

中國-猶太學院

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- 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 Kaifeng Municipal Museum.
- 4) To promote and assist the study and research of the history of early Jewish travel in China and in the rise and fall of the various Jewish communities that were established in China over the past millennia.
- 5) To publish general information and scholarly materials dealing with all aspects of the Chinese-Jewish experience.
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Points East

中國-猶太學院

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IN CHINA, JEWISH STUDIES BLOSSOM

by Paul Mooney
excerpted from *The Chronicle of Higher Education*,
11 August 2006

Jinan, China: It's a Friday night in the capital of the eastern coastal province of Shandong, and a group of several dozen young Chinese university students gather for dinner at an apartment just a few blocks away from the campus of Shandong University.

Save for some hummus, the dining table is weighed down with Chinese food. But this is not your typical Friday-night meal in China.

First, the gathered students bow in prayer, covering their faces with their hands as candles are lit. Then, led by Mr. Avrum Ehrlich, a former rabbi and now a professor of Judaic studies in the School of Philosophy and Social Studies at Shandong University, the group sings songs and recites prayers together as several participants crane their necks to read the Hebrew script in shared books. The male students wear yarmulkes. One even wears a T-shirt emblazoned with a large blue Star of David.

Mr. Ehrlich finishes the ritual blessings over the wine and the bread, and offers a toast. At last the students take their seats and begin to eat, as the room fills with animated conversation.

All but two of the guests at this weekly celebration of the Jewish Sabbath in Mr. Ehrlich's apartment are Chinese students of Judaism at Shandong University. Mr. Ehrlich, a 37-year-old professor from Australia, is one of the first foreign academics to teach Hebrew Bible, Talmudic thought, and the Kabbalah in China. His ambitious plan is to put this sleepy provincial university on the map as an international center of Judaic studies.

Part of Mr. Ehrlich's pedagogy is to immerse his students in rituals central to Judaism. Thus he holds this weekly gathering at his apartment — complete with chopsticks. "It's sort of a fusion Chinese Shabbat," he quips.

Pop into any of the classrooms in the building that houses the School of Philosophy and Social Studies on Shandong's tree-shaded campus and you are likely to see students reading the Bible in Hebrew, conjugating Hebrew verbs, thumbing through the Talmud — a centuries-old collection of Jewish law and commentary — or debating the similarities between Judaism and Confucianism.

The enthusiasm for studying Judaism expressed by Mr. Ehrlich's students reflects a growing interest in that religion elsewhere in

(continued on page 4)

AN ISRAELI VISITS KAIFENG

by Gavriel Cohen

My name is Gavriel. I am 23 years old from Tel Aviv, Israel. After finishing a 3 year army service I decided, as is fairly popular among young Israelis upon finishing their army service, to go traveling for a few months. I decided to travel to the Far East, choosing China as my primary destination. It's a complicated and interesting country, possibly now more than ever, and I ended up spending over 5 months traveling there.

I started my travels in Beijing, where I landed in mid-November. About a week later, on a day train to the city of Datong, an important historical Buddhist center, I decided to go to Kaifeng, which I knew to be the ancient capital of China and the home of China's oldest Jewish community.

Having not prepared for this, having no real knowledge about the city, I spent quite some time trying to find out as much information as possible. I read a couple of guidebooks, which were helpful in information about the city itself — tourist sites, accommodation, etc. — and which had very little information about the Jewish history there. I remembered having read an article or two and having watched a TV program or two about the subject in the past, but I had only a vague recollection of those. I thus turned to the internet. The net proved itself, as always, to be a good source for information. Some of the sites I found were actually promotional sites — some for books, some for companies arranging Jewish history tours in China. Of all the sites containing a good historical background on the subject, two noteworthy ones are those of the Sino-Judaic institute (<http://www.sino-judaic.org>) and Beit Hatfutsot (<http://www.bh.org.il>). Each of these websites contained an interesting in-depth account of the city's Jewish history.

I thus arrived in Kaifeng in late November of 2005 with some knowledge about the city's Jewish and other history. I was, however, faced with a question that seemed almost impossible to answer — I had some knowledge about the Jewish history in the city and about the city itself, but absolutely no clue about real Jewish life in modern day Kaifeng. How do I begin exploring this in a place where I don't speak the local language and don't know anyone who can help me?

I contacted Rabbi Anson Laytner of the SJI through the institution's website. He replied quickly, providing me with the details of his contact — Prof. Zhang Qianlong, head of the Institute of Jewish studies at Henan University. I tried to contact her and kept looking for something that could help me find

(continued on page 6)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Featured Articles:

In China, Jewish Studies Blossom ... 1

An Israeli Visits Kaifeng 1

From The Editor 2

In the Field 3

Articles:

Arab, Jew, Chinese 10

Won Ton or Kreplach? 11

East Meets Kvetch 12

Jewish Publications at
Shandong University 13

Sasson Jacoby, 88 13

Book Nook 14

FROM THE EDITOR

One of the traditional customs associated with the Jewish New Year is to go to the bank of a river or lake and symbolically purge oneself of accumulated sins by emptying one's pockets of some bread crumbs and casting them into the water. This is called "tashlich" in Hebrew, from the verb "to cast out."

In a similar way, I have accumulated an odd assortment of articles over the past year all having to do with different aspects of Jewish identity as it intersects with various Asian identities. Now, just as we begin the new year, I take these articles out of my folder and cast them upon you, our readers, our water—and thus I am purged of...well the analogy only goes so far.

One unexpected treat that happened to appear just at the right time is Gavriel Cohen's featured article on his trip to Kaifeng about a year ago. It is well-written and comprehensive; a fascinating read.

Shana tova—a good and sweet, healthy and happy new year to you all!

