

ful analysis characterizes the work as a whole. This chapter also includes an analysis of the Chinese pronunciations of Hebrew names, with an explanation of the syllabic nature of the Chinese language so that the reader may better understand why Mordecai, for example, transcribed as *Mo-to-kai* (*Mo-de-gai* in the current PRC romanization). Here I would disagree with the authors concerning the Chinese pronunciation of the word Israel, the first syllable of which is given as *yi-ci*. The second character rendered as *ci* ("tse") has a second, less common pronunciation, *si*, which accords better with the Hebrew. In transcriptions of foreign words into Chinese, there is a tendency for a character to be chosen if it has a less familiar pronunciation that matches the sound to be rendered. To summarize the conclusion to this chapter, the phonological Masoretic rules were generally followed for the vocalization of the texts, but where there are deviations, they correspond to the Judeo-Persian Haggadah that was used as a comparison. There is also some evidence of influence from the Chinese phonological system.

Chapter Four, "The Judeo-Persian of KH [= Kaifeng Haggadah]," deals with the Early Judeo-Persian portions of the Haggadah. After a brief explanation of that language, in this case, the Persian dialect of the Iranian Jews from the eighth to the early thirteenth century, and written with the Hebrew script, there is

a detailed discussion of the notations in that language which appear within the Haggadah. From the corpus of Early Judeo-Persian manuscripts, it is possible to delineate three general Judeo-Persian areas, the western provinces of Iran, Khorasan (northeastern Iran and Afghanistan), and the Central Asian countries of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, known to the Jews of the area as Bukhara. The language that emerges from the Judeo-Persian notations in the Hagaddah resembles closely the two latter dialects, and is closest to that of Bukhara. On the basis of those notations the authors say the evidence points to the likelihood that the Kaifeng Haggadah "originated from Persian-speaking lands, perhaps modern day Central Asia" and that "the liturgy originated in the Persian Passover rite."

Chapter Five, "Order of the Service," develops the discussion of that liturgy. Earlier studies have pointed either to the Persian or the Yemenite traditions, and these views are briefly listed. Then follows a detailed description of the sequence of the seder with comments about what traditions are represented and what is omitted. In effect, the authors say many features of the Kaifeng ritual are consistent with the theory that the source of the Kaifeng Haggadah is an early Babylonian tradition, but no opinion is voiced concerning the Yemen/Persian controversy.

The text of the two manuscripts, labelled HUC Ms 927 and HUC Ms 931, is given

in full on pages 77 to 122, with detailed textual notes and comments. An English translation then follows, pp. 123 to 148, again with annotation. The translations of the Judeo-Persian portions are in Italic font, to distinguish those passages from the Hebrew. An extensive bibliography of works cited, pp. 149 to 156, includes those in Western languages and Chinese. Then follows excellent photographs of HUC Ms 927, pp. 159 to 210. An index, pp. 211 to 216, concludes the volume.

This is a most impressive work, and the authors are to be highly praised for the high level of care and dedication with which it was prepared. I regret that Michael Pollak, who contributed so much to the field of Kaifeng Jewish studies and to the Sino-Judaic Institute, did not live long enough to read it.

Albert Dien is the immediate past president of SJI. He is Professor Emeritus, East Asian Languages & Cultures, at Stanford University's Center for East Asian Studies.

In Brief
Jewish Wayfarers in Modern China. Matthias Messmer. Lexington Books, 2012. 238 pp. \$65.

Jewish Times Asia writes "The book offers a magical journey back through time using carefully-researched biographies in a wide variety of typical and less typical Western visitors."

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Points East

THE SINO-JUDAIC INSTITUTE 中國猶太研究院 מכון סיני יהודי

Vol. 27 No. 2
July 2012

A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute

THE TWO MOISHES IN CHINA

by Joe King

Morris "Two-Gun" Cohen was the one and only Jewish Chinese General and, for a time, was head of the Chinese Secret Service! One of his colleagues was Dr. Moses Schwarzberg, a Russian Jew who helped save China, for a time, from the Communists.

The official languages (in order of importance) in the Chinese Secret Service, during the time of the Two Moishes, were Chinese, Yiddish and English.

Two-Gun Cohen's Story

Born in Poland to a large (eight children) observant Jewish family, Abraham Morris Cohen was a handful almost from the time he could walk. His father beat him when he was three years old for wandering away from his East London home. A sturdy lad, he responded to Christian boys' bantering by – at age eight – knocking out a 12-year-old. A boxing promoter signed him to fight professionally. He called himself "Fat Moisha" or "Cockney Cohen," but would never enter the ring on a Friday – the Jewish Sabbath. He feared his father's wrath.

He was often hungry; his family was poor – so he earned pocket change by picking pockets. Ultimately, he was recruited by a man known as "Harry the Gonof" (the Yiddish word for "thief" – a Fagen-like creature right out of a Charles Dickens novel.) Arrested, he was sent, at age 12, to a variety of reform schools. His angry parents borrowed the money and sent him, aged 16, to a friend farming in Wappala, then in the Assiniboia territory – later part of Saskatchewan.

Cohen's life changed drastically one evening in Saskatoon. He delighted, on Sunday evenings, to dig into a large Chinese dinner and then gamble in the back of the café. But, when he turned up one night at one of his favorite haunts, he found the aged Chinese restaurant owner, Mah Sam, being held up by a hoodlum. Cohen wasn't going to have his plans for the evening interrupted – so he sidled up to the thug, whacked him in the head – disarmed him – and then threw him bodily out of the restaurant.

To the Chinese, he became a hero at a time when anti-Asiatic feeling in Canada was even greater than its anti-Semitism. Cohen became the only white man admitted to the ranks of the secret Chinese Tong.

A KAIFENG JEW TEACHES ISRAEL'S NEXT ENVOY TO CHINA

by Raphael Ahren

excerpted from *The Times of Israel*, April 12, 2012

Matan Vilnai, ambassador-in-waiting to Beijing, is studying with Shalva Jin, the first member of the ancient Kaifeng community to convert after moving to Israel.

In February, Home Front Defense Minister Matan Vilnai gave up his Knesset seat to become Israel's new ambassador in China. But since the incumbent ambassador doesn't seem to want to vacate the post just yet...Vilnai might be stuck in Jerusalem until August. In the meantime, the 67-year-old is keeping busy learning Mandarin.

Shortly after the cabinet confirmed Vilnai's appointment to Beijing in February, he and his wife started learning Mandarin twice a week. "In the first lesson, I taught them how to say 'hello' and 'how are you' and things like that, and then we started looking at the basics of the language structure," Jin recalled.

Vilnai, who started at nil, is still at the level where he focuses on elementary vocabulary, learning how to count and words such as "tired" and "work," Jin, 28, said. "He didn't ask me to teach him diplomatic terms. At the moment, we are focusing on the language of everyday life."

The former deputy defense minister is currently focusing on learning how to have a basic conversation. Trying to teach him reading and writing would be too ambitious, said Jin, who works part time for the Berlitz language school in Tel Aviv, which teaches the Foreign Ministry's diplomats.

"He still has a few months before he leaves, but that won't be enough," Jin added. "In order to learn how to read and write, he would have to sit many hours every day alone at home and study."

