

9. Children unaccompanied by foreigners are not allowed in Reserve Gardens.
10. The Police have instructions to enforce these regulations.

By Order

N.O.Liddell

Secretary, Council Room, Shanghai, September 13, 1917

This was a City Ordinance which clearly decreed that all Public Gardens were reserved for the Foreign Community. Think about that. We're in China and the native Chinese were barred from Public Gardens. I was obviously a foreigner, much more so than in Switzerland and yet, the minute I got off the ship, I had rights over the native Chinese. I was clearly a beneficiary of those laws and of the attitude that prevailed in Shanghai. As a result I felt much less a foreigner in Shanghai than I did as a foreigner in Switzerland.

There were other examples of discrimination against the Chinese as well, economic discrimination. Let me give you just one example. We lived in an apartment on the 10th floor of an upscale apartment building. We had hardwood 'parquet' floors, radiator heating, electricity, hot and cold running water. We had 2 servants who lived in the servants' quar-

ters in back of the kitchen by the back stairway in 2 rooms that had concrete floors, no lights, no heat, no windows, no doors. I recall one evening our cook got sick and my mother asked me to go up to the apartment of a Russian doctor who lived 2 stories above us and to ask him to come down to examine our cook and find out what was wrong with him. I recall taking the doctor to that back room with a flash light which I had to shine on the sick man so that the doctor was able to conduct his examination.

I had no social contact with Chinese people. I was living in a de-facto segregated society...

America: I arrived in San Francisco on July 26, 1946. After getting off the ship, I walked all over downtown San Francisco and did not encounter a single homeless person unlike the Shanghai I had just left behind. I saw only one person, a double amputee dressed in a suit and tie and seated at Union Square near Stockton Street, selling pencils. He was something of a fixture there and I saw him often again.

I was fortunate to be admitted to the International House in Berkeley. That insti-

tution had a policy of placing each foreign student together with an American student in a room. My first room mate was a Chinese-American graduate student who had recently been discharged from the military. Can you imagine that I, who never socialized with Chinese people in my 6 years of living in China, had a Chinese-American room mate? He told me that he had flown bombing missions over Germany for 2 years and, as you can imagine, we got along very well.

At the I House, I got to know so many students of many different nationalities, races and religions. There was a Japanese-American I became friendly with who later became a Deputy City Attorney and neighbor of mine in San Francisco. I met a number of black students, Americans as well as Africans. I met students from Arab lands and I made friends with some Palestinians, friendships that have lasted till now.

Thus I came to realize that prejudice and discrimination against anyone are simply wrong and that we must constantly be aware of their existence and make a conscious effort continually to fight against them.

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Vol. 22 No. 1
July, 2007

Points East

中國-猶太學院

A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute

THE HEBREW STUDIES PROGRAM AT PEKING UNIVERSITY, BEIJING, CHINA

by Zhenhua Meng, Yiyi Chen

Peking University (also known as Beijing University, henceforth PKU) has always been at the forefront of many significant movements in the history of China since its establishment in 1898. In 1985, the department of Oriental Studies started the first undergraduate program in Hebrew language and cultural studies in China. This has become a milestone in many ways for Judaic studies in China.

The political atmosphere in the 1980s, when China had no official diplomatic relationship with Israel, was not as open as today. The Chinese knew little about the outside world. Due to the limited and sometimes misleading information provided by the government run media, most Chinese believed that the State of Israel was a "menial jackal" of the "American imperialists" and a sinister invader in the Middle East. The first Hebrew class was established for national security reasons. The initial number of students was eight. When the first class began, there was little fanfare. Instead, it was said that some security guards were stationed outside the classroom to deal with potential threats. "I could only read written Modern Hebrew in books and newspapers," says Ms. Zheping Xu, who goes by the Hebrew name Shula, "but had no experience on how to communicate with Israelis in daily spoken Hebrew." She was among the handful of Hebrew students trained by Mr. Xiangqun Xu in the late 70s and early 80s. Mr. Xu is a self-made Hebrew scholar, who started to self-study Hebrew in the early 60s at the request of a former state leader for national security purposes. He was a graduate from the Oriental Studies department at PKU as a student of the Arabic language in the late 50s. Mr. Xu spent almost half a century studying modern Hebrew using newspapers and books collected from Israel. His life-long study culminated with a modern Hebrew grammar written from scratch in the Chinese language, based on thousands of index cards he made during the previous 50 years. It was published by PKU Press in 2005.

Lack of experienced instructors did not efface the keen interest of the first eight Hebrew students at PKU. The authorities at PKU invited guest instructors from the United States to help Ms. Xu with the teaching of spoken Hebrew. Some of the instructors were scholars in biblical Hebrew, with limited experience in modern spoken Hebrew gained while visiting Israel. The first Hebrew class of eight students graduated in 1990.

In 1991, preparation for formal diplomatic relationship between China and Israel were underway. The foreign ministry of Israel

(continued on page 4)

TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY TO GET CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE

by Ron Friedman

excerpted from E-Jerusalem Post, May 30, 2007

The Confucius Institute for Chinese Studies will begin offering classes at Tel Aviv University in October, according to an agreement signed on Monday between University President Prof. Itamar Rabinovitch and Chinese Ambassador to Israel Zhao Jun.

The Confucius Institute is an initiative of the Chinese government aimed at promoting Chinese language and culture internationally.

TAU has the largest faculty of Far Eastern studies in Israel, with 200 students registering for Chinese language and culture courses every year.

As opposed to regular university courses, classes at the Confucius Institute will be open to the public and students will not have to be registered at the university.

"In the last 10 years we have experienced a huge growth in demand for Chinese language studies. China is the fastest growing economy in the world today. Many Israelis are interested in learning the language history and culture of the newest global superpower," said Prof. Meir Shahaar, the new institute's director...

Israel is the third country in the Middle East to open a Confucius Institute, after Lebanon and Turkey.

In addition to language courses, the new institute will offer seminars on Chinese philosophy, history and economics, and fund fellowships and exchange programs with Chinese universities and awards to outstanding students...

The institute will be run by Shahaar and professors Aron Shai and Raanan Rein.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Featured Article:

Hebrew Studies Program
at Peking University 1

Tel Aviv University to Get
Confucius Institute 1

From The Editor 2

In the Field 3

To the Editor 4

Articles:

Lost & Found - Nazi-era Passport
Connects Four Continents 6

Afridi Pathans: A Lost Tribe of
Israel? 8

Adoption of Chinese Children 9

Jewish Life in Harbin in the 30s 12

From Europe to China During
World War II 14

SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	211
China	15
Israel	14
Canada	10
England	9
Hong Kong	6
Australia	3
Japan	3
France	1
Germany	1
Indonesia	1
South Africa	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	1
TOTAL:	277

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue marks a significant transition for SJI with the election of a new slate of officers. The timing of this change does not allow us to address its significance in this issue, either in terms of appreciating all that the former leadership team has accomplished or in terms of anticipating what the new leadership team has in mind. This we will save for future issues of *Points East*.

For the moment, let me formally express our collective appreciation for all that Al Dien has done: the correspondence and phone calls and emails and meetings. He has been the brains and soul of SJI; the rest of us just his digits. Thank you, Al.

In the meantime, be forewarned: I am now president of SJI and I control its media ...

Anson Laytner

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Anson Laytner, Publisher

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FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

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though I spoke German and "Schwitzerdeutsch" (Swiss dialect) like a native, I frequently heard the expression of "Chaibe Uslander" (Damn foreigner) from other kids.

When I attended the Kantonal Gymnasium in Zurich shortly after the outbreak of WWII, we had a teacher of German Language and Essay who was a Swiss Reserve Army officer. On the first day in school he asked each member of the class to identify himself by asking where and when he was born etc. When it became my turn, he asked me where I was born and I said "Japan" whereupon he asked me what my nationality was. I answered that my mother was Russian. He then told me to get up from my seat and stand. He turned to all the other boys in the class and said: "Everyone: Look at this boy. He is Russian!" I had a most unusual feeling like I was sort of a freak on exhibit.

I also experienced anti-Semitic prejudice. My first recollection of an occurrence was on a Sunday morning when I was walking on a street near where I lived and passed a church. Suddenly the church doors opened and many kids came running out. Apparently the Sunday School had just ended. One the kids from my class in school with whom I had a friendly relationship, spotted me and ran to me and said: "You killed Christ!". I was quite dumbfounded but it was clear from where he had just learned this bit of wisdom.

More troubling was the anti-Semitic hatred that emanated from Germany. We lived only about 50 miles from the German frontier and were therefore easily able to hear German long wave radio broadcasts. I'll never forget hearing the Fuehrer scream into the microphone that he intended to destroy the Jews. He used the German verb "vernichten", i.e. not just to destroy but literally "to make into nothing", i.e. annihilate. This was very intimidating stuff to experience for any Jew, especially a very young one.

In 1937 during the summer vacation period, my dad decided for our family to go to his native Latvia, to visit with his family and attend his younger sister's wedding. Though Latvia is only about 1000 miles away, it took a long train ride through Germany to get there. In Berlin we had to change trains and railroad stations. As we left the station and walked out in the streets of downtown Berlin, I

recall it was a beautiful sunny summer day, we saw many German swastika flags flying from the flagpoles and buildings and many uniformed German military walking around wearing swastika armbands.

For us Jews this was a particularly oppressive atmosphere. There were leaflets on the sidewalks which had imprinted: "Die Juden sind unser Unglueck" (The Jews are our misfortune) and several large stores were marked "Jude" and "Don't shop at Jewish stores". It is hard to recreate the impression our entire family felt. It was as if the entire German nation was in a state of war with the Jews and we were very defenseless in that situation.

