



The Way Back Machine I am a Chinese Jew

By Jin Xiaojing

Reprinted from Points East 1:1

From June 17 to 23 last year I attended the First National Symposium on Nationalities of the World. Though a Hui, I knew very little about the Moslems. So I joined the sessions of the West Asian and African section.

Discussions were animated as soon as they began, with delegates addressing the meeting one after another. The issue of national sentiment attracted lively comment. Comrade Yang Zhaojun, Professor of History at Yunnan University, talked about his own experience. He said he was a Hui but had “long ceased to observe the teachings of the Hui religion (Islam), living very much like a Han, except that my feelings and sentiments are still on the side of the Huis. Of the four basic attributes of a nationality as defined by Stalin, namely, a common speech, a common geographical area, a common economic life and a common psychological quality often expressed in culture, I have already lost three retaining only the fourth—a common national sentiment.”

“Among the Huis in China,” he added, “there are not just Moslems, but also some Jews as well. This is especially true in Kaifeng, Henan province, where there are quite a number of Jews among Huis. In Kaifeng, there is a street called Jiao Jing Hutong (Canon-Teaching Lane), where many residents have features unlike those of the Huis elsewhere, and are generally called ‘Blue-Capped Huis.’” He said he had known two professors by the name of Jin, who were brothers and Jews. As I listened I became curious.

When Professor Yang finished speaking, I went up to him. “My ancestors who lived in Kaifeng, Henan, were also named Jin. What are the full names of the two professors you just mentioned?” He gave their names and I exclaimed: “Oh, they were my second and sixth uncles!” The audience was stunned. “At last we’ve found the Jews,” some comrades commented. At this, everyone laughed. The discussion became even livelier.

In August the same year, I attended the First National Symposium on Theories of Nationalities. I joined several discussion groups, wishing to know more comrades and friends. On the second day of the Symposium I came to the study session of the No. 3 group. As soon as I sat down I heard Comrade Hua Liu (Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee, People’s Congress of Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region) addressing the group: “There are Jews among Huis. A Professor Jin whom

(continued on page 3)

The Sinicization of Islam in Imperial China

By Fauziah Fathil

Excerpted from: Fauziah Fathil. 2019. *Islam in imperial China: Sinicization of minority Muslims and synthesis of Chinese philosophy and Islamic tradition*. KEMANUSIAAN the Asian Journal of Humanities 26(Supp. 1): 167–187. <https://doi.org/10.21315/kajh2019.26.s1.9>

Introduction

Islam first reached China during the Tang era (618–907 CE). Over the centuries, Islam slowly gained a foothold in China that by the last imperial period of Qing or Manchu dynasty (1644–1912 CE), Islam and Muslims gained recognition as a minority religion and communal group in China...As a minority community, one continuous and pressing issue experienced by Muslims in imperial China was assimilation into majority non-Muslim culture also known as “sinicization.” It is however, erroneous to think that the sinicization was merely an outcome of government policies since it was also partly due to the very existence of Muslims in the country itself where centuries of mingling and socialising with the non-Muslim majority led to gradual change in their way of life as accommodation of popular or dominant culture set in. Unlike government policies which are sometimes unwelcoming, assimilation of Muslim minority due to long contact with mainstream culture is naturally inevitable...

Literature Review

...On Islam and Muslims in China, the work of Donald D. Leslie is very informative as it discusses the origin and development of Islam from the Tang until Qing era (Leslie 1998). While Leslie does touch on the sinicization or assimilation of Muslims into Chinese culture during different eras in Chinese imperial history, the outcome of the process however, one of which being the synthesis of Chinese philosophy and Islamic ideas by Muslim scholars is not sufficiently covered...On the other hand, his work entitled *Islamic Literature in Chinese* (Leslie 1981) is more on the reconciliation between Chinese and Islamic ideas while the sinicization process was side-lined...

James Frankel’s work discusses in great length the synthesis embarked upon by Muslim scholars with the main aim to

(continued on page 5)

Notice to Subscribers. Particularly Overseas Subscribers. Please Consider Receiving Points East Digitally

It is very expensive for us to mail out Points East, particularly to those of you outside the United States. Please consider receiving the electronic version of Points East and letting us put your dues to a better use. Just send an email to Laytner@msn.com and you’ll be switched over. Thanks!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Featured Articles:

The Way Back Machine	
I am a Chinese Jew.....	1
The Sinicization of Islam	
in Imperial China	1
From the Editor.....	2
Letters to the Editor	3
Book Nook.....	13
Articles:	
From Cosmopolitan Harbin to	
Multicultural Australia: My Harbin	
Journey.....	10
Pesach and Chun Jie	
Compared	13
In Memoriam	
David C. Buxbaum, z"l.....	14
The Gewing Brothers.....	14
A Ming Mystery in Jerusalem	16

SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	122
China	16
Israel	8
England	5
Australia	2
Japan	2
Taiwan	2
Canada	1
Germany	1
Mexico	1
Total:	160

FROM THE EDITOR

Following up on SJI Board member Josh Zuo's excellent suggestion, each issue of volume 40 of Points East will mark the Sino-Judaic Institute's 40th year of operation in some way.

This issue features the revelatory article by Prof. Jin, in which she discovered her Kaifeng Jewish roots, which in turn served as a catalyst to add an activist element to our nascent organization's agenda.

Since Prof. Jin grew up as a Hui Muslim, I thought that an article on Islam in China might be a good accompaniment to her essay. To my surprise, much of what I had thought unique to the Chinese Jewish experience was shared by the Hui Muslim community: origins in Persia, trading by land and sea, intermarriage with Han Chinese, glory days and then isolation in the Ming, sinification of philosophy and practice, and more. The critical difference between the two communities: numbers. Simply put, the Jews lacked the numbers to maintain a vibrant culture as their fortunes and numbers declined during the Qing due to continued isolation, natural disasters and wars. Prof. Fathil's article is long, even excerpted, but worth the read. I also noted that many of the authors he cites as experts on Islam in China are Jewish. That makes me recall Prof. Song's short piece in our last issue about Jewish scholars of Chinese Studies.

As we mark volume 40, let me give a shout out to my partner in this venture: Charlene Polyansky, who has produced Points East since its inception, back when we did cut and paste mock-ups. Thank you, Charlene, for your years of dedicated service!

Lastly, let me wish all our readers a happy New Year of the Snake. According to what I read online, the Snake represents tenacity and, like the Kaifeng Jews themselves, SJI is nothing but tenacious in trying to help this tiny community survive through these challenging times.

Anson Laytner



Points East

Anson Laytner, Editor

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

Letters to the Editor and articles for *Points East* may be sent to:

Preferred Form:

e-mail: laytner@msn.com

or to: Rabbi Anson Laytner
1823 East Prospect St.
Seattle WA 98112-3307

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

SJI members interested in receiving a copy of the annual financial report should send a self-addressed envelope to: Prof. Steve Hochstadt, Treasurer of the Sino-Judaic Institute, 34 Colgate Rd., Unit 1, Roslindale, MA 02131 USA

Sino-Judaic Institute
c/o Rabbi Anson Laytner
1823 East Prospect St.
Seattle WA 98112-3307

SJI Officers

Anson Laytner, President
Wendy Abraham, Vice-President
Steve Hochstadt, Secretary/Treasurer
Arnold Mark Belzer, Immediate Past President

Managing Board

Joel Epstein, Beverly Friend, Jeremy Goldkorn, Loraine Heller, Dan Levitsky, Ondi Lingenfelter, Abbey Newman, Kevin Ostoyich, James Peng Yu, Charlene Polyansky, Eric Rothberg, Danny Spungen, Joshua Zuo, David Zweig.

International Advisory Board

Moshe Y. Bernstein, Jan Berris, Zvia Bowman, Mark Cohen, Avrum Ehrlich, Fu Youde, Judy Green, Len Hew, Tess Johnston, Dan Krassenstein, Den Leventhal, Michael Li, Yonatan Menashe, Maisie Meyer, Mark Michaelson, Sonja Muehlberger, Gustavo Perednik, Andrew Plaks, Pan Guang, Shi Lei, Yitzhak Shichor, Elyse Silverberg, Noam Urbach, Shalom Wald, Tibi Weisz, Xiao Xian, Xu Xin, Albert Yee, Zhang Qianhong.

Past Presidents

Al Dien, Leo Gabow

Bequest Request

Please consider putting the Sino-Judaic Institute in your will.

A Correction

Dear Editor,

Some friends forward the recent publication of POINT EAST [39:1, March 2024] in which I noted one of my articles was published [Criticizing Israel's Gaza Action is Not Anti-Semitism]. I was so happy to see that, but the author of the article was changed to Li Weichao, whom I have never known, and I don't think he is a researcher in SASS, so I write to you for a confirmation, perhaps you know him.

Dr. Wang Zhen Professor and Deputy Director,
Center for Jewish Studies in Shanghai (CJSS),
Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences (SASS)
E-mail: wangzhen211@sass.org.cn

This in indeed a puzzle. As I wrote to Dr. Wang, I have no idea who Li Weichao is, how the article on China's perspective on Israel's war in Gaza got attributed to him, or even how I received the article in question. Was this an instance of cyber-trickery? But why?

