

Hebrew?" When I go back to Shanghai for my vacation, my mother always asks me, "Why did you change your major to Hebrew while everyone else is crazy about learning English?" Like others, she is puzzled too. But there is more to it than that. She wants her daughter to stay with her in Shanghai. That's very typical of a Chinese mother. Indeed, hardly anyone wants to leave Shanghai, let alone a girl who has neither relatives or friends in Peking. Generally, Chinese children grow up under their parents' wings.

Well, to me it is simple. I am just taking a step in the direction of the Jewish nation which sometimes served as a main topic over tea during my Secondary School days. "Why haven't they been assimilated by other nations, especially after hundreds of years of exile?" "What enables them to do so well in business? Is it only because they are more diligent?" "How did they create such a mighty military?" There are lots of whys. So when a teacher from Peking University came to my school to enroll students to study Hebrew, I volunteered. This was just what Robert Frost described in "The Road Not Taken—"Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference."

After taking an entrance examination, I was accepted and became on the first seven students learning Hebrew in China. It is somewhat strange that before we knew each other well, none of us asked the others why they chose Hebrew for their major at a time when there is no relationship between the People's Republic of China and Israel. Perhaps we were a little bit tired of repeating the same answer again and again. However, of one thing we were certain: there must be pioneers. And we are glad to be the first few. But if you ask me for a detailed explanation why we are so lucky to have such an opportunity, I could not tell you. It must be fate.

Once I met an American who had been studying Chinese for more than fifteen years. Like the others, when he learned of my major, he asked me why I had chosen it. Given the state of relations between the People's Republic of China and Israel, he wondered of

what utility would knowledge of Hebrew be. "Well," I said, "I study Hebrew for the same reason you started to learn Chinese when there was a tense relationship between our two countries."

And now we have been studying Hebrew for two and a half years. I don't know how we are getting along with our Hebrew compared with other foreign students who learn it as a second language. Anyway, we received a lot of praise from some American Jews who came to our class last term to convince themselves that there really was a group of students at Peking University learning Hebrew. They were very surprised to discover that the Hebrew section possessed only one American teacher, seven text books used for beginners at Ulpan, and five concise English-Hebrew, Hebrew-English dictionaries (now we have eight English-Hebrew dictionaries). To make mat-

ters worse, we have no Hebrew teacher this term. It's difficult to find an adequate Hebrew teacher. So this term, we have no teaching materials except newspapers, which of course, are not very interesting. We are grateful to those who donate rudimentary materials related to Hebrew. We will keep them for our future students. We hope that in the future, we will have access to books on Jewish culture, history and literature. Tapes and films would also be very much to our liking. One can't separate oneself from listening and speaking while learning a language.

Thus, the Chinese Educational Office is going to send two students to the United States to study Hebrew and some other related courses. I am one of the lucky people. To study in a better environment will be of great benefit to us. We would, in turn, be of greater benefit to our country.

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POINTS EAST

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THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF HONG KONG

by Dennis A. Leventhal
Chairman, Jewish Historical
Society of Hong Kong

The Jewish Community of Hong Kong is best characterized as small, diverse and dynamic. Current membership in Ohel Leah Synagogue consists of approximately 230 families (over 600 people),¹ and contains around twenty-five different nationalities "whose religious beliefs range from ultra-orthodox through to reform,"² and is a mixture of Sephardim and Ashkenazim. In recent years there has been a large influx of professional people, including bankers, lawyers, academics, and commercial consultants.

The historical core of the community is Sephardic, but religious practice is primarily Ashkenazic, with much of the Jewish population consisting of "transient Jews in business, education, and the consular corps."³ The Sephardic core provides continuity and intricate links with the complex history of the Far East.

After the 1842 Treaty of Nanking opened Chinese ports to foreign settlements, the Sassoon, Kadoorie, and other leading Jewish families, originally from Baghdad via India, pioneered Jewish settlement of Canton, Shanghai, Tianjin, Ningbo, Hong Kong and other Chinese coastal cities.⁴ As merchants and traders, they were an intimate part of the rich and variegated life of the Chinese "Treaty Ports."

Although Jewish community life in Hong Kong began around the mid-1850s, the current synagogue was not built until 1901-1902. Ohel Leah Synagogue is Colonial-Sephardic in design and "was given to the community (under a Trust) by the family of Sir Jacob Sassoon; the adjoining Jewish Recreation Club was presented by Sir Elly

Kadoorie in 1909."⁵ The original club building was thoroughly looted during World War II. In 1949, a new club building was constructed using funds donated by the membership and "matching" funds from the Kadoorie brothers.

"Prior to 1858 the graves of certain Jewish settlers have been traced back to the Colonial Cemetery in Happy Valley" on Hong Kong Island.⁶ Other early settlers were buried in Macau. The Hong Kong Jewish Cemetery was established by a small government land grant in 1858.⁷ Located in Happy Valley, this grant was expanded in 1904 by Sir Matthew Nathan (1862-1939), who served from 1904 to 1907 as Hong Kong's only Jewish Governor.⁸ Sir Matthew also served the community as Honorary President of Ohel Leah Synagogue while in Hong Kong.⁹ The main thoroughfare in Hong Kong's Kowloon peninsula is called Nathan Road in his honour. When first constructed, this road was dubbed "Nathan's Folly" because it was considered too large and thus would never be fully utilized. Today, it is one of our most heavily used thoroughfares.

During the 19th Century C.E., the connection between the Jewish communities of Hong Kong and the various other Treaty Ports of China was fundamentally one of Sephardic trade. In the 20th Century, new historical pressures brought an influx of Ashkenazim to the China coast, increasing greatly the East Asian Jewish population. The first Russian Jewish immigration occurred after the pogroms around the time of the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, and the second followed in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Initially, most of these refugees settled in Harbin (Manchuria), but gradually many flowed into other Chinese cities.

In the 1930s, the Jews in China

S.J.I. PRESIDENT VISITS CHINA; PROPOSES SINO-JUDAIC EXHIBITION

by Leo Gabow

I would like to give our membership a report on my visit to China during the period April 18th to May 6th. This report will deal with what I perceive to be a growing academic and scholarly interest in the Jewish experience in China among Chinese scholars; an interest not confined to the ancient Jews of Kaifeng, but including the more recent arrival of Jews in Shanghai, Harbin and other Chinese cities.

Item 5 of this report, will in my judgement, turn out to be the most significant, particularly as regards our Institute's relations with an important Academy in China. I venture to characterize it as a possible breakthrough.

1) **Mr. Tang Yusheng:** In Beijing I met with Mr. Tang, who works as an Assistant Research Fellow in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Minorities Research Institute. Mr. Tang's immediate superior is Mr. Israel Epstein, Editor of *China Reconstructs*.

Mr. Tang first came to my attention via a report given me by our Hong Kong representative and member of our Board of Directors, Mr. Dennis Leventhal. On November 2, 1987, Mr. Leventhal wrote me as follows: "Mr. Tang has written a book (in Chinese) called "Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Chinese Jews" (still in MS form). Mr. Tang expressed the opinion that much of the published material on the Kaifeng Jews consists of rehashings of other published materials. He feels his work offers new insights." Mr. Tang is seeking a translator, skilled in Judaic studies and Confucianism, to translate his book into English.

