

MARCO POLO ROUTE

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'It would be impossible to piece together such a continuously accurate travel account from afar. The main Challenge raised was that Marco Polo never mentioned the Great Wall. Yet we met Chinese historians along the way who pointed out that the Great Wall was mostly a broken line of dirt rubble when Polo passed, so there was no reason to mention it in his account. The magnificent stone wall so famous today was built 80 years after Polo left China", Rutstein said.

Rutstein and Winn are writing a book on their adventures, which took them across 14 named mountain ranges and 6 deserts, including the 1,000 mile long Taklamakan and parts of the Gobi. They took more than 20,000 photos, a rare and unusual document of modern life along the ancient Silk Road. They are trying to raise funds for a travelling photo exhibit and a documentary film on Polo's journey. Their book is well named - "Amazing Places, Marco Polo".

A travel/history/adventure/photo-

graphy book published by Viking Press of the first half of the expedition is now available from the Marco Polo Foundation. It is entitled "IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARCO POLO: a Twentieth-Century Odyssey". It was written and photographed by Harry Rutstein and Joanne Kroll, an anthropologist who traveled and documented Marco Polo's path from Venice to the back door of China. The large studio book consists of their story as well as 142 photographs - 67 in magnificent color, 7 maps, many ancient prints and dozens of pertinent excerpts from Marco Polo's book. A

copy may be obtained by sending a check for \$14.95 (includes handling and postage) to the MARCO POLO FOUNDATION, INC., P. O. BOX 4155, SEATTLE, WA 98104.

By Harry Rutstein, Executive Dir.

MARCO POLO FOUNDATION, INC.

The Marco Polo Foundation is a non-profit foundation dedicated to providing a better understanding between the East and the West by means of international research, expeditions along the routes of Marco Polo publication of books, production of films, video and other audio-visual materials and their distribution throughout the Western world.



Photograph of Scroll of Esther. Oriental Script. Illuminated in China 18th century (?). Ink on vellum, paint and gold partially backed by Chinese silk. Cecil Roth Collection, Beth Zedec Museum, Toronto. Photograph courtesy of Beth Halleluach.



NEW PUBLICATION AVAILABLE

The Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong has announced publication of the first volume in its newly-established Monograph Series. Entitled *Sino-Judaic Studies: Whence and Whither*, it is an essay and bibliography by Dennis A. Leventhal, Chairman of the Society. Its main purpose is to serve as a map of areas already explored, and to point the way to unknown territory for explorers in this field of research.

The volume also includes the first published copy of the Kadoorie Memoir, which was originally written in 1979 by Lord Lawrence Kadoorie, C.B.E., J.P., as a private letter to a friend and former employee. Numerous anecdotes set in the framework of a China coast Jewish family history offers a unique picture of the life of a major figure in 20th century Sino-Judaic history.

Hardbound, 99 pp., 9 ill., 284 citations. ISBN 962718401-2. Overseas price US \$17.50 per copy (incl. postage). Make checks payable to "Ohel Leah Synagogue". Address orders to: Chairman, Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong, 70 Robinson Road, Hong Kong.

Join The Sino-Judaic Institute

The Sino-Judaic Institute was founded on June 27, 1985, in Palo Alto, California, by an international group of Jewish scholars and activists. The purpose of the Institute is to work with the Chinese Government and the Kaifeng Jews in the study and preservation of Chinese Jewish life, culture and artifacts.

At this initial meeting, the Institute adopted the following goals and purposes:

- 1) To support the establishment of a Judaica section in the new Kaifeng museum.
- 2) To assist and promote scholarship and research regarding the history of, contacts with, and the contemporary experience of the Chinese Jews.
- 3) To serve as a briefing and information center for those interested in the subject and for travelers to Kaifeng.
- 4) To publish information and scholarly material on the Jews of China.
- 5) To promote friendship with and understanding of the Jews of China.
- 6) To develop close cooperation with Chinese and Jewish groups on matters of mutual interest.

Membership in the Institute is open and we cordially invite you to join in supporting our endeavor, the first such effort since 1924. Our annual dues structure is as follows:

Senior citizens and students	\$20	Corporate/organizational	\$ 250
Regular membership	\$50	Benefactor	\$1,000

I wish to become a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute and to receive *Points East*. Enclosed is my cheque for \$_____.

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An occasional publication of The Sino-Judaic Institute

VOL. I, NO. 2

APRIL, 1986

TWO VISITS TO KAIFENG

MY SOLO JOURNEY TO KAIFENG

In August and September of 1985 I had the unique opportunity of spending uninterrupted time alone with many of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng. It was the first time in over forty years that any Westerner was able to spend a concentrated amount of time alone with the Chinese Jews, recording, with their permission, informal oral histories of their families as well as memories of Jewish rituals and holidays.

My trip to Kaifeng was preceded by a visit to Beijing to secure tickets for my journey back from China via the Trans-Siberian Railroad. While in Beijing I met with Madame Jin Xiaojing, a researcher in the National Minorities Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and a woman who only within the last few years discovered her own Jewish roots ("I Am a Chinese Jew", *Points East*, Vol. I, No. 1).

Madame Jin's daughter, Qu Yinan (presently studying at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles), and I had spoken many times over phone calls spanning the East and West coasts. We were able to compare our Jewish backgrounds and get well acquainted, distance notwithstanding. It was through Qu's letter of introduction that I was able to meet her mother.

Jin Xiaojing and I met over lunch at the Beijing Hotel several times. She was obviously delighted to encounter "another" Jew, and appeared to revel in her new-found identity. Each time we met for lunch she was eager to stress that we could order anything so long as it did not contain pork -- a carry-over from her early Muslim upbringing, and newly reinforced by the discovery of her Jewish identity.

My conversations with Jin Xiaojing were enlightening, and underscored the fact that there are many Muslims today who, if they could only explore their roots a bit further, might indeed discover that their ancestors, too, were Jewish. How fortunate it is that Madame Jin herself is a researcher on

this very subject.

While travelling south from Beijing, I thought back to my first few visits to Kaifeng. It was during my initial visit to China in 1981 as a student at Nankai University in Tianjin, that I learned of the continuing existence of the Chinese Jews. But it was not until 1983 that I was able to actually visit Kaifeng myself as a tour leader for the American Jewish Congress.

On each AJC tour I led, our group met with two or three of the more prominent Chinese Jews -- Shi Zhongyu, Zhao Pingyu and Shi Yulian. Articulate and at ease in front of groups of foreigners, these gentlemen all knew quite a bit about their Jewish roots.

At these meetings, the Chinese Jews gave brief accounts of their family histories and what they knew of their Jewish heritage. Question and answer periods always followed, but in spite of all this many members of my groups reported feeling that it was hard to envision the community as having ever been a truly Jewish one.