Then in 1939, shortly prior to the outbreak of WWII, my parents sent me to a summer camp in Champéry, in the Alps in the French speaking part of Switzerland. It was a very nice summer camp for boys. I was 12 years old and I met there several boys from Germany and I particularly recall a German boy, about 15 or 16, tall, blond, handsome and a friendly type and at first we got along fine and I looked up to him as a role model, as younger boys are apt to do. Of course he was a member of the Hitler Youth, as all German boys were and he found out shortly that I was a Jew and then his friendly playfulness quickly turned into nastiness and meanness. He started to espouse and continuously repeat and recite the lessons he had learned so well in the Hitler Youth, that of the superiority of Aryans and inferiority of Jews and did so with an air of self-assuredness and in very authoritarian manner that booked no contradiction.

My reaction to this continuing assertion of superiority of Germans over the inferior Jews was a very painful experience and became the dominant experience that I took away from this camp. Today I can remember little else. I would not say that he was able to convince me or that I felt that I was in fact inferior, but I did begin to have some doubt on that subject and it would not be an exaggeration to say that I did not look upon my Jewishness with pride and even became somewhat ashamed of it. I certainly would not have volunteered that fact to any stranger.

Let's fast forward 46 years to 1985. I was on a trip to Soviet Russia with my wife and 12 year-old son Jonathan with a group of lawyers and their wives. Most of the group were non-Jews. Our sight seeing

bus was driving through an old section of Moscow when Jonathan, seated in the back of the bus called out to the tour leader in the front of the bus and asked him whether he could point out some of the old historical synagogues in the City. I was surprised and pleased by his attitude as an American 12 year-old, obviously proud of his heritage unlike his father's at age 12 in Switzerland.

We now switch to Shanghai where I arrived at age 13. My father had decided to get out of Europe while the going was good. We left in April of 1940 through Italy which was still neutral and took a boat from Venice all the way to Shanghai, a 5 week journey. Shanghai, what a sea change from Switzerland. I don't have to tell you all, who lived there. We moved into the French concession, where there was the French Army, French Courts, French laws, French street names where the Chinese population were 2nd class citizens in their own land. In the International Settlement, we had turbaned Sikh police from India, the 4th US Marines, Italian Marines, the Foreign Volunteer Corps. the US and British navies in port.

I did some research to find out whether in fact there was a law favoring the colonial powers against the natives and I was never able to find any evidence of that frequently mentioned sign on the fence of a park or lawn stating that "Chinese and Dogs not Permitted" but I did find an old statute enacted by the Shanghai Municipal Council, as follows:

PUBLIC AND RESERVE GARDENS-REGULATIONS

1. The gardens are reserved for the foreign community.
2. The gardens are open daily to the public from 6 a.m. to half an hour after midnight.
3. No persons are admitted unless respectably dressed.
4. Dogs and Bicycles are not admitted.
5. Perambulators must be confined to the paths.
6. Bird nesting, plucking flowers, climbing trees or damaging trees, shrubs or grass is strictly prohibited; visitors and others in charge of children are requested to aid in preventing such mischief.
7. No person is allowed within the band enclosure.
8. Amahs in charge of children are not permitted to occupy the seat chairs during band performance.

In 1932, the Sungari overflowed and flooded the low-lying *Pristan*. Along with everybody who lived on the first floor my family had to evacuate and move in with some friends in flats on the second and third floors of apartment houses. Boats were the only method of transportation, and I remember how Betar volunteers helped evacuate the Jewish elderly and infirm.

A few personal vignettes: Harbin did not have a good public library system, and as a result we had to purchase our books. One of the rituals that I remember well, is going with my mother every Friday to the Globus bookstore to buy a book. That was usually a reward for good behavior and good grades.

While still in the Jewish elementary school, Betar quickly became the center of my life. Once a year, Betar paraded along the main Kitaiskaya Street, with the blue and white Zionist flag, and a marching band where I played snare drums. But more important was ping-pong. After school, I would go there to practice ping-pong, and on the way home I would stop by a grocery store run by the parents of one of my classmates. There I would consume a couple of Danish pastries and a bottle of "Kefir," a yogurt-like drink. No wonder that I was not hungry at dinnertime, much to my mother's displeasure. Ping-pong continued to be my obsession, and eventually I made it to the top Betar team. There were over twenty teams in the annual tournament, but the two top contestants were the Y.M.C.A. Russian team and the Jewish Betar. Most of the years, Betar came in second, except in 1936 and in 1941, with me on the winning team in 1941, shortly before my departure from China. That was certainly a high point in my Harbin years.

Aside from drums that I played in the Betar marching band, and later at the Y.M.C.A. College jazz band, and piano, which was obligatory for string players at the First Harbin School of Music, my more important musical instrument was the violin. My mother, a great lover of classical music, was pushing me to follow in the footsteps of Jascha Heifetz. Of course, I never reached such heights and eventually abandoned the path of a professional musician, but I was quite good and popular when I began to play publicly, first at the Music School concerts, and later in the Harbin Symphony Orchestra, in the first violin section and also as a soloist and in cham-

ber music ensembles. In March 1939, the Harbin Symphony went on a month's tour of Japan, Korea, and Manchuria, and that also was one of the highlights of my Harbin days. I wrote up the Japan trip in the *Bulletin of the International House of Japan* (Spring 2002 issue), and I would be happy to email a copy to anyone who is interested. This article was also put on the web site of the Japan Policy Research Institute, and I would gladly give you the web site information.

I would like to end my recollections with a few words about my relations with the Chinese in Harbin. I think that you will find it strange, that in my thirteen years in China, I can only remember two Chinese with whom I had a close relationship. One was Hsieh, the comprador (manager) or my father's wholesale import business of woolens, and Wang who was my desk-mate at the Harbin English Secondary School. Wang was one of the sons of the richest Chinese in Harbin and the owner of a number of enterprises. He was five or six years older than most students, and he was constantly protected by a personal bodyguard, a former Russian army officer who was armed and who sat outside the classroom. These were times of kidnappings for ransom, among them several sons of prominent Jews who were kidnapped and killed. The most notorious case was that of Semyon Kaspe, a promising pianist who lived in Paris and who came to Harbin to visit his father, the owner of a jewelry store and Hotel Moderne, the center of social and cultural life in the city. The kidnapers, a band of White Russian thugs, first cut off one of the pianist's fingers, and then killed him. Another Jewish fatality was a young man whom I knew personally who was kidnapped and killed. Years later, his younger brother was a close friend of mine in Los Angeles. But to return to the Wangs: They lived in an elaborate compound, and I had to pass a couple of checkpoints to get to the family quarters. I remember their huge living room with two grand pianos, one that looked pretty gaudy. My friend's brother studied piano in Germany and brought the instruments with him to Harbin. There were no Chinese pupils at the First Harbin School of Music, although we had some half-Japanese and half-Koreans. No musicians in the Harbin Symphony Orchestra, although one of the cellists was Japanese. None of my classmates in the Y.M.C.A. College was Chinese. That says something about our life in China, but not among the Chinese.

References

For my personal recollections, see Alexander Menquez (pseud.), "Growing Up Jewish in Manchuria in the 1930s: Personal Vignettes," chapter in Jonathan Goldstein (ed.), *The Jews of China*, Vol. II (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000).

Peter Berton, "Pre-War, Occupation, Post-Occupation Japan: Three Vignettes," *International House of Japan Bulletin*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (Spring 2005), pp. 6-21. Also available on the website of the Japan Policy Research Institute: <http://www.jpri.org/publications/occasionalpapers/op35.html>

Peter Berton, "Contributions of Jews to The Musical and Cultural Life in Harbin in The 1930s and Early 1940s," Published in Chinese and English in the *Proceedings of the First International Seminar on the History and Culture of Harbin Jews*, Harbin, China, August-September 2004.

From Europe to China During World War II

by Attorney Joseph Jedeikin excerpts from his presentation at the Worldwide Old China Hands Reunion, Portland, OR, Sept. 11, 2006

I'd like to talk about some of my experiences in discrimination which I experienced as a child and teenager. I was in somewhat a unique position having lived both in Switzerland for 10 years where I became quite aware of prejudice directed against me and then in Shanghai for six of my teenage years where I was more a beneficiary of prejudice. I want to share with you my different reactions to what I was experiencing, closing with the final episode when I arrived in the USA, this land of immigrants where I finally was able to sort it all out.

I was born in Japan in 1927. My parents were Jews originally from Eastern Europe, my mother from Russia, my dad from Latvia. In 1933 at age 3 our family moved to Zurich, Switzerland: We were citizens of Latvia.

I found the Swiss people at times to be very proud of their country, a bastion of democracy and neutrality since the 13th century. Consequently many Swiss felt strongly nationalistic and were greatly aware of non-Swiss residents among them. I recall experiencing prejudice simply because I was not Swiss born. Even

IN THE FIELD

• New Officers

The Sino-Judaic Institute Board of Directors is pleased to announce its new slate of officers:

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Editor, *Points East*: Anson Laytner
Past President: Al Dien

A future issue of *Points East* will hopefully feature a summation by Prof. Dien of his long tenure at the helm of SJI. In the meantime, we offer him many thanks for his remarkable years of service to our Institute.

• Important Articles Published

Dr. Shalom Salomon Wald writes from Paris that the *Autumn 2006 edition (LVII No.2) of the Oxford University Journal of Jewish Studies*, the JJS, contains two scholarly and contradictory articles on the "Confucianisation of the Kaifeng Jewish Community", one by Prof. Zhang Qianhong in Kaifeng and one by himself. Prof. Zhang, a loyal member of the Communist Party of China, takes an "idealistic" position (the Jews disappeared because of their religious admiration for Confucianism) and Dr. Wald, an observant Jew, contradicts this from a "Marxist" position (the Jews disappeared because their life became economically and materially untenable, Confucianism was no problem for a good Jew). Dr. Wald adds that he and Dr. Zhang were quite proud that the JJS accepted to publish the studies because the JJS is considered the most prestigious European academic research journal on Judaism and, to the best of his knowledge, the JJS has never published anything on Chinese Jews.

• Jewish Tour of India Offered

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of a Jewish mystic.

• Journey to Janjira, the ancestral home of many Bene Israel. Travel by dhow to the island fort of its African rulers and see the new palace which is not open to the public.

• See Bene Israel synagogues in Mumbai, coastal villages and Thane. Thana is the only place in India where the Jewish population is growing.

