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- 1) The study of the ancient Jewish community of Kaifeng and assisting its descendents as appropriate.
- 2) The study of Jewish life in Shanghai, Harbin, Tianjin and elsewhere in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 3) The support of Jewish studies programs in China.
- 4) The study of cultural intersections between Chinese and Jews, for example adoptions, literature, diasporas, etc.
- 5) The study of Sino-Israeli relations.
- 6) To cooperate with other groups whose interests lie in Sinitic and Judaic matters.

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# Points East

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

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## TIME TO STOP PROJECTING OUR FANTASIES ONTO KAIFENG JEWS

by Barnaby Yeh

There exists a story out there which describes a Jewish traveler arriving in China. As fate would have it, he encountered the Jewish community of Kaifeng. Starving for kosher food, he joined them for a Shabbat meal. During the meal, he noticed that the locals were serving meat that was cooked in milk. Shocked, he prodded one of the locals, and (presumably in a common tongue) asked, "Do you not know that we are forbidden from cooking meat and dairy together?"

"It is nothing to worry about," assured the Kaifeng Jew, "for the prohibition in the Torah is only against cooking a calf in its mother's milk. We have kept rigorous records of which cow bore which calf and rest assured that violating this serious law is an impossibility."

Bemused at this assertion, the traveler rejoined, "But it is said that we are not to cook or even serve meat and milk together at all, right in the Talmud!"

Upon hearing that last word, the Chinese hosts exploded in indignation. "Who is greater – Moses or the Talmud?!"

If this story sounds outlandish to you, then you would be correct. After all, the very notion of a Chinese community serving dairy at all, let alone together with meat, is ridiculous to all who have a basic acquaintance with Chinese culture and cuisine (or anyone who has been to a Chinese restaurant!). Indeed, in a culture filled with lactose-intolerant individuals, this story simply could not have happened. It is much more likely that a Karaite or someone with an anti-Talmudic polemic had concocted this story, using Kaifeng as a backdrop because it was "exotic" and too far-flung for anyone to check its veracity.

Research into the Jewish community of Kaifeng is an ongoing process, and new revelations are constantly surfacing (such as Jordan Paper's 2012 publication *The Theology of the Chinese Jews*, which details the syncretistic ideology of the Jewish community with Daoism and Confucianism). As such, each revelation makes the overall picture of this almost-lost community more complete. But many gaps still remain, leading to rampant speculation and conjecture. As a result, many misconceptions and falsehoods still hold mythic status in people's understanding of the community. The vignette above was just one

## A BIG WEEKEND WITH FORMER SHANGHAI REFUGEES

by Bev Friend

After giving a brief overview of the history of Jewish World War II refugees sheltered in Shanghai, keynote speaker Professor Steve Hochstadt, author of *Exodus to Shanghai, stories of escape from the third Reich*, made a very perceptive point. Looking out at an audience of about 150 attending the Spungen Family Foundation's Shanghai Memory Dinner Event (Chicago, Aug 15) he noted not only the importance of keeping this history alive, but also that the history is not coming from the original refugees but from their now adult children. Sixteen of them sat at our individual tables, relating what they could recall from their own memories and the tales told by their parents. It is an important, fascinating, and sadly incomplete view.



Steve Hochstadt & Manli Ho

Hochstadt and these survivors shared memories, and the next day at the follow-up luncheon held in the Holocaust Museum in Skokie, IL, we discovered another side of the coin from another offspring: Manli Ho, daughter of diplomat and humanitarian Dr. Ho Feng Shan who saved thousands of Austrian Jews by granting them Shanghai entry visas in his role as China's Counsel General in Vienna. A reporter, Manli...for the past 15 years has been uncovering and documenting his work. Dr. Ho received no recognition during his lifetime, but this was rectified in 2000 when Israel awarded him the title *Righteousness Among Nations*, posthumously at Yad Vashem.

At both Foundation events, a long table held a display of Holocaust memorabilia from Danny Spungen's considerable collection, as well as copies of Hockstadt's book and several of the new limited edition series of *Shanghai Memory Silver and Gold Medals* to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the es-

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SJI MEMBERSHIP

Table with 2 columns: Country, Total. Rows include United States (179), China (19), Israel (16), Canada (14), England (4), Australia (2), Germany (3), Japan (2), South Africa (2), Indonesia (1), Switzerland (1), Taiwan (1), and TOTAL: 257.

FROM THE EDITOR

Few articles have inspired as much controversy as our reprinting Ms. Shaland's article on her recent visit to Kaifeng [PE 28:2].

A number of readers took me to task for allowing obvious misinformation about the Kaifeng Jews to continue to be disseminated. At the very least, it was suggested, I exercise editorial powers either to excise the offending information or clearly note that it is wrong.

Although the Jewish period of atonement has passed, the gates of repentance are never closed, so let me ask forgiveness from you for this error in judgment and allow me to explain:

On the one hand, I like to publish all sorts of accounts of visits to Kaifeng; on the other hand, I also recognized that Ms. Shaland was being given misinformation either knowingly or unknowingly by her Chinese Jewish hosts. I assumed, rightly or wrongly, that it was important for our readers to hear what some Chinese Jews are currently saying about their past and that most of our readers could distinguish between accurate and inaccurate information on their own.

(Although Ms. Shaland's piece was a well-written typical tourist account, I found it fascinating as a story of how some Kaifeng Jews Kaifeng are using Jewish tourism as a means of economic advancement—and there's nothing wrong with that. But one has to wonder about their knowledge level and motivation. Do they simply not know what information is true and accurate or do they choose to create stories to suit their own purposes, or is it something else again? Time will tell.)

Still, new readers might not be knowledgeable enough to distinguish fact from fiction and thus could be misled by this bad information. Furthermore, as a reputable journal, we have an obligation to be accurate and to ensure, to the best of our ability, that the information we present is information. Accordingly, from now on, I will do my best to delineate truth from fallacy in all future articles.

Anson Laytner

Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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2000). In the last decade, however, research has benefitted greatly from new Chinese language sources about this subject—much of it collected in Peter Kupfer's edited volume, Youtai: Presence and Perception of Jews and Judaism in China (Peter Lang, 2008), a work that does not appear in Paper's bibliography. Yet even with its bibliographic limitations, Jordan Paper's book will shed new light on Jewish life and thought for scholars and general readers alike. I myself (having researched Jewish and Chinese cultural comparisons) plan to use this text in a new undergraduate seminar on the history of the Jewish experience in China.

