

single out any specific party. He also reiterated that the PLO should represent the Palestinians at the conference.

The two agreed that China and Israel would maintain regular contacts through the two countries' ambassadors to the UN — and Peres announced this publicly after the meeting.

In an official statement, a Chinese spokesman said the Chinese foreign minister had "reaffirmed China's support for the convening of the international conference on the Middle East under the auspices of the United Nations, and pointed out that the Palestine Liberation Organization is entitled to participate in the conference on an equal footing with the other parties."

ISRAELI-CHINESE TRADE BOOMING

By Abraham Rabinovich

(Reprinted from the Jerusalem Post Oct. 17)

An American Jewish lawyer, who has worked in China for the past 15 years, said recently in Jerusalem that the level of Israeli trade with China far surpasses that which prevailed between the U.S. and China on the eve of President Nixon's visit to Beijing in 1972.

David C. Buxbaum, who provides legal assistance to American and European companies in China, disclosed that Israeli trade with Beijing — conducted through third country corporations — as well as the intensity of cultural contacts has increased substantially in the past year. Nixon's dramatic visit, he said, has been preceded by a slow but steady increase in cultural contacts and in trade which

did not reach the present level of Israel's trade.

"The Chinese are clearly not foreclosing the possibility of some sort of relations with Israel which may be a precondition for their participation in an international conference."

Beijing's main motive for wanting to participate in such a conference, said Buxbaum, was to prevent the Soviet Union from acquiring a dominant role in "West Asia."

While the official Chinese position regarding Israel seems severe — "there are, after all, more Arabs than Israelis," — their unofficial attitude is more moderate than would appear, said Buxbaum. An anti-Israel coloration in news coverage and cartoons which often marked the Chinese press in the past has decreased substantially in the past year, said Buxbaum, who closely monitors newspapers.

(Editor's Note: Buxbaum is SJI's representative in China.)



POINTS EAST

An occasional publication of The Sino-Judaic Institute

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NOVEMBER, 1987

TEACHING ISRAELI POLITICS IN CHINA

By Martin Edelman

In the Spring of 1987, I was a Visiting Professor at Beijing University. I had been invited by the Department of International Politics to teach a course on Israeli Politics. It was the first time for a formal course on that subject in the People's Republic of China. What follows is a brief description of that remarkable experience.

My presence in China as an invited foreign expert on Israeli politics also elicited additional lecture and seminar invitations by academic institutes and at other Chinese universities. On each such occasion I was asked the same question: "Why do the Israelis and the Americans refuse to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict?"

My own response to the question, partly professional and partly quizzical, resulted in a counter question to them: "What makes you think that the Israelis and the Americans do not wish to end the conflict?" Their reaction to my question was also always the same: "Professor Edelman, as a reasonable person, you must admit that the principles of the Fez Plan provide a just basis for a resolution. Yet the Israelis and the Americans reject them. How else therefore can their positions be explained?"

All Chinese academics with whom I came in contact are familiar with their government's clearly articulated policy on the role of Israel in the Middle East. The PRC insists that Israel must withdraw from *all* the territory it occupied as a result of the 1967 Six Day War, and that Israel must recognize the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent state led by the PLO. But unlike the PLO, China does not deny Israel the right to exist; the People's Republic sees the existence of Israel as a "given" of Middle East politics.

The Chinese government maintains that at their 1982 meeting in Fez,

Morocco, the Arab states and the PLO agreed to principles similar to those articulated by the PRC. The Fez Plan called for recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination under the leadership of the PLO; the creation of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, with Jerusalem as its capital; and Security Council guarantees of peace for all the states of the region, including the independent Palestinian state. In light of their government's policy and the extensive coverage of Middle East events in the government controlled media, my Chinese hosts accepted the Fez Plan as a just basis for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

These same individuals, however, had not heard about the PLO's failure to respond to American inquiries about the meaning of the Fez Plan. The United States had wanted to know whether Israel was included in the states whose security the U.N. was supposed to guarantee. In other words, did the Fez Plan supplant the pledge in the PLO Covenant to destroy Israel? Would a PLO state on the West Bank explicitly renounce that long-standing touchstone of PLO doctrine? (In fact, at the Algiers meeting of the Palestinian National Conference which was held in April, 1987, the PLO once again publicly endorsed its Covenant.) In 1982, the United States had wanted to know whether the proposed PLO state would coexist with Israel or was to replace it. The United States never received a clear answer to its question, not from the PLO and not from the Arab states, not in 1982 and not subsequently.

Despite the extensive coverage given to the politics of the Middle East in the Chinese media, this obstacle to American—let alone Israeli—agreement with the Fez Plan was never mentioned. Most of the scholars and students I addressed had never realized that this problem existed. Those who were aware of the unresolved ambiguities nonetheless still found one reason or another to support the

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A CHINESE JEWISH IDENTITY

By Wendy Abraham

© Wendy Abraham 1987
Reprinted from Hadassah Magazine,
Aug.-Sept. 1987

A glimmer of nostalgia can be detected in the eyes of 66-year-old Shi Zhongyu (pronounced Sh'r Jongyu) as he recalls Passover rituals in Kaifeng in 1928. Then a seven-year-old boy, Shi watched the substitution for the traditional rooster's blood — colored paint mixed with water — dabbed over the doorpost of his home, using a Chinese writing brush. This festival, he recalls, was combined with features of the Chinese New Year. Another custom, celebrated separately, would take place in May, when Shi's mother would cook cakes containing no yeast.

"When the Hans [ethnic Chinese] celebrate New Year's, they have some Buddhist idols which they worship," Shi explains. "We didn't have those statues in our family. We only had the memorial tablets for our ancestors, in front of which we would place food offerings of mutton rather than the pork used by other Chinese, to show our respect for our Jewish ancestry."

The story of China's Jews is supposed to have ended. But in 1987 there are still people in Kaifeng who claim Jewish ancestry and recall Jewish holidays and rituals — over a century after the synagogue near South Teaching Scripture Lane was destroyed for the last time. Over 150 years after the last Chinese rabbi in Kaifeng conducted services, taking with him at his death the last real knowledge of Hebrew and Bible, Jewish memory persists.