Anson Laytner

"The Jews of Kaifeng"

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Community

The Sino-Judaic Institute's exhibit
is a hit wherever it goes!

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relations bridge between Jews and
Asians ♦ Unique programming
and public relations
opportunities for all age groups ♦
Complementary materials and
speakers available ♦ Affordable ♦
Easy to install

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Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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Points East

Prof. Xu's propensity to treat the historicity of *The Travels of Marco Polo vis-à-vis* the Jews of thirteenth-century China as evidence of the highest order...

The second error is that Xu seems to be unaware that the authenticity of the authorship of a universally accepted primary source concerning the Kaifeng Jews, and perhaps some of the true author's comments, have been challenged several times in publications written in 1975 and later... On the whole, when Xu recounts historical data he has derived from the literature, his efforts often turn out to be skimpy and in many instances not as carefully recorded as they might have been. When, on the other hand, he discusses the information he has obtained directly from the remnants of the old Kaifeng *kehillah* and sorts out and groups much of this information under distinctive headings, he is well worth reading. This is also true when he introduces us to data and points of view he has encountered in the growing Chinese-written Judaica literature, much of which is not readily available to Western readers.

I should add that Xu's paper, "Chinese Policy Towards Judaism," presented at the international symposium "Youtai—Presence and Perception of Jews and Judaism" that took place at the Germersheim branch of the Johannes Gutenberg University on September 19–23, 2003, deals *inter alia* with the unsuccessful efforts made in 1953 by the descendants of the Kaifeng Jews to persuade the government of China to grant them official recognition as one of the country's several dozen minorities and to be included thereby in the affirmative action policies accorded to such minorities. I have read a draft copy of this paper and consider it a superior piece of work that will surely merit reading when the documents submitted to the Germersheim seminar are published in book form.

Taiheyo Senso to Shanghai no Yudaya
nanmin

(The Pacific War and the Jewish Refugees in Shanghai) by Maruyama Naoki Hosei Daigaku, 2005, 216x155mm. 312 pp. Yen 5,800. ISBN 4-588-37703-5 reviewed by Rena Krasno

During the first week of September, Professor Albert Dien and I had the great pleasure of meeting Prof. Maruyama Naoki of the Faculty of Law of Meiji Gakuin University (Tokyo). We took this opportunity to invite Professor Maruyama to visit the

archives of the Hoover Institute. Ron Bulatoff, who is responsible for the China section, very kindly took much time off his busy schedule to warmly welcome our visitor, help him register at the archives, and have access to the Sino-Judaic files, as well as other files in the Hoover China Catalogue.

The Pacific War and The Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, examines the formation of the Jewish Community in Shanghai after Great Britain's victory in the Opium War resulting in Shanghai's status as a Treaty Port... The first Jewish settlers, who arrived after the signing of the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, were Middle Eastern Jews and White Russian Jews who had escaped from anti-Semitism in Europe and in Iraq.

The author depicts the approximately century old history of the Jews in Shanghai until the Communist takeover of the city in 1949. He describes how the European Jewish refugees sought refuge and new lives in other countries.

Professor Maruyama's interest in international relations centers on the Middle East in general, and Shanghai in particular. Long after the Pacific War ended, he personally met Laura Margolies, the Joint Distribution Committee representative in Shanghai before and during the Japanese occupation, and was very much impressed by her dedication to helping Jewish refugees who had escaped from Nazism. Throughout, Laura Margolies had managed to maintain a working relationship with the Japanese occupying forces in Shanghai. She has since passed away at an advanced old age and Prof. Maruyama is writing a book on her life and work.

According to Prof. Maruyama, although a member of the Axis powers, Japan had never persecuted Jews. In fact, Japan did not close its doors to Jewish refugees and treated them decently when they arrived in Japan. 20,000 finally resettled in Shanghai. After Pearl Harbor when the Japanese occupied Shanghai, the Jewish refugees became part of their responsibility. It was a new experience for Japan, but it should be emphasized that although they were Germany's allies, they never applied the Nazi policy of exterminating Jews.

This outstanding book helps Japanese today understand the desperate situation of Jews at the time that Hitler pushed forward 'the Final Solution' to rid Europe of all Jews in the empire he hoped to found. Prof. Maruyama kindly donated a copy of his book to the Sino-Judaic Institute Library.

Unfortunately, at present, Prof. Maruyama's book is available only in Japanese.

Shanghai Legacy

by Marion Cuba

US \$14.95

reviewed by A. James Rudin
excerpted from the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, 17 July 2006

While stationed as an Air Force chaplain in Japan and Korea in the 1960s, I met some of Shanghai's Jews who were then living in Tokyo. They praised the Japanese for rejecting [Gestapo agent] Meisinger's murderous request [to carry out the "Final Solution" on Jews living under Japanese control in Shanghai and other Asian cities]. They also lauded the heroic work of Chiune Sugihara, Japan's World War II consul in Lithuania...

These little-known chapters in history are vividly captured in Marion Cuba's recently published novel, "Shanghai Legacy." It is a compelling multigenerational family saga that skillfully moves between World War II Shanghai and contemporary New York City.

"Shanghai Legacy" is the story of Hannah, a psychologically rigid and emotionally bitter German Jewish girl who spent eight years in Shanghai, where both her parents died. At war's end, young Hannah and her husband, also a Shanghai Jew, move to the United States and begin a new life. In the novel, Maya, their American-born daughter, discovers many painful family secrets after her mother's death.

Cuba superbly re-creates wartime Shanghai when Maya discovers Hannah's long-hidden diaries. Because Cuba's carefully researched novel draws on source material from the period, her book is more than the usual mother-daughter story of love, loss, rejection and reconciliation. Nor is it just another Holocaust memoir. Instead, "Shanghai Legacy" tells a gripping story that holds the reader's attention while conveying important historical information.