• Recapture the spirit of the Sassoons and other "Baghdadi" merchant dynasties in Calcutta and Bombay.

• Meet interesting local Jewish and non-Jewish Indians.

• See famous museums, palaces, Hindu temples. Cruise the backwaters near Cochin.

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Ken Robbins
@ 703-379-2600
or RAJANAWAB@aol.com.

Ken Robbins, a longtime SJI member, has published more than fifty articles, edited a book and curated ten exhibitions dealing with Indian history and art.

• Israel Renovates Hongkou Elders' Activity Center

On June 6th, the Consulate General of Israel, in collaboration with the Hongkou District government and with the support of the Shanghai Charity Foundation, inaugurated a newly renovated elderly activities-center in Huoshan Park, to honor the elderly residents of Hongkou district who helped to absorb Jewish refugees before and during WWII and lived with them side by side in this neighborhood.

This year the Consulate General of Israel decided to mark Israel's 59th national day by—in some way—repaying the generation that absorbed Jewish refugees in Shanghai, instead of with a traditional national-day reception. The Consulate believes it's a more meaningful way that will both benefit the residents of the area and demonstrate the strong bond between the Jewish people, Israel and China.

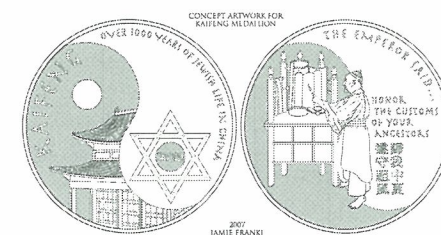
The Consulate General of Israel and 26 Israeli companies joined together to

raise 666,666 RMB for this project. With this amount of money, the Hongkou Elders' Activity Centre in Huoshan Park has been renovated and reequipped with new furniture, computers, a library, facilities for entertainment and medical equipment.

Guests who attended the ceremony included: Mr. Yu Beihua, District Mayor of Hongkou District, Mr. Uri Gutman, Consul General of Israel in Shanghai, representatives from the Shanghai Charity Foundation, Consuls General from the US, Germany, Austria and others, the donor companies, academics dealing with Jewish affairs, leaders of the Jewish community in Shanghai and representatives of the media.

• Special Medal Commemorates 1000 Years of Solitude

Mel Wacks, Director, Jewish-American Hall of Fame, has informed us that his organization has commissioned a special medal commemorating "Over 1,000 Years of Jewish Life in China". Designs are based on drawings by Father Domenge. The Chinese inscription from one of the Kaifeng stelae was supplied by Chan Sui-jeung, author of "The Jews of China."



The medals, 3 inches in diameter, should be available later this year. The retail prices of the medals – which would be issued in limited editions – are expected to be \$50 for bronze, \$175 for pure silver and \$225 for the gold-plated pure silver version. These are very heavy, weighing 8 oz. each.

SJI members will be entitled to a special discount. More information to follow.

IN THE FIELD (continued)

• News From Kaifeng

The fifth essay competition on Jewish history and culture at the Institute of Jewish Studies was recently held. It received over 100 papers. There were two students who won the first prize, five who won the second prize, and ten third prize winners. Our correspondent, Grace Yao Yulan got a first prize with her topic "The Reason of the Separation between Christianity and Judaism". Grace hopes to be studying in Israel next October.

TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

My name is Gilad Feldman (Fili) and I'm from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel.

Recently, I've heard an interview on ABC with Prof. Youde Fu about Chinese studying Hebrew and thought that it since I'm running the community for Israelis who are studying Chinese culture and language (www.chinese-garden.net) it could be wonderful to connect between the two communities.

Thanks in advance,
Gilad Feldman - fili
Mobile: +972-54-806-8003
Email: fination@gmail.com

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing an historical-fiction novel about a Jerusalem-born German-Jew who survives the Crusaders' 1099 siege of the holy city and eventually makes his way to Song Dynasty China (960-1279 CE) via a sea route from Baghdad. It is not totally out of the realm of possibility that this sort of thing occurred. There were German-Jews living in Jerusalem at the time and Muslim merchants sailed to and from China heavily during this time. Anyway, I've read several books on the subject of the Kaifeng-Jews, but there is still A LOT of material I need to know before I can continue filling in certain details about the community and its inhabitants.

I'm sure that there is not a lot of info about the early days of the Kaifeng synagogue because of repeated floodings, but do you know of someone who might be able to answer several questions (focusing on the

Song Dynasty) for me? For instance, what part of Kaifeng was the community in? How did these Jews keep kosher if they were say 1,000 miles away from the main community? Were any of them conscripted into the Chinese military to fight the armies of the Jin Empire? These are just a few. One thing I've found interesting is that I constantly read the synagogue was built in 1163, but it's never mentioned that Kaifeng was apart of the Jin Empire during this time. I've read that Kaifeng became the Jin's "southern capital" in either 1157 or 1161 (depending on the source). If this is true, the Jews would have had to ask the Jin and not the Chinese for permission to build the house of worship.

Thank you for your time.

Jim R. McClanahan
dagan75@hotmail.com

The Hebrew Studies Program at Peking University (continued from page 1)

and its counterpart in China reached an agreement to support a Chinese university to train a class of students in Modern Hebrew to facilitate further cultural and diplomatic exchange between the two countries. A U.S. based Jewish foundation was to provide financial assistance so that the class could have experienced instructors in Modern Hebrew hired directly from Israel and getting paid a salary comparable to that of their Israeli colleagues working in Israel. Due to PKU's experience with the first Hebrew class in China, the Ministry of Education in China turned to it to fulfill this initiative. Since 1991, four more classes were admitted every four years one after another (1991, 1995, 1999 and 2003), with the first one in 1991 drawn hastily from students who were already attending the University in other language programs and the Law school.

Since 1991, more than a handful of instructors from Israel and the U.S. have taught in this program; at any one time, there was at least one native speaker teaching the students. Most of these instructors have had Ulpan teaching experience in Israel, while some of them are also faculty members in Israeli universities, holding post graduate degrees in fields such as Hebrew linguistics, literature and education. They successfully exported the

crucial teaching method in the Ulpan to China — "teaching Hebrew only by Hebrew" from the very beginning of their first class. Some of them even prohibited the students from speaking English or Chinese in class. Although many students found it very difficult during the first few weeks, they soon got used to this method and made rapid progress. After one year of learning the language intensively—12 class hours or more a week—the Hebrew majors were able to converse freely with Israelis.

When the Israel embassy opened in Beijing in 1992, it got involved with the program's academic development with a more hands-on attitude. Textbooks were shipped from Israel to the embassy and then distributed to the students. The students were invited to Passover and Independence Day celebrations organized by the embassy. These students also frequently attended visiting Israeli art performances and concerts in Beijing. All the Israeli ambassadors visited the class; prominent guests with Jewish backgrounds from all over the world frequently came to the PKU campus to talk to the students, among them, Shimon Peres.

The faculty team of the Hebrew program has grown larger, albeit slowly, during the last decade. Starting from 1991, Mr. Ping Zhang, a Master Degree holder who studied Hebrew with the first class, began to serve as the counseling teacher of the 1991 class. He went to Israel in 1993 and earned his Ph.D. in comparative culture studies (Confucianism and Talmudic Studies) in 2000. He is now an Israeli permanent resident and a tenured professor at Tel Aviv University. In 1993, Ms. Xu, the first Hebrew teacher on a university campus in China, earned her Masters degree in Modern Hebrew linguistics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Ms. Yu Wang, a graduate of the class of 1990, became the third Chinese faculty member in the program in 1995. She received her Master's degree in Jewish Culture from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is working towards her Ph.D. degree on modern Israeli politics from Haifa University. In 2003, another member of the class of 1990, Dr. Yiyi Chen, joined forces with his former teachers and classmates. He was trained in Near Eastern Studies and the Hebrew Bible at Cornell University, and spent several years working in the U.S. before returning to China.

Points East

Points East

and show how this Jewish community fit in the history of Jews in China.

The first wave of Jewish presence in China began over a thousand years ago when some Jews came to China with the Arabs along the historic Silk Route. They tried to maintain their Jewish identity, but over the centuries they intermarried with the Chinese, they assimilated into the Chinese society, so that by the mid-nineteenth century, the last synagogue in the city of Kaifeng closed for lack of congregants. The second wave of Jews arrived in China around the same time that the first wave of Jews practically disappeared. It was in the aftermath of the Opium War, when the British began to build their presence in China, first on the island of Hong Kong, in Canton, Shanghai, and other important Chinese seaports. Along with the British came a group of Sephardi Jews from Baghdad and India. They were, of course, British subjects, and quickly began to play an active and important role in the commerce of these foreign enclaves in China. Jewish entrepreneurs like the Sassoons, Harpoons, and Kadoories not only contributed to the economy for which they were knighted by the kings and queens of England, but also organized and helped maintain Sephardi communities in China. The Jewish community in Harbin is considered to be the third wave, Ashkenazi Jews from the Russian empire, to be followed a few decades later by the fourth wave of Jewish refugees from Hitler. As a matter of fact, when one mentions Jews in China, the most common response is, "you mean the refugees in Shanghai before and during World War II." And they are often shocked to hear that there is a long history of Jews in China, who had little to do with persecution, but who went to China to seek economic opportunities. That was certainly my father's motive when he decided to leave Bialystok and seek a new life in Manchuria.