Teaching a minister is not Jin's first claim to fame. Born in China and always having felt Jewish, in 2004 she became the first Kaifeng Jew to be fully recognized as Jewish by the Israel Rabbinate.

Shavei Israel, a nonprofit promoting Israel's relationship with

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FROM THE EDITOR

Although I don't usually criticize other organizations working in our field, I am making an exception this time when I take a light-hearted poke at Shavei Israel for how it hosted a Pesach (Passover) in Kaifeng to accuse it of Ashkenazi chauvinism (Ashkechau)—and maybe even colonialism and imperialism.

You can read the article for yourself in this issue, how a good-hearted young Israeli who has been working with the Bet HaTikvah School arranged for a seder that included: gefilte fish, chicken soup with *kneidelach*, and raisin wine. Now these sound like good seder accoutrements to me, but then, I'm of Ashkenazi stock. What do Chinese Jews have to do with gefilte fish or kneidlach? Bupkis!

While the two vegetarian dishes each attending family brought surely added a Chinese flavor to the feast, I really must protest Shavei Israel's effort to propagate Ashkenazi cuisine in Kaifeng. Where will this cultural imperialism end? Today, the Kaifeng Jews; tomorrow the B'nei Menashe; then it will be the B'nai Anousim in Portugal or South America...Soon lost Jews everywhere will be tasting the culinary delight known appropriately as *p'tcha* and want to return to the Jewish fold nonetheless.

Seriously, though, we ought to give thought to what is a Jewish universal and what is culturally specific to a particular sub-group. The challenge is what we choose to present as "authentically Jewish" and it pertains to halacha, music, minhag, food—everything! Pesach, seder, matza, maror and charoset (however made) are Jewish universals; gefilte fish and kneidlach are culturally specific to the Ashkenazi world, just as fried rice with bean sprouts during Pesach are to the Kaifeng Jews—and to Sephardic Jews too for that matter.

A Correction and an Offer
Points East, Vol. 26, #3 (November 2011) included an essay, "The New Wave of Jewish Migration to China Since the Reform and Opening-up". Lead author Pan Guang wrote the following: "We are happy to read the English translation of our 2007 article. Tiberiu did good work!" But the challenge of translating Chinese

(continued on page 3)

Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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Points East is published three times a year, in March, July and November.

Deadlines for submitting material to be included in these issues are January 15th, May 15th and September 15th.

FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

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In 1922, the Comintern adopted a strategy of alliance between European communists and revolutionary nationalists in Asian countries that were colonies (India, Indonesia) or semi-colonies like China, in order to break the encirclement of Soviet Russia by Western and Japanese imperialism. To implement Vladimir Lenin's "two-stage revolution" theory for Asia (which stated that national liberation and the proletarian socialist revolution could be only achieved following industrialization and the modernization of government), the Comintern dispatched Adolf Abramovich Yoffe to Shanghai. There, he and Sun crafted a formal agreement known as the Sun-Yoffe Declaration of 1923, whereby the two men agreed that Soviet Russia would provide assistance to China even though it was not ripe for a Soviet-style revolution. No sooner was the agreement signed, than a coalition of minor warlords occupied Canton and invited Sun to return and re-establish a revolutionary government.

At Sun's request, the Comintern now sent to Canton a most experienced veteran revolutionary, Mikhail Markovich

Gruzenberg, alias Borodin. Borodin, a native of Riga, had for years been active in left-wing movements in Chicago. He became Sun's chief advisor. At Borodin's urging, Sun reorganized the Kuomintang into a disciplined party following a Leninist model, and created a revolutionary army led by the party, for which Russia provided instructors (chiefly general Vassili Bluecher, alias Galin) and weapons. In addition, Borodin helped Sun to make his ideas more coherent in the form of an ideology based on three principles: nationalism, democracy and people's livelihood (welfare statism).

Disappointed with the failure of the West and Japan to support his movement, Sun heavily relied on the Soviet alliance. He did, however, resist the more radical suggestions of Borodin, such as confiscating the land of the landlord class.

In May 1925, Sun was invited to Beijing by a coalition of warlords who sought to negotiate for a peaceful reunification of China. Sun died soon after his arrival of lung cancer. By the following year, the Kuomintang's revolutionary army undertook its northern expedition to reunify

China but, by then, Borodin was bested by the army's commander, Chiang Kai-shek, who, notwithstanding his graduation from the Moscow military academy, turned by force against his communist allies and expelled Borodin and other Soviet advisors from China. After establishing his National Government in Nanjing, Chiang claimed Sun's mantle, and enshrined his predecessor as "Father of the Nation" in an elaborate mausoleum. His government did not, however, pursue Sun's pro-Zionist promise: in the United Nations vote of November 1947, which decided on the partition of Palestine, its representative abstained. He Fengshan (Fengshan Ho), China's consul-general in Vienna in 1938-40, did nevertheless issue thousands of life-saving visas to Austrian and German Jews, who were thus able to reach Shanghai, where there were no passport controls. Without proof of a destination, these people would not have been allowed to leave Germany and annexed Austria, and would surely have perished.

René Goldman is professor emeritus at the University of British Columbia.

BOOK NOOK

The Haggadah of the Kaifeng Jews of China. Fook-Kong Wong and Dalia Yasharpour. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011. 216 pp. \$135.00. ISSN 1571-5000; ISBN 978 90 04 20809 4 reviewed by Prof. Al Dien

This beautifully printed and well-published volume is a detailed study of two Haggadot from the Jewish Kaifeng community that are now housed at the Klau Library of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati. The authors are Dr. Dalia Yasharpour, Lecturer in Persian Language and Literature, Harvard University, and Dr. Fook-Kong Wong, graduate of the Harvard Divinity School, and Associate Professor of Old Testament Studies at the Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary. As the authors point out, while there is a considerable literature on the Jews of Kaifeng, the only specialized studies of their manuscripts are Michael Pollak's *Torah Scrolls of the Chinese Jews* (1975) and Donald Leslie's *Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book* (1984). Some attention has been paid to these Haggadot in the past, but this study is the first to examine the two manuscripts in fine detail

and to arrive at persuasive conclusions as to the nature of these two manuscripts, their history, and what they can tell us about the community itself.

Chapter One, "Haggadah Manuscripts of the Kaifeng Jews," is a detailed description of the physical nature of the manuscripts, such as order of pages, water damage, and repairs. A careful study of the script, including comparisons of the calligraphy with other datable manuscripts enables the authors to establish that they most probably date from the latter part of the seventeenth century or the eighteenth century. They could well have served as master texts kept in the synagogue, from which copies were made for use in the Passover seders at the homes of the few thousand Jews of that time.

Chapter Two, "The Community's Knowledge of Hebrew as Reflected in its Haggadah," uses the Hebrew of the texts as a witness to a particular time in the process of the communities' full knowledge of Hebrew when they arrived in China, probably in the Song dynasty (960-1279), to its loss by the nineteenth

century. This analysis also relies on the evidence provided in the observations by the Jesuit visitors in the early eighteenth century. While the manuscripts employ the Tiberian vocalization (that commonly used today) there are indications that other textual traditions were also present. From what the Jesuits said, the Jews by the early eighteenth century were no longer proficient in writing the language, and there was a strong Chinese influence in their pronunciation.