If you ask Chinese Jews how many of their ranks remain in the 1980's, estimates range from 100 to 300, although it is not clear if they mean individuals or only male heads of households, since Chinese Jews trace their descent patrilineally, as the Chinese custom. This, of course, raises

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Join The Sino-Judaic Institute

The Sino-Judaic Institute is a non-denominational, non-profit, and non-political organization which was founded on June 27, 1985, in Palo Alto, California, by an international group of scholars and laypersons. Its goals and purposes are as follows:

- 1) To promote friendship and understanding between the Chinese and Jewish peoples, and to encourage and develop their cooperation in matters of mutual historical and cultural interest.
- 2) To support the establishment and maintenance of a Judaica section in the projected municipal museum of Kaifeng.
- 3) To promote and assist study and research in the histories of early Jewish travel in China and in the rise and fall of the various Jewish communities that were established in China in the course of the past thousand and more years.
- 4) To publish general information and scholarly materials dealing with all aspects of the Chinese-Jewish experience.
- 5) To assist the descendants of the ancient Jewish community of the city of Kaifeng, Henan Province, in their efforts to preserve and maintain the artifacts and documents they have inherited from their forebears, as well as in their efforts to reconstruct the history of their community.
- 6) To serve as a briefing and information center for those interested in Sino-Judaica, and for travelers to Kaifeng and other centers of Jewish interest in China.
- 7) To cooperate with other groups whose interests lie in Sinitic and Judaic matters.

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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From the Editor:

In the last issue of *Points East* "In The Field", we ran a short item on Martin Edelman, assistant professor of political science at the State University of New York, Albany, who was teaching in the Department of International Politics at Beijing University. In this issue, we are pleased to present Prof. Edelman's detailed account of his experience as a visiting professor there. His article and the story by David Landau provide excellent commentary to the two articles we ran last issue on Chinese-Israeli relations.

In this issue we also feature excerpts from SJI Board member Wendy Abraham's article in *Hadassah* magazine, based on her interviews with Kaifeng Jews and Leo Gabow's provocative essay on the assimilation of the Chinese Jews. The efforts of two film-makers to document the story of the Chinese Jews are described in this issue; in our next issue other film projects on the Shanghai Jews will be presented. The next issue will also highlight the story of the Jews of Mizoram through several articles.

Points East continues to be well-received — so I'm told. But why tell just me? Put your thoughts in writing and achieve a limited circulation immortality in print! Our "Letters to the Editor" section is your forum for commentary, corrections, compliments and even criticism. Unfortunately, for this issue we had none to share. Let's have some feedback, please!

Anson Laytner

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IN THE FIELD**SURVIVAL OF THE CHINESE JEWS to be published in China**

Donald Daniel Leslie's authoritative work, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews*, is being translated into Chinese by Mr. Geng Sheng of Beijing. Prof. Leslie has written a new preface for this update of his 1972 text and we will feature excerpts of it in a forthcoming issue of *Points East*. The Chinese version of *Juifs de Chine*, by Joseph Dehergne and Prof. Leslie is due to be published this year.

Jewish Section of Kaifeng Museum to Open

Fred Kaplan, another SJI Board member, reports that Mr. Lee Fusheng, manager of the International Travel Service in Zengzhou, stated, during his recent visit to the U.S., that "a Jewish section of the Kaifeng Museum would be open to the public in late 1988."

Hong Kong Resources Available in U.S.A.

The Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong has donated a complete set of the *Hong Kong Jewish Chronicle*, which began publication in 1977, to the University of Maryland. Students and scholars who would like to access this material should contact Prof. F. J. Shulman, East Asian Collection, McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, 20740.

Jewish Tour of China Planned

SJI President Leo Gabow will lead a Jewish heritage tour of China in April 1988. The trip is sponsored by the Jewish Community Center in Palo Alto. See details in the announcement in this issue.

Also of Interest

David Markenson, a visiting student at Nanjing Normal University in China, heard of SJI while visiting Hong Kong. Since then he has joined SJI, visited Kaifeng, and plans to continue his studies of the Chinese Jews upon his return to the States.

SJI Treasurer Prof. Al Dien has recently concluded a trip along the Silk Road.

Dennis Leventhal, Chairman of the Hong Kong Jewish Historical Society and SJI Board member, visited Shanghai for in depth talks with Chinese academics on matters of common interest.

Teaching Israeli Politics in China

(continued from page 1)

official government policy and to explain why the proposals enunciated at Fez were the correct basis for a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

It was in this context that I began teaching the first course on Israeli politics in the history of the People's Republic of China. The thirty undergraduates in the class were in the third year of a four year program. While they all knew English, their facility with the language varied considerably. Because I do not speak Chinese, class lectures were necessarily presented in relatively simple, not overly conceptual English. And the lack of adequate library resources slowed the pace of instruction; there were few books on Israel in the library and even those were not readily accessible. But the students were eager to learn and it was readily apparent that they were spending a good deal of time attempting to master the intricacies of Israeli politics.

I saw my basic task as explaining how Israel's foreign policy derived from its citizens' understandable concern for security. The first part of the course was devoted to an examination of the events surrounding the establishment of the State. The students had come to the class with a specific framework of analysis: Israel had been created by the Western imperialist powers to resolve their "Jewish problem." So we spent a couple of classes studying why the Jewish people had for two millennia sought to recreate a state in their ancestral homeland and how the secular Zionist movement had laid the groundwork for national liberation.

While this history was all new to the students, they were clearly most surprised to learn that the Soviet Union had played a prominent role in helping to establish the State of Israel. They were so accustomed to the anti-Israel actions of the USSR that were not prepared for a record which included strong Soviet support for the Jewish State in the UN and the shipment of arms (via Czechoslovakia) to that beleaguered country during its fight for survival in 1948-49.

The next section of the course dealt with the political culture, electoral system, and government structures of Israel. Here, I saw my main task as explaining how a Western-style democracy works to students who had never left mainland China. To this day, I am

these people whose numbers may be in the hundreds. The Jews of Kaifeng crystallize a key issue for Judaism through their drama of near extinction and survival," says Ms. Resnick.

The filmmaker wants the film to provide a human perspective on the virtually unknown existence of these people at a time when China is playing an ever increasing role in today's world. The film will visually record a vital historic era of Jewish culture that will disappear, if attention is not drawn to it. In addition to providing a unique approach to the very contemporary issue of assimilation, the film will also explore the importance of Jewish identity. Susan Resnick is very inspired by the survival of this identity: "It is important to take into account the historical, social, and circumstantial forces that led to the demise of the community of the Jews of Kaifeng, but even more important is to reveal the survival of their affiliation throughout so many centuries. It is a miracle!"