It is not difficult to understand why. The steles which we were permitted to view in the warehouse of the Kaifeng Museum were engraved with the history of the Kaifeng community and the major tenets of Judaism. Dating to 1489 and 1512 (only a rubbing is left of the 1663 stele, which itself has been lost), these commemorative stones once located on the site of the synagogue, have Chinese characters carved into them -- beautiful, but totally incomprehensible to the average Western tourist with no knowledge of Chinese.

On the site of the former synagogue (which itself was periodically destroyed by fire and flood), next to South Teaching Scripture Lane where most of the Jews once lived, now stands a hospital. This is the fulfillment of a dream by the Anglican missionaries who bought the site in the early 1900s. Nothing at all remains to remind visitors that as early as 1163 the Jews first obtained permission to build a synagogue on that very spot.

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SHABBAT IN KAIFENG, AUGUST 1985

Our group arrived at Zhengzhou Air Airport about 10 o'clock at night. We were met by Mr. Guang and Mr. Liu of CITS. We "enjoyed" an hour and a half bumpy and dusty bus trip to Kaifeng. Both Mr. Guang and Mr. Liu are very knowledgeable about the Jews of Kaifeng. It seems that they both memorized Bishop White's book and are very anxious for more information about the Jews of Kaifeng. They were most anxious to make our experience a very special one.

The next morning we set out for South Teaching of the Scriptures Lane and the home of Mr. Zhou. As always, Mr. Zhou was a gracious and outgoing host. We looked at the model of the synagogue that Mr. Zhou is working on and talked with him for some time with the help of Mr. Liu and Mr. Guang. It is clear that he is quite used to greeting foreign visitors and enjoys all the attention. In a most interesting exchange with our entire group assembled, I asked Mr. Zhou how long this dwelling had been in his family and he held up one finger. I asked him if that means 100 years and he answered, "No, a thousand". It was quite impressive. I have never met a Jew who could show me their 1,000 year old ancestral home. (Obviously, I am aware that because of the floods, it was probably rebuilt many times.) We left Mr. Zhou's home with a promise to meet again in the afternoon at the Kaifeng Guest House along with other Kaifeng Jews. We walked off to the area in front of the hospital, the site of the former Kaifeng synagogue. It seems that some construction is about to take place and quite a significant area has been cleared. In my mind's eye, I saw the synagogue standing and in my soul, I felt a pang of hope that the buildings that were removed were to make way for a replica of the Kaifeng Synagogue, but, so much for fantasy. I was intrigued as I looked at the debris

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BOARD REPORT

From the Editor:

The response to our first issue of Points East has been overwhelmingly positive. Enquiries have been coming in from all over the country, especially since the Association of Asian Studies published mention of our organization in its newsletter.

Aside from learning that our printer's grippers were too tight and that using a three-hole punch would facilitate collection of future issues, readers appreciated the blending of first-hand accounts, scholarly material, personal testimony and related work being done in the field. In this issue we proudly present our first two letters, one by the pre-eminent scholar in the field, Donald Daniel Leslie. Also for the first time are two items which we hope will be regular features of Points East, a column called "In the Field . . .", a summation of activities relating to the Chinese Jews, and a report of the SJI Board meeting.

We have received a number of articles detailing visits to Shanghai and elsewhere in which the authors have sought to uncover traces of the former European Jewish community presence there. We will feature these in a subsequent issue. Those of you who lived in China before or during the War are invited to submit articles based on your experiences at the time.

We hope you enjoy this second issue of Points East.

Anson Laytner

Points East:

An Occasional Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute

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The Board of the SJI held its second meeting on January 26, 1986 in Palo Alto, CA. Among the many issues discussed at the day-long meeting were the following items:

The SJI currently has over 85 members from places as diverse as the United States, Canada, Hong Kong, China, Australia, West Germany, Sweden, Holland and California.

The SJI has tax-exempt status in California but is still awaiting approval of Federal tax-exempt status as a non-profit organization.

The SJI is committed to assisting in the creation of a Jewish museum in Kaifeng, only all of a sudden we have a choice of three! A family museum by Mr. Zhou will not receive our support currently because it is a private enterprise. However, two other museums, one at Henan University and the other, the Kaifeng Municipal Museum, are both under consideration. The University Museum focuses on life during the Song Dynasty and seeks to include a section on Jewish life in Kaifeng at that time. Although limited in scope and relatively remote in location, it will probably receive some support from us because it is already in-the-works. The Kaifeng Municipal Museum is still only in the planning stage but, given its central location and broader scope, the SJI still prefers to devote its energy towards seeing a Judaica section created there.

The highlight of the meeting, in the writer's opinion, centered around a controversy regarding the parameters of SJI activities in Kaifeng. Generally speaking, the Board was of two opinions, one wishing to confine the SJI to scholarly work, the other seeking to pursue a more activist role with the descendants of the Chinese Jews. Despite heated debate, there was total consensus in opposition to any activity which smacks of proselytism. After much discussion, the original goals of the Institute were retained as the best compromise between the "academic" and "activist" factions and the following policies were adopted:

- 1) No officer, board member or member of the SJI may use the SJI name for monetary gain.
- 2) Any activity which may be interpreted in such a fashion must be cleared in advance with the Executive Committee.
- 3) No one may speak or act on the part of the SJI without prior permission of the Executive Committee.
- 4) Any project seeking use of the

SJI name must be sent through the President for Board approval which will be determined through correspondence or at the next scheduled meeting. If pursued through the former course, any conflict will be resolved at the next meeting. No project may be undertaken in the name of the Institute without Board approval.

The Board then endorsed a project developed by Anson Laytner and Sidney Shapiro to air the miniseries "Holocaust" on China Television as an official SJI project. Begun prior to the birth of the Institute, the project already has won the approval of the Chinese authorities and the distributors of the show, Worldvision Enterprises. Fundraising for the project will continue.

Lastly, the SJI will publish several scholarly works. The first is the republication of Loewenthal's bibliographies together with an update by Leo Gabow. The second, a scholarly journal called Sino-Judaica, to be edited by Prof. Al Dien of Stanford University, will feature longer original articles than does Points East, the SJI newsletter.

By Anson Laytner, Secretary

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

27 February 1986

The Editor - Points East

Dear Sir:

May I congratulate you on your excellent Vol. I, No. 1 of January, 1986.

I found the extracts from Madame Jin Xiaojing well worth reprinting. Her points about the absorption of the Kaifeng Jews among the Muslims are very interesting, and also her suggestion that there are many descendants all over China. I was fascinated by the possibility of a Chinese Jewish presence in Yangzhou in particular, for I believe that there was once a flourishing community there around 1500. Her errors too are interesting! It is unlikely that there was a large immigration in the Ming.