Chapter Three, "Hebrew in the Kaifeng Haggadah," finds that the vocalization follows the Masoretic tradition, but there are inconsistencies. The authors, through a detailed comparison of the words in these Haggadot with those of other traditions, in particular those of the Judeo-Persian tradition, find that the Kaifeng examples agree most often with the latter both textual and orthographically. To take one example (Chart 4, p. 36), the presence or lack thereof of the dāgçð to indicate plosive pronunciation indicates the close relationship of the Kaifeng and the Judeo-Persian Haggadot as against that of other traditions. This sort of care-

variations become common by the 1930s—and the most widespread just happened to be a style popular among Jewish women. Today, that “American” version is represented by the National Mah Jongg League, an 84-year-old organization that publishes a new official scorecard each year, and the American Mah-Jongg Association, which connects players to tournaments nationwide.

“It’s the million-dollar question!” said teacher Toby Salk when asked why Jews play. “People come up with all these theories, but I don’t think anyone really knows.”

“I’ve read about the businessman who brought it to New York from China,” offered Xiaoming Jiao, a 29-year-old woman whose family moved to San Francisco from China when she was 9. “This is all new to me,” said Jiao, who recently discovered her great-great-grandfather was Jewish, gesturing around at all the Chinese-Jewish intermingling. “But I’m so excited to know more about Jewish culture.”

Not far away, at a table full of old pros—all friends who travel to Las Vegas each year for a 300-person mah jongg tournament—was Sandy Belsky of Foster City. She said that while she normally plays the Jewish style, she did stop at the information table to pick up the rulebook for the Chinese style of play. “Why not? I understand it’s more like gin rummy,” she said, as her Jewish friends settled back down at the table after a Chinese food break. “I’d absolutely love to learn.”

Revolutionary Associations

by Prof. René Goldman
reprinted with permission from the *Jewish Independent* (Vancouver, BC, Canada)

This year’s month of February marked the centennial of the completion of China’s first revolution of the 20th century: the founding of the Republic of China, the first republic in Asia, by Dr. Sun Yat-sen.

An idealistic revolutionary, Sun (known in China and Taiwan as Sun Zhongshan) believed that for China to become a modern, democratic, progressive country, respected by the world, the declining Qing dynasty founded by the Manchu invaders in 1644 had to be overthrown and replaced by a republican form of government.

But Sun’s concerns for the future of his country ran deeper. Like many Chinese reformers and revolutionaries of his time, he was influenced by the pernicious doctrine of social Darwinism, which viewed the world as an arena of international rivalry and struggle, in which only the fittest among the nations survived. China had suffered so many humiliating defeats in its confrontations with the West and Japan that it seemed its very survival was in question. This led Sun, among others, to view the historical fate of the Jewish people as a mirror of what might await China: exile and persecution. Sun bemoaned China’s lack of cohesion and his prescription was for them to follow the Jewish example of possessing a firm sense of nationhood. Sun strongly admired Zionism and, over the years, he had contact and formed relationships with several Jews.

For more than a decade from his places of exile in Japan and North America, Sun led the Kuomintang, the Chinese Nationalist Party that he founded. His followers attempted almost yearly uprisings in coastal cities of China in the hope that any of these could become the spark that would light up the revolutionary conflagration.

In 1908, the empress-dowager Cixi, who for half a century had ruled the empire with an iron hand, died, leaving on the throne an infant emperor and a weak regent. Three years later, on Oct. 10, 1911, the garrison of the inland metropolis of Wuchang rose in revolt and revolution spread across the south. Sun returned to China and was proclaimed president of the Republic of China in the southern capital Nanjing (Nanking).

However, the north and Beijing remained firmly under the control of the dynasty and its most powerful army, commanded by the opportunistic general Yuan Shikai, who inflicted defeat on the revolutionaries and then negotiated a settlement: in exchange for Yuan forcing the monarchy to abdicate, Sun would yield the presidency of the republic to him. Yuan’s next move was to stage a coup and make himself president for life in 1913 and emperor in 1915. However, Yuan’s death the following year saw China break up into regions ruled by opposing warlords while, in Beijing, a weak government and president maintained a semblance of unity.

Back in Canada, in 1912, the adventurer Moishe (Morris) Cohen, the unruly son

of a London East End gabbai, had been inducted into the membership of the Calgary branch of the Kuomintang by the Chinese friends he had made in the course of his activities, in Saskatchewan and Alberta, activities that landed him in the Prince Albert penitentiary. Cohen was the only Caucasian to earn that mark of trust, and he had previously won distinction for his bravery and competence as a sergeant in the Edmonton Irish Brigade during the First World War.

After the First World War, Cohen embarked on a new life of adventure in China, where he was introduced to Sun, who made him his chief bodyguard. In 1917, Sun had established a revolutionary government in Canton, from where he hoped to gather forces to fight the northern warlords and finally reunify China under the leadership of the Kuomintang.

In the course of a foiled attempt on Sun’s life, Cohen suffered a wound to his left arm; this inspired him to train himself to shoot from both hands, hence earning the sobriquet, “Two-Gun Cohen.”

Cohen greatly admired Sun, and the Chinese leader’s ascendancy over him seems to have changed him into a well-behaved, moral man. Cohen mourned Sun’s 1925 passing like one grieves for a father. He thereafter served both Sun’s widow and the Kuomintang in various missions, earning an honorary generalship in the process.

In 1922, Sun was driven out of Canton by his warlord ally and found refuge in the French concession of Shanghai. On a previous stay there, Sun had met representatives of the Jewish community, notably N.E.B. Ezra, publisher of the Sephardi Zionist newspaper *Israel’s Messenger*, and David Rabinovich, publisher of *Nasha Zhizn*, the organ of the Russian Jewish community. In a letter published after the Balfour Declaration in *Israel’s Messenger*, Sun assured Ezra of his wholehearted support for the Zionist movement, which he identified with China’s struggle for national emancipation.

Grigori Nahumovich Voitinsky, agent of the Communist International (Comintern) organization, was also present in China around that time. In Shanghai since 1920, Voitinsky established relationships with radical young professors and students and persuaded them to found the Chinese Communist Party in 1921.

names of English names back into English led to more than a few mistakes. My personal favorite: The article referred to a man whose name was re-transliterated as “M. Kelinboke [Clinback?].” Turns out the name actually is “Greenberg”. Pan and his team have sent in a new version, which is available electronically by request to info@sino-judaic.org.

Anson Laytner

Report from Kaifeng: Passover in China

by Brian Blum

reprinted from the Shavei Israel website: www.shavei.org, 15/05/2012

How do you celebrate Passover in China? With gefilte fish, *charoset*, chicken soup with dumplings, and six liters of raisin wine!

Hebrew University graduate student Shulamit Gershovich has been spending the semester studying at a local university in Kaifeng to improve her Chinese. She is also teaching Jewish history and culture, as well as Hebrew and some English, to the Jewish community there. She reports that, with *Shavei Israel’s* generous assistance, this year’s Seder was particularly festive.