To prepare her film, the petite brunette has spent months in researching through libraries and in consulting with informed people in Europe, Israel, and the U.S.A. It was during a visit to the Beth Hatefusoith in Tel Aviv that the filmmaker became aware of the existence of the Kaifeng Jews. The discovery triggered something in her own understanding of the uniqueness and universality of the Jewish people. Deeply moved by an inexplicable affinity with these Chinese Jews, Ms. Resnick set out with determination to develop a film project: "I was impelled to develop this subject into a film that I feel will be an important contribution to completing our awareness of Judaism."

Susan Resnick has been making films since 1975. Her film DEPARTURE, received an Academy Award nomination and recognition at international film festivals. In 1979, she was awarded a grant from the American Film Institute. She has worked in the field of documentary and fiction films, and has collaborated on projects in French and American film industries.

Susan Resnick is hoping to find funding from individuals or groups. She also looks forward to the collaboration of a young woman, Wendy Abraham, who is currently in Beijing, where she is writing about the Jews of Kaifeng for her PhD. thesis at Columbia University.

Miss Abraham's fluency in Chinese and her familiarity and insights into the subject have been, and will be, very valuable.

Individuals or organizations that are interested in providing the means for converting this project from its present format into tangible film are invited to contact Susan Resnick: Igen Films/Cinemedia, c/o Susan Resnick, 123 Bank Street, New York, New York 10014, U.S.A.; Telephone: (212) 675-7076.

THE JEWS OF CHINA: 3 PERSONAL FILMS

By Jette Kurth

No stranger to the cinema, nor to China, Gary Bush, a young Canadian film-maker, now is planning a series of 3 films on the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng.

The first, entitled "The Day the Rabbi Returned to China," pieces together the story of the Jews of China through the eyes and experiences of Rabbi Joshua Stampfer of Portland, Oregon. From his encounters with the descendants of the Chinese Jews, we learn not only of their past but about life as a Chinese Jew in China today, the problems they face having been cut off from Jewish learning, and their eagerness to learn about their ancient Jewish heritage.

The second, "I am a Chinese Jew," centers around Ed Chao of Seattle, and Qu Yinan of Beijing. Chao, who only recently learned that his father was of old Kaifeng Jewish stock, wants to visit Kaifeng, to find other Chaos living there but most of all to help the people to become real Jews again. Qu's mother, a sociologist, learned about her Jewish heritage by accident, and Qu is now studying Judaism in Los Angeles where she plans to marry an American of Eastern European Jewish roots.

The third film, "My Chinese Zaide", is Gary Bush's personal account of his great, great grandfather, Zaide Li, a Kaifeng Jew, who was an adventurer making his way alone to Shanghai at the age of 20 fighting off bandits all the way; a dollar-a-day coolie in British Columbia before returning to Shanghai where he was a Kung Fu master teaching martial arts and where he married a Russian Jew. The fate of Zaide Li is undetermined. Some say he was killed by foreign mercenaries; others that he lived to be more than 80 years and left China to join the Russian Revolution.

Gary Bush was born in Montreal in 1951. He attended Sir Georges Williams University, was a reporter for *The Morning Star*, worked for the

National Film Board, and has been free-lancing since 1981 as an independent Producer-Director. Bush's films have been exhibited at major film festivals. His awards include, among others, The Canadian Film & TV Best Documentary Award, Toronto; The Blue Ribbon Award, American Film Festival, New York. His recent film, "The Children of Song Ching Ling," was nominated for an Academy Award in 1985.

Those interested in this project may contact Gary Bush c/o Gary Bush Productions, PO Box 3887, Vancouver, B.C. V6B 3Z3 Telephone: (604) 926-7709

AN UNPRECEDENTED MEETING: ISRAELI AND CHINESE CONTACTS BETWEEN BOTH COUNTRIES WILL CONTINUE

Compiled from *JTA*, Oct. 1 &
Jerusalem Post, Oct. 10

In an unprecedented meeting between the Foreign Ministers of the People's Republic of China and Israel, it was concluded that contacts between representatives of both countries will continue in the future.

The meeting between Shimon Peres, Israel's Foreign Minister, and his Chinese counterpart, Wu Xuegian, was the first meeting ever between the Foreign Ministers of China and Israel. The meeting between the two officials took place at the Chinese Mission to the United Nations. It lasted one hour and 45 minutes. Although representatives of China and Israel have met in the United Nations in the last few months, the Peres-Wu meeting was the highest level of contact between China and Israel. Moreover, the Chinese publicly announced the meeting and allowed photographers to take pictures of the two officials at the end of their meeting.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wu told Peres that China will not establish diplomatic ties with Israel as long as Israel holds on to the occupied territories and the Palestinian problem remains resolved.

But Wu said that China would accept any formula for an international peace conference worked out between "the Arabs, Israel and the Secretary General of the United Nations." Wu used the term "the Arabs" and did not

tion as a Confucianist might not allow him to divulge this, at least publically. Moreover, as he would be compelled to leave his home in order to serve, his ties became even more tenuous. The young Jewish Civil Servant, away from home, and with friends and acquaintances of non-Jewish persuasions, would have no choice but to seek a wife among non-Jewish women.

The process is surely duplicated in the West. Even the first generation of a mixed marriage will often find the offspring only too happy to escape into the non-Jewish world, thus avoiding the opprobrium of being considered "different." There is no reason to suppose that the Jews of China did not share this reaction. The twin factors, consisting of the prizes the Civil Servant would garner and the relative ease with which they could be achieved, could not have failed to persuade some of the best minds among the young to opt for Confucianism. Ai Tien, the Chinese Jew who visited Father Ricci in Peking in 1605, was himself studying for an advanced degree. He informed Father Ricci that he could not read Hebrew though he recognized many of the characters. He explained that he had to devote all of his time to the Chinese Classics and to Confucianism.

The Civil Servant prize, however, could only be sought after by the few. The majority of Chinese Jews had to seek their livelihood in other ways. They turned out to be no more immune to the blandishments of assimilation than the young. The Civil Servant prize may have been the factor that promoted assimilation in Jewish youth, but it could not apply to the majority who had neither the talent nor the interest to seek Civil Service. For them the reasons had to be more subtle.