Mr. Tang has a number of publi-

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(continued on page 5)

From the Editor:

SJI member Henrietta Reifler, a resident of Shanghai from 1935-47, and daughter of Rev. Mendel Brown, Rabbi of Ohel Rachel Synagogue and principal of the Shanghai Jewish School, called me recently with an excellent suggestion. Noting Wendy Abraham's call for books (in our most recent issue of *Points East*), she pointed out that such appeals lack follow through. Should individuals just send materials over? Wouldn't a coordinated plan of action be better? After consulting with Leo Gabow, we decided that you may send your books to me, c/o the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, 510 Securities Building, Seattle, WA 98101, and I will forward them to Wendy. If you are in doubt about what to send, check with us first and please — good quality Judaic materials only.

Wendy: Let us know what to send!

Everyone else: Enjoy this issue!

Anson Laytner

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IN THE FIELD

- Canadian film-maker Gary Bush, featured in *Points East* 2:3, visited Kaifeng recently as part of his work on his documentary on the Chinese Jews. An article describing his trip abroad appeared recently in the *Canadian Jewish News*, 12 May, 1988.
- SJI's existence was noted in the *Congressional Record* when Rabbi Arnold Belzer, SJI's East Coast Director, gave the invocation to the House of Representatives in Washington, D.C.
- Kaifeng and Wichita, Kansas, are sister cities, and a delegation from Kaifeng, consisting of three officials of the city government and two members of the Kaifeng Branch of the China International Travel Service, came to Wichita at the end of April. Prof. Albert Dien, on behalf of the Sino-Judaic Institute, hosted the delegation during their stopover in San Francisco. In conversations with Wang Jiping and Liu Wenqing, Director and Deputy Manager, respectively, of the CITS branch, a number of new developments were reported. First of all, a map of Kaifeng has finally been printed to replace the unsatisfactory brochure-type of the past. The new map is in the Daoyoutu series, and although it is at present only available in a Chinese version, it is quite usable with some assistance. A new hotel is about to open its doors. Its name is Dongjing, which may be translated as Eastern Capital, and it is located, appropriately enough, on Welcoming Guests Road. Mr. Liu Wenqing has been assigned to be manager of the hotel. A new museum has been built and the exhibits are in the process of being installed. The stone stelae of the Jewish synagogue, dating to 1489, 1512 and 1679, heretofore only to be seen in unsatisfactory fashion in a temporary storehouse, are to be moved to the new museum. The new museum is conveniently located a short distance north of the new hotel. In summary, every effort is being made to make a visit to Kaifeng a pleasant and rewarding one, and Prof. Dien was assured that both CITS and the city government welcome those who come to Kaifeng to learn more about the an-

cient Jewish community there.

- SJI member Henrietta Reifler has published an article in *Nizkor*, the newsletter of the Washington State Jewish Historical Society. Entitled "Seattle Jews from China: An Oral History Project," the article combines personal reminiscences, general history and photographs. WSJHS notes that her article is part of a larger collection of interviews with Jews who lived in China.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mary Korr from Philadelphia writes, "I read your mailings with great enjoyment."

Harold Peck of Cincinnati writes, "Thank you for a very informative publication."

Mrs. Abe Schwartz of St. Louis writes, "I enjoy reading your publication. I find it very interesting and informative."

Nathan Lipton of Thousand Palms, Calif. writes, "The Jews of Kaifeng-fu has for the past three years, been an exciting part of my lectures on Judaic Studies in the Coachella Valley-Palm Springs areas. Information in *Points East* is a great help."

A PLEA FOR INVOLVEMENT,
NOT JUST STUDY

by Louis Schwartz

Were we to accept the notion that anyone not born of a Jewish woman is not a Jew, without considering or taking into account extenuating circumstances, then we might as well give up all links to Jewish descendants still found in China, Ethiopia, India and other countries in the world where indeed they are still to be found, assimilating to various degrees with other cultures. Regardless of your definition of who is and who is not a Jew, does it not behoove us to give new interpretation to ancient Jewish laws? We now live in a different world and time than did those who formulated these laws.

Are we now to write off the Jewish descendants from around the world as a chapter in history, to call in the archaeologists, anthropologists and historians to unearth all we can of their historical past, question these descendants in detail wherever we could find them, write our research papers and cast them off?

pay taxes."

1360, referring to the years 1277-1294: (Shan-chu hsin-hua, by Yang Yu): "...the officials in the Hangchow sugar board were all rich Jewish and Muslim merchants." (See Leslie's *Survival of the Chinese Jews* and Rudolf Lowenthal's *Bibliographies*. (The above references are taken from Leslie's "Survival" in many cases verbatim.)

* *Recent Chinese Writers on Kaifeng Jews*

Chang Hsiang-Wen, 1910: Chang visited Kaifeng and published his report in a Chinese journal. In 1935 it was translated into English under the title, "An Early Report on the Kaifeng Jewish Community." (See Hyman Kublin's *Studies of the Chinese Jews, Selections from Journals East and West*, Paragon Book Reprint Corp., N.Y. 1971.)

Ch'en Yuan, 1923: This work in Chinese, is entitled *I-Tz'u-Lo-Yeh Chiao K'ao*. This important work is probably the most authentic analysis of the Stone Inscriptions from a Chinese scholar. Though White and Lowenthal mention Ch'en Yuan, Leslie and Pollak give due credit to this scholar. (For an annotated translation and critical analysis, see Allen Edward Ross, "A Study of the K'ai Feng Israelites," a thesis presented to the faculty of the Graduate School, University of Southern California, June, 1970.)

Pan Guandan, 1953: His work in Chinese, translated as *Historical Questions Concerning the Jewish People in China*, is important, though it lacks the scholarship of Ch'en Yuan. A revised, English translation may be found in *Social Sciences in China*, May 1980. (For further discussion on Ch'en Yuan and Pan Guandan, see Shapiro's *Jews in Old China*.)

Jiang, Wenhan, 1982: His work *Christianity and the Kaifeng Jews in Ancient China*, has not been translated and has received scant attention in the West. Those who have read the book in Chinese have reported that it contains no new material, at least in respect to its Jewish segment.

(For further and detailed information on these writers, see Leslie's *Survival*, Pollak's *Mandarin*s and the Lowenthal *Bibliographies*.)

* *Early European References to Jews in China*

1286: Marco Polo refers to Jews in Khanbaliq (Beijing).

c. 1300: John of Monte Corvino, a Franciscan, refers to Jews in China.

c. 1326: Andrew of Perugia, Bishop of Chuan-chou, wrote, "...of the Jews...there are indeed no converts."

c. 1342: Jean de Marignolli argued with Jews in Khanbaliq.

1346: Ibn-Battutah, an Arab traveler, wrote, "we entered the second city through a gate called the Jews Gate. In this city lived the Jews, Christians and Parsees."

(See *Cathay and the Way Thither*, by Henry Yule, London, 1866, revised by Henri Cordier and re-issued in London, 1913-16.)

During the Ming Dynasty, Chinese sources do not appear to mention Jews, despite the certainty that a Jewish community and Synagogue existed in Kaifeng.

