SINO-JUDAIC STUDIES

WHENCE AND WHITHER



SINO-JUDAIC STUDIES: WHENCE AND WHITHER

AN ESSAY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

by

Dennis A. Leventhal

and

THE KADOORIE MEMOIR

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ISBN 962 – 7184 – 01 – 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The bibliographical project which has resulted in the following pages owes a debt of gratitude to many people. Their assistance has been of great value, and has demonstrated fully the interdependent nature of meaningful human activity.

I would particularly like to express my appreciation to Professor James C. P. Liang (Sinologisch Institut, Leiden University), Professor Schuyler V. R. Cammann (Department of Oriental Studies, University of Pennsylvania), and Mr. S. J. Chan (Tsuen Wan District Commissioner, Hong Kong). They provided me with extensive and detailed advice on both text and references.

Special notice must be taken of the part played by Mr. Mark I. Ejlenberg, Chairman, Jewish Recreation Club of Hong Kong. It was he who first urged the organization of the Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong, and he saw that we had support and encouragement in every phase of our growth and activities.

And, of course, I must thank my wife, Mary. Only another writer can fully comprehend the wide range of support to be received from a multi-talented spouse during a research and writing project.

Dennis A. Leventhal, Chairman
Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong
November 1985/Heshvan 5746



CONTENTS

Page

Introduction 6

Sino-Judaic Studies: Whence and Whither. 8

A Bibliography of Sino-Judaic Studies

I. Books in Western Languages 36

II. Articles in Western Languages 49

III. Books in Chinese 74

IV. Articles in Chinese 76

The Kadoorie Memoir 80

INTRODUCTION

It is most appropriate that the first publication in the monograph series of the Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong presents a bibliography of published works on Jews and Judaism in Hong Kong and China, and a personal memoir by Lord Lawrence Kadoorie, C.B.E., J.P.

The Kadoorie family has long been one of the leading benefactors of the Jewish community of Hong Kong. Lord Kadoorie's life-history, and that of his family, is an intrinsic, vital part of the story of Hong Kong and Shanghai. The recollections published here for the first time were originally written as a private letter and, it is with Lord Kadoorie's kind permission that the Historical Society is able to present it to the public.

The accompanying essay and bibliography by Dennis A. Leventhal complements Lord Kadoorie's personal memoir by bringing Judaic history in East Asia into focus. As chairman of the Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong, Mr. Leventhal has worked diligently to foster awareness of what limited attention has been given to the Jewish experience in the Far East.

Community obligations take many forms. One of these is to support historical research which, ultimately, helps us to understand our environment, and ourselves, better. We invite both our community members and friends with common interests to support the continuing efforts of our Historical Society.

Mark I. Ejlenberg
Chairman
Jewish Recreation Club of Hong Kong
October 1985/Tishrei 5746

SINO-JUDAIC STUDIES : WHENCE AND WHITHER

by Dennis A. Leventhal

When one first hears of Jews in ancient China, a common reaction seems to be a question about the possibility of finding traces of the "Lost Tribes of Israel." Although the search for these "Lost Tribes" reappears in various times and places, there has never been any substantial proof of their presence in China.

Researchers have tried to date the earliest Jewish travellers to East Asia. They have found significant evidence along the traditional routes of travel between East and West in ancient and medieval times.

From early Roman times to the mid-fifteenth century when the Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople, the Silk Road was the longest and most significant commercial highway in world history. It began with caravans carrying Chinese silk and Indian spices to the West in exchange for Roman gold and Syrian glass. As commerce continued down through the centuries, the Silk Road also transmitted ideas and technologies between East and West, such as Chinese paper-making, alchemy, gunpowder, the printing press, and va-

rious art motifs;[1] Persian carpet and cloisonné manufacturing; Zoroastrian and Buddhist religious concepts; Arabic mathematics and Indian chess.[2]

With the explosive appearance of the Islamic Empire in the seventh century, Arab traders came to dominate the flow of commerce along the Silk Road. Sea traffic also increased to the point where, during the latter part of the T'ang (618-906 C.E.) and through the Northern Sung (960-1126) dynasties of China, the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea virtually became Muslim lakes.

It is inconceivable that Jewish merchants did not join the endless line of camel caravans or venture in the hazardous but profitable ocean trade. Thus, it is not surprising to learn of references to Jews in China in the journals of Islamic geographers and travellers of that period. How could the way stations on the overland trail not have facilities for Jewish traders to partake of the joy and repose of the Sabbath? There is definite evidence of settled Jewish communities, around the ninth century, in Silk Road cities as far east as Khorassan at the entrance to Chinese territory. Furthermore, fragmentary documents dating from the ninth century and written in Judaeo-Persian and Hebrew provide evidence of Jewish overland visitors as far east as Dunhuang in the present-day Xinjiang Autonomous Region of China.[3]

The Jewish merchants of the Silk Road, known as Rhadanites, were apparently quite prominent in this flow of commerce, and most probably played a large part in bringing Jewish settlers to China. The Khazar kingdom, a Turkic group originally from Central Asia which adopted the Jewish religion in the eighth century, also was an important element in trans-Asian trade. Their territory north of the Caucasus provided a central point for Silk Road caravans, especially when the southern routes were made impassable by Islamic wars.[4]

Jewish communities established on the Malabar coast of India provided advance bases for those who followed the sea route to the China coast. Arab writings, from the ninth century and later, indicate that coastal cities such as Canton, Quanzhou, Ningbo and Hangzhou had resident communities of Jewish merchants, probably of substantial size.

Eventually Jews moved into central China to such places as Beijing, Loyang and Kaifeng, and built the first known synagogue in China in 1163. Kaifeng, where this religious edifice was constructed, was the capital of the Sung dynasty until the year 1126 when it was captured by the Juchen tribes who came out of the Manchurian region to set up the Chin (1115-1234) dynasty over most of China north of the Yangtse River. Although it seems likely that synagogues were established in

other Chinese Jewish communities, such as Hangzhou, which became the capital of the Southern Sung (1127-1279) dynasty, concrete evidence of their existence has yet to be found.



Model of the Kaifeng synagogue. The model, which is included in the Permanent Exhibit of Beth Hatefutsoth, was based on drawings and descriptions by Jesuits from the 18th century.

Photo courtesy of Beth Hatefutsoth, the Nahum Goldmann Museum of the Jewish Diaspora.

Current research indicates that Chinese records did not take notice of resident Jews until the Yüan (1280-1368) dynasty of the Mongols. The few passages from Yüan documents which mention Jews deal with diverse matters, i.e., taxation, marriage regulations, military conscription, dietary practices, and Hangzhou sugar board officials, and are linked with references to other minorities such as Muslims and Nestorian Christians.[5] Western travellers during this period, including Marco Polo, John of Monte Corvino, Andreas of Perugia, Jean de Marignolli, and Ibn-Battutah, also have left us reports of Jewish presence in several Chinese cities.

We begin to get a picture of Chinese Jewish life during the Ming (1368-1644) dynasty from various original source materials. These include Chinese historical records, Judaeo-Persian colophons to the Kaifeng Torah scrolls, a Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book of the Dead, and copies of stone inscriptions from steles once set up at the Kaifeng synagogue. In addition to genealogical data, we have some biographical information on various individuals.