To set the record straight: Dr. Wang Zhen is the author of the article, which first appeared in the China Daily on 4 January 2024. Our sincerest apologies for the mix-up.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Articles on the DNA of Kaifeng Jews were published in the July 2024 and November 2024 issues of Points East. The November issue carried this introduction by you: "After we published Kevin Brook's article "Genetic Confirmation" in Points East 39:2, July 2024, we were contacted by Adam Brown from Avotaynu and asked to reprint the following article, upon which Mr. Brook's article was based but without his attribution. ED"

You have that in the wrong order. The Avotaynu DNA Project did not write or post their article until after I notified them of my article in Points East, and I did not copy from anything they wrote. You already know that you sent me the finalized and corrected version of Points East's July 2024 issue at 2024-07-12 20:40 Eastern Time. I sent my article to Brown and three of his co-researchers on 2024-07-14 01:28 ET and Brown responded in a hostile tone on 2024-07-14 10:22 ET and asked me not to publish my article even though it was already in print. They then felt compelled to spend the rest of the day writing an article presenting largely the same information as mine, which they posted on their website at the start of the following day, July 15, 2024,

and that is what they submitted to your November 2024 issue. I could not have cited their article because it didn't exist at the time I wrote mine. I did credit their project, however, and I did quote words that Brown had spoken on two public video presentations. Prior to reading their article, I was unaware of Harold Rhode's involvement in collecting the additional Kaifeng Jewish samples, which is why I only named Richard Gussow and his son as data collectors. So it is inaccurate to say that mine was "based" "upon" their article and wrong to say that I didn't give an "attribution" that I was supposed to. I cited all of my sources and did not engage in plagiarism. You furthermore must remember that I submitted the first version of my article to you on 2024-04-26 02:30 ET and the final version of my article to you on 2024-05-14 03:32 ET, more than two months before Avotaynu composed their similar article on AvotaynuOnline.com. You are obligated to set the record straight on the actual order of events.

On July 14, Avotaynu decided to remove the upgraded Big Y samples from the Kaifeng Jewish project's public Y-DNA results page, but a Wayback Machine capture dated April 14, 2024 shows them.

Kevin Brook
kbrook@khazaria.com

Chinese Jew, continued from page 1

I knew was a Jew." This again drew my attention. I asked him what the professor's name was. Again it was my uncle. So I put a few questions to him (I had not known him before). First I asked him how he had come to know my uncle was a Jew. "He told me himself," he said. "When did he tell you this?" I asked. "It was during the 50's," he replied. "I was in Mecca as head of a pilgrims' delegation when I met him. He was at that time lecturing abroad." Then I told him, "I am his niece." "His blood niece?" he asked back. "Yes." Another round of animated comment from the conference participants.

Since my ancestors have been identified as Jewish by experts at both Symposia, many comrades and friends often asked me with concern what nationality I should write when filling our forms. I am not sure myself, because I've never heard my parents or uncles talk about it. I only remember that when I was studying at Hua Mei Girls' Middle School (a missionary school) in Chengdu, two teachers once asked me: "Are you a

Jew? Your family must be Jewish..." At home I asked my father the same question the teachers put to me. "Our ancestors came from the Arab land," he told me. "But we have always called ourselves Huis." When I was in college, because I was attending the Institute of Nationalities, plus I had fair complexion and light hair, and the fact that I had meals at the Hui dining hall, both my teachers and my fellow students at first thought I had come from a minority nationality in Xinjiang because I didn't look like a Hui.

After these symposia, some interested experts, professors and comrades often talked to me about Jews in China, sometimes with direct reference to my ancestors. Not long ago, an associate researcher of the Institute of History of the Academy of Social Sciences told me he had a teacher who was Jewish. I asked him to tell me the name. He did, and it was my uncle again. Increasingly I felt I needed to know more about my ancestors. Too bad my father and all my uncles had died and couldn't tell me anything.

Last October I attended the First National Symposium on Nationality Studies in Guiyang. I took the opportunity to make a side trip back to Chengdu to visit with my aged mother (86 years old). She recalled the time 66 years back when she had just married my father. My mother is a native of Luoyang, Henan, and my father was a native of Kaifeng, Henan. She told me that before she was married, she had heard her father talk about my great grandfather Jin Shide in Kaifeng and about his family. Her father had told her that great grandfather Jin Shide had come to Kaifeng, Henan, from Arab lands during the early Qing dynasty by way of the Silk Road. At first he travelled back and forth but later settled down in Kaifeng.

She also told me that his family worshipped in a somewhat different way from the local people (meaning the Huis in Kaifeng), that is, in covering their faces with both hands at the end of an Islamic service, the Huis usually had both palms turned toward the face, whereas my great grandfather

and great granduncles had their right palm turned toward the face and the left palm turned outward. My mother also told me that it was our ancestors' habit to wear a black or blue cap when worshipping, unlike the Hui who wore white caps when worshipping. My father had told my mother that when my great grandfather died, a monument with inscriptions on it was built to commemorate him. Unfortunately that monument can no longer be found.

I have also read an article¹ on Chinese Jews by the late sociologist Professor Pan Guangdan. According to his findings, of the Jews migrating to China from Palestine in West Asia, most arrived in Kaifeng in the second year of the Reign of Ming Dynasty Emperor Hong Zhi (1489). There were local stone tablets to record the fact in which they called their religion "Yi-shi-le-ye" transliteration of what is now called "Israel."

But why did Jewish people like my ancestors later turn into Hui? I believe there were two reasons. First, because the Jews who settled down in China were few and scattered, it was hard for them to retain their own language, culture, religion and custom. Even during the peak of their migration to China during the Ming dynasty, the inscriptions on the monuments they built had already referred to Noah as Nu-wa, and Abraham as A-lao-luo-han. They had already regarded Judaism as "not much different" from Confucianism, "its teachings including obeying the laws of heaven, revering one's ancestors, observing the relations between sovereign and subject, fulfilling filial duties to one's parents, being loving to one's wife and children, observing the distinction between the superior and the inferior, and making friends with people—quite similar to the five cardinal human relationships of Confucianism." So it can be seen that they were already on their way to becoming assimilated by the Han people. Inter-marriage with the Han people had further accelerated the process.

This is different from Jews migrating in large numbers to Western Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Arab countries. Today there are more than

three million Jews in Europe, over two million Jews in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and more than five million Jews in the U.S. Secondly, the beliefs and customs of Judaism are very similar to those of Islam, so most Jews in China became converted to the Hui religion (Islam today). And since Islam is a national religion, combining both religion and nationality, Jews converted to the religion of Islam naturally became the Hui nationality. In the old society, when minority nationalities were subjected to discrimination and national oppression by the ruling classes, it was inevitable for the tiny minority of Jews either to be assimilated by the Han people or attach themselves to a bigger minority nationality. My ancestors probably chose the latter course. That is why I have always registered by nationality as Hui, although I should actually be a Jew²...

Both Judaism and Islam are monotheistic religions believing in one God, Judaism calling its God Jehovah, Islam calling its God Allah (Arabic) or Huda (Persian used by people in Xinjiang) or True Lord (Han and Hui). Their believers do not eat pork, practice the rite of circumcision, and observe Sabbath and fast day. Their worship ceremonies are similar, all conducted in the spirit of atoning their sins to God. Judaism also stipulates that when eating beef and mutton, the tendons must be removed. So in China, Judaism is also called the tendon-removing religion. In the synagogues, an area is set aside for removing tendons after the animals are slaughtered. During the Qing dynasty, in Kaifeng there was a street named Tendon-Removing Faith Hutong (renamed Preach Scripture Hutong after the establishment of the republic). In Judaism the priests in charge are called man-la (rabbi), in Islam they are called ahung (imam). In China, such differences had disappeared after the Jews adopted the Hui faith...

Our family has preserved the traditional custom of addressing people of our own clan or hometown as Lao Biao. On the eve of liberation, as my father was being transferred to another post, our whole fami-

ly moved with him from Chengdu in Sichuan province to Xian. While going through the Daba and Qinling mountains, the train stopped at small towns for meals (there was yet no Chengdu-Chungqing line). Everywhere the local Lao Biao prepared Muslim food for us. It is said that the Jews in Kaifeng have preserved this form of address. Not long ago when the responsible comrade from the Kaifeng Museum came to interview me, he gave me some materials which show that when Jewish people marry off daughters, relatives congratulate them by holding both hands palm up and addressing them as Lao Biao. These fine differences were the only vestiges of Judaism kept by the Chinese Jews after they adopted another faith.

To sum up, the Jews in China either became assimilated by the Hans, a process accelerated by intermarriage with Hans, or adopted Islam to become Hui or other Muslim nationalities, such as the Uighurs, Kazakhs, Tartars, Tajiks, Uzbiks, Tungxiangs, Bao-ans and Salas. As far as I know, except for the close to 200 who live in communities in Kaifeng, Henan today, the rest of the Chinese Jews are distributed in over a dozen cities throughout the country, and in the northwest (including Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai and Xinjiang), the southwest (Sichuan and Yunnan), the northeast, and Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces. Yangzhou (in Jiangsu province) is the second largest point of concentration. As for members of my clan, they are distributed in eight cities, namely, Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Chengdu, Kunming, Xian, Lanzhou, and Luoyang.

Notes

1 Pan Guangdan, "Some Historical Facts About Jews in China," Chinese Social Sciences, No. 3, 1980, pp. 171-186.

2 From Encyclopedic Knowledge, No. 4, 1981.

Sinicization, *continued from page 1*

obtain legitimacy and recognition for Islam from the imperial government instead of being viewed as a threat (Frankel 2008). The details provided by Frankel regarding the works and ideas of Muslim scholars prove to be comprehensive as he extensively dwelled on the Chinese Han Kitab which refers to a body of literature on Islamic beliefs and practices written in classical Chinese...