The Jewish community in Harbin, and indeed the entire foreign community of Harbin, which it was a part of, grew rapidly in the aftermath of the Russian revolution, that sent thousands of Russians and members of minority groups like the Ukrainians, Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians, Muslim Tatars, and of course Jews streaming into the city. At one point, the Jewish community numbered over ten thousand (some estimate even twenty thousand) out of a foreign population of nearly one hundred thousand. As Professor Goldstein has reported, there was a central Jewish orga-

nization called *Kharbinskoe Evreiskoe Dukhovnoe Obshchestvo*, Kh.E.D.O. for short, which stood for the Harbin Jewish Spiritual Society, a kind of a Jewish federation, overseeing the work of many Jewish organizations, including the Jewish hospital, the Jewish People's Bank, *Deshovaya Stolovaya* (literally the "cheap dining hall") *Gmilus Khosed* (a free or low interest loan office). For a number of years, my father was the chairman of the Auditing Committee for all Jewish communal organizations. There were also two Jewish youth organizations, the *Brit Trumpeldor* (or Betar) organized by the Zionists-Revisionists and the *Maccabi*, a world-wide Jewish sports organization. Betar not only served the local Jewish community, but actively promoted *aliya* to Palestine. I knew the parents of the present Israeli prime minister, Ehud Olmert, who left Harbin for Palestine in the early 1930s.

Over the years, there were a number of Jewish schools in Harbin, but in my time there was the Jewish elementary school called Talmud Torah, where all subjects were taught in Russian, plus a heavy dose of Hebrew (The five books of the Bible, Talmud, modern Hebrew literature, etc.), and Chinese and English as foreign languages. Upon arrival in Harbin in 1928, I was enrolled in Talmud Torah's first grade, skipping kindergarten. In the 1920s, there was a Jewish high school, which today houses a Korean junior high, but the Stars of David can still be seen in the round windows. Naturally, there was a Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of town, but as Harbin grew after the exodus of foreigners, it became necessary to move the cemetery to a more distant place. In fact, the Chinese authorities are taking meticulous care of the cemetery, which I visited in 1998 and again in 2004. One Jewish observer noted that whereas Jewish cemeteries are being desecrated in Europe, in China they are being zealously guarded by the authorities.

Life in Harbin in the 1930s

How was life in Harbin? In a general way, it was not much different than life in many European cities. Of course, it was located in China, but there was a separate Chinese town where Europeans rarely ventured to visit. The people you saw on the streets were largely European. Of course, there were Chinese street vendors balancing heavy loads of goods (my favorite treat was "*tanhula*," a caramelized apple on a stick), Chinese street cleaners, beggars,

rickshaws, Chinese policemen (under the Japanese occupation paired with Russian policemen, and Japanese police officers), Chinese "compradors," a kind of office managers in European business enterprises, as well as Chinese helpers of all kinds, some Chinese stores, but mostly not in the center of European life. The buildings were early twentieth century European city architecture, and as Saigon was called the Paris of the Far East, Harbin was little St. Petersburg. To be sure, there was a pagoda and Oriental bridges in the city park. There was also a Confucian temple, but it was outnumbered by scores of Russian orthodox churches, Catholic places of worship, a mosque, and several synagogues.

The names of the streets were exotic: *Kitaiskaya* (the Chinese street), the Japanese, the Korean, the Mongolian, but also the Cossack street, the Artillery street, the Commercial street, the Pharmacy street, the Stock market street, Market street, the New Prospect, and Diagonal street. The districts within the city had some Russian but also Chinese names: *Pristan'* ("embankment" in Russian), where most of the Jewish stores and Jewish organizations were located, and where most of the Jews lived; *Novy Gorod* (the New Town), where the railroad administration (first Russian and then Japanese), *Zhelsob* (the Railroad Club), and the railroad station were all located; *Nakhalovka* (a place of "ruffians"), a sort of slum for the poor; *Modyagou* (a Chinese name); and, across the Sungari River, *Solnechnyi ostrov* (Sun Island), a name that in the Chinese translation has survived the disappearance of the Europeans and which was developed into a spectacular tourist attraction, with a museum of ice sculptures. Actually, Harbin now sponsors a magnificent ice sculpture festival that attracts many tourists. Which brings to my mind two vignettes: Sungari, of course, froze for a good part of the year, and one could walk across, but more likely to hire a "*tolka, tolka*" (push-push in Russian), a kind of a carriage with two benches which was powered by a Chinese in the back. The second vignette is the sight of Orthodox Russians digging a hole in the thick ice on January 6th (the Russian Christmas according to the Julian calendar), and jumping into the ice-cold water in a kind of a baptism ritual. This practiced in a place where temperatures dipped to minus thirty, forty or on occasion even fifty below zero.

My daughter and son-in-law adopted a lovely, intelligent girl in China in 2004 and are highly pleased with the assistance of their JCICS-member agency, Homeland Adoption Services in Congers, NY. Obtaining children through Homeland, a social group called Jewish Families With Children from China meets regularly. Also helpful with my questions, Spence-Chapin Services, a NYC non-profit and COA accredited adoption agency that the above *NYT* article mentioned, said that 25% of its foreign adoptions it arranged in 2006 were from China. They and other agencies which unite Jewish parents and Chinese adoptees should inform the parents of the Sino-Judaic Institute and the history that it honors, studies, and extends. Also, agencies should inform parents of the advancing studies in Judaism and wide-ranging Jewish topics in China, because of their possible interest in meeting scholars and students and their religious counterparts during their adoption stays in China.

To conclude, I was most pleased to learn about the Stars of David: *A Jewish Adoption Information & Support Network*. Carrying the slogan, "Building Jewish Families through Adoption," it is a non-profit organization providing the Jewish community compassionate support, adoption information, and education to prospective parents, adoptive families, adult adoptees, and birth families. It is not an adoption agency. In the past several years, adoptions from China have become most popular for Jewish individuals and couples seeking to adopt abroad. Therefore, the Network has increasingly focused on educating its 800+ members about Jewish-Chinese issues and history, such as providing information on the Sino-Judaic Institute and Sino-Jewish history. Stars of David co-sponsors the Midwest Adoption Conference every November, which is one of the largest adoption conferences in the country. Providing a website and newsletter, *Adoptive Families*, the Network helps individuals and Jewish Family Service agencies to set up chapters in the U.S. and throughout the world. An all-volunteer group, it was originally founded in Massachusetts in 1984 by adoptive parent Phyllis Nissen and Rabbi Susan Abramson, and the current National Chapter Coordinator, Susan M. Katz, was mentioned early in this article. Check www.starsofdavid.org for more information.

¹ Dr. Albert Yee is a retired psychology professor

and academic dean and a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute Board of Directors. His email address is: alyee@montana.com.

² Since Americans are generally unfamiliar with the source and nature of racial prejudice towards Asians, read Chapters 4 & 6 in my book, *Yeee-Hahl!: Remembrance and Longing*, 2005, www.airleaf.com. Readers will find parallels with anti-Semitism, especially in Chapter 5, "The Incomparable Chinese and Jews," which Rabbi Anson Laytner, *Points East's* editor, and I coauthored an earlier draft.

Jewish Life in Harbin in the 1930s

by Peter Berton

Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Relations, University of Southern California.

Presented at the symposium on the Jews of Harbin, Flanzer Jewish Community Center, Sarasota, Florida, March 17, 2006 and first published in English in the *Bulletin of the Igud Yotzei Sin*.

Dr. Lengyel, the organizer of this symposium and exhibit, is an archeologist, and I am his fossil. Seventy-seven years ago, when I was six years old, I arrived in Harbin with my mother to join my father who had arrived two years earlier.

Today, I want to tell you a little about the history of the city of Harbin, the Jewish community in which I grew up, and to give you a feel of what life was like in this cold, exotic, faraway place.

The Uniqueness of Harbin

Harbin was established a little over one hundred years ago, when the influential Russian Minister of Finance Sergei Witte borrowed money in France to build a Russian railroad in China. The Trans-Siberian railroad wound its way beyond Lake Baikal and then had to veer north and follow the Russo-Chinese border northeast and then south along the Ussuri River to the Russian naval base at Vladivostok. As an aside, Vladivostok was established in 1860 and in Russian it means "Rule the Orient." A look at the map would show that if a direct line could be built across Manchuria, the journey from European Russia to Vladivostok could be greatly shortened. And so, a Chinese Viceroy who attended the coronation of Tsar Nicholas II, was said to have been bribed to get Chinese permission to build this railroad. The Russians began to look for a strategic place along the railroad to place their administration head-

quarters and chose a place near a sleepy Chinese town on the Sungari River, which became Harbin. This was in 1898, and a century later, I attended an international conference in the Russian Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk to commemorate Harbin's centennial and to discuss cooperation between the Russian Far East and China's Northeast.

Around the turn of the twentieth century, Harbin began to grow, especially since it became the base of Russian army operations during the war with Japan that erupted in 1904. After the Chinese revolution in 1911, China descended into a warlord period, with Manchuria under the control of warlord Chang Tso-lin. The Nationalist revolution under Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek began to consolidate and centralize power in the country. The Japanese who controlled the railroad in the southern half of Manchuria, a prize they got for defeating Russia in 1905, wanted to keep China weak and divided, and were apprehensive of the Nationalist consolidation of power. In 1928, the year I arrived in China, the Japanese placed dynamite under Chang Tso-lin's train and killed him. Three years later, on September 18, 1931 the Japanese army instigated an incident, and used this as a pretext to occupy Manchuria. They proceeded to establish a puppet state of Manchukuo, and enlisted Henry Pu Yi, the last emperor of China, to sit on the puppet throne—so essentially most of my life in Harbin was under Japanese occupation. The city had its Chinese mayor, but the vice-mayor was a Japanese (man) who ran the show. This system was akin to the Soviet practice of having an Uzbek or Kazakh serve as first secretary of the non-Russian republics, but the second secretary was Russian. In Harbin, things were a bit more complicated, since it was the Japanese Army in control, and hence the most powerful person was the Japanese general who headed the "Special Operations Service" (*Tokumu Kikan*). This was the intelligence and counter-intelligence headquarters of operations against the Soviet Union. If someone was arrested, the place to check and plead was not the police, but this Japanese military mission.