The Kaifeng group appears to have flourished at this time, but the process of acculturation to Chinese life had clearly begun. Jews of the Ming began to move into the civil and military bureaucracy of the government. The process by which they achieved this social mobility inevitably

involved some absorption of the dominant, state-supported Confucian ideology.[6]

Nevertheless, Judaic loyalties remained strong throughout the Ming. Unavoidable disasters in the form of floods and rebellions, which seem to strike in the course of Chinese history at a frequency and timing of their own determination, resulted twice in the destruction of the synagogue in Kaifeng and loss of scriptures. Each time, however, the faithful managed to rebuild and restore these material manifestations of their faith.

A new source of information stemmed from the semi-humorous but dramatic meeting in 1605 between a Jesuit priest, Matteo Ricci, and a Chinese Jewish governmental functionary from Kaifeng, Ai Tian. When they first met, each thought the other was a member of his own faith. Ricci's discovery that Ai was a Jew, and a representative of an existing Chinese Jewish community of which Europe at that time was unaware, began a long period of Western interest in establishing direct contact with the Kaifeng Jews.



Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), the Italian priest who founded the Jesuit mission in China. His accidental meeting in 1605 with a Chinese Jew, Ai Tian, informed the western world of the presence of Jews in China.

Photo courtesy of Beth Hatefutsoth.

Ricci was one of the first of a number of Jesuit missionaries to China during the late-Ming and early years of the Ch'ing (1644-1911) dynasties. As can be expected, these Roman Catholic clerics saw the Kaifeng Jews as conversion targets. But even more, they were interested in what accommodation Chinese Jews had made with Confucian ancestral rites. At that time, the Jesuits were engaged in a conflict with Vatican authorities over the doctrinal question of whether or not converted Chinese Christians should be permitted to continue participation in this traditional ritual practice. The Jesuit missionaries hoped that evidence supporting their viewpoint in the dispute could be found in Kaifeng.

This "Rites Controversy" was a major passage in Church history because, in effect, it set the authority of the Vatican against that of the Chinese government. The Jesuits maintained that the Church should accept a practice sanctioned by the local government authorities. Vatican opposition led eventually to suppression of the Jesuit order by the Church, and the expulsion of Catholic missionaries from China by the Ch'ing government. Even today, the conflict between the Vatican and the leadership of the People's Republic of China over the loyalties of Chinese Catholics has not been resolved.[7]

There was also, on the part of the Christians, strong theological interest in obtaining one of the Kaifeng Torah scrolls. The prevalent belief in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was that the

Kaifeng Jews were descended from the "Ten Lost Tribes of Israel" and that their copies of the biblical texts would prove to be the oldest in existence. Also believing that this "Lost Tribe" had been isolated from the Diaspora before the advent of Christianity, the Christian missionary mentality was convinced that a Kaifeng Torah could be used to ascertain the faithfulness, or rather the unfaithfulness, of the Old Testament version which Christians had inherited from the Jews. Christian theologians hoped they could find discrepancies between the Kaifeng and Rabbinical texts which would prove that the ancient Rabbis had made deliberate textual changes eliminating passages which would prove conclusively that Messianic prophesy did in fact point directly to Jesus. If they could thus prove the correctness of Christian doctrine, and thereby discredit Jewish authorities, they believed the result would be mass worldwide conversion of Jews to Christianity. They were disappointed on all counts.

The records of the Chinese Jews in the local gazetteers of the early Ch'ing are complemented by Jesuit descriptive notices of the early eighteenth century. In general, the former record some of the public, secular activities of Chinese subjects we know to have been Jews. The latter record observations of their religious life and practices. The Jesuit letters inform us that while many Jewish traditions and customs were still being followed at that time, aspects of the state religion of Confucius had begun to be incorporated into the synagogue,

and the Kaifeng Jews were beginning to lose command of the Hebrew language. Isolation from other Jewish communities and accommodation to the host culture marked the beginning of the process of assimilation.

From 1723 to 1850, rising xenophobia and anti-Christian feeling in the Ch'ing government caused a complete cessation of contact between Kaifeng and the outer world. When China was forcibly "reopened" by Western powers in the mid-nineteenth century and limited contact was resumed, the Kaifeng community was found to be in an advanced state of decay. Jewish religious and Hebrew linguistic knowledge was rapidly disappearing, although some practices such as circumcision and abstinence from pork were still being observed.

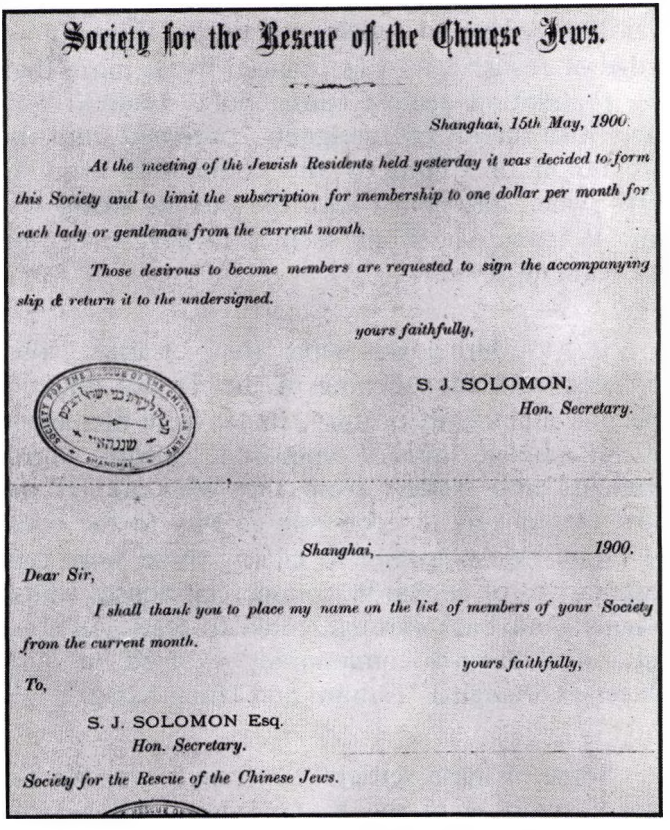
Nevertheless, the revival of European interest in Kaifeng increased as Western diplomats, traders, missionaries, and assorted adventurers flowed into the newly opened Treaty Ports of coastal China. Some, mostly Protestant missionaries, sought contact for conversion opportunities. Some were motivated by intellectual curiosity. Others, particularly Jews, sought to "rescue" an "ancient people". It was during this period that the Kaifeng Jews, many of whom were living in a near-destitute condition, were led to sell their few remaining scriptures and prayer books. Many of these texts found their way into Western libraries and museums.[8]

By the 1920's, the Jews in Kaifeng were no longer a community. Their numbers were greatly reduced, having been assimilated to the extent of being Chinese in both appearance and culture. Judaism as a way of life was gone. Even circumcision, the most basic affirmation of the Covenant, was apparently no longer practiced. Their knowledge of Jewish laws was reduced to no more than the prohibition against eating pork. Limited contacts with interested foreigners continued until the Liberation of China by the communist army in 1949, when all contact with the outside world was cut off again. The Book seemed to have closed on the Kaifeng Jews.