Another relevant work is by Raphael Israeli where he narrates the development of Islam and Muslims as a minority culture and group in China beginning from the imperial era until modern times (Israeli 2002). Concerned with the relations between Muslim minority and majority Chinese population, the author tackles the ideological, philosophical, and ethnic disputes between them, as well as feuds between different Muslim sects. Furthermore, the work uncovers the gradual sinicization process experienced by Muslims and its outcomes, one being the accommodation of Islam by the mainstream culture, particularly in modern day China...

Michael Dillon's work provides valuable information on minority Muslims known as Hui, the descendants of early Muslim migrants to China (Dillon 1999)...Using mainly Chinese-language Muslim sources to retrieve information, Dillon explains the role of religion among the Hui Muslims as well as the development of various Sufi orders in China. While he does discuss the sinicization of Hui Muslims, his treatment of their response to that process is more concerned with the relations between Muslims and the Chinese government which sometimes involved uprisings and rebellions by the former. From this discussion he concludes that although Muslims managed to preserve their distinctive identity, they failed to form a united force against the Chinese authorities...

As with Dillon, Jonathan N. Lipman also discusses the development of Islam from the Tang era until the 20th century...using both Chinese and Western sources (Lipman 1997). His variety of sources lead him to raise some fas-

cinating questions related to Muslims in China, hence making his work more critical and at the same time his arguments more convincing. While Lipman does explain the issue of sinicization of Hui Muslims, his attention is directed to the role of religion, language and ethnicity as important factors which enabled Muslims to maintain their identity...

On the synthesis of Islam and Confucianism, the work of Petersen is useful as it highlights the adaptability of Islam to Chinese traditions (Buddhism, Daoism and particularly Confucianism) as embodied in the Han Kitab resulting from the efforts done by a small group of Muslim scholars (Petersen 2018). The synthesis which fully emerged during the Ming Dynasty, according to the author, was meant to construct a meaningful religious tradition that the Muslim community in China could fully understand...

...Tontini illustrates the interconnected relationships between Islam and Chinese tradition concentrating however on the compatibility between Islamic law and Chinese state law (Tontini 2016)...from 18th until 21st century...

The Coming of Islam to China

...Islam was believed to first reach China in 7th century ad during the period of Caliph Uthman al-Affan when Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas was sent on a diplomatic mission to the country (Leslie 1998; Owadally 2006)...trade contributed the most to the cause of expansion of Islam in China. Not only did the famous Silk Route...bring into China valuable commodities, but also Islamic faith to its people. Equally significant was maritime trade routes linking up China with the Arab world via major waterways in South East Asia and the Indian subcontinent where ships from trading ports in the Middle East sailed back and forth to China for silk, paper, and porcelain. As the number of Muslim traders in China grew and trade flourished, they were allowed to settle in major commercial cities including capital cities...Chang'an/Xi'an and later Luoyang (Tang Dynasty); Kaifeng and Hangzhou (Song Dynasty); Khanbaliq/Canbulac or Beijing (Yuan Dynasty); Nanjing and later Beijing (Ming Dynas-

ty); and Beijing and Shenyang (Qing Dynasty). The open-door policy of the Yuan Dynasty in particular contributed to extensive trade between the Muslim world and China and coupled with Yuan's flexible policy on migration consequently led to further expansion of Islam in the country...

In due course, Muslims slowly increased in number and despite few imperial edicts prohibiting inter-marriages between Muslim settlers and local women issued by Tang and Song rulers, the laws proved to be unworkable. Inter-marriages between Muslims and local Chinese women of Han ethnic group inevitably took place leading to the establishment of a growing Muslim community, particularly in areas adjacent to Chinese-Muslim borders. The Muslims and their descendants were commonly known as "Hui" or "Huihui" among the local Chinese. Ethnicity wise, the Muslims in China however, consists of different Turkic groups such as Uyghur, Kazakh, Kirgiz, Tajik, Uzbek and Tatar, and Hui (descendants of Muslims of Persian, Arabian and Central Asian origins and Han Chinese)...If previously "Hui" was used in Chinese sources to refer to all Muslims of various origins, in present China the term specifically refers to descendants of Arab, Persian and Central Asian Muslims and Han Chinese. Currently, the number of Muslims is estimated at around 23 million or 1.7 percent of total Chinese population of 1.3 billion with heavy concentration in northwest and northeast regions namely Xinjiang, Ningxia, Gansu and Qinghai. Substantial number of Muslim population can also be found in provinces of Henan, Hebei, Shandong, and Yunnan...

Sinicization of Hui Muslims

Sinicization refers to a process of assimilation of dominant Chinese or Han culture by Hui Muslims who formed the minority group in China... In the case of China, since the Han culture is the most dominant, coupled with centuries of contact with the Hui Muslims who are numerically inferior, the latter consequently took on some cultural aspects of the former. Another significant point to consider is

that assimilation could also happen either spontaneously or a result of a series of policies enforced by the ruling authorities. Looking at what happened in China, there had been such attempts to assimilate or integrate the Muslims through the issuance of imperial edicts and laws by the ruling authorities.

...Instead of embracing the Han culture fully, the Hui Muslims until this present day continuously uphold their own distinctive culture particularly in matters related to religious duties and rituals. Despite the change in their outer appearances and language (previously the Muslims spoke either Arabic or Persian), Islam remains to be practiced, mosques continue to be centres of worship while Islamic knowledge and Arabic [are] taught and learned.

To understand why or what caused the sinicization fell short, the answer perhaps lies in the distinctive trait of Islam itself, where once embraced it would be difficult for the adherents to abandon it fully as Islam encompasses all aspects of their lives. Interestingly, a view that the Chinese by nature never completely abandon their root or identity (Leslie 1998) perhaps also deserves some attention since the Hui Muslims were generally half Chinese being descendants of early Muslim settlers and local Han Chinese. This explains why the Hui readily accepted some aspects of the Han culture yet remained steadfast in their Islamic faith...

Throughout the imperial rule, China's government policy towards Islam and Muslims was generally tolerant and flexible. While there had been several incidents in which Muslims were suppressed by the authorities for instance, following the outbreak of the Panthay Rebellion (1856–1873 CE) and Dungan or Tungan Rebellion (1862–1877 CE), which occurred during the Manchu or Qing era, the underlying reasons were mainly political rather than religious. During these events, some of the Muslims who rebelled sought to end the Qing Dynasty and replace it with a Chinese rule since

the Manchus like the Mongols were seen as outsiders therefore, unfit to rule China...[T]he rebellions also saw the involvement of non-Muslim groups against the Qing government as they too wanted to end the Qing rule...With the exception of these unfortunate incidents, generally the Muslims were treated well by the rulers of imperial governments of China...

As to when the sinicization of Muslims actually began, majority of records points to the Ming period and this is justifiable given the many changes that happened in the lifestyle of the Hui Muslims during that era. Though there had been several attempts by earlier rulers of the Tang, Song and particularly Yuan dynasty to regulate the lives of Muslims in China through enactment of laws, requiring them to be no different from the Han Chinese population, the effects of assimilation were however, most visible during the Ming era. Not only did Muslims during the Ming period adopt Chinese dress code, write religious inscriptions using Chinese scripts, speak Chinese dialects and change their names to sound more like Chinese, they also took on Chinese cultural influence in the realm of knowledge such as philosophical concepts and ideas. Several factors contributed to the sinicization during the Ming period, i.e., the Ming government's ethnic or racial policy, isolationist policy of the Ming Dynasty, accommodating attitude of Muslims towards local culture, and finally some incidents of conflict between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in China.

On the Ming's ethnic or racial policy, the integration of people belonging to various ethnic groups under centralised rule was the main goal of the Ming government. Having survived a long war against the Mongols of the Yuan Dynasty, integration, in the eyes of the Ming rulers, was very crucial for the unity and survival of China in facing internal and external threats. Consequently, some laws were issued requiring Hui Muslims as with other minorities in

China to adopt several cultural aspects of the Han ethnic group, to which the Ming belonged. Nevertheless, it is important to mention here that of the various minority groups, Muslims were favoured by the Ming rulers, leading to the notion of the Ming's pro-Islam policy, as argued by some scholars, and that the Ming era was the "Golden Age of Islam" in China. Among the Ming emperors who displayed such a policy include Emperor Hongwu (1368–1398 CE), Yongle (1402–1424 CE), Xuande (1425–1435 CE) and Emperor Zhengde (1505–1521 CE)...

Apart from establishment of mosques and Islamic learning centres, other proofs of pro-Muslim policy include the employment of a substantial number of Muslims in the imperial court, administration, and army, as well as patronage given by Ming emperors to Muslim scholars. There was also an issuance of imperial edicts prohibiting the slaughtering of pigs and consumption of wine [both of which are contrary to Islamic law]...

Despite what appeared to be Ming's pro-Islam policy, Muslims were subject to the integration policy of the Ming making them in due course also inclined towards the culture of non-Muslim Chinese. One such ruling towards integration was inter-marriage law requiring minorities to marry Han Chinese. The fact that the Ming belonged to the Han ethnic group explained the issuance of the law to assimilate minorities into the larger Han community. While the law was applicable to the Muslims as to other minority groups, in the case of Hui men marrying Han women, the latter would normally convert to Islam, leading to gradual increase in the number of Muslims. As for Hui women, not many Han men, due to status, chose to marry them. Before the Ming, there had also been several policies towards integration which affected Muslims. The Yuan rulers for instance, once issued an edict prohibiting Muslims from slaughtering animals for food

and performing circumcision. The first prohibition was nevertheless, eventually abandoned as it resulted in decline of trade related to animal husbandry while the second was nearly impossible to monitor, making the law simply impractical.