What is truly novel in Paper's study is the reconsideration of Christian sources about the Chinese Jews. Starting with the Jesuits, missionaries have been carefully recording the religious practices of Kaifeng Jewry, but clearly with a bias. Bishop Charles William White (an early 20th century Canadian Protestant) continued this tradition of scholarship—but again, with an eye toward how the Judaism of Kaifeng could be made to accommodate Christian ideas. Jordan Paper has re-translated many of the sources were collected by Christian scholars, with a new emphasis upon the authentic Jewishness of the Kaifeng diaspora. He mines new meaning from the 3 communal steles erected in Kaifeng in 1489, 1663 and 1679. He also probes more deeply than previous scholars the 24 horizontal tablets and 17 pairs of vertical plaques that were present in the Kaifeng synagogue. Although this may not seem like voluminous evidence with respect to other Jewish cultures, in China these steles and tablets yield fresh insight about how native beliefs and Judaism were harmonized to create a faith that was clan oriented and also mirrored some of the deepest theological views of Saadia Gaon and the Rambam.

Jordan Paper's book takes a while to get to this core argument about the religious outlook of the Chinese Jews. The first half of his study recapitulates snippets of history covered in more detail by earlier researchers such as Donald Leslie and more recent Chinese scholars such as Zhang Yilang. What is important in this overview is the argument about the implications of Jewish integration into Chinese society during and after the Song

dynasty. Whereas other researchers have noted the absence of anti-Semitism (especially of the virulent Christian kind) in China, Paper underscores the contrast between the Kaifeng experience with that of German Jews invited to Poland as tax collectors for the nobility (p. 88). Far from earning the enmity of local peasants, Chinese Jews became part of an urban elite that integrated successfully with its Chinese neighbors—Confucian and Muslim alike. The result was a vibrant and enduring Jewish community. As Jordan Paper points out, the oldest synagogue in Prague lasted 730 years while the Kaifeng synagogue functioned 678 years, from 1163 to 1841 (p.4). It was, in his view, also as successful as some of the oldest Jewish communities in Persia, with the exception "perhaps of Baghdad" (p. 94).

The Persian roots of Kaifeng Judaism play a key role in Jordan Paper's conjectures about the theology of Chinese Jews. Although other researchers have noted the trade routes that brought Jewish merchants across the Silk Road and to the coastal ports in China, no one else has developed as fully the implications of Mizrahi (versus Ashkenazi) theology for the Chinese community. For example, a new work entitled The Haggadah of the Kaifeng Jews of China by Fook-Kong Wong and Dahlia Yasharpour (Boston, 2011) does detail the Judeo-Persian language and customs of Iranian Jews and how they affected Kaifeng practices—but it does not dwell upon the theological implications of this syncretic approach. Paper, by contrast, asks explicitly: What did Chinese Jews believe about G-d? About Mashiach [Messiah]? About the centrality of the Exodus and of Yerushalaim [Jerusalem] to Jewish beliefs?

The answers come from an honestly "speculative" reading of classical Chinese philosophy and of the theology of Saadia Gaon. Both, Jordan Paper argues, resisted anthropomorphism and emphasized abstract notions such as creation ex nihilo. Whereas, other scholars have described the placards in the Kaifeng synagogue as Daoist objects created by non-Jewish literati (who were indeed commissioned to write some of these texts), Paper points out how these fragments echo Saadia Gaon's words and views. There is more

than simply verbal play at stake here (as for example the echo between a line in the Dao De Jing and a Kabbalistic couplet about raza de razin, stima de-khol stimim ("mystery of mysteries, the most concealed of all truth" p. 136). At the core, we find an appeal to expand our appreciation for what constitutes genuine Judaism by making room for sinified notions such as Tian –Sky's Truth (enriching notions of the Hebrew shamayim), and Xiao—reverence for patriarchs and family ancestors (p. 92, 94).

Is the assimilation of non-Jewish ideas and values, then, the best prescription for Jewish longevity? Yes, answers Jordan Paper emphatically in many places in this book. Alas, there is too much contrary evidence from the history of Chinese Jews and the fate of American Jewry—which also concerns the author as well as Rabbi Anson Laytner, who wrote the thought-provoking postscript about our post-Shoah longing for a theology of inclusiveness. Even though Paper and Laytner are critical of Orthodox Judaism, both writers concede that what kept Chinese Jews Jewish was an inclination toward orthopraxis rather than universalist beliefs.

Attachment to some form of kashrut and to the sacredness of inherited texts (even after Hebrew became unintelligible in the Kaifeng community) sowed the seeds of the Chinese Jewish renewal that we are witnessing today. To be sure, old dilemmas endure: Who is really a Jew (especially since very few Chinese Jews had Jewish mothers)? Should one make aliya or build new Jewish institutions on native ground? These questions are still debated in Kaifeng as well as in Jerusalem, in Shanghai and in Tel Aviv, in Beijing and in Paris. Wherever Jews remain committed to some form of tradition and to a shared destiny, Jordan Paper's book will find its interested readers.

Vera Schwarcz, the Vice-president of the Sino-Judaic Institute, is the Freeman Professor of East Asian Studies at Wesleyan University. Among her recent publications are her new poetry book Chisel of Remembrance, (http://www.antrimhouse books.com/schwarcz.html) and Place and Memory in the Singing Crane Garden.

tion, even amidst the vicissitudes of the Second Sino-Japanese War.

There are also some troubling exaggerations in Gao's text. She makes the unsourced claim that Yasue and Inuzuka "attempted to attract as many Jews as possible to Japanese-occupied China in order to exploit them ruthlessly" [emphasis mine -ed.] and that Japan's policy in the late 1930s was "intended to harm the refugees." [pp. 8,136]. There is a difference between *exploiting* Jews versus *inviting refugees in* as potential investors, experts, and influencers of American policy. There are two examples of Japanese treatment of Jews which can arguably be characterized as "harmful" and even "ruthless." In 1933 White Russians in Harbin, in collusion with ethnic Japanese *kempetai* (police) officer Konstantin Ivanovitch Nakamura, kidnapped, tortured, and murdered Russian-Jewish pianist Semion Kaspé. The often abusive and arbitrary conduct of the Japanese official Goya Kano (who liked to call himself "king of the Jews" in enforcing Shanghai ghetto restrictions) also appears to have been "harmful," "ruthless," and at least arguably anti-Semitic. But two examples do not a rule make, and Gao cites neither one.