It was during this same span of time, commencing with the opening of the Treaty Ports in the mid-nineteenth century, that a new dimension in Sino-Judaic history appeared. Jewish entrepreneurs and traders from the West joined the flow of pioneers in economic activity to the coast of China. Most prominent among these were representatives of Sephardic commercial houses whose origins went back through India to Iraq. As a result, new Jewish communities evolved in such places as Shanghai, Tianjin, and Hong Kong.[9]

Some of these settlers, concerned over the decayed condition of the Kaifeng Jews, formed the Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews in 1900. Unfortunately, they were not able to be of much help. Contact was limited due to the civil disorders stemming from the Boxer Rebellion, and

funding was insufficient to rebuild the Kaifeng synagogue. Then, Ashkenazi refugees, who began coming to China in flight from the Russian pogroms, became a dominant concern, diverting charitable activities to this more immediate problem.



Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews.

Shanghai, 15th May, 1900.

At the meeting of the Jewish Residents held yesterday it was decided to form this Society and to limit the subscription for membership to one dollar per month for each lady or gentleman from the current month.

Those desirous to become members are requested to sign the accompanying slip & return it to the undersigned.

yours faithfully,

S. J. SOLOMON.
Hon. Secretary.

Shanghai,_____ 1900.

Dear Sir,

I shall thank you to place my name on the list of members of your Society from the current month.

yours faithfully,

To,

S. J. SOLOMON Esq.
Hon. Secretary.
Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews.

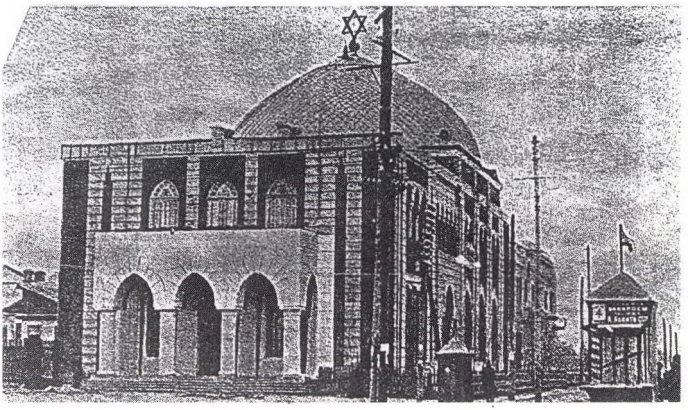
Form for joining the Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews. The society was founded by Jewish merchants in Shanghai in 1900, in order to assist the Kaifeng community.
Photo courtesy of Beth Hatefutsoth.



The Jewish Chinese flour merchant from Kaifeng, Li Ching-sheng and his son, Li Tsung-mai. Shanghai, April 1901. During their stay in Shanghai, the 12 year-old son was circumsized and given the Hebrew name Shmuel.

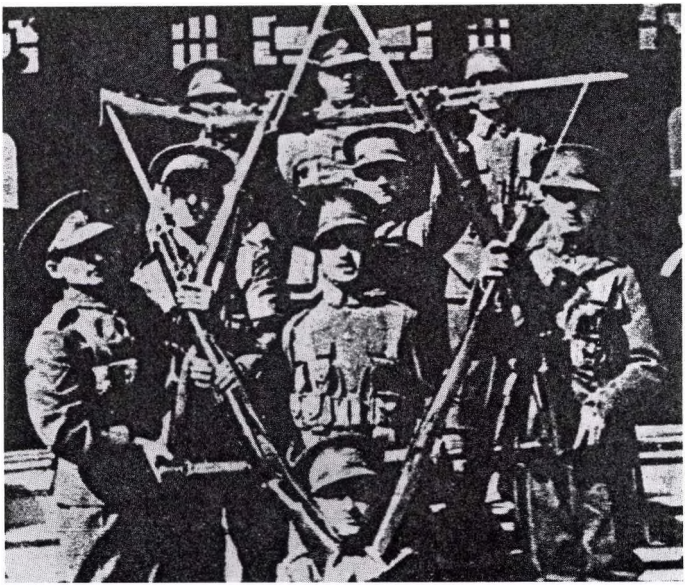
Reproduced by kind permission of Jewish Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

More Russian Jews sought refuge in China following the Bolshevik Revolution. Settling first in Harbin in northern Manchuria, they soon established Jewish communities of their own in such other cities as Shenyang, Dalian, Beijing and Shanghai. By the early 1930's, there was a total of approximately 15,000 Jews in China. This population swelled in 1938-1939 with another 18,000 or so Ashkenazi refugees from Germany, Austria and Poland who escaped the Nazi horror. Most of these endured the privations of World War Two in Japanese-occupied Shanghai. Between the end of the war and the Liberation of China, almost all of the Jews in China had left. Today, they live in the United States of America, Hong Kong, Israel, the Philippines, Australia and elsewhere.[10]