The Kaifeng Jews were a tiny group, and however tolerantly Confucianism reacted to the practice of all religions, the Jews could never totally escape Chinese xenophobia. Security could safely be achieved by merging with a larger group. It was to Islam that many Jews turned, despite the contempt the Moslem held for the Jew.

Jin Xiaojing quotes a Chinese scholar: "There are Jews among the Chinese Moslem nationality." Though the Jews converted to Islam, they apparently retained a Jewish coloration, much like Jews to convert to Christianity in the West.

Jews assimilated into Confucianism as well as Islam. Islam because of its

theological similarity to Judaism, and Confucianism because of a similarity in ethos. Both groups supplied social protection; Islam constituted a large minority and Confucianism as the dominant doctrine in Chinese society.

Philosophically, Confucianism and the general ethos of Chinese life, was in many respects, not all that different from the Jewish ethos. China's ancestor worship, while far more extreme than the Jewish reverence for the family, was sufficiently similar to allow the young Jewish seeker after the rewards of society, to rationalize his choice. The moral doctrines advocated by Confucius and Mencius could fit readily into the Jewish ethic.

The Chinese emphasis on ritual was again in conformance to Jewish emphasis. Lin Yu T'ang points out in his "The Wisdom of Confucious," that much of the ritual direction given by Confucius and Mencius "reads like Deuteronomy," and the "religion of Li, like Judaism, embraces both religious worship and daily life, down to the matter of eating and drinking."

Joseph Needham speculated, "Confucianism could perhaps be considered a parallel with the Hebrew's priestly tradition in so far as it regularized and supported the State sacrifices, and with the Hebrew prophetic tradition in so far as it attempted to humanize and ameliorate first feudalism and the feudal bureaucritism . . ." and H.G. Creel in his "Confucious and the Chinese Way," dealing with a particularly crucial period in Chinese cultural evolution, writes, "This transition from ritual thinking to ethical thinking has occurred, of course, in many religions . . . The instance that comes most readily to mind is that of the Hebrew Prophets." Even Sun Yat Sen was irresistably drawn to paralleling the Jew and the Chinese.

All in all the philosophic and moral base of Chinese society made it easy for assimilation to take place. The main obstacle was familial, and this proved no match for the advantages of assimilation. The demise of the Jewish colony in Kaifeng was virtually complete, leaving less than 200 Chinese who still refer to themselves as Jews. A renaissance of Judaism in China would be miraculous.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

are gratefully appreciated and published.

Thank you

The Albert L. Schultz Jewish Community Center in Palo Alto, California, is sponsoring a Jewish Heritage Tour to China in April of 1988.

The tour will be led by Leo Gabow, President of the Sino-Judaic Institute, and will include Kaifeng, the home of the ancient Chinese-Jewish Community.

For further information, please write Leo Gabow, ALS Jewish Community Center, 655 Arastadero Road, Palo Alto, CA. 94306. Or phone (415) 493-4096 or (415) 493-9400.

SEVEN SURNAMERS, EIGHT CLANS

By IGUD YOTZEI SIN • Association of Former Residents of China

SUSAN RESNICK, an American born film writer and director, has put together a film project of substance on the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng. She is now seeking the necessary funding for what promises to be, in the words of Michael Pollak, author of *MANDARINS, JEWS, AND MISSIONARIES*, "a highly entertaining and intellectually stimulating film . . . practical, exceedingly desirable, intriguing, ably thought out, and exceedingly well formulated."

The film will be based on individuals and families who, after more than a millenium of living in China, totally isolated from Jewish Tradition which was perpetuated in the Diaspora, still, to this day, consider themselves Jewish. Michael Pollak writes: "I am delighted by the rising interest these past years in the surprising existence in the heart of China of a miniscule and cutoff outpost that has doggedly striven for a millenium or so to retain its affiliation, however tenuous, with the Judaic sources from which it derives."

Susan Resnick plans to explore the present reality of representative members of the "Eight families with seven different surnames" who many Western scholars have written off as the defunct community of Kaifeng, China. She believes that there is a story to be told about these people, about the gradual disappearance of Jewish identity in most of them, and the earnest efforts of certain individuals to rekindle the light of heritage and to learn the meaning of what they affirm as their Jewish identity. "I can't emphasize enough the value and urgency of documenting on film the existence of

still not sure they fully comprehend how Israelis can live with a system that tolerates open expression of conflict and tension. Yet I do believe that they acquired some understanding of the ethnic and religious divisions within the Israeli Jewish community and about relations between Jews and Arabs, and how these conflicts are reflected in Israel's political system. How they felt about democratic political systems, or about an individual's freedom in a democracy, was not openly expressed. In light of the Chinese government's negative reaction to the student demonstrations of December, 1986, this was plainly not an appropriate topic for discussion.

The course concluded with an examination of foreign policy/security issues. The students were well informed of the deep division within Israel's unity government on the wisdom of convening a Middle East peace conference under the aegis of the UN Security Council. China has been fully supportive of that effort. As one of the permanent members of the Security Council, China is eager to increase its participation in Middle Eastern politics though the convocation of a U.N. sponsored conference. Again, as a result of their prior knowledge, the students had difficulty understanding why anyone would oppose that initiative.

So I had to explain to them how Likud's nationalist conception of Greater Israel and the Religious bloc's conception of the Holy Land made both groups reluctant to think about peace proposals involving withdrawal from the territories occupied since 1967. I also had to explain that the Labor bloc's concern for military security made them reluctant to accept a PLO state in the West Bank and Gaza. Most of all, I had to explain how Israeli governmental policy was constrained by Israeli public opinion and how 40 years of armed attacks had generated a pervasive mistrust of Arab intentions. Given the material presented earlier in the course, I am confident the students understood the different Israeli positions. I am also confident, however, that very few, if any, were persuaded that any Israeli position—as opposed to the Chinese government's policy—was correct.

At the end of the semester, I gave a final examination. The students were given 10 days to write a thousand word essay on either of two questions. One question dealt with the events surrounding the establishment of the State of Israel. The other dealt with the

proposed international conference for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. Both questions called for the students to examine Israeli actions and policies in light of the existing international situation. To my great delight, the students' answers demonstrated a fair amount of knowledge. Very few had a sophisticated appreciation of the nuances; yet all of them seemed to comprehend that Middle Eastern politics could not be reduced to a good guys versus bad guys scenario. They were in a position to do more advanced studies of Israel and the Middle East should their inclination and/or work in a government agency or university lead them in that direction.

