

examined. James Finn saw one of the scrolls in 1866 at Cambridge, and his conclusion was succinct and final: "No variations, however, of any consequence, not even for gratification of curiosity, have been detected in the text of these differing from those of Europe or from the printed Bibles. Modern scholarship confirms Finn's disappointment . . .

Over a very long time, nearly two centuries, Jewish and Christian interests coincided, although powered by very different motives. Like the Samaritan Pentateuch, the manuscripts of the Chinese Jews yielded no treasures. Yet even the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls, the only truly ancient texts to predate the manuscripts

which had been in use for centuries in Christian Europe, failed to reveal any significantly different biblical message. The wildly improbable claims of the Jewish scribes turned out to be based on fact: careful copying had preserved the sacred text for at least one and one-half millennia . . .

ON THE ROAD TO RECOGNITION

by David S. Makovsky
reprinted from The Jerusalem Post,
March 10, 1992.

One achievement rarely linked with Menachem Begin is Israel's first contacts with China.

"There is no doubt that Begin played a key role in the earliest ties between the

two countries" said Reuven Merhav, former director-general of the Foreign Ministry and an architect of relations between Jerusalem and Beijing.

The first step toward ties came in 1979, according to Merhav, three years after businessman Shaul Eisenberg began his contacts with Chinese authorities. Eisenberg had business ties in Japan and Korea.

Eisenberg approached then-defense minister Ezer Weizman with a proposal that Israel begin secret, undisclosed commercial links with China, which according to foreign reports were military sales. Weizman brought the idea to Begin, who gave the green light.

"Begin understood immediately that there was a window of opportunity, because China had finished with the Cultural Revolution and opening up to the world. He therefore gave his OK and the first stage of ties was launched," said Merhav.

Full diplomatic relations were established in January.



REPORT FROM PROF. ZHAO XIANG RU 6 MAY 1992

Dear Prof. Dien,

I am very pleased to report to you that after more than four years of preparatory work, the Society for the Study of the History and Culture of the Kaifeng Jews (Kaifeng Youtai lishi wenhua yanjiuhui) was formally established on May 1st. The birth of the Society will deepen the study of the Kaifeng Jews of ancient China and the history of their Israelite religion (i.e. Judaism), will strengthen the exchange activities with foreign scholars and advance the development of deep and long enduring friendly relations between the Chinese people and the foreign Jewish communities, as well as to pave the way for the foreign Jews to engage in commercial activities and to establish factories in Kaifeng and to revive the work of the historical culture of the ancient Jews.

On May 1st, at the initial meeting, I was chosen as the first president of the Society. Wang Yisha, Zhang Fangtao (Henan University), Qu Chunshan (author), Duan Xueren (Chairman of the Union of Social Science Academies of Kaifeng City), Wei Zhenzhong (Head, Administrative Bureau of Kaifeng City), Wei Zhenzhong (Head, Administrative Bureau of Kaifeng City), Jin Xiaojing (female, descendant of the Chinese Jews, assistant editor of the periodical "United Nationalities") were all elected as vice-presidents.

In order to facilitate the development of later work, the Society appointed Zhang Zhengxiang, the vice-chairman of the Standing Committee of the Kaifeng Municipal People's Government, to take the post of honorary president. Sun Guanghua, the mayor of Kaifeng, has taken the post

of advisor. In addition, Hua Hansan (Kaifeng Standing Committee, Head, Propaganda Bureau, and in charge of the Communist Party Propaganda Bureau's examining and approving academic organizations), Hu Han (Head Secretary, Kaifeng People's Government) and Xi Jianguo (Head, Planning Committee, Kaifeng) were also appointed as advisors.

During my stay in Kaifeng from April 16 to May 2, aside from the work of presiding over the establishment of the Society and coordinating the organization and selection processes, I also carried on discussions with the Mayor and Vice-Mayor concerning the question of restoring or building the Memorial Hall of the Kaifeng Jews and establishing the Jewish cemetery, and obtained the verbal agreement of the mayor for the revival or re-establishment of the hall of the ancient Kaifeng Jews and the construction of the Kaifeng Jews' cemetery.

1) On the condition that there is not any promotion of religious activity, the Kaifeng government has agreed that under the rubric of restoring ancient cultural installations and the ancient Jewish traces, and with the financial assistance of foreign Jews, one can erect a Chinese Jews' Memorial Hall (to be reconstructed based on the appearance and style of the original Jewish synagogue).

2) Agreed that in a scenic area on the banks of the Yellow River, in the western suburbs of Kaifeng, to purchase land to establish a cemetery for the Chinese Jews.

3) That they would consider establishing in the western suburbs of Kaifeng in the Xinghua Economic Development Zone a separate Overseas Jews' Economic Development Zone.

4) To facilitate foreign Jews coming to Kaifeng as tourists, to honor the

IN SEARCH OF THE LOST SCROLL

The Chinese Jews and the Problem of Biblical Authority in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England

by David S. Katz, Tel Aviv University
excerpted from The English Historical Review, October 1990.

Even at the very outset of the Reformation it was realized that a religion based on Scripture alone would be only as true as the biblical text itself . . .

It was therefore even more remarkable when Benjamin Kennicott (1718-83), the celebrated biblical scholar at Oxford, turned to the task of collating all known manuscripts of the Old Testament text in a scholarly attempt to move a bit closer to the original word of God. Kennicott knew, however, that as things stood his prodigious efforts were doomed to failure, for no complete copy of the Old Testament had been discovered that dated before the late medieval period, standing therefore at a very considerable distance from the original time and place of divine transmission. What was needed was a much earlier text, preferably one which had been untainted by the interference of Talmudic Jews. The Lost Ten Tribes would certainly have such a copy, but failing their discovery, one source was already known which might supply their deficiency — the Jews of China. The existence of such a community had been known in Europe since the early seventeenth century, and many scholars speculated that they might be the offspring of the Lost Ten Tribes. Contact with the Chinese Jews came to occupy the thoughts of Kennicott and all those interested in perfecting

Join The Sino-Judaic Institute

The Sino-Judaic Institute is a non-denominational, non-profit, and non-political organization which was founded in 1985 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 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.
- 3) To support the establishment and maintenance of a Judaica section in the projected municipal museum of Kaifeng.
- 4) 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.
- 5) To publish general information and scholarly materials dealing with all aspects of the Chinese-Jewish experience.
- 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. Our annual dues structure is as follows:

Benefactor	\$1,000	Regular membership	\$ 50	Corporate Sponsor	\$250 to \$499
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(continued on page 4)

(continued on page 4)

From the editor:

Last month I was very pleased to have attended the "Jewish Diasporas in China" conference at Harvard University. Actually, the conference itself was an ingathering of the diaspora of scholars on the Jews of China, because we came from all over the world to attend.

If this sounds a little messianic, it is intended to be, and rightly so. It is hard for me to convey the sense of history-in-the-making that I felt there. Granted, as Israel Epstein said, what we are studying is marginal to both Chinese and Jewish history (not to mention world history), but even so, in our chosen micro-historical field, we were making history. Much thanks is due Prof. Jonathan Goldstein for organizing the conference.

I spell out the details in my highly selective and personal account of the conference, which is further back in this issue, but I do want to say what a delight it was finally to be able to put faces to the names of people who have been sending me articles and letters for years.

Rabbi Stampfer of Portland has suggested that SJI hold a similar conference several years hence on the West Coast of the United States and I want to second that idea. There might even be a way to coordinate dates with our colleagues in China so that part of the conference

could take place here and part of it take place across the pond, over there.

In our next issue we will be focusing on various aspects of Jewish life in India and Japan. Readers wishing to contribute to this issue, which comes out in February 1993, are hereby forewarned to send their materials in soon.

Lastly, let me express my hope that the new year of 5753 will be a good and sweet one for all of you and may it also be the year we finally see peace between Israel, the neighboring Arab states and the Palestinians. You should all say "Amen."

Anson Laytner

IN THE FIELD

• NEW CHINESE BOOKS ON JEWS PUBLISHED

A set of volumes entitled *Youtai wenhua congshu* (Series on Jewish Culture), under the general editorship of Gu Xiaoming, a professor at Fudan University, Shanghai, is currently being published by the Shanghai Sanlian Bookstore. Of the nineteen titles which will make up the series, some four have appeared. Two of these were available in the bookstores when *Al Dien* was in Shanghai earlier last month. These are translations of *The Jews* by Chaim Bermant (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), translated by Feng Wei, and of Joseph Klausner, *Kitsur Toldot Hasifrut Haivrit Hachadasha* [A Short History of Modern Hebrew Literature], Acre, 1986, translated by Lu Peiyong. These are handsome paperbacks, with colorful covers, and a prominent slogan, "Not to understand the Jews is not to understand the World."

• SHANGHAI GRAVESTONE INFO AVAILABLE

Tess Johnson, the secretary to the consul general in Shanghai, has made the history of Europeans in Shanghai an object of serious study and has amassed much archival material. She has recently written to say that she has compiled a list of all the western gravestones still present in Shanghai, at the Song Qing Ling Memorial Cemetery on Hong Qiao Road, and that she would be willing

to look up names and even photograph the relevant gravestones upon request. All that she asks is that a stamped, self-addressed envelope accompany the request. Her address is Amcongen Shanghai, PSC 461 Box 200, FPO AP 96521-0002. This is but another example of her generosity and helpfulness to others.