In addition to the *kneidelach* from Israel, “each family brought two dishes, which were all vegetarian,” she writes. “We read the Haggadah and acted out the ten plagues and the song ‘Had Gadya’ (‘One Little Kid’).” The table was set with flowers and a beautiful white tablecloth, which Shulamit bought specially for the evening.

During the week of Passover, the Kaifeng community hosted two more Israelis – doctoral student friends of Shulamit’s, one studying Israeli archaeology and the other Bible. The two led a fascinating discussion on the origins of Hebrew writing. Shulamit has shared several pictures taken just before the start of the Passover holiday, which you can see on the Shavei Israel website.

In the coming weeks, the Jews of Kaifeng will have another visitor. Ilene Orleansky, a musician and producer from Israel has been traveling around the world making recordings of Jewish music from remote communities in Africa and Asia.

She will arrive in China at the beginning of June. She plans to release a CD with the music and to share the proceeds with the communities involved, including Kaifeng.

IN THE FIELD

♦ New Book in Chinese

SJI Board member Tibi Weisz informed us that Renmin Chubanshe, (Renmin Publishing) in Beijing published a book late in 2011, *Gu Dai Kaifeng Youtai Ren* (Jews in Ancient Kaifeng), which includes an essay of his.

♦ Bnei Menashe Aliya from India to Resume This Summer

For the first time in five years, a large group of Bnei Menashe immigrants from northeastern India is slated to make aliya this summer. 50 families, numbering 250 people, will arrive in August and settle in the Galilee. More than 1,700 Bnei Menashe moved to Israel over the last decade.

♦ Mazal tov on 6 successful years, Jewish Times Asia!

Established more than 6 years ago, JTA is the primary platform for news gathering, event highlighting and community awareness for the region’s Jewish communities, which are spread across 10 countries with different backgrounds and nationalities.

The paper is widely available for pick-up at all the various Jewish associations and community centers in the region. JTA also launched an on-line flipbook version a few years ago, with most of its readers coming from the U.S., followed by Israel and then the Asian region, in that order. Some countries, to which hard copies are not mailed, are also strongly represented, namely Malaysia and Indonesia.

Founder and publisher Philip Jay noted that, when he established JTA “there was no previous title or point of comparison...it was done from scratch”. He is very happy with its growth and feels most fulfilled that his paper is useful and relevant—and

hopes it stays that way!

♦ China holds its first Limmud

Jews living in Asia gathered for the first-ever Limmud event. Sunday’s program, run by Limmud International, drew nearly 100 Jews from Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Mumbai, the Philippines, Japan, Singapore, Israel, Britain and the United States. Limmud, the open Jewish learning program, has held events in some 60 communities on five continents. The China Limmud was supported by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

♦ Kaifeng Youth to visit U.S.

In June, thanks to the organization Kulanu, two young Jews from Kaifeng will be delving into Jewish learning, culture, and community, and meeting other Jews from around the world at the Brandeis Collegiate Institute’s summer program. BCI, considered “a laboratory for living Judaism,” is offered for Jewish people of all backgrounds, ages 18 to 26. *Mazal Tov* to You Yeheng and Wang Jiaxin from China, on being accepted into this intensive experience! The two will first spend a weekend at the Jewish Multi-Racial Network Annual Retreat in Pennsylvania before traveling to California for the month-long BCI program. After that, they will both volunteer as counselors at URJ Camp Newman, a Reform Jewish camp in Santa Rosa, CA. Jiaxin flies back to China after Camp Newman, while Yeheng heads to Congregation Har Tzeon-Agudath Achim in Silver Spring, MD, for a one-month internship in early childhood care before she returns home to Kaifeng.

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The Two Moishes

(continued from page 1)

Ultimately, Morris Cohen journeyed to China – now being led into modernity by Dr. Sun Yat Sen, and he became commander of the President’s 250-man bodyguard.

Several attempts were made to assassinate the President. On one occasion, Cohen fought off three assailants attacking Sun on a train. He was nicked in his left hand. The wound made him think. “Supposing it had been my right arm. As soon as we got back to Canton, I got me a second gun, another Smith and Wesson revolver.” Journalists dubbed him “Two-Gun” Cohen.

Two-Gun was of great service to the Chinese. A veteran of World War I, he taught his new friends boxing and the use of weapons. He became a military adviser, and an arms dealer. In 1922, he was named Director of the Chinese secret service.

Morris Cohen had a very limited knowledge of Chinese, but in his new post, he was able to use Yiddish quite a bit. One of his confreres was interpreter Moishe Schwarzberg, and the two would chat in Yiddish!

The Schwarzberg Story

At the beginning of the 1920s, Moses Schwarzberg was fleeing the newly-born Soviet Union. He had been a member of a revolutionary group at the University of Moscow, whose members, were marked for death after they tried to kill Soviet Union founder Lenin in 1918 (a plot devised by yet another Jew, Shlomo ben Hirsch Rozenblum – known to the British Secret Service as Sidney Reilly – and whose career was fictionalized as James Bond. But that’s another story.)

Schwarzberg’s flight took him to Siberia, then a lawless region. As he crossed over the border into China, then locked into a Civil War between a democratic party headed by Sun Yat-Sen and a swath of powerful war lords, he stumbled across the near-frozen body of an elderly Chinese man. The man still had a faint pulse, and Schwarzberg dragged him to a nearby Russian Cossack village, and brought him back to consciousness. To the Jewish doctor’s surprise, the Chinese man spoke Russian and after a time, feel-

ing that he was dying, he turned over to Schwartzberg a message from the Soviet Union’s leaders to Dr. Sun (plus gold coins to bribe his way).

The doctor made his way to Shanghai but found his way to the President barred by a highly-protective bodyguard. Schwarzberg gathered that the “huge man with a shaved head and two pistols in his belt” was in charge but when he tried pleading his case, in Chinese and Russian, the chief bodyguard responded, in English, “Who the hell are you and what the hell do you want?”

When he learned who he was, Cohen switched to Yiddish. A collaboration of the two Moishes was born. When Scharzberg made his presentation to Doctor Sun, it became apparent that the Chinese President couldn’t read Russian. The multilingual Jewish doctor was immediately offered a job as an interpreter. Two-Gun put it this way: “Listen, kid, how would you like to stay on as Dr. Sun’s confidential secretary. He likes you.” And so Chinese spies worked in Chinese, Yiddish and English!

(Dr. Schwartzberg completed his medical degree in Berlin, practiced medicine in Hong Kong and Peking, but fled with his wife and daughter to Chungking when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbour in 1941. After the war, he organized the Shanghai Regiment with 1,200 Jewish volunteers to fight for newborn Israel.)

Two-Gun becomes a General

Two-Gun was named to command the Chinese 19th field army. Time Magazine, in 1931, reported that Cohen “was gazetted by the Canton government a Brigadier General.” He led Nationalist troops in fighting against both the Japanese and communist Chinese.