Shanghai Legacy is published by booklocker.com and available at amazon.com and barnesandnoble.com, as well as booklockler.com, or by special order at any bookstore. ISBN 1-59113-809-4. For more information go to www.shanghailegacy.com.

SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	211
China	15
Israel	14
Canada	10
England	9
Hong Kong	6
Australia	3
Japan	3
France	1
Germany	1
Indonesia	1
South Africa	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	1
TOTAL:	277

had also edited the China English Bulletin for immigrants from that country. Healthy throughout his long and fruitful life, he died at 88 and was buried in his beloved Jerusalem.

Professor Zhang Yidong Visits the Hoover Institution

by Rena Krasno

Early this summer, I received an email from Professor Zhang Yidong, and could not fail but to respond warmly to its contents. He wrote:

Dear Ms. Rena Krasno:

With interest I read the material "Jewish Studies in China". Early in the 1950's, when I wrote my dissertation "The Great Geographical Discoveries and China", I had connected history between China and the West beginning from the earliest time. I knew that in the early years of the Han Dynasty, Jews came to China and some of them settled in Kaifeng – Henan Province (i.e. almost two thousand years ago, not 700 years). In the ex-Soviet Union and

the U.S., I also met some Jews. My impression is that they all are able and erudite persons. I think the rise of Jewish study in China is a very good thing. It will be a favor for modernization of China as well as enrichment of spiritual life of Chinese people. I am waiting for our meeting on 22 September.

With best wishes!
Sincerely Yours,
Zhang Yidong

Thus when Prof. Zhang arrived in the U.S., I invited him on September 22 to visit the Hoover Institution Archives, as I had promised.

At the age of 17, Prof. Zhang entered Beijing University (History Department). In August 1951, he was selected as a student to be sent to the U.S.S.R, where he continued his studies in history at the Leningrad University. There, he completed his dissertation "The Great Geographical Discoveries and China" in 1956. This dissertation was so well received that Leningrad University admitted him to three further years of postgraduate work. The results were evaluated in his diploma

as "excellent".

During the Cultural Revolution, Prof. Zhang, like many other Chinese intellectuals, encountered political problems, but in 1986-1987 he resumed his studies at the Nanjing University - John Hopkins University Centre for Chinese and American Studies in Nanking. Since then he has led a very active academic life, publishing numerous highly praised articles in well recognized academic publications.

At our visit to the Hoover Institution, we were - as usual - very cordially and efficiently received by Ron Bulatoff who had prepared a small exhibit of some of the Sino-Judaic collection (which keeps expanding) in a small room off the library. He also kindly gave Prof. Zhang a copy of the August 2006 Hoover Institution Archives Holdings on China.

Prof. Zhang has just concluded a historical-autobiographical book "On Both Sides of Fuyou Street". It includes two volumes and 22 chapters. When the book is published we hope to review it in the Book Nook section of *Points East*.

BOOK NOOK

The Jews of Kaifeng, China: History, Culture, and Religion, by Xu Xin. Jersey City, N.J.: KTAV Publishing House, 2003. 193 pp., US \$29.50

reviewed by Michael Pollak

excerpted from *Shofar, an Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 23:3, Spring 2005

In the preface to this work, Xu Xin, Professor of the History of Jewish Culture at Nanjing University, asserts quite correctly that a great deal of what "has been written about the Jews of China is fantasy, much is polemic, and much is, at best, pseudo-history." What is puzzling, however, is that he promptly follows this statement with the claim that "little if any attention has been paid to charting the life of the Kaifeng community from a historical standpoint," and caps this with a sentence reading, "This study undertakes to fill the gap."

The problem here is that the publication in 1966 of the second edition of Bishop William Charles White's 1942 *Chinese*

Jews, together with the appearances in the first half of the 1970s of works by Hyman Kublin and Donald Daniel Leslie, sufficiently awakened the dormant interest in the history of the Jewish people of dynastic China to encourage the writing of at least two dozen additional books on the subject, as well as a hundred or two pertinent academic studies. Accordingly, Prof. Xu's complaint that there has been no more than a sketchy interest in investigating and writing "from a historical standpoint" about the way of life of the forty or more generations of Jews who made their homes in the Chinese Empire must be judged as greatly exaggerated. Although this large outpouring of print concerning the saga of these far-flung members of the Judaic Diaspora varies greatly in quality and reliability, I submit that much of it has already succeeded in attaining the goal that Prof. Xu aspires to in the writing of his book. In fact, the knowledgeable reader will quickly discover that Xu repeatedly cites and paraphrases portions of the texts in the existing literature as he compiles his own work on the subject.

This is not to say that Xu has failed to provide any worthwhile or innovative data and interpretations that have hitherto been unknown to other historians in the field of Sino-Judaica... Given his extensive exposure to both the Chinese and Jewish aspects of the subject he was exploring, it is therefore discouraging to note that he appears to be unfamiliar with much of the relatively recent additions to the literature of Sino-Judaica, and that he is inadvertently guilty of making a series of errors of omission and commission in a work that is in many ways deserving of commendation. These errors, for the most part of minor significance, may understandably cause the reader to wonder how much confidence to place in those pages of the text containing materials that are entirely new to him.

Space restrictions make it impractical to list herein more than two specimens of the numerous scholarly lapses I have found in Xu's book.