So I left China with a strong sense that a good foundation had been laid. A small number of Chinese academics at the country's premier universities and prestigious academic institutes had engaged in dialogues about the Middle East in which both the United States' and Israeli positions were presented as rational approaches to regional problems of peace and security. And a class of students at Beijing University—the next generation of Chinese academics and administrators—had become familiar with the basics of Israeli democracy and policy.

Plainly much remains to be done. We left the books and slides we had brought with us at Beijing University. But that university's library remains woefully short of basic texts and journals, and it contains almost no materials reflecting the most recent scholarship about Israel and Jewish culture. If that is the case at the country's premier institution of higher learning, how much more so is it likely to be at its other universities. Within the constraints imposed by politics and finances, I hope a process can be devised for systematically developing the infrastructure for Chinese scholarship in these areas.

Equally important for the task is a continuation of academic exchanges. At this point, the policies of the People's Republic precludes extensive faculty and student exchanges between Israel and China. But Chinese academics and students have been able to participate in Western conferences and programs about Israel and Jewish cultures. This participation should be encouraged and wherever possible extended.

Similarly, I hope that my experiences in China were just the beginning. Over the course of the next few years I hope that many other scholars have the opportunity to teach about Jewish

culture and Israel in the People's Republic of China. Personally I hope to have the opportunity of doing more advanced work with the students I taught at Beijing University and to continuing my exchanges with Chinese scholars.

A Chinese Jewish Identity

(continued from page 1)

problems for other Jews who define Jewishness matrilineally, according to *halakha* (Jewish law); by this criteria, Chinese Jews are not "really" Jewish, and haven't been so for hundreds of years.

In fact, the Reform and Reconstructionist movements, in adopting patrilineal descent in the 1980's, legitimated a practice that Chinese Jews trace back at least as far as the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). A Ming emperor conferred upon the Jews seven surnames by which they are identifiable to this day: Ai, Gao, Ji, Li, Shi, Zhang and Zhao. Although other Chinese may have one of these surnames, Chinese Jews and their descendants will have *only* one of these seven names. Two names are of particular interest — Shi and Jin — meaning Stone and Gold respectively, common surnames today among Western Jews.

A Jewish community as such no longer exists in Kaifeng. Indeed, most of those of Jewish descent do not even know each other. "In Kaifeng, we Jews have virtually no contact with each other," one reported. "Only if someone says, 'My name is Li. I've heard my grandfather say I'm also a Jewish descendant,' do we know there are some links between us." But among individuals a strong sense of ethnic identity remains, and they are eager to share this and learn from foreign Jews who travel to Kaifeng as part of tours to China.

Li Rongxin (pronounced Rungshen), the son of one of the Kaifeng Jews who was aided by the Shanghai Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews, lives in Kaifeng today. At 77, he is healthy and full of stories of Jewish life in Shanghai — of the synagogue on Museum Road near where the Li family lived, and of the foreign Jews, mostly from England, with whom he had contact — and of Jewish practice in Kaifeng.

The one small room Li calls home is filled with correspondence from Western Jews he has met over the

years since Kaifeng was opened to tourists. He has accumulated something of a Judaica library, as they have given him copies of Haggadas and Hebrew primers. Nevertheless, his knowledge of Jewish law and custom seems tinged with *bubbe meisehs* passed down among Chinese Jews — such as the “fact” that Jews observe the Sabbath in part by fasting. (Interestingly, the 1489 stele does state that Jews are to fast four times a month.)

While in Kaifeng two summers ago, I met again three Jewish descendants who had been brought before the American Jewish Congress groups which I led on tours of China in 1983. At the time, we were allowed to spend only a little over half an hour interviewing those chosen to speak to us. Shi Zongyu, Shi Yulian and Zhao Pingyu are the only Chinese Jews brought before groups of Jewish tourists. All eloquent spokesmen, they nevertheless left visitors disappointed, as the Westerners tried to understand the strong ties which somehow bound them to us, as well as the differences which seemed at times insurmountable. Indeed, many came away feeling that these people were frauds — after all, they neither observe Jewish holidays and traditions anymore, nor do they speak or read Hebrew. And to top it off, they gave the standard line of the Chinese Government about Israeli aggression.

How close *do* these Chinese Jews feel to Jews around the world? Many feel a special bond for our common ancestry and heritage, but the political world in which they live precludes a deeper understanding of Jewish ties to the Land of Israel. Nevertheless, pride in their past is very real, as can be seen by their listing their children as “Youtai” (Jewish) on all certificates of registry, next to the space allotted for nationality, where they once might have written “Han” (ethnic Chinese).

Zhao Pingyu, a retired tax collector in his mid-60’s and a member of the Planning Committee of the Tourist Bureau of Kaifeng, displayed one of these certificates. Perhaps the most enterprising of all the Chinese Jews, Zhao is preparing a mini-museum or, as he calls it, a “commemorative hall,” which will recount the many contributions and scholarly successes attained over the centuries by his ancestors. To this end, he has built a model of the old synagogue as his father and grandfather told him it looked. It is along the lines of the model of the Kaifeng synagogue found in Beit Hatefutzot (the

Diaspora Museum) in Tel Aviv, only Zhao has added two stone lions in the front, which stood there through the centuries.

“In the course of researching the history of the Zhao clan, one must also understand things which pertain to the original synagogue,” say Zhao. “At least this will enable me to pass this knowledge on to my own descendants so that they will understand their history. During my research of the synagogue, I discovered that the last restoration was undertaken by my family.”

Given that Judaism has been traced patrilineally in Kaifeng for centuries, Zhao finds himself in a peculiar position: He is one of the few Chinese Jewish descendants with an extensive knowledge of his people’s history and only daughters — five of them — to pass it on to. Like Tevye, Zhao has had to accommodate to changing times. He has, therefore, decreed that any children which his daughters have should be registered as “Youtai,” even if their fathers are not of Jewish descent. And they have all agreed. In fact, one has joined her father in a small-scale enterprise of making Chinese Jewish *yarmulkas* to be sold to Jewish tourists — which will, they hope, bring in much-needed funds for the museum project.