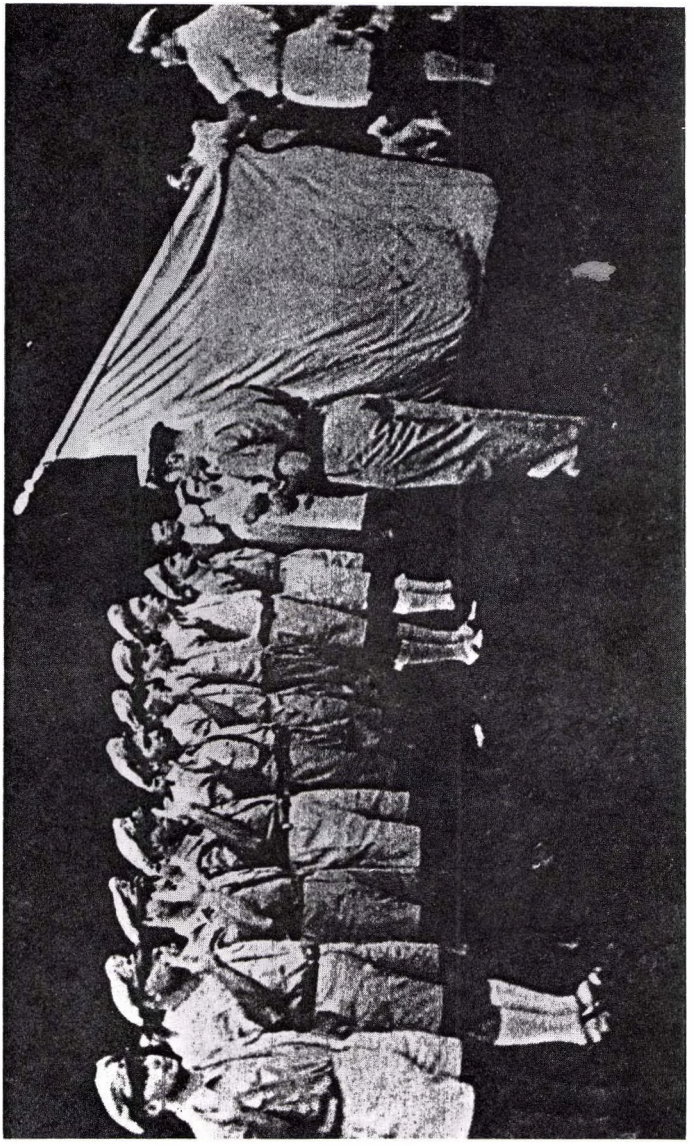


FORMER SYNAGOGUE IN HARBIN, HEILONGJIANG

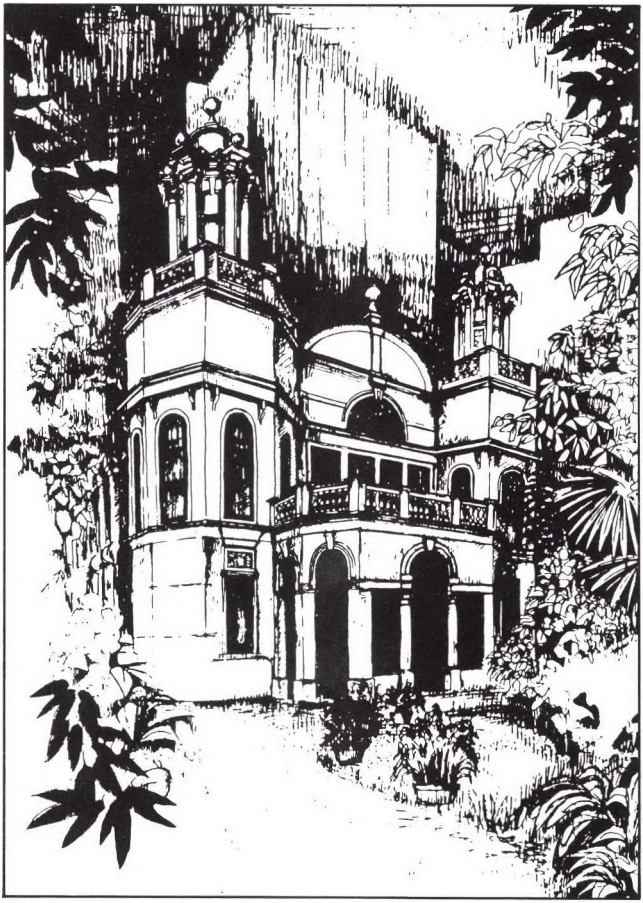
Photo courtesy of Wm. Kerbel, New York.



JEWISH YOUTH in China prepared themselves to help their brethren in Eretz Israel defend the Yishuv. Some joined the British Volunteer Corps (Jewish Platoon) in Shanghai when World War II broke out (above.) Right: young Chinese Jews who completed a military training course organized by Betar, a Zionist youth group, participate in the graduation ceremonies prior to flying to Israel in the fall of 1948 to help defend the newly-formed state.



Photos courtesy of Wm. Kerbel, New York.



Ohel Leah Synagogue, Hong Kong.
(CORNERSTONE LAID IN 1901)

From that time to the present (1985), the only active synagogue on the entire China coast, or, for that matter, on Chinese soil, has been Ohel Leah Synagogue in Hong Kong. The membership rolls of Ohel Leah still hold the names of Sassoon, Kadoorie, Ezra and others who represent direct continuity with Sino-Judaic history. The Jewish community of Hong Kong has already demonstrated its capacity to be a springboard for the most recent phase in the Jewish experience in East Asia.

With the institution of the "Four Modernizations" policy of the People's Republic of China, members of the Hong Kong Jewish community have been intimately involved with many of the developments, economic and otherwise, in the new relationship between China and the West. Hong Kong has proved itself as the "open door" through which many constructive and mutually beneficial transactions between Chinese and foreign enterprises have occurred. One merely has to point to the participation of the China Light and Power Company, headed by Lord Kadoorie, in the Daya Bay nuclear power project to indicate the economic side of this involvement. Other community members, including a large group of newcomers from approximately twenty-five different countries, are participating in cooperative activities in the People's Republic of China in the fields of diplomacy, commercial investment, law, industrial development and general trading.

Hong Kong-based activities should also prove significant from the perspective of Sino-Judaic history. The recent liberalization of religious and travel policies by the Chinese government has permitted a limited but definite revival of Jewish religious, social and academic energies in China. One Hong Kong resident organized the 1984 publication in Shanghai of a reprint of the *Tanya*.[11] This marked the first Hebrew language publication in China since the Liberation of 1949. Hong Kong has also provided religious support facilities to P.R.C.-resident-alien Jews who are part of the influx of diplomatic, academic and commercial personnel to China in recent years.

A resurgence of interest in the Kaifeng remnant has been manifested by a new wave of foreign visitors to that city. Beginning in 1980, concerned people from Hong Kong and elsewhere have established a direct dialogue with Kaifeng residents who claim Jewish descent. The Kaifeng Jews of today retain a strong sense of identification with their Jewish ancestry. A recent reassertion of ethnic identity has led to their being recorded as Jews on household registers and identification papers. They have not, however, achieved governmental classification as a separate "national minority".

Westerners are not alone in this renewed interest. The Chinese themselves have demonstrated increasing efforts to study the Chinese Jews. While

Chinese scholars' current understanding of Judaism itself is limited mainly to book knowledge, they do have relatively easier access to local resource materials. Thus, open dialogue with the Chinese can only enhance the attempt to increase our knowledge of Judaism in China.[12]

Growing awareness of the new opportunities for investigation led eventually to the founding in early 1984 of the Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong. The fundamental purpose of this Society is to provide a regionally-based center for stimulating and supporting study of the total Judaic experience in East Asia. Among its current programs, it is attempting to obtain appropriate materials to assist in creating a Chinese Judaica exhibit in the proposed Kaifeng Museum in cooperation with Kaifeng authorities.

Elsewhere, other groups of researchers and interested persons have begun to mobilize efforts to generate activities devoted to specific aspects of Sino-Judaic studies. In July 1985, the Sino-Judaic Institute was formed in California with the stated goals of engaging in research on the history and current activities of the Kaifeng Jews and supporting the creation of the above-mentioned Judaic exhibit in Kaifeng.[13] The Amishav organization,

based in Israel, has taken a direct interest in another dimension of Sino-Judaic history. They are currently planning an expedition to Sichuan and Tibet in 1986 or 1987 to look more closely at evidence purporting to indicate the existence of remnants of the "Lost Tribes" in those regions. The Project Judaica Foundation, Inc., headquartered in Maryland, is planning to develop a traveling exhibition entitled "The Jews of Old China", and intend to send representatives to China in 1986 to investigate further this possibility.

There are other areas of potential research that need attention. For example, of the three former synagogues of Shanghai, one of them, Beth Aharon Synagogue, was demolished in the Spring of 1985 to make room for new printing facilities for a local newspaper, the *Wenhui Bao*. One stone from this structure which carries a menorah inscription was saved, though broken, and is now stored in the care of the Shanghai Museum.[14] The other two former synagogues may be in similar danger of being destroyed to allow new construction. An attempt to find and preserve significant relics from such edifices should be made.



