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"The Strange Story of Japanese-Jewish Friendship." Sermon
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The Temple Bulletin

OF

Congregation Emanu-El B'ne
Jeshurun

Milwaukee 11, Wisconsin

Vol. 22, No. 5

November 16, 1954

Heshvan 20, 5715

Sabbath Services

Friday Evening, November 19, at 8 o'clock

RABBI JOSEPH L. BARON

will speak on:

"THE AMERICAN JEWISH TERCENTENARY"

Friday Evening, November 26, at 8 o'clock

RABBI HERBERT A. FRIEDMAN

will speak on:

"THE STRANGE STORY OF JAPANESE-JEWISH FRIENDSHIP"

Sabbath Morning Services

11:15 o'clock

Saturday Morning, November 27, at 11:15 o'clock

MARY ELLEN BUTENHOF

daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Butenhof

will be Bas Mitzvah

THE TEMPLE BULLETIN

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Union of American Hebrew Congregations

Herbert A. Friedman _____ Rabbi
Joseph L. Baron _____ Rabbi Emeritus
Sol Altschuller _____ Cantor
Herman Weil _____ Director Religious Ed.

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Kaddish List

(Taken from Memorial Tablets)

November 19

Rose Ashley Morris Resnick
Morris Friedlander Rosalie Steindler

November 26

Henrietta Ettenheim Ida Mandel
Sam Friedman Isaak Nachman
Sarah Friedman Rosa Schmidt
Rachel Kratzenstein David S. Schneider
Theresa Schwartz

In Memoriam
STELLA CLAUS

SERMON NOTES

"THE AMERICAN JEWISH TERCENTENARY"

November 19

Last winter, the Milwaukee Jewish Welfare Fund invited representatives of all Jewish organizations in our city to consider local participation in the American Jewish Tercentenary celebration. Dr. Baron was then invited to organize the program here, and he has since called into being both the Milwaukee Tercentenary Committee, under the leadership of Mr. Stanley Glen, and the Wisconsin Tercentenary Committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Norman Abrahams.

This Friday evening, November 19, Dr. Baron will report to our Congregation on the activities of the local and State organizations, and will speak on the historic and spiritual aspects of the American Jewish Tercentenary.

THE STRANGE STORY OF JAPANESE — JEWISH FRIENDSHIP

November 26

A most unusual and often tender story is now beginning to be told about a group of Japanese men and women who have developed a deep interest in Jews and Judaism. There are actually converts; a flourishing society to promote relations between Japan and Israel; contacts between these people and American Army chaplains.

Prince Mikasa, a brother of Emperor Hirohito, is the leader of the group and is deeply in earnest about its work. Enough of the story is now available so that we should become aware of this important and interesting possibility.

H.A.F.

*You and Your Family
are Cordially Invited to Attend the*
UNION THANKSGIVING SERVICE

at the

IMMANUEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1100 North Astor Street

Thursday morning, November 25, at 10:30 o'clock

Rev. Donald Johnson will deliver the Sermon
Rabbi Friedman will participate in the Service.

PLAN TO ATTEND THE CITY-WIDE TERCENTENARY SERVICE

to be held at

Beth El Ner Tamid Temple
3725 North Sherman Boulevard

Sunday Morning, November 28, 10 to 11 o'clock

All Rabbis and Cantors will join together in the first All-Temple Service.

Program will be televised over WTMJ-TV.

Gifts of Love

The **TEMPLE LIBRARY**, during the past few months, received the following contributions:

From Mrs. James I. Schulhof in honor of Richard Schulhof's Confirmation.
From Mr. and Mrs. Irving Saltzstein in memory of Rabbi Samuel Hirschberg.
From Mrs. Blanche Bell in memory of Dr. Maurice J. Ansfield.
From Eva and Jerry Diamond and Lillian Friedman in memory of Emil Feld.
From Mrs. Hortense Oppenheimer, Los Angeles, in memory of Bella Heller.

The **PRAYER BOOK FUND** has received contributions:

From Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Kaufman in honor of Laurie Sue.
From Mrs. Louis Liebmann in memory of Louis Liebmann.
From Mr. and Mrs. Herman Mosher and Mr. and Mrs. Ben Rosenfeld in memory of Emil Feld.
From Mrs. Sigmund Bensinger in memory of Sigmund Bensinger.
From Mrs. Louis Berman in memory of Jill Diane Berman, Louis Berman, and David and Fannie Kurman.