Furthermore, the isolationist policy of the Ming Dynasty also contributed to the sinicization process in that it cut off Muslims in China from the rest of the Muslim world, hence putting a stop to direct Islamic influence from West and Central Asia. Unlike the Yuan government which opted for open-door policy to suit the needs of its huge empire, the Ming emperors chose seclusion instead to prevent possible invasion from outside. Unlike before, freedom of movement was restricted which resulted in the decreasing number of Muslim migrants from West and Central Asia. Due to the closed-door policy, the people of China during the Ming period were also discouraged from going overseas. Consequently, having lost that direct or strong contact with the larger Muslim population outside the country, the Muslims in China became more inclined to blend in with the local non-Muslim majority and adopt some aspects of their culture...

[T]he Muslims themselves displayed a readiness to adopt the Han culture arguably for their own sustainability. They need to fit into the larger society, failing of which would only result in the Muslim community being alienated and casted aside. Accordingly, the Muslims in China appeared to have cautiously made the changes themselves in order to be more Chinese-like. Names similar to Chinese in sound for instance, were chosen. Muhammad was changed to Ma, Hassan to Ha, Hussain to Hu, etc. Chinese costumes were adopted to replace traditional Muslim dresses and Chinese cooking style was favoured though in choosing food ingredients the Muslims still adhered to Islamic rulings. The Muslims also began to widely use Chinese scripts in writing and spoke the Chinese dialects. The effect of

the sinicization was also visible in the construction of mosques where elements of traditional Chinese architecture were incorporated resulting in pagoda-like mosques. Apart from avoiding ostracism, the decision to blend into the larger society also means better treatment for Muslims, if not equal to the Han Chinese, as subjects of the empire. By accommodating some aspects of the Han Chinese, this would likely ensure tolerant policy by the imperial government towards the Muslims that they would continue to be hired in the government service and military forces and allowed to practice their religion freely. Because of these reasons too, some Muslim leaders and groups fought alongside Ming forces against the invading Manchus...

Looking at what happened in the history of relations between Muslims and majority non-Muslims in China, the desire to assimilate some aspects of Han culture by the Muslims could also possibly be due to some incidents of conflict with non-Muslims. There had been occasions where Muslims were attacked and assaulted for being foreigners or non-Chinese. One infamous incident was the massacre at Guangzhou (Canton) in 878 CE where Muslim traders and settlers were among the 120,000 foreigners killed. Apart from Muslims, among those killed include Christians, Jews and Magians or Mazdeans (fire-worshippers). The massacre, which occurred during the Tang period, was driven by anti-foreign sentiment felt by local Chinese towards all foreigners in China, not just Muslims...Due to such incidents, this might have somehow shaped the Muslims' attitude to become more accommodating towards the culture of the majority so that they were regarded as part of the larger population, hence avoiding similar prior event of mass atrocities.

Synthesis of Confucianism and Islam: Gedimu School

One of the results of the sinicization process or assimilation of Chinese culture by Hui Muslims is the synthesis between Chinese and

Islamic ideas or traditions. Done by Hui intellectuals and scholars, the amalgamation between Islamic and Chinese concepts manifested in new threads of ideas that characterised a leading Islamic religious sect in China, the Gedimu.

Belonging to the Hanafi Sunni School, the Gedimu was first introduced by Arab and Persian traders to the south-eastern coast of China in the early centuries of Islam. It is the oldest Islamic school of thought in China and remains the most dominant until now. Currently it is the largest sect with adherents distributed throughout the country. Of the current Muslim population in China, 58.2 percent belongs to Gedimu School...The name Gedimu comes from Arabic word qadim meaning "old" and in China the Gedimu is known as the "old teaching" or "old school" as opposed to later schools which appeared in the mid of the Ming era onwards...

Several leading Muslim scholars are important to mention as they were the pioneers of the Gedimu School. Among them are Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu, Liu Zhu, and others. Apart from translating Arabic works into Chinese, the scholars were also noted for their own works on Islam in the Chinese language. Synthesising Islamic concepts with the philosophical ideas of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, their works are later known as Han Kitab (Hanjin in Chinese) or Books of Han and became major religious references and reading materials on Islam for the Hui Muslims in China. Han Kitab refers to a body of Islamic literature dated from the Ming period and produced by Hui Muslim scholars in which they explained the teachings of Islam using neo-Confucian classical Chinese (Frankel 2008)...

To the Gedimu scholars, it is imperative to explain Islamic concepts using classical Chinese philosophical ideas especially those of Confucianism in order to make it easier for local Muslims, many of whom

were not well-versed in Arabic to understand Islam. For this purpose too, they made sure that Islamic texts and books were comprehensible to both Muslim and non-Muslim readers by translating Arabic books, including the holy Qur'an, into Chinese. This effort of Gedimu scholars though accepted by many Hui Muslims was rejected by a few quarters. One of the later Muslim religious groups, the Yahiwei in particular, was strongly against the approach of the Gedimu School on the basis that its way of pronouncing Qur'anic verses or Arabic words in Chinese jargon or sound is improper and against Islamic tradition (Gillette 2000). Furthermore, the synthesis with Chinese philosophy of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism by Gedimu scholars which necessitates reconciliation between Islam and foreign ideas, as pointed out by their critics, is also in itself a form of unorthodox innovation...

After long centuries of living side by side non-Muslim Han and becoming increasingly detached from Muslim culture of West and Central Asia, the ability of Hui Muslims to use Arabic, Persian and possibly some Turkic languages, previously used by their ancestors to study Islam, gradually declined. Consequently, Islamic education or learning through the Chinese medium became necessary (Dillon 1999). The fact that Chinese, especially by the era of the Ming Dynasty, was the language used by majority of Muslims on a daily basis due to the sinicization process also means that Islamic learning and education would best be taught through that medium. Also familiar to the Muslims at that time...were various Chinese concepts and ideas related to Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism...Many Muslim scholars had in fact during their educational training studied these Chinese concepts apart from Islamic knowledge learned at the hands of their religious teachers. Hence, given the acquaintance and familiarity of the Muslim community with these Chinese philosophical concepts and ideas, it is natural for Muslim

scholars to use them in order to explain Islam. One matter of urgency which appears to have necessitated the synthesis of Chinese and Islamic ideas is the weakening state of Islamic faith among some Muslims and poor condition of Islamic education in Ming China...

Another reason for the synthesis effort...It was natural for scholars to look into different ideas and find points of commonalities and differences. This is what scholars do and it is no secret that in dealing with Islamic knowledge, as with other disciplines, leading Muslim scholars in West and Central Asia discussed Islam in an attractive manner referring to ideas of previous Greek, Indian philosophers, etc. For instance, famous Muslim philosophers like al-Farabi and Ibn Sina synthesised Greek ideas of Plato and Aristotle with Islam, while al-Biruni attempted to reconcile Buddhism and Islam. Following the footsteps of these great scholars, whose works had great influence on the development of various disciplines in China, it is plausible to think that scholars of the Gedimu School also attempted to relate Islam to Chinese concepts in order to attract not only non-Muslim Chinese to the religion but more importantly to ensure that the Hui Muslims understood and adhered to Islam.

Finally, the similarity between some Chinese concepts and teachings particularly of Confucianism and Islam could also explain the inclination of Gedimu scholars to synthesise both. Educated in classical Chinese studies, the Gedimu scholars such as Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi believed that Islam and Confucianism share some commonalities and hence, are compatible. The fact that Confucianism itself is essentially a code of ethics that touches on positive values like filial piety, loyalty to rulers, benevolence, etc., made it easier for Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi and others to come out with the synthesis since Islam too emphasises on righteous conduct of man...This brings to the last point

– the synthesis demonstrates that Islam is aligned with mainstream intellectual Chinese culture hence projects the peaceful nature of the religion. Unlike some other foreign creeds, Islam is not a threat to popular beliefs of the Han community or a challenge to the political status quo...This would help to ensure fair treatment of Islam and Muslims by the imperial authorities and the rights of Muslims to practice Islam in the country (Frankel 2008).

The actual synthesis between Chinese ideas and Islam first began in 16th century CE, i.e., during the Ming period, which also marked the real process of sinicization experienced by Hui Muslims in China. Ironically, it was also the most progressive period in the long history of Islam in the country that it was known as the "Golden Age of Islam" in China. Islam increasingly spread in China while Muslims experienced a great boost due to Ming's favourable policies towards the religion and adherents of Islam. It was in the mid of the Ming era that Muslim scholars in China started to realise the need to teach Islam in a clear or understandable manner using Chinese concepts as they witnessed the decline of Islamic faith among Hui population and poor condition of Islamic education. The first move towards that direction was paved by Hu Dengzhou (1522–1597 CE), who after extensive travel found that a new approach was needed to keep Islamic faith and education alive. Consequently, he began to translate Arabic scriptures into Chinese. This technique developed by Hu Dengzhou in Shaanxi was later adopted and spread to other parts of China by Wang Daiyu and other Gedimu scholars who further improvised the method through the synthesis of Chinese concepts and Islamic teachings (Dillon 1999).

Wang Daiyu or Wang Tai-yu (1570–1660 CE) was not only a religious scholar but well-trained in the art of astronomy for which he was entrusted during the Ming era to hold the office of Master Supervisor of

the Imperial Observatory. Among the first to explain Islam using Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism, Dang Wu who was known as Zhenhui Laoren (True Old Man of Islam) also translated Islamic scriptures into Chinese scripts since he believed that such works could provide a better understanding for the Muslim community in China in comparison to Islamic works written in Arabic...