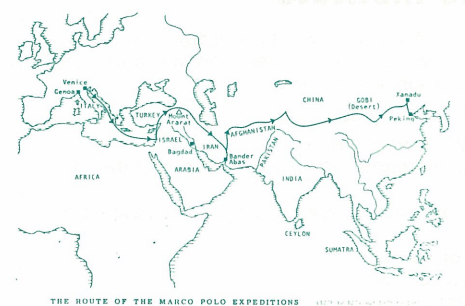
I was also impressed with the perception shown by Daniel J. Elazar. As he writes, some of the "Jews" of Kaifeng will indeed become Jewish, because the Jews of the West will make them into Jews. As a sinologist and historian, I do not intend to enter into the controversy as to whether that is a good thing or bad. I would merely say that, at the present time, there can hardly be said to be Jews in Kaifeng, not halachically, nor by any reasonable use of the term Jew. It is good too to see Michael Pollak rightly correctly Shapiro's mistake about the manuscripts supposed to be held in Kaifeng. As he writes, there is still some chance of finding manuscripts in Hebrew or Chinese. Nevertheless, I would stress that, apart from the well-known collections in Cincinnati and the

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had turned the desert upside down. The sand particles were so fine and tiny that we inhaled a lot of it - I coughed for a week afterward". "It is a little scary being lost in the middle of the second largest desert in the world - only the Sahara is bigger. Marco Polo said he heard strange voices in it. It is known locally as the "Sea of Death" or "Desert of No Return". I wasn't too worried because our Uighar guide seemed to know where he was going. All along the Silk Road we found people very friendly and helpful like him. They were especially pleased to meet Americans," said Ruthstein.

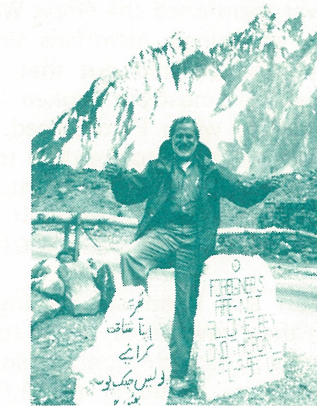
"I first got intrigued by the idea of Marco Polo 15 years ago when I found out that nobody had ever succeeded in following his complete route", Rutstein said. In 1971 I approached the Chinese at the U.N. with my idea. They told me I'd have to wait - and I sure did wait, a total of 14 years for permission to cross China, much of it where no foreigners have been since the explorer Aurel Stein was last here in 1932, over 50 years ago."

"Lots of adventures have tried to follow Marco Polo's Route", Rutstein said. "But most failed because of closed borders, sickness and the difficult travel conditions on the Silk Road. Frank Shor (USA) tried it in 1949 and got stopped at the Chinese border. Others claimed to follow Polo, but they often missed his route by hundreds of miles; following the northern rim of the Silk Road is easier. I spent four years studying old maps and comparing them with Polo.



The southern arm of the Silk Road that Polo took across the southern Xinjiang has been next to impassable for centuries because the desert buried many of the old oases. But a few oases still survive and so does the Silk 'business on the Old Silk Road. I was thrilled to find local farmers in Khotan were still weaving silk patterns by hand and dyeing each individual thread as they have for 2,000 years. They are so beautiful that I've decided to sell them in the U.S.", said Rutstein enthusiastically.

which shrank and became too salty and has now disappeared. Another Lop tribesman living in Milan, Xinjiang was the son of Aurel Stein's guide and told us tales about that period."



Harry Rutstein, leader of the 1985 Marco Polo Expedition of the border between China and Pakistan. (Elevation 16,400 ft.)

"I have always been impressed with how Polo's journey made such a big impact on modern history. He was the first true global man. Polo's book helped spark the Renaissance in Europe with the hundreds of new ideas and products he brought back from China. His book was the bible of geographers for 200 years. Christopher Columbus was jealous of Polo and it led him to his discovery of America. So in a sense it was Marco Polo that propelled modern history to leap forward, and the Chinese deserve credit for being such an advanced civilization at the time" Rutstein philosophized.

"My purpose in retracing the route was to see what has remained the same and what has changed. Crossing China for 4500 miles was like walking through the world's biggest outdoor museum. In Xinjiang we picked up 2,000 year old Han Dynasty coins lying on the ground like they were thrown down yesterday. At the same time, we were astounded at how rapidly China is modernizing and overcoming the age-old poverty of its peasants."

"Everywhere we travelled we heard the same story over and over again. Whether peasant or factory owners, everyone said income had doubled in the last 5 years. It's because of economic reforms that let people work their own plot or get bonuses for increased production. Peasants that still push hand carts around now own color tv's"

The expedition met many rarely visited minority tribespeople who live along remote stretches of the Silk Road. "We danced and sang with Tajiks in the Pamirs, warmed ourselves in Kazakh yurts below Mt. Muztagata, ate dozens of watermelon with desert Uighars. In Ningxia we prayed in the mosques with Hui moslems, and Inner Mongolia Michael wrestled with a Mongol herdsman for sport", Rutstein said.

"In Gansu Province we met a Yugu tribesman of Tibetan stock who is earning U.S. \$50,000 dollars a year net profit from a bus company he started in 1984. He used to be a vegetable farmer. Now he is in the vanguard of China's revolutionary New Socialism where it is OK to make money as long as the nation benefits. This wise policy has inspired the common people we met with new vigor and pride", said Ruthstein.

"We also met two remarkable Lop tribesmen, the only ones still alive that used to live in the middle of the Lop Desert. Until 1924 they lived by hunting exclusively around Lake Lop

Who was the most remarkable person we met? Both Rutstein and Winn agree it was Liu Yu Tien, a modern Chinese Marco Polo we met near the ancient Buddhist grottoes of Dunhuan.

"Liu spent 11 months in 1984 hiking 3,000 miles along the Great Wall. This year he's hiking another 3,500 miles on the Silk Road from Xian to Pakistan, nearly the reverse of our trip", said Rutstein. It was a face to face meeting between a Chinese Marco Polo and an American Marco Polo. We immediately felt a deep comradeship with each other. Liu told me he sometimes goes without food for three days, and has no sleeping bag to protect him on cold desert nights", said Rutstein.

"What drives Liu is a deep quest for freedom and the adventure of living spontaneously. He is rebelling against the structure of life in China, it is too rigid for a free spirit like him. Dramatic statements like his journey show that he loves China and hopes to inspire its leaders to be more flexible in letting people pursue their own dreams", Rutstein said.

The 1985 expedition visited every identifiable town in China mentioned by Marco Polo, and found his account a remarkably accurate and detailed travel guide. "This should help disprove the British scholar who claims that Marco Polo never even visited China but simply wrote tales he heard while trading in Persia", Rutstein observed.

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LITERARY MISDEEDS

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ferring to the 1926 edition which excises the name of Mr. A. Horne.

The incorrect attributions of Kublin, Pollak and Leslie could only come about through the use of the second edition of Ezra's "Chinese Jews." Had they been aware of the original published in 1925, Horne would have been given his due credit.

It is difficult not to suppose that Arthur Sopher indulged in some hanky-panky that deprived Horne of authorship of the Appendix and in place substituted his own name.

