



mitsugi shibata

In Shanghai in July 1942, 3 high-ranking Nazis met Japanese officials. The Germans were keen to see the Final Solution implemented by its Japanese ally and brought a proposal for exterminating the city's large Jewish population. There was to be a round-up of all Shanghai's Jews on the Jewish New Year and a number of options were proposed for their immediate liquidation.

At that meeting was Japanese vice-consul, Mitsugi Shibata. Appalled at what he had heard, he convened a committee of 7 local Jewish leaders and told them of the plan, even though he knew that this was treasonous. Together they decided that since the extermination plan probably did not have the backing of Tokyo, they should inform the relevant authorities there. When the local commander of the Military Police found out, he had Shibata and the 7 Jews imprisoned and tortured. However, their message had got through to Tokyo and the extermination plans were halted.

Because of his actions, Shibata was expelled from the Foreign Service. Back in Tokyo, he felt he had harmed the 7 Jews, by causing their imprisonment and was too ashamed to maintain his Jewish contacts. In fact, he had saved thousands of lives. It was not until the 1976 that he was located and honoured at a special ceremony at the Jewish Community Centre in Tokyo.

*Courage to care*