



Irene Shaland's Lecture

Jews in the Land "Quite Unlike Any Other:" Myanmar and Cambodia through the Eyes of a Jewish Traveler



Sunday

October 21st 2018

2:00 PM

Advance registration required. Call 845.634.4997 to register.

This is Burma, and it will be quite unlike any land you know about.
Rudyard Kipling, "Letters from the East," 1899.

The road to Myanmar is definitely less-travelled, even for a seasoned globe-trotter. But those who do venture along it are wooed by the country's sparkling beauty and the sincere friendliness of its people. The Myanmar's temple art is matchless in its elegance. The deepest spirituality of its ancient form of Buddhism seamlessly blends with the pagan spirits of the Burmese universe. It is hard to imagine a religious Jew with his family arriving in this, "unlike any other" land. But they did, and many built significant fortunes, while playing an important role in turning British Burma, especially Rangoon, into one of the most prosperous regions in Southeast Asia. **They were the Baghdadi**, a special breed of the Jewish tribe. And so, the Burmese Jewish narrative is, first and foremost, the Baghdadi story.

Travel with Irene Shaland to the ancient land of rice fields and countless golden Buddhas and pagodas to discover the little-known narrative of the once thriving Jewish community of Burma that was all but decimated during World War II.

Understand why this small group of immigrants throughout their history in Asia became so successful commercially and powerful politically only to disappear to almost oblivion after the 1940s and 1960s.

Learn about the Jewish renaissance in this country today and the brave new world of the Myanmar Jewry.

In Cambodia, we will visit a small synagogue across the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh and discover what the Rabbi's usual day looks like in the country of Angkor Wat.