Finally, there is the all-important matter of the Chinese and Japanese diplomatic relationship with Nazi Germany, which underlay the presence of some 17,000 Central European Jewish refugees in Shanghai. Gao acknowledges that a "complicated relationship" existed between "China, Japan, Germany, and the United States before and during World War II" but, using no German sources, does little to unravel its intricacies (pp. 3, 128). She fails to cite the pioneer scholarship of Gerhard Weinberg of over fifty years ago on the foundations of Nazi policy in East Asia. Drawing on German sources, Weinberg explains that, on February 20, 1938 Nazi Germany sensed greater economic opportunities with Japan and with Japanese-occupied regions of China than with unoccupied China and therefore recognized Japan's puppet regime of Manzhouguo. Germany, under its new Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, inched ever so closer to Japan with whom it previously had ambivalent relations and away from Nationalist China with which it had extensive military ties. From 1937 until the Wannsee Conference of January 1942,

which specified worldwide Jewish genocide, Hitler was happy to see Jews who were fleeced of virtually all material possessions dumped in regions under the control of his Asian ally, Japan. Such a bizarre confluence of policies enabled 17,000 Central European Jews to flee Europe for sanctuary in Shanghai. [Weinberg, "Japanese Recognition of Manchoukuo (*sic*)." *World Affairs Quarterly* 28 (1957)]. Using Hebrew and Japanese sources, Frank Shulman attributed the Nazi government's rapprochement with Japan to precisely the same causes as Weinberg. Shulman demonstrated that Japan's pro-Zionist sentiments began to cool well before World War Two as she cultivated far larger trade surpluses with the Arab and Islamic world than she could ever hope to enjoy with the *yishuv*, as the much smaller Jewish community of Palestine and later of Israel was then known. Despite philo-Semitic behaviour much earlier in the twentieth century, by 1938 it was economically and strategically sensible for Japan to ally with Nazi Germany, but never to go as far as embracing the genocidal policies of the Nazis. [Shulman, "The Nature of Japanese Activity in the Middle East: Japanese-Middle Eastern Economic and Political Relations since World War II." unpub. Master's thesis, University of Michigan, 1968].

In summation, Gao's new book has provided new supportive data about East Asian diplomatic history in the 1930s and 1940s. Her research in Chinese and Japanese sources confirms that, for much of the period under consideration here, neither the Chinese nationalist government in Nanjing nor the Wang Jingwei puppet regime in Beijing maintained any meaningful control in Shanghai. Even though entry visas were not required to reach Shanghai, German acceptance of Chinese "final destination" visas enabled Jews to escape Europe. Japan allowed a significant number of Jews to settle in occupied China. Gao's data demonstrates once again that it was the fortuitous convergence of the diplomatic policies of several nations, plus the energetic efforts of the Jews of the world, which made Shanghai a safe haven for Jewish refugees and spared these same individuals from almost certain annihilation at the hands of the Nazis.

JONATHAN GOLDSTEIN is a Research Associate of Harvard University's

Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies and a professor of East Asian history at the University of West Georgia. His specialties are nineteenth-century Sino-American commerce and East Asian Jewish trading communities. His books include *Stephen Girard's Trade with China* (2011), *The Jews of China* (1999), *China and Israel* (1999), *America Views China* (1991), and *Philadelphia and the China Trade* (1978). He may be reached at gao@westga.edu.

### ***The Theology of the Chinese Jews 1000-1850***

by Jordan Paper, Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012, \$85.00

reviewed by Vera Schwarcz

The history of the Kaifeng diaspora has long fascinated Jews and non-Jews alike. From Mateo Ricci's first encounter with Chinese Jews in 1605 through the utube fever about the *shecheyanu* prayer of Yaakov Wang at the Kotel in 2009, there has been no shortage of missionaries, travelers and scholars drawing "lessons" from Kaifeng's Jewry. What makes Jordan Paper's work unique is the focus upon the innermost beliefs of Chinese Jews—a subject about which we have very little concrete information. Paper brings to this explorative project a nuanced sense of familiarity with the classical Chinese language. His claim in this brief work is twofold: First he lets us know that his training and affinity makes him capable of thinking like the Chinese literati; and the other is that Chinese Jews were most analogous in outlook to Confucian elites who also had side interests in Buddhism and Daoism. Finally, the overarching argument of this book is that the Judaism that flourished in Kaifeng was authentically Jewish and therefore can enrich and deepen contemporary Jewish life and practice.

Paper's broad and often schematic argument represents the fruition of a senior scholar's reflections upon the discipline of comparative religion. Other scholars have delved more deeply into specific aspects of the history and even of the theology of the Chinese Jews. Paper himself acknowledges the work of Andrew Plaks, Xu Xin, Irene Eber and other scholars who contributed to the two-volume study of *The Jews of China*, edited by Jonathan Goldstein (M.E. Sharpe 1999,

## IN THE FIELD

### ♦ **New Publication**

SJI board member, Den Leventhal has just signed a publishing contract for his new book, *How to Leap a Great Wall: The China Adventures of a Cross-Cultural Trouble-Shooter*. His story is a memoir of a 30 years' career living and working among the Chinese people. Traveling to forty-five Chinese cities during this front line corporate warrior's career put him into some surprising situations. He has flown "cargo class" from Nanjing to Shanghai on an antique Russian propeller-driven aircraft. He sold tons of a specialty chemical product in Hebei Province by translating a twelve hundred years old poem on a betting challenge during a twelve course Chinese banquet. He lectured in the Chinese language on international trade risks in twenty-eight Chinese cities, becoming a minor, local Chinese TV luminary in the process. And, he engaged in a lengthy political war with a corrupt Chinese governmental organization hell bent on destroying a successful Sino-foreign joint venture.

After reviewing Den's manuscript, Prof. Vera Schwarcz, Freeman Professor of East Asian Studies, Wesleyan University, and Vice President, The Sino-Judaic Institute, provided the following comments:

*"A seasoned, savvy China expert with a keen sense of what works in actual business encounters, Leventhal has crafted a unique book. It weaves together well-told tales chock full of tiny details that make up genuine intercultural competence. "OMG a la chinoise" and "subcutaneous xenophobia" are just some of the unusual morsels awaiting the reader along with vivid lessons from Chinese history and philosophy. It is rare indeed to find so many important themes in US-China relations addressed with both humor and analytical verve. No American businessman can afford to sit down at the negotiating table without hav-*

*ing perused this book! It will delight professionals and general readers alike."*

The book is scheduled to be launched in spring, 2014, from MerwinAsia, (distributed by the University of Hawaii Press).

### ♦ **News About Prof. Xu Xin**

SJI Board member Dr. Bev Friend writes that between November 3 and 9, Professor Xu Xin will visit the University of Southern California to launch 12 Nanjing testimonies in the Visual History Archive at the Shoah Foundation (<http://sfi.usc.edu/>), an organization dedicated to making audio-visual interviews with survivors and witnesses of the Holocaust and other genocides. The foundation is essential in maintaining history and providing a compelling voice for education and action.

