Peter Max was born in Germany on October 19, 1937. His parents fled Nazi Germany with him in 1938 to escape the Holocaust and travelled to Shanghai, China, where they lived for the next ten years.

In 1948, Peter Max left Shanghai with his family. He cried on the ship because he did not want to part with his Amah. After Shanghai, Peter’s family moved to Israel and France and finally settled down in the United States. Peter lost contact with his Amah but hoped that one day he would return to Shanghai to find her.

Today, Peter is a well-known artist in the USA. His works often feature famous people, statesmen, sportsmen, sports and some other popular cultures. He has created paintings and projects for US Presidents Ford, Carter, Reagan and the first President Bush. He has created as many as 100 paintings of President Clinton.

One of Continental Airlines’ Boeing 777 aircrafts had a special appearance designed by Peter. He has also painted for a Norwegian Cruise line named Breakaway.

In October, 2012, Peter returned to Shanghai with a sketch of his Amah, drawn from memory. He hoped to find her, embrace her, and bring his Amah to America. Peter said, “I’ve been to many countries. Wherever I go, I feel myself a Chinese. I think I’m 80% a Chinese.”

Peter opened his own studio in Pudong New Area of Shanghai. He hopes that his future works will show more of his attachment to his second homeland, China.

On October 11, 2012, Peter Max paid a special visit to the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum where he attended a press conference and expressed his wish to find his Shanghai Amah, i.e. his nanny. He said, “She was only a couple of years older than me, so she was more like an elder sister of mine. She is my first art teacher and opened the window of art for me.”

During his years in Shanghai, Peter lived in a pagoda-style house, between a Buddhist and a Sikh temple. In the morning, he would watch the Buddhist monks practice calligraphy with large bamboo brushes on large sheets of rice paper. At night, he would listen to the beautifully sung prayers of the Sikhs. When Peter lived in Shanghai he was very close with his nanny, Amah. Peter’s Chinese nanny taught him how to hold and paint with a brush by using the movement of his wrist. His mother encouraged him to develop his art skills by leaving a variety of art supplies on the balcony of the pagoda.