Since China has opened up in recent years, travelers have visited with the descendants of the Chinese Jews and viewed the two remaining stelae in the Kaifeng Museum. An increasing number of Chinese scholars have taken an interest in the history of the Kaifeng Jews, and now the Sino-Judaic Institute has organized and formalized this interest.

We welcome inquiries from our readers.

CHINESE STUDENT TO
STUDY IN U.S.A.

by Wendy Abraham

Yu Zhiqi has recently been notified that Brandeis awarded her a full scholarship to complete her undergraduate Hebrew/Judaic studies there beginning this Fall. Although she is still waiting to hear from Columbia and the University of Pennsylvania, she does not hold out much hope of receiving such a generous award as Brandeis has offered. She is from Shanghai originally, and will be there this summer while I am Fudan University, so she will keep me informed of her final destination.

In the meantime, I have contacted several East Coast synagogues and friends in the hope that they might plan to invite her for Shabbat and upcoming holidays, which she is eager to experience in

SLIDE SHOW
NOW AVAILABLE

A presentation by slides and taped commentary has been prepared on the history of the Jewish community in Kaifeng from their arrival in the 12th century down to the present. The commentary was prepared and is narrated by Prof. Albert Dien of Stanford University. The set, consisting of forty-eight 2x2" slides, a half-hour cassette, and a bibliography of suggested readings, is being distributed by the Sino-Judaic Institute on a non-profit basis for \$50.00, including postage. The presentation is especially well-suited for use in schools, community centers and libraries. To order a copy of this informative and educational set, write to the Audio-Visual Section, SINO-JUDAIC INSTITUTE, 3197 Louis Road, Palo Alto, CA 94303. There is an additional charge for the presentation on videotape rather than on slides. The exact charge for this videotape version depends on the number of requests, so please let us know if videotape better suits your needs.

America. So far she has been to one Shabbat, a Chanukah celebration and a Passover seder, all of which I organized in Beijing. In addition, I have suggested that they might wish to have her speak to their organizations, both about the state of Hebrew education in China and Chinese people's attitudes towards Israel, etc. Her English is marvelous, and her Hebrew is really quite good—combined with her naturally charming, diplomatic personality I think she'd be a winning speaker. I am also enclosing a copy of an essay she wrote for me a while ago on why she chose to study Hebrew.

WHY I CHOSE
TO STUDY HEBREW

by Yu Zhiqi

Almost everyone that I come across asks me, "Why do you study

The Israel Museum in Jerusalem. (For more detailed information, see Donald Daniel Leslie's *The Survival of the Chinese Jews*, E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1972; Charles William White's *Chinese Jews*, 3 Vols., University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Canada, 1942; 1 Vol., Paragon Book Reprint, N.Y., 1966; Michael Pollak's *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries*, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia, 1980.)

* *Horizontal & Vertical Inscriptions (Synagogue Archway)*

Copies of ten Horizontal and seven Vertical inscriptions may be found in White's "Chinese Jews." Copies may also be found in the Jesuit Archives in Rome. Paris copies contain eighteen Horizontal and fifteen Vertical inscriptions. (See Leslie's *Survival of the Chinese Jews* and White's *Chinese Jews*.)

* *Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book of the Dead.*

This manuscript is currently in The Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio, and contains records of the seven remaining Jewish clans. These records trace the Ai clan, a Jewish family, back to the 15th century. The Memorial Book was closed about 1670. This Memorial Book of the Dead is extremely important as it gives genealogies, some in Hebrew and some in Chinese. A variety of sociological data may be inferred, such as the number of Rabbis in Kaifeng, an estimate of the Jewish population, and a number of customs. (For a detailed analysis of this book, see Leslie's *The Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book*, Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1984; Berthold Laufer's *A Chinese-Hebrew Manuscript*, Paragon Book Reprint, New York, 1971; White's *Chinese Jews*.)

* *Scrolls of the Law (Torahs) from the Kaifeng Synagogue*

Most of the extant Torahs were purchased from the Kaifeng Synagogue by two Chinese-Christian Delegates, as they were called, sent by Protestant missionaries from Shanghai to Kaifeng in 1851. Three more Torahs were sold in Peking by two young Kaifeng Jews in 1868.

Seven Torahs from the Kaifeng Synagogue may now be seen in the

following places.

- 1) British Museum, London, England.
- 2) Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, England.
- 3) Bodleian Library, Oxford, England.
- 4) American Bible Society, New York.
- 5) Jewish Theological Seminary, New York.
- 6) Austrian National Library, Vienna, Austria.
- 7) Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

Another Torah Scroll was deposited in the Library of the Missionary College in Hongkong. It has disappeared. Two of the Torahs are missing. Those left in Kaifeng have disappeared. A Torah Case may be seen in The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto.

Sotheby, in Manhattan, recently auctioned off what was advertised as a Kaifeng Torah, containing Genesis. It was purchased by a Baptist Minister from London, England. This Torah has not been authenticated by scholars, to the best of our knowledge. We have attempted to trace the history of this Torah, but are unable to get information on previous owners. There can be no doubt that Sotheby's advertisements were made in good faith. Nevertheless, we await independent and outside confirmation. (For the best and most detailed analysis of the extant Torahs, see Michael Pollak's "The Torah Scrolls of the Chinese Jews," Bridwell Library, Dallas, Texas, 1975.)

* *Religious Materials from the Kaifeng Synagogue*

The following is housed in The Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati, Ohio.

- 1) 34 Religious books dealing with Jewish Law.
- 2) 29 Prayer books.
- 3) 2 Haggadahs.

These materials were purchased by the two Chinese-Christian Delegates in 1851. They eventually found their way to The Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among Jews, and were eventually purchased by The Hebrew Union College for a large sum of money. (For details, see Pollak's *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries*.)

* *Jewish Burial Ground in Kaifeng.*

The Jewish burial grounds have

disappeared, but were supposed to have existed in the western suburbs of Kaifeng. (See Sidney Shapiro's *Jews in Old China*, Hippocrene Books, New York, 1984).

* *The Vicissitudes of the Scriptures*

This book, written by the Jew, Zhao Ying-cheng, is no longer extant. It was written during the Qing Dynasty, 1644-1662. Sidney Shapiro, in his book *Jews in Old China*, writes that it is currently in the Kaifeng Museum. But he, and Wang Yisha, former Curator of the Kaifeng Museum, now advise that it is still lost.

* *A Preface to the Illustrious Way*

This book, written by the brother of Zhao Ying-cheng, Zhao Yang-tso, is also not extant. In his work *Jews in Old China*, Shapiro writes that it is in the Kaifeng Museum. But he and Wang Yisha now admit that it is still lost.

* *A Chime*

A chime was used to call the Jews to prayer. One of these chimes may be seen in The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada.

* *References to Jews from Chinese Sources*

The 1710 T'ien-fang tien-li, Ch. 14, (A Muslim-Chinese source) has it that Jews and Christians should not be allowed space in Muslim areas.

April 19, 1329: Yuan Shih (The Official History of the Yuan); "Buddhist and Taoist priests, Nestorians, Jews and Ta-shih-man, who engage in trade, to be taxed according to the old regulation. . ."

November 24, 1340: (Yuan Shih) "Ta-shih-man, Muslims and Jews should be prohibited from marrying paternal cousins."