The Shoah Foundation has also invited Yehuda Bauer, a Czechoslovak-born Israeli historian and scholar of the Holocaust and Professor of Holocaust Studies at the Avraham Harman Institute of Contemporary Jewry at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Plans are to have the both scholars engage in a conversation for students, faculty and the public, moderated by Stephen Smith, tentatively set for Nov. 7.

Plans are also in the works Xu to make another visit to the U.S. during May, 2014, this time to the East Coast.

### ♦ **Jewish Old Shanghai Comes to America**

"Jewish Refugees in Shanghai" brings together for the first time photos, personal stories, and artifacts from Shanghai's Jewish Refugee Museum. The exhibition highlights the role China played in helping save over 20,000 Jewish men, women, and children from Nazi persecution from 1933 to 1941.

It was exhibited in New York (September 16-21), and comes to Chicago (October 21-26) and Los Angeles (Oct 27 to Dec 14).

In New York, it was presented at the Rockefeller Center Concourse, with the official opening happening on September 19<sup>th</sup>.

In Chicago, it will be shown at the James R. Thompson State of Illinois Center and is sponsored by the American Jewish Committee. On October 21<sup>st</sup>, there will be a panel moderated by author and AJC National Leadership Council Member Linda Frank, author of "After the Auction," with Prof. Steve Hochstadt, author of "Exodus to Shanghai, Stories of Escape from the Third Reich" participating, and a ceremony featuring Governor John Huntsman, former ambassador to China.

In Los Angeles, it will be hosted at the UCLA Hillel. On Oct 27<sup>th</sup>, there will be presentations by Prof. Steve Hochstadt and others, and also an academic conference scheduled as part of the exhibit. For further information, see: <http://www.confucius.ucla.edu/event/shanghai-jewish-refugee-museum-exhibit-ucla-hillel>

### ♦ **A Star is Born**

Sonja Muehlberger writes that at the end of June, DW (Deutsche Welle-TV and Radio-station) published a new and longer feature, a new cut (about 40 minutes) on TV (China/Shanghai, Brazil, USA, Berlin) which may now also be seen on "youtube" and even on "facebook" in English as "Traces of the Past" and as "Spurensuche" in German.

<http://www.dw.de/spurensuchedeutsch-j%3BCdischeskulturerbe-weltweit/a-16872140>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H6QXLK4pasE&list=PLdrKWT9w9Hg20ZKGz7MWI0jL9NkNGMVFO>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPnnXDkrVo>

## TO THE EDITOR

My mother in law was born in Shanghai in 1924 being the youngest daughter of Nahum Abraham Cohen and Lulu Cohen (nee Shibbeth). Their address was 24 Quinsan Road and as far as I am aware her father Nahum was from Iraq and Lulus' family was from Turkey. I am assuming that they may have been part of the Baghdadi Jews that came to Shanghai but I am not sure. She married my father-in-law Victor Levy in 1947 in Shanghai.

I am trying to find any information about her family or even information on where to look for any records or history about the family. As I live in Australia it is very difficult to find any information.

I would appreciate any assistance you could give me.

Rachel Levy  
alanlevy@bigpond.com

I write to inquire whether it is possible to search records without actually traveling to China.

My grandmother's name was Vera Sorokina or Sorokin. She had two sisters, Clara (possibly Claudia?) and Anna. She was the youngest. They were in Harbin and Shanghai after their parents were killed in Russia. I don't unfortunately know whether they were formerly in the Ukraine or Tashkent (maybe later their family remaining in Russia, cousins, etc., moved to Tashkent from the Ukraine). As for the year, I have a photograph of her with her sisters, I think approximately 1920s, says taken in Harbin. In 1930s she (my grandmother) lived in Shanghai. I know that also "White Russians" moved to China, and unfortunately, my family did not talk much about the past, including my grandmother (who did not live near us) so I also don't know who killed her parents or why.

I'm sorry I don't have more information other than she and her sisters lived in Harbin/Shanghai approximately 1920s and she lived in Shanghai 1930s until moving to the Philippines in late 1930s approx.

I had been told that my grandmother was Russian Orthodox (Christian) but I've also been told that some people changed religions. Do you know if Sorokin is a Jewish surname?

Thank you in advance for any answers or direction you can provide.

Ms. Jerry Cohen, beauberrie@hotmail.com

## Time to Stop Projecting Our Fantasies onto Kaifeng Jews

(continued from page 1)

amidst many; others include the notion that they were Karaites, that they were pre-Second Temple Levites, or that they were a Lost Tribe from the Northern Kingdom [of Israel].

Why do Kaifeng Jews make for such an easy target of these myths? As mentioned above, the fact that they were said to be in China lends them an aura of mystique, further amplified by misconceptions and generalizations. Add in a great deal of patchwork research, and the whole affair becomes an easy recipe for ideological projection. Such a phenomenon is not new to the community; we can recall the story of the Jesuit missionaries, who unsuccessfully attempted to "prove" that Western Jews distorted the Scriptures by analyzing the Kaifeng Torah scrolls.

These distortions of the truth are bad enough, but are especially egregious when community members start accepting them without question. Guo Yan, the community's de facto ambassador to the world, despite her best genuine efforts to promote research of her ancestors, is still telling tourists that her ancestors left during the First Exile and did not celebrate Hanukkah. However, the former statement is not supported by any concrete evidence, and HUC Manuscript 926 (p. 8-10) has easily proved the latter to be false.

Instead of relying on conjecture, we should look strictly to the revelations made by research. Analysis of Jesuit accounts and, most importantly, the documents left behind by the Kaifeng Jews themselves, demonstrate the Rabbinical nature of the community through and through. One missionary recorded the community Rabbi of the time writing down the six orders of the Mishnah, naming each and every one of them correctly. (Kassimir, "Research and Resources: The Kaifeng Jews", plate XX; source: Gozani 1723, Archives Jesuites) One of the community manuscripts (HUC MS 926 p. 8-10) contains the Rabbinic prayer for Hanukkah, "Al haNissim", in perfect line with the text prescribed by Maimonides (Mishneh Torah Seder HaTefilla 25), albeit with some confusion about the vowel points. Finally, no Karaite or pre-Rabbinic community would end every

single one of their prayers (HUC MSS 923 p. 41, 924 p.152, 941 p. 37, etc.) with the final verse of Tractate Berakhot of the Mishnah, which begins "Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Hanina..." These findings, and many more that followed in their wake, have proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the medieval Israelites of Kaifeng-fu were, in fact, Rabbinic Jews. As the generations passed, they may have assimilated some traditions and lost touch with others, but the core of their practice has always retained its Rabbinic heritage.