The **SACRED ORNAMENT FUND** is in receipt of gifts:

From Mr. and Mrs. Sam Wiviott in honor of James' Bar Mitzvah.
From Allan Polacheck in memory of Stella Polacheck.

WANTED!

The Temple is in need of an upright piano for the Vestry room. If you have such a piano, which you are not presently using, we will be happy to receive it. Please call Miss Friedman, ED. 2-6960.

GREAT LAKES REGIONAL MEETING

November 20-21

The Great Lakes Regional Meeting of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations will be held at St. Paul, Minnesota, on Saturday and Sunday, November 20-21.

Members of our Congregation, who would like to attend these interesting sessions, may do so as official delegates of the Congregation by contacting Miss Friedman at the Temple Office.

FLOWERS FOR OUR ALTAR

The Sisterhood Floral Fund acknowledges with thanks the receipt of contributions in honor of:

Mr. John Ruppia on his 60th birthday.
Allen Bloom's Bar Mitzvah.
Mary Ellen Butenhof's Bas Mitzvah.

in memory of:
Abel Berkoff.

RECEPTION FOR NEW MEMBERS

After Sabbath services on Friday evening November 12, all new members of the Congregation were feted at a reception in the Temple Vestry.

Prior to the reception, each member received by mail a High Holy Day Prayer Book inscribed with his name.

UNIONGRAMS

Send greetings for all occasions by **UNIONGRAM**, proceeds of which go to the Hebrew Union College Scholarship Fund. Call Mrs. Claire Krom, WOodruff 2-7573, or Mrs. Robert Mann, WOodruff 4-1038.

UNIONGRAMS — 35 cents each.

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS AT ONCE!

for the

SISTERHOOD - MEN'S CLUB

Harvest Dinner Dance

SATURDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER 20

HERE'S THE PLAN FOR A WONDERFUL EVENING:

- 6:30 — Cocktail Parties for everybody (at members' homes.
You'll be told where to go)
- 8:00 — Delicious buffet dinner at Temple.
- 8:00 to 12:00 — Dancing to music by Russ Zarling's fine orchestra.

Send your check and number of reservations (\$6.50 per couple) to
Mrs. E. J. Youngerman, 3017 N. Marietta Ave.

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2419 E. Kenwood Boulevard
Milwaukee 11, Wis.

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I. Elements of Shinto Religion ①

- A. Nature-worship
- B. Emperor-worship
- C. Simple ritual + personal purity

Some say it is not a religion but a patriotic cult.

A. Nature-worship

- 1. Many gods, all objects or forces in nature
- 2. Sun-Goddess, most important
- 3. Mikado descends from her.
- 4. Mountains, e.g. Fuji-yama, sacred.

B. Emperor-worship

- 1. Mikado is divine, holy, and to be worshipped, when alive + when dead.

C. Ritual

- 1. Most prayers, to nature-gods and Emperor, are for material blessings
- 2. Personal cleanliness - much washing.
- 3. Purity is ceremonial + physical - rather than purity of heart + thought
- 4. No definite code of morality in Shinto.

Statement of 1919

(1)

The Japanese are the chosen people of God, and the presence of God is especially manifested in the Emperor of Japan. Shinto is logically destined to be the universal religion and the saving culture of mankind. The duty of the Japanese people and of the Emperor of Japan is to spread that religion and culture, until the Emperor of Japan shall become the supreme temporal and spiritual ruler of the world. This conquest of the world is to be made by peaceful means; but it seems reasonable that if peaceful means fail, the power of might may be tried. (Reported in the Biblical World, July, 1919, p. 434)

Statement of 1945

On the first New Year's Day after the military defeat of Japan in 1945, the Emperor Hirohito issued to his people an epoch-making Imperial Rescript, in which he re-constructed certain conceptions prevailing in Shinot. In particular he disavowed the cherished belief concerning his own divine nature, and also the superiority of the Japanese people.

"In greeting the new year, we have to... proceed unflinchingly toward elimination of misguided practises of the past... And, through being thoroughly pacific, we will construct a new Japan... "The ties between Us and Our people... do not depend upon mere legends and myths. They are not predicated on the false conception that the Emperor is divine, and that the Japanese people are superior to other races, and are fated to rule the world. The Tenno (Emperor) is not a living god.