January 27, 1280: (Yuan-tian-cheng) (The Statutes of the Yuan); "Henceforward, Muslims and Jews, no matter who kills the meat, will eat it, and cease killing sheep by their own hands, and will cease the rite of Sunnah. . ." (Donald Daniel Leslie, in his book *Islam in Traditional China*, Canberra College of Advanced Education, Canberra, Australia, 1986, p. 165, interprets "Sunnah" to mean circumcision.)

July-August, 1320: (Yuan-Shih); "Muslims, Nestorians, Jews and Ta-shih-man, except those in actual charge of temples and services, to

Several great scholars from Israel and elsewhere, from whom I personally have heard, expressed the notion that there is no possibility of igniting the spark of Jewishness in "these people" and that we ought to face up to the reality of events and to "let them be."

This attitude made me more fully aware of the discrepancy between "Science" and "Soul." As a scientific endeavor, a research study is conducted where positive provable facts are unearthed from as many sources as are available. This information is then interpreted, analyzed, evaluated and better understood. Scientific research methods must be purely objective to be of any value. It's a time-consuming search for truth, for facts. And this is most important for furthering human knowledge. In the course of my academic experience there have been many research projects in which I have been involved and I know how easy it is to leave out "Soul" while pursuing pure research. The scientific method surely has its place in our organization, but let us not leave out "Soul" in our dealings with our Jewish descendants.

My colleagues in the SJI, Gabow, Leslie, Dien, Pollak and other scholars, are contributing mightily to research on the history of the Jews in China. I have read many of their articles and am in awe of their achievements.

But I am suggesting that, unless we now add "Soul" to our interests in Jewish descendants, we might lose them forever. If they are now only 1/6 or 1/20 part Jewish, in the next generation they may become 1/12 or 1/40 Jewish. Let us at least find a way to give them a choice.

Isn't it the aim of all cultures to make their members proud of who they are. When traveling in a distant remote part of the world, aren't we buoyed up to meet a fellow Jew? And for those of you who have traveled to Kaifeng, China or to India, and have met some of the Chinese or Indian Jewish descendants, didn't you, as I did, have a warm feeling toward those who are linked in history to our Jewish culture?

How can we ignore the pleas of Mr. Zhao, Mr. Shi, Mr. Li, Mr. Ai and many other Jewish descendants and their families? Historical events have caused them to lose knowl-

edge of their cultural heritage. But this was not, and is not, their choice. When I gave some money to Mr. Chao (with the authorities' knowledge), I like to feel it helped encourage him to start building a model of the last synagogue in Kaifeng. Before I left China, on my last visit to Kaifeng, I saw the building of the model in progress. According to Rabbi Stamper's article in our Feb. 1988 issue, it appears that Mr. Chao needs further encouragement. I am not suggesting that Mr. Chao is waiting to be given more money. I'm convinced that what he and the other several hundred Chinese Jewish descendants hunger for is more and closer contact with other Jews, which will in all probability encourage them to resurrect part of their old forgotten Jewish culture. It is not forbidden for China's citizens to be both Chinese and Jewish, that is to have both an ethnic and a national identity.

Many of the Chinese Jewish descendants have requested literature dealing with Jewish culture and history, even long before their community was destroyed over 150 years ago. They have, to date, received pitifully little. My brother, Percy Schwartz, had prevailed upon the leadership of his synagogue in Woodmere, NY to donate some Jewish books. The gift also included a miniature Torah. Unfortunately, it appears that neither package ever reached Mr. Chao.

When I met Wendy Abraham in New York about 2 years ago, she had gathered together several books on Jewish history which she hoped to piece together, have translated into Chinese and have published. Her current stay in China allows her great opportunity for closer contact with Chinese Jewish descendants wherever they live.

The key point is to create more personal contact. When David Buxbaum and I went to Kaifeng, we met with Chinese Jews, met with Shirley Wood and the University's administrators, met with the curator of the Kaifeng museum, and banqueted with Chen Libo and other city officials, including the mayor of Kaifeng. People like Mr. Buxbaum, or scholars like Wendy Abraham, who are fluent in Chinese and who reside in China, can be of invaluable help in easing the way for more direct access to our

people in Kaifeng. Trips to Kaifeng are sorely needed. In the future, visiting professors, like Professor Edelman, could take their students from Beijing to Kaifeng. Tours, such as the recent one led by Leo Gabow, might in themselves encourage the Jewish descendants there to begin some correspondence with our organization's members. My primary wish, however, is that some of the Sino-Judaic Institute's efforts focus on bring more "Soul" to our Sino-Judaic relations, and in reaching out to Chinese Jewish descendants directly.

I, for one, would love to see that all Jewish descendants, wherever they are found, are given the opportunity to learn more about their past, and for them to decide their own future regarding how they want to deal with that knowledge. Unless they are supplied with information regarding their history, we will lose them forever as a living link to that part of our own culture. When we abandon the living descendants of our people, we diminish ourselves. Let us help them now.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF HONG KONG

(continued from page 1)

were estimated at 15,000, with organized communities in Harbin, Mukden (present Shenyang), Dalian, Beijing (Peking), Tianjin, and Shanghai. Then, in 1938-1939, approximately 18,000 Central European Jews fled from the Nazis and settled in Japanese-occupied Shanghai. The more than 30,000 Jews in China who survived World War Two were dispersed again, with emigrations to the Americas, Australia, Israel and Hong Kong. Some were forced to return to the Soviet Union.¹⁰ By 1976, only thirty Jews remained in the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Between the two World Wars, the Jewish Community of Hong Kong was less transient than today. Apart from the races and occasional launch picnics, social life was centered on the Jewish Recreation Club. In 1937, there was an influx of people coming from Shanghai to

escape the fighting between the Japanese and Chinese. Because of difficulties with accommodation for these refugees, part of the Club was converted into a dormitory for housing them.¹¹ During WWII, when most of Hong Kong's Jews, being British nationals, were interned by the Japanese, one resident, with a "neutral" passport and therefore not interned, was able to hide Ohel Leah's Sefer Torahs, keeping them safe throughout the duration of the war.¹²

When asked to characterize the community, one of our patriarchs suggested that the historical variations in our rabbinical leadership would indicate our multi-faceted character. In 1925, a Hazzan was imported from Baghdad. Both he and the local Sephardic community spoke Arabic at that time. A Rabbi was appointed for the first time in 1961. In 1963, a Reform Rabbi from St. Louis, Missouri, joined us as a guest Rabbi during his Sabbatical year. The two Rabbis who followed were graduates of Jews' College in London.

From 1977 to 1984, Ohel Leah was led by a Rabbi from Jerusalem who "did much to promote respect for the name of the Jewish Community in Hong Kong."¹³ After a short interval with a Rabbi from the Lubavitch Movement, the Trustees appointed, in 1986, a Rabbi of Sephardic background with credentials from an Orthodox Ashkenazic Yeshiva.