The Jewish Community in Harbin

It is said that the first Jew arrived in Harbin in 1899, a year after its founding, and in the next few years more Jews arrived and began to build a synagogue and community organizations. But now, let me pause,

The Hebrew Studies major at PKU has been the only one in China for over twenty years; this means in a country with a population of 1.3 billion, only 9-12 students at any one given time are learning Modern Hebrew on a university campus. These students appreciate this privilege and put an enormous amount of effort in their studies. They can typically reach or pass Level Vav (the highest level in Ulpan) in Modern Hebrew by the time of their graduation. Tal Devir, a correspondent of Yediot Aharonot in Beijing, sat in and interviewed the class for two months and wrote a long report in a July 2002 issue of the newspaper, in which he reluctantly admitted: "When talking with these students who have studied Hebrew for only two years in Beijing, I am really jealous. I have been in China and studied the language for many years but I don't dare speak Chinese with them, for their Hebrew is much better than my Chinese (translated from Hebrew by Zhenhua Meng)."

The faculty and students in this program at PKU also helped the Chinese public gain more accurate and objective information about Israel and the Jewish people. For example, in 2001, Zhenhua Meng, a sophomore student of the fourth class at that time, set up a website to provide information on Israel and the Jewish people to the Chinese audience. This website soon became popular and the affiliated online forum hosted a number of heated discussions about Israel. One year later, Mr. Meng was sent as an exchange student to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, from where he wrote columns for two Chinese newspapers to share his unforgettable experiences and thoughts from a Chinese point of view. Many of the graduates maintain web logs in which they write about Israel and the Jewish culture; these have attracted many readers who are interested in the subject.

As of February, 2007, there have been 33 graduates from the Hebrew program in PKU; nine more are due to graduate in the summer of 2007. Besides the two who became faculty members in the Hebrew program at PKU, others are working for Chinese Academy of Social Sciences—the think-tank for the central government, the Shanghai International Studies University, Center of Jewish Studies in Shanghai, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Xin Hua News Agency Jerusalem Office and the Israeli embassy in Beijing. Some are employed by Israeli and Chinese companies such

as El Al and the Chinese Tourism Group; others are pursuing their graduate degree in areas related to the Jewish culture in the U.S., England and Hong Kong, China.

Besides training students in the Hebrew studies major, the program also offers courses to the whole student body of PKU. These classes provided many of the most brilliant young people in China a more comprehensive and balanced perspective on Israel and the Jewish culture. These scholars are also active participants in academic exchanges and cooperation with other colleagues in China, and these activities in turn have influenced many of the intellectuals' thinking on issues Middle East, Jewish, and Israeli.

The history of the Hebrew program at PKU overlaps with China's tremendous economic revival and development during the last two decades. Starting from the second class of the program, it enjoyed strong support from both a Jewish foundation and the Israeli embassy, especially when compared with the relatively limited resources Chinese universities had back in the early 90s. This generous support not only made literature about Israel and the Jewish people abundant to the students, but also allowed short and long term visits by them to the State of Israel, as well as inviting experienced instructors from Israel to teach. However, due to various reasons, this support has diminished over the years, and now there is no support whatsoever to this program coming from any source outside the university. Although China's own governmental support can make up some of the deficit in the operation, it is far from enough to maintain the former legendary quality of language instruction of the program.

Today, more universities in China have recently started or are planning to offer Hebrew and Jewish Studies programs. At this juncture, the diminishment of external funding is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, as stated above, due to the lack of funding to attract top-grade language instructors to teach, the students' spoken Hebrew skill will suffer, as well as the availability of reading material and trips to Israel; on the other hand, the program at PKU sees this also as an opportunity to transition from a mere language teaching program to one that focuses more on original research.

With the increase of international trade and traveling, the general interest of the

Chinese to learn about the Middle East region has also grown dramatically. At PKU, there are many professors who are working in related fields (the Palestinian-Israeli relationship in the International Studies College, Middle Eastern political systems in the Political Science Department, comparative studies of Islam, Christianity and Judaism in the Philosophy and Religion Studies Department, and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in the Oriental Studies Department). The members of the Hebrew program will work more closely with these colleagues. The collective strength of all these scholars working together will definitely produce some new viewpoints for the students in the top university in China. The current Hebrew students have already felt the difference — they used to be overly influenced by the Jewish point of view, but now, partly due to decreased hours of instruction by Israeli teachers and much less literature sent from Israel, they have more time to take up other courses representing different or even opposing views, as well as to read much more diversified literature about Israel. Today, they tend to put Israel into a larger Middle Eastern cultural and political context.

After almost 22 years, the Hebrew and Jewish Studies program at PKU is transforming itself again, propelled by both internal and external forces, to reposition itself in regard to the pressing need of China's new development and its relationship with the international community, especially the Middle East. It has trained dozens of Hebrew students, and has influenced thousands more who have studied on the same campus. It will continue to do so with its new effort to focus on original and objective research; hopefully this new initiative will get its much needed support from all sources around the world. [Prof. Chen may be reached at yiyi.chen@pku.edu.cn]

Appendix I: Selected publications by faculties and graduates of the Hebrew classes at PKU (in the order of publication)

Chen, Yiyi, 1994, *Three Days and a Child*, a Chinese Translation of A. B. Yehoshua's novella with the same name, China Social Science Press (winner of the 1995 Institute of Hebrew Literature Annual Translation Prize).

Chen, Yiyi, 1994, "Studies on the Assimilation of the Jewish Community in Kaifeng, China," *World Religion Study*, a peer-reviewed journal published by China Social Science Academy.

Zhang, Ping, 1996, *Avoth: The Wisdom of Our Fathers*, China Social Science Press.
Zhang, Ping, 2003, *Derech Eretz Zuta: The Jewish Way of the World*, Peking University Press.

Zhang, Su, 2003, *Israeli Special Force*, Hainan Publishing House.

Wang, Yu, Wang, Jianguo and Jiang, Guopeng, 2003, *Shin-Beth Between the Schism*, a Chinese Translation of Carmi Gillon's novel, International Cultural Publishing Cooperation.

Xu, Zheping, 2004, *300 Sentences of Hebrew*, Peking University Press.

Xu, Zheping, 2005, *Course of the Hebrew Language*, Peking University Press.

Meng, Zhenhua, 2005, *Earrings in the Cellar*, a Chinese Translation of Rachel Bernheim's holocaust memoir, Yunnan People's Publishing House.

Chen, Yiyi, 2006, *The Hebrew Bible, An Introduction Based on Textual and Archaeological Data*, Kunlun Press.

Chen, Yiyi, 2006, "Understanding Israelite religion — New Challenges for Chinese Bible Translations," *Religion Compass*, vol. 1.

Yu, Weidong, 2006, *Modern Israeli Culture and Society*, Shanghai Foreign Education Press.

Xu, Zheping, forthcoming, *Hebrew-Chinese Dictionary*, Peking University Press.

Meng, Zhenhua, forthcoming, *Lion's Honey*, a Chinese Translation of David Grossman's novel, Locus Publishing.

Appendix II: Classes offered by the Hebrew Studies Program faculties to the whole university student body:

Introduction to the Hebrew Bible;

Introduction to Judaism;

Hebrew for Everyone;

Biblical Archaeology.

Appendix III: Other online resources about the class and their activities:

"Approaching Israel" website address: <http://www.israelcn.com/>;

"Student's goal is Chinese translation of Hebrew Bible," an online version of an article featuring Dr. Yiyi Chen: http://www.news.cornell.edu/Chronicle/96/11.21.96/Bible_translation.html

Ping Zhang's blog of: <http://blog.daqi.com/zhangp>

LOST and FOUND – Nazi-era Passport Connects Four Continents

by Peter Nash

When a curious Chinese collector of old items found two Nazi-era issued passports in a flea market in Shanghai in 1999 he did not know what to do with them. Some years later he heard that a Jewish cultural site was planned to be built to commemorate the flight of 20,000 Jews from the Nazi occupation of Europe and their refuge in

Shanghai. So the collector Zhu Peiyi contacted the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Memorial Centre and they posted the story and names of the passport holders on the [ex-ShanghaiLander website: www.rickshaw.org](http://www.rickshaw.org).

As a German born refugee who escaped and found refuge in Shanghai, I recognised one of the names, Viennese-born Gerti Waszkoutzer. We were together in a kindergarten class and she also emigrated to Sydney after the War and our parents maintained a friendship. Gerti later married and became known as Gerda Brender. I contacted her with this incredible story not knowing if it would be of interest to her but quickly learning that she was overwhelmed with "nostalgia, excitement and nervousness". As she had no siblings and her parents had passed away this was her only physical link with her childhood in Shanghai. "It was a great shock to have found it and it sent shivers down my spine ... but it was a wonderful surprise".

Gerda and her immediate family decided to travel to Shanghai to reclaim the passport amid great excitement by the Shanghai authorities as well as media coverage in Shanghai and Sydney daily newspapers and the Jewish press.¹

The second passport was in the name of Manfred LICHTENSTEIN who was born in Halle, Germany, reportedly on 24 August 1932. As no one claimed it, I decided to try to find Manfred or someone connected with him. After all I had many Shanghai resources in my possession and also knew where other valuable resources were available.

The first resource I looked at was the Japanese controlled 1943-44 Census for the Europeans and other Nationals forced into the Shanghai Hongkew Ghetto.² Manfred was not listed, which was odd but not totally unusual. I also knew that the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) in Shanghai took applications from most of the Jews migrating to other countries after 1945. These so-called Shanghai HIAS Lists³ have been microfilmed and are searchable⁴.

Valery Bazarov heads the HIAS Location and Family History Service in New York and he found an application from Hermann Lichtenstein, his wife Esther and children Manfred and Ruth, also giving their place and dates of birth and other

data. My excitement in knowing the names of the other Lichtenstein family was tempered slightly by the fact that their application did not list potential sponsors, an extremely valuable part of the HIAS Lists, which often gives a clue to onward migration. However I also now had their birth dates and this showed up an anomaly, namely, Manfred was born on 24 June 1923 not 24 August 1932.

To find where any or all of the Lichtenstein family migrated from Shanghai was the next key step. About 7000 settled in the United States, the highest number to any country, with about 5000 going to Israel, 3000 to Australia and the remainder spread throughout the world.