Mr. Alexander Horne is now 85 years of age and living in San Francisco. Beset by ill health, he no longer is interested in the subject. But his son, Mr. Tony Horne of Palo Alto, California, who is in possession of the original edition of "Chinese Jews," is perturbed that his father's name has been removed as author of the Appendix.

I have seen the original edition and photocopied relevant pages. But Mrs. Leorah Kroyanker, Curator of the Kaifeng Exhibition in Beth Hatefutsoth on the Tel Aviv Campus, advises, ". . . the Jewish National and University Library have the two editions."

All of the above material have been presented to Doctor Leslie and to Michael Pollak. Leslie responded, "You are completely right in your 'A Literary Misdeed.' I had no idea that Sopher used someone else's work," and Michael Pollak advises that "The Horne-Sopher matter is distressing. Anything can happen, and it is conceivable, though very improbable, that there was an error in the production of the second edition which left Horne unmentioned. But I doubt this."

Doctor Irene Eber of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who has done considerable writing on the subject of the Chinese Jews, writes, "...on Sopher and Horne, it is sad, but such inadvertent or intended appropriations happen frequently. It is good that you brought it to everyone's attention."

And finally Mrs. Kroyanker informs me that she will "correct matters in the forthcoming exhibition, where I will state that Mr. Horne wrote the Appendix."

Dr. David Brown, an American Jew, who visited Bishop White and Kaifeng Jews in 1932, wrote a series of articles in "The American Hebrew and Jewish Tribune. In one of his articles entitled "Brown Rediscovered China's Ancient Jews," he lists the officers of the

"Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews." "This new organization," he wrote, "was formed . . . in August of 1924, the new officers elected being: president, Simon A. Levy; vice-president, Dr. A. Rosenberg; treasurer, Dr. Lobzowsky; secretary Mr. A. Hoine." Hoine, of course, is a typo error, and is actually Mr. A. Horne.

Interestingly, Bishop White, in Part One, page 156, in his "Chinese Jews," quoting from David Brown in a chapter headed, "Through the Eyes of an American Jew," carries over the typo error, and Horne is again referred to as Hoine.

It is hoped that whenever it becomes necessary for writers to quote or refer to Ezra's "Chinese Jews," credit be given to Mr. A. Horne as author of the Appendix.

By Leo Gabow

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

THE JIN SAGA CONTINUES

[Last issue, Points East reprinted excerpts from articles by Prof. Jin on her discovery of her Jewish roots. In this issue, we continue the tale through the next generation. Prof. Jin's daughter, Qu Yinan, is currently a student at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles. The article is reprinted from the New York Times, June 18, 1985.]

Portland, Ore., June 17 — Qu Yinan could barely contain her excitement as she watched Rabbi Joshua Stampfer wash his hands in preparation for a Jewish Sabbath meal.

Miss Qu, who spoke little English, gestured for the two-handed pewter cup the rabbi used for the ritual, then expertly poured the water first over her right hand, then her left, and again over both hands. It was, she was able to explain later, something she had learned from her grandfather in China.

Since that first American Sabbath last September, the 25-year-old Peking journalist said, she has learned much more about the history and traditions of a people of which she recently learned she is a part.

Miss Qu discovered she was among the several hundred surviving Chinese Jews after her mother, Jin Ziaojing, an anthropologist and journalist, learned of the Jews of Kaifeng at a conference on minorities in 1981.

'I Am a Chinese Jew'

The next year, Miss Jin wrote an article, "I Am a Chinese Jew," for a national journal, outlining the history of Chinese Jews and her own memories.

Next fall, Miss Qu plans to attend the University of Judaism in Los

Angeles, to which she received a full scholarship.

"I really love this Jewish people," she said recently. "Before I did not know I was Jewish. Now I know, and I want to know it clearly. I want to learn more about Jewish culture, history and religion."

Although Miss Qu originally came to the United States to learn more about American cultures, her interest in Judaism was fueled by her acquaintance with Rabbi Stampfer and his wife, Goldie, with whom she has been living. She now reads Hebrew, attends Sabbath services at Rabbi Stampfer's Conservative synagogue in Portland, Congregation Neveh Shalom, helps with the Sunday school, sings the grace after meals and soon will be called upon to recite the Torah blessing at the Saturday morning religious service.

Hopes to Write of Traditions

After completing studies at the University of Judaism, Miss Qu said, she plans to return to China and would like to write a book about Jewish traditions. She said there were no articles or books available in Chinese that discuss Judaism and its history.

Like many Chinese Jews, Miss Qu's family maintained only the vestiges of religious practice. Her family did not eat pork or shellfish and she recalls that her grandfather always wore a blue skullcap, maintaining the custom of males covering the head.

Because her grandfather did not discuss his religion, however, Miss Qu said she and her mother had thought they were part of China's sizable Moslem community, since Moslems also shun pork and wear skullcaps. Rabbi Stampfer met Miss Jin and her daughter when he traveled to China in 1983 under the auspices of the Oregon Committee for the Humanities to research the history of the Jews of Kaifeng.

Invitation to America

He invited Miss Qu to come to America. Four months later, after discussions with her mother and her husband, Fong Chaoyang, 28, Miss Qu accepted the rabbi's offer. Almost a year after the initial invitation, Miss Qu arrived in Portland. Her husband, an international affairs reporter for The People's Daily, remains in China.

Since September, Miss Qu has spent her days studying English at Portland Community College, and Hebrew and Jewish customs with Rabbi Stampfer and his family. She also enrolled in an introductory Judaism class offered by the Oregon Board of Rabbis.

Rabbi Stampfer said Miss Qu is now the only Kaifeng Jew in the world

SHABBAT IN KAIFENG

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plaque with the Hebrew word "Shalom" and the Chinese equivalent. Mr. Zhou showed me a mock up of a proposed commemorative coin with a likeness of the Kaifeng synagogue. It is quite nice and I hope he is successful in that project.

We visited the Great East Mosque which we found interesting. It seems obvious that some of the accoutrements of the Kaifeng Synagogue are indeed on that site, the lotus bowl being a notable example.

We also visited the steles (memorial stones tracing the community's history) in the warehouse of the Henan Museum. Given their state of preservation, they are hardly impressive and their sad situation of being relegated to that warehouse is most disheartening.

Some observations: In regard to the community -- I was most interested in Leo Gabow's article in the Palo Alto newspaper. Lou is obviously correct, "There is no Jewish community".