In the wake of the recent commitment to economic growth in China, there has been a liberalization of China's official policy on religious observances. Furthermore, there has been a revival of Jewish services in Beijing and Canton by Western Jews who live in those cities as diplomats, foreign correspondents, and commercial representatives.¹⁴ Ohel Leah provides support to these groups by serving as a source for Pesach supplies, educational materials, etc. A concrete sign of this revival occurred in the summer of 1984 with the publication in Shanghai of a reprint of the *Tanya* by a Hong Kong resident. This is the first Jewish publication in the PRC since the Liberation of 1950. Furthermore, just as many Hong Kong residents are involved with the expan-

sion of China's trade and industrial growth, Hong Kong Jews also are participating in, and contributing to, China's economic revival.

The Hong Kong Jewish community also has a connection, however small, with the ancient Chinese Jewish communities about which we know too little. A British traveler made contact in 1907 with the near-destitute remnants of the Chinese Jewish community of Kaifeng, Henan Province, and learned that one of their Torah scrolls had been sold during the late 19th Century to a foreign missionary "because they were starving."¹⁵ This scroll reappeared in the Museum of Hong Kong which, in turn, gave it to Ohel Leah Synagogue. While it has been reported that Ohel Leah, in 1925, presented this scroll to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem,¹⁶ its present location is unknown.

In March 1974, a local German Salesian friar, Father Herbert Vogt, discovered four old Hebrew scrolls in the Thieves Market on Cat Street in Hong Kong. "Sir Lawrence (Kadoorie) purchased these Torahs for about HK\$5,000." It has been suggested that they previously belonged to the Chinese Jews.¹⁷ Today, they are preserved in the Ark of Ohel Leah Synagogue, along with several other magnificent Sephardic Torah scrolls.

The community is organized through membership in Ohel Leah Synagogue and the Jewish Recreation Club of Hong Kong. Day-to-day affairs of the synagogue and club are handled by a General Committee consisting of four officers and thirteen sub-committee chairmen. A Board of Trustees is chaired by Lord Lawrence Kadoorie, who was elevated to the Peerage on 14 December 1981. To commemorate this event, the community has established the Lawrence Kadoorie Forest in Israel.

Synagogue services, held on a regular basis, are conducted by a full-time Rabbi. The kosher kitchen, under rabbinical supervision, is becoming famous for its kosher Cantonese cuisine. Other facilities include a mikvah, library, and Rabbi's house.

Today in Hong Kong, Jewish education is a major concern and our youth can benefit from a vigorous Sunday School program in Hebrew language, Jewish history, religious

observances and culture. A nursery school, weekday Hebrew classes, and a teen social program provide additional dimensions to our youth program. Currently there are more than 80 children involved in the various activities.

In addition to programs for youth, other organized activities include adult education programs, religious studies, and numerous cultural and social activities. Members can participate in a wide choice, with selections as diverse as Israeli dancing lessons, lectures by visiting scholars and dignitaries, or special interest video films.

Prosperity being the norm in this small outpost of the Diaspora, the tradition of charity is strong. For example, "Sir Ellis Kadoorie, who died in 1922, left 100,000 pounds (sterling) to the British government for the building of schools in Palestine. . ."¹⁸ Hong Kong's U.I.A. drive annually tops HK\$2 million through donations by the local community. The Jewish Women's Association of Hong Kong is a strong supporter of WIZO and many other Jewish and Hong Kong charities. And, of course, the Jewish Benevolent Society is a local institution of long standing.

Hong Kong also has a variety of Jewish communication/literary vehicles. A monthly newsletter handles all the basic messages for organizing community activities. The *Hong Kong Jewish Chronicle* is a quarterly journal, established in 1977, which provides a descriptive chronicle of community events and interests.

The Jewish Historical Society of Hong Kong, founded in 1984, has already published the first two volumes in its Sino-Judaic monograph series. This Society is evolving into an important center for the support and promotion of research into the Jewish experience in Hong Kong and China. After building Hong Kong's first fully-catalogued general Judaica library, it has been gathering many obscure and hard-to-find materials needed for Sino-Judaic research. As part of its program to establish worldwide scholarly communications with other individuals and organizations with similar interests, the JHS has become the Hong Kong liaison office of The Sino-Judaic Institute (headquartered in Palo Alto, California), which serves as a rubric

I am grateful too for the opportunity that this new edition in Chinese gives me to correct some of the errors in my original work of 1972 and to note some of the new finds by myself and other scholars.

In 1972, I wrote that "this work is my final summing up about the Kaifeng Jews." However, since then, the important Jesuit contribution to our knowledge has been dealt with in far greater detail by Joseph Dehergne and myself in our *Juifs de Chine*, Rome, Paris, 1980.

I have also published a new book, *The Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book*, Canberra, 1984, which gives a new translation of this unique work, and also includes an analysis of the 1663 list of the Community and its Officials, held only in the Bibliotheque Nationale.

Since 1972, other scholars have added to our knowledge, and some new understanding has been achieved. Michael Pollak, in particular, has added information about European attitudes to the Kaifeng community, and also something about the memories of modern descendants.

Further research and analysis may still uncover new facts. However, for the major source material and history of the community in Kaifeng and for Jews elsewhere in China, comparatively little has been discovered not already dealt with by the great scholar Ch'en Yuan in 1920 and 1923 (reprinted in 1981 in Beijing and Shanghai), followed by William White in 1942 and by myself. For the inscriptions in Chinese, the text and analysis by Ch'en is still basic. I myself am not hopeful of any new documentary sources being found in Kaifeng or elsewhere.

We would like to know more of the attitude of the Chinese authorities and Han people to the Jewish minority in China. We have very little direct information. Hopefully, we may learn from the new valuable research being undertaken in Beijing, Quanzhou and Ningxia about Islam in China and the relations between Muslim (Hui) and Han Chinese.

We have also very little information about relations between Jew and Muslim in China. Both use some Chinese terms in common (e.g. *ch'ing-chen-ssu*, *li-pai-ssu*, *man-la*), but Muslim sources in Chinese hardly mention Jews in

China. The 1710 *T'ien-fang tien-li*, ch. 14, has only that Jews and Christians should not be allowed halls in Muslim areas. We should note too that the separate and distinct surnames of Jews and Muslims in China suggest an avoidance of intermarriage.

This work does not include a study of the position in modern China of the ethnic Jewish descendants in Kaifeng who are arousing a new interest both in Chinese circles and elsewhere. I wrote in 1972 that "though individuals may still trace Jewish descent, they are no longer Jews by race, nor by religion, nor by culture, merely by name." I would now qualify this by adding: "Some perhaps still have a residual sympathy for the idea of being Jewish." That Jews survived in China for so long is due to the tolerance for minorities and respect for ancestral customs shown by the Chinese throughout their great history.

THE ARTIFACTS OF THE KAIFENG JEWS: WHERE ARE THEY?

by Leo Gabow

Points East has printed articles which discussed the Jews of Manipur, Mizoram and of Burma. Possibly articles will appear about other exotic communities around the world who refer to themselves as "Jews," or have the appellation "Jewish" thrust upon them.

It is of some importance that we not parallel the historical status of these communities with the former Jewish community of Kaifeng. The Jews of Manipur and Mizoram for example, have left behind no Jewish artifacts or literature. We have only their oral tradition, which like all oral traditions, must be assessed objectively.