Site of the former Beth Aharon Synagogue in Shanghai. Originally funded by a Hardoon donation, it was turned into a factory after Liberation. (Note stacked drums visible through hole in wall.) This site was demolished in Spring 1985 to allow construction of a printing factory.

Photo, dated April 1984, courtesy of M. Ahlers.

The remains of Jewish cemeteries should also be sought out and their inscriptions recorded. Eighteen pieces of tombstones bearing Hebrew inscriptions are reported to have been located in the museum in Quanzhou, Fujian Province. To date, copies of these inscriptions have not been made available to western scholars. The Jewish cemetery in Hong Kong, established in the 1850's, is intact, but has not yet been utilized academically. Its inscriptions should prove to be a valuable aid to genealogical studies of local families.

Perhaps even more important, the former refugees from wartime Shanghai are reaching advanced age. Most of them left China with nothing but the few possessions they could hand-carry. Since they have been scattered around the world, gathering their personal reminiscences would be a long and costly process, but it should be done. Every personal story of those tumultuous times and events in China left untold is valuable historical raw material lost forever.

It is also possible that various records and documents left behind in Shanghai by former Jewish residents and refugees have been preserved, either by accident or design. It is hoped that the Shanghai archives, which are still difficult to access, will soon be explored, and any relevant materials found will be catalogued and made publically available to researchers.

Another question, tantalizing to the Sinologist, is the possibility of Chinese records holding as-yet-undiscovered information on Jewish activity in China's past. It is proverbial that China has the longest continuously-recorded history in the world. The sheer volume of classical China's literary output suggests there is always the chance of finding a manuscript or copy of a private publication which holds material of value to specialized research.

The various dimensions of Jewish history in East Asia have not yet been fully explored. The Kadoorie Memoir, presented herein, suggests the potential for research in just one of those dimensions, but, even more, demonstrates the importance of living links between past and future. It is the sense of history and one's place in it that generates significant human activity.

The publication of a bibliography of Sino-Judaic works is designed to promote public consciousness of the Jewish experience in East Asia as a valid focus of study. Hopefully, it will serve as a useful tool for students and scholars by stimulating and assisting further research. As a record of what has been done already in this field, the bibliography maps out areas already explored, pointing the way to unknown territory for those who may be interested in the further understanding and preservation of regional Jewish history.

In compiling such a specialized list, one rapidly becomes aware of the areas which have received great emphasis and those which have received little. This is usually a reflection, in part, of the availability of resource materials, and, in part, of the particular interests of the people who have engaged in these studies.

A brief look at our list reveals immediately that the great majority of scholarly works are devoted to the Kaifeng Jews. Of the 284 books and articles listed, approximately 70 percent deal mainly with the Kaifeng connection. The remainder divide attention among the "Lost Tribes", early notices of Jewish travellers to China, the Sephardic entrepreneurs of the China coast, the Ashkenazi refugees, and a scattering of individual Jews with unique experiences in China.

Books and articles which have been written on China-related topics in all fields of study are multitudinous. By contrast, the number of published works in Sino-Judaic studies is very small. No doubt I have missed references in compiling this bibliography, and urge my readers to advise me of any such omission. I hope that a renewed interest in this unique subject area will soon create the need for an expanded edition of this bibliography.

NOTES:

1. For a brief but thorough survey of Chinese intellectual input to Western civilization, see D. Bodde, *Chinese Ideas in the West*, Asiatic Studies in American Education, No.3. Wash., D.C.: American Council on Education, 1948. A good example of art motif transference can be found in S.V.R. Cammann, "Symbolic Meanings in Oriental Rug Patterns," *Textile Museum Journal*, Vol.3, No.3 (1972), in two parts, pp.5-54.

2. A detailed discussion of how a mathematical idea evolved as it travelled across Asia can be found in S.V.R. Cammann, "Islamic and Indian Magic Squares," *History of Religions*, Vol. 8, Nos. 3-4 (1969), pp. 181-209, 271-299. For the travels and resultant evolution of chess, see D.A. Leventhal, *The Chess of China*, Taipei: Mei Ya Pub., Inc., 1978. For general studies of the trans-Asian land and sea trade, see L. Boulnois, *The Silk Road*, Trans. by D. Chamberlin, New York: Dutton, 1966, and G.F. Hourani, *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951.

3. D.D. Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews: The Jewish Community of Kaifeng*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1972, p.5. At least one scholar puts Jewish communities in central Asia as early as the 5th-6th centuries; see G. Frumkin, *Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970, p.91. An as-yet-unsubstantiated claim by another writer puts a large influx of Jews in Changan, the capital of T'ang dynasty China, during the early part of the 7th century; see S.S. Shih, "The Only Chinese Jew in Formosa," *Orient*, 5 (Nov. 1954), pp. 29-31.

4. A brief overview of Jewish merchant participation in early East-West trade is found in Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Volume III, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, pp. 681-682. The Khazar kingdom of Jewish converts is discussed in Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe: The Khazar Empire and its Heritage*, New York: Random House, 1976.

5. Leslie, *op cit*, pp. 12-14; see also p. 201 for citations of references to Jews in Chinese records of the Yuan period.

6. The institutionalized route for upward social mobility was through a state-run school and examination system which tended to create conservative government officials with values and interests supportive of imperial socio-political perspectives. See C.O. Hucker, *The Traditional Chinese State in Ming Times*, Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1961, pp. 14-19, 20-22, 34-37.

7. For a standard survey of the Jesuit mission to China, see A.H. Rowbotham, *Missionary and Mandarin: The Jesuits at the Court of China*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1942. Various documents relating to the Rites Controversy are found in A.S. Rosso, *Apostolic Legations to China of the Eighteenth Century*, South Pasadena: P.D. & Ione Perkins, 1948.

8. Both Leslie, *op cit*, and M. Pollak, *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries: The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980, provide critical analyses of the reports on Kaifeng Jews made by the 19th and early 20th century Western observers and activists. For standard references on Christian missionary activities in China, see K.S. Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China*, New York: Macmillan, 1929, and P.A. Varg, *Missionaries, Chinese, and Diplomats*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958.

9. Very little research has been done on the Sephardic commercial houses established in the 19th century. The only major work seems to be S. Jackson, *The Sassoons,* New York: E.P. Dutton, 1968.

10. There is little documentation on these China coast Jewish communities. The WWII Jewish experience in Shanghai under Japanese domination is discussed in D. Kranzler, *Japanese, Nazis and Jews,* New York: Yeshiva University Press, 1976, and M. Tokayer & M. Swartz, *The Fugu Plan: The Untold Story of the Japanese and the Jews during World War Two,* New York: Paddington Press, 1979. A synopsis of the origins and current state of the Hong Kong community is given in D.A. Leventhal, *The Jewish Community of Hong Kong: An Introduction,* Hong Kong: Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong, 1985.

11. David C. Buxbaum, a Sinologist and lawyer with offices in Hong Kong and Canton, is responsible for this breakthrough in Judaic publication.

12. Of the 27 Chinese language items listed in our bibliography, ten (37%) of them were published in the 1980's. S. Shapiro, *Jews in Old China: Studies by Chinese Scholars*, New York: Hippocrene Press, 1984, provides the western scholar with translations of a number of these Chinese works.