• HELP SOUGHT ON SHOLEM ALEICHEM

Yao Yisi, who lives in Shanghai and studies and translates Sholem Aleichem into Chinese, has written to say that much of his work is based on a six volume Russian translation of Aleichem's work, published in Moscow in 1959, as well as a few additional volumes published singly. This material is very limited and he has difficulty in carrying on his research. What he would like very much to receive to enable him to continue his researches are the following, in either Russian or English: 1) Reminiscences by relatives and contemporaries; 2) Critical studies of his works; 3) Different editions of "Malchik Motl"; 4) Photographs of Sholem Aleichem; 5) Holdings of works of Sholem Aleichem in American libraries; 6) An introduction to the state of research on Sholem Aleichem in the various countries.

Any assistance or advice on this subject would be greatly appreciated. Prof. Yao's address is Apt. 1508, No. 4, Lane 455, Maotai Road, Shanghai.

• ZIONIST CLASSIC TO BE PUBLISHED IN CHINA

Prof. Xiao Xian, of the Institute for West Asia Studies, Yunnan University, reports that his translation of Herzl's *The Jewish State* will be completed very soon and that it is to be published by the Commercial Press, the best known publisher in China. He also expressed his appreciation for books sent to him by the Sino-Judaic Institute, which will be useful to him in his next project, a history of modern Jewish history.

• PROF. ZHAO XIANG RU IN AMERICA

Featured at the Harvard Conference was Prof. Zhao Xiang Ru, of the Institute of Nationality Studies in Beijing and also president of the

consulted with Joseph Wolff, that bizarre Jewish convert involved with the London Society, with Dr. Alexander McCaul, his associate, and with others about the 'expediency of addressing the Chinese Jews by a Hebrew letter', and in the end was forced himself to draw up the Hebrew text to the best of his abilities. This, when done, was sent in triplicate on 7 November 1844 with an English translation to T. H. Layton, British vice-consul for Ningpo and an old China hand, who enthusiastically promised to try to have the letter transmitted inland where Europeans were not permitted to travel.

Five years passed before Layton had any significant news to report, which was directed to Finn, who later recalled his 'feelings while holding such documents in hand, within view of the Mount of Olives, and of that wailing-place which forms part of the inclosed site of the ancient Temple.' Layton, now in 1849 at Amoy, turned up a Chinese Moslem soldier from Kaifeng, who gave a fairly detailed report of the Jews in his native city, whose numbers he estimated at about one thousand. Layton's further inquiries during that year and the next produced no additional intelligence: 'Money alone will obtain information', he reported, 'and perhaps Sir Moses Montefiore or some wealthy Hebrew will pay it.' Layton died at his post in China in 1850, but in June of the following year his widow in London finally had word of a reply received at Amoy from the Jews of Kaifeng, an answer to Finn's letter, which had been brought to the interior by a fur merchant. Mrs. Layton herself expressed the fascination for the Chinese Jews which she shared with her husband, and noted that nothing 'from my childhood has ever possessed such an interest to me as God's wonderful dealings with this strange people, to-day as of old time.' The letter itself, the first to be received in Europe from that long-lost corner of Israel in Kaifeng, was written in Chinese and dated 20 August 1850 and, in Finn's words, was 'a writing on most delicate paper, with the address upon a slip of bright red, gummed over the exterior.' Finn, then, succeeded where Kennicott, Collet, da Costa, the Jews

of New York and London and all others had failed. Unfortunately, although sent in 1850, the long-awaited letter from the Chinese Jews did not reach Finn until twenty years later, at London in April 1870. 'The chain of occurrences which produced this delay surprises one to look back upon it', Finn explained, 'The principal circumstance being, besides much uncertainty as to my own movements and long succeeding illness, the utter inability after a certain period to discover the existence or whereabouts of my amiable correspondent, Mrs. Layton.' The translation from the Chinese was made by M.C. Morrison, the son of the man who reported on the Chinese Jews over half a century before.

The letter from the Chinese Jews was signed by one Chao Nien-tsu, who reported on the nearly complete breakdown of the community . . .

Chao Nien-tsu closed his letter with a plea that a delegation be sent to them immediately, as the synagogue itself was in great danger of being mortgaged away or pulled down altogether.

Finn certainly needed no further encouragement to attempt a meeting with the Chinese Jews, even without this important and path-breaking letter, but other matters occupied him in Turkish Jerusalem during this period when he was unaware that his epistle had reached its destination. Meanwhile, however, an Anglican bishopric had been established at Hong Kong, and the London Society brought Finn and his subject to the attention of Dr. George Smith, the first bishop. Miss Jane Cook of Cheltenham had given funds to the London Society for the purpose of locating the Chinese Jews, and their Dr. Medhurst, while visiting Shanghai, suggested sending two Chinese Christian converts up country to Kaifeng to investigate the matter at first hand. The men left Shanghai in November 1850, armed with a Hebrew letter written by Isaac Faraj, a Jewish merchant established in the same city, and within a month they had travelled the seven hundred miles by river and reached Kaifeng. Their stay on this first occasion was short, as they feared for their safety, but they managed to acquire a number of small Hebrew books which they took

of New York and London and all with them to Shanghai, where they each wrote a short account of their adventures, which were published in pamphlet form with a preface by Bishop Smith. The two Chinese converts returned to Kaifeng in 1851, and this time arrived in Shanghai with six of the community's twelve torah scrolls and forty other manuscripts which had been sold to them, and were accompanied by two Jews of Kaifeng who stayed a few months at the mission on the coast.

Finally, then, in 1851, over two hundred years after the first tantalizing reports from the Jesuits, Western scholars were able to determine if this outpost of Judaism harboured any ancient manuscripts which might verify or refute Kennicott's emendations and thereby provide a fully definitive text of the word of God as spoken on Mount Sinai and as revered to the letter especially by Protestants the world over. Smith emphasized that the *torah* scrolls of the law, 'each containing a complete copy of the whole Pentateuch, were purchased for 400 taels of silver (about £130) from the Jews duly assembled to the number of 300 persons; and the MSS were conveyed in open day from the synagogue to the lodgings of our travellers.' As to their description, Smith recorded that they 'are each written in a fine legible hand on thick sheepskins sewed together, and are without points, or any of the modern divisions into sections or even books.' An examination of the contents of the manuscripts brought back from Kaifeng, however, was rather disheartening. 'The cursory examination which we have been already enabled to bestow on them', Smith noted even from the few books that were brought back after the first visit by the Chinese converts, 'leads to the belief that they will be found by Western biblical scholars to be remarkable for their generally exact agreement with the received text of the Hebrew Old Testament.' Smith added hopefully that 'Though in themselves interesting and valuable, they are probably much inferior in interest and value to the twelve rolls of vellum containing the Law', and prayed that these too might be acquired and

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there.' Hirsch and Simson recounted some of the intelligence they had from India, and closed by informing the Jews of Kaifeng that 'we, in America, live much at peace in New York and in other places, that Jews act as judges beside Christians in suits involving money as well as at the trial of capital crimes.' In conclusion, they prayed, if 'it is possible for you to inform us about the usage and ways of your province it would please us greatly. We are always at your service.'

The Jews of New York were hopeful of a reply: after all, they had just had word from Malabar which was hardly less distant and obscure. 'If you wish to send us an answer', they wrote the Chinese, 'place your letter in the enclosed envelope, on which is an address in English. It will then reach us without fail.' Unfortunately, Captain Howell, 'Bound for China', despite all efforts, 'could not discover them': he himself put the original letter in the enclosed envelope and posted it back to New York. This was the last eighteenth-century attempt to communicate with the Jews of China, and the last of the almost blind Western fishing expeditions in Kaifeng.

By the early nineteenth century, the possibilities of searching personally for lost communities of Jews were far more promising. One of the first of these ethnic explorers was Claudius Buchanan, later associated with the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews. Buchanan's motives were similar to those Kennicott:

A copy of the Scriptures belonging to the Jews of the East, who might be supposed to have had no communication with Jews in the West, has been long considered a desideratum in Europe; for the Western Jews have been accused by some learned men of altering or omitting certain words in the Hebrew text, to invalidate the arguments of Christians. But Jews in the East, remote from the controversy, would have no motive for corruptions.

When Buchanan went to Cochin in February 1807, the black Jews there told him that there were still Jews in China. Furthermore, according to other information Buchanan received, the 'Cabul Jews, who travel into the interior of China, say that in some Synagogues the Law is still written on a roll of leather, made of Goats' skins dyed red; not on vellum, but on a soft flexible leather.' Buchanan meanwhile managed to procure some old manuscripts from the Indian Jews, and barely escaped with his life when the cry went up that Christians were stealing from the Jews. Still, Buchanan was confident that 'One or two of

the MSS which I have just procured, will probably be of some service in this respect.'

On the other hand, the most recent efforts of Western Jews to reach their brethren in China met with no success at all. In 1815 a number of Jews from London are said to have sent a letter in Hebrew to the Jews of Kaifeng. According to one report, the letter was delivered there by a travelling bookseller to a person who claimed to be able to read the language. An answer was promised, but the bookseller took alarm at rumours of a civil war, and left the city before receiving a written reply. So, too, Dr. Robert Morrison, the translator for the English embassy to China under Lord Amherst in 1816. . . . Nothing more reported about them, despite Morrison's enquiries.

Some interest in the Chinese Jews was revived in 1836 when the letter from the London Jews of 1760 was published in translation by the flamboyant and eccentric self-styled 'Rev. Dr. M. Edrahi, Native of Morocco, Member of the Talmudical Academies of London and Amsterdam; Professor of Modern and Oriental Languages; Private Tutor to the University of Cambridge', etc., etc., who arrived in London in October 1833, bearing 'recommendations signed by three hundred of the principal learned men and governors of the various places through he has travelled, in England, France, Holland, and Germany.' He also published the famous circular letter from the Jews 'on the further side of the river Sambatyon', which he turned up in Amsterdam, and which had been used to great effect by emissaries from Jerusalem two hundred years before. No doubt Edrehi's book was the inspiration behind William Simpson's plan to prepare himself for coming into contact with the lost Ten Tribes when he departed with the Niger Expedition to convert the Africans in May 1841. At 'the suggestion of some Christian friends', he recalled, 'he was provided by the two chief Rabbis in London with letters commendatory to their brethren, in case it should be found that in the province of God towards that remarkable people any portion of them were located in the interior of Africa.' Simpson brought with him epistles in Hebrew from Dr.