Not so with the Kaifeng Jews. They have left us stelae, prayer-books, Haggadahs and Torahs. They have been contacted by missionaries of the past who visited their Synagogue. The evidence that a colony of Jews lived in Kaifeng is overwhelming.*

What follows is a partial listing of the whereabouts of much of the material they left behind, as well as a partial listing of Chinese and Western references to these Kaifeng Jews. Readers of **Points East** should know where these mater-

ials can be seen and should also possess an awareness of the varied source materials.

* *Memorial Stones from the Kaifeng Synagogue*

There were three Memorial Stones (stelae), standing in the courtyard of the Kaifeng Synagogue, containing inscriptions giving the history of the Kaifeng Jews.

One stone was dated 1489, and commemorated the re-building of their Synagogue after its destruction by a flood of the Yellow River in 1461. On the reverse side of the stone was another inscription dated 1512. This inscription attempts to develop similarities between Confucianism and Judaism.

Another Memorial Stone is dated 1663a (obverse side), and the reverse side is dated 1663b. The 1663a stone again attempts to construct philosophical harmonies between Judaism and Confucianism, and is "A Record of the Rebuilding of the Synagogue."

The 1663b reverse side is entitled "Names Inscribed on the Reverse of the Stone." These are names of those involved in the re-building of the Synagogue.

The last Memorial Stone is dated 1679 and is entitled "Stone Inscription of the History of the Ancestral Hall." This stone deals with the accomplishments of the Zhao clan, probably the most important Jewish family in Kaifeng.

The 1663 Memorial Stone has disappeared, probably forever. The 1489/1512 and the 1679 stones may be seen in the Kaifeng Museum by appointment.

The Vatican Library, Bargano Cinese 497, has two rubbings of the 1489 Memorial Stone, one of the 1512, and two of the 1663a (obverse side). The Vatican Library apparently does not have rubbings of the 1679 or of the 1663b stone.

The Jesuit Archives in Rome (Jap. Sin, 168, Fol. 446-449) contains copies of the 1489 and 1512 inscriptions. Copies may also be found in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, Fonds Chinois, No. 1204. Seven pages of the 1663b Memorial Stone may be found in a booklet at the Bibliotheque Nationale.

Replicas of the 1489/1512 stone may be seen in The Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada and in

disposal of the Committee, that the sending of a mission to Kaifengfu for the purpose of obtaining trustworthy and reliable information, which they had in view since the formation of the Society, had not yet come to pass.

A co-religionist in the north of China, has acquainted the Committee of his kind intention to take a trip to Kaifengfu, as soon as business duties permit him to do so, and visit the Chinese Jews for the purpose of obtaining proper information as to their state, etc. A Hebrew scholar was retained to accompany him there. Unfortunately to the cause, however, that after the lapse of about a year he had to suddenly alter his plans, and he was obliged to give up the idea of going to Kaifengfu. Another gentleman, a member of the Committee, Mr. G. J. Shekury, has since intimated to the other co-members of the Committee his kind intention of going to Kaifengfu during the autumn months. The present political troubles, however, made him postpone his journey for the time being, as traveling in the interior, and more especially in Honan, is not a safe thing to do now.

Since the death of Li King Son, two of the Native Jews went back to their homes, and we have now with us six of them. They are attending the Shanghai Jewish School and studying Hebrew and English. Several attempts have been made to obtain employment for some of them, which did not prove successful, owing to their insufficient knowledge of the local dialect or English. If no further help is received in the near future these six native Jews will have to be sent back to their homes, as the balance of the fund now in hand will not go very far in maintaining and educating them much longer.

SIMON A. LEVY
Vice-President
1903

ISRAELI POLITICIAN VISITS CHINA

by Michal Yudelman
reprinted from The Jerusalem Post
March 26, 1988

"We have opened the door and taken the first step," Mapam Secretary-General Elazar Granot said last week on returning from a visit to China, where he met with high-ranking Chinese officials.

Relations between Israel and China will develop step by step, Granot was told by Chinese officials. At this stage, however, there is no chance of establishing

diplomatic relations between the two countries, because China insists that Israel withdraw from all the territories and grant self-determination to the Palestinians, Granot said.

"The Palestinians deserve what the Israelis have, no more and no less," Granot and his companion, *Al Hamishmar* editor Marek Geffen, were told.

Mapam was the first Zionist party ever to be invited on an official visit to China. Granot was invited by the Association for Improving International Relations, an organization formed by the Chinese Communist Party in 1981 to make contact with socialist and progressive parties all over the world "as a bridge to diplomatic relations," Granot said. The association maintains contact with some 200 parties worldwide.

"We were treated like kings," Granot said. "The initial respect and politeness gave way to warmth and cordial treatment that broke down all barriers. In China, the secretary-general of a party is a most important title."

Granot invited the Chinese to Mapam's convention, scheduled here for May 5, and said he hoped they would attend. "I can't say what the future will bring concerning relations with China. Clearly it will have to be a gradual process. But we've opened the door, and I'm proud of the service we have done the State of Israel."

We deeply appreciate the generous contribution to the SJI by Mr. & Mrs. Milton Nobler.

ISRAELI ORGANIZED TOURS TO PRC

For the first time, organized groups of tourists holding Israeli passports will be allowed to travel to the PRC this year. This was made possible by a special permit obtained by the Orientour travel agency, in association with the PRC Government tourism company CTS, which provides most of the Western agencies with tourist services. Nine exclusively Israeli tours have been approved so far. They are scheduled to leave beginning next month. (*Tel Aviv HADASHOT in Hebrew 19 Apr 88 p 2*)

LOWENTHAL BIBLIOGRAPHY FUND

The Lowenthal Bibliographies represent a historic milestone in the study of the Chinese Jews. Now, in cooperation with the Hebrew Union College, SJI will be reprinting this important, but long out-of-print work. Funds are still needed for this project. We gratefully acknowledge the generous gifts from the following members:

Dr. & Mrs. Eugene Balter
Peter Billig
Mr. & Mrs. Jack Cowl
Ruth Davis
Greg Foss
Morris Hazan
Lawrence Kramer
Donald Leslie
Dennis Leventhal
Leo & Lil Lowenthal
Marcia Miller
Kenneth Robbins
Saul Schwartz
Nigel Thomas

Won't you join them?

EXCERPT FROM A PROPOSED NEW PREFACE FOR THE CHINESE EDITION OF THE SURVIVAL OF THE CHINESE JEWS

by Donald Daniel Leslie

I am delighted to have my book on Jews in China translated into Chinese for several reasons.

First, I feel greatly honoured to have my work published in China. Second, it is very pleasing that it is being done as part of a new resurgence of native Chinese scholarship after a long period of stagnation. It is good to see Chinese scholars doing so much valuable research in many fields, and also to see them utilising and sharing in similar research done by non-Chinese scholars. Foreigners do have something to offer in Chinese studies, but without Chinese help and association our progress is limited. Let us now look forward to many years of cooperation between Chinese and foreign scholars.

for a broad network of Sino-Judaic students and scholars.

Hong Kong has clearly evolved as a major center of Jewish life in East Asia. Between the World Wars, the community consisted of only 50 to 75 families and the synagogue was rarely used. This is a far cry from our current membership of over 230 families and the present activity level which includes a daily minyan. A 1936 report mentions that an attempt to start a school failed due to "lack of interest," whereas today Jewish education facilities are a top priority item.¹⁹ Further recognition of Hong Kong's growing important in East Asia's Jewish life was made by the establishment, in October 1986, of a Lubavitch Chabad House.