Although he has amassed a formidable Judaica collection from Jewish tourists over the years, Zhao can neither read the books nor make use of them, as they are all in English or Hebrew. However, he does appreciate having them and hopes that one of his daughters, who he would like to send to the United States to study Judaism, will someday return to Kaifeng and explain them to her father.

The Zhaos still live on South Teaching Scripture Lane, named after the religion of the Jews who resided there because of its close proximity of the synagogue. “[The synagogue] was destroyed in the flood of the Yellow River,” says Zhao. “After the flood [in the midnineteenth century], many Jews fled to other parts of the country. They went north, south, east and west, scattered in all directions. After they left, they managed to make a living where they were and never bothered to return. So some of them [now] don’t even know they are Jewish. At that time, we also left, without any choice. But we couldn’t make a living, so we came back. After this, we had no house, no way to make a living, so we just set up a house next to the original synagogue temporarily and slowly

made our lives again. That’s how we came to remain on this street.”

Few Kaifeng Jewish descendants display the knowledge of their ancestry that Zhao Pingyu possesses. When shown a Star of David, for example, Ai Dianyuan did not recognize it as a Jewish symbol. Nevertheless, Ai displayed an attitude typical of most Jewish descendants in Kaifeng today, as distinct from those brought before tourist groups to recount their family’s histories; that is, they know they are of Jewish descent only because they were told so by their fathers, and they have a strong desire to pass this one bit of information on to their children. For some reason, it is still important to them to do so.

Ai Fengmian, a former construction worker now in his 70’s, had one of the most interesting stories. In 1952 Ai was picked by his neighborhood committee to go to Beijing to represent Chinese Jews as one of the national minorities in a ceremony held by the then three-year-old government of the People’s Republic of China. Ai met and shook hands with Mao Tse-tung, Chou En-lai and Deng Xiaoping. One might conclude from this episode that shortly after the establishment of the PRC, Jews were close to being declared a national minority.

China has 55 national minorities, who are declared such on the basis of common language, traditions, customs and geographic area. The Muslims now constitute the second largest minority in China, after the Zhuang, and they are able to retain their study of Arabic and religious observance in mosques. The Jews, however, long ago lost their knowledge of Hebrew and, with the destruction of the synagogue, a communal meeting place for worship. Many Jews were, in fact, swallowed up by Islam over the years, since it was the religion whose customs and practices were most like those of Judaism.

One such person in Jin Xiaojing, a sociologist at the National Minorities Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. Jin, whose surname means “Gold,” only discovered her Jewish roots in 1980. Jin Xiaojing’s daughter, Qu Yinan, a Beijing journalist, is now studying at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles.

A deep desire to recover his heritage was best exhibited by Shi Zhongyu, whose childhood memories of celebrating Passover and seeing brass Stars of David wrapped in red silk hidden in a medicine chest are still vivid.

Chinese, and it was no mean accomplishment in the ethnological field.”

Bishop William White, who was in charge of the Anglo-Canadian Mission in Kaifeng, and who purchased the Synagogue site for his Mission, stated the matter differently. He wrote, “The reasons for the collapse of the Jewish colony is a story which may someday be told, but for the present it is enough to say that the fact of this colony having existed for possibly eighteen centuries in the very heart of a strong virile people like the Chinese is very wonderful. For ten centuries or more the Jews have existed quite isolated from their co-religionists in other countries.”

The inference White makes is that lack of contact with Jews from the outside world may have been responsible for Jewish assimilation in China. Had fresh Jewish blood been injected into the Kaifeng community, Kaifeng Jewry might have been revitalized.

This seems not to be supported by the experiences of the Jews of India. Indian Jews who had no contact with Jewry from other countries, maintained their identities. In the case of the Cochin Jews, they did not number more than twenty-two hundred in the 17th century. This was, according to Professor Mandelbaum, probably their greatest number, yet they held to their Judaism for more than a thousand years.

Another settlement, the Bene Israel, numbered approximately 14,000 souls. Before the 18th century, the Bene Israel had no outside relationships, yet survived as a Jewish group. Many have emigrated to Israel.

Nor can antisemitism be considered a cause for Jewish assimilation in China, for no oppression of Jew qua Jews existed. The Jews suffered no discrimination or persecution not suffered equally by all the people. “A great credit to the Imperial regime of China,” commented Doctor Josef Preuss. The blood libel accusation that medieval Christians found so believable, was alien to the Chinese, as the ethic of Confucianism did not allow for this genre of persecution. Whatever the actual cause of Jewish assimilation, it cannot be ascribed to antisemitism. If foreigners were at various times held in suspicion, the Chinese Jew was held no more so and no less so than others.

A corollary point is advanced by S.M. Perlmann, in his booklet, “The Chinese Jews.” The freer the society, the more amenable minority groups

are to assimilation. As the Jews did not experience persecution as Jews in China, it became inevitable that they would be absorbed by the Chinese as the Chinese had absorbed numerous other peoples. Perlmann’s thesis is that racial and religious persecution create the cement that binds people to their ethnicity. A vital group loyalty is created with a resulting solidarity. As persecution always has its basis in cruel fantasy, the victims can only gather together in riteousness.

Perlmann advances the view that the same phenomenon will occur in France, England and the United States. The freedoms of these countries will wash away the ethnic glue and assimilation will proceed apace. Solution? Perlmann says that a Jewish State must be established in order to insure Jewish survival. Four years after Perlmann penned his remarks, the Balfour Declaration was issued.

Spinoza advanced a similar theory. Christian persecution of the Jews insured Jewish survival. It was Spinoza’s view that Jewish survival could only be explained on secular, sociological grounds. He rejected the theological doctrine that the Jews were “chosen” to survive. Wrote Spinoza, “That they have been preserved in great measure by Gentile hatred, experience demonstrates.” This experience, he says, can be witnessed in Spain and Portugal. When Spain permitted the Jews all the “privileges” of society, they began to gradually relinquish their Judaism and entered into the process of absorption. Portugal refused to grant these “privileges,” causing the Jews to remain intact as a religious and ethnic group. Spinoza did not reach the same conclusion as Perlmann. He did not advocate a Jewish State. Of course such advocacy at that time was hardly possible. But Spinoza clearly rejected the “Chosen People” concept, arguing that all people are “Chosen.” For these and similar views Spinoza was excommunicated by a Jewish court.