"By their (that is, the Japanese people's) supreme endeavors... they will be able to render substantial contribution to the welfare and advancement of mankind."

ELEMENTS OF STRENGTH IN SHINTO

3

Reverence for the supernatural present in nature.
No general idolatry, despite round-mirror symbol of Sun-goddess.
Self-sacrificing reverence for government as a divine institution.
An enthusiastic, unifying patriotism.
An affinity between man and the divine.
Religious value in cleanliness and purity.
Reverence for the beautiful as integral to religion.
Loyalty to the superior, almost the soul of religion.

AMERICAN JEWISH

ELEMENTS OF WEAKNESS IN SHINTO

Its heterogeneous polytheism.
Its primitive animism, unsuited to science.
Its fantastic scriptural myths about deity.
Not one deity worthy of veneration as a moral ideal.
No paramount cosmic moral law.
No intrinsic value in a human individual.
No historic founder to standardize and inspire.
No outstanding, historic noble human example.
No magnificent goal for human society.
No glorious hope of a future life.
Its sacred scriptures give no guidance and inspiration for noble living.
Not much help available from deity.
No historic service actually rendered to outsiders.
No place for non-Japanese, except recently.

II. STORY OF KORESHIGE INUZUKA,

President Nipponese-Jewish Friendship League
(almost 1000 members)

1. Captain in Imperial Japanese Navy
2. Saved from death by German sub in WWI, vowed to devote life to noble cause. Picked Jews.
3. In 1920's, naval attache in Paris - identified self with French Jews - kept kosher.
4. In Shanghai 1939 helped refugees. "I noted that the U.S. press was very much controlled by Jews. Therefore, I expounded, if Japan remains friendly to Jews in Orient, it is possible to improve U.S. feelings toward Japan through the influence of mass media."
5. In 1945 he was commander of Philippines. Called to Manila for questioning as war criminal - saved by letter from Union of Orthodox Rabbis of U.S. that described how he had saved hundreds of Yeshiva students from death.

III. Chaplain Wolf and ADMIRAL
YAMAMOTO

(5)

At meeting of The League ¹⁹⁵³ Wolf
saw: Foreign Office officials
presidents of two of largest banks
directors of three of great mfg. companies
professors from leading universities
Prince Mikasa

YAMAMOTO, one of Japan's great naval
minds & political figures - was seated
next to Wolf (naval chaplain).

Y. Unwrapped stone object from handkerchief,
and explained through interpreter. An
archeologist by avocation. The old admiral
believed he had discovered a tablet
of the Ten Commandments in his Japanese
garden. Wolf examined stone, found
it bare, did not disillusion the old man.

IV. Prince Mikasa now 35-38 (6)

youngest brother of Emperor Hirohito
Prince Chichibu died
Prince Takamatsu is in diplomacy
Prince Mikasa is scholar.

Small, intellectual-looking, regal, impressive

1. Brought up to believe his family would inherit the world. Then collapsed spiritually when Japan lost. He had obligation to westernize himself. In six years of studying western culture, he discovered that the Jews were the key to western civilization.
2. Came to believe that Jew is not only father of the west - but is also bridge (which is poignant Japanese symbol) between west and east.
3. Jews taught him meaning of suffering. Japanese pride had been humbled. Only hope was for Japanese to learn from Jews how to retain dignity even though degraded. Through Judaism, he was proud again to be a Japanese.

4. He lives like a Jew

(7)

a) Intellectually:

1. Studies Hebrew
2. Reads Bible
3. Expert on Jewish history
4. Wants to start Imperial Institute of Jewish Studies
5. Is lecturer ^{in Tokyo} at the Women's University - Christian Missionary Institute in Tokyo.

b) World-wide Jewish sympathy:

1. member of World Zionist Organization
2. wants to go to Israel
3. believes himself (in some deep & mystic sense) to be descendant of Jewish kingly line.

c) Ritualistically:

1. Keeps Sabbath ^(Saturday) afternoon for study & meditation

d) Public statements

his feelings are known to royal family & Japanese public

If he were free agent,
which no royal person is) he would
convert and live in Israel.

