor's degree and worked as a surgeon at the University Teaching Hospital. Qiu