A number of other reasons have been advanced explaining Jewish assimilation in China. Lawrence Kramer’s “The Kaifeng Jews, A Disappearing Community,” does a masterful job in analyzing these many proposed reasons. But one cause has received considerable support. For some odd reason the Chinese Jews never translated the Bible or their prayer books into Chinese. As more and more Jews over the generations lost the ability to read Hebrew, they

lost their identity and the sustenance their literature had supplied to previous generations. Had they translated their religious literature into Chinese, their children and their children’s children would have been able to retain their Jewish identity. The Muslims who did translate their religious works into Chinese, not only survived, but became a powerful religious bloc, even today in Communist China. Of course it should be remembered that the Muslims far exceeded the Jews in population. The Jews constituted only the tiniest fraction of the population, and as Bishop White commented, it is amazing that they survived as long as they did.

But Song Nai Rhee dismisses most of the above reasons. He considers them secondary, even tertiary. The primary cause of Jewish assimilation was the Imperial Chinese Civil Service System. All other reasons were merely contributory and served only to exacerbate the primary effects of the Chinese Civil Service System. Chinese Civil Servants who passed the various examinations, the equivalent of our Bachelors, Masters and Doctoral degrees, had a considerable influence on the community at large. They were sent to rule in parts of China away from their homes, in order to avoid problems of nepotism.

The insistence that Civil Servants be among the educated class was based on the moral principles of Confucius. The Confucian doctrine stated that government must be morally guided and that Civil Servants had to be chosen on the basis of merit, moral quality and superior education. The requisite for the passing of these examinations was the contender’s comprehension of Confucian doctrine and the Chinese Classics. The literati who became a Civil Servant stepped immediately to the top of society. “The door was opened to power and wealth.”

It was natural that the best minds would gravitate to such positions, and that included the Jews as well. While the Orthodox Jews probably looked with apprehension at such behavior, the young Chinese-Jewish intellectual found the prizes too glittering. As no racial or religious biases stood in his way, he could compete on equal terms with other Chinese. Once he opted for the Civil Servant prize, there was little time to learn about Judaism.

Even if the Jewish Civil Servant felt an emotional tie to Judaism, his posi-

"The *yarmulkas* I saw in my family were not made up of four sections like this [given him by a tourist], but rather were composed of six pieces," he recalls. "They were dark blue with black trim, and there was Hebrew writing embroidered on it. They used yellow thread to embroider it with. I never understood any of the Hebrew writing ... These belonged to the previous generation. It was always kept in the closet ... As I remember now, the number of the edges probably has something to do with the Sabbath. The story goes that on the first day God created such and such, the second day God created such and such, and so on, finishing creation on the sixth day. So because of this, the *yarmulka* has six or seven parts. I heard this from my mother. It's really regrettable we no longer have these things."

Shi is working with Wang Yisha, former curator of the Kaifeng Municipal Museum, who probably knows more contemporary Chinese Jewish descendants than anyone else, to reconstruct the genealogies of the Kaifeng Jews, in particular the Shi clan. To this end, they are eager to get hold of the Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book of the Dead, on which Sino-Judaic scholar Donald Daniel Leslie has done considerable research. The Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati has agreed to donate two microfiches of this work to Kaifeng — one to the Municipal Museum, which is planning a Judaica wing that will house the steles, and another directly to Wang Yisha. However, efforts to expedite the sending of the microfiches have run into some bureaucratic snags, which have temporarily set back those who would delve into their past in Kaifeng.

The China International Travel Service (CITS), the official Chinese travel agency, has been attempting to establish greater tourist contact between Western Jews and Kaifeng. However, tourists have been discouraged by the many inconveniences of traveling to Kaifeng (still a long way from the amenities afforded by the more glamorous cities of Shanghai and Beijing) and the paucity of actual "things to see" relating to the history of the Chinese Jews: The site of the synagogue is now occupied by a hospital, and the two steles may be seen only with considerable haggling on the part of tour leaders with CITS officials. As a result, even the American Jewish Congress abandoned Kaifeng as a part of the itinerary of its China tour in 1986.

My own solo journey to Kaifeng in 1985 was capped by a five-hour de-

attention by the public security police on grounds that I was collecting secret information for FBI-style research and was attempting to proselytize the Chinese Jews, who don't even exist anymore — so I was told — so there should have been nothing to interest me. Speaking to people in their homes, I was informed, was illegal. Since I was on a tourist visa, I should have been visiting pagodas, not talking privately with individuals — in Chinese, no less. My interrogation was a far different experience than what happens in most other cities in China, certainly the large ones such as Beijing and Shanghai, where contacts between foreigners and Chinese are quite the norm.

Many tourists I brought to Kaifeng in official groups have come away wondering whether the whole thing wasn't a hoax to get visitors and their money into the city. Having spoken to many of the Jewish descendants in the privacy of their homes, having heard their stories and even discussed Middle East politics, I cannot agree with that assessment. There are precious memories of Jewish life in Kaifeng which are worth recording for future generations of Chinese Jews and for Jews around the world.

To this end, the Sino-Judaic Institute was created in 1985 in Palo Alto, California, to encourage research and scholarship about the Jewish experience in China and to aid the establishment of a Judaica wing in the Kaifeng Municipal Museum.

I saw in the Chinese Jews a mixture of two of the greatest civilizations — certainly the oldest — the world has known. What I began to ask myself was not why Judaism and Jews as a community no longer live on in Kaifeng, but rather, how they could have survived in that far corner of the earth with a Jewish identity for so long.

We acknowledge with gratitude the contribution of \$1000 by —
MARVIN JOSEPHSON
to the Sino-Judaic Institute.

JEWISH-CHINESE CONTACTS REACH NEW HEIGHTS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 23 (JTA) — A kosher restaurant in Beijing and a

Jewish studies conference in 1988 for Chinese scholars in Shanghai — these are two prospects that have come into view following a recent visit to the People's Republic of China by leaders of the Asia-Pacific Jewish Association (APJA).

Senior Chinese scholars, however, guided by their Foreign Ministry, rejected the suggestion that a meeting of Asian Jewish colloquiums' international steering committee be held in Beijing, with scholars from Israel and the West attending. They indicated that this would be too sensitive and premature.

Other agreements tentatively reached between the APJA delegation and leaders of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences include:

- Sets of the Encyclopedia Judaica and other Jewish source material will be presented to six leading research and academic libraries in China.
- Video and audio tapes on Jewish topics will be made available for wide distribution.
- Chinese scholars will be invited to attend the Third Asian Jewish Colloquium in 1989, and to attend other international Jewish conferences, possibly in Israel. Jewish-studies scholars, possibly from Israel, will be invited to China.
- More tourist visas will be granted to Israeli citizens — but still within limitations.