V. Relations with Israel

(8)

1. Embassy in Tokyo flooded with requests for visas, jobs, Hebrew instruction, etc.
2. Pro-Israel sentiment, especially in Navy, would enable Israel to recruit a mercenary ~~army~~ ^{force} from Japan, if she wanted to.
3. Politically:
 - a. Israel's enemy is Arab-African bloc
 - b. Israel must make holes in that bloc
 - c. Japan will someday be in U.N.
 - d. Japan can tear holes in that bloc, for Israel, in the U.N.
4. Mystique

Inuzuka had a dream telling him that the hope of the world lay in an alliance between India, Israel & Japan. Israel is Oriental country, like Japan, at opposite end of Asia. They should work together.

VI. Our Future Action

(9)

1. Do we want converts?
2. Are we willing to accept them, as Shintoists, who will always retain something of the Shinto in them?

Feldman reports 10,000 seeking conversion.

This could be another episode like the Khazars.

TOKYO'S NIPPONESE-JEWISH FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

The Emperor's Brother Testifies to Israel's Chosenness

ARNOLD JACOB WOLF

A CHANUKAH party in the Allied forces' Tokyo Chapel Center is pretty much like any other anywhere. The Jewish community invites the servicemen stationed in central Honshu and the evening follows the program ordained of old by the Jewish Welfare Board. Still there are regional distinctions. Although most of the GI's come from Flatbush or Omaha, here and there is a uniform of the UN Forces on "R&R" leave from Korea ("Rest and Recreation" officially, though there are numerous more vulgar interpretations)—a Turkish Jew, an Ethiopian Falasha, a Londoner. And the Tokyo Jewish community itself smacks more of Kiev or Berlin or Tientsin than of Brooklyn. It is made up of Jews of disparate backgrounds united only, it seems, by past persecution and the English they speak now.

The last party was only fair. The *latkes* couldn't be cooked because there was a gas shortage, which the Tokyo gas company always solves by turning the gas off during dinner hour when, it correctly assumes, most of it is used. There was lox (a Japanese delicacy) and cream cheese (which is hard to find), but the famous Tokyo bagel-baker was on strike. This was a great pity because the Japanese bagels, as well as *hamantashen* and *challeh* in their season, are among the best in the world. The band was jazzy and loud, like all Japanese bands, trying to give us the most for our money. The services were brief

and impressive. But there was an undeniable shortage of women, the real point of the whole party. A couple of WAC's, several under-age daughters of the community, and a Japanese "Jewess" in kimono and *obi* were not enough to satisfy hundreds of Jewish servicemen.

It was under these unlikely circumstances that I was invited, almost too casually, to a dinner to be given the next night for Prince Mikasa, brother of the Emperor, and a reputed friend of the Jews. I accepted out of curiosity and because the club where the reception was to be held serves the best steaks in Japan. I was pretty sure that would attract some of the more interesting of the poorly fed Japanese aristocracy.

The American Club is the second best in Tokyo. The best one doesn't seem to admit Jews; most of the others are limited to correspondents, military officers, or nationals of a particular country. But it is a respectable place for thirty affluent Jews to invite as many important Japanese to dinner and a few speeches. The evening began at six and was over at nine, according to Japanese not Jewish *minhag*. The steaks were good, the speeches short, the mood cordial.

THE idea for the get-together had apparently been formulated first by Koreshige Inuzuka, president, according to its latest name, of the Nipponese-Jewish Friendship League, a fairly new organization with about four hundred members all over Japan. This organization is distinct from, and in some ways opposed to, the older and larger Japan-Israel Association, which had previously been the one more intimate with the Jewish community. Inuzuka's motive, I was told, for calling the party was to insinuate his own group into the graces of the Jews and dis-

SURELY never was a stranger "interfaith" gathering held than the one here described by ARNOLD JACOB WOLF. The author was born in Chicago in 1924, and, after an A.B. from the University of Cincinnati, took his rabbinical training at Hebrew Union College. He served as rabbi of Emanuel Congregation in Chicago, and is now Jewish Chaplain on the Staff of Commander, Naval Forces, Far East.

place the Japan-Israel Association, whose motives he impugned and whose methods he disclaimed. The Jewish community in Tokyo, disparate in background and religious inclination, but united by business ties and other circumstances, is always glad to pay the bill for any parley which promises them a greater measure of security or prestige in a country where almost all Jews are aliens.