Solomon Herschell, the Ashkenazi chief rabbi, and Rabbi David Meldola, the Sephardi *haham*, in order to be prepared for the possibility that the Lost Ten Tribes would be of one or the other persuasion. This mission met with as little success as the others.

The actual making of contact with the Jews of China in the middle of the nineteenth century was more than a narrative anti-climax: it was the shattering of the hopes of Kennicott and Collet to find a truly ancient manuscript copy of the Old Testament, and the faith of da Costa that here in China might be a living remnant of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. The man whose letters finally elicited a response from Kaifeng was James Finn (1806-72), British consul in Jerusalem from 1845 to 1862, whose interest in the Chinese Jews began even before his sojourn in Palestine, as a product of his involvement with the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews. Finn came across the *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses* which contained the early reports of the Jesuits concerning Chinese Jewry, and after further research of his own, he produced in 1843 a short monograph on *The Jews in China* . . .

By the time that Finn's first book on the Chinese Jews appeared in print, the possibilities of actually making contact had improved immeasurably. According to the provisions of the Treaty of Nanking (1842), which ended the Opium War between Great Britain and China, the island of Hong Kong was ceded to Britain, and five Chinese ports were opened to Western residence and trade. Finn thought that as one result of this change, 'new efforts should be made for opening up a communication with the Jewish colony of the interior; or, at least, for inquiring what had become of them during the interval of a hundred and twenty years'.

Finn appealed to Bishop Michael Alexander, a converted Jew now serving as Anglican Bishop in Jerusalem, requesting that he write a letter in Hebrew which might be sent to China, but nothing came of it. So, too, in June 1843, was Finn disappointed when a Parisian Jew named Henri Hirsch was prevented by poor health from making a one-man mission of inquiry to Kaifeng, as he had intended. Finn

newly formed Institute for Socio-Historical Research on the Kaifeng Chinese Jews. On his first trip to America, Prof. Zhao visited Yale, Harvard, Wesleyan, Holyoake, Boston U., Princeton, Columbia, the U. of Washington (Seattle) and of Oregon (Portland), UCLA, Stanford and UC Berkeley. He also had his first taste of modern American Judaism. At Princeton, Prof. Andy Plaks showed him Orthodox Jewish life; in Seattle, Anson Laytner treated him to a Reform-Conservative Shabbat and in Portland, Rabbi Joshua Stampfer hosted him for a Conservative-style Rosh Hashanna. Is Zhao confused? Maybe he'll write some of his impressions of American Jewry for a future issue of *Points East*. Also of interest: In Seattle, Zhao met his distant relative, Ed Zhao, and they had much time to explore family history and future plans together.

• THE KAIFENG INSTITUTE FOR SOCIO-HISTORICAL RESEARCH ON THE CHINESE JEWS

The Kaifeng Institute for Socio-Historical Research on the Chinese Jews, a popular scholastic group composed of specialists, scholars, and other persons concerned with research on the history and culture of the Jews was established on May 1, 1992.

Assistant mayor of Kaifeng in charge of general affairs, Mr. Zhang Jinxiang, is honorary president of this Research Institute; Professor Zhao Xiang Ru, a Kaifeng Jew, is president; and director emeritus of the Kaifeng city museum, Mr. Wang Yisha is vice president in charge of general affairs and concurrently secretary. The Institute is located at No. Ten Beidu Street, Building Four, Second Floor, Kaifeng, Postal Code: 475000, Fax: 552320; Telephone 552374/552062, Attention: Guo Aisheng.

Professor Zhao's address is: Haidian Dist., Furongli, Bldg. 9, Fl. 13, No. 1 Beijing; Tel. 2562968; Postal Code: 100080.

• **PROF. XU XIN IN LOS ANGELES**
Prof. Xu Xin, on his way back from the Harvard meeting, stopped in Los Angeles where he was hosted by Nigel Thomas, a member of the Board of the Institute. Prof. Xu pre-

sented the Institute with a copy of his recent book, *Anthology of Modern Hebrew Short Stories*, translated into Chinese, and published in Guilin this year. He also sent us a copy of *Dangdai waiguo wenxue* [Contemporary Foreign literature], 1990:2, which contains a translation by Prof. Xu of S. Y. Agnon's novella, "In the Heart of the Seas."

• SECOND VOLUME OF SINO-JUDAICA PLANNED

The first volume of "SINO-JUDAICA: Occasional Papers of the Sino-Judaica Institute" has been well received, and we continue to receive requests for it. We are now preparing to issue a second volume, this one concentrating more on the Jewish community in Shanghai before and during WW II. Members are encouraged to submit manuscripts for consideration by the editorial committee.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

To the Editor:

In the March, 1992 issue of *Points East*, Volume 7, No. 2, in an article entitled "A Brief Review of the Sino-Judaic Institute", by Anson Laytner, the following sentence occurs: "In 1980, Vice-President Michael Pollak wrote the first book on the Chinese Jews in over 50 years . . ."

Please be advised that the definitive work on the Chinese Jews was written by Donald Daniel Leslie. His work, entitled *The Survival of the Chinese Jews*, was published by E.J. Brill in Leiden in 1972, only 8 years prior to Pollak's excellent work, *Mandarin. Jews and Missionaries*.

Leslie's book received wide, scholarly recognition, and Pollak himself, in discussions with me, has given priority to Leslie's work, and has acknowledged the scholarly debt owed to Leslie. Indeed, Pollak writes in his *Mandarin*, referring to Leslie's *Survival*, "The most comprehensive scholarly study of Chinese Judaism ever attempted . . . The prime text for the serious student of Sino-Judaica."

Incidentally, Leslie and Pollak are great friends.

Sincerely,
Leo Gabow

To the Editor:

A member of the Institute who was a former leader of the Shanghai Jewish community has expressed some misgivings concerning a portion of the memoirs of Dr. Moses Schwartzberg, related by Leo Heiman and reprinted from *The Jewish People's Almanac in Points East*, vol. 7:2, pp. 7 ff. Dr. Schwartzberg spoke of organizing a Shanghai Regiment of some twelve hundred Jewish volunteers, for whom he was able later to obtain exit permits to enable them to participate in Israel's struggle for independence. According to the information made available to us, two groups of volunteers, fourteen to sixteen in all, one led by Arya Marinsky and the other by Sammy Miller, were supplied with false documents and false visas, and reached Palestine via Paris, their planes refueling in Baghdad. These volunteers, members of Betar, then joined Irgun. The project was organized and led by Judith Hasser (now Mrs. Ben Eliezer), and the name of Dr. Schwarzberg did not at that time come up in this connection. If indeed there is some misinformation and exaggeration contained in the memoir concerning this event, it may well call into question other portions of that memoir.

Al Dien
President, SJI

QUERY

I am interested in Chinese Jewish history because, according to family legend, I have a Chinese ancestor: my great-great-grandfather, Julius Burakoff (or Burakov) was supposedly born in Port Arthur in 1809 and died in Hong Kong in 1849. His son, Kalman Burakov, was born in Hong Kong in 1840 and died in Vilna in 1901. Julius's wife (Kalman's mother) was supposedly Chinese. I have no further information about Julius or his wife: why were Julius's parents in Port Arthur? How did Julius get to Hong Kong? How did Kalman get from Hong Kong to Vilna? Who was my great-great-grandmother (Julius's wife)? What became of her? Was she likely

to have been Jewish? Are there burial records for a Jewish cemetery in Hong Kong going back to 1849? What might my ancestors have been doing on the Pacific Rim in 1800 (I have another great-great-grandfather who was supposedly born in Vladivostok in 1799)? I would be very grateful for any help or direction you could give me towards answering these questions. Thank you.

Sincerely, Dr. Seth R. Katz
Dept. of English
Bradley University
Peoria, IL 61625 / 309-677-2490

REPORT FROM PROF. ZHAO XIANG RU

(continued from page 1)

religious faith and customs of the Jewish religion, they may consider establishing a chapel at the Dongjing Hotel. Foreign Jews may also buy land in Kaifeng to construct a hotel for Jews alone.

In addition to these, I met with the administration and with the historians of Henan University and, accepting my suggestion, they are actively preparing to establish an academic research organization entitled "Henan University Research Center for the Study of China's Ancient Jews" (Henan daxue Zhongguo gudai Youtairen yanjiu zhongxin). I may be invited to become an advisor of this center.

I hope that our Sino-Judaic Institute will promptly organize a group under your or Mr. Rosen's leadership to go to Kaifeng and to discuss the matters concerning the erection of the Chinese Jews' Memorial Hall, and to have direct conversations and discussions with the relevant branches of the Kaifeng administration.

In order to respond to the favorable attitude of the Kaifeng city administration toward us Jews, it is at present terribly important that one or two matters be addressed in order to obtain their trust and in order to demonstrate the prestige and economic strength of foreign Jews. If we are able to reach an agreement on the question of the erection of the Jews' Historical Memorial Hall with the Kaifeng authorities, I hope that, on the behalf of the Sino-Judaic Institute, we can establish a foundation abroad to raise the building fund by soliciting contributions.

What do you think?

Warmest good wishes to you and your family.