The first of the errors I am noting here is

IN THE FIELD

• Xu Xin Announces Jewish Tour of China

Prof. Xu Xin is pleased to announce that he will be the "accompanying expert" on a tour of JEWISH CHINA, June 27th – July 12th 2007. This once-in-a-lifetime experience will also benefit his Institute for Jewish Studies at Nanjing University. The tour will include: Shabbat with Beijing Jewish Community and an in-depth tour of Beijing; Harbin, an important Jewish center for 50 years; Kaifeng, the historical city where Jews settled 1,000 years ago; Xian, home of China's great archeological wonder "The Terra Cotta Army", a 3-day cruise on the Yangtse River Three Gorges; and, of course, Shanghai, China's 21st century city and home to 20,000 Jews in WWII. For complete information: www.jewishchina.com or call David Welsh at 818.222.4447 (USA). The tour limited to a maximum of 20 travelers.

• New Jewish Center Opens in Shanghai

The Shanghai Jewish Center located in the very heart of Pudong, where many foreigners reside, was officially inaugurated on June 11, 2006. This important event in the life of the small Shanghai Jewish Community was the result of the unfailing efforts of Rabbi Shalom and Mrs. Dina Greenberg (Chabad) who arrived in Shanghai in 1998.



The new Center is a 4-story building, some 8,000 sq. ft. in an area which is, according to Rabbi Greenberg, "suitable for the needs of the Jewish people living, working, touring and doing business in Shanghai." The first floor is occupied by a synagogue, the second by a kosher restaurant and a social hall. The remaining space has been dedicated to a school.

The most celebrated guest at the *chanukat habayit* (dedication) of the

new Jewish facility was Rabbi Shlomo Amar, the Chief Rabbi of Israel, *Rishon L'tzion*, who had just arrived in Shanghai. Rabbi Amar led prayers at the site of a synagogue built in 1920 and called on China to officially recognize Judaism as a religion.

Villa #1, Shang-Mira Garden
1720 Hong Qiao Road
Shanghai, 200336 China
Phone: (86 21) 6278 0225
Fax: (86 21) 6278 0223 *
Info@chinajewish.org

• Bnei Menashe Coming to Israel

A group of 218 Bnei Menashe, a people from a remote mountainous corner of northeastern India who claim descent from one of the lost biblical tribes, will be immigrating to Israel as recognized Jews for the first time. Last year Israel's Sephardi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar declared Bnei Menashe "descendants of the Jewish people."

To date, many of the some 1,000 members of the community – who arrived in the country as tourists and later converted to Judaism and became citizens – live in West Bank settlements. The decision to place them predominately in settlements has drawn criticism.

Their advocates say the move was not a political but a practical decision. They say the settlements were among the only communities in the country willing to financially help the Bnei Menashe who arrived in Israel and had to spend their first year studying for conversion, without much time to hold down jobs.

The group that is scheduled to arrive in November will be living for the first year in absorption centers in the northern towns of Carmiel and Nazareth Ilit. The Jewish Agency will be facilitating their absorption into Israel.

• Rena Krasno Hard at Work at 21+

"I am extremely busy rereading the entire long ms. of "Shanghai Struggle - the Historic Journals of Fred Marcus - 1939-1949. I must admit I am really happy about it. Audrey is coming here at the beginning of October and we will finalize everything and... hope to find a suitable publisher.

My children's book in Chinese about Kaifeng will soon be published. The Taiwan publisher likes it very much and they got a very good artist from the mainland to illustrate it."

In her spare time, Rena finds and translates material for *Points East*, lectures, gives tours for SJI at the Hoover Institute. Says Rena: "I am lucky to be constantly excited about something at my ancient age!!! But... when will I ever rest???"

• When in London

Albert Cheung, a young Chinese-Canadian from Toronto, has sent us information about a British Kosher Oriental restaurant has a website that describes the story of the Kaifeng Jews. "It is very well-written and well-researched, and I think **The New Kaifeng** has done a great job of educating and informing British Jews about the Kaifeng Jews. Here is the link to the web page devoted to the Kaifeng Jews that is on the restaurant's website: <http://www.kaifeng.co.uk/jewsofkaifeng/index.html>." The New Kaifeng also caters simchas and has take-out.

• Change Comes to Delhi

Judah Hyam - Delhi's only synagogue - has just turned 50. Today, the synagogue has just 25 worshippers - descendants of the Bene-Israel tribe that arrived in Mumbai 2000 years ago.

Delhi's Jewish community may be a small one, but it says that makes it easier to modernize traditions like giving women a larger role in religious rituals. "If I want Judaism to survive in India, I must shed all the religious beliefs which are not practical in today's world. So women are included in the minyan, a congregation of 10 righteous men that is required to read torah," said Ezekiel I Malekar, Rabbi. "My daughter was the first one to step on the platform, where sacred text was read and after that there have been many girls participating," said Sharon Lowen, community member.

As the community gets ready to celebrate Rosh HaShannah, it reveals its next goal, which is to have a woman serve as the next Rabbi of the synagogue. They expect a tough fight, but the group says it sticks together and that's half the battle won.

In China, Jewish Studies Blossom (continued from page 1)

China as well, both in academe and in popular culture. Along with Shandong, 10 other Chinese universities now offer courses in Jewish studies.

Although Judaism is not one of China's five officially recognized opiates of the masses, as Lenin described organized religion — Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestantism, and Roman Catholicism — the study of its history, ritual, cultural influence, and language is on the rise here.

Buried Roots, New Shoots

...the country does have a long and rich history of contact with, and interest in, Jews and Judaism. A small Jewish community thrived in the city of Kaifeng [and] in the early 20th century, Chinese intellectuals, who were keen to see China modernize, looked to the Jewish experience for inspiration. In the 1920s, Yiddish literature provided an example for the development of vernacular Chinese. And Sun Yat-sen, father of the Chinese Republican revolution, praised the Zionist movement as a model for popular independence. During World War II, Shanghai, Harbin, and Tianjin served as refuges for thousands of Jews who fled into China from Europe.