There are, however, people who strongly identify themselves as Jewish. The individuals that I met seem strongly private and family-oriented. But I believe that it is because there is no material focus for what can become a community. Permit my humble recommendations based on much too short a stay in Kaifeng but based on a gut feeling and a good deal of experience with Jews and Jewish communities. I believe that it is of the greatest importance that there be a person or persons from the U. S. Jewish community knowledgeable about Jews and Judaism and fluent in Mandarin present in Kaifeng from now on. No other single project could be more important to the Jew of Kaifeng. Such a person with skills of organization and knowledge of Judaism could literally perform miracles. I would encourage the Sino-Judaic Institute to support such efforts. If it is necessary for another entity to be created for the purpose of developing educational materials, so be it. If it need be separate from the Institute, fine. But we should support the project. As to the matter of a material focus to the community, this discussion really involves a myriad of subjects including the issue of the multitude of Kaifeng museums. I believe that very high level negotiations should take place with either the Mayor of Kaifeng (who is due in the U. S. soon) or even higher officials to propose that either a replica of the synagogue be built on some site in Kaifeng entirely with foreign money or that

some other structure be converted to house some kind of Jewish commemorative presence. Such a building could contain replicas of artifacts, photographs, etc. and even have a room as a meeting place for what could become a "reborn Kaifeng Jewish community".

By Rabbi Arnold Mark Belzer

IN THE FIELD

• SJI President Leo Gabow; Board members Michael Pollak, Arthur Rosen and Wendy Abraham; and member Jan Berris all are participants in lectures and panels at events complementing the exhibition of "The Jews of Kaifeng" at the Jewish Museum in New York, March 4 through June 15, 1986. For more information about the series, contact the Jewish Museum at (212) 860-1863.

• Rabbi Anson Laytner has obtained permission from the Chinese government to show the series "Holocaust" on Chinese TV. Sponsors for this worthy endeavor are urgently needed. If you have, or know of someone with \$40,000 to spare, contact Rabbi Laytner at (206) 622-8211.

• The Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong, under the chairmanship of Dennis Leventhal, has published a book on the history of Hong Kong Jewry and has several more items in the works. Included in the proposed monograph series are: an essay and bibliography on Sino-Judaic studies by Mr. Leventhal, a personal memoir by Lord Lawrence Kadoorie, and an account by S. J. Chan of his visits to Kaifeng between 1981 and 1983.

• Prof. Gao Wangzhi, of the Institute for Research on World Religions and the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, delivered a lecture, "On the History of Judaism in China," at the 15th Congress of the International Association of the History of Religions, in Sydney, Australia in August 1985.

• A slide show, "The Story of the Chinese Jews", is currently being produced by SJI Board member Wendy Abraham. Geared towards educational and cultural organizations, the project is slated for completion in May '86.

• Filmmaker Susan Resnick of New York is planning to do a film on the Chinese Jews. Sponsors are welcome to contact her for more information at: (212) 675-7076 or 123 Bank Street, NYC 10014.

• SJI Board Member Andrew Plaks, Professor of Chinese Literature at Princeton University, has translated part of the 1489 stele from Kaifeng into Hebrew.

• Prof. Chen Jia Hou, of the Eastern Language Department at Beijing University, is seeking a qualified individual to teach Hebrew and Judaic studies there for a four-year staff position. Please contact him directly if interested (and qualified).

• Chinese-Jewish Pen-Pals: Some of the younger generation of Chinese Jews have expressed great interest in corresponding with young Western Jews. Those interested must be able to read and write Chinese. Contact Wendy Abraham at: 1230 Amsterdam Avenue, #829, New York, NY 10027.

• Two Upcoming Tours to Kaifeng, which will include meetings with the Chinese Jews, will be led by SJI East Coast Director, Rabbi Arnold Belzer, and SJI Secretary, Rabbi Anson Laytner. For more information contact Rabbi Belzer at (201) 891-4466 and Rabbi Laytner at (206) 622-8211.



SJI Member I. I. Glass Honored

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(continued from page 2)

Jesuit archives of Paris and Rome, very little has so far turned up. I myself am not hopeful of any major finds.

And that brings me to the main reason for my letter.

A lot of work has gone into the study of the so-called "Moshe Leah" scrolls, by Leo Gabow, Michael Pollak and others. Michael Pollak has now gone a bit "Overboard" with his support of the authenticity of these scrolls. He writes: "I should think that it would be wiser at this stage to proceed from the premise that the scrolls are what they are purported to be -- namely very old family heirlooms". He also writes of a possible Dead Sea tie-in to these texts. I feel that it is necessary for me to state publicly my firm conviction that these two scrolls from Taiwan are nothing but a hoax.

I believe that I have now found convincing evidence for this, including the source of the "Isaiah scroll".

1. The photos of Moshe Leah holding the two scrolls confirm what Leo Gabow (in Heritage, Friday, July 12, 1985) writes, that the "maxim scroll" photo was taken several years earlier than the "Isaiah scroll" one.

2. I suggest that the "maxim scroll" is simply Hebrew letters copied down at random, with-

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out any meaning to the text. Moshe Leah identifies it as "a translation of old Chinese maxims". How does he know? When did he give this identification? What language is the "maxim scroll" translated into? Why was such a book translated in any case? Until we have actually managed to decipher it, I suggest we consider it as gibberish.

3. To turn to the "Isaiah scroll". Perhaps I am showing my lack of knowledge, but I have never heard of Isaiah scrolls (apart from the two thousand year old Dead Sea scrolls).

4. Assuming that the calligraphy is similar to that of the Dead Sea scrolls, as stated by several scholars (see Pollak's analysis), what does it show? It shows, in my opinion, that the scroll is a recent copy, in fact a forgery made since the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered in the 1940's and published in the 1950's.

5. The source of this forgery is, I believe, the book by J. T. Milik, *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea*, (Studies in Biblical Theology No. 26), published in French in 1957, English edition in 1959, second impression 1963). Plate no. 9 at the end of the book is "The older Isaiah manuscript from Cave 1 (c. 100 B.C.) opened at chapters 40 and 41."

6. Pollak, using the analyses of Emanuel Silver and Irene Eber, identifies the content of the photo from Taiwan as Isaiah 38.9-20 and Isaiah 40.2-11. I am confident, though this needs a further check by a competent Judaic scholar, that Milik's Plate no. 9, in spite of the ascription "opened at chapters 40 and 41", includes part of chapter 38 as well as chapter 40. Plate no. 9, I believe, begins with the same words as does the Moshe Leah scroll. I believe also that this Plate no. 9 includes all the passages given in the Moshe Leah photo, though this also needs checking. Silver in his letter to Pollak writes: "There are other possible explanations, e.g. that somewhere along the line a copyist had an exemplar that was mutilated at the edges, with the loss of a couple of words at the beginning(s) or end(s) of line(s) . . ." This fits in, I believe, with Plate no. 9.

7. What a coincidence that Moshe Leah's scroll has no more text!

8. I suggest, therefore, that this Taiwan copy or forgery was made after the earlier gibberish copy. I do not know when this was done. Certainly after 1957.

9. It is just possible, though most unlikely, that the "maxim" scroll is "genuine", i.e. a copy of individual letters without any meaning, made at any time within the last hundred years or so, only the "Isaiah scroll" being a forgery, i.e. a copy of a recent book, done in Taiwan within the last thirty years.

It would be churlish not to thank Leo Gabow and Michael Pollak for their efforts. Without their perseverance in identifying the second scroll as based on Isaiah, and its calligraphy as like that of the Dead Sea scrolls, I would not have been able to identify the source of the forgery. I would add that Irene Eber, in her letter to Leo Gabow, had no doubts that this scroll was indeed a forgery.