Inuzuka, a former captain of psychological warfare in the Imperial Japanese Navy, is a man of ability and charm. When saved from death in a clash with a German submarine during the First World War, he had vowed to devote his life to some noble and private cause. That cause became the Jews. He told a *Nippon Times* reporter that his sympathies for the Jews were first excited when he watched the Russian Revolution from a battleship off Vladivostok and discovered in it a triumph of Jewish might and Jewish righteousness. Later in the 1920's, when he was a naval attaché in Paris, he identified himself with the French Jews and, in fact, kept a strictly kosher cuisine despite the incomparable blandishments of French cooking. What the French Jews thought of this Oriental is still a mystery, though they must have been generous enough, since during further assignments in Japan and China he showed numerous kindnesses to Jews.

In Shanghai particularly, which in 1939 was a refugee center, Captain Inuzuka found opportunity to help. Yet, as he states, his motives were far from purely disinterested. "I noted that the U.S. press was very much controlled by the Jews. Therefore, I expounded, if Japan remains friendly to the Jews in the Orient, it is possible to improve U. S. feelings toward Japan through the influence of mass media." A naive and plaintive blend of both philo- and anti-Semitism!

When the war ended Inuzuka was nominal commander of the occupied Philippines. He was called to Manila for questioning as a war criminal and was saved only by a letter from the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of America that described how he had saved hundreds of Yeshiva students from death. When Jews came in growing numbers to

Japan after the war he resolved to renew old and mutually profitable connections.

FOR their part, the Jews, mostly graduates of the China community, willingly acknowledge their debt to Inuzuka and other members of his League for decisive help, and are satisfied to share some of their new wealth with tested Japanese friends. Their position in a fluid Japanese economy and polity is insecure and their previous experiences of danger make them sensitive to the winds of favor. The Jews of Tokyo are, in a more exact way than the Communists could know, both "cosmopolitan" and "Zionist," cosmopolitan in that they know many lands and many languages, but are native to none, Zionist in that the sentimental center of their patriotism is the land of Israel. Because they are wealthy and at least temporarily well settled they will never go there, except perhaps a few for the six months necessary to gain Israeli citizenship. The home city of their youth will remain Harbin or Singapore rather than Jerusalem.

In Tokyo they are a community apart, withdrawing from the native Oriental simplicity, barred from the company of the snobbish European colonials. They are showy, unlettered, clannish, and insecure. They are also kind to a stranger (a Jewish one, of course; any other would not be close enough even to be confronted as a stranger), loyal to what they conceive of as appropriate Judaism, and sophisticated beyond imagination. Their new community building, formerly an American general's home, will be as much used for bridge and business as for the ministrations of their modest Orthodox rabbi. But it will be closer to the heart of these people than most American community centers or synagogues. It is already a kind of gilded *shtetl* housing the memories of their dead and the *cheder* of their fugitive offspring. All in all, the Jews of Tokyo incarnate the wanderings, the perils, and occasionally the dignity of the Jew in an alien world. They are exiles even from themselves.

What they do for a living is in some cases a mystery. My best friend in the commu-

nity, a New York veteran married to a beautiful *sabra*, left the country hurriedly when he was indicted for smuggling an enormous quantity of sugar. Few, if any, of the others are so clearly on the wrong side of the law, yet the distinctions between legal and extra-legal are far from clear-cut in post-occupation Japan. A fast buck can be made and Jews, among many others, are not averse to making it. This adds more than glamor to the Imperial approbation of the Prince.

I WAS flabbergasted at the high caliber of the Japanese guests. They included Foreign Office officials, the presidents of two of the largest banks (and banks to the Japanese, as to the Swiss, are supremely important), the directors of three of the great manufacturing companies, some professors from Tokyo's leading universities, and—perhaps most significant of all for Jewish needs—the Director of the Immigration Bureau. I was seated—*nebach*—with the Prince and the president of the community on one side of me, and former Admiral Yoshio Yamamoto with an interpreter on the other.

What had led the committee to seat me next to the Admiral was surely the fact that I was a navy chaplain. The old man delicately ignored the slight implied by my very junior rank. One of Japan's great naval minds and a figure of importance in Japanese politics, he is now reduced by purge and senescence to the position of an elder statesman lacking both power and the will to power. Between the coffee and his heart medicine, he turned to me and pointed to a small stone object which he had unwrapped from a handkerchief. Calling upon my modest Japanese, I asked, "*Nan deska?*"—What is it? He answered with a flow of explanation and then pointed to my Jewish chaplain's insignia. The interpreter explained that the Admiral, an archaeologist by avocation, believed he had discovered an old tablet of the Ten Commandments in his Japanese garden. I examined the dig with care. So far as I can say, the stone was bare, but I did not disturb an old man's illusion.