The political and cultural reopening of China in the late 1970s opened the gates for the study of religion in general, and Judaism in particular, at many universities, such as the one in Jinan. But one of the most prominent Chinese scholars of Judaism says he stumbled into the field by accident.

Xu Xin, 56, director of the Center for Jewish Studies at Nanjing University, was a Red Guard during the disastrous Cultural Revolution (1966-76). He was in high school when the Cultural Revolution began, and at the age of 18 was sent to the countryside to work for two years. He entered Nanjing University in 1973 as a worker-peasant-soldier and graduated three years later. As academic life returned to normal, Mr. Xu focused his attention on post-World War II American literature.

He was particularly attracted to American Jewish writers — especially after Saul Bellow won the 1976 Nobel Prize in Literature. "I never thought I'd focus on Jewish literature," says Mr. Xu. "There were a

hundred Chinese professors doing Bellow, Malamud, Roth, and Singer, and I was just doing a small bit."

The Jewish Observances

But in order to understand those writers, Mr. Xu says, he realized that he would have to learn more about Jewish culture. So he dug into Jewish studies, taking off in 1986 to live with a Jewish family in the United States.

He knew nothing about Jews at the time. He thought Hebrew was a dead language. Mr. Xu had not even met a Jew until 1985, when an American professor, James Friend, turned up at Nanjing to teach English literature for six months. The two scholars hit it off, and Mr. Xu was invited to teach for two years at Chicago State University, where Mr. Friend was chairman of the English department. During the first year, Mr. Xu lived with the Friend family, at their home in Lincolnwood, Ill.

During his first week in the United States, he attended a bat mitzvah. He then worked his way through the Jewish calendar, observing Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Passover, and other Jewish holidays with friends and relatives of the Friends. When Mr. Friend died of a heart attack, in 1987, Mr. Xu attended a Jewish funeral as well.

The journey had a major impact on him. "When you live with someone every day for a year, you see their life and way of thinking," he says. "I lived with a Jewish family and went through all the traditions and rites. I felt the traditional Jewish way of thinking and philosophy could provide many valuable lessons for China."

For instance, he recalls learning the Jewish concept of *tzedaka*, or charity and justice for those in need. Jewish law commands Jews to give *tzedaka* according to their ability. Charity is a concept that is basically alien to most Chinese, says Mr. Xu. He tells of his surprise when Jewish friends readily donated money to some worthy cause. "They were middle class," he says, "and I asked them why."

He also marveled at Jewish friends who regularly read the Talmud and the Torah "just for the love of learning," comparing them with Chinese colleagues, who, he says, learn just to pass exams or get better jobs. "How many Chinese scholars read Confucian classics every day?" he asks.

Points East

At the end of his trip abroad from China, he jumped at the chance to go to Israel. "My visit to Israel was just 10 days," he recalls, "but it shook me." Among Chinese people, he says, Israel is usually thought of as a war-torn country, but he was surprised by its modernity. Before heading home, he went to a bookstore and spent his remaining money on books about Judaism. "I didn't buy my wife a gift," he says, laughing. "I just bought books."

Finding Structure

Upon returning to Nanjing, in 1989, as chairman of the English department, Mr. Xu set up the China Judaic Studies Association with the help of prominent American Jews. He met like-minded Chinese scholars who had studied in Europe and exchanged ideas with them. "We had a saying," he says. "Without an understanding of the Jews, you can't understand the Western world."

In 1992 he established the Jewish-studies center at Nanjing, the first of its kind in China. Since then Mr. Xu has studied the Talmud at Hebrew Union College, in Cincinnati, Yiddish at Columbia University, and Hebrew again at the Ulpan Akiva, or Hebrew school, in Netanya, Israel. He has also done two stints at the Center for Judaic Studies at Harvard University, and has compiled a lengthy CV of scholarly works in English and Chinese, including monographs, scholarly articles, and translations. Most impressive among them is his work on the translation of an abridged version of the *Encyclopedia Judaica*, with 800-plus pages and more than 1,600 entries.

Some 300 undergraduates at Nanjing enroll each year in "Jewish Culture and World Civilization," an elective course. Although only a handful of students are in the Jewish-studies center's graduate and Ph.D. programs, Mr. Xu says he has more students applying than he can accept. "My students are excited because they've never heard these things before," he says. "They never thought they could view life in this way." Each year one Ph.D. candidate goes to Israel to study Hebrew.

The center, which is run out of a small space on the Nanjing campus, is scheduled to move in November to the Glazer Center for Judaic Studies, which was built with donations from American and British Jews. The new building will provide

Points East

forced to engage in a dialogue of actions.

There is a huge space between the pastor and me that was never joined, but we made great use of our shared chasm. Rather than engage in a doubtless misunderstood shouting match from opposite sides of the gap, we simply chose to scale the lip and meet across the kitchen table for tea after church. Over our post-service snack, Pastor Lee and I discussed the most innocuous and easily translatable aspects of the Old Testament, never veering toward the murky terrain just beyond Deuteronomy's border. Through these stunted and uninspiring chats, I felt the full weight of ritual's value. Our differences absolutely did set us apart, but it was our mutual willingness to meet somewhere beyond our divide and participate in a common experience that made our relationship all the more intimate. With a little work and a lot of food the Lees and I found the great expanse of heaven, right inside our tiny house.

Jewish Publications at Shandong University

by Al Dien

The Center for Judaic and Inter-religious Studies, Shandong University, under the direction of Prof. Fu Youde, has an active and impressive publishing program. One example of this is a work by Prof. Fu entitled *Xiandai Youtai zhexue* (Modern Jewish Philosophy), Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 1999, 322 pp., in which he surveys the work of Herman Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Leo Baeck, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Mordecai M. Kaplan. The bibliography of 25 items includes such works as Buber's *Between Man and Man* and *On Judaism*, and Heschel's *Who is Man?* and *God in Search of Man*. This is to say that not only did he consult Julius Guttman's *Philosophies of Judaism: The History of Jewish Philosophy from Biblical Times to Franz Rosenzweig*, but he read the primary books written by these philosophers. The contrast between this study by Prof. Fu and the glib popularizations that one finds in the bookstores in China cannot be greater.