13. One of the founding members of the Sino-Judaic Institute is D.D. Leslie whose study on the Kaifeng Jews, cited in note 3, is the "classic" in the field. Research in this area must take Leslie's work as a baseline. It provides the most complete analytical survey of known source materials (as of 1972) dealing with the Chinese Jews.

14. Ms. Mulan Ahlers, a doctoral candidate in Sinology who was in Shanghai during this event, reports that the menorah stone was saved by the efforts of Mrs. Tess Johnston, secretary to the U.S. Consul-General in Shanghai.

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THE KADOORIE MEMOIR OF 1979

Introduction

The following document should be of particular interest to Hong Kong readers. The Kadoorie family is prominent amongst the various architects of Hong Kong's recent economic success story. This becomes understandable as we learn how their family has been intimately involved with the economic life of the China coast for over one hundred years.

Lord Lawrence Kadoorie, C.B.E., J.P., is a leading figure in the Jewish community of Hong Kong and his family history exemplifies the story of the 19th–20th century Sephardic commercial pioneers of the China coast. These traders and entrepreneurs not only founded Jewish communities in various Treaty Ports, but they also provided significant participants in the contact between East and West which stimulated forces of major social change in China.

The Memoir was written originally as a private letter, dated 6 February 1979, from Lord Kadoorie to his former secretary, Mrs. Luba Arkin. Apparently it was a response to a request for in-

formation on Kadoorie family history. The letter is being published here for the first time thanks to the courtesy and kind permission of Lord Kadoorie.

Naturally, a short memoir such as this cannot give a complete story. It does, however, give us a brief sketch of major family events, some personal reflections, and humorous anecdotes relating to various episodes of his life.

Hopefully, the Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong will be able to obtain other original documents, memoirs, and memorabilia from former residents of the China coast Treaty Ports so as to make them available to historical researchers.

THE KADOORIE MEMOIR

Being a Letter from Lord Lawrence Kadoorie of Hong Kong to Mrs. Luba Arkin of Israel, dated 6 February 1979.

Dear Luba,

I have before me your letter dated 7th January, 1979, together with a letter from Mrs. Rena Krasno asking me for information about our family's connection with Shanghai Jewry.

With China's Four Modernizations Programme, Hong Kong has become more busy than ever, consequently I have had little time to devote to historical retrospect. However, I trust the following may be useful.

Going back to the beginning when the Romans destroyed the Temple and the Jews were dispersed – 2000 years ago – some proceeded northwards, others turned west to Salonika, Morocco and Spain, whilst still others moved eastwards to form a large community with its headquarters in Baghdad, Mesopotamia.

This ancient community prospered and, in more recent times, sent its sons overseas to India, to China, to Europe and to America.

Amongst the leading families of the Baghdad Jews were the Sassoons, the Kadoories, the Somechs, the Sophers, the Gubbays and others. The Kadoorie and Sassoon families, who were related by marriage, were merchant farmers, currency for trade in those days being flocks of sheep, often left in the care of nomads, who, as it were, acted as bankers for the owners.

My father, Eleazar Silas Kadoorie (Sir Elly Kadoorie), one of seven children, arrived in Hong Kong via Bombay on May 20th, 1880, to join the firm of E. D. Sassoon and Co., as a clerk at the princely salary of Rps. 37 per month. His elder brother, Moshi, who had preceded him was also employed in Sassoon's and later, in 1883, he was joined by a younger brother, Ellis (Sir Ellis Kadoorie).

In due course, my father was transferred to North China, where he spent some time in the Treaty Ports of Shanghai, Wei Hai Wei, Tientsin, Wuhu, and Ningpo. Many are the stories he had to tell of those early days but one, a minor event which took place while he was in Ningpo, had a major effect upon the future of the family.

Due to the absence of the Manager, my father was left in temporary charge of E. D. Sassoon's office in Ningpo. An outbreak of plague in that city caused him to withdraw a barrel of disinfectant from stores without the permission of his Senior Manager. For this he was severely reprimanded.

Feeling this was most unjust he protested to such an extent that he was sent back to Shanghai to report to the Head Office. There he was told not to argue but to obey. His further protests resulted in his being fired and consequently he returned to Hong Kong where his brother, Moshi, gave him HK$500. – and told him that was all he could expect! No doubt this happy occurrence upon which the family fortunes are founded should be depicted by a barrel of disinfectant rampant upon the Kadoorie Coat of Arms.

My father then set up as a broker. He was generally liked and with native intelligence, hard work and good luck managed to build up his fortune.

Towards the end of the 1890's the young 'Kelly', as his friends now dubbed him, visited England where he met Mr. Frederick Mocatta, a well-known Sephardi philanthropist. It was at the home of the latter that he was introduced to my mother, Laura Mocatta, whom he married in 1897 bringing her out to Hong Kong.

The Mocattas were of Spanish origin, the family leaving Spain for Holland at the time of the Spanish Inquisition. They later proceeded to England in the 1600's where together with the Goldsmids they formed the firm of Mocatta and Goldsmid Ltd., in 1684. This company has been silver brokers to the Bank of England since 1696.

At first my mother found living in Hong Kong somewhat difficult, being very different from the atmosphere to which she was accustomed in London. However, she was befriended by a Mrs. Gubbay, a lady of great charm and character, who did much to initiate her into the vagaries of life in the Orient.

I, Lawrence Kadoorie, was born here (Hong Kong) in 1899 and my brother, Horace, in London in 1902.

During the next ten years, my father with his partners, a Mr. George Potts and a Mr. Sassoon Benjamin, succeeded in building up their firm, 'Benjamin, Kelly and Potts', to become the premier brokerage house in Hong Kong.

An interesting anecdote illustrates Robert Burns' statement 'The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley'. Admiral Dewey and the American Navy were in Manila Bay prior to taking over the city. Everything there was in a state of depression bordering on chaos. It then occurred to my father and his partners that in order to make a fortune now was the time to 'buy'. Consequently, a syndicate was formed in Hong Kong with the purpose of purchasing almost everything that was for sale in Manila – cigar factories, water-works, tramways, gold mines, office buildings and the rest. All that was necessary was to wait for the coming 'boom' with the arrival of the Americans. Sadly,

however, this 'boom' never took place and it was only gradually and years later that the syndicate was able to dispose of their holdings at a small loss.

In 1910 my father and mother decided to leave the Far East and to settle in England. They rented a house in Eastbourne where my brother and I were in school.

In 1911 my father learned that the Senior Manager of his firm had been speculating with his investments in Hong Kong and that his firm had suffered severe losses. This caused him to return to the Far East to recoup what he could of his fortune.

After a trying time in Hong Kong he left for Shanghai where, at the insistence of Mr. Stevens, then Manager of the Hong Kong & Shanghai Bank, he remained in order to reconstruct a large number of Rubber Companies which, because of a slump in that industry, were facing bankruptcy. He achieved this task with eminent success and then decided to reopen his business, this time with its head office in Shanghai.

In 1914 my mother and father, together with Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin, came to Banff in Canada to spend the Summer holidays with their children who were arriving from school in England.