A more renowned scholar of the Gedimu School is Liu Zhi, also known as Liu Jia Lian (1660–1739 CE), whose writings considered as the pinnacle of Islamic literature in China. A Muslim scholar and philosopher during the Qing era, like Wang Daiyu, Liu Zhi sought to clarify Islam and Islamic thought using Chinese concepts, borrowing terminologies from Buddhism, Daoism, and particularly neo-Confucianism. ...Along with the works of Wang Daiyu and other Gedimu scholars, his works formed part of the Han Kitab used by Hui Muslims in China as references until today...

It is worth now looking briefly at some of the synthesis made by the Gedimu scholars. What one can discern from the synthesis is that sometimes the scholars downplayed Islamic concepts or ideas so as to ensure that they are in line with those of Chinese schools of thought. This is understandable since they wanted to position Islam within a broader context of Chinese tradition...For instance, Liu Zhi considered Confucius and Mencius of Confucian School as "Sages of the East" while Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as "Sage of the West" instead of highlighting the prophet-hood of the latter. To them, the teachings of Confucius, Mencius, and Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) despite some variances all rooted in the same divine source of wisdom and moral order (Frankel 2008). For the same reason to accentuate the commonalities between Islam and Confucianism, the Muslim scholars abstained themselves from lengthy discussion on Islamic law (shari'a) thus signified the readiness of the

Muslim community to adhere to the law of the land that is the imperial law, except in matters related to individual or communal religious practices (Frankel 2008).

Another aspect emphasised by the Gedimu scholars was the harmonious relation between Confucian code of ethics and Islamic teachings. They took the view that the "Five Cardinal Relationships" which form the foundation of Confucian social order are compatible with Islam as they also characterised the duties and responsibilities of a good Muslim... Underlying these relationships are positive values like filial piety, loyalty, brotherly love, benevolence, etc.

Indeed, Islam's emphasis on good values made it easy for the Gedimu scholars to take up the view that Confucian teachings with respect to the Five Relationships are compatible with Islam. In the context of the relationship between ruler and subjects for instance, the scholars maintained that the Muslims were allowed to believe in the Chinese political concept of Tian Ming or "Mandate of Heaven"... The concept essentially entails full loyalty to the Chinese emperor and this, in the view of Gedimu scholars, is to be accepted by Muslims in the country since Islam too, they argued, enjoins its followers to obey appointed rulers whether Muslims or non-Muslims, as long as they ruled based on the principle of justice (Frankel 2008)...[I]t is only logical that the Gedimu scholars adopted such a view. Not only did this help to ensure peace prevailed in the country, but more importantly warranted general acceptance and tolerant treatment towards the Muslim minority by Chinese imperial authorities.

Conclusion

The sinicization of Muslims was indeed a gradual process that took centuries to produce significant results....Through the works of Gedimu scholars such as Wang Daiyu and Liu Zhi, Islam and Muslims in

imperial China were treated well by the Chinese authorities despite being a minority religion and group. Not only did the synthesis highlight the universality of Islam as a religion that is suited to different eras and places but also helped to ensure the survival of Islam in China until present day.

Fauziah Fathil serves in the Department of History and Civilization, Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, International Islamic University Malaysia, 53100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. He may be contacted at fauziahfathil@iium.edu.my

Works Cited

- _____. 1999. China's Muslim Hui community: Migration, settlements and sects. Richmond: Curzon Press.
- Frankel, J.D. 2008. Apolitization: One facet of Chinese Islam. *Muslim Minority Affairs* 28(3):421–434. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13602000802548078>
- Gillette, M.B. 2000. Between Meccas and Beijing: Modernization and consumption among urban Chinese Muslims. California: Stanford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2458/v9i1.21637>
- Israeli, R. 2002. Islam in China: Religion, ethnicity, culture and politics. Lanham and Oxford: Lexington Books.
- Dillon, M. 1996. China's Muslims (Images of Asia). Hong Kong, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leslie, D.D. 1981. Islamic literature in Chinese, late Ming and early Ch'ing: Books, authors and associates. Belconnen: Canberra College of Advanced Education. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0035869x00159738>
- _____. 1998. The integration of religious minorities in China: The case of Chinese Muslims (vol. 59 of George Earnest Morrison Lecture in Ethnology). Canberra: Australian National University Press.
- Lipman, J.N. 1997. Familiar strangers: A history of Muslims in Northwest China. Seattle and London: University of Washington. <https://doi.org/10.1086/ahr/105.1.190>
- Owadally, Y. 2006. The book of a great sahabi: Sa'ad Ibn Abi Waqqas (r.a.) and Muslims in China. Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Nordeen.
- Petersen, K. 2018. Interpreting Islam in China: Pilgrimage, scripture and language in the Han Kitab. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Tontini, R. 2016. Muslim Sanzijing: Shifts and continuities in the definition of Islam in China. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

From Cosmopolitan Harbin to Multicultural Australia: My Harbin Journey

By Mara Moustafine

[This was the keynote speech at the first International Conference of Former Foreign Residents of Harbin, which was held at the Hotel Modern Harbin on 26 June 2017. It was published in the *Collected Works on International Conference of Former Foreign Residents in Harbin* (Harbin: Harbin Publishing House, 2019).]

...My family has a long history in this city. I was born in Harbin in 1954 into a family of mixed Russian, Jewish and Tartar heritage, whose roots lay in the former Russian empire. Four generations of my family lived here over 50 turbulent years from the first decade of the 20th century until we migrated to Australia in 1959.

I first returned to Harbin with my parents in 2000. They were born in Harbin, within a month of each other in 1929 – but worlds apart. Their families were of different religions, cultures, economic means and political outlook. They arrived in the city at different times and in different circumstances. What made their union possible was the sort of city Harbin was, for which I am forever grateful.

My fascination with the city of my birth has brought me back here seven times. I have written a history-memoir about my family's life here and was delighted to have it published in Chinese. Today, I would like to draw on my family's story to illuminate aspects of Harbin's cosmopolitan history¹ and the influence it had on the life that we and other Harbiners built in Australia.

From the early years of the 20th century, the Chinese Eastern Railway (CER) drew people of many different nationalities, cultures, religions and languages² to Harbin and other settlements along its route. They came seeking opportunity and refuge. Apart from Chinese and Russians, there were Jews, Poles, Tatars, Latvians, Lithuanians, Karaites and other minorities from the former Russian empire.

Mother's family – Jews from Byelorussia
On my mother Inna's side, the Zaretsky and Onikul families were early

Jewish settlers in Harbin and Hailar. They came from the Jewish villages of Byelorussia to a land of opportunity because here the discriminatory laws of Tsarist Russia, which confined Jews to the Pale of Settlement, excluded them from certain professions and restricted their numbers in schools, did not apply.³ Most importantly, there were no pogroms and little overt anti-Semitism, at least until the late 1920s. Families would arrive in chain migration, with one member setting forth to test opportunities in the distant new homeland, and others following.

Jews played an early role in developing natural resources, freight-based export industries and commerce in Harbin and the smaller railway towns of Hailar, Manchuria (Manzhouli), Mukden and Tsitsihar. In 1903 they were the earliest minority community officially recognised by the CER Administration in Harbin. They established their own community institutions (schools, synagogue, a burial society and communal dining room and later a hospital and home for the elderly) but also played an active role in the city's commercial, cultural and public life and participated actively in municipal affairs.⁴

The first of the Zaretsky family to arrive in Harbin was my grandfather's older brother Ruvim. He came in 1906 with his brother-in-law, Samuel Zalmanov and set up the family meat and livestock business. My grandfather, Morduh (Matvei) Abramovich Zaretsky, joined them in 1912 and in the mid-1920s, established a major livestock trading partnership, which operated in Hailar and Harbin.

My maternal grandmother Gita's Onikul's family, took a different path, moving through Harbin to Hailar in 1909. There, her father ran a small dairy business and was an agent for Singer sewing machines, providing his children with a good education, including in Harbin.

After my grandparents married in 1926, grandfather Zaretsky built a two-storey apartment block at 155 Jingwei Jie (Diagonalnaya Ulitsa) in Daoli, where our family lived until we left. From 1951 to 1959, he worked as a Director of the Jewish Bank.

Father's family – Orthodox Russian and Muslim Tatar

My father Alec's parents both arrived in Harbin in the 1920s. They were among the masses of refugees crossing the border from Siberia with the retreating White Armies in the wake of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution and the Civil war.

The family of my grandmother, Antonina Artemyevna (Tonya) Shelomnova, were wealthy Russian farmers from Samara on the Volga. But by the time they arrived in Harbin in 1922, they had to scrape together a living. At seventeen, Tonya married my grandfather, Muhamedjian Mustafin, a Tatar Muslim from Kazan, who arrived in Harbin in 1920 with the White Army. In Harbin he worked as an electrician and maintenance man, while Tonya qualified as a nurse and worked at the Kazem Bek hospital.

Notwithstanding their cross-cultural marriage, Tonya and Muhamedjian maintained their respective cultural and religious practices. My grandmother worshiped regularly at St Nicholas Orthodox Cathedral that once stood at the centre of Harbin and the Blagoveshenskaya Church near the Songhua River in Daoli, where the Gloria Plaza Hotel now stands.

My Tatar grandfather attended the Tatar mosque on Tongjiang Jie (Artilleryeskaya Ulitsa) in Daoli on major celebrations and was involved in the Tatar community organisation, serving on its board in the late 1930s. The Harbin Tatar community was the first Tatar community in the Far East and became especially significant after the Soviet regime banned religion.⁵

At its peak in the mid-1920s, the Russian community numbered about 120,000 people, with another 35,000 living in the smaller towns along the railway's route.⁶ They enjoyed a rich Russian cultural life, offset by a unique cosmopolitan flavour and the interplay of ethnic, religious and cultural communities. By this time the Jewish community in Harbin had grown to around 13,000, with around 2,000 in other towns. The number of Tatars in Daoli was around 1500.⁷ People lived side by side in relative harmony, mixed socially and did business with each other. In Harbin, Jews and Tatars

could be Russians, free to participate fully in either or both cultures.