Another important contribution to Chinese scholarship on Judaism is his Center's *Youtai yanjiu* (The Journal of Jewish Studies), vol. 1 (2002) 309 pp., vol. 2 (2003), 262 pp., and vol. 3 (2004) 353 pp. The articles are in Chinese and there are En-

glish abstracts of the major articles. The articles are arranged under a number of topics such as Jewish Religion and Philosophy, Jewish People and the State of Israel, On Anti-Semitism, Jewish History, Torah and Laws, and Jewish Ethics. Picking some at random, they range from "Influences of the Idea of God on the Ethics of Judaism," by Tai Ming, an MA student at the Institute, "Holocaust Narrative in Israel after the Eichmann Trial," by Zhong Zhiqing, PhD candidate at Ben Gurion University, Israel, and "Introduction to Abraham Joshua Heschel's Thought of Philosophy of Judaism," by Liu Ping, PhD., of the Philosophy Department, Fudan University, Shanghai. Vol. 3, pp. 347-53 added a bibliography of Jewish-related articles and books published in China in 2003. These numbered five books and sixty articles, of which only fourteen were in vol. 2 of this series.

Out of curiosity I tabulated the affiliations of the authors represented in these three volumes. Of the 39 contributors represented (some wrote more than one article), nine were connected with the Center, and another nine were in other departments of Shandong University. Other institutions represented include the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing (4), Beijing University, Fudan University in Shanghai, Nanjing University Prof. Xu Xin has written two articles), Wuhan University, Henan University in Kaifeng, and Yunnan University. Prof. Ephraim Kleiman of Hebrew University contributed an article as did a member of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences who is currently studying in the Hebrew Literature Department of Ben Gurion University. The ranks of the contributors ranged from professors (9) and researchers (3) to lecturers, equivalent assistant professors (4), to PhD candidates (5) and MA candidates (4). It is clear that there is a surprisingly widespread interest in the subject of Jews and Judaism in the Chinese academic community that has found a voice in the publication of this journal.

Sasson Jacoby, 88; Jerusalem Post Foreign Editor, China Expert

by Alexander Zvielli
reprinted from the *Jerusalem Post* (n.d.)

For over 30 years (1952-1982) Sasson Jacoby popularly known as 'Sas' was

an integral part of the Post editorial team. He started out as a reporter, but his wide scope of interests and an excellent knowledge of the Near and Far East earned him the prestigious foreign editor's position. His regular feature "The World Scene" appeared weekly for more than a decade. He was part of a select group of experts who could correctly analyze political trends in Far Eastern nations, whose actions were indirectly bound to the fate of Israel.

In an article published in 1976, Sas commented that all the learned Sinologists had made a multiplicity of utterly wrong predictions following the death of Chinese premier Chou en Lai. The time had come, he wrote, to answer the question: Where does China's army stand in the correct power conflict? Sas correctly analyzed the Chinese leadership's internal struggle, winning the respect and admiration of an entire army of local and foreign correspondents stationed in Israel.

Sas, the scion of a prominent Baghdadi family, was born in 1918 in Shanghai. His father was rabbi of the Jewish congregation there. Sas eventually settled in Israel, together with a huge number of other Iraqi immigrant families, many of whom found work and a future in various functions at the Post. At the time of his arrival, he served in Mahal. The Post was in the process of rapid expansion from its War of Independence limit of two pages daily and four on weekends to a full-sized 16- or 24-page daily. Sas helped provide the content to fill those extra pages. As foreign editor he fulfilled Gershon Agron's desire to lift the Post from a local newspaper to the level of an international tribune.

An expert on international affairs, Sas was perhaps the sole member of the Post's staff who was both an expert on Chinese culture and on the multitude of UN and other worldwide organizations. His articles were highly informative; foreign policy decision makers were said to take his view into account in formulating Jerusalem's positions.

A fearless critic of duplicity in international affairs, Sas was never shy about presenting his own, however unpopular, view on matters of the day. He

East Meets Kvetch: A J.A.P. in South Korea

by Anne Gray Fischer

[Anne Fischer is on a Fulbright work/study program in South Korea.]

The proof is in the pulgolggi: stripped of our silly cultural distinctions, we're really just people who want to love and be loved, to feel fulfilled and comfortable in our own skin, and to enjoy this seemingly arbitrary chunk of time we've found ourselves in. What should it matter if you shower once a week and I shower once a day? Or if you peel the skin off your produce and I eat it with the skin on? Or if you believe Jesus Christ died for our sins and I don't? At least, this is what I hoped my new host family would think when I first heard the news that I, a Los Angeles Jew, would spend the next eternity (otherwise known as ten months) with a Methodist pastor and his family...

The Lees and I lived together in a narrow bungalow, just a few pious paces away from a one-room red brick church with a coordinating red neon cross that buzzed its siren song atop the crest of a tiny hill. The fact that our church-adjacent house boasted only one bathroom for six people bred more controversy than our mutually exclusive religions. Luckily for me, but unluckily for my reader, our life together was a very boring tale of compromise and compassion, one where we reverently invoked the word "family" without once uttering the Father's name. Our deafening conviction to perform the rituals of community drowned out the magnitude of what we never said.