It was whilst my brother and I and the two Benjamin daughters were crossing the Atlantic in

the charge of our respective Governesses that war broke out with the result that we could not get back to school. After a series of adventures, during which our large party ran out of cash, we all managed to get back to Shanghai where we spent the rest of the war years.

There was and never will be another city like Shanghai between the two wars – a city of extreme contrasts combining the attributes of both East and West. The Paris of the Orient, with its good and its bad, providing a paradise for adventurers. Here my brother and I continued our education – the international environment provided by Shanghai broadening our outlook and giving us an understanding of what it was to become a citizen of the world.

In 1919 our home in Shanghai caught fire and our mother, who was a remarkable woman loved by all who knew her, lost her life by returning to the house to try to find the Governess. It was after this that Horace and I took on a number of responsibilities formerly carried by our mother and did our share towards building up the Kadoorie name throughout Asia..

In the early 1920's we spent three or four years in Europe. My father bought a house in London and it was here that King Faisal I of Arabia and Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia were his guests for several months. During these years we developed a broad circle of friends in France and England.

My background, besides being trained in my father's office, was to study law with a well-known barrister, Mr. J. E. Salmon, who incidentally, was an expert on comparative legal systems world-wide. In consequence of this I became a student in Lincoln's Inn, eating several dinners there but never having time to complete my legal studies and be called to the Bar.

My brother, Horace, wished to become a farmer, but again pressure of family affairs made this impossible. Early in his career he took over the running of Marble Hall, an experience which stood him in good stead when he became Chairman and a director of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels Company. (The family interests in this company extended back to the last century and are particularly evident in the Peninsula Hotel which, today, is well-known throughout the world and is the premier hostelry in Asia.) Marble Hall was the house my father had commissioned to be built during his absence from Shanghai. Unfortunately, the architect, a certain Mr. Graham Brown, took to drink with the result that this residence became a palace. To put it mildly, it was something of a surprise to us, upon our return to Shanghai, to find the architect in hospital with the D.T.'s and a house with a ballroom 65' high, 80' long and 50' wide, not to mention other huge rooms and a verandah 225' long. However, the real shock came when the contractors produced orders showing that the architect had commissioned these splendours which we were now called upon to pay for.

Happily, my father was fond of entertaining his friends and Marble Hall became well-known to visitors from all parts of the world. Today, under the PRC, it has become a Children's Palace where pupils chosen from various schools are trained in the arts. In these changing times it is pleasing to know that this house, of which my father became particularly fond, is now used by thousands of happy children benefiting from the courses provided.

It has been a long tradition in the Kadoorie family to share their good fortune with others. My uncle, Sir Ellis Kadoorie, built a number of schools in Hong Kong, Canton, and Shanghai. Basically these schools were intended to provide Chinese students with a background in English so as to assist them in obtaining work with the foreign firms set up in this part of the world. In those early days these non-denominational institutions were particularly appreciated by Chinese families since the only other alternative was to send their children to Mission schools.

My father concentrated on building schools and hospitals particularly in the Middle East. His choice of schools for girls and their location was inspired by the fact that, at that time, women received no education other than at home. These institutions were administered by the Alliance Israelite of Paris and the Anglo-Jewish Association of London. My father, however, made it a condition that all children irrespective of religion, were welcome.

The impact was that girls, now benefiting from a good education, demanded equality of intelligence from would-be husbands rather than just submitting to their parents' choice. Perhaps we can claim to have started a 'Women's Lib' movement.

My uncle, my father, my brother Horace and I took a personal interest in and contributed generously to Jewish Community Affairs in Hong Kong, Shanghai and other parts of the world. In 1937/38 my brother, Horace, played a most important part in caring for the several thousands of Jewish refugees from Russia, Germany and Austria who were the last batch to be able to leave these countries. Horace founded the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association and also built the Shanghai Jewish School. These institutions, unique in their way, created the foundation upon which many of the children of these refugee families later became successful citizens in other areas of the world, particularly the United States.

It is largely due to him that the Jewish Youth of Shanghai were given the spirit and incentive to look forward to the future with hope and confidence knowing that they were well-equipped to create a better life in new surroundings.

> *Note:* In this connection I would suggest that Mrs. Krasno consult 'Japanese, Nazis and Jews' by David Kranzler which provides an excellent description of what took place within the Jewish community in Shanghai during the war.

Apart from business contacts and his considerable influence in financial circles my father donated, in Shanghai, a T.B. Sanatorium, a Dermatological Section in the Sun Yat Sen Hospital and also other medical facilities.

For his benefactions throughout the world he was made a Knight Commander of the British Empire (KBE) in 1926.

In the 1930's I returned to Hong Kong to reopen our office here and it was shortly after that you, Luba, (at, I believe, the age of 16) became my secretary. Consequently, you can fill in with your recollections of that period. My brother remained in the Firm's head office in Shanghai with my father.

In 1938 I married Muriel Gubbay, the granddaughter of the Mrs. Gubbay to whom I have referred previously and who befriended my mother upon her arrival in Hong Kong.

In December, 1941, Hong Kong fell to the Japanese – my father who had come here for the Winter, my wife and I, my daughter, aged 18 months and my son, aged 6 months, were interned in Stanley Camp with nothing other than the possessions we could carry.

Life during the war years was hard but it had its lighter moments. I well remember that my father, who was ill at the time, often sat under a tree in the camp compound where he held converse with other inmates of the camp. He never lost confidence and, perhaps more important, as the following anecdote will tell, never lost his sense of humour.

Food in the camp was minimal, our allowance being only 900 calories a day. This naturally had an effect on social conditions and reactions. One day whilst collecting my rations of one cigarette tin full of rice, some boiled lettuce and a little soup, a large and burly individual shouted from across the room, 'Damn you, Kadoorie, your father cannot get away with this. I am a Hong Kong policeman and I intend to remain here.' Not knowing who he was, I asked him to what he was referring. He replied, 'Your father has said that he will take all of us who are here in camp to Shanghai and I refuse to go.' I shrugged the matter off and later reported the incident to my father saying that it was no laughing matter. He replied, 'Lawrence, we are 3,500 people in this camp, the Japanese have captured Hong Kong and Singapore and control the whole area, and there is still someone who believes that I can move 3,500 people in the middle of a war from Hong Kong to Shanghai. All I can say is let them believe it, my credit is still good.'

After five months, and for some reason known only to our captors, I was classed as a Canadian Journalist and consequently we were allowed to proceed to Shanghai with the Diplomats on the 'Tainan Maru' – a 2,000 ton ship carrying 2,000 passengers. The problem of washing babies' nappies in salt water during the voyage was painful both to me as the washerman and, no doubt, to young Michael who protested vociferously as to the abrasiveness of his wearing apparel.

The journey to Shanghai took nine days. On arrival we found that Marble Hall had been taken over by the Japanese and my brother, who had no knowledge of what was happening to us, was living with relatives in their home. Upon learning of our arrival he met us and took us all to that residence.