It was, however, a predominantly “Russian world”, largely disengaged from the China around them. Few studied the Chinese language seriously or delved into the culture. Few ventured into the adjacent district of Daowai (Fujiadian), where most of Harbin’s 300,000 Chinese then lived.

Manchukuo

The Japanese occupation, establishment of Manchukuo in 1932, and the Soviet sale of the Chinese Eastern Railway to Japan in 1935, turned this “Russian world” upside down.

The economy declines and a climate of intimidation, violence and anti-Semitism was unleashed. This polarised the community and drove thousands to leave Harbin. Some headed for the international settlements of Shanghai, Tientsin and beyond.⁸ They were the lucky ones. For those who returned to the Soviet Union, at the height of Stalin’s purges, their Harbin identity often became a death sentence, as was the case for several of the Onikul family.⁹

For the Zaretskys, who stayed in Harbin through the thirteen years of Japanese occupation, life was especially harrowing. There were two groups of Harbiners who did not fare well under Manchukuo – Soviet citizens and Jews. And the Zaretskys were both.¹⁰

People who for years had lived side by side, united by their origins in the Russian empire, suddenly became identified by the characteristics which divided them: ‘White émigré’ or ‘Soviet’, ‘Orthodox Christian’ or ‘Jew’.

The Zaretsky meat business was seized by the Japanese and my mother was excluded from school and even from associating with children of white émigrés. Meanwhile my father, whose family were stateless ‘whites’, was forced to study Japanese at school and spent his vacations digging potatoes to feed Japanese soldiers.

When the Soviet Red Army arrived in Harbin in August 1945 to “liberate” them from the Japanese, most Harbiners, regardless of their political tags, welcomed them with flowers and euphoria. But soon thousands of innocent émigrés were rounded up and deported to prison camps in the

USSR, along with Japanese collaborators.¹¹ This included representatives of Harbin’s various communal and social organisations, who had dealt with the Japanese during the war on behalf of their communities.¹²

Post war

With the defeat of fascism in 1945, foreign Harbiners once more sought to regain those precious things the War had denied them – education, a peaceful community, security and prosperity. Some Jews departed for the newly established state of Israel, while Poles return to a liberated Poland. Increasingly the awareness of the new political reality of China took hold, especially after 1949.

When the Harbin Polytechnical Institute (HPI) – the forerunner of the Harbin Institute of Technology – reopened its doors to Russians¹³ after the war, young people like my parents flocked there. Most studied Engineering, which was then still taught in Russian. My parents joined the new Oriental and Economic Studies Faculty and graduated in the early 1950s, fluent in Mandarin. They worked at the Sugar Refineries Construction Bureau as technical translators and interpreters between Chinese officials and visiting East European advisers. It seems that, even in the late 1940s, they envisaged their future life to be in China, serving as a bridge between communities that were coming ever closer together.

Australia

In the 1950s and early 1960s many thousands of Russians from Harbin and other railway towns migrated to Australia,¹⁴ joining other Russians who had arrived earlier from Shanghai and Tientsin. Most settled in Sydney, though some also in Melbourne and Brisbane.

They adapted relatively easily to their new life. Most were well educated, entrepreneurial and often multilingual. They succeeded in business and worked in technical professions. Graduates of HPI, including my father, found ready employment as engineers and draughtsmen in various departments of the Australian public service.

Musicians from Harbin’s famous music school played in the Sydney Symphony and Opera orchestras and joined the Sydney conservatorium.

The Australia these Russians arrived in was predominantly monocultural and British. The White Australia policy, implemented in 1901 to exclude Asians, was still in force until 1968. It was a far cry from the cosmopolitan cities in China from which these people had come.

Having experienced life in vibrant Russian diaspora communities, the former Harbiners established community institutions, Orthodox churches and Saturday language schools to ensure their children retained Russian language and culture. At the same time they engaged fully as new Australians, contributing to the development of Australia’s multicultural society.

The graduates of HPI maintained their close social links. In 1969 they formed an alumni association and published seventeen editions of an annual journal – ‘Polytechnik’ – which recorded the histories of Russian institutions and life in Harbin. Two years ago, I was delighted to introduce some visiting academics from HIT to some of the veteran Russian alumni living in our city. In an exciting development, HIT has now opened an Australian Studies Centre, with which I am privileged to be associated.

Returning to Harbin

Over the past 20 years, former Harbiners and their descendants have started visiting Harbin to reconnect with their history, visit the landmarks of their lives and honour ancestors, who made this city their home. I first did this with my parents in 2000.

Rationally, my parents knew that in the forty turbulent years since they left Harbin, the city had withstood the ravages of the Cultural Revolution and had absorbed a huge influx in population. Still, it came as a shock to find no trace of our former house, the Orthodox churches where my grandmother prayed and a fun park on the site of the old cemetery where members of my father’s family and friends were buried.

Still, my parents were heartened to find their former schools were teaching new generations of children and St Sophia functioning as an architectural museum. We were excited to lo-

cate the graves of my great-grandparents and other relatives at the Jewish cemetery in Huangshan. We stayed at the Hotel Modern, admired the familiar facades of Zhongyang Street and walked across the iconic Jihong Bridge between Daoli and Nangan, as before. At that time, other sites appeared to be in limbo. I photographed my parents beside piles of rubble at the famous entrance of the old HPI institute building, at the Tatar mosque and the boarded up synagogues in Daoli – lest they too would disappear.

But on each subsequent visit to Harbin, I was pleased to find that, amid the city's rapid growth, efforts were being made to preserve some of Harbin's history. The Jewish and Russian cemeteries at Huangshan saw gradual improvements. The two synagogues were restored as exhibition and concert halls. On my last visit in 2015 I discovered that the Polytechnical Institute building had become the HIT Museum and my father's former school next to the Old Synagogue concert hall was now the Glazunov music school. It is fitting too that, with Harbin's designation as a 'UNESCO city of music', the contribution of the many Russian musicians and artists to the city's musical heritage is now openly acknowledged.

Yet the former Tatar mosque, which lies in the same precinct on Tongjiang Jie and was renovated around 2005, still stands unused and has again fallen into disrepair. At a time when the city is celebrating its multicultural diversity, it would be the perfect venue for a museum commemorating the Tatar community of Harbin, which was the first Tatar community in the Far East.¹⁵

The city of Harbin possesses a unique and precious architectural heritage and culture that must be preserved. This applies not only to places of worship and cultural relics, but other buildings and streetscapes in all parts of the city, including Daowai. Tearing down old structures to replace them with imitations will undermine the city's authenticity and prove to be a source of regret to future generations.

Another precious historical resource lies in the archival records of former Harbin residents and the various communities who lived here, their old books and Russian and community

newspapers. In researching my books – *Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files* (Harbin Dang'an) – I had the good fortune to access such records in Russia and many places in the world, including some here in Harbin. But sadly, the community records still remain closed.

I strongly urge the Harbin and provincial authorities to make these archival records accessible to qualified scholars and descendants – at least in digitised form – while those who have interest in or knowledge about them are still alive to inform our understanding of our shared history. Without such participation, the files in the archives can never recover their meaning...

I left Harbin too young to have a sense of nostalgia for the city and do not yearn for some lost 'Russian world' on Chinese soil. As a historian, I have a curiosity and interest in the city's past, and the conditions that allowed this city to flourish through the shared input of people from so many different origins. But above all else, I treasure the growing and unexpected web of new relationships I have formed with Chinese friends, the experiences we have shared and the opportunities we now have to enhance these further.

Mara Moustafine is the author of 'Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files' and is an Honorary Associate with the Department of History, University of Sydney.

Notes

1 I use the term 'cosmopolitan' deliberately – because of the transformative and interactive quality it connotes. These people transformed the city and in turn, their lives and interactions here, through periods of significant political turbulence, fundamentally transformed them – in ways that they carried with them to further destinations.

2 The 1913 census identified some 55 nationalities, including Russians and Chinese, as well as Jews, Poles, Japanese, Germans, Tatars, Latvians, Georgians, Estonians, Lithuanians and Armenians, speaking 45 languages, the most common being Russian, Chinese, German, Polish and Yiddish.

3 Dr Abraham Kaufman, the former leader of the Harbin Jewish community, described how the CER Chief Administrator, General Horvath, thwarted attempts to impose restrictions on the Jews by the Governor-general of the Far Eastern Province, Gondatti, (Kaufman, Al. 2001, 'Lecture of 17 February 1962', Bulletin of Igud Yotzei Sin, vol. 336, p. 35. p. 34).

4 In 1909, Jews made up 12 of the 40 mem-

bers on the city council (Kaufman, *ibid*). They continued as an organised community until 1964.

5 Usmanova, L. 2007, *The Turk-Tatar Diaspora in Northeast Asia*, Tokyo, p.117 and p.119.

6 Stephan JJ, 1978, *The Russian Fascists: Tragedy and Farce in Exile 1925-45*, Hamish Hamilton, London. p. 56. According to Bakich, O. 2000, 'Émigré identity: the case of Harbin', *South Atlantic Quarterly* vol. 99, no. 1 (Winter), pp. 51-73. p. 56), between 100,000 and 200,000 Russian émigrés flooded into Harbin during this period, though many moved on to other cities in China and beyond.