Two times a day, somewhere among vast plots of ginseng fields in a little house teetering on top of a tiny cliff, you could find my host family and me sitting down to eat. Host dad would bow his head in silence and before he had raised it again, his three sons had already inhaled half of the fattiest or saltiest offerings on the table. Host mom was still pattering at the stove and hadn't yet sat down to eat. Oh, and there's me, I was the white girl at the other end of the table, dropping food anywhere but in my mouth, and cursing a little louder each time I didn't hear gasps of comprehension. There was usually no conversation save the cows mooing outside until host mom finally sat down in the splash zone next to me and we ate to the strains of "Eat this, why aren't you

eating that, come back, you didn't finish this." Long after the boys made their dramatic, dish-clattering escape from the table, the women cleared the table and prepared the tea and fruit. Over tea, host mom and I gossip - despite our language deficiencies we were both fluent in womanese - and host dad tried in vain to bring the conversation around to something like business or the local agriculture. Once our routine had been established, religion was not discussed, but there was a period of adjustment when we had to introduce our religious differences.

Korean cultural norms dictate that abstaining from public religious discussions is as taboo as participating in them in Los Angeles. So it was just moments after learning my name that Pastor Lee told me rather than asked, "You are Christian." While he awaited a confirmation nod, I awkwardly squinted and shrugged my shoulders to shake off any as-yet unimplied guilt. In my pidgin Korean I eked out, "I am Jew. Is that OK?" Pastor Lee's reaction to my Hebraic confession was coincidentally the top-secret international Jewish password: "Yeah, Jew is OK. Let's eat dinner!" Though Pastor Lee did not know the accompanying secret handshake, his words immediately put me at ease. I never had to worry that my Sunday morning enthusiasm would invite pressure to convert to a lifetime of zeal and by the end of our first week together, I was a biweekly regular in the pews.

Since I came out into Korean Methodist farming society, the sense of community was overwhelming. I lowered the average age of Pastor Lee's congregation to about eighty, and on every walk I took along the country roads that frame our area I got big bear hugs and double-fisted handshakes from each hunched, shriveled church-member of unknown sex I met. In church, they often shared bemused looks as I stumbled through the Korean hymns set to Old English tunes and while they attentively listened to the pastor's sermon, I caught up on my Bible reading and recast the role of Moses. The instant after Pastor Lee's wife played the "amen" bars of the last hymn on the piano, the boys raced back to their cartoons in the bungalow and I soaked up more bear hugs and handshakes.

However, were these same church-members to learn that I am Jewish, I wonder if they would have welcomed me with such

unqualified warmth. My skepticism, while unfair and possibly paranoid, is not without warrant. As it is, my gracious acceptance into the pastor's family was partly based on their deeper bias against Muslims. I represent, it would seem, the lesser of two evils. Over the course of four taxing years, the Lee family endured heat and hurled rocks as missionaries in Bahrain. To hear Pastor Lee grimly put it, "My God told me to go to Bahrain. Then my God told me to leave." He resented Muslim extremism, especially the brand reserved exclusively for his family while they lived as a distinct minority in the Middle East. It was his bitterness against Muslims and not his support for Jews that pushed his politics into a staunchly pro-Israel camp. While I appreciated his concerted empathy for me, it was unfortunately the result of the rejection and mistreatment he suffered at the hands of my assumed enemies during his stint in Bahrain.

As for his religious philosophy, Pastor Lee tended to focus on matters of property. An avid reader of motivational books for the middling corporate set, my pastor believed that life is a business and he preached accordingly. Through the story of Jacob and Esau, Pastor Lee advised his ancient flock of cucumber farmers to separate from one another when they accumulate vast fortunes, in order to avoid any tension borne of envy. Therefore the stereotype that Jews like money, of which I half-heartedly tried to disabuse him, is for Pastor Lee, a plus. While I may grouse because his political and social sympathies for Jews seemed to come from a misinformed or distorted vantage point, I knew I should be grateful for his commitment to our shared peaceful life, regardless of the motivators.

All my life at temple, at school, and at home, I also judged people based on what they said, how they said it, and what they wore when they said it and then I cultivated relationships accordingly with the misguided pretensions one would expect from someone with such a dubious system of judgment. I relied on language as my guide to the cultural norms that shaped my every action. In Korea, I was air dropped into this context-free zone, culturally illiterate and literally illiterate and I had to wean myself off of my language dependence. In fact, the language barrier, once my greatest fear, became my strongest ally. Strapped to our bungling and limited language skills, the Lees and I were

Points East

Points East

much-needed space for classrooms; the collection of 7,000 books, which is still growing; an exhibition room; and a conference room.

Fu Youde, a professor of philosophy at Shandong University, relates a similar tale of an accidental discovery and a rapid growth in interest and academic enterprise. Mr. Fu, who is China's leading expert on George Berkeley, the 18th-century Irish philosopher, was invited to work on a project to translate the works of Baruch Spinoza, the 17th-century philosopher of Jewish background, into Chinese.

He knew nothing about Judaism at the time, so in 1992 he traveled to the University of Oxford to study Hebrew, the Talmud, the Bible, Jewish history, and Jewish ethics. He moved on to London, where he continued his studies for one more year at Leo Baeck College, an institution of Jewish learning.

Mr. Fu never finished his ambitious translation project, but, like Mr. Xu, he came away convinced that China had a lot to learn from the Jewish tradition. "I came to realize the importance of Jewish culture, and that it could play an important role in the future of China," he says.

When he returned to Shandong, in 1994, Mr. Fu established the Center for Judaic and Interreligious Studies, a project he says the university readily supported. The center is now developing a library and research center, with books coming in from individuals and libraries all over the world. On a recent afternoon, Noam Urbach, a Hebrew teacher from Israel, stands in his office going through boxes of donated books, brushing off dust with his hand as he separates them into stacks.