By Donald Daniel Leslie

To the Editor:

In the letter by Daniel J. Elazar ("A Conversation in Beijing", *Points East* Vol. 1) several "facts" were mentioned which are either erroneous or misleading and therefore must be commented upon.

1) "... they are seeking recognition for the Jews as China's ninety-seventh recognized nationality . . ."

There are at present only 55 National Minorities recognized in the People's Republic of China (the China Official Yearbook of 1983/84 also lists Russians as a 56th Minority). As a point of interest, the Hui (Muslims) rank as China's second largest minority (after the Zhuang). They are also the only minority to be identified as such on the basis of their religion.

2) *Mr. Elazar mentions that there are "500 Kaifeng Jews" in existence.*

On my last trip to Kaifeng in August of 1985, upper estimates by the Chinese Jews themselves on the number still left ranged between 200 and 300 people. However, it was not made clear whether this was the number of Jews left in Kaifeng or those in all of China.

3) *Mr. Elazar "... heard from Professor Gao that Rabbi Joshua Stampfer of Portland, Oregon, had brought one of the girls of Kaifeng to Portland to study . . ."*

Mr. Elazar was referring to a 26-year-old woman, Qu Yinan, who was a journalist in Beijing before coming to the United States. She was raised in Beijing and has never even visited Kaifeng. Professor Gao must have been aware of this, since he has been a professional colleague of Qu Yinan's mother, Madame Jin Xiaojing, at the National Minorities Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing for quite some time.

Finally, one other point raised in Mr. Elazar's article needs updating: The American Jewish Congress may remain a major sponsor of China tours, but those in Kaifeng can no longer expect "a substantial portion of the Jewish tourists to come to Kaifeng to see a Jewish museum," because according to my last conversation with the Travel Division of AJC, as of 1986 their China tours will no longer include Kaifeng on the itinerary.

By Wendy Abraham

AN AMERICAN RETRACES MARCO POLO'S JOURNEY ALONG THE SILK ROUTE

An expedition retracing Marco Polo's historic journey 4500 miles across the remote provinces of China reached Beijing on October 20th after months of difficult travel on the ancient Silk Road. "It took fourteen years, but I finally made it!" exclaimed a travel weary Harry Rutstein, the expedition leader, a 55 year old American from Seattle, Washington and a member of the SJI. Rutstein stood proudly atop the famous "Marco Polo" bridge, nicknamed after Polo who

crossed Peking's oldest stone bridge many times during his 17 year stay in Ancient Cathay in the 13th century.

Rutstein has become the first person in 700 years to retrace the entire route of Marco Polo from Venice, Italy to Beijing, China, an incredible 13,000 mile overland journey. Polo took 4 years to make the journey from 1271 to 1275.

Rutstein's total travel time was about 8 months. He did it in three separate expeditions because of border problems. In 1975 he went from Marco Polo's doorstep in Venice, across the mideast, to Afghanistan. In 1981 he crossed the Hindu Kush and Karakoram mountains in Pakistan. In 1985 he crossed China. On the last two expeditions he was accompanied by Michael Winn, a 34 year old writer and photographer from New York. Four well-known Chinese photographers also followed them across China; Lu Xiangyou, Head of Photography Department; Luo Xiaoyun, Journalistic Photographer; Jin Tielu, Journalistic Photographer; (all of the China News Service) plus Jin Bohong, Senior Photographer of "People's China". All have had their works widely exhibited both in China and abroad.

Following Polo's philosophy, Rutstein and Winn used whatever local transport was available -- foot, camel, horse, donkey-cart, goatskin raft, tractor and jeep.

"Bactrian camel is still the best way to travel", observed Rutstein. "You snuggle in between two huge, hairy humps, and wiggle your pelvis to keep rhythm with the camel's gait. It's comfortable, cheap and reliable, and the camel glides across the sand as smoothly as a boat in calm water.

Rutstein and Winn were the first foreigners since 1949 legally permitted to cross overland from Pakistan into China by way of the 16,200 foot Khunjerab Pass. They crossed the border on August 15, 1985 flying four flags - Chinese and Pakistani national flags, the Explorer's Club flag and the Marco Polo Expedition banner. Thousands of tourists are expected to follow their footsteps beginning in April 1986, when the Hunza-Kashgar Karakoram Highway will be officially opened to foreigners.

Their journey took them through many dangerous adventures. "We got caught in a blinding sandstorm while crossing the Taklamakan Desert near Niya in Xinjiang Province. We were riding on camels and could only see a dozen yards ahead. It was like God

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A LITERARY MISDEED

every other page, including the Appendix. The alternate pages contain the title "Chinese Jews."

In Sopher's Preface to this second edition, he writes, "The foregoing thoughts have been suggested by re-reading an informative article on the Chinese Jews which was first published in the East of Asia Magazine, and is now reprinted in these pages, with an Appendix bringing the whole matter up to date." Sopher's new Preface deletes the following words from the old Preface; "written by the Late Mr. Edward I. Ezra." Otherwise the new Preface remains the same.

This second Preface is signed "Arthur Sopher," and reads "*Shanghai, 3rd Feb. 1926.*" (My emphasis)

It should be noted that Mr. Alexander Horne and his family left Shanghai for the United States in July of 1925. This date is confirmed by Mr. A. Horne's son, Mr. Tony Horne, who was born in Shanghai. Mr. Tony Horne wonders if Mr. Sopher waited until their departure before coming out with his amended 1926 edition.

Only one indication appears in the Appendix of the second edition that would lead one to the conclusion that the Appendix was written by a second party. In discussing the stone tablets, the author of the Appendix writes, "The location of the tablet of 1663 (which Mr. Ezra gives erroneously as 1668 . . .)". In no other place in this edition may one assume a separate author for the Appendix, least of all Mr. A. Horne.

Enter Professor Hyman Kublin and the Paragon Book Reprint Corporation.

Professor Kublin, an eminent specialist in the history of East Asia, compiled "several volumes composed of materials written about the Jewish inhabitants of the Old Chinese Empire." They comprise books and brochures that have been out of print for many years.

Kublin performed a remarkable service for scholars interested in this interstice of Jewish history. He hoped that easy availability of these materials would encourage others to involve themselves in its study.

One of Kublin's anthologies was published by Paragon Book Reprint Corporation in 1971 under the title, "Jews in Old China, Some Western Views," and included Ezra's "Chinese Jews." Kublin undoubtedly worked from the second 1926 edition, which amended the 1925 edition by deletion and insertion.