I have not mentioned the Prince, though

he dominated the entire gathering as soon as he appeared. Small, intellectual-looking, with the Semitic look that the Japanese admire, modified by their brownish coloring, he made a dignified and magnetic presence. Every Japanese in the room was strained between the ancestral compulsion to do obeisance to his lofty station and the modern, postwar dictum that the Imperial family is like everyone else—only more so. He was cordial and generous and seemed at home.

PRINCE MIKASA is the youngest of four brothers, of whom the eldest is the Mikado. By custom, as well as by inclination, this makes Mikasa the scholar of the family. Imperial rule is reserved for Hirohito (who is almost never called by that name), sports for the late Prince Chichibu, diplomacy for Prince Takamatsu. Mikasa bears his role with grace, assuming horn-rimmed glasses and a scholarly manner to fit.

The facts of Prince Mikasa's biography are almost as hard to ascertain as those of his Imperial oldest brother. In some ways they are even more difficult to collate since they describe a cloistered and extremely shy man. One reads of his annual *haiku* poem, frequently the best produced by his family, which joins the poets of the country in each January's competition. One hears of his experiments in square dancing, which American officers have taught him to do well. One notes his appearances, modest and encouraging, at many intellectual gatherings.

Perhaps the most interesting of Prince Mikasa's recent activities has been his investigation of the ceremonial mirror of the Imperial family. This ancient mirror, a traditional part of the coronation ceremonies, has recently been announced by some to be a vestige of Jewish influence. One hardy "authority" asserted that behind its quicksilver lay the Hebrew words "*Eheyeh asher eheyeh*," "I AM THAT I AM," the text of the Mosaic theophany. After a promise to ascertain the truth of this, the Prince returned without announcing a result. Though as a scientist he had wanted to examine the evidence, as a member of the royal house he

felt constrained to refuse politely to manipulate the mirror. So the "authorities" may continue to make their claims for the mirror, but at Crown Prince Akihito's enthronement they will surely be silenced. Prince Mikasa's own interest in Judaism is founded on other, more respectable grounds.

I was asked to open the proceedings with an invocation. Foregoing any English remarks informing the Deity why and wherefore we were gathered, which would have required extensive translation, I limited myself to two Hebrew benedictions: the *motsi* for bread and the *broche* recited upon seeing a member of a Gentile royal house. I am not sure anyone below a king rates it, but I had never been so close before and I was not going to take a chance. The Prince later asked me for copies of the *broches*, which I wrote out for him in cursive script. He read them back to me haltingly, explaining that he did better with printed Hebrew characters. If he had done any better than he had, I would have fainted.

The first address was given by Leon Greenberg, a lawyer who had come from the States to try Japanese war criminals and never gone home. An ex-president of the Jewish community, he was probably chosen, as I was from among the three rabbis present, for his ability to speak English without accent. No one could have predicted how the interpreter would have translated a more European-flavored diction. Mr. Greenberg was brief, but the conscientious translator took twice as long as he did with each of his three paragraphs. He paid tribute to the Prince, to Captain Inuzuka, and to Professor Kotsuji, a doctor in Semitics from the Pacific School of Religion who, like the Captain, had once been a great benefactor of the Jews in China. (He was now reduced to advisory work with the American navy.) Professor Kotsuji comes to all of our holiday services in the navy chapel but, despite a knowledge of Hebrew and Judaism equal to that of any of us, he has never pretended to be closer than a friend—in which he is unlike other and less learned Japanese now-

adays, who declare themselves to be Jews, half-Jews, or would-be Jews, though only a handful of them have actually been converted. Mr. Greenberg reminded the Japanese of their fine record of opposition to bigotry and hoped they would continue to befriend the Jews. We had had evidence of this in their adamant refusal during the last war to hand over to the Nazis the one Jew remaining in the Tokyo area, a penurious *shammes* of the Yokohama synagogue. Mr. Greenberg also remarked vaguely on some of the similarities between the two peoples, but he did not elaborate. It was for good will rather than ethnography that he and the other Jews had come.