As people of alleged scholarly stature continue to proliferate more and more of these fanciful stories in their highly impressionable communities, the resulting effects could deal a significant blow to the general remembrance of Kaifeng Jewish history. Bearing this false knowledge, community members will develop these stories and pass them down to future generations until they end up becoming more gospel than the actual scholastic findings, fraying the link that binds the community to its own past. Allowing such fantasies to corrupt the truth only manages to deal the Kaifeng Jews and their ancestors an immense disservice, and like all falsehoods, it is better for us to stop them at the point of origin before they spiral out of control.

*SJI member Barnaby Yeh is currently visiting Kaifeng.*

## A Big Weekend with Former Shanghai Refugees

(continued from page 1)

establishment of the Hongkew Ghetto... [See *China Produces Jewish Commemorative Medals*, in this issue.]

A small scroll accompanies each coin and both are featured in a fine wood box with a glass top. On one side of the coin, a woman shelters a small girl with her toy panda under an umbrella. They are standing in a lane and behind them is a doorway with a small mezuzah. The address on a door to the left of the Chinese lady is 1943, symbolic of the year the Hongkew District opened to the refugees. The girl represents refugees, the Chinese lady is caring and benevolent and the panda is a symbol of China. Further explanation for this picture lies in the scroll which I did not realize could

Jewish journalist N. Elias [not Ezra –ed.] B. Ezra. [pp. 13, 99-104]. At a minimum, Japanese officials sought to prevent American economic sanctions and an embargo against Japan. At a maximum they sought Jewish investment in Japanese-ruled regions of China as part of much larger American financial commitments. This goal was de-prioritized after the September 1940 Japanese-German-Italian Tripartite Pact. Shillony demonstrated long before Gao that Higuchi, Inuzuka, and Yasue, all preached an "ideological anti-Semitism" but, at the same time, professed a "practical friendship" for Jews who wished to settle in Japanese-occupied parts of China." [Letter: Avraham Altman to *Jerusalem Post*, 19 May 1982; Gerhard Krebs, "The 'Jewish Problem' in Japanese-German Relations, 1933-1945" in Bruce Reynolds, ed., *Japan in the Fascist Era*. (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 113-129; Maruyama Naoki, "Facing a Dilemma: Japan's Jewish Policy in the Late 1930s" in Guy Podoler, ed. *War and Militarism in Modern Japan* (Folkestone, UK: Global Oriental, 2009), pp. 22-38; Ben-Ami Shillony, *The Jews and the Japanese: The Successful Outsiders* (Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1991), pp. 201-207; Shillony, "Japan and Israel: The Relationship that Withstood Pressure," *Middle East Review* 18, no. 2 (Winter 1985/86), pp. 17-24].

Gao has nevertheless added valuable new data from Guomintang and Japanese archives in support of existing theories. She documents the autonomy of some Japanese field-grade staff officers in China in implementing policies affecting Jews. These colonels, lieutenant colonels, and majors acted largely independently of their commanding officers in the central government. She offers important biographical information about Inuzuka, Yasue, and Higuchi, explaining nuances of difference between Inuzuka's ideas which have sometimes been characterized as "the Fugu Plan" and Yasue's notion of *Hakko Ichiu* (=universal brotherhood). These differences of opinion with respect to the treatment of Jews were symptomatic of even broader differences of opinion between the Japanese army, navy, and the civilian foreign ministry (pp. 58-92, 126). Gao also confirms evidence from Polish sources that Japanese Vice Consul Sugihara Chiune's issuance of transit visas to Polish Jews in

Lithuania in 1940 was a bi-product of, and perhaps even a cover-up for, his primary function as an intelligence agent spying on the Soviets and Germans. Sugihara worked closely with the Polish underground and Government-in-Exile, helping to smuggle their non-Jewish agents out of occupied Poland and soon-to-be occupied Lithuania. [p. 112; see my chapter "Motivation in Holocaust Rescue: The Case of Jan Zwartendijk in Lithuania, 1940" in Jeffrey M. Diefendorf, ed. *Lessons and Legacies VI: New Currents in Holocaust Research* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2004, pp. 69-87)]. Finally, Gao performs an important scholarly service in dispelling the exaggerated and un-sourced claims of Rabbi Chaim Lipschitz and Ezra Yehezkel-Shaked, of Japanese "plans" to drown the Shanghai Jews in the Pacific at the behest of the Germans. [pp. 123-24; Lipschitz, *The Shanghai Connection: Based on the Hebrew "Nes Hatzalah"* (New York: Maznaim, 1988), pp. 106-07; Yehezkel-Shaked, *Jews, Opium, and the Kimono* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 2003), pp. 197-99].

Gao should be commended for adding all of this new information. But she omits the specifics of Japanese policy toward the Jews after Inuzuka left Shanghai in March 1942. She makes no reference to the activities of his replacement, Navy Colonel Toshiro Saneyoshi, nor of Tsutomu Kubota, who became director of the office of Stateless Refugees Affairs set up in February 1943 at Hongkew to check and issue passes for Jews who needed to go out of the designated area. That same month SACRA (The Shanghai Ashkenazi Collaborating Relief Association) was established to facilitate the transfer of stateless Jews to the designated area. Its chairman was Dr. A.J. Cohn. Later it was transformed into the Central Control Board with Cohn again as chairman. Gao fails to mention this individual or those organizations.

Over and beyond these omissions, there is a troubling lack of consistency in Gao's argument. On the one hand she maintains that the history of Jews in wartime Shanghai "has been explored almost exclusively by Western scholars" (p. 3). She thereby does a disservice to the formidable, and, in some cases lifelong, academic commitments of the aforementioned Maruyama Naoki, as well as Pan Guang, Tang Peiji, Xu

Buzeng, Xu Xin, and Zhou Xun. Inexplicably, she refers to these same scholars authoritatively elsewhere in her text (pp.7-9, 130). She also makes the un-sourced claim that there are "limited source materials available from the Asian, especially the Chinese side" (p.7). In reality, there is an abundance of Chinese and Japanese source material which linguistically-competent scholars of multiple ethnicities have mined for decades. But one example is Xiao Xian's textual analysis of images of Shanghai Jews between 1904 and 1948 in the newspaper *Dongfang zazhi* (Eastern Miscellany) which Gao, again inexplicably, cites authoritatively elsewhere in her text (pp.12-18). Careful proofreading could have eliminated these inconsistencies.