My wife, Rieke, suggested I look at the National Archives of Australia (NAA) website⁵ and search for Manfred's name. I immediately found a file existed for Manfred. To access this file at NAA in Canberra I asked our Canberra-based AJGS member, Frank Atkinson, if he could retrieve the file and send a copy. Now I found that an application by the then-Australian Jewish Welfare Society (AJWS - now JewishCare) for entry to Australia was approved in 1948 for Esther, Manfred and Irmgard Lichtenstein. It also gave their ages. Post-1945 AJWS files are still archived in Sydney and Melbourne, but neither Bella Sharp-Collins (JewishCare, Sydney) or Lionel Sharpe (AJGS Melbourne) could find one for this Lichtenstein family, casting doubt on their migration to Australia.

As Ruth and not Irmgard was included on the HIAS List, I felt that Irmgard may be Manfred's wife and that Ruth probably married in Shanghai and emigrated elsewhere. This thought induced me to do a reverse search of the 1943-44 Shanghai Census. I searched for those with the first name Irmgard and, based on nationality, ages and occupation (Census versus NAA file), I matched up with an Irmgard Haas, possibly her maiden name, which I thought may be useful information.

Next I looked at my copy of Shanghai Death Lists which except for one year includes the deaths of refugees in the years 1940 to 1948 and I found that the father Hermann had died in 1946. Surely Esther born in 1896 would also have died by now. With no confirmation that any of the Lichtenstein family actually migrated to Australia, I searched the very accessible Mormon database for US Social Security

and Kim (unsuccessful) through drilling "to be like us" that shames looks they cannot change. As for Kim who lived tormented in her fundamentalist family and arranged marriage into her twenties, rabid faith laced by racism can be traumatizing. Reflecting on her upbringing and persistent mental problems, Kim said that she "always felt like I was living inside a bubble." While most adoptive parents are loving and caring, there is much evidence that the relative ease of adopting overseas in the past have placed children into unloving and unwholesome families. Because of their creed-based care for children, I believe that Jewish parents will be foremost in raising their adopted children properly and make sure that they know and can relate their cultural heritages.

Asian orphans are in a catch-22 — infanticide or indigence where born or chances for a happy or scarred life in the U.S. American child agencies are caught between many older and "difficult" children awaiting adoption and parental preference for babies, which can be obtained overseas if they are willing to pay. Since demand is high and granted that the best parents should have priority, U.S. foreign adoption policies can be improved as China has recently done.

A fourth-generation Chinese American, Korean War veteran, and retired psychology professor, I live in a Montana town with about 80,000 residents and very few Asians. The 2000 Census found about 7,000 Asians in the entire state. Over several years, I have contacted 50 white parents locally who had biracial adoptees, mostly Asians. Some were unmarried women; the People's Republic of China used to allow singles 5-8% of its adoptees. Magnifying the local count across the U.S., Asian adoptees are everywhere. Out of my professional and multicultural background, I volunteered pro bono assistance to the parents. I told them that cute as they are as babies, loved by family members, and appreciated by outsiders as youngsters, serious concern should be given their adopted children's identity and treatment by others in later life.

With their Asian features, unlike Heidi Bub who passes as white, unless they are well-prepared, they will face stereotyping with little clue as to who and what they really are. In time, many adoptees will want to find their roots and will resent any deraciation and lack of cultural mentoring, as do many Korean adoptees today. Since

I offered my assistance, all of the Montana parents except for one family have dismissed my offer and no doubt the cultural mentoring issue altogether. Meshing with complaints of adult Korean adoptees, my result shows that many if not most adoptive families, especially in the South and remote areas, neglect meaningful cultural mentoring and refuse to regard it as a serious obligation, even though they had pledged to do so as required by China. One family with three Asian adoptees had their oldest child write to tell me that no cultural mentoring was needed, because they were devout Christians and God's care would be more than enough. Wishing him and his siblings the best of fortunes, I pray that they will not suffer racism and confusion as they grow older. The great advantage of Jews as adoptive parents is that they know what culture means from their very own background and are sensitive to bias and prejudice and will raise adoptees to know who they are, where they came from, and what they have become.²

Adoption Policies and Procedures

To adopt an orphan overseas, one can file an I-600 petition from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) at a U.S. diplomatic post in China. It requires the child's ID, a home study, parents' fingerprinting and their proof of U.S. citizenship, marriage or singles exemption, income data, and health insurance for the adoptive child. Since home studies assess applicants' suitability to adopt alien children, it is distressing that the CIS accepts home studies by licensed private adoption agencies, costing thousands, as equivalent to those by state and civic auspices. And, less reputable agencies can rubber-stamp studies by unlicensed or foreign agents, which can be expected to be perfunctory at best. Assigned baby quotas by China, the indispensable agents handle the terms of both sides, each step price-tagged. Congress should tighten up the CIS "Eligible Orphans Act" to reward reputable agents and the best possible parents and counteract greed and the unworthy.

Beginning May 2007, China's adoption policies will make it harder to adopt a Chinese child. According to U.S. adoption agencies which received briefings by Chinese officials, the changes are said to come from the enormous increase in applications by foreigners, not just Americans, which greatly exceeds the number of babies. Chinese children are popular

because they are healthy and well cared for, and China's adoption system has been efficiently run. With the new policies, an adopting family must be composed of a man and woman between 30 and 50 who are high-school graduates and have been married at least two years or five years if it is a second marriage. There must be no more than two divorces between the two parents. They cannot have criminal records, be obese (body-mass index of less than 40), or have a net worth less than \$80,000. Annual family income must be at least \$10,000 per person. Anyone seeking to adopt who is on antidepressant or other psychiatric medication will be denied (which the *NYT* said was shocking to Manhattan types since many seek psychiatric aid). Applicants must be free of cancer, AIDS, and other diseases. If they will adopt a child with "special needs," who may be lacking a few fingers or have a drooping eyelid, parents can be as old as 55. Needless to say, applicants are racing to complete the long process of completing and filing adoption papers before May.

The new guidelines put China in the middle of national restrictions, not as tough as Korea has become but stricter than Vietnam. Seeking white children, some who adopted from Russia and its former Eastern satellites have found that their adoptees were permanently brain defective, a condition caused by being born of alcoholic mothers.

Accreditation and Adoption Agencies

Headquartered in New York City (NYC), the Council on Accreditation (COA) is a non-profit, international, independent, child and family service and behavioral healthcare accrediting organization. Certifying agencies involved in foreign adoptions, COA was founded in 1977 by the Child Welfare League of America and Family Service America (now the Alliance for Children and Families). COA's approved groups include adoption agencies and many others, such as those that treat troubled youth and families. Guided by the U.S. State Department, adoption agencies are now applying for Hague Convention accreditation, which is more refined and internationally respected. Nonprofit adoption agencies are also members of the Joint Council on International Children's Services (JCICS) which "advocates on behalf of children in need of permanent families and promotes ethical practices in intercountry adoption."

Background to Asian Adoptions

For long, the United States has had a liberal immigration policy for foreign adoptions by its citizens. With thousands of Asian children, most of whom were orphans, victimized by the Korean and Vietnam wars, adoption programs were organized. The government of Korea and its approved agencies mounted a program that brought up to 250,000 young Koreans to America. Born of U.S. servicemen during the Vietnam War, 2,000 Amerasians were flown to the U.S. by Operation Babylift in 1975 just before the Reds completed their conquest. The Communists had vowed to slaughter all of the Amerasians. Babylift was part of America's rescue of two million allies and their families. Conducted in the throes of defeat, President Gerald Ford's decision was an unprecedented, humane act that has been overlooked but should be recalled with pride.

However, the White House quickly forgot the refugees after they reached the U.S. The Amerasian youth were hastily given to almost anyone who would take them. The millions of refugees were given prison-like conditions and "parolee" status in several states that demanded federal funds to accommodate them. California with the most Vietnamese refugees protested loudest and its supposedly liberal governor, Jerry Brown, and his administration thundered, "We have too many Asians already." That was more than enough for me, then an academic dean at Long Beach State. I attacked the racism and acrimony at federal and state hearings and protested the refugee conditions I found. At Camp Pendleton, refugees were packed into squad tents with armed Marine sentries patrolling them. Nobody knew what to do and what would become of the refugees. Federal officials who had heard my speeches called on me to assist them. Working together for two years, which my work took me to Washington regularly, we developed a decent, humane program. It changed their residence status from temporary to permanent, provided instruction in English language and American life, and a graduated program for their release from detention through charitable groups, mainly religious bodies that came forth. For myself, the several-year experience exposed the nation's prejudice towards Asians and the Vietnam War as well as revealed its decency when push gave to shove. *Points East* readers might see the parallel between this tale, which ended well, and Washington's

shameful response to Jews who sought safety in America from the Nazis, most of whom were rejected and returned to Europe.

The documentary, *Daughter from Danang* (2002), was an Oscar nominee and Sundance winner. The heartbreaking film is about an Amerasian's reunion with her Vietnamese mother. Heidi Bub was adopted by a single white woman and raised in Pulaski, Tennessee, the KKK's birthplace. Kept ignorant of her Asian background by her straitlaced, unloving parent, as an adult Heidi nevertheless journeyed to Vietnam to find her birth mother. The reunion ended in bitterness, for raised as she was and totally ignorant of and unsympathetic with her mother and Vietnamese culture and customs, Bub could turn her back on the one who had given her life and care through the war until she was six years old. The mother expected Bub to assist her existence as dutiful Asian children do for their parents, but Bub refused any help and returned to the U.S.

The 2000 Census found nearly 12 million full/part Asians in the U.S., of whom about 870,000 are "Asian & White." Besides their rapid rise, nobody knows how many full/part Asian adoptees there are. While Amerasians stopped coming long ago and public outrage in Korea has restricted adoptions from that nation, China is now the lead source — 5,053 in 2000 and 6,493 in 2006 (according to the State Dept.); 99% are baby girls. The increase in Chinese adoptions comes despite a drop from 22,728 international adoptions by Americans in 2005 to 20,679 in 2006. At \$15,000-20,000+ per child through private adoption agencies, the baby trade draws big bucks. Costs include a \$3,000-\$4,000 "gift donation" to those giving up the child and up to \$2,660 for agents' dossier fee. Thus, Asian adoptee issues cry out — the way they are handled with priority on costs, how parents raise the adoptees, and how the adoptees cope when they are mature.