PRINCE MIKASA then spoke—in Japanese, of course. He was precise and eloquent, correcting an occasional mistake by the interpreter, who formerly might have had to commit *hara-kiri* for it, but now satisfied himself with bows and blushes. The Prince spoke diffidently, almost haltingly, but with great sincerity and persuasiveness.

Unexpectedly, he began without the polite irrelevancies of the other speakers. He launched into an attack on the superstitious belief of many Japanese in the audience that their people was descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel. He deplored the theories, common here, that the Japanese and the Jews have some mystical affinity or spiritual identity apparent only to the initiated. The real relationship of the two peoples, more contrapuntal than identical, he considered to be more profound.

Then he spoke of himself, also unexpectedly and frankly for one upon whose words millions hang. He said that after the Western powers defeated Japan (he spoke of this more openly than I had ever heard any other Japanese do), he had had the *on*, the obligation, to Westernize himself. He had gone to school to Western culture. And, he said, in the six years of his study, he discovered one supreme fact; that the Jews were the key to Western civilization. The truth incarnated in Judaism, a truth of being rather than of theory, is the central meaning of

history. I listened in amazement as he gave almost point for point the argument of Halévi's *Kuzari*, which culminates in the conversion to Judaism of the Khan of the Khazars. History had brought him—Prince Mikasa—to the Jew, he said, and Judaism had brought him back to himself. For the Jew is not only the father of the West, he is the scion of the Orient. He is the holy bridge (a traditional and poignant Japanese symbol) between East and West. Through understanding Judaism the Prince regained a sense of his dignity as a member of his people; he was again proud to be Japanese.

Prince Mikasa then became practical. He pleaded for an Imperial Institute of Jewish Studies in Tokyo, presumably financed by Jewish money. He said that only an understanding of Judaism rooted in scholarly research would be of value. He offered himself as a student in that Institute.

Then he spoke of suffering. He said that Japan had only begun to suffer, that her pride and her might had been humbled for the first time in Imperial history. But the Jews had often suffered and been degraded. The only hope for the Japanese was to learn from the Jews how to draw meaning out of their trials.

I flatter myself that I was one of the few appropriately touched by the words of Prince Mikasa. My fellow Jews seemed reluctant to follow his sensitive and modest reflections with sympathy. What they wanted was not praise, but terms, from Caesar. The other Japanese were either cool novices or ecstatic philo-Semites, therefore less deserving to be taken seriously than the Prince in his middle way. For me, it was an unforgettable moment, a challenge, a vindication.

THEN Captain Inuzuka spoke. He told of a mystic vision that had come to him in the night. As in some passages in Genesis, it was hard to tell whether God himself or his angels had visited him, but in any event he had received a message from on high telling him that the hope of the world lay in an alliance between India, Israel, and Japan. I am not certain whether he meant the nation

or people of Israel, or how literally he meant to bind us all. I am inclined to think his ecstatic pictures were merely part of an accepted Japanese way of expressing ideas on world politics. No one got very excited. He said the atom bomb had been invented by Jews, that (though few knew the secret) the Japanese had invented a similar weapon. Like the Jew, the Japanese was both doer and thinker, an incomparable entrepreneur and a creative mystic. These two fabulous peoples—the only such—could if they would drink also from the wells of Indian tradition—remake Asia and the world. His talk, much longer than the others, though it continued in this vein, was interspersed with subtle remarks about the containment and defeat of Communism.

After the close of the banquet I was borne under by expressions of Japanese *politesse*. Admiral Yamamoto, as he took his lonely farewell, heaped blessings on my head. The civil officials insisted I meet with them at greater length so that they could pursue their inclinations towards things Jewish. The shopkeepers and the businessmen invited me to buy wholesale. Mr. Greenberg felt sure that even Inuzuka's long speech had not dissipated the splendid good will generated by the evening.

IT is the custom in Japan to offer one's host a gift. So I turned to the Prince and offered to procure for him any Jewish books he might wish to read. He thanked me and asked me to answer a question that other Jewish representatives had been unable to do for him satisfactorily. "This is your year 5713," he said. "But 5713 years since what? The Christians count from the birth of their founder, we from our kings—and you?" I told him we began with the creation of the world. "Ah," he said, "it is the right way."