Gao's study further suffers from the omission of key sources of information. No interviews are cited, although, as recent conferences of Shanghai survivors and scholars have revealed, there are still many articulate ex-Shanghailanders with a broad range of opinions, including Chinese and Japanese eyewitnesses. [Anson Laytner, "When East Meets West: A Ground-breaking Conference Studies Jewish Diasporas in China," *Points East* (Menlo Park, CA) 7, no. 2 (October 1992), pp. 8-11; Edith and Isidore Chevat, "Harvard Sponsors a Conference on the Jewish Diasporas," *U.S.-China Review* (New York) 16, no. 4 (Fall 1992), pp. 10-12]. Gao fails to cite any German diplomatic documents, essential for the study of Shanghai in this period (see below), nor the ten German-language publications functioning in Shanghai, nor the city's Polish, Russian, and Yiddish press. The critically important Yiddish letters of Harbin social worker Meir Birman and Tianjin Bundist leader Lazar Epstein, in New York's YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (*Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut*), document the movement of Russian Jews from Manzhouguo and Tianjin to Shanghai. In September 1939, Birman relocated from Harbin to Shanghai in order to manage Shanghai's office of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), which serviced that city's burgeoning immigrant population. Epstein, for his part, visited Manila on behalf of HIAS and recorded the closing of the "open door" to the Philippines, which once had been an option for Jews fleeing Sino-Japanese hostilities. A closed door in the Philippines made Shanghai the only viable Far Eastern option for mass Jewish immigra-

## BOOK NOOK

At the time Matzdorff, his parents and grandmother were trying to build a new life for themselves after sailing halfway around the world to a country he had known only through the movies as a boy in Berlin...

The relationship lasted a year. He took her to meet his parents in their small rented room in Hongkou.

"My Dad was apprehensive, because in those days for a foreigner to perhaps marry a Chinese girl was a little bit misunderstood. It was not customary," he said.

But any thought of marriage disappeared when she dumped him for a US Navy sailor.

He only saw her once more after the war, in Nanjing Road, a busy commercial street not far from where they first met.

"One day somebody tapped me on the shoulder. And she was trying to tell me what happened. But I was not interested anymore," he said.

But now, after moving to the United States, becoming an American citizen, building a successful leather business and retiring, he thinks of finding her once again before he dies...

His wife Nancy accompanied him on his quest.

"I'm visualising a movie in my head: refugee boy moves to America, gets rich, comes back to Shanghai, goes into a shop and there's an old lady behind the counter. I can see it in my mind," she said.

A 1948 Shanghai directory lists a Miss Cleo Wong of the Cleo Crochet Co., advertising "Handmade Crochet Work and Neckties", but then the trail goes cold.

The story has captured the imagination of the Chinese press, but no leads have emerged.

"If she is (in her) nineties then she's still alive. But who knows?" Matzdorff said, his eyes glistening with tears.

"All I could ask is: 'Do you remember me?'"

### **Shanghai Sanctuary: Chinese and Japanese Policy toward European Jewish Refugees during World War II**

New York: Oxford University Press, 2013; ix + 185 pp. \$74, L45; ISBN 978-0-19-984090-8 (hardback; alk. paper) by Gao Bei

reviewed by Jonathan Goldstein

A much-abbreviated version of this review appeared in the September 2013 China Quarterly

In a 2010 article in the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Joshua A. Fogel cited a cornucopia of recent publications about Shanghai in Chinese, English, and Japanese, which one would expect, but also in French, German, Hebrew, Korean, and Russian, and in English translation from German, Polish, and Yiddish. ["The Recent Boom in Shanghai Studies," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 71, no. 2 (April 2010)]. When one contextualizes Gao Bei's 2013 book *Shanghai Sanctuary*, with its 137 pages of text, within this vast corpus of Shanghai studies, it is clear that she has added much original data to the extant literature, but has not achieved two of the objectives outlined in her introduction and epilogue.

She defines her first task as redressing a situation in which "the story of the European Jewish refugees in China during the Second World War is still not well known" and "the relations of the Jews and the locals, the native Chinese in particular, have long been neglected by scholars of the field." (pp. 3,128) She thereby flies in the face of Fogel's vast bibliography as well as others assembled by Rudolf Loewenthal and Frank Shulman.

Second, she seeks to "reveal...that both the Chinese Nationalist government and the Japanese occupation authorities thought very carefully about the Shanghai Jews and how they could be used to win international financial and political support in their war against one another." (p. 10). Others have already told the story of Jewish refugees in China and the Sino-Japanese policy considerations which underlay the admission of these refugees.

With respect to Chinese Nationalist policy, Gao reiterates what Irene Eber, Marcia Ristaino, and David Kranzler have already revealed. While Sun Ke, Jakob Berglas, Kong Xiangxi, and Maurice William suggested mass settlement of Jews in such underdeveloped regions of China as Yunnan and Hainan, these grandiose schemes were implemented no more than France's ambitious but unrealized "Madagascar" plan or Philippine President Manuel Quezon's suggestion of massive Jewish settlement on Mindanao. Beginning in late 1937, Chinese government consuls were happy to grant Jews entry visas to regions of China it did not control. The Guomindang leadership hoped such humanitarianism would win much-needed support from politically-influential American Jews at a time when it was far from clear that China's major military alliance with Nazi Germany would endure. [Irene Eber, *Wartime Shanghai* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), pp. 66-70; Marcia Ristaino, *Port of Last Resort* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 117, 146; David Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis, and Jews* (Hoboken, NJ: Ktav, 1988), pp. 30, 37].

With respect to Japanese policy, Avraham Altman, Gerhard Krebs, Maruyama Naoki, and Ben-Ami Shillony, established well before Gao that the head of the Japanese Navy's Advisory Bureau on Jewish Affairs from April 1939 to March 1942, Captain Inuzuka Koreshige, helped Jewish refugees settle in Japanese-occupied (and Navy-administrated) Shanghai. His army counterparts Colonel Yasue Norihiro, liaison officer with the Jewish community in Harbin in Japanese-occupied Manchuria (Manzhouguo) and Major General Higuchi Kiichiro, chief of military intelligence in Harbin from August 1937 to July 1938, aided Jewish resettlement in that region. Altman maintains that Inuzuka, Yasue, and Higuchi were "using the Jews as tools in [their - ed.] government's efforts to get the U.S. to remain neutral," a parallel effort to Chinese schemes to win American goodwill via America's presumably-influential Jewish community. Japan, like China and the Philippines, accepted Jewish refugees but never went as far as to embrace a vast resettlement scheme, such as those proposed by Tamura Kozo and Shanghai

be opened until told so by Danny's daughter Leanna. The insert tells the following story in English and Chinese, written by Professor Xu Xin of Nanjing University:

### **I am Sarah, a Jewish Girl from Europe.**

In the 1930's, my future was shadowed by the rise of the Nazis. My family and I were forced to abandon our happy lives and beautiful homes to escape the Shoah. A ship called SS Biancamano — a true Noah's Ark — took us on to new lives at the Bund of Shanghai, an international city filled with multinational architectural designs and diverse people.