Zhao Xiang ru

[Editor's note: Prof. Zhao is a Chinese Jew.]

IN SEARCH OF THE LOST SCROLL

(continued from page 1)

the scriptural text. The renewed interest at Oxford in these isolated children of Abraham in turn prompted the Jews of London to try to make contact with their lost brethren. Their agent was Emanuel Mendes da Costa (1717-91), fellow of the Royal Society, geologist, and resident expert on Jewish history and culture.

His Jewish religion being no bar to election, Emanuel Mendes da Costa was elected a fellow of the Royal Society on Thursday, 26 November 1747 and was admitted the same night. Da Costa was renowned as a natural historian, and his work on fossils was recognized throughout Europe. He became secretary and librarian of the Royal Society and was in contact with most of the enlightened minds of London. His accessibility made it certain that he would be consulted on various questions of Jewish interest when they arose, whether in the fields of ancient history, philosophy, or cultural comparison, and he himself was drawn to these issues even without this additional incentive. The enigma of the Chinese Jews came to his attention several months before he was made a full member of the Royal Society, on an occasion when he attended a lecture as a guest of one of his many supporters. Da Costa recorded in his common-place book that on

Thursday 30 April 1747 Dr. Thomas Shaw Prof. Hebrew & Oriental Languages at Oxford communicated a paper to the Royal Society (which was read) of the fabulousness & falsity of the Chinese Chronology — the Chinese, says he have a record that about 200 years after Christ a number of Jewish families from the Western parts of the World went there to settle.

That Professor Shaw should have spoken about the Chinese is not in itself surprising. For intellectuals of the Enlightenment, the Chinese provided a sort of modern exemplar of classical civilization, pagans who reached the heights of cultural development. Certainly after the reports of the Augustinian friar Juan Gonzalez de Mendoza were published in 1585,

and even more so from the journal of Matteo Ricci, the Italian missionary who founded the Jesuit mission in Peking, the picture of Confucian China as an idealized non-Christian empire came to dominate the popular conception of the Far East . . .

Professor Shaw was probably correct in placing the first Chinese Jews in the period of the Han dynasty, for it would not be surprising to find Jewish silk traders among the others that arrived in China in the first quarter of the third century A.D. . . . But the first documented meeting between a Westerner and the Jews of China was the momentous encounter reported by Matteo Ricci (1552-1610), the Jesuit missionary . . .

What interested him in particular was the report that in the synagogue the Jews kept with much veneration the Pentateuch of Moses, written on sheepskin parchment, rolled in five scrolls'. Since Jews 'lived there for 500 or 600 years', these copies of the Scripture might be quite ancient . . .

Ricci's conclusions regarding the scriptural canon of Chinese Jewry and the possibility that ancient and unknown manuscripts of the Old Testament might be had in Kaifeng are not known, but his first contacts stimulated others to follow in his footsteps. The next important meeting was that with Jean-Paul Gozani (1647-1732), who went to Kaifeng itself in 1698 and both lived there and returned often during the next twenty years. Gozani first visited the Jews there in 1704, and remained in contact with them until 1723, when the new Chinese emperor Yungcheng expelled the missionaries from all parts of China except Peking and Canton. In his Portuguese letter of 5 November 1704, Gozani tells of his first meeting with the Jews 'in the view of enquiring for the Old Testament among them'. The missionary's investigation into the precise contents of the Chinese Jewish library was hampered by the fact, as he confessed, that 'as I don't understand Hebrew, it consequently was to no purpose' . . .

This was worrying. For if the Chinese Jews had the Talmud, then consequently their copies of the Old Testament, albeit rather ancient, would similarly be tainted by the possibility

bled, but he did introduce a new element into the discussion which made finding the Chinese community even more important. For if indeed the Jews of Kaifeng were 'Karaites', that is, biblical Jews who did not know of or recognize the authority of the Talmud, then their text would be even more reliable and untainted by rabbinical extrapolations. From the context of previous letters, it would seem that little was known about the Jews of Cochin in eighteenth-century England, but that the Dutch were in much closer touch with events in India.

If Kennicott was aware of this new intelligence, and it is most likely that he was, he could not but have been encouraged. The net effect was to spur Kennicott himself to attempt to make direct contact with the elusive Chinese Jews. Kennicott's message was brought to China by Sir Frederick Pigou on his way to Canton, who also brought with him a printed Hebrew Bible published at Amsterdam. According to a letter received by Kennicott in 1769, the titular Bishop of Honan province was willing to assist in the mission, but as he himself never received permission to visit his own diocese, his aid remained spiritual alone.

Kennicott never did succeed in obtaining a reply, nor did Collet nor the Jews of London, but not for want of trying. When Daniel Fenning published his new system of geography in 1766, he could do no better than return to Gozani for the most up-to-date information about Chinese Jewry. So, too, was this the latest account included in the 'Memoire sur les Juifs établis en Chine', published by the Abbe Gabriel Brotier in French in 1774, from the Latin of three years earlier. Brotier's book was widely circulated, and must have had the effect of stimulating interest in the subject of the Chinese Jews. Olave Gerhard Tychsen, the Danish Hebraist, also tried to establish communication with Kaifeng, and sent two letters there in 1777 and again in 1779, via Batavia, with no reply. Kennicott himself died in 1783 and was buried in Christ Church Cathedral. His major work on the Old Testament was completed by 1780, even without conclusive proof of textual defects which he hoped would come from China.

The death of Kennicott in 1783 signalled the end of the association of the search for Chinese Jewry with the most advanced of the biblical critics. Kennicott himself showed how much was possible even without a holograph bible. The interest in the subject became correspondingly rather more geographical than scriptural, especially as the later inquiries met with some success. Emanuel Mendes da Costa, meanwhile, also faded from the centre of interest, for reasons apart from his death in 1791. For a number of years he continued to be the Royal Society's expert on Hebraic affairs, answering queries and sending replies. But in the end he seems to have lost his perspective somewhat and began to embezzle funds from the Society: when this was discovered he was dismissed from his clerkship in December 1767, ejected from that body of fellows, and committed to the King's Bench prison, where he remained incarcerated for nearly five years. The discovery of the Chinese Jews and their manuscripts was to be a phenomenon of the nineteenth century rather than of the Enlightenment.

The search for the elusive Jews of Kaifeng did not end with the death of Kennicott and the disgrace of da Costa. In 1787 the Sephardi Jews of New York received a letter from India, written by the Jews of Malabar in the Hebrew language, using square characters, sent via a sailing ship to London, and mailed from England on 13 January to America. According to their own account, the Jews came to Malabar after the destruction of the Second Temple, and in more recent times suffered under Portuguese rule, until the arrival of the Dutch in 1663 enabled them to follow their religious precepts without interference:

In the year 1686 (common era), four men came to Cochin from Amsterdam: Moses Ferrara, Isaac Irgas, Abraham Burata, and Isaac Muchata. They were Portuguese Jews, merchants, who visited all the places where Jews lived. They rejoiced and reported everything to Amsterdam, above all, that there was a great lack of books. When that was learned in Amsterdam, that community sent, as a gift to the community of Cochin, *Humashim* (copies of the Pentateuch), *mahzorim* (holiday prayer-books), copies of the *Shulhan Arukh*, and other books, to the joy of the whole community.

Since then we have friends in Amsterdam. We write to them and to this day they send

us the books we need. Accordingly, many volumes of the Gemara (the Talmud) may be found here, *midrashim*, and also Cabalistic works. We are not well versed in these, but we do regulate ourselves according to the *Shulhan Arukh* which Joseph Caro prepared; our ritual is that of the Portuguese.

The letter does not seem to have been known in Europe until the middle of the nineteenth century, when it was discovered in the archives of the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue in New York by I.J. Benjamin II, that latter-day Benjamin of Tudela who recorded his travels in Asia, Africa, and America and enthralled the German-Jewish reading public. But it does explain how fruitless efforts to find an ancient copy of the Old Testament in India must have been, for the Jews of Malabar were already flooded with the latest European texts and in any case no doubt had been denuded of ancient writings by the Dutch.

One result of the exciting reply from India received by the Jews of New York was a similar feeler to the lost Jews of China. A Hebrew letter was composed and entrusted to the care of a certain Captain Howell, 'Bound for China', and according to the cover letter in English from Solomon Simson of the Sephardi community in New York:

You have herewith a letter in Hebrew directed to the Elders of the Jewish Congregation at Cac fong or Cac fong ford, in the Province of Honan; these people are not called Jews by the Chinese but are called Tiaokin kiao by which name You will please to inquire for them. If You should not meet with any of them, then please to get some person to direct it to them in Chinese agreeable to the above. Your compliance may bring some accounts from this people that may serve to amuse the literati and will in a particular manner oblige me.

The letter to their brethren itself shows the New York Jews rather more interested simply to establish contact rather than to torture the Chinese at this initial stage with a long list of questions. Alexander Hirsch and Solomon Simson . . . were writing now to ask of their numbers, from what tribe they stemmed, when they arrived in China, about their ritual, whether they have the biblical books, and their general circumstances in the East. 'In like manner', they noted, 'we have received a writing from the land of Malabar, from our brother-Jews

IN SEARCH OF THE LOST SCROLL

(continued from page 5)

in the Royal Society about these people, and the wish to learn more about their manner of living, writings and customs. 'Anything whereof that you shall be willing to communicate to me I shall receive with thankfulness', da Costa promised, 'and in order thereto, and that you may meet with the easier access Among these people, some of our Priests and Scribes haue wrote to them in Hebrew.' The Hebrew message in question was enclosed with da Costa's letter, as well as an English translation. Da Costa also offered a word of advice on how to proceed with this mission:

I think it prudent that you should be cautious that this design should not be known to the Papists, and particularly to the Jesuits, lest they should endeavour to hinder our discoveries; for 'tis possible, were such a thing to prove true, that the British Interest might be strengthened in China, and some new branches of Commerce open to the Honourable Company, all which I ardently wish to promote. Should your affairs not permit you to attend this Matter, you will oblige me greatly in recommending it to some Person you may think properly qualified to execute it, and Any Expence you may be at, not exceeding Fifty Pounds Sterling I shall repay with thanks.