I went out into the foggy Tokyo night in confusion and pride. I wondered whether it was their recent defeat or the very truth of Judaism that had brought these strange people so close to us. And how their fate could be the mirror of our own. And for what a man might still be brought to royal estate.

JAPANESE CONVERT TO JUDAISM

Heads Friendship-for-Israel Organisation

By a JEWISH CHRONICLE Reporter

A remarkable story of a Japanese who became converted to Judaism and now heads an association to promote friendship between Israel and Japan was told to me last week.



Shlomo Nishiyama

The convert is Shlomo (formerly Shigeru) Nishiyama, a 30-year-old business man, who as a student developed such an interest in, and liking for, things Jewish that he wrote the thesis for his university degree—for the first time in the history of Japan—on a subject connected with Israel's economic problems.

Today, Shlomo Nishiyama heads the Japan-Israel Association, whose aims are to foster better understanding and closer contact between the two countries.

The story of Nishiyama was told to me by his foster-parent, Mr. W. I. Zimmerman, a business man from California, who spent a few days in Britain on his way back from Israel. He met the Nishiyama family when the Zimmermans were living in Shanghai in the 'thirties. They left for the United States just before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour.

Moral Crisis

Like many a Japanese youth, Shigeru—then a university student in Tokyo and a Shintoist—underwent a moral and intellectual crisis as a result of the shattering events of the war, culminating in the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan. Disillusioned, he searched for new ideas and a new faith, and he found them in Judaism. With the help of a Jewish Chaplain of the American Occupation Forces he became a Jew.

His interest in Zionism and Israel, stirred by the sufferings of the Jews under Nazi occupation, developed simultaneously and he soon became the leading figure in the ever-growing movement for Japanese-Israeli friendship.

The interest aroused in Japan in the Jewish people and its restored homeland, Mr. Zimmerman told me, had found yet another expression: Prince Mikasa, a brother of Emperor Hirohito and a scholar in Hebrew, had accepted the position of Lecturer in Ancient Hebrew History at the Women's University—the Christian missionary institute in Tokyo.

London Jewish Chronicle
6 Aug 54

10,000 JAPANESE SEEKING CONVERSION TO JUDAISM, JWB OFFICIAL REPORTS

HARTFORD, Sept. 8. (JTA) -- As many as 10,000 Japanese are seeking conversion to Judaism, Rabbi A. J. Feldman, spiritual leader of Beth Israel Temple here, has reported after returning from a 10-week tour of Torah Convocations in the Far East. Rabbi Feldman made the tour on behalf of the National Jewish Welfare Board's Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy, of which he is executive chairman.

Explaining the new trend among Japanese, Rabbi Feldman stated he found that the war had "knocked out the spiritual props" which previously had been sufficient for many Japanese whom Shintoism taught that their country was invincible. As a result, many of them are turning to Judaism, bolstered to a great extent by the fact that American Jews, especially chaplains in the American armed services, had offered many kindnesses to the Japanese.

A great many Japanese, Rabbi Feldman reported, are learning Hebrew, and many are practicing Jewish rites. Jewish chaplains and rabbis, however, are "going slow" on accepting the would-be converts, he noted.

Rabbi Feldman, who is editor of the Jewish Ledger here, reported that he found that European Jews in Japan, Orthodox in their practice, had experienced little anti-Semitism in that country, except during World War II, when Japan was an ally of Hitler Germany.



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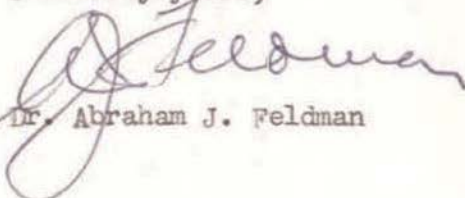
Rabbi Herbert A. Friedman
2419 E. Kenwood Blvd.
Milwaukee 11, Wisc.

My dear Herbert:

Thanks for your letter of the 10th, September. The statements to which you refer appeared in the form of an interview in the Jewish Ledger of September 2nd, upon my return from the Far East. It is based on information which was given to me by Rabbi Milton Rosen of Tokyo who is handling the situation. Also, one of the chaplains who recently returned from the service, I think it was Raab, showed me some pictures of these prospective converts, when he saw me at the Convention of the CCAR last June.

With every good wish for a blessed
New Year, I am

Sincerely yours,


Dr. Abraham J. Feldman

AJF/sz