When my family arrived, we were warmly greeted by our Chinese neighbors. However, the establishment of Designated Area for Stateless Refugees, known today as the Hongkew Ghetto, in 1943, filled our lives with hardship and dismay.

One stormy afternoon, when I got lost, wandering through the rain-swept, narrow streets, with my dog and panda toy, a kind Chinese lady befriended me by holding an umbrella over my head to protect me from the rain and wind. The warmth of her gesture in this dark moment was like the bright rays of light emitting from a holiday menorah. I therefore became a witness to history and live today to tell the tale 70 years later.

The other side of the coin shows a large ship pulling into a harbor with the Shanghai skyline behind it; silhouettes of people strolling on the Bund fill the foreground. Seven birds fly in a formation overhead and symbolize the 70th anniversary of the Hongkew Ghetto. The English words "Shanghai Memory" are inscribed.

One fact mystified me—a couple strolling on the bund appears to be dressed in Victorian costume. I was able to ask the father-and-son team, Qiming Zhao and Rocky Zhao, who designed and engraved the coin for the Shanghai Mint, what their intention had been. The answer was that for a Chinese audience, they wanted explicitly to show that these strollers were foreign...

Highlight of the weekend celebration was meeting the Shanghai refugees. Originally, there were to be 13 guests at the banquet, but when an extensive article about the event appeared in the *Chicago Tribune*, three more contacted Spungen and were included, and a frail, 87-year-old man who had been one of the American sailors liberating the Shanghai at the end of the War, drove 200 miles to join us and request information about a refugee he had been seeking for over 40 years. I gave him a copy of the *Bulletin of Igud Yotsei Sin*, the publication of the Former Residents of China that is published in Israel in Hebrew, Russian and English ([www.jewsofchina.org](http://www.jewsofchina.org)) and suggested that he contact them.

Our programs for both the evening and afternoon sessions were summarized in charming little passport books which listed the honored guests and the survivors with photos and brief autobiographies. Most touching was a tribute to one of Spungen's five closest friends — Nick Brown, who died on May 13, 2013.

The original 13 Shanghai guests (in reverse alphabetical order): Ellen (Solomon) Wolf, Highland Park, IL; Trixie (Braun) Wachsner, Los Angeles, CA; Chaya (Walkin) Small, Chicago, IL; Edie (Oelsner) Shafer, Milwaukee WI; Annie (Weinblum) Rodin, Chicago, IL; Gary Matzdorff, Grenada Hills, CA; Steven Low, Marietta, GA; Judy (Fleischer) Kolb, Northbrook, IL; Harry Katz, Pebble Beach, CA; Kurt Jacoby, Highland Park, IL; Gerry Jacoby, Lincolnshire, IL; Ellie Grasse, Palm, Desert, CA; Ralph Cohn, Lincolnshire, IL



Danny Spungen & Bev Friend

The three newcomers: Carla (Klein) Shock, Palos Heights, IL; Jerome Schachter, Northbrook IL; Jenny (Rosenthal) Schwartz, Highland Park, IL.

The Spungen Foundation focuses its grant making on health related issues, especially cancer research, care and treatment, and Jewish causes. Holocaust education using philatelic and numismatic material is one small part of their mission statement. They note that the Foundation has no interest in the production and distribution of medals associated with the Shanghai Memory Project. For additional information and future events, see <http://www.spungenfoundation.org/>

Kudos to Danny Spungen on many levels: for conceiving of and funding the coins from the Shanghai mint, for preparing these commemorative celebrations and for his work with disseminating Holocaust information worldwide.

### **China Produces Jewish Commemorative Medals**

The Shanghai Mint has struck a limited edition series of "Shanghai Memory" silver and gold medals to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Designated Area for Stateless Refugees, commonly known as "the Shanghai Ghetto" or "Hongkew Ghetto."

"This is the first time any China mint has ever produced numismatic items with a theme related to Jewish history," said Danny Spungen, President of Why Not Collectibles of Lincolnshire, Illinois.

"The design of the medals is filled with symbolism related to the humanitarian efforts by China to offer safe refuge for those who fled Europe starting in the 1930s," explained Spungen. He has been involved with the planning of the project for the past three years after an initial meeting with Shanghai Mint officials in December 2010.

The medals are composed of 99.9 percent pure gold or silver and have been struck in sizes of one-ounce silver, one-ounce gold and five-ounces gold.

Each medal is individually etched with its limited edition number. The 1-ounce silver medal is limited to a mintage of 5,773 pieces (representing the current year in the Jewish calendar) and costs \$188

each. The 1-ounce gold medal is limited to 570 medals and costs \$3,636 and the 5-ounce medal, limited to 36 pieces, costs \$32,000.

Each medal also is accompanied by a Shanghai Mint certificate of authenticity written in both Chinese and English.

You can order directly from Danny Spungen at [danny@whynotcollectibles.com](mailto:danny@whynotcollectibles.com) or from any of the three U.S. distributors that offer the medals, the KMJ Group, Mish International Monetary Inc. and Qian's Coins & Collectibles. Contact the KMJ Group at 562-888-2596 or [www.thekmjgroup.com](http://www.thekmjgroup.com), Robert Mish at 650-324-9110 or [www.mishinternational.com](http://www.mishinternational.com), and Qian's Coins & Collectibles at 857-928-2750 or [qianmin@gmail.com](mailto:qianmin@gmail.com).

### Bearing Witness Ever More

excerpted from *The Economist*, 24 August 2013

Discussing the Holocaust in the context of other human horrors is popular in Latin America, Africa and Asia as well. The Association of Holocaust Organisations (AHO), the world's biggest Holocaust association, has increased from 25 members in the late 1980s to over 300 today. It is to stage China's first international conference on the topic in Harbin. The north-eastern city once had a thriving Jewish community, but a more important stimulant for local interest in the conference will be parallels to be drawn, rightly or wrongly, between the Holocaust and Japanese wartime atrocities. The Imperial Japanese Army used the city for experiments on humans, including vivisection and dropping anthrax from low-flying planes, killing an estimated 400,000 people.

Methods developed by early Holocaust centres have become guides for memorials to Asian tragedies. The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Cambodia and a Chinese museum commemorating the "Rape of Nanking" by Japanese soldiers in 1937 have drawn on Yad Vashem. "Israeli people did a great job of teaching the past," says Xiaowei Fu, director of the Judaic studies department at Sichuan University in Chengdu. She has tried to drum up interest in the Holocaust with an essay competition offering a cash prize.

In some places, the Holocaust now overshadows the conflict that fuelled it...

