



Dear Readers:

Happy Chanukah and welcome to Issue 13 of *Asian Jewish Life*. While this issue was initially meant to be a celebration of food and festivals, the recent disaster in the Philippines has turned it into something a bit different. We have put a couple of great food pieces on hold in order to bring the Philippines into the spotlight. In a later issue we will discuss, in depth, the incredible response from the Israeli/Jewish world to this disaster.

For now, we bring you a very different look at the Philippines in *Jewish Refugee Rescue in the Philippines, The Cantor Joseph Cysner Story (Part 1)* by Bonnie M. Harris. This is a very detailed account of the 'how' and 'why' Jewish refugees made their way to the Philippines during the Holocaust.

In a very different piece, we hear from Carl Hoffman his personal story of his Jewish-Filipino family's connection, or reconnection for Carl, with Judaism and their decision to make aliyah. His piece, originally appearing in *Lovetaps*, a collection of short stories by Hoffman, is entitled, *An Accidental Israeli- A trip to Manila paves the way home*.

We take another look at aliyah, a piece of fiction by Sophie Judah entitled *Tales of Grandpa Eli*. In this issue we feature *Part 1- The Story of My Parents*. Other parts of this unpublished work will be featured in future issues of *AJL*. *The Story of My Parents* is a moving look at an Indian family's struggle to adapt to their new lives in Israel.

Also making aliyah, we look at the story of the Kaifeng community and their journey in a beautiful photo essay by Jason Jia, *Fully Jewish-Fully Chinese*. We have decided to highlight the photos that specifically highlight their life in Israel. See page 2 for a glimpse at their life in Kaifeng.

And since I do love a great Jewish journey story, we also hear from Liane Wakabayashi in our cover story, *Becoming Observant in Tokyo - A Personal Shabbat Journey*. The original artwork on the cover was also supplied by Liane.

Also related to a journey, in our Travel Diary we hear about Rabbi Judith Edelman-Green's trip to Mumbai in *Spirituality as Spice to Life- My time with the Bene Israel*.

In *Film in Focus*, we look at a journey to freedom following the liberation of the Ravensbruck Concentration Camp. We focus on one very small part of the film, *Harbour of Hope*, that explores the friendship between a Chinese woman and a Jewish mother and daughter while in the camp.

Our Book Reviews also look at World War II and the Jewish refugee experience in Shanghai. *AJL* Books Editor Susan Blumberg-Kason discusses the books *Survival in Shanghai: The Journals of Fred Marcus and Exodus to Shanghai: Stories of Escape from the Third Reich* by Steve Hochstadt.

And while talking books, Jocelyn Eikenburg interviews author Rachel DeWoskin in *On Stardom in China, Award-Winning Fiction and Judaism*.

And last, but certainly not least, because it is *Chanukah* we do need to celebrate. Allaya Fleischer presents two Thai recipes, one more traditional but fried in oil, Mee Krob, and the other the perfect Jewish-Thai fusion, 'Tom Yum Latkes'.

We hope you have a very happy *Chanukah*.

Erica Lyons
Editor-in-Chief



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