When the Japanese entered World War II, in 1941, Cohen was captured in Hong Kong. The Japanese now had a great enemy – but they didn’t know it. By identifying himself as a Canadian businessman, he fooled the Japanese. Ultimately, Morris Cohen was among a small number of prisoners released in exchange for important Japanese officials held in the US. He returned to Canada. “When we pulled into Montreal,” he said. “I picked up my parcels and stepped down on the platform – a free man.”

On Friday, Dec. 3rd, 1943, the Montreal

Gazette reported “A few dozen men and women met early yesterday at Bonaventure station for the sole purpose of meeting the fairytale Chinese general, a Jew by birth a Canadian Citizen, Gen. Morrice Cohen a former aide-de-camp to the famous rebuilder of China, Dr. Sun Yat sen.”

Cohen married a Montreal woman but the affair didn’t last. He planned to return to England – but he had one great service to offer to the Jewish people.

In 1945, the United Nations was being formed in San Francisco. And a resolution proposing the partitioning of Palestine into two states – one Jewish and the other Arabic – was to be submitted to the new organization. The international Jewish community was on hand to do what it could to see that the Resolution was passed.

Two-Gun flew to San Francisco and convinced the head of the Chinese delegation to abstain from voting when he learned they planned to oppose partition. That abstention ultimately helped ensure passage of the measure partitioning Palestine – and allowing the creation of Israel.

He died in Manchester and was buried there with a trilingual headstone – in English, traditional Hebrew and in Chinese (a tribute from the people he served so well.) The tribute identified him as “Ma-Kun” – as close as the Chinese could get to Morris Cohen. It means “clenched fist.”

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A Kaifeng Jew Teaches Israel’s Next Envoy to China

(continued from page 1)

the descendants of Jews, estimates that today there are between 500 and 1,000 identifiable descendants of Kaifeng Jews. “In recent years an awakening has been taking place among them, as increasing numbers of young Kaifeng Jews seek to reclaim their heritage,” according to the Jerusalem-based organization.

Jin’s father, who says his Chinese identification card lists his nationality as “Youtai,” or Jew, brought the family to Israel in 2000, when Jin was 16. Born Jin Wen-Jing, she changed her first name to

imagine its most pressing problems into its most lucrative opportunities.

Take, for instance, Israel’s water problem. Nature provides barely enough water for Israel, and that’s why in 1993 the Technion, Israel’s institute of technology and de facto laboratory, created the Water Research Institute. The Institute brings together the university’s top engineers, chemists, biologists, and physicists, who collaborate together to solve Israel’s water problem.

Right now, the Water Research Institute is building a new “water-wise” building, which aims to meet 80 percent of its water needs by harvesting rainwater on its roof, and recycling “gray” water from showers and sinks. It’s also helping the Israeli government desalinate the Sea of Galilee in an eco-friendly and energy-efficient way.

These are technologies and management systems that once developed can be profitably exported to countries that have severe water shortages. (For example, China.) If China is the world’s sweatshop then Israel is the world’s laboratory. China needs to learn to become a laboratory if it is to survive the environmental pollution, financial mismanagement, and social inequity that derive from being the world’s sweatshop. So how can our Chinese students become the creative talent that China needs? And what makes Israel so innovative?

Israel’s answer is, as always, short and simple: *Ask questions.*

These two words in fact represent the cultural chasm that divides Israel and China. As *Start-Up Nation* mentions, Israel lacks hierarchy and formality so that when we visited a public high school in Tel Aviv, we saw teachers interrupt the principal, and learned that Israelis consider “shyness” a learning disability. When I asked an Israeli 14-year-old girl how much homework she does at night, she responded with “Why are you asking me this question?”

Israel is a radically different world for my students, many of whom have already been on school trips to the United States and Botswana. In these two countries, our students discovered it was encouraged to ask questions, and to stand out. In Israel, they were told it was rude not to ask questions, and if you don’t stand out then you’re a loser.

To ask questions is not simply to raise your hand and open your mouth, which are difficult enough for many a Chinese student. It entails a radical re-ordering of how you relate to yourself, and to the world around you – it requires a flattening of the world, the centering of the world around yourself, and ultimately a willingness to overturn the world if need be. That’s what makes Israel such an innovative culture, yet also why so many other cultures find Israelis difficult to deal with.

If China is to be creative, it simply can’t declare it a national priority, or just send Chinese students overseas. It needs to re-imagine its society from one that is hierarchical and stagnant to one that is free and open, just as Judaism did two thousand years ago. While it was hard for our students to speak out, to challenge authority, and to ask questions, they in fact did learn to do so. And they discovered they like it.

While we were at the Technion, our students peppered a Technion biology professor with so many questions that he couldn’t finish his presentation on genetically modified foods even after he stayed half an hour longer than he had planned. Instead of walking away angry, he did so impressed, like a true Israeli.

If Chinese must ask a question they often ask “why.” For example, why visit Israel? If China is to be truly creative, it needs to learn from the Israelis, and start asking “why not?”

Jiang Xueqin is a deputy principal at Peking University High School and the director of its International Division. From 2008 to 2010, Mr. Jiang created and managed the Shenzhen Middle School study abroad program. He has previously worked as a journalist, a documentary film-maker, and a United Nations press officer.

Jews, Chinese and Mah Jongg

by Emma Silvers

excerpted from JWeekly.com, *Jewish Weekly of Northern California*

It was a Wednesday evening...as members of the Bay Area’s Jewish and Chinese communities came together for a big mah jongg event sponsored jointly by the San Francisco office of the American Jewish Committee and the AsianWeek Foundation.

The July 27 extravaganza attracted nearly 150 people, roughly a 50-50 split between Jewish and Asian. Most of them were avid players, though newbies were welcome and instructors were on hand. For four hours...people gathered around tables to gossip, nosh and celebrate the game that occupies a special place in both Jewish and Chinese homes.

At any given time, there were 20 to 25 four-person games going on, with requisite breaks for dinner (Chinese food), dessert (rugelach and black-and-white cookies) and a short documentary, “The Tiles That Bind,” which featured Jewish and Chinese women reminiscing about their mothers playing mah jongg.

The dual-cultural aspect of mah jongg was the centerpiece of the night.

“Mah jongg is something I grew up with...and I wanted the chance to play it with my Chinese and Jewish family,” said one of the players, San Francisco’s Lauren Bellings, a Chinese American woman who is married to a Jewish man. “I’ve always been fascinated with the two cultures”...

At the event in San Francisco, the average age of those in attendance was about 60. And, true to the game’s reputation, women outnumbered men by a ratio of about five or six to one...

At a nearby table, younger faces from several different ethnic backgrounds were deep in concentration over the Chinese style of the game. Sherman Lee, 26, had come up from San Jose just for the event. “My aunts and my cousins on my mom’s side have always played, they go to the gambling parlors in Chinatown pretty much every day,” he said. “I only started playing about a year ago, but I know the three most popular Asian styles—Hong Kong style, Taiwanese and Japanese.”

And then there’s the Jewish style. “Oh, that’s really different,” San Francisco’s Jeanelle Chang, 27, chimed in from across the table. “I know because I have a Jewish set I got from my aunt...”

As for why Jews play mah jongg—which was created in China in the mid-19th century—it all depends on whom you ask. It’s generally agreed that the game was imported to New York in the 1920s; the first sets were sold by Abercrombie & Fitch.