Here (in India) and in some other places, the Holocaust is seen as the core event of the 20th century in Europe, and it thus draws millions of tourists to its memorials. Last year, 46,500 South Koreans visited Auschwitz, only a few less than Israel's 68,000.

### From Maidenhead to China

by Bob Sather

excerpted from <http://news.reformjudaism.org.uk/press-releases/from-maidenhead-to-china.html>, 25 July 2013

[Members of Maidenhead Synagogue recently embarked on a 12-day tour of China, focused on Jewish sites and heritage. Led by Rabbi Jonathan Romain and John Dunston, the group visited historic and current Jewish communities, as well as seeing more conventional tourist attractions. Bob Sather shares his impressions of a fascinating journey.]

...We had the pleasure of Shabbat and dinner with the Reform communities in both Beijing and Hong Kong. These are active groups, composed of expatriates, a few with Chinese spouses. The Hong Kong Jewish Centre in particular was impressive: They have built two high-rise residential towers on the property, which provide an income to the community, and the lower floors house the Reform and Orthodox synagogues, as well as classrooms, offices, and a swimming pool.

We took an overnight train to Harbin, in the far north of China, crossing the great Manchurian plain. There is only one Jew living in Harbin, a city the size of Boston. He is a professor from Israel who is married to a local woman. There used to be 20,000 Jews, starting in the 1890s, mostly Russians, many who fled the revolution in 1917, but they died off or emigrated after the Second World War. We visited the Jewish cemetery outside town and saw the grave of Ehad Olmert's grandfather. The last Jew was buried there in 1963.

China is one of the few places on earth where the Jews were never persecuted. We saw an amazing exhibition at the Harbin Jewish museum, built in the old synagogue. It was huge, with two floors of exhibits. Unaccountably, the Chinese decided to honour a vanished community of foreigners. The exhibit is full of

quotes and labels praising the Jews for the tremendous economic and cultural contributions that they made to Harbin. And (unlike most exhibitions) there is no mention at all of the Jews as a suffering or victimised people, aside from a statement by an Israeli statesman that in Harbin the Jews were welcomed without any of the prejudice they found in other places.

From Harbin we flew south to Kaifeng...Recently a few Kaifeng Jews have begun to revive Judaism in the city. We visited several in their homes. Sheli, a scholar, studied for four years at Tel Aviv University...teaches Hebrew to a few children in a small museum in his house. We met a very energetic and enterprising young woman named Esther who has established a study centre and a tiny prayer hall - her father has built a beautiful little Chinese-style ark (that lacks a Torah) - and she hopes to persuade the local authorities to rebuild the synagogue. They face formidable obstacles. Judaism is not on the official list of five religions approved for Chinese. The laws forbid gatherings of more than ten people except for approved purposes. The Jerusalem Rabbinate will not recognise them as Jews, because their Jewish heritage is not matrilineal...(Three or four young people have made aliyah, but they had to 'convert' in Israel.) If the synagogue is rebuilt, it will probably have to be called a 'historical monument and tourist attraction'. And it cannot be rebuilt on the original site, where now stands a modern hospital.

We asked Sheli what the future of the Kaifeng Jews is likely to be. He said there are two possible futures - in Kaifeng and in Israel. The future in Kaifeng depends on a policy change by the government, which may not happen. He himself intends to remain, and carry on his work restoring Judaism in Kaifeng; if the most committed Jews all make aliyah, Judaism in Kaifeng will disappear.

We had an eight hour ride on a bullet train from Kaifeng to Shanghai...Shanghai, like Harbin, was home to a large community of Western Jews, now vanished...

Judaism in China is on a knife's edge. The expatriates will be there for some time to come, but they do not represent authentically Chinese Judaism. The

Kaifeng Jews may or may not be able to revive their own traditions - or they may emigrate to Israel. As John Dunston pointed out, the Jews of the world have survived for so long precisely because they have been persecuted, which has kept them as a distinct community. In China, because they were never persecuted, they eventually intermarried and were assimilated. There is a lesson here for Jews in Western countries - the very freedom that we now enjoy may pose a risk to the survival of our communities.

### JTA Archive: China Offered Jews a State in '28

By Adam Soclof

July 11, 2013

Why did China propose a Jewish state in 1928?

An error in translation.

While embarking on a fundraising mission for Jewish settlement in Palestine,



an unknown Zionist delegate arrived in Peking in 1928 and filed paperwork with authorities there for permission to solicit in China. The paperwork was misinterpreted as an application to purchase a parcel of land for settlement, and an amusing sequence of events ensued, as reported by the London Daily Telegraph on July 10, 1928 and by JTA one day later:

The Minister of the Interior at Peking thought the Zionist wanted to purchase land in China for the purpose of settling Jews there and promised a special treaty if the Zionists would indicate the site for the proposed homeland and the approximate area required.

The Director of Lands had already proceeded with drafting an agreement, when, through the British Minister at Peking, the delegate managed to explain he only

required permission to raise funds among Jews in China for the Palestine up-build-work. This permission was granted.

Read more: <http://www.jta.org/2013/07/11/news-opinion/jta-archive-china-of-fered-jews-a-second-state#ixzz2YIA54xtt>

### Picture This

Faith Goldman ([faithnamdlog@aol.com](mailto:faithnamdlog@aol.com)) would appreciate any reader's assistance in identifying the people in this photo of her late husband Robert Goldman's class in Shanghai 1956.

Shown are:

Top row left to right: Robert Goldman, Johnny Kost, Victor Netupsky, Vova Matvieff

Bottom row left to right: Jeannine Martinet, Lizzy \_\_\_\_\_, Christine Robert, Sylvia Talbot, Jackie Shlau Rand



### Seeking Lost Love in Shanghai

excerpted from *The Malay Mail Online*, [www.malaymailonline.com](http://www.malaymailonline.com), 21 August 2013

It was more than 70 years ago that Gary Matzdorff, a Jewish refugee, escaped Nazi Germany for China and found love, only



to lose his paramour and then have to flee the Communists.

Now 92, Matzdorff returned to his former home in Shanghai hoping to find the Chinese woman he spotted across a dance hall floor again.

Then, the sophisticated city was renowned as the "Paris of the East". Some of Matzdorff's memories of Shanghai have faded over the decades, but the image of the woman in a Chinese-style dress split high up the leg remains clearly imprinted on his mind.

"She looked like a princess," he says. "She was just beautiful."

He scrawled a note on a napkin, asking the woman to meet him later in the evening, receiving an American "okey doke" in reply.

Cleo Wong, it turned out, ran her own lace shop and was not one of the "taxi dancers" available as temporary partners for the price of a ticket at the Wing On Department Store ballroom.