Denouncing deraciation and maltreatment, African and Native Americans have tried to curtail biracial adoptions of their kind. Since almost all Asian adoptees are taken by non-Asians, the same concerns are pertinent for them as well. While domestic adoptions in America are well-regulated professionally, alien adoptions have had problems. Inadequate, bureaucratic American policies govern alien adoptions and some if not most states have

little say over them. Montana state agencies for adopted children told me they were unable to provide oversight and welfare support services for children adopted overseas through federal facilities. However, other states license adoption agencies and have strict policies that guide international as well as domestic adoptions.

Adult Asian Adoptees of Washington in Seattle is one of the very few groups offering activities to promote healthy identity and cultural development for distraught Asian adoptees. I have volunteered to be AAW's Montana rep. Yet such groups only reach teens and adults. AAW estimates that Asian adoptees, mostly adult Koreans today, number in the 100s of thousands. Others estimate 250,000 Koreans, which at the current, prevailing rate would have cost a total of about \$4 billion. Numerous Internet items on Asian adoptees include those by grown-up adoptees who bemoan that they were raised by whites in non-Asian environments with no effort given to their cross-cultural and adult needs. It is heartening to note the "bicultural social network" underway in Manhattan's Upper West Side that Jewish families have developed for their Chinese adoptees and resource support from groups, such as Families with Children from China, and adoption agencies. Hopefully, the cultural mentoring provided goes beyond superficial song-and-dance routines, which the Sino-Judaic Institute might facilitate.

China's "one child/family" edict and the demand for babies by Americans have created a thriving trade. As stark as the plight of orphans may be, adoption is highly desirable but it's not a pure panacea. Heartbreaking tales tell of the hardships many Asian adoptees have faced, such as *Ten Thousand Sorrows* by Elizabeth Kim. Adoptees go all over America, often where few or no Asians live. The neglect of meaningful cultural mentoring is shortsighted at best and can be tragic; for mature adoptees will be perceived as Asians and treated accordingly. To assist Korean adoptees who seek their cultural roots, AAW and the Korean government offer homeland study and travel programs. Some are so disoriented that they have renounced their U.S. citizenship and stayed in Korea. With its population concerns, China is unlikely to do the same.

It is distressing that there are parents who try to derace adoptees as Bub (successful)

Death Index using Stephen Morse's versatile and valuable website⁶. Luckily the HIAS Lists gave me Esther's exact date of birth as there were other possible matches, but I was able to confirm that she died in 1975 and that her last residence was Astoria, Queens, NY. But more than that it also showed that her Social Security was issued in Illinois — perhaps Chicago?

It then occurred to me that for over 60 years, starting from 1934, a vast number of former German speaking Jews used the New York-published German language periodical *Aufbau* for a variety of personal notices (as my family certainly did). I also knew of the so-called Aufbau Indexing Project (AIP) which aimed to have a searchable database. However after several years it had still not been launched and I was unsure of its status.

Through JewishGen's German SIG⁷ I found the name and contacted the current AIP coordinator, Alex Calzareth, who said the AIP was partially completed but that if I gave some details he would check with the issues that had been scanned and indexed so far. I was in luck, as there was an obituary for Esther S. Lichtenstein née Friedler, originally from Halle, in the 21 March 1975 *Aufbau* issue following her date of death.

The bonus was that other surnames mentioned in the obituary were LAUB, LIGHT and LEIB. My hunch that *Aufbau* could help was right. But I was also confused as I had no prior connection to these names. Noting the order of the names in the obituary, my thoughts then were: "Esther's husband Hermann died in Shanghai, so did she re-marry (someone) Laub, and live and die in New York?"; "Did Manfred and Irmgard (possibly his wife) change their name to Light?"; "Did Ruth marry (someone) Leib?"

To get answers to these questions I re-visited the 1943-44 Shanghai Census List, Social Security Death Index website, and also searched online White Pages Directories for Illinois, New York and Florida (a popular destination for many American Jews). I could not connect anything with any certainty. As luck often begets luck, Alex Calzareth decided out of interest in this unusual story to search submitted family trees on www.worldconnect.rootsweb.com, a website linked to www.ancestry.com (not necessarily with a Jewish focus). On a tree submitted by Harold J. Schmidt, he found Manfred Lichtenstein from Halle, Ger-

many, his correct parents' names and that he died on 20 February 1996 in Chicago. Given this date and his birth date 24 August 1923 (not 24 June 1923 nor 24 August 1932!) he also cross-checked the SSDI and found a death for Fred LIGHT! Thus some mysteries were solved: Manfred changed his name and his wife was Rosie (surname unknown) — not Irmgard Haas...

The Schmidt Family Tree (last updated in 2002) showed that Irmgard Lichtenstein married Herman Laub and that Harold married the daughter of Ruth and Joseph Leib. The Tree showed that as well as Manfred, Irmgard and Herman Laub and Ruth Leib had died — but not Joseph Leib. It also seemed that neither Manfred nor Irmgard had children. In submitting his tree, Harold J. Schmidt also provided an email address. I sent a message, did not get a 'bounce' and waited and waited ... but I never got a response.

I was disappointed of course but thought it may have been for a variety of reasons: spam control, sender's name not known and therefore blocked, etc. I then searched the online White Pages Directory for Chicago/Illinois, found some possible hits for Harold J. Schmidt, phoned, but could not make a connection.

As ex-Shanghaianders have Reunions every two or three years I consulted attendee lists, especially the 1993 Reunion held in Chicago. I found that the Laubs and Joseph Leib had attended. With the given address for Joseph who now would have been 92 I wondered if he was still alive and at that address. So I contacted an ex-Shanghai school classmate, Joan Deman, in Chicago for assistance and also mentioned that Irmgard Laub had only died within the last year making it more likely to find an informant for her death. Joan then told me that another Shanghaiander, Kurt Jacoby, worked for the Chevra Kadisha (Jewish Burial Society) in Chicago. I contacted Kurt and not only did he know the Leib family but he also believed that Joseph Leib was still alive and would try to locate him.

The breakthrough finally came when Joseph Leib's daughter, Susan Schmidt, phoned me, first apologising for taking a while to respond. It seems that she was very pre-occupied with her father as he needed a lot of care lately. Susan was born in the US but she was in awe of how her grandparents and parents and their siblings came to Shanghai from Germany and

survived the harsh conditions and then built new lives in the US. She was very keen to claim her uncle Manfred's passport so I gave her the necessary contact details in Shanghai.

Even though there was no direct connection with my own family history, it felt as though there was and so I was very thrilled with the outcome.

The strange discovery of Manfred Lichtenstein's passport and the search for him connected four continents: Europe, Asia, America and Australia. However, there is still no explanation as to how Manfred and Gerda Brender's passports mysteriously appeared in a Shanghai market and it also makes one wonder if there are still more to be found.

References

¹ Peter Nash, "Reclaiming Lost Passports", *Kosher Koala*, Vol 12 No 2 (June 2005) [Newsletter of the Australian Jewish Genealogical Society, Inc., Sydney]

² The Gross-Hongkew 1943-44 list is on CD-ROM attached to the book *Exil Shanghai 1938-1947* by Armbrüster, G; Kohlstruck, M; Mühlberger, S.; Teetz, Germany, Hentrich & Hentrich, 2000

³ Peter Nash; "Shanghai HIAS Lists"; *Avotaynu* Vol. 17, no.4 (Winter 2001); 19

⁴ Shanghai HIAS Lists on microfilm searchable on site at Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, Jerusalem [http://sites.huji.ac.il/archives] and YIVO Institute of Jewish Research, New York [www.yivo.institute.org]

⁵ www.naa.gov.au — also see Home Page of AJGS website: www.ajgs.org.au for how to search NAA site

⁶ www.stevemorse.org

⁷ JewishGen's German Special Interest Group: www.jewishgen.org/GerSIG

Peter Nash (formerly NACHEMSTEIN) was born in Berlin, found refuge in Shanghai, lived there from 1939 to 1949, then emigrated to Sydney. His keen interest in his family genealogy together with his China background has enabled him to research the available resources for finding former Jewish residents in China. He authored the chapter on China in the "Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy".

Afridi Pathans: A Lost Tribe of Israel?

by Farzand Ahmed
reprinted from *India Today*, November 6, 2006

Malihabad, the small orchard town on the outskirts of Lucknow, will appeal to your senses straightway. While it is renowned for the sweet and fragrant Dussheri mango, the place has given birth to some of the finest Urdu and Persian poetry. And its claim to fame does not end there. The dusty town now stands home to something which can be traced back to biblical times. Among the inhabitants of Malihabad are a clan of tall, fair, well-built people who call themselves Afridi Pathans—warrior and poets. In fact, a huge arch at the entry to the town is dedicated to Bab-e-Goya, a famous warrior and poet. Growing evidence, however, suggests that their ancestry is not Muslim but Israelite and they are not originally from the Afghanistan-Pakistan area but are, in fact, one of the ‘lost tribes’ of Israel. In Malihabad, in the heart of Uttar Pradesh, they certainly stand out with their unique physical features.

Now a study by one of their own tribe, Navras Jaat Afridi, and published recently in the form of an e-book titled *The Indian Jewry & The Self-professed ‘Lost Tribes of Israel in India* traces their lineage to one of the ‘lost tribes’ of Israel. Says Navras “The main purpose of the research (for a doctorate from Lucknow University) was to trace the Afridi Pathans’ ancestry.” To make his study credible, he got help from an international research team which included Professor Tudor Parfitt, director of the Centre of Jewish Studies, London University and Dr. Yulia Egorova, a linguist and historian from Russia. The team visited Malihabad and collected DNA samples from 50 paternally unrelated Afridi males to confirm their Israelite descent. The researchers looked at Israel’s connections with Pathans in the frontier areas of Pakistan and their links with Afridi Pathans in Uttar Pradesh’s Malihabad and Qaimganj (Farrukhabad) as well as with Pathans in Aligarh, Sambhal and Barabanki besides tribes in Kashmir, Manipur and Guntur of Andhra Pradesh.