Though the initial fad tailed off, several

based Erica Lyon of *Asian Jewish Life* magazine, which chronicles historic and contemporary Jewish communities in the region.

JDC's presence in the region focuses on strengthening Jewish life by developing social networking especially among the ex-pats in the major cities, and providing frameworks to deepen and diversify informal Jewish educational opportunities for all.

Judy Amit, the Regional Director for Africa/Asia, reports on some of our activities that include:

1. The first *Jewish Service Corps* placement in Shanghai in September 2011. This program is seen as particularly appropriate to the demographic profile and needs of the young ex-pat population. It establishes a foothold in a region that had no current JDC organizational presence. Plans are under way to expand the program by basing an additional JSC Fellow in Beijing in the coming year.

2. *Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum*. In what is a unique expression of China's pride in its relationship to Jews in the context of World War II, the regional government of Hong Kou has created and runs a museum on the site of Ohel Moshe, the former synagogue that served Jews in the ghetto under Japanese rule. In a formal agreement between the government of Shanghai and JDC, our Jewish Service Corps Fellow has been helping the museum strengthen its portrayal of this dramatic chapter in the history of Jews and China, and expand its reach in telling this story to world Jewry and to the Chinese people.

3. *Social networking*. Efforts are under way to identify and encourage increasing numbers of young Jewish ex-pats to connect to each other and to Jewish life through informal activities. Within a few months of spearheading this initiative in Shanghai, several hundred individuals had participated in a variety of JDC-supported social, cultural, and educational events. In Beijing, JDC has encouraged the establishment of a "Moishe House," and it is helping to support the ongoing Jewish programming offered there.

4. *Limmud* conference. This internationally renowned multi-dimensional celebration of Jewish life and learning is being brought to China/East Asia in 2012 with the support of JDC. The *Limmud* framework has been utilized successfully by JDC in Europe and in the former Soviet Union. We hope to have similar success in East Asia. The first event—a mini *Limmud*—is being held close to the Great

Wall of China on June 3, 2012, and a full *Limmud* is planned for the beginning of 2013.

Over the past 70 years, JDC has worked with various Jewish communities in Africa/Asia...Now we can add to this tapestry of colorful Jewish communities the ex-pat community in East Asia—and we are excited for the possibilities.

Steve Schwager was until recently the Chief Executive Officer of American JDC.

Bay Area's Israel-China Cultural Festival

The Bay Area hosted the first Israel China Cultural Festival, a month-long series of art and photo exhibits, film screenings, lectures, panels, comedy and children's book events. It culminated with a big banquet in San Francisco's Chinatown. All to celebrate 20 years of diplomatic relations.

The festival was presented by the Consulate General of Israel, the Chinese Culture Center of San Francisco, Asia Society Northern California, the Israel Center, the Sino-Judaic Institute and a score of other local Jewish and Asian organizations.

The event celebrated not only the relationship between the Bay Area Jewish and Chinese communities, but longstanding economic and diplomatic connections among Jews, Israel and China.

Manli Ho, daughter of a Chinese diplomat in Holocaust-era Vienna who saved some 2,000 Austrian Jews and who lived in San Francisco until his death, spoke at an exhibition about her father, Feng Shan Ho, at the Chinese Historical Society.

SJI's travelling exhibit on the Jews of Kaifeng was on display at the JCC of San Francisco.

Today Israel and China are among the world leaders in electric car technology. That was the subject of a panel discussion, "Driving Towards the Future: Israel, China, and Electric Vehicles," on June 14 at a Silicon Valley law firm.

A mini-film festival June 26-28 included "Noodle," about an Israeli woman trying to reunite a Chinese boy with his mother, "Ushpizin" and "The Port of Last Resort," about the Jews of Shanghai, all with English and Chinese subtitles.

Another festival highlight was a month-long book exhibition featuring best-sellers by Israeli writers such as David Grossman and Etgar Keret translated into Chinese and English. The exhibit was on display at the S.F. Public Library Main Campus. The library's Chinatown branch hosted an afternoon story time for kids on June 14, featuring Israeli author Elad Weingrod's "Like You, Like Me," a bilingual tale about a boy in Israel wondering if there is a boy like himself in China.

The festival wrapped up on July 2 with an invitation-only banquet at a Chinatown restaurant. Israeli professor Shalom Wald, an expert on Sino-Israeli relations, spoke.

What Israelis Can Teach Chinese

by Jian Xueqin
excerpted from <http://the-diplomat.com/china-power/2012/05/13/what-israel-can-teach-china/>

Last week, twenty students and I traveled to Israel for six days to study what makes Israel "a start-up nation," as Dan Senor and Saul Singer call it in their New York Times bestseller *Start-up Nation: Israel's Economic Miracle*. With a diverse population of eight million, Israel lacks water, oil, and land, is encircled by hostile neighbors, and is a terrorist target. (Not to mention the international condemnations it gets for its treatment of the Palestinians.)

Yet, despite all this, it has become arguably the world's most dynamic economy. It has 4,000 start-up companies, attracts almost one-third of the world's venture capital, and more Israeli companies are listed on the NASDAQ exchange than companies from Europe. *Start-Up Nation* tells us that Israel is so innovative because of its culture of "tenacity, of insatiable questioning of authority, of determined informality, combine with a unique attitude toward failure, teamwork, mission, risk, and cross-disciplinary creativity."

And that's what we experienced as we traveled from the sun-soaked stone city of Jerusalem to the rolling hills of Haifa to the Mediterranean coast of Tel Aviv.

In Jerusalem, we learned that Judaism has survived several millennia of persecution because it dares to innovate...And this tradition has helped Israel today to re-

Shalva, or "serenity," a translation of Wen-Jing. She learned Hebrew; went to high school; and, four years after arriving here, stood before a religious court in Haifa under the auspices of the Chief Rabbinate and formally converted to Judaism. Today, Jin lives in Jerusalem where in 2008 she graduated from the Hebrew University.

"I didn't want to go through conversion because I've always thought of myself as Jewish," she told *Hadassah Magazine* in 2005. "But according to the *halakha*, I had no choice. God chose the Jewish people to be his nation, and I wanted to be accepted as part of it."

Personal Judaic Pilgrimage to China: Three Facets

by Bev Friend

Nanjing

At the age of 77, I set foot on Chinese soil for the seventh time in the past 25 years—this time to receive a citation as an Honorary Director of Glazer Institute for Judaic Studies at Nanjing University in celebration of the Institute's 20th Anniversary. Our ceremony was embedded in a much larger festivity—the 110th Anniversary of the University. What an honor!

Nothing can compare with sitting with fellow honorees at a table in the front of a tiered lecture hall in the Johns Hopkins building, hot tea in mugs before us and two screens behind us which projected translations of our words as we spoke. I was especially delighted to be able to share this with my travelling companions: daughters Tracy and Marla, friend Irv Kaplan, and Cousin Richard Pass. To add to my personal pleasure, CD's of Tracy's original Hebraic melodies provided musical background. It just doesn't get any better! All that was missing was my late husband, Jim, the first Jew Xu Xin ever met, and the catalyst for all that has followed (although he did not live to see any of it).