Sensitivity In Beijing

The president of the APJA, Australian tourism tycoon Isi Leibler, and vice president Sam Lipski say they found "no evidence ... of any short-term prospect of a change in the status quo" between Israel and China. They say there is much sensitivity in Beijing "to the climate created by exaggerated speculation" in the Israeli media and by "over-eager Israeli politicians," and that this is "counter-productive."

They told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that they were especially anxious to acquaint informed American Jewish leadership and opinion of their efforts in China.

Leibler and Lipski had apparently hoped to be able to hold a session of their colloquium steering committee in Beijing, following the participation at the second colloquium in Hong Kong last March of Chinese scholar and establishment figure Prof. Sidney Shapiro (Sha Boli).

Shapiro lectured at the colloquium on the history of the Jews of Kaifeng, and he has retained a warm relation-

ship with the APJA since then. He is to visit Australia in 1988.

But the APJA leaders were turned down. They are understood to believe that Arab diplomatic pressure on the Chinese Foreign Ministry, and the general waiting mood in Beijing in advance of the 13th Communist Party Congress in October, have led to extreme circumspection on the part of Chinese academics with whom they are in contact.

The most senior among these are Prof. Zhao Fusan, a vice president of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and director of its Institute of World Religions, and Dr. Li Shen zhi, also an academy vice president and director of its Institute of American Studies. Zhao, who is a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee and considered a ranking cultural-ideological figure, told the APJA that there are some 20 scholars throughout China involved in one way or another with Jewish studies.

Their greatest problem was a dearth of source material, he said. The academy had recently translated Martin Buber's "I and Thou" and Abba Eban's "My People" into Chinese.

Zhao agreed with the APJA that collections of basic Jewish resource works, especially in philosophy, poetry and archaeology, would be distributed to the Academy of Social Sciences' own documentation center, to the Chinese National Library, to Beijing University, to Fudan University in Shanghai, to the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and to the Nanking Theological Seminary.

He conceded that the level of Jewish studies was not high, but singled out for special mention Prof. Hsu Ding Xin, an Old Testament scholar at the Nanking Seminary and a pupil of the late Dr. J.F. Li, who graduated from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in the 1930's.

Beginning Of A Cultural Dialogue

Zhao also welcomed the APJA's readiness to help towards arranging a conference of Chinese scholars of Jewish studies, to be held in Shanghai next year. One or two outstanding Jewish studies scholars from the West would attend this conference, along with some of the Chinese academics active in the field.

While the participation obviously would not be large, Zhao felt the conference could be an important beginning of a cultural dialogue.

It was Zhao who, in the surprise of

the two Jewish leaders, raised the idea of a kosher facility in Beijing. He said it could serve as a tangible presence of Jewish ethnic culture. Leibler and Lipski accordingly began discussing the project with the Sheraton Great Wall Hotel, which is a Western businessmen's favorite hostelry in Beijing.

Regarding Israeli tourists, Leibler was told by an authoritative official that there was no problem for them to receive visas provided they consisted of no more than 30-40 percent of a tour group.

There has been a fall-off recently in the number of visas granted to Israelis seeking to tour China.

SHANGHAI APPEAL FOR MATERIALS ON THE RHADANITES.

Prof. Gong Fang-zhen, Director, Office of Religious Research, Institute for the Study of Religions, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, is a specialist on religions imported to China along the Silk Road. His field work is done in close cooperation with the Xinjiang Archeological Bureau.

Having become interested in the Rhadanites, Prof. Gong would like to obtain copies of any available published materials on this subject to provide background for further research.

To promote this research, and to demonstrate the international cooperation vital to the advancement of specialized knowledge, anyone with relevant materials to spare is invited to send copies to Prof. Gong at Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, No. 7, Lane 622, Huai Hai Zhong Lu, Shanghai, China.

THE ASSIMILATION OF THE KAIFENG JEWS

By Leo Gabow

In the year 1605, a Jesuit Priest, Father Matteo Ricci, received a visit from a Chinese Jew at his Mission in Peking, and thereby learned of the existence of an exotic Jewish community in Kaifeng-fu, the former capital of the Northern Sung Dynasty.

Since then, numerous articles and books have been written, some serious, others of a sensational nature, and some only imaginative figments,

analyzing and describing this colony of Jews. Without doubt, the most definitive analysis of this Jewish colony was done by Professor Donald Daniel Leslie in his work THE SURVIVAL OF THE CHINESE JEWS. Yet we know little about these Jews, despite the many books, pamphlets and articles.

It is incredible that we should know so little about them. It is quite understandable that we should know little about the men behind the Rosetta Stone, but the Kaifeng Jews have left us Memorial Stones, prayer books, Torahs, Codex's and other materials. They have been written about by people ranging from Father Mateo Ricci to Bishop William White; by many Missionaries, Catholic and Protestant who had personal contact with them from the 17th century to the Chinese Revolution of 1949; and by contemporary scholars who have studied all their materials. Moreover, descendents of these Chinese Jews exist to this day, though they can tell us little or nothing of their past. So far as oral tradition is concerned, all seems to have been lost.

No stories or poems written by the Chinese Jews themselves, describing their way of life, their sorrows and achievements, their familial and religious conflicts, have been found, though the talents for such literary efforts doubtlessly existed. Some Jews became literati, some were officers in the army, and it seems quite reasonable to suppose that many were well educated.

A renewed interest in the Chinese Jew has developed, both here and in China, and articles are appearing in both Chinese and American journals and newspapers with increasing frequency. Michael Pollak's outstanding book, "Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries," has stimulated further interest, particularly in the Jewish community.

The question of assimilation, virtually complete among the Kaifeng Jews by the middle to the late 19th century, is engaging. Why were the Chinese Jews absorbed and assimilated, while the Jews of Ethiopia and the Jews of India, maintained their Jewish identities?

Lin Yu T'ang, in his book, "My Country and my People," writes, "... it was due entirely to the family system that the Jews of Henan, who today are so thoroughly sinolized that their Jewish tradition of not eating pork has become a mere memory. The race consciousness of the Jews can be shamed into oblivion only by the greater race consciousness of the family-minded