7 According to sources cited by Usmanova, p. 111.

8 By the end of the 1930s, the Russian population of Harbin had dropped to around 30,000. This figure is based on Japanese data given in 'The White Russians of Manchukuo' 1937, 1937, *Contemporary Manchuria* vol. 1, no. 3; Clausen, S. & Thøgersen, S. (eds) 1995, *The Making of a Chinese City: History and Historiography in Harbin*, M. E. Sharpe, New York. p.116). By 1935, Harbin's Jewish community had declined from 13,000 in 1931 to only 5,000, Bresler, B. 2000, 'Harbin's Jewish community 1898-1958: politics, prosperity and adversity', in J. Goldstein (ed.), *The Jews Of China Volume 2*, vol. 2, M. E. Sharpe, New York, pp. 200-215, p. 209.

9 Moustafine, M. 2002, *Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files*, Random House, Sydney.

10 My grandfather took Soviet identity papers after the USSR was established in 1920 because he believed that being stateless was too risky in the unstable political environment in which they lived.

11 Bresler 2000, p. 211.

12 This included Jewish community leader Dr. Abraham Kaufman. (Kaufman, A. 1973, *Lagernyi Vrach* (Camp Doctor), Am Oved, Tel Aviv; Kaufman, T. 2006, *The Jews of Harbin Live on in My Heart*, Association of Former Jewish Residents of China in Israel Tel Aviv, pp. 131-159.

13 The Institute was closed to Russians by the Japanese in 1937.

14 According to the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs, 2005, *A New Life for Refugees: Australia's Humanitarian Program*, Canberra, p.1, some 14,000 people arrived under the special humanitarian program for White Russians from China between 1947 and 1985. This program mainly included those from Harbin and other former CER towns, as well as Xinjiang. Russians from Shanghai were covered by other programs for Displaced Persons.

15 Usmanova, L. p.117 and p.119.

Mara Moustafine is the author of 'Secrets and Spies: The Harbin Files' (Penguin Random House 2002 and e-book 2012), an updated edition, 'Harbin Dang'an', translated by Li Yao (Sanlian Bookstore Beijing, 2018) and numerous academic articles about Russians and Jews from China. She is Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Humanities and Languages, University of New South Wales, Australia.

BOOK NOOK

Jewish Communities in Modern Asia: Their Rise, Demise and Resurgence

Edited by Rotem Kowner, University of Haifa
Cambridge University Press 2023

978-1-009-16258-6

Contents

Introduction

Communities in Modern Asia: Background, Significance and Main Questions
Part I Central and North Asia: Old and New Communities in Russia's Shadow

Part II South Asia: Identity and Culture in British and Independent India

Part III Southeast Asia: Colonial Legacies and Emerging Communities

Part IV East Asia: Communities and Strife in the Sinosphere

1 The Jews of Shanghai: The Emergence, Fall and Resurgence of East Asia's Largest Jewish Community, by Rotem Kowner and Xu Xin

2 The Jewish Community of Harbin: Its Meteoric Rise and Fall under the Shade of Three Empires, by Joshua Fogel

3 Taiwan: A Postwar Jewish Community without Deep Roots, by Don Shapiro

4 Jews in Japan: The Winding Road of a Business Community, by Rotem Kowner and William Gervase Clarence-Smith

Part V Imaginary Asia: Lost Peoples and Invisible Communities

Conclusion

Jewish Communities in Modern Asia: Underlying Commonalities, Demographic Features and Distinctive Characteristics

About the Author: Rotem Kowner is Professor of Japanese Studies at the University of Haifa, Israel. A founding chair of the Department of Asian Studies at the same university, he has written extensively on the treatment of Jewish communities in the Japanese empire and the attitude toward Jews in contemporary East Asia. Kowner has also led several projects that examine broad themes in Asia within a global context. His project on the Russo-Japanese War has yielded several books, most recently *Historical Dictionary of the Russo-Japanese War* (2017) and *Tsushima* (2022). A second and ongoing project deals with questions of race and racism and has resulted in numerous publications, including *From White to Yellow* (2014) and the two coedited volumes (with Walter Demele) *Race and Racism in Modern East Asia* (2013–15).

Pesach and Chun Jie Compared

By Seth Rogovoy

Excerpted from the *Forward*, 15 February 2018

The Chinese New Year [which fell on January 29 this year] is observed, by some estimates, by fully one-sixth of the earth's population. The day is observed throughout China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore and some other Asian countries, as well as in Chinatowns around the world. Originating in southern China, in the greater region of Guangzhou, the observance is also known as Spring Festival.

Jews, of course, have their own spring festival, otherwise known as Pesach, or Passover. It's sometimes referred to as Chag Ha'aviv, which means...spring festival. And while the Jewish New Year is commonly thought of as Rosh Hashanah, which typically comes around in early fall, Passover is actually considered one of four possible Jewish New Years. The term "Rosh Hashanah" does not appear in the Torah; in fact, in both Exodus and the Book of Ezekiel, the Hebrew month of Aviv — later renamed Nisan — is referred to as the beginning of the year or as the first month of the year. Nisan is also the month of Passover...

Chinese New Year, like Passover, Rosh Hashanah and all Jewish holidays, pops up at various times each year within two months of the Gregorian calendar (January and February), because the Chinese calendar, like the Hebrew calendar, is based on the Metonic cycle, a lunisolar calendar that intercalates an extra month every 19 years (as opposed to the Gregorian, with its months of varying lengths and its additional day every four years). Generally speaking, Chinese New Year falls on the second new moon after the winter solstice.

But the similarities between Chinese New Year and Passover aren't merely those of calendric quirks. The holidays share rituals and practices that bear striking and provocative resemblances.

[The Chinese New Year, or the Spring Festival, celebrates the beginning of a new year according to the traditional Chinese calendar — and celebrations will last just over two weeks, [from the new moon] until the full moon. Passover begins on the full moon and lasts

for seven, or eight, days.]

In preparation for Chinese New Year, families thoroughly clean house from top to bottom. The belief is that by literally sweeping away all dirt, any remaining bad luck from the previous year will be wiped away, thereby preparing homes for good luck in the new year. It doesn't take too much of an imagination to see parallels to the Jewish practice of ridding one's house of hametz, literally, crumbs of grains forbidden during Passover but understood to have the spiritual implication of ridding oneself of the "puffiness" of arrogance or pride.

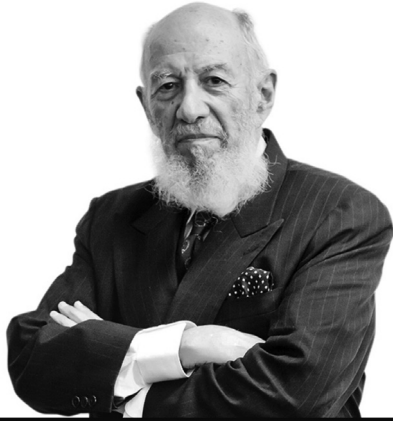
Before New Year's celebrations begin, Chinese homes are decorated in red, a practice traced back to the story of a Chinese New Year monster who roamed around eating children and livestock. Once people discovered that the monster was afraid of the color red, they began hanging red lanterns, wearing red clothes, draping doors with red cloth and posting red scrolls printed with lucky messages on their doorposts!

In other words, mezuzahs, which, in Judaism, are amulets containing miniature scrolls with auspicious Biblical verses that are hung on door thresholds. But in the Chinese case, red ones, akin to the color of the blood (of the Pesach offering, or the sacrificial lamb) that the Jews in ancient Egypt painted on their doorposts as a signal to the angel of death to pass over their houses while on his way to carrying out the plague of the killing of the firstborn. From this evolved the spiritual practice of the mezuzah. And, in the Chinese case, the red amulets are meant specifically to ward off an evil monster bent on killing children.

Just as the custom in Judaism is to usher in most festivals with a ritual meal attended by family on the night before the first day of the holiday (as with the Passover Seder), Chinese New Year also kicks off with a "reunion dinner" with special foods. In China, dumplings are traditional — that's kneidlekhs (matzo balls) to you. Nian gao — a sticky sweet cake akin to a Rosh Hashanah honey cake — is customary at the meal. And perhaps recognizable to those Jews whose family elders weren't as creative in the kitchen as others, boiled chicken is often served...

Seth Rogovoy is a contributing editor at the *Forward*.

In Memoriam:



David C. Buxbaum, z"l
1933-2023

A Tribute

By John Church

Picture a white, Jewish, American lawyer landing behind the bamboo curtain after a day-long train ride from Hong Kong ("Before the MTR it was the worst imaginable – you would sit and windows would be wide open and people would walk right through the windows, step on your trousers and onto the train. That was almost *de rigueur*!").

He stood out a little as he steamed into Guangzhou and disembarked onto a crowded platform, the Cultural Revolution in full swing and not a lawyer of any colour or creed in sight – anywhere. A couple of hours later, he was detained as a spy.

No matter how you stack it, this lawyer has been around. David Buxbaum followed Richard Nixon's footsteps into China in 1972, just three weeks after the US president had returned from that historic visit.

David C. Buxbaum, Hayyim Daveed ben Shlomo, held a significant place in the legal community. Buxbaum was the first

American lawyer invited to China to represent American business interests in 1972, after President Nixon's historic visit. He founded Anderson & Anderson's first overseas office in Guangzhou. Subsequently, the firm opened offices in Mongolia, elsewhere in China, and Asia. His dedication and commitment to bridging legal practices between China, Mongolia, and Asia greatly contributed to the growth and success of the rule of law.