So da Costa added a new imperialist element to the search for the Chinese Jews as a sweetener to the mission itself.

The text of the letter sent by the Jews of London to their lost brethren in China repays examination. The language is Hebrew, and the letter is signed 'Isaac son of David Nieto': Isaac Nieto succeeded his father in the post of *haham*, the leader of the Sephardi community, in 1732, but held office only eight years, resigning in failure. Nevertheless, he retained posts of honour in the community, and only added dignity to the epistle. The Jews of London informed their Chinese co-religionists that they had heard a good deal about their community, and wished to alert them to the fact that they were not alone, and 'that the descendants of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levy, are dispersed all

over the face of the globe, east, west, north, and south, whose numbers may be computed at ten millions'. It was not clear at this distance, they wrote, 'whether ye are descendants of the Ten Tribes . . . or whether you descend from the other tribes, being those of Judah, Benjamin, and Levy, as we are.' The Chinese Jews were asked to reply in whatever language they felt comfortable, either in Hebrew, Arabic, or even Chinese. In the meantime, the Jews of London appended a list of nine questions which might help to determine the chronology of their dispersion, and the nature of their rites and rituals. Among these, the Chinese Jews were also asked, 'Do you know whether there are any congregations or numbers of Israelites in Tartary, or in any countries near or distant from you, and whether they are descendants of the Ten Tribes?' Anglo-Jewry concluded its epistle with the supplication that

We now crave your pardon for this great trouble, which we hope you will readily grant, since it is not only we who dwell here in England, who are desirous of being rightly informed concerning the foregoing particulars, but it is the general and anxious wish of all our brethren in these parts to be truly acquainted with what relates to your origin and present condition, and to be instructed as much as possible concerning the like circumstances of other Israelites, who we have reason to believe do reside in several other Eastern countries, so far distant and remote from us, that we have not hitherto been able to learn whether they belong to the Ten Tribes or not

The letter is signed by those of Israel 'who reside in this city of London, in the kingdom of England, on the twenty-fourth day of the Eleventh month called Sebat, in the year 5520 [1760] from the creation of the world, Amen.'

The fate of this important letter remains unclear. Moses Edrehi (of whom more later), an extremely eccentric Moroccan Jew who passed through England in the middle of the nineteenth century, claimed that

The letter was sent by some respectable persons, who on their return from China brought an answer in the Chinese and Hebrew languages, which was afterwards translated into the English language for the Portuguese Jewish congregation; and the original was left in the museum at the India House. I could not find the copy, and suppose it has been lost.

The source of this rather startling intelligence is not given, but it may be

that Edrehi heard the story from David Meldola, the son of the late *haham*, who was acquainted with him. M. N. Adler, looking through the records of the India House Museum at the end of the nineteenth century, was also unable to find any such letter.

Nevertheless, apart from anything else, what the letter to the Chinese Jews does show is how different Anglo-Jewry's conception of the entire mission was from that of Kennicott, Collet, and the Christian Hebraists. Nowhere in their letter do they mention the possibility of obtaining ancient copies of the scriptures. As far as they were concerned, the masoretic traditional text of the Old Testament used by Jews everywhere in the known world was not only accurate but a faithful reflection of the words spoken to Moses on Mount Sinai. What interested the Jews of London was rather the possibility that another lost community might be discovered in China. It was for this reason that at the same time they took the opportunity to send another letter of inquiry written in Arabic to the Jews of North Africa. Without the constant prodding of Collet and da Costa, they probably would not have bothered to send their letter, but once done their motives were shown to be somewhat different and more connected with the centuries-old search for the Lost Ten Tribes, rather than with the newer attempts to correct the ancient text of the Holy Scriptures.

What little new information there was came from India, for by now the Jews there also knew of the European interest in their distant neighbours in China. Thubia (Tobias) Boaz, a Jew living in the Hague, wrote to Ezekiel Rahabi II, the lay leader of the Indian congregation at Cochin and agent there for the Dutch East India Company, and asked if anything was known about the Chinese Jews and their religious practices. Ezekiel Rahabi replied in 1767, and noted that 'if there are Jews in the Chinese Empire, I must inform your Lordship that we have heard from trustworthy individuals that there are Jews in Tartary. But they are Karaites, although well versed in the Holy Tongue. God alone knows how much of this is true?' The Indian's report may have been somewhat gar-

of rabbinic tampering. Even more intriguing is the single page of Hebrew and Latin with Gozani's autograph, on which is a list of the names of the books of the Talmud, and another page with the books of the Bible. If this document was written in Kaifeng, then at least the titles of the Talmudic canon were known to Chinese Jewry.

The letters of Ricci and Gozani were the most widely-known sources of information concerning the Chinese Jews and were quickly noticed by scholars. The current state of knowledge was admirably summarized by the abbe Gabriel Brotier (1723-89) in Paris in the later 1750s. Brotier's 'Memoire' was published in Latin in 1771, and then in French three years later, and was thus eminently accessible. 'The news of a synagogue of Jews, established in China several centuries ago', he explained, 'was, for all the savants of Europe, a most interesting piece of information. They were confident that they could discover a text from Holy Scripture which would serve to solve their difficulties and put an end to their disputes' . . .

The Jesuit reports of a certain amount of Talmudic knowledge was extremely worrying, but Western intellectuals retained the hope that none the less some very ancient copies of the Old Testament might be found, to provide a better text than the late medieval one in current use in both Jewish and Christian Europe.

Chief among these biblical scholars in England was, of course, Benjamin Kennicott, fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, from 1747, a pupil of Thomas Hunt, the Regius Professor of Hebrew. Kennicott's life work was the collating of existing manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible in an attempt to eliminate errors which had been introduced over the centuries, while still acknowledging the divine inspiration of Scripture itself . . .

The search for the Chinese Jews, and the assistance that they might possibly give in establishing the true and original Hebrew text, was just the sort of project that appealed to Emanuel Mendes da Costa, newly elected fellow of the Royal Society. Certainly by the 1740s, da Costa was recognized as an easily accessible oracle on Jews and Jewish culture.

Da Costa protested that he himself was 'not being Any wise greatly Conversant in Rabbinical Learning', but being a member of the Royal Society and in close contact with other learned savants of the age, it was inevitable that he should have been involved in all variations of matters Jewish.

The very first attempts in eighteenth-century England to restore contact with the Jews of China and to procure from them a more accurate copy of the Old Testament text came, however, neither from da Costa nor from Kennicott, but from a rather more obscure preacher from Newbury, Berkshire, named John Collet. On 23 December 1752, Collet wrote to the Reverend Mr. Dumaresque at St. Petersburg explaining his plan. Collet asked his Russian correspondent to keep the Hebrew letter to the Jews with him, and 'whenever any proper opportunity offers, so as to be but as a small expence, I would beg the favour of you to convey it to them by a safe hand: & to transmit to me their answer, or whatever information you can gain concerning them, by the first ships that come to England, as the expence by the Post is too considerable.' Collet noted that he was having similar letters sent 'to the Israelites in various parts of Asia & Africa', including China . . .

Collet's first question was to know 'unto what tribes of Israel ye belong; & whether you have any Chronicles of the times of your sojourning there, in the Hebrew language, or in the language which ye speak at this time.' Collet included a list of biblical books as they appeared in the accepted canon, and ended his letter with requests for further information regarding the Israelite alphabet and intelligence in connection with the vexed question of Hebrew pointing . . .

Enclosed with Collet's letter to Russia was a copy of Kennicott's recently-published work on the present state of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament . . . These burning questions cried out for reply, but 'the only method of determining all these things is to get some old Manuscripts of the Old Testament from the Jews or from the ten tribes, who are settled in very distant places, and have no communication with our European Jews.

Collet showed considerable enterprise in trying to find an answer to the problem of the authenticity of the Old Testament text, and spared no efforts in searching for remnants of Israel who might help him in his work. As such, it was inevitable that Emanuel Mendes da Costa should have become involved at some stage. Da Costa had been forwarded a letter Collet sent to Robert Dingley in the spring of 1756. Collet, in his reply to da Costa, still through the medium of Robert Dingley, noted that when one considered the dispersion of the Jews it was more surprising that they managed to preserve the books they did, rather than that some were lost and others distorted . . .

Collet hoped that da Costa would pass this wish on to world Jewry, and thereby perform a great service for religion and scholarship.

Communication with China was very nearly impossible; making contact with Russia was extremely difficult. Collet's project of improving the text of the Old Testament moved forward almost imperceptibly, but with none of the principals entirely abandoning the plan. Da Costa continued to advise gentile scholars on Jewish matters, and Collet meanwhile was writing directly to Kennicott, encouraging him to believe that it might be possible to 'procure a MS, either as old, or taken from one as old as our Savior's time: such a one I should hope might be still existing among the descendants of the ten tribes . . .

The seeds planted by Collet since 1752 finally came to fruition eight years later when, thanks to da Costa, the Royal Society itself became involved in the search for the Chinese Jews. In 1760, da Costa wrote to a man well acquainted with Chinese matters who had been recommended to him by David Salomons of the London Sephardi community: 'The Royal Society and other Persons haue been inform'd by seueral of the Northern and Western Provinces of the Chinese Empire there are People who profess the Jewish Religion or somewhat like or dependent upon it'. Da Costa noted the curiosity expressed

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CHINA HAS TIME TO TAKE A LONG VIEW

by Liat Collins

reprinted from The Jerusalem Post,
February 4, 1992

While Israeli media and political personalities used the term "historic" to describe the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and China, the Chinese media gave less prominence to the subject, and certainly chose a different description.