During the interim period prior to being interned once again in Cha Pei Camp, we, as British subjects, wore red armbands with the letter 'B' and, as 'enemies', were only allowed by the Japanese to visit certain shops to purchase food. All we had had been confiscated and our possessions were reduced to a minimum. However, meeting old friends amongst the Chinese and Russian communities, whose loyalty and kindness provided hope and confidence that better times would follow, was indeed a heart-warming experience.

In 1943 my wife, myself and the children were interned in Cha Pei Camp. My father who was very ill remained with certain other invalids outside the camp in my brother's care.

We spent the next two years living in one room, about 18' x 15', together with an American family of Lebanese origin consisting of a father, his adolescent son and daughter, and his sister. This gentleman, a Mr. Basha, prior to internment had owned the best linen shop in Shanghai. This was fortunate since his sister was able to bring into camp with her a large quantity of castille soap which she generously shared with us, and which proved invaluable.

Concentrated living under these crowded conditions was a never-to-be-forgotten experience leaving its impression on our future outlook on life, bitter but perhaps salutory medicine and, in retrospect, I can say it provided a clearer perspective, a better understanding of true values and a greater tolerance in dealing with people.

Towards the end of 1944 the Kempeitai (Military Police) allowed us out of camp to see my father just before he died. We were then placed under house arrest in the staff quarters of our old home, Marble Hall, which had been reserved for the use of Wang Ching Wei, the puppet governor, whom the Japanese wished to set up to head a Chinese Government. There are several anecdotes

I could tell of this period but perhaps the most extraordinary concerns a Judge we knew who was attached to the French Consulate.

One evening, in the total blackout of Shanghai, a great hammering on the door announced a certain Mr. Kaufmann, who was the Chief Judge in the French Court in Shanghai and who, as a French subject, had not been interned. This gentleman, who was obviously under heavy stress, stated that supporters of the Vichy Government in Shanghai were after him and that he had to leave his home. Saying this he handed us a parcel weighing 7 kilos and wrapped in newspaper. Upon asking him what it was, he replied, 'It is a bar of gold and you are the only people I know to whom I can trust it'. He then disappeared saying, 'Bury it'. Our feelings as prisoners of war, with no assets and under house arrest, were to say the least somewhat mixed. However, at about midnight my brother and I sneaked out of the house into the garden, found a tree, and proceeded to bury this gold bar. Some nine months later, when the war was over, after some searching, we found it again and returned it to its rightful owner.

Another unforgettable incident took place when a good friend of ours managed to visit our quarters late one night to tell us that he had heard over a clandestine radio of the atomic bomb and the Japanese surrender.

On the 20th August, 1945, the first Americans landed in Shanghai. They were a group of twenty headed by Major Shoyer (who later became Vice Chancellor of the Chinese University of Hong Kong). Officially the war was not yet over but they managed, through the Swiss Consulate, to contact us with a request to put them up in our home. Needless to say, we were only too delighted to receive these welcome guests. For the first time in five years we turned on the lights in Marble Hall and celebrated on 'K' rations – a form of nourishment we had not yet experienced. Shortly after this our home became a centre for military personnel – American, Australian and British.

With the coming of the second World War, the Kadoorie family had lost practically everything, their assets being in countries which had been overrun by the enemy both in Asia and Europe.

During the interim, prior to the communists taking over Shanghai, Horace concentrated on our Shanghai office. I started up again in Hong Kong. My adventures in getting back are worth recording.

General Hayes, Officer Commanding All Troops in China, was staying in Marble Hall where he was joined late one evening by Mr. Ogden, the British Consul General, who had just flown in from Chungking. Being very anxious to return to Hong Kong I asked them whether I could use Mr. Ogden's plane which was returning to Chungking and to proceed from there by RAF transport to

Hong Kong. To this they agreed, giving me letters requesting utmost priority and VIP treatment. On arrival in Chungking I was put up at the British Consulate and immediately contacted the RAF, which flatly refused to carry me as a passenger – thus leaving me stranded.

One day I was offered a tour of the city by jeep. It so happened that there was a nail in the cushion of this jeep and it tore a large rent in my trousers. I must have looked very miserable as I stood disconsolately on the steps of the British Consulate because a passing jeep carrying a number of GI's took pity on me and asked what was wrong. I replied that if they had only one pair of trousers they would know!

The GI's asked me to join them and 40 minutes later my one and only civilian suit was exchanged for a complete GI uniform. On asking who one saluted I was assured that 'No-one saluted no-one around here.' This suited me admirably. Before leaving Shanghai I had been requested to contact anyone in authority who could give the necessary orders for monies to be released and remitted through Swiss banks for the relief of German and Austrian refugees of whom approximately seven thousand were Catholics, and ten thousand, Jews.

Upon the surrender of the Japanese these funds had become blocked thus causing severe hardship. I pleaded this cause to the GI's who had

come to my rescue. They, in turn, thought it was a matter for the Army Chaplains, five of whom were called to interview me. Resulting from this conference I was taken to see General O'Rand in charge of the American forces in Chungking. He listened sympathetically, gave the necessary orders and asked me if I would accompany him to Canton. I thanked him, but before accepting, thought I would see the RAF once more. The latter were adamant that they would not carry passengers but, when I suggested I could be classed as freight, they agreed – sitting me down on a pile of bank notes which were being flown into Hong Kong to replace the Japanese military currency then in circulation.

My arrival here on November 11th. 1945, in a GI uniform, and as freight, enabled me to exert what influence remained to me as past Chairman of the Hong Kong Shanghai Hotel Company to obtain a room in the Peninsula Hotel. Some three months later women were allowed back to the Colony and Muriel was able to join me.

In due course my brother joined me in Hong Kong and starting almost from scratch an intensely busy period followed during which we both played an important part in the reconstruction of our assets.

Hard work and good fortune have brought us back to the position which we now enjoy, our greatest pleasure being that we have been able to assist some of the less fortunate of our friends who have known better days.

Last year my life and I revisited China after an absence of thirty years. We were well received and I am happy to say that the relationship between the Chinese authorities and ourselves is excellent. They know that we are grateful to the country where we grew up and that the political events and trials through which we have passed have not left any bitterness, but an understanding of the need to assist in every way possible to make the world a better place to live in.

This flood of recollections does not really answer Mrs. Krasno's questions. However, in the one hundred years since the family has been in this part of the world, the name 'Kadoorie' has become synonymous with the Jewish communities of Hong Kong and Shanghai, and its influence has helped shape the history of the foreign communities and the Chinese people with whom we have come into contact. There is much of interest that could be written but we live in exciting times and continue to play our part which makes it difficult to recount what would, no doubt, be a fascinating story.

Sincerely yours,
Lawrence Kadoorie

LK/mw

Printed by: **Rising Sun Co.**
• Chinese & English Typesetting, • Design,
• Reprographic , • Offset Printing
465 Hennessy Road, 2/F.,
Hong Kong.
Tel.: 5-8935967, 5-8936271
Telex : 84939 GNLC HX (RISING SUN CO.)

日昇公司
• 中英文電腦植字 • 翻譯 • 美術設計
• 英文電腦排版 • 製版 • 速印 • 印刷
香港軒尼詩道465號三樓
電話：5-8935967 5-8936271
電訊：84939 GNLC HX（日昇公司）

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