While Guilford and Diane Glaser were unable to attend the ceremony, they sent a letter stating how proud they were to have their name associated with this world-class initiative—a thought that was echoed by all the speakers. Their sincere appreciation and support of the Institute was further witnessed by the establishment of The Diane and Guilford

Chair of Jewish and Israel Studies at Nanjing University during the commemoration.

Professor Hong Yingxing, Party Secretary of Nanjing University, gave the opening remarks, followed by Dr. Aaron Ciechanover, Nobel Laureate of Chemistry for 2004 and professors Dan Schechtman (Technion) and 2011 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, Zhang Qianhong, Vice-President of Zhengzhou University and Director of the Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University; and Fu Youde, Director of Institute of Judaism and Inter-religious Studies at Shandong University.

The Glazer Institute then awarded Directorships to Marwyn Samuels, Chairman of XL Holdings International Investment Services, an old China hand and a long time supporter for Jewish studies programs in China, and me, and we each had an opportunity to respond and present scholarships to deserving students.

When it was my turn to speak, I told the audience that while I had stood on the Great Wall of China six times, always filled with awe, that Wall—magnificent as it is—was not what brought me back to China. I returned each time not primarily to see what was intended to divide people—a wall—but to work on breaking down walls by participating in what unites them—a bridge—the unique one provided by the China/Judaic Studies Association, furthering the study of Judaism in China. (A video of the entire session can be seen at http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDAxMDc0NDIw.html)

Following speeches and coverage by both international and local TV, we all continued to the Institute itself where a plaque honoring Yao Yi-en, Scholar, translator, and Chinese Expert on the study of Shalom Aleichem was unveiled, which formally declared the establishment of Center of Shalom Aleichem Studies in China.

Then, Tracy presented 168 CD's of Hebrew/Jewish music gathered from composers and performers throughout the U.S. to provide the core of a musical archive for the Institute. As she stated during her brief presentation, "Jewish music is central to Jewish worship and celebration, and is an integral component of learning about Judaism and Jewish culture." Combined with the 54 CDs she contributed during our 2006 visit to Nanjing, the In-

stitute now houses the largest collection of Jewish music in China.

After that, we had opportunity to sit down with Institute Alumni in an informal setting to learn their current and future plans. All were excited about their careers, and dedicated to their work, which spanned many universities including Ludong University, Tianjin Normal University, Henan University of Technology, the Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University, Henan Normal University, and Zhejiang Normal University.

Harbin

Following our stay in Nanjing, we headed to the city I had most wanted to see in prior trips: Harbin, and learned far more than I had ever expected. While I had known that Jews had settled there in the days of the Russian Pogroms, I had never realized just how big an influence they had had on the development of the city. First, there were the plaques on many main street buildings, citing the Jews who lived or practiced their professions there. But even more impressive were the signs in the Jewish museum housed in the New Synagogue where notice after notice gave credit to Jewish initiative and foresight in bringing this city from an agricultural to an industrial state.

Each plaque bestowed words of high praise, such as the following:

The people will forever remember the contributions made by the Jewish people to the development of the city.

or
Harbin Jews brought about numerous economic miracles by bringing into full play their intellectual and business talent and working closely with the Harbin people.

or
During the first half of the 20th century, Jews brought to China Europe's latest achievements in social sciences, literature, art and natural sciences. They spread Western culture and brought advanced science and technology to Harbin and to China as a whole. By the mid 1920's, Jews who pursued intellectual work in the fields of education, law, journalism, medicine, engineering, technology, culture and the arts made up 33.8% of Harbin's working population. Among them were exceptional individuals, famous professors, excellent journalists,

talented pianists and violinists, who were well known both at home and abroad and brought about remarkable achievements....

I can think of nowhere else in the world where non-Jews have been so fulsome in their appreciation and praise. It was daunting, wonderful, and yet sad as no Jews remain in this city. There are only the empty buildings, the cemetery (where the grandfather of former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert is buried) and a myriad of decorative Stars of David gracing buildings, staircases, windows, gateways, and tombstones.

Beijing

Yes, we saw the magnificent wall again but for me the highlight of the city was meeting Xu Long, author of *Money of Ancient Judaea and Israel*, a remarkable work by a remarkable man. Xu is NOT a professional numismatist; he is a professional chef. In fact, he is the head chef in the catering branch of the Great Hall of the People, China's parliament building in Beijing, supervising more than 200 chefs in the preparation of state banquets. He also travels to other countries, including the US, and will soon head to Turkey to supervise Turkish chefs in the proper preparation of Chinese dishes. If he gives as much care and attention to his culinary skills as he does to his research, his meals must be notable.

Xu Long's book is both comprehensive and cohesive, including not only thousands of photos of Jewish and Israeli coins, but also incorporating information on the historical periods of each—introducing history, religion, culture, art, folk customs, education, science, technology, political and military influences. The 575-page work is a 10-year labor of love, brimming with scholarship. [See article on Xu in this issue, p. 6.]

And while we did not get to sample his own cooking, he hosted us for a remarkable meal at a Peking Duck Restaurant, ordering special dishes from his colleague there, and the next day took us on a personal, behind-the-scenes tour of the Great Hall of the People.

What Lies Ahead

I do not know if I will get to China again, but hope my children and grandchildren will continue our connection with the Judaic Institute. Certainly, peripatetic Xu

Xin will be back in the U.S. in the near future. Meanwhile, he barely has time to catch his breath. A week after we left, he was being honored for distinguished teaching, and he will participate in Testing Limmud in Beijing on June 3, and the International Conference on Ancient World History in Tianjin from June 16-18, followed by an International Conference on Israel-China Relations: Past and Future in Shanghai from June 21-28. The latter is divided, with a section on *Israeli Studies in China: Introducing One Ancient Civilization to Another*, Thursday-Friday, (at Shanghai International Studies University); and *Future History: Civil Society vs. State from a Traditional and Modern Perspective*, Sunday-Monday (at Fudan University).

There is no doubt in any of our minds that China is thriving — and we are happy to report that the same is true of the Glaser Institute for Judaic Studies at Nanjing University, with 20 years now completed and a bright future.

Bev Friend is Executive Director of the China/Judaic Studies Association and serves on the Board of SJI.

Chinese Chef's Main Course: Ancient Jewish Coins

by Shula Kopf
excerpted from *JPost.com (Jerusalem Post)*: 03/14/2011

One of the most passionate collectors of Israeli coins is the head chef in Beijing's Great Hall of the People. When Xu Long isn't cooking Peking duck for visiting heads of state, he devotes his time to researching the history of Jewish coins.

It took him 10 years of painstaking study, but last November Xu Long published a 575-page hard-back on the subject, *Money of Ancient Judaea and Israel*. Ironically, his book, which is in Mandarin, is one of the most wide-ranging on the subject in any language.

"His book starts with the first coins ever minted in Judea during the Persian period in the fourth century BCE and goes up to the Jerusalem of Gold 24-carat bullion coin launched last year by the Bank of Israel," says Arthur Boxer, CEO of the Israel Coins and Medals Corporation (ICMC)... [They meet] every year at the International World Money Fair in

Beijing, where display of the book helps attract local collectors to the Israeli booth.