There may be two reasons for this. First, the term "historic" does not mean the same to a country which has been recording its history, uninterrupted, for some 5,000 years as it does to a state founded not 50 years ago; and secondly, the new-found diplomatic relations with such a tiny country in the Middle East simply haven't the same significance to the Chinese as establishing relations with a huge country in the Far East does to us.

Before Israelis become too boastful and optimistic about the new possibilities these relations open up, they might do well to remember a few basic facts about the relationship.

One of the reasons China did not establish official relations until now is that it did not need to. Israel was so concerned about being accepted that it gave Beijing almost everything it needed.

Thus, while Israel supplied China with agricultural and military know-how without insisting on an official status, China was selling weapons to Arab states. China's main reason for agreeing to establish relations was the desire to improve its image with the larger powers and join in the international discussions on the Middle East in Moscow. The Soviet-Russian resumption of ties after the end of the Cold War also had an effect on Beijing's decision.

But just how much the relationship with Jerusalem means to China is not clear. While Israel sees it as triumphant recognition of the Jewish state, China clearly has no intention of giving up its relations with the Arab states and the PLO.

There is very little likelihood, for example, of China's ending missile

sales to Syria and Saudi Arabia. It has everything to lose by giving up such lucrative deals and nothing to gain. What more would Israel give China to make it worth China's while?

In addition, through a peculiarity of the very large and complex Chinese bureaucratic system, money from arms sales goes back into the Chinese military and not to the country as a whole. The generals will not give up their source of money, prestige and power for the sake of some small-scale politics.

An added bonus of China's continued good relations with the Arabs is that this helps pacify China's substantial Moslem minority, which has been rumbling in recent years.

Israelis are used to the American perspective of Israel as the center of the Middle East (although this relationship too has changed following the Gulf war). But China is very unlikely to move the focus of its Middle East operations from Egypt, with which it has had a long and lucrative relationship, to an unknown quantity like Israel.

Even Chinese bureaucrats who specialize in the Middle East know very little about Israel; they have been more involved over the years with the Arab states and Iran. (For that matter, it might be noted that China historically had trade relations with Persia and the Gulf states via the famous so-called Silk Route. One of the few incidences in which Jews were killed in something like a pogrom in China occurred several centuries ago, when local Jews were mistaken for Arab merchants and attacked for unfair trading.)

China isn't a religious state, and it is certainly not one based on Judeo-Christian-Moslem principles. Its peasants haven't heard of Israel or Judaism, and they don't even know where the Middle East is. What they are concerned with is daily existence in a still largely agricultural society. Even today, concerns focus first on the family, then the village-commune, then the clan and, finally, on the Chinese people as a whole.

We can expect more and more Chinese to hear about our country through tourism, but it will be a one-sided phenomenon. Naturally, for economic

reasons among others, we can expect many more Israeli tourists to visit China than we can expect Chinese to visit our country.

Sino-Israeli relations have come a long way, but they have not been set in cement. The cumbersome bureaucracy makes it unlikely that China will suddenly take a decision to cut ties — though Chinese leaders have, throughout the millennia, been known suddenly to change their minds, especially when it comes to foreigners.

It is equally unlikely that we will achieve a status in Beijing equal to other Middle East countries. Strange as it may seem, China will probably see us as a continuation, almost a province, of the larger Arab entity — except for one fact:

Like many other countries in the Far East, China has heard about the pro-Israel lobby in the US and, like those other countries, it probably has an exaggerated idea of the lobby's influence. Therefore the fate of the relationship between Israel and China is probably tied to the fate of the relationship between each country and Uncle Sam.

Only time will reveal the nature of the Sino-Israel relationship. Unlike young Israel and its government, China, with its ancient history, understands time perfectly. And time is a commodity that China, unlike Israel, has plenty of.

DAVID MARSHALL REMEMBERED

by Malcolm Caplan

adapted from The Jerusalem Post,
February 7, 1992

Among Asian leaders, the story of David Marshall is unique. He was the son of Baghdadian Jews who settled in Singapore around 1900. He was born in Singapore and became a prominent lawyer there. In World War II, the Japanese captured Singapore; as a member of the volunteer militia and a prisoner of war, Marshall was sent to Japan to engage in forced labor.

He came home after the war and rebuilt his law practise, entering politics for the first time in 1955. As a member of the Labor Front Party, he won election as the first chief minister of Singapore.

designate the Jews.

[For more information on the Chinese terms used to designate Jews, see Rudolph Loewenthal, "The Nomenclature of Jews in China," Monumenta Serica 12 (1947), pp. 97-126; reprinted by Hyman Kublin in his Studies of the Chinese Jews: Selections from Journals East and West, New York, Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1971, pp. 55-84.]

ISRAEL AND CHINA SIGN TRADE ACCORD

TEL AVIV (JTA)— Israel and the People's Republic of China have initiated a trade agreement that lowers administrative barriers to mutual commerce and opens up vast new vistas to Israeli exporters.

The speed with which the pact was drafted—in only a month—was an indication of China's interest in developing commercial relations between the two countries, said David Koren, director general of the Israeli Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The announcement followed reports that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was reconsidering plans to sell 40 Kfir jet planes to Taiwan because of objections by the Chinese People's Republic, which feared the deal would strengthen its traditional enemy.

Koren, who inaugurated the trade talks during an official visit to Beijing, said the Chinese are interested in Israeli technology, industry and agriculture.

Even before the establishment of diplomatic ties in January, Israel and China were trading partners. Israel registered \$40 million in exports to China last year, including agricultural and industrial goods and equipment, as well as arms.

It imported only \$4 million in Chinese goods, mainly shoes, textiles, pencils and other light industrial goods.

The accord was initialed just before El Al's scheduled launching of direct flights from Tel Aviv to Beijing.

On Sept. 3, El Al Flight 095 extended the flight map of Israel's national airline eastward in a non-stop, 10 1/2-hour flight to the Chinese capital, passing over Russia and the now-independent states of the former Soviet Union.

INQUIRY

Professor Pan Guang, Dean of Center of Israel and Jewish Studies in Shanghai, is writing a book, Zionism in Shanghai (1903-1949). He would appreciate any information and comments concerning the Zionist movement in Shanghai, especially on the following aspects:

1) Information about Zionist organizations and groups, including • Shanghai Branch of the Palestine Foundation Fund • Shanghai Betar and "Friends of Betar" • China Union of Zionists - Revisionists (founded in 1929) • Shanghai Branch of New Zionist Organization (founded in 1935) • Mizrahi in Shanghai • Poalei Zion and Left-wing Poalei Zion in Shanghai • Kadimah in Shanghai and its German-speaking branch • Theodor Herzi Allgemeine Zionist Organization (THAZO) • Zion Zioni • Zionist Association • Zionist Organization Shanghai • Shanghai Branch of the Women's International Zionist Organization (WIZO) • Shanghai Branch of Irgun and "Friends of Irgun"

2) Information about Zionist publications, including: • The Call (in English) • The Tagar (in English and Russian) • The Jewish Voice (in English and Russian) • Davar (a mimeographed newspaper appeared in the "Hongkew Ghetto" from July to October, 1943) • The Hadegal (in Russian).

3) Information about Zionist activists, including: • Mrs. R.E. Toeg • Bernard Rosenberg • Ilutovich (no full name) • Dobekirer (no full name) • Arye Marinsky • L. Kotovitch • Ossie Lewin • Otto Koritschoner • Bergman (no full name) • Paul Parnes • Samuel Muller

4) Information concerning anti-Fascist activities organized or supported by Zionists in Shanghai and conflict between Zionists and Fascists in Shanghai. For instance, were there any Shanghai Zionists who joined the Allied army or navy, or even lost their lives in the anti-Fascist war?

5) Was there any anti-Zionist sentiment and activity within the Jewish community, among foreign residents, or within the Chinese population in Shanghai?

6) Was there any controversy or conflict between different Zionist groups in Shanghai?

7) Information (especially photos) about the following major events:

• Mr. Israel Cohen's visit to Shanghai in 1920 • Albert Einstein's visit to Shanghai in 1923 • Dr. U. Bension's visit to Shanghai in 1925 • Shanghai Zionists set up Jewish settlements in Palestine, 1920-21 • the split of the Theodor Herzl Allgemeine Zionist Organization in 1941 • the effort of Shanghai Zionists to help Jewish refugees from Europe • Jabotinsky memorial assembly in Shanghai, 1940 • the election in Shanghai (October 27, 1946) to the 22nd World Zionist Congress • the visit of representatives of Zionist organizations in Palestine to Shanghai in March, 1947 • the gathering to protest the handing of Dov Gruner by the British authorities in Shanghai, April 22, 1947 • celebrations in Shanghai upon the establishment of the State of Israel.

8) Information about recreational, educational and sports activities organized by Shanghai Zionist organizations.

9) Information about the Shanghai Zionists' plan to ship munitions and young fighters to Israel. Was there a Jewish troop named the "Chinese Platoon" on the front of the first Arab-Israeli war?

10) Some reports mention that Ms. Soong Ching Ling (widow of Dr. Sun Yat-sen), General Moses Cohen ("Two Gun Cohen") and Dr. Moses Schwarzberg (Jewish advisor to the Chinese government), were active supporters of Zionism in Shanghai. Are there any materials available to substantiate these reports?