As an esteemed expert in private international Chinese, Mongolian, and Asian law, Buxbaum's knowledge and experience were widely respected. His extensive publications in the field showcased his expertise and served as a valuable resource for legal professionals.

Throughout his career, Buxbaum handled notable cases, both domestically and internationally. His representation of the successful respondents in the landmark case of *Butz v. Economou* before the United States Supreme Court in 1978 highlighted his legal acumen. In China, he successfully managed the landmark case *Microsoft, Autodesk, and Wordperfect v. Juren* in 1996, one of the first times an American software company filed copyright infringement claims in China. The case in Beijing Intermediate People's Court was tried on national television and the US\$53,000 fine, confiscation of Juren equipment and order to make a public apology was seen as a decisive IP (intellectual property) victory at the time. Buxbaum's expertise in IP civil and criminal cases, as well as his involvement in leading commercial arbitration cases in China, Hong Kong, Lon-

don, and New York, made him a respected figure in the legal community.

[Buxbaum was also a pioneer in terms of the Sino-Judaic Institute. Back in December 1984, Leo received a letter from Prof. Louis Schwartz who was spending an academic year teaching in Beijing. With Gabow's encouragement, Schwartz joined forces with Buxbaum, then a bilingual Shanghai-based lawyer, and together they travelled to Kaifeng and made contact with the Jewish descendants. They also had meetings with Kaifeng's mayor, the curator of the Kaifeng Museum, the manager of Kaifeng's C.I.T.S., and university administrators and scholars. After many discussions with the Chinese Jews as well as with the authorities, the concept of a Jewish Museum or at least a Judaica exhibit in the Kaifeng Municipal Museum was born. Eventually, SJI was able to install an exhibit on the Kaifeng Jews on the top floor of the Municipal Museum. Sadly, the exhibit was only open to foreign visitors and, now that the entire Museum has been replaced, the fate of SJI's exhibit is unknown. Buxbaum remained in China and served for a number of years as a founding Board member of SJI. He remained an active, albeit critical, supporter of SJI throughout the years.]

In Memoriam: The Gewing Brothers

Nick Andrus on the deaths of his grandfather and great-uncle, and about a film he is making regarding their life in Shanghai.

Shanghai survivors Walter and Heinz Gewing passed away in 2024, leaving behind their brother Ehud (Ernst) Gewing and large families in both the United States and Israel

(see obituary notices below). Heinz's grandson, Nick Andrus, is working on a documentary called *Three Brothers in Shanghai* about their experiences. The film will explore what it was like to be a child in Shanghai while revealing the enduring nature of sibling bonds and the long-term impact of parental decisions. Interviews with the brothers, filmed over the course of fourteen years, form the emotional core of the character-driven film.

Experts on European and Shanghai history providing context to the story include Steve Hochstadt (Professor of History Emeritus Illinois College & Sino-Judaic Institute), Marsha Rozenblit (Professor of Jewish History, University of Maryland), Dvir Bar-Gal (Shanghai Jewish Tours) and Ryan Cheuk Him Sun (PhD Candidate, History, University of British Columbia). Andrus has conducted research at the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Shoah Foundation, and the Leo Baeck Institute. A graduate of the University of Southern California School of Cinematic Arts and a member of the Directors Guild of America, Andrus has worked on narrative feature films, including projects that have premiered at Sundance, Tribeca, and numerous other film festivals. For more information on his film *Three Brothers in Shanghai*, go to <https://three-brothersinshanghai.com/>.

Walter Gewing passed away at the age of 94 ½ on Oct. 11, 2024, in Pleasanton, California. Born on April 28, 1930, in Leoben, Austria, Walter's early life took a dramatic turn when his family fled to Shanghai. He and his family spent a decade in the Shanghai Ghetto before

finally receiving permission to emigrate to the United States.

After settling in San Francisco, Walter met Anna, the love of his life. They soon married, raising three children and sharing a long, fulfilling life together. Over the years, they moved from San Francisco to San Ramon and eventually to Stoneridge Creek Retirement Community in Pleasanton.

Walter built a successful career with Prudential Insurance, and after retiring, devoted his time to traveling, family, his beloved dog Dixon, Torah study, improv classes, baking, friendships, gardening, and — by his own humorous admission — “stagnating.” Walter most recently found new love as well in the person of Beth Wilson.

Known for his sharp wit, warmth, and generosity, Walter's presence was cherished by all who knew him. To those who had the pleasure of his company, he was the epitome of a “*mensch*” — a person of integrity and honor.

Heinz Gewing passed away at the age of 91 in Dublin, California on January 21, 2024. Born on October 10, 1932 in Leoben, Austria, he spent his childhood in Shanghai. Heinz and his family lived in a small apartment above his father's store, in an area known as the Shanghai Ghetto. It was not an easy life, but hard work, resilience and a sense of humor helped sustain them.

After arriving in San Francisco in 1948, Heinz attended Lowell High School, graduated from UC Berkeley, and received his master's degree in educational counseling from Penn State. He and his late wife Lisa Gewing were married for over 50 happy years,

raising their two daughters in Oakland, before moving up the California coast.

Heinz started out as a teacher at Oakland High School. He later worked at the Job Corps, a program created during the Lyndon Johnson Administration as part of the War on Poverty. He went on to become the last Superintendent of the Murray School District and the first Superintendent of the newly created Dublin Unified School District.

It was in Dublin that Heinz first met PTA president and parent volunteer Eileen Barr. A friendship developed that years later, after Lisa's death, turned into something much more. The couple spent 17 wonderful years together, sharing a passion for politics and social activism. When they weren't out protesting, they were traveling the world or welcoming a constant stream of visitors into their home.

Heinz was a kind man, known for his generosity, wit, and common sense. A close friend once described him as the only person he knew who could turn a mountain into a molehill.

Heinz is survived by his cherished partner Eileen Barr, daughters Jenny Andrus (Alex) and Dina Gewing (Tim); granddaughter Sasha Andrus and grandson Nick (Ashley); and twin brother Ehud, as well as his beloved nieces and nephews.

Bequest Request

Please consider putting the Sino-Judaic Institute in your will.

www.sinojudaic.org

A Ming Mystery in Jerusalem

By Alex Winston

Excerpted from the *Jerusalem Post*, 3 December 2024.

A small shard of porcelain, dating from the Ming Dynasty (1520–1570), containing the earliest known Chinese inscription discovered in Israel.

Jerusalem's Mount Zion is full of mystery and surprises, but this summer, archaeologists unearthed a treasure that had experts scratching their heads – and smiling with delight.

Amid the dust and ruins of a site dating back to the Byzantine and Second Temple periods, a glint of porcelain revealed a remarkable find: a fragment of a 16th-century Chinese bowl bearing a poetic inscription in Mandarin, "Forever we will guard the eternal spring."

For three years, the Israel Antiquities Authority and the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology (GPIA) have been digging deep into Mount Zion's storied past. Led by Prof. Dieter Vieweger, their excavation has mainly un-

earthed ancient relics from over 1,500 years ago. But this small shard of porcelain, dating from the Ming Dynasty (1520–1570), rewrote some of the known narratives of the site's history.

It began when Michael Chernin, an archaeologist with the IAA, spotted a colorful object peeking out from the soil during site preparations. Intrigued, he carefully retrieved and cleaned the fragment, revealing an inscription.

Enter Dr. Anna de Vincenz, a pottery specialist, who quickly identified the markings as Chinese. To decipher the text, the team turned to Jingchao Chen, a researcher from Jerusalem's Hebrew University, who translated the poetic phrase that graced the bowl.

The bowl's journey from China to Mount Zion is a story of empires and trade routes. In the 16th century, the Ming Dynasty enjoyed flourishing trade relations with the Ottoman Empire, which at that time ruled the Land of Israel. Historical records describe at least 20 Ottoman delegations visiting the imperial court in Beijing between the 15th and 17th centuries.

Chinese scholar Ma Li's writings from 1541 provide further clues, noting Chinese merchant colonies in cities like Beirut, Tripoli, and even Jerusalem. These trade links brought not only exotic goods like spices but also elegant items such as porcelain, a prized commodity across the globe.

While ancient Chinese porcelain has been found in Israel before, this is the first discovery featuring an inscription. "It's a tangible reminder of how interconnected the world was, even centuries ago," said Eli Escusido, director of the IAA. "This poetic message in Chinese, found in such an unexpected place, adds a beautiful new chapter to Jerusalem's story."

The fragment of a colorful bowl, originating in 16th century China, found on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. (Emil Aladjem/IAA)



The fragment of a colorful bowl, originating in 16th century China, found on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem. (Emil Aladjem/IAA)

**Mail to: The Sino-Judaic Institute, Prof. Steve Hochstadt, Treasurer, Sino-Judaic Institute,
34 Colgate Rd., Unit 1, Roslindale, MA 02131, or sign up online at www.sinojudaic.org**

JOIN THE SINO-JUDAIC INSTITUTE

Regular Member \$60	Supporter \$100	Patron **\$1,000+	Benefactor ***\$5,000+
Senior 35	Sponsor 250	**Receive Chaim Simon's <i>Religious Observance by the Jews of Kaifeng China</i>	***Donors at the \$5,000 level and above also get their choice of a copy of a book by Hochstadt, Laytner, Paper Schwarcz, Tokayer or Weisz.
Library 60	Corp/Org/Synagogue . . . 250		
Student/Academic 40	Sustainer 500		

Selection: _____

I wish to become a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute and to receive Points East three times a year. Enclosed is my check for \$_____

PLEASE PRINT

Name _____

Address _____ E-Mail _____

Home Phone # _____

Work # _____

Fax # _____