"The first time I came to Israel everything seemed familiar to me because I already knew about places from the coins," says Xu Long, 47. He explains his interest in Israeli coins: "...You can learn about people and their history and culture through their coins, and since the Jews have had a long and colorful history, the cultural content in Israeli coins is very rich, if not the richest in the world. No other country refers back to its ancient history in its modern coins as does Israel."

According to Xu Long, [he] was riding his bicycle on one of Beijing's streets when he spotted a foreigner and stopped to ask the man if he spoke French. The foreigner was Albert Kalifa, an Israeli studying Chinese medicine in Beijing, Algerian by birth and fluent in French.

"He asked me if I would like to teach him French and I said, 'Why not,' Kalifa says in a telephone interview from his home in Kibbutz Nir Eliahu. "We met every day for French lessons for about half a year and he taught me about Chinese customs and way of life."

Kalifa knew of Xu Long's interest in coins and gave him a few Israeli coins. "This aroused a great curiosity in him about Jewish customs and life and he asked many questions. He was insatiable for information about Israel and Judaism," says Kalifa. "During his first visit to Israel, he wanted to see every spot that appears on Israeli paper money and coins."

One of the mandatory stops for Xu Long when he is [in Israel] is the Kadman Numismatic Pavilion of the Eretz Israel Museum in Tel Aviv, where he meets with curator Cecilia Meir. "The people who come to see us are all crazy about some special field in numismatics, but to see his face light up when I showed him the coins was amazing," says Meir. "He was so excited to touch the ancient coins, not because they are ancient, but because they are Jewish. All the collectors I know have some connection to Israel or to Judaism, but to think that somebody who lives so far away and doesn't have any connection has written such a book is really amazing. He's promoting Jewish culture in China through the coins"...

The chef is already planning his next

project, A Jewish cookbook in Chinese, and he took some time from his numismatic pursuits to meet with Israeli chefs.

Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University Celebrates 10th

Anniversary

by Len Hew

On May 13 and 14, 2012 our Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University, Kai Feng, Henan Province, China, celebrated its 10th anniversary. The celebration, which included an academic conference on the future for Jewish studies in China, became a major event, not just for the IJS and Henan University but also for the academic circle of Jewish studies in China. With only a couple of exceptions, every scholar involved in Jewish/Israeli and Middle Eastern Studies in China, about 40 of them in total, came at our invitation to share this happy occasion with us and to participate in the conference. The celebration/ conference was held at the conference hall of the university located in the new campus. There were about 90 participants at the celebration/conference with IJS students included.

On the morning for the first day, the first half of the morning was devoted to the formal ceremony for the celebration. After the welcoming speech by the Vice President Guan of Henan University, I was asked, as honorary director for the IJS, to bring greetings on behalf of the IJS and to give a short review on how the Institute got started 10 years ago and my personal role in the founding of the Institute. During the speech, I gave recognition to Dr Jerry Gotel, Dr. Zhang Qian Hong, the younger staff members and students of IJS, both present and past, for their contributions and remarkable teamwork in helping to make IJS the reputable institution it is today. The Executive Director for the IJS, Dr. Zhang Li Gang, gave a detailed and a very impressive account of all the major events and activities undertaken by the IJS for the past 10 years. After the official ceremony, awards for the winners for this year's Len Hew Jewish Essays Competition were given out. I gave out the prizes for the Len Hew Jewish Essays Competition and Ms. Carice Witte of SIGNAL gave out the prizes for winning essays on topics on Israel.

After the coffee/tea break, the second part of celebration—the conference on the

future of Jewish Studies in China—began. This went on to noon the next day. There were so many to deliver their papers and so little time for each that many had to cut short both their presentations and the discussions that followed. But the range of topics was phenomenal, covering most aspects of Jewish culture and history. Special public lectures were organized in the evenings to take advantage of the presence of certain famous scholars attending the conference. Monday night the farewell dinner hosted by Dr. Miao, Dean of College of History and Culture, Henan University brought this memorable event to a happy conclusion.

For all of us who have been involved in and/or closely connected with the IJS, we have waited for this celebration for a long time, in fact, we had waited patiently for its arrival for the past 10 years. All of us have worked hard for our Institute and we are very proud that after 10 years in existence, our Institute has become one of leading centers for Jewish Studies in China and has earned recognition and respect from the academic circle in Jewish studies in China. This well-attended celebration testifies to this fact. To all who are involved with the IJS, the conclusion of the celebration on May 14, only ushers in, officially, the beginning of the second decade of continued growth and development for the IJS as an important center for Jewish studies in China. We look forward to a new decade of renewed dedication, commitments and achievements, comparable to that of the past decade.

Len Hew, a member of SJI's Advisory Board, is Honorary Director of Henan University's Institute of Jewish Studies. SJI is a proud supporter of the IJS.

Executive Report to Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) Board of Directors

by Steve Schwager

Something very special occurred a number of weeks ago in China at the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. A new play, *North Bank Suzhou Creek*, premiered in the former Ohel Moshe Synagogue hall that is a central part of the Museum, before an audience that included the Consul Generals of the U.S., Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Israel; other high ranking diplomats; and the mayor of the Shanghai municipality. A

moving, educational, and artistically daring historical drama, the play explores how Jewish refugees, Japanese officials, and local Chinese coexisted in Shanghai during World War II. The play is performed in Chinese and English, and incorporates popular klezmer, Hollywood, and Chinese folk melodies from the period. The members of the prestigious audience were visibly moved by the story, and the play received a good deal of media attention. "This is the Chinese version of Schindler's List," remarked Jeffrey Sichel, one of the directors.

JDC's Jewish Service Corps Fellow, Jeanine Buzali, was a key player in this remarkable event, bringing together the directors and actors, the museum authorities, the Israeli consulate, and the Jewish community. Jeanine writes, "This has been the peak of my work as a JSC Fellow in Shanghai. It has brought to light the significance of JDC's work in Shanghai and the need that exists here for cultural events."

JDC activities in the Africa/Asia region have expanded over the past year, and now include the Jewish communities in East Asia. Certainly, JDC is no stranger to this area, having worked in Shanghai during and immediately after World War II. It assisted European Jews fleeing the Nazi onslaught and helped sustain some 15,000+ who survived the war there after the city's Japanese occupiers cut off further immigration.

Over the past 67 years, JDC has maintained a small foothold in China—providing humanitarian support to a small number of Chinese who had helped Jews survive and, in the 1990s, collaborating with the Shanghai authorities to improve welfare services in that city.

JDC's decision to reconnect with the Jewish communities in East Asia and especially in China is due to the growing and increasingly dominant position of this region on the world economic and political stage, and the growing Jewish populations in the region, particularly in China. A significant number of young, talented, ex-pat Jews have been relocating to the major population centers, adding to the presence of existing, established Jewish communities in the financial hubs of Hong Kong, Singapore, and Japan. It is estimated that there are now around 16,000 to 18,000 Jews living in East Asia, with 6,800 of them in mainland China, and the number is constantly increasing. A feature of this population influx was the founding by Hong Kong-