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ROSH HASHANA

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Gratefully Accepted

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Chinese?" Did the "Sephardic" Jews do enough to help the Nazi refugees or did they keep themselves aloof? Did the Russian Jews really hate the German Jewish refugees and vice versa? Did the Polish Jewish refugees only help their own and not support the Joint? And what about Japanese-Jewish relations? On one hand there was the sanctuary of Kobe, while on the other, the harsh regime of Shanghai's Hongkew ghetto. What was their "real" attitude? Some praised Hardoon for being the first to truly penetrate and participate in Chinese cultural issues while others criticized him for separating himself from his own people.

But when the dust had cleared from these diverse disputes, it was clear that there was much to celebrate at the Harvard Conference. It was a historic and a truly international gathering, one which left the participants yearning for more. "We're only at page one of Jewish studies in the Far East," declared Rabbi Marvin Tokayer, for many years the rabbi in Japan. "This is a good start," said Prof. Xu Xin, "But when it's over it's history, and we need to keep going! Next conference in China!"

Of the two communities, Kaifeng represents the more legitimate cultural encounter between two great civilizations. The communities of the coast, despite their contributions to Chinese life, were too short-lived for any significant cross-cultural interaction. But one wonders what might have been had these later communities stayed. However, in the place of this conjecture, we have today a different, perhaps more fruitful endeavor. If, as Prof. Vera Schwarcz said, the torch was passed from the Kaifeng Jews to the Shanghai Jews, today the torch has been passed from them to scholars and activists from China, Japan, Israel, Australia, America, Great Britain and elsewhere, all working together not just to study the past, but to build bridges of understanding for the future.

THE CHINESE TERM FOR JEWS

by Albert E. Dien

Recently there has been a series of columns and letters to the editor in the newspaper Forward discussing the Chinese term for Jew and its associated meanings. The following remarks are offered here in the event that some readers of Points East are also interested in this topic. . .

The earliest attempt to deal with the word Jew seems to come from the seventh century, when a Christian text was translated into Chinese, and the term Juhud was transcribed by characters pronounced something like zhi-hu, now shi-hu, meaning "stone-hurry", obviously chosen for their sound, and not meaning. Later terms during the Mongol period, 13th-14th centuries, were a variety of characters pronounced zhu-hu or zhu-wu, also without reference to meaning. The inscription of 1489 in Kaifeng, by the Jews themselves, used the term Yi-si-le-ye for Israel, and the characters chosen can be read to mean "The One bestowed a joyful patrimony," obviously here chosen for meaning as well as for sound. The modern term for Israel is yi-se-lie, but the characters do not render much sense.

The modern term for Jew is you-tai, the you pronounced like "yo". This transcription seems to have been coined in the 14th or 15th centuries, and by now has become the standard one in use. The meanings of the characters are "like, as, still, similar" for the first and "very, much, greatest" for the second. The first character is written with the "dog" classifier*, and some have seen this as derogatory. Yet no literate Chinese looking at the character will think of the animal, any more than he would think of a sheep classifier when looking at the character mei "beautiful" used to write the name for America. You-tai by itself is an adjective, and, to indicate a person, one adds the word ren; for the country, one adds guo and for the religion, one adds jiao.

* A "classifier" is a partial character which is added to a particular character to distinguish that word from others with the same sound.

The basic meaning for you-tai is "Jew," but, in the column and letters to the Forward, it was reported that the term also means "miserly, cheap." This was not the original meaning of the term, that is to say, the word for "cheap, miserly" was not extended to mean Jew, but rather the opposite, the connotation being picked up by some Chinese from the West. Literate Chinese, after all, have read Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice." There is a certain cachet in some circles to being well-informed about the West, and stereotypes about Jews is a part of that baggage. However, while these Western ideas made some inroads, the Chinese have never gone so far as to become anti-Semitic. On the contrary, the Chinese are very proud that Jews in China, including the Kaifeng community, which has been there from at least the eleventh century, have never suffered from any persecution based on religious grounds. Chinese scholars who have written to the Sino-Judaic Institute for books have asked in particular for materials concerning anti-Semitism, which they have difficulty in understanding.

By far the strongest image in China about the Jews is that they are highly intelligent and shrewd in business, which are to the Chinese highly admirable traits. There is the belief that the Jews are largely powerful financiers, a part of those same Western stereotypes, and there is no doubt some element of self-interest at the governmental level in the recognition of Israel and the inducements which have been made to attract investments from that community. Still, what primarily seems to drive the interest in China concerning Jewish history and culture is the attempt to understand how this minority people was able to produce such towering figures as Einstein, Freud and Marx. These names are always mentioned in one breath. In a sense, China and the Jews share a common problem, only the scale being different. That is, how does one preserve one's identity in the face of Westernization and so-called modernization? It is a question which deserves study and mutual understanding, and it is one which far outweighs which Chinese characters are used to

Although he was an outspoken anti-Communist, the Chinese Institute of Foreign Affairs invited him to visit China and a date was set for the summer of 1956.

Learning of this planned visit, the then head of the Council for the Jewish Community in China, R.D. (Reubie) Abraham wrote to Marshall in June 1956 saying that he had heard a BBC broadcast from Shanghai announcing China's invitation. Abraham requested Marshall to urge the Chinese authorities to extend recognition to the young State of Israel and also to grant exit visas for all Jews in China who desired to leave for Israel.

While Marshall was in Peking (as it was then called), another approach was made to him by a British MP, C. Leslie Hale, who wrote requesting his support and intervention with the Chinese authorities on behalf of a small group of Jews in China who wanted to migrate to Israel. Abraham was of the opinion that there was pressure on China from Russia to make difficulties for Jews who were of Russian origin.

In China, Marshall met with Jews of Changshan, Harbin and Shanghai; and in the Shanghai he was welcomed by Abraham, whom he described as "stubbornly Orthodox, very intelligent, keen of eye and a reported authority on Chinese art."

Marshall visited the Shanghai Jewish Shelter at 642 Fushing Road, ate in the succa and wrote to his brother Meyer in Singapore that what impressed him was "the dignity of the tiny Jewish community in such distress."

Marshall met with Chiao Kuanhua, vice president of the Institute of Foreign Affairs in Peking, and raised the question of Jewish emigration to Israel. (As an aside, Marshall wrote to his brother that he also raised the question of imprisoned Catholic priests and American airmen.)

Shortly after meeting with the Jewish community in Shanghai, Marshall also spoke to the director of the Foreign Affairs Bureau, Liang Yu-Fan, who promised to help with the exit visas.

On October 9, 1956, Marshall met with Premier Chou En-lai in Peking.

Although the official protocol of that meeting makes no reference to the problem of Jews in China wishing to leave and especially for Israel, or the question of recognition of the Jewish State, Marshall maintained in private conversation that he had raised the question of Jews wanting to leave for Israel, as well as Chinese recognition of Israel.

According to Marshall, Chou was interested in the constitution of Singapore allowing for those of Chinese origin to return to China in their retirement, if they so wish. In response, Marshall said that there were Jews in China waiting to return to their ancient land, now the State of Israel, drawing a parallel between the Jewish and Chinese traditions of strong ties to a national homeland.

He claimed to have told Chou that China was not respecting that tradition by their refusal to allow Jews to return to Israel, in order to placate the Russians. Marshall recalled in a taped broadcast that Chou denied the accusation but agreed to look into the matter.

The former chief clerk of the Council of the Jewish Community in China, A.M. Begg, wrote to Marshall from Hong Kong in March 1957, saying that the situation in China had eased for both Jews and all Soviet citizens and "it is a generally accepted view that your personal intervention in Peking, at the time of your visit there, has been the decisive factor in breaking the impasse. All Jews who benefited from this change of policy are endlessly grateful to you." (Josef and Lynn Silverstein researched this topic in The China Quarterly of September 1975.)

Reubie Abraham told me this story in Hong Kong in 1961, adding his personal regret that while Marshall had succeeded in helping the Jews to leave China, he was not successful in overcoming Chou En-lai's reluctance to recognize Israel.

[Editor's Note: Malcolm Caplan resides in Jerusalem and was formerly director of the Hongkong and Whampoa Dock Company Limited, Hong Kong.]

BOOK NOOK

Someone Review These Books,
Please!

The Secret Lives of Trebitsch Lincoln, Bernard Wasserstein. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

In this biography, the author tells the story of Trebitsch Lincoln, one of the most bizarre figures of the 20th century. Born in Hungary to Jewish parents, he went on to become an Anglican curate, a British M.P., an American outlaw, a German spy, and finally a Buddhist abbot in Shanghai. Wow! Or should that be OY!?

Shanghai Sabbath: A Historical Tragicomedy in Four Acts.

Kurt Salomon Maier, with assistance from Kathryn Scuka, edited by Randall Barry. Arlington, VA: Russo Publishing, 1988.

EXERPTS FROM THE "FOREWORD" TO STRANGERS ALWAYS: A JEWISH FAMILY IN WARTIME SHANGHAI
by Rena Krasno. Berkeley: Pacific View Press, 1992. \$24.95

by Al Dien

. . . To recount the historical events which produced the city of Shanghai is to trace the history of China over the last century and a half. The Opium War, brought on by the Chinese attempt to stop the flow of opium into their country, was the pretext used by the Western nations to force the Chinese to open their ports to foreign trade. Part of the peace arrangements included the provision that certain areas of Shanghai were to be administered by the foreign powers — Chinese administration and law could not extend to those who lived within the borders of these extra-territorial enclaves. Foreign communities in China as far back as one can go had always been held responsible for their own administration, but they were accountable, through an appointed headman, to the Chinese government; such group responsibility did not differ in

principle from the way all of China was administered and, in effect, the *danwei* or units to which everyone in present-day China is attached is a continuation of just such a system. The Westerners (one includes here the Japanese), however, carried it much further, for they removed their enclaves, and the land these occupied, from the purview of the Chinese state, and in effect made of these extra-territorial colonies a kind of no-man's land. Even the Chinese who lived within these borders were protected from the reach of the Chinese authorities, and so these areas became a shelter for those who plotted against the state and a distribution point for seditious literature and movements . . .