The primary indicator of growing local needs, however, is a redevelopment program for the Ohel Leah site which is scheduled to commence in 1988. This program has evolved after several years of planning, which began in 1979 in response to numerous community needs. This matter has recently generated some controversy in the local English-language newspapers. The difference of opinion comes from those who see redevelopment of the synagogue site as necessary and vital for the growth and needs of the religious community and those who want the synagogue preserved *as is* on the grounds that it should be considered an historical monument. It should be noted that the majority of those holding the latter opinion are not members of Ohel Leah Synagogue.

Plans call for a complete renovation and restoration of the synagogue, incorporating materials, features and design of the original edifice, along with modifications required by the demands of safety and comfort. The program will also provide for greatly expanded and improved ancillary facilities, as well as a financial base to ensure the solvency of the community well into the future.

Hong Kong is a dynamic and rapidly changing international society. Its Jewish community reflects this unique environment. While its members are constantly "on the go," visitors are welcomed and enjoyed.

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S.J.I. PRESIDENT VISITS CHINA; PROPOSES SINO-JUDAIC EXHIBITION

(continued from page 1)

cations to his credit. Among these publications is an article on "Jews" in the World Nationalities Section of the Chinese Encyclopedia. Mr. Tang advised that the Editors of the Encyclopedia wanted him to include matters of politics in his article. This Mr. Tang refused to do and won his point.

Mr. Tang gave me a precis of his book, as well as a Table of Contents. Though badly translated into English, his precis leaves me with the clear impression that his writing is of a scholarly nature and also expresses a sympathetic concern for Jewish history. His studies take him beyond the Jewish experience in China to the universal Jewish experience.

Mr. Dennis Leventhal requested that Mr. Tang be placed on our

mailing list. This we have done. We shall remain in contact with Mr. Tang.

2) **Mr. Wang Yisha:** A second book in progress on the ancient Jewish community in Kaifeng (also in Chinese) is being prepared by Mr. Wang, who resides in Kaifeng, and is the former Curator of the Kaifeng Museum. He is also seeking an English translator.

According to the Table of Contents previously supplied by him, Mr. Wang's efforts appear to be a much more ambitious undertaking than Mr. Tang's. I attempted to contact Mr. Wang during my stay in Kaifeng, but did not succeed. This despite the fact that Mr. Wang expressed the wish to see me, and asked for my itinerary, which I supplied.

Mr. Wang has also asked Professor I.I. Glass, a member of our Advisory Council, to write an introduction to his book.

3) **Kaifeng Museum:** As many of you know, the existing Museum in Kaifeng is nothing more than a storage place which houses the Jewish stelae as well as a number of other stelae. A new Museum is being built in Kaifeng, and materials are gradually being transferred to the new Museum. I have seen the new Museum from the outside. It is a handsome structure with a Chinese motif, and should open at the end of the year. Meanwhile the Jewish stelae remain in precisely the same position as they have for many years, subject to the elements, bird-droppings, etc. I have been informed that the Jewish stelae will shortly be moved to the new Museum and placed in an upright position for viewing.

Some reports have filtered down to the effect that the new Museum will have a Judaic section. I must state that there is little basis for such an assumption. No decision has been made on this point, and it is highly questionable that anyone in Kaifeng could or would make such a decision.

Mr. Liu Wenqing, Vice-Manager of China International Travel Service, visited me in Beijing. He and Mr. Wang Jiping, Director of Kaifeng Municipal Foreign Affairs Office and Chief of Kaifeng Tourism

Bureau were on their way to the States as part of a trade mission. I put the question directly to Mr. Liu. Will there be a Judaic section in the new Museum and how can the Sino-Judaic Institute help make such a section successful? I told him that we would supply material for the Jewish section. (I should add that the question of a Judaic section in the Kaifeng Museum has been a matter of discussion with Kaifeng authorities since the founding of the Sino-Judaic Institute.)

I put another question to Mr. Liu; one that was put to him and others in authority in Kaifeng, by Professor Louis Schwartz during his stay in China; by others subsequently; and by myself during my first visit to Kaifeng in 1982. Will the China International Travel Service place a marker in English and Chinese at the site of the ancient Synagogue?

To both questions, Mr. Liu could only give nebulous replies. The answers to both questions remain a matter for continued discussions.

4) Mr. Shi Zhong-yu & Mr. Zhao Ping-yu: Both these men are Chinese Jews, and freely admit to their heritage. My wife and I had met these two gentlemen in 1982, along with other Jewish descendants. But only Mr. Shi was available on this occasion. Mr. Shi delivered a short talk about his Jewishness, took questions from the group we were leading, and joined us for dinner.

Mr. Zhao Ping-yu had suffered a stroke with resulting paralysis. We were unable to see him or visit his home. As many of you know, Mr. Zhao was one of the more active Jewish descendants. He had begun to make yarmulkas; built a model of the Kaifeng Synagogue; and attempted to turn his home into a family Museum. All of his activities have now ceased.

We hope for his recovery.

5) Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences: I earlier referred to this portion as probably the most significant part of my report. I will let you be the judge.

I had two meetings with Director Gong Fangzhan, of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Institute of Religion. I had previously conducted correspondence with

Director Gong on the subject of a Sino-Judaic exhibit to be shown at the Shanghai Academy. Director Gong's remarks were always of an encouraging nature, but never definitive.

However, in our face to face conversations, Director Gong was most positive about such an exhibit taking place. He gave me every reason to suppose that no official obstacles any longer remain. Their important proviso was that decisions regarding the specific items to be displayed be in the hands of the Academy. Their reasons were quite clear and had to do with Chinese sensitiveness towards foreign proselytising. I readily agreed to this proviso.

We now await an official letter confirming our verbal discussions, as well as a target date for the exhibit. Many details need to be worked out, and we may have to send a representative to China, who is fluent in Chinese, and whose judgement is sound. As soon as we receive official confirmation of our verbal discussions, we will appoint a Sino-Judaic exhibit chair-person and committee to carry our work forward.

As such a project will entail the expenditure of large sums of money, we will have to seek foundation grants to fund this important project. Meanwhile we are open to suggestions from the field and welcome your participation.

One final point: Professor Xiao Zhitan, of the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, was also involved in our planning. Prof. Xiao took ill and was not able to attend our meetings. Nevertheless he gifted me with two books published by the Shanghai Academy which contain thought-provoking articles written by him.

Our deepest thanks to Professor Xiao, and we wish him a speedy recovery.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE RESCUE OF THE CHINESE JEWS

A serious effort to reclaim the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng was made in Shanghai in 1900, and resulted in the formation of the SOCIETY FOR THE RESCUE OF THE CHINESE JEWS. The cause of this new activity was a discovery by the Shanghai Jews that a number of Kaifeng-

Hebrew manuscripts had been purchased by the Jesuits, and were being exhibited in the Sicawei Observatory in Shanghai. The new Society then sent a letter in both Hebrew and Chinese, requesting that some of the Kaifeng Jews come to Shanghai and visit with their fellow-Jews in Shanghai.