Kublin was aware that Ezra alone wrote "Chinese Jews." In his introduction to "Jews in Old China, Some Western Views," he writes, "... he (Ezra) published a long study 'Chinese Jews,' in the East of Asia Magazine..." But he was apparently unaware that Horne was the author of the Appendix, for he writes in the same introduction, "To promote interest in the work of the Rescue Society, Arthur Sopher, a brother-in-law of Edward Isaac Ezra, reprinted Ezra's earlier study, to which he added a long section (Appendix) detailing developments concerning the Chinese Jews during the preceding two decades." Thus Kublin attributes the Appendix to Sopher.

Michael Pollak, in his "Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries," makes the same attribution. On page 224, he writes, "Sopher, introduced as a fellow Jew to a Mr. Chao, owner of a tea shop . . . was greeted with the remark, 'Hah! A member of the same tribe?' " "Hah! A member of the same tribe" is a quote from the Appendix.

On page 225 of "Mandarins," Pollak again writes, "Sopher delivered an illustrated lecture before a group of interested Shanghai Jews in which he reviewed the colorful history of the Chinese Jews and told of his personal contacts with them. Sharing the podium with him was George Sokolsky..."

This event is described in the Appendix of Ezra's "Chinese Jews." The Appendix reads, "... at an illustrated lecture before the Jewish community here I had the opportunity of describing my recent findings in Kaifengfu, and to recount the history of the colony, in which Mr. Geo. Sokolsky collaborated in describing the route along which the Jews traveled across Asia to China."

I submit that it was Mr. A. Horne that delivered the illustrated lecture, and that it was Mr. A. Horne who met Mr. Chao of the tea house in Kaifeng, not Mr. Sopher.

Nor does Donald Daniel Leslie give correct attribution. In his "Survival of the Chinese Jews," page 192, he refers to "Arthur Sopher, Chinese Jews, Shanghai, 1925. Gives Ezra's article but also adds information about the 1924 resuscitation of the Society and Wong's visit."

And on page 236, under "Bibliography and References," Leslie mentions "Sopher, Arthur Chinese Jews, Shanghai, 1925, includes Ezra."

Leslie makes it clear that he is re-

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A. Mr. Shih, the elder --- Tape recorders are new in China. It would be a very useful project. I want to share a story. When I was a child in Kaifeng during the 1930's I was asked by my schoolteacher along with other members of my class to put down our family's city of origin. I put down Jerusalem. It was during the Japanese occupation. When I told my father about it, he was quite disturbed, perhaps because of the Axis of Japan and the Nazis. He told me that from now on I was to put down, Kaifeng, and not Jerusalem. I protested, "But Grandfather always told us that our city of origin was Jerusalem". My father said, "Yes, of course, but from now on, write Kaifeng".

I pass around Bishop White's book. Mr. Zhou --- Many of the sources of this book are from my uncle. (Mr. Zhou then identified his own picture as a small boy. Mr. Zhou signed his name over the picture. I quoted the 1932 letter which was a request from Mr. Zhou's father to the Jews of the U.S. to help rebuild the synagogue.)

Q. Rabbi Belzer --- Is that what you would like today?

A. Mr. Zhou --- The site of the synagogue belonged to Bishop White. My father wanted to get it back.

Q. Rabbi Belzer --- Would the Jews of Kaifeng like a community center to be available?

A. Mr. Zhou --- No, it is not necessary to build a center for Jewish descendants of Kaifeng, only for a place for this replica of the synagogue and a Hall of Remembrance of the history of my family. Not for religious purposes, only for the sake of history.

Q. Rabbi Belzer --- If some kind of community meeting place were available, not as a center of religion but as a place for cousins' to share

A. Mr. Zhou --- If it had nothing to do with religion, then it would be okay.

Q. Mr. Bernard Bober --- Do you see any physical differences between yourself and other Chinese because of Jewish blood?

A. Mr. Zhou --- Due to hundreds of years of inter-marriage, there are no differences. Many years ago I remember some experts coming to take our pictures. They even measured our noses to determine if there were indeed any differences, but there are no differences.

Q. Rabbi Belzer --- What do you know about Jews in the world today?

A. Mr. Shih, the elder --- We know that Karl Marx, Charlie Chaplan and

Einstein were Jewish. Other Chinese told us that they knew that Jews are smart and good businessmen. I was asked to be a business consultant. I think because it is known that I am a Kaifeng Jew.

Q. Mrs. Matilda Meyers --- Are your wives Jewish?

A. Mr. Zhou --- No, we trace our Jewishness through the father's line, in the traditional Chinese way.

Q. Mr. Shih - (taking out a notebook) --- I wrote down the 10 Commandments. Can I read them to you? Will you tell me if they are correct?

(Mr. Shih reads the 10 Commandments, version obviously is from a King James Bible.)

A. Rabbi Belzer --- Yes, they are correct. Do you always have them with you?

A. Mr. Shih --- Yes.

Q. Mr. Shih, the elder --- Could you tell us about the Jewish holidays?

A. Rabbi Belzer --- (Gave a rather long description of the various Jewish holidays with Mr. Shih taking copious notes.)

Q. Rabbi Belzer --- What was the Chinese title for Rabbi?

A. Mr. Shih, the younger --- They were "Manla" but that is from the Persian. (Other questions followed and the group adjourned for a special Song Dynasty banquet.)

The most interesting piece of information that came from our discussion is the fact that the Jews of Kaifeng have followed patrilineal descent throughout its history. As explained, this is in the Chinese tradition (and Biblical tradition too) and was a way of insuring that honors conferred by the Emperors be passed down through the father's line. This piece of information has extraordinary implications in the Jewish world today with regard to the legitimacy of patrilineal descent.

At the banquet I made an effort to sit with Mr. Shih and his nephew. While Mr. Zhou protested about not being interested in Judaism as a religion, I detected that both the elder and younger Mr. Shih had more than a scholarly interest in Jewish history. I pursued this and found that I indeed was correct in my perception. The lack of materials in Chinese about Jews and Judaism was of course noted. Following dinner, we adjourned back to the conference room where we gathered to have a very late Havdallah program. Through Jeremy Paltiel, obviously a Godsend, I explained the significance and symbolism of Havdallah and used the enclosed service which a Sino-Judaic Institute Board Member helped prepare prior to our trip. It

was clearly an extremely moving event. I suggested that it was perhaps the first time in well over 100 years that any kind of Jewish cultural ceremony had taken place in Kaifeng. We all felt the power of the moment and savored the taste of the sweet wine and the smell of the spices and the beauty of the flame. I can say that there were misty eyes for all of us. Even the guides commented on what a moving experience it was. Following Havdallah, I gave out a number of presents to Mr. Zhou and both Mr. Shih's, including a large poster-size blow-up of some of the illustrations of Bishop White's book. I gave Mr. Shih, the elder, a Hertz Chumash (Pentateuch). I gave Mr. Zhou a full-sized Torah replica (on paper, not parchment) as well as the Havdallah set that we used, a number of kipa's, some beginner books in Hebrew with instructions on how to form the Hebrew letters. When I took out a mezuzah, Mr. Shih, the elder, put out his hand to touch it and then kissed his hand in the traditional way. We were all very surprised and, of course, moved to see this. I asked him how he knew about that custom and he said he was told about it. It is clear to me that Jews of Kaifeng were told many things, some of which are remembered and some of which, of course, have been forgotten. The group said warm farewells to our Kaifeng cousins. Very early the next morning by pre-arrangement we met at Mr. Zhou's home to affix a mezuzah to the doorpost of his house. With the traditional prayers and many neighbors looking on, we put a very lovely large brass mezuzah onto his doorpost.