Shanghai was only one of a number of ports open thus to settlements of foreigners but its size and location made it the most important. The variety and heterogeneity of its inhabitants may not have differed much from such cities as New York, but these people did not give their allegiances to the country in which they lived. Brought together thus, the society was an extremely complex one. Over the past years there have been many books written by sojourners there, but what we have lacked is the voice of those who lived in Shanghai during its heyday, those years before and during World War II. These are now beginning to appear — one thinks of Nien Cheng's recent *Life and Death in Shanghai* (London: Grafton Books, 1986) or Francizka Taussig's *Shanghai-Passage* (Vienna: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, c1987), and this is in good time, because when those survivors are gone, there will be no way of recapturing that sense of firsthand participation. It is thus our good fortune to have this record by Rena Krasno of her experiences under the Japanese occupation of Shanghai during the War.

I have had the pleasure during the last few years to have come to know Rena through our participation in the work of the Sino-Judaic Institute, of which she is in charge of the public relations. . . Since the years depicted in this book, she has lived in Japan, Korea, the Philippines and Israel, and

now, the United States, constantly expanding her horizons and linguistic accomplishments . . . Cast in the form of a diary of her experiences (because her account is based on such diaries), one finds here much that has the freshness of immediate experience, but also much more, for she is able to provide a much wider canvas on which to depict a time and a society which have disappeared forever. Rena belonged to only one portion of this multifaceted society, but she did not limit herself to that one community, and in her writing we can find an engrossing and evocative account of a wide array of peoples and experiences, and as we accompany her, and through her eyes, we can see that world for ourselves.

WHEN EAST MEETS WEST: A GROUND-BREAKING CONFERENCE STUDIES JEWISH DIASPORAS IN CHINA

by Anson Laytner

Never mind that there were more conferees than there are actual Jews in China; never mind that the communities under discussion are both extinct. The scholars and activists who gathered for a ground-breaking conference on the Jewish diasporas in China were as excited as a group of biologists who had discovered a new life form.

The reason for the excitement was not the subject matter per se but rather the gathering itself. For the first time in history, scholars and activists from China, Japan, Hong Kong, Australia, the United States, Great Britain, Israel and elsewhere were able to meet freely to discuss the obscure objects of their desire: the indigenous Jewish community of Kaifeng and the Western ones of Shanghai and Harbin.

The conference, held under the auspices of the Fairbanks Center for East Asian Studies at Harvard University in mid-August, was not only a sell-out but, according to conference organizer, Prof. Jonathan Goldstein, it could have sold out to more than twice

the 150 who did attend. In the weeks immediately preceding the conference, Goldstein was receiving fifteen to twenty calls a day from people the world over who were interested in attending the historic three day event.

Goldstein, a sinologist by training, got the idea for the conference when his studies in early Sino-American relations led him to discover the activities of three American Jewish traders who were active in Canton in the 1830's. Initially, Hebrew University was to be the site for the conference, but three years ago, with Israeli-Chinese relations still officially non-existent, it was easier for him to arrange matters from his home base at West Georgia College than to do so from Israel.

The fact that he is a Fairbanks Center research affiliate, coupled with the Widener Library's interest in displaying its Sino-Judaic artifacts collection for the first time, led to Harvard's selection as the conference site. A grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a small second grant from the Sino-Judaic Institute enabled scholars from China, Japan, Israel and Australia to attend.

It was the attendance of these scholars that set this conference apart. Unlike the conference held this past spring in Beijing by the World Jewish Congress, which featured prominent Jewish and Chinese scholars in private and largely symbolic discourse, the Harvard conference was open to the public on a first-come, first-serve basis and featured scholars who were coming together to cooperate on an equal footing to share insights on a common topic: the Jewish experience in China. As Zhao Xiang-ru, a descendant of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, observed, it was the first time that such a universal gathering had been held and he was thrilled to meet so many other people interested in the subject.

For many Westerners in attendance, hearing the Chinese and Japanese reports of their own activity in the field of Sino-Judaica made them realize that they were not alone in their *mishugas*. To offer but two examples: Prof. Xu Xin, of Nanjing University, announced that he and his team had finished translating a concise version of the *Encyclopedia Judaica* into

Chinese and that it was now at the publisher's, while a Japanese scholar urged the conferees not to ignore Japanese interest in Zionism, Jews and Judaism.

But the conference was not without controversy. Perhaps the most heat focused on accusations that the Israel Embassy in Beijing was cooperating with the Chinese government in denying the right of aliyah to a number of "Chinese Jewish" families which had requested it immediately following the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and China.

Even the terminology "Chinese Jew" is controversial. Halakhically, of course, there are no more "Chinese Jews." But unlike traditional Judaism, in China — as in Reform Judaism — nationality is determined patrilineally. The "Chinese Jews" or "Chinese of Jewish descent" claim Jewish nationality either through the mother or, more often, through the father.

What we now know is that there are at least 2,000 people who can claim "Jew" ("Yoe tai" in Chinese) as their nationality based on place of family origin in Kaifeng and their holding one of seven distinctive surnames. There are perhaps many others living throughout China, with Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Zhengdu, Kuangming, Xian, Lanzhou and Loyang being cited as additional locations.

According to oral histories taken in recent years by both American Jewish and Chinese scholars, many of the older generation have memories of their parents and grandparents observing quasi-Jewish customs, as do they themselves in some cases. Passover is the major festival, but its timing, after a thousand years, now coincides with the Chinese New Year in the early spring. Matza was and is eaten, and some recall the smearing of rooster or lamb blood — or cinnabar and water — on the doorposts of the house as late as the 1930's. The stone stele of 1489 mentions fasting four times a month and some remember fasting on Shabbat. They know about not eating pork (which is not to say they observe the injunction), extracting the sinew, and circumcision.

But these vestiges of observance are less important than the fact that they know their history and lineage,

that they are a distinctive minority with a specific ethnic and historical affiliation, and that it is important to pass this knowledge along to the next generation. The Han Chinese call their Jews the blue-capped Hui to distinguish them from the much larger Chinese Muslim community which is called the white-capped Hui. In fact, many Chinese Jews sought theological refuge in Islam once their own communal and religious institutions died. After all, from a Confucian/Buddhist Chinese perspective, how different are Judaism and Islam? Goyim is goyim.

Today many Chinese Jews voluntarily write "Jew" as their nationality on their official "Certificate of Residency." From the very beginning of its rule, the Communist regime has granted them quasi-official standing as a national minority, although it remains unclear whether they now have full national minority status. Some Chinese Jews, like Prof. Jin, have "discovered their roots" and written about their heritage in popular Chinese magazines. Others, like Prof. Zhao, have combined personal odyssey with academic study.

Still others, particularly those who have remained in Kaifeng, have worked to create a museum of their artifacts and striven to build a synagogue/cultural center/memorial hall on the site of their ancient synagogue. With the help of Western Jews, the cooperation of the Kaifeng city officials and the encouragement of a growing cadre of Chinese scholars, these latter goals are on their way to becoming a reality. Since the mid 1980's, organizations like our California-based Sino-Judaic Institute and the Hong Kong Jewish Historical Society have been working closely with a multitude of Chinese scholars who in turn have created a plethora of philo-Jewish and philo-Israel organizations of their own. The quantity of their publications on various aspects of Israel, Jews and Judaism is astounding, especially considering that until 1978 — and even until the establishment of Chinese-Israeli ties — these topics were politically incorrect.

But the issue of a Chinese Jewish aliyah could upset this growing collaboration, not to mention the newly

established relations between China and Israel. Are the "Chinese Jews" really Jews? Should they be considered so given their unique historical situation? Do they really identify as Jews or are they only seeking to emigrate for economic reason? Are they different from many of the Jews from the former Soviet Union who have made aliyah or the Falas Mora of Ethiopia who wish to do so? And how many actually want to leave? These questions will have to be answered by authorities in Jerusalem and Beijing — if and only if the topic comes up for discussion.

In the meantime, however, this was a side issue to discussions of Jewish-Chinese acculturation and accommodation; of comparisons between the Jewish and Neo-Confucian traditions and similarities between what the Chinese Jews had done, what the German Jews had done with Hegel or American Jews still do with the Constitution. Most intriguing was a suggestion from the floor that perhaps the Chinese Jews' exclusive reliance on Hebrew and their failure to translate either the Torah or various prayers into Chinese led to their quick decline once they lost the ability to teach the Hebrew language.

The first part of the conference focused on the indigenous Chinese-Jewish community of Kiefeng. The second half of the conference dwelt on the "Sephardic" and Ashkenazic settlements in China of the 19th and 20th centuries: the Baghdadi Jews who followed Britain's empire, first into India and later into China; the Russian Jews who came as the Russians built their railroad to Harbin and who were later joined by refugees fleeing the Russian Civil War and the Bolshevik Revolution; and lastly, by the thousands of European Jews seeking refuge from the Nazi onslaught.

Here too tempers flared more than once, for what is mere history to some is still alive for others and intensely symbolic for still more. Were the great Baghdadi Jewish families guilty for engaging in the opium trade? Some said, "No, because it was legal." "Yes," was the reply, "but was it moral?" "And by whose laws?" asked a third. "The British imperial system's or the