Historians and scholars, like Professor S.N. Sinha, former head of the department of history, Jamia Millia Islamia, and Professor V.D. Pandey, head of the department of medieval and modern Indian history,

Lucknow University, have found Navras’ research a ‘landmark’ study on the Jews in India and their links to Uttar Pradesh...Four of ‘lost tribes’ have been traced in India: the Afridis, the Shinlung in the Northeast, the Yudu in Kashmir and the non-Muslim tribes in Guntur. Historians believe that Afghans were the descendants of Israel. They came to the region known as North West Frontiers and Afghanistan and, as they moved onwards, they were called Afridan, in Persian meaning ‘newly arrived’ and thus acquired the title ‘Afridi’. Many of the Afridi-Afghans still follow Jewish tradition like the Sabbath and circumcision on the eighth day of the birth.”

...The Pathans of Malihabad and Farrukhabad call themselves Bane Israel, which means children of Israel. Bane Israel clans are also found in Aligarh and Sambhal in Moradabad.

The Pathan-Afridi settlement in Malihabad dates back to 1202 A.D., when the village of Bakhtiarnagar was founded by Mohammad Bakhtiar Khilji. Most of the Pathans came in around the middle of the 17th century and each migrant clan took possession of villages around Malihabad. However, the greatest wave of migrant Pathans, mainly Afridis, arrived in Malihabad a century later during Ahmad Shah Abdali’s five invasions between 1748 and 1761.

Many Israelite-Afridis of Malihabad and Qaimganj rose to eminent positions in the field of warfare, politics, literature and sports. If Dr Zakir Husain, an Israelite-Pathan, the third President of India and founder of Jamia Millia Islamia University hailed from Farrukhabad, Malihabad prides itself on Nawab Faqueer Mohammad Khan ‘Goya’, the poet and courtier of Awadh, who later became commander of a cavalry and the governor of Khairabad; Josh Malihabadi, the rebel poet who later migrated to Pakistan; Ghaus Mohammad Khan, the tennis player and Anwar Nadeem, stage artist, writer and poet.

There are around 1,200 to 1,300 Pathans in Malihabad and half of them, according to the latest research, are Israelite-Afridis. The study has evoked much excitement among the Afridi Pathans as they are not ready to accept their Jewish identity. Unlike the other tribes who have readily claimed affiliation to the ‘lost tribes’ of Israel, Afridi Pathans are skeptical about

their Jewish status. The reluctance is quite evident as 91-year-old Qavi Kamal Khan, one of the Afridi Pathans of the town, says, “I have heard that we have Israelite lineage but we are not Jews. We are Afridis.” Historians, however, believe that Navras’ research may turn out to be a milestone in the genealogical-historical research that takes off in an obscure corner of Lucknow, re-discovering a link lost in the passage of time...

More on Dr. Aafreedi’s Book
by Matt Zalen
excerpted from Jewishworld.jpost.com,
15 November 2006

Dr. Navras Jaat Aafreedi, an Indian historian, says he may have found a genetic link between members of his clan in northern India, the now-Muslim Afridi Pathans, and one of the Ten Lost Tribes.

“There were those who looked at this research as part of a big Zionist conspiracy against Islam,” said Aafreedi, who is currently conducting research at Tel Aviv University into possible Israelite descent among certain Muslim Indian groups. “They felt I was trying to deprive Islam of its bravest followers, the Pathans, by converting them to Judaism. They felt that my convincing them of their Jewish heritage was just another form of conversion.”

According to Aafreedi’s study, which was published as an e-book, about 650 out of the 1,500 members of the Afridi Pathan clan in Malihabad, India, may possess genetic material shared by nearly 40 percent of Jews worldwide. If confirmed, the findings would support the clan’s connection to the tribe of Ephraim, Aafreedi said. A related Indian Pathan group numbering some 800 people was not tested for the project.

Although he performed the research for his doctoral studies at Lucknow University, the main motivation for Aafreedi’s research was personal.

“My uncle told me when I was a child about our connection to the Israelites,” he said. He has been deeply interested in his ancestry ever since, especially in “the fact that the tribe is identified with Israel.” Aafreedi describes himself as a secular humanist with no bias against Jews, but says such open-mindedness is not common in his clan.

“The new generation of the Pathans is

largely ignorant,” he said, adding that after settling in a “hostile Muslim environment,” the Pathans largely lost their own traditions. “The knowledge of our ancestry was passed down orally, he said, “but now only the elders know about it.”...

According to Michael Freund, a *Jerusalem Post* correspondent and chairman of Shavei Israel, a Jerusalem-based group that assists lost Jews seeking to return to the people of Israel: “Historically, there were Persian writers who wrote about the connection between the Pathans and the people of Israel. When the British arrived in the area there were missionaries who wrote about it as well. There is quite a good deal of historical evidence to support this assertion.”

Even former president Yitzhak Ben-Zvi addressed the connection. In his book, *The Exile and Redeemed*, he quoted an Afghani Jew as saying, “According to the tradition current among the [Afghan] Afridis, they are indeed descendants of the Israelites, more particularly the sons of Ephraim.”...

Aafreedi’s research is now being analyzed by geneticists in England. If his results are confirmed, it will be the first genetic evidence linking the Afridis Pathan tribe to the Israelites...

Adoption of Chinese Children by Jews: Affirmation of Sino-Jewish History

Albert H. Yee¹

For its article reporting the stiffening of China’s adoption policies, the *New York Times* (NYT, Dec. 24, 2006) began with a captioned photo, “Marcia Hochman and her 4-year-old daughter, Annie Mitnick, celebrated Hanukkah at their home on Riverside Drive in Manhattan on Friday.” The girl’s father was seated in the background. It said that the support group, Families With Children From China, claims that Manhattan’s Upper West Side has the greatest concentration of adopted Chinese children in the country. The NYT also said that the area has “a bicultural social network that offers everything from ethnic-heritage training to Mandarin-speaking nannies to mother-daughter dumpling-cooking classes.” Wonton and kreplach?

An informative article by Merry M. Eisenstadt & Debra N. Cohen (*Washing-*

ton Jewish Week, Feb. 3, 2000) quoted Susan M. Katz of Chicago, national chapter coordinator for Stars of David International Inc., who said that adoption is an ancient practice mentioned often in the Torah that is transforming the Jewish community. A growing number of children from different ethnic backgrounds are becoming part of Jewish families in America, many of whom are reevaluating “what it means to look - and be - Jewish,” which translates to something new, not negative. The Bible includes positive adoption tales — Abraham adopted his servant Eliezer and Mordechai raised Esther, his orphaned cousin. Rescued from drowning in the Nile by Pharaoh’s daughter, Baby Moses became an adopted Egyptian prince who later saved his people, the Jews, from slavery. According to the Talmud, “Whoever brings up an orphan in his home is regarded as though the child had been born to him” (*Sanhedrin* 19B).

However, some Orthodox rabbis have raised questions on conversion requirements, which reform parents have responded to by seeking access to *mikvaot* (ritual bath) at Conservative and Reform synagogues. Speaking to 60 adoptive and would-be adoptive parents in December at a gathering sponsored by the Jewish Family and Children’s Services in San Francisco, Reform Rabbi Yoel Kahn, Executive Director of Stanford University Hillel Foundation, discussed the conversion issue. He said that non-Jewish children adopted by Jewish parents do not necessarily need an Orthodox conversion, “Unless the child wants to marry in Israel, there are not issues in the U.S. about the nature of the conversion.”

Across the nation, about 25 percent of Jewish couples who are adopting are bringing children from China, Vietnam, Russia, South and Central America, and Korea. The Stars of David International is a support group and resource network for Jewish adoptive families. Half of the adoptions in Washington, DC’s greater region are facilitated by the Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA) and are of children born overseas, according to Beth Lutton, coordinator of JSSA’s Adoption Options program. I found much information on Jewish adoptions of Chinese children on the Internet, such as by the Jewish Adoption Blog, Jewish Journal.com, Interfaith Family.com, JCR Institute for Jewish & Community Research, and New Beginnings Family and Children’s Services, etc.

The just-mentioned JCR Institute reported in 2004 that the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-2001 found about 35,000 adopted children were being raised in Jewish homes, a number which is probably about 53,000 today.

Why should the Sino-Judaic Institute and its members be interested in Jewish adoptions of Chinese children? In answer, the adoptees are a reaffirmation of Chinese-Jewish affinity continuing after more than 1,000 years, a phenomenal history that the SJ Institute was established in 1985 to honor, study, and extend. This modern-day migration of Chinese children reflects wonderfully well on the positive history of Jews in China. Also, phoning Jewish groups involved in Chinese adoptions, I learned that only the Stars of David knew about the Institute and only one had any idea of the history of the Jews in China. Each person I spoke to immediately sensed a poetic and gratifying connection between their efforts for Jewish parents who adopt Chinese kids and Sino-Jewish history. They agreed that adoptive families will want to learn about the SJI and may become members. Their adoptees may join SJI and other Jewish and Chinese societies in the future in order to relate to their bicultural heritage. As written in *Yeee-Hah!* (2005):

The Chinese and Jews possess the worlds’ oldest, continuous civilizations. On that basis alone, their provocative characteristics deserve serious historical and social-psycho-logical study. The Jews’ centuries-old, intergroup relations in Chinese vs. other societies should be studied and become widely known. . . . Sino-Jewish studies would not only further the understanding of both peoples but can also provide new and perhaps inspirational testimony on the indomitable human spirit to withstand misrule and adversity, maintain cultural traditions and values, and progress.

Therefore, Jewish adoptions of young Chinese open a new chapter in Sino-Jewish relations, which I believe deserves recognition by the SJ Institute and its members. The rest of this article covers some history in Asian adoptions and the nuts and bolts of adopting foreign children and China’s new policies. Please share this article with others who are not SJI members and might be contemplating adoptions.