From the experience the night before, I realized that Mr. Shih would also have liked to have had a mezuzah. I happened to have only two so I arranged to send one off to Mr. Shih the next morning with a note and instructions on how to affix it to his doorpost. Once again, it was a great privilege to be able to have such a special experience.

An observation concerning Mr. Zhou: While he protests that he is not interested in Judaism as a religion, he seems entirely enthralled with all the symbols and accoutrements of Judaism. Another observation in regard to Mr. Zhou's entrepreneurship: During our discussions, I brought up the fact that many Jews would be coming through in the future and that I thought it would be entirely fitting if Kaifeng Jews prepared some kind of souvenir to sell to such visitors. I even made some suggestions, perhaps a

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with an ability to read Hebrew and participate in basic Jewish rituals. He also noted that the Jews of Kaifeng were planning to convert a house on Teaching Scripture Lane in Kaifeng into a Jewish museum and community center. It would be the first meeting center for Jews there in more than 100 years. Both he and Miss Qu said they did not know whether that move would spark a renewal of the Chinese Jewish community, but the rabbi said that it represented "the first faint light of a renaissance of an ancient community."

MY SOLO JOURNEY TO KAIFENG

(continued from page 1)

The Jews themselves intermarried and assimilated to such a degree that today they are indistinguishable in appearance from other Chinese. Indeed, some of the more skeptical in our group expressed reservations that the "Jews" we met could have been virtually anyone and we would not have known the difference.

To me and some of the others, however, there was an immediate sense of kinship with the Chinese Jews we met. Indeed, one of them was flattered to learn that he in some way resembled my paternal grandfather. This particular Chinese Jew and I ended up corresponding for over a year. Family photos were exchanged, and interest was expressed in learning more about each other's Jewish experiences in the world.

Finally arriving in Kaifeng alone in August of '85, I proceeded to look up the Chinese Jews I had met before, and inquired of others I might get to know. I was met with the utmost hospitality and warmth wherever I went in Kaifeng, and was even aided in my search for the Chinese Jews by an ordinary local family eager to befriend a foreigner. They introduced me to the oldest member of the Ai clan, who had represented the Chinese Jews in Beijing at the request of the newly established Communist government in 1952.

I was taken to factories and shown pictures of workers who were also surnamed Ai and claim Jewish descent. Many times I spent hours with the Chinese Jews in their homes or riding together on bicycles to visit others, talking endlessly about their memories, hopes and dreams.

I discovered a vast array of differences regarding knowledge of their Jewish backgrounds. Each one at least knew they were of Jewish heritage because they were told so by their parents, and felt a strong need to pass

this knowledge on to their children. My talks with them were exhaustive. When listening to memories the older generation have of witnessing or participating in holiday celebrations, I discovered aspects of their former religious practices which differ considerably from those of the rest of the Jewish world -- such as separating into two holidays the practices of smearing chicken blood over the doorpost, and of eating unleavened bread for a week.

One Chinese Jew, according to his own research and recollection of stories passed down to him, took issue with the architectural rendering of the Kaifeng synagogue in the model currently on exhibit in the U.S., which he had seen in a picture supplied by a Western tourist.

Yet another asked why our Western yamulkas are sewn into four sections (he had been shown a yamulka by a tourist) rather than into six sections, like the ones he saw as a boy. His mother had told him that this was to remind them that the earth was created in six days. Clearly, stories from the Bible were passed down, too.

In between hearing such memories and comments, I also met Chinese Jews who could not even recognize the Star of David. They had no memories whatsoever and only knew that their parents expected them to know and hand down the fact that they were Jewish.

The experience of hearing *in Chinese* memories of Passover and other celebrations was precious indeed. Mostly, however, I was witness to an extraordinary period in the history of the Chinese Jews. As the last generation of Chinese Jews to have personal memories of Jewish rituals and celebrations, the older generation is eager to pass on such memories and knowledge to their children. Great desire was expressed to obtain as much information as possible on their genealogies in particular.

It is clear that an awareness of their unique place in both Chinese and Jewish history, and the desire to keep a sense of Jewish identity alive, which had helped sustain this once thriving Jewish community, is still in evidence today.

by Wendy Abraham

(Future issues of *Points East* will feature translations of interviews of Chinese Jews by Ms. Abraham.)

SHABBAT IN KAIFENG, AUGUST 1985

(continued from page 1)

by the thought that an excavation on that site might indeed turn up some relics from the past but it does not seem that any attention is being paid to that

possibility. I was surprised to learn that neither the site of the synagogue nor South Teaching of the Scriptures Lane had been marked properly for tourists. It seems like a very simple thing. If money is the problem, I am sure that even a bronze sign or marker could be made up in the U.S. and shipped and properly mounted for less than \$1,000. I was later assured by Chen Li Bo (a CITS official) that the municipality is still working on this. Not being an old China hand, I suppose patience is not one of my virtues. While looking at the synagogue site we met two young Canadian cousins who asked us if we were looking for Jews and we told them no, we had already found them. Both were Jewish, one a physician from Montreal and the other, Dr. Jeremy Paltiel, a professor of Political Science at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Canada. He is fluent in Mandarin and we directed him to Mr. Zhou's home. We also invited both he and his cousin to join us in the evening for our banquet. In the afternoon, Mr. Shih and his nephew, Mr. Shih, Mr. Zhou and his young granddaughter came to the Kaifeng Guest House for a far reaching discussion.

Present at the meeting was Mr. Chen Li Bo, Mr. Guang, Mr. Li, Mr. Gao, our national guide and all the members of the group. I began with a welcome to all those who came to the meeting, a thanks to Mr. Zhou for allowing us to visit his home and greetings from the Sino-Judaic Institute. What follows are some of the questions and answers:

Q. Rabbi Belzer --- What can we do for you now and in the future?

A. Mr. Zhou --- I have five daughters and five granddaughters and would like for some of them to go to the U.S. to learn about our shared history, to learn about Judaism and to trace back genealogy.

Q. Rabbi Belzer --- Is there a desire to learn Hebrew?

A. Mr. Zhou --- I would be interested in books with Hebrew letters. I would like to learn Hebrew calligraphy.

Q. Rabbi Belzer --- How do you pass on your sense of Jewish identity to other family members?

A. Mr. Shih, the younger --- I have been trying to make contact with other family members. There was a "family book". The book is useful in identifying other Kaifeng Jews.

Q. Rabbi Belzer --- Have you recorded any of the stories that you remember hearing from parents and grandparents so as to develop an oral history?

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