On April 6, 1901, a Kaifeng Jew and his twelve year old son came to Shanghai, and March 10, 1902, eight more Jews arrived. Questioning revealed that the Kaifeng Jews no longer observed any Judaic practices. They knew only that they derived from a people different from other Chinese.

Following are several documents belonging to the Society and detailing its affairs further.

Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews COMMITTEE

MOORE, LEWIS, <i>President</i>	L. MOORE & Co.
LEVY, SIMON, A., <i>Vice-President</i>	E. D. SASSOON & Co.
EZRA, E. M., <i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	
ABRAHAM, D. E. J.....	
EZRA, EDWARD I.....	ISAAC EZRA & Co.
EZRA, N.E.B.....	
GENSBURGER, H.....	GENSBURGER & Co.
HARDOON, S. A.....	E. D. SASSOON & Co.
LEVY, N. S.....	S. J. DAVID & Co.
MOSES, A. E.....	D. SASSOON & Co., LTD.
SOPHER, M. A.....	S. J. DAVID & Co.
SOLOMON, S. J., <i>Hon. Secretary</i> ..	

Shanghai, 21st. HESHVAN 5661.
13th November. 1900.

To our Brethern in faith in KAI-FENG-FU:

We have a few months ago addressed you a letter in Hebrew signed by members of our Community and forwarded it to you with its translation in Chinese, but it was, unfortunately, lost in transmission before reaching you. As soon as we became aware of the fact we sent you copies of the letter and its translation. The messenger returned some two weeks ago bringing a letter addressed to him by some of your members asking him to carry a message to us that the writers intend to come and see us as soon as the disquietude which is now raging in some parts of the country has disappeared. You cannot imagine how welcome was the news received by everyone of us. We write now this letter to inform you that a Society has recently

been formed for the purpose of considering the best means of reviving the religion of our Fore-fathers among your Community. The members of the Committee of our Society are anxiously awaiting the arrival of some of your members so that they can discuss with them as to the best method to attain the aim in view. In order that no more precious time be lost we ask you again to send two or three of your members to SHANGHAI with as little delay as possible so that some steps may be taken for your early relief from your present state of lack of knowledge of our religion.

By order,
and on behalf of the Committee,

S. J. Solomon
Hon. Secretary

Society for the Rescue
of the Chinese Jews.

The above is a copy of a letter which has been kindly translated into Chinese by the Rev. Dr. J. Edkins. Both letter and translation have been forwarded to KAI-FENG-FU with the same native messenger who brought a letter from the Jewish Community of that place. He left SHANGHAI on the 17th November 1900 at night for KAI-FENG-FU.

* * *

The Committee of the Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews, about the middle of August last, sent a native messenger to KAI-FENG-FU with a letter (both in Hebrew and Chinese an exact copy of the one which was lost in transmission) addressed to the Jewish Community there. The Messenger returned, arriving here on the 24th instant, brought a letter in Chinese addressed to him, which Rev. Dr J. EDKINS has kindly translated:—

Letter addressed by Li King Sheng the writer and Li En Ting, to the native messenger at Takang in Seintan lane, near KAI-FENG-FU.

It reads, addressing Mr. Yin:—"we conversed with you at KAI-FENG-FU and arranged to leave on September 25th to proceed to Takang and there join you in a journey to Shanghai, to see our compatriots in that city of the Jewish Religion. But the news of war in the North is disquieting. At present peace is impracticable. Constantly we have in KAI-FENG-FU troops passing and repassing. Everyone is disturbed in mind. Besides the Government has not become settled in its decisions. A Synagogue could not just now be erected, nor can we leave our homes for a long journey.

We therefore think it best to write this letter to send to you. Do not wait for us if you have important matters to be attended to, requiring you to go at once to Shanghai. Kindly proceed in advance of us. When you see our Jewish Compatriots tell them that we find it better to wait till the country is quieter. We will then, certainly set out to go to Shanghai and confer with them personally on all matters. The site of the Synagogue remains as it was but our people are very much scattered. We wish you in conclusion a prosperous journey."

Arrangements are being made to send shortly the same messenger once more to KAI-FENG-FU with instructions to try to induce two or three co-religionists to come to Shanghai soon.

S. J. SOLOMON
Hon. Secretary.

Shanghai, 30th October, 1900

Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews

At a meeting held recently in Shanghai it was decided to appeal to our co-religionists in all parts of the world for funds to enable the Society to take more effective measures to rescue the poor forlorn brethren now residing in and about Kaifengfu, far in the interior of China, from their present deplorable state of utter ignorance of our religion, beyond the oral traditions of many generations. They have now reached a very low level and it would be a pity if we, who are close to their doors, should find ourselves unable to adequately answer their heart-rending cries for help.

One of the fundamental laws of our religion is that we are responsible for each other. We must not therefore allow a whole community to be wiped out entirely, now that we know of their difficulties, without our making strong efforts to aid them. The time has come when we should no longer maintain our former attitude of keeping aloof from the unfortunate orphan colony; let us now become parents and guardians to these poor brethren and teach them that which we have been taught by our forefathers. They must no more be left to remain in their dire ignorance. I must, therefore, beg all co-religionists to come forward with their contributions in order to render possible the deliverance of those unfortunate descendants of co-religionists from their present state of terrible ignorance.

Those of our brethren from Kaifengfu who recently came to Shanghai informed us that the congregation there has lately succeeded in getting from the Chinese

authorities a new title deed for the land on which their Synagogue formerly stood. The land is said to contain some 200 mow, say 27 acres. What we desire now is to rebuild that Synagogue on its former site, build a Beth Hamedrash, and send them such efficient teachers, Mohellim and Shochetim as may be required and practicable. We estimate that to efficiently do this and put the congregation upon a footing to do credit to our religion, the sum of £5,000 will be required.

I confidently appeal to our brethren in all parts of the world to make such response as will enable us to fulfill our religious observances in this matter in a proper and fitting manner.

L. MOORE, Pres.,
Soc. for the Rescue of Chinese Jews.
Shanghai, 29th Sivan, 5662 (July 4, 1902)

Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews

REPORT

It is with extreme regret that the death of the esteemed and beloved President of the Society ever since its formation, Mr. Lewis Moore, is to be recorded. He has always taken a very keen interest in the welfare of the Chinese Jews. Another regrettable incident has also happened since the date of the last General Meeting. Mr. Li King Son, who was the first native Jew to come to Shanghai in 1900, died on Tuesday, the 11th Ab., 5663 (4th August, 1903). He was given a Jewish burial and buried in the Jewish cemetery. Several members of the Jewish Community attended his funeral. It was then discovered that he bore the covenant of Abraham. This makes one inclined to presume that during Mr. Li King Son's infancy circumcision was not altogether forgotten. He didn't seem, however, up to the time of his decease, to know anything about it when he was repeatedly asked various questions on the subject.

Soon after the last General Meeting, our late President made an appeal to co-religionists all over the globe on behalf of the Chinese Jews, and copies of his appeal were forwarded to various parts of the world and published in several Jewish papers in Europe and America. Unfortunately, however, the support received in response to such an appeal was not of such a nature as to enable the Committee to take such steps in the rescue of our native co-religionists as they would wish to have done.

It is due to various causes, but principally to want of sufficient funds at the