



Dear Readers:

Welcome to the 17th issue of *Asian Jewish Life*. As I write this letter I am preparing to attend the World Jewish Congress Plenary in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Living in the Far East, Jews find themselves somewhat 'off the radar' and a bit disconnected from the major arteries of Jewish life. I am excited for yet another opportunity to help better connect our communities with the greater Jewish world and also for the chance to share with them some of the unique contributions that Jews have made in our region.

In this issue, we will take a general tour of the region touching on Shanghai, Hong Kong, Japan and India. As it happens, many of the stories touch on World War II, but the experience of Jews in the region was very different from those in Europe.

As promised, we have featured a piece that focuses on Jews who sought refuge in India during the Holocaust. Dr. Shalva Weil brings us *The Walter Kaufmann Story- The Exile Who Invented All-India Radio's Signature Tune*.

Also out of India, Navras Jaat Aafreedi brings us *The Jews of Bollywood-How Jews Established the World's Largest Film Industry*. It is a wonderfully detailed account of the Jewish contribution to the industry. The piece is enhanced by incredible photographic postcards from Stephanie Comfort's extensive collection.

But the story that absolutely has to be told in this issue is that of the passing of India's Lt Gen JFR Jacob. While the story predominated Indian and Jewish media in the days that followed his death, it was a Facebook post that touched me. When someone in the public eye, in this case a decorated Indian war hero, it is somewhat easy to dissociate them from their private life. Jael Silliman, an academic, author and friend, posted a simple message along with her links to various media articles, "Rest in Peace, Uncle Jackie". A very special thank you to Jael for sharing

her personal story in *Rest in Peace, Uncle Jackie - Personal Reflection on the Passing of Lt Gen JFR Jacob*.

The Cover Art is the work of talented Israeli, Bene Israel artist Michael Kolet. Thank you to Nissim Moses for introducing us to Michael Kolet's art and for your continuous efforts to preserve and promote Bene Israel culture.

We have also included *Autobiography of Magen Abraham Synagogue, Ahmedabad*. This beautiful poem, by Edward Rubens, is an emotional look at the significance of the Magen Abraham Synagogue. Magen Abraham, built in 1934, is the only synagogue in Ahmedabad, India.

Moving from India and into China, we have two Writer's Desk pieces that perfectly compliment one another. Faith Beckerman Goldman shares her husband's story of a boyhood spent as a refugee in Shanghai in *A Journey of a Thousand Miles -The Start of My Shanghai Bob's Story*. In presenting the story of her quest to tell her late husband Robert Goldman's story, she references his friendship with Fredy Seidel. We have also chosen to feature Fredy Seidel's first person account of those tumultuous years in *Journey to the Other Side of the World*. Fredy Seidel's forthcoming memoir, *Shanghai, Before and After the Fall-Caught Between Two Chairs*, will be published late summer or early fall 2016 by iUniverse.

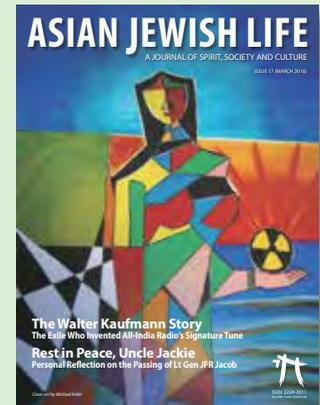
And on the topic of memoir, our author interview features Tracy Slater, author of the beautifully written memoir *The Good Shufu*. The interview, *On Writing, Love and Judaism in Japan*, was conducted by Melissa Uchiyama whose own touching and intimate piece was featured in Issue 16.

Book Reviews have been contributed by Susan Blumberg-Kason. *No Wasted Words* is a unique look at two very different Jewish experiences in China.

And lastly, we present *A Look at Hong Kong's Military Cemeteries - An Effort to Record Lost Jewish History*. I contributed to this research along with Howard Elias, Marc Ellison and Alistaire Hayman. This is by no means a complete history. It is part of an ongoing collaborative effort to remember and record our community's unique history.

As always, thank you for reading. Hoping you find much joy in the month of Adar.

Erica Lyons  
Editor-in-Chief



*Asian Jewish Life* is a free quarterly publication designed to share regional Jewish thoughts, ideas and culture and promote unity. It also celebrates our individuality and our diverse backgrounds and customs.

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