Piquing Interest

The program at Shandong is recruiting students from all over China and hopes to attract international students as well. It has held international conferences, playing host to international scholars who have included Elliot R. Wolfson, an expert on the Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism. Last July the Shandong center held a summer program in Jewish studies that attracted students in various disciplines from around the country.

Shandong's Mr. Ehrlich says the program is translating dozens of academic works and Jewish classics, along with 15 books

by American Jewish writers, including *The Chosen*, by Chaim Potok, and *This Is My God*, by Herman Wouk.

Zhang Can, a graduate student of Mr. Ehrlich's, became interested in Judaism as an undergraduate studying philosophy. This month she plans to go to Hebrew University in Jerusalem for a year, where she will do a comparative study of the Chinese and Jewish diasporas. She will return to Shandong to complete her Ph.D.

Ms. Zhang has been studying Hebrew for a year, and Mr. Ehrlich is proud of her. He pulls a Hebrew-language book off a shelf, hands it to the young woman, and asks her to read. As her finger moves deliberately across the page, she slowly says the words aloud, translating into halting but fluent English the biblical story of Jacob.

Ask Mr. Ehrlich about China's growing fascination with things Jewish, and the talkative former rabbi ticks off a number of theories. He agrees with Mr. Xu that Chinese students and scholars feel that studying Jewish history and philosophy is an excellent starting point for understanding the fundamentals of Western civilization. But he also believes that among Chinese people, "the sense of affinity with the Jews because of a shared notion of suffering is very strong."

Mr. Ehrlich points out that in the 1970s, as China was emerging from the Cultural Revolution, the *Diary of Anne Frank* sold 40 million copies in that country. Chinese readers apparently identified with the plight of the young Jewish girl. The book may have "served as a canvas for observing their own condition," he says.

Chinese citizens can also benefit from adopting the Jewish notion of critical but constructive self-examination, says Mr. Ehrlich. "Many Chinese are fascinated with the absence of censorship, the liberal criticism heaped on Jewish protagonists, the lack of uniformity in thinking and practice, and the high degree of innovation exuding from the Jewish experience," he argues. "They are curious about how the Jews can remain united without consensus, without obsession with land, and without homogeneity of any sort."

A look at a list compiled by Mr. Ehrlich of some 50 scholarly articles written in China about Judaism over the past decade offers

an idea of where Chinese interest lies: "The Reason Why There Are So Many Outstanding Jews"; "From the Success of Jews to Chinese Education"; "An Analysis of the Factors Behind the Cohesiveness of Jews."

Such interest has spilled into Chinese popular culture, says Mr. Ehrlich, although there the books tend to be not only more superficial but, in some cases, anti-Semitic. In the past year alone, he says, at least 10 books have been published in Chinese with titles like *The Secrets of the Jews* and *How to Be a Jewish Millionaire*. Mr. Ehrlich is quick to emphasize, however, that the Chinese are not anti-Semitic, and that the Chinese stereotypes are "more complimentary than contemptuous."

Model of Reform

Shandong's Mr. Fu is quick to draw similar connections. He argues that of all peoples, the Jews have been the most successful in dealing with the challenges of modernity. "The goal of Jewish reform ... was to retain Jewish cultural identity by reserving Judaism while accepting modernity and merging into Western society," he says.

He sees the Reform movement in 19th-century Judaism as a model for China. The movement's goal, he says, was to transform the Jew into a European, integrated into Western culture, who, at the same time, would remain faithful to his religion.

"The Jews have modernized themselves materially," he says, "living a modern life in Western countries on the one hand, and they have maintained their cultural identity — namely, their Jewishness — on the other."

As China has transformed its economy into a market system, Mr. Fu continues, Chinese people have grown perplexed about who they are. "Most Chinese do not know what their cultural identity is and how to keep it," he says. "In short, they have lost their 'Chineseness' and are soulless."

Mr. Fu sees Confucianism, the social philosophy that shaped the thinking and behavior of Chinese for centuries, as playing a role similar to that which Judaism played for Jews. Although many Chinese do not deem Confucianism a religion, Mr. Fu argues that Chinese are thirsty for religion and a spiritual way of life, and that

the country is a "hotbed for Confucianism to take root, sprout, and grow up."

Indeed, Confucianism has enjoyed a revival in China in recent years, with scholars dusting off the writings of the man once vilified by the Communists for his "feudal" thinking, and universities offering courses in what is known as *guoxue*, or national studies.

For the time being, however, scholars such as Mr. Ehrlich, Mr. Fu, and Mr. Xu are focusing on training the next generation of scholars, both to examine Jewish studies and to see its connections to Chinese traditions both ancient and modern.

An Israeli Visits Kaifeng (continued from page 1)

a way to contact today's Jewish descendants in the city. I spent the next 3 days walking around town, seeing the local tourist attractions and trying to find out as much further information as possible on the internet. Finding information regarding Jewish life nowadays turned out to be quite difficult for more than one reason. As I mentioned, information about modern Jewish life in Kaifeng is hardly available on the internet. But suppose I did find it – what would I actually be looking for? I knew that there was no religious aspect to Jewish life in modern day's Kaifeng and I hardly expected to find any organized Jewish establishment there. I didn't even know if I would find anyone who speaks English – pretty important, considering the fact that I don't speak any Chinese... To top it all off, the best information I could find about independent visits to Kaifeng were very discouraging posts on internet forums - threads started by people seeking the same information as me were answered only by people who had come out of Kaifeng disappointed at not finding any trace of the alleged Jews there.

I thus spent the first few days of my visit to Kaifeng reading discouraging reports and seeing the city's main tourist attractions. I found it to be a very pleasant, laid-back city. The city obviously lacked a very important feature that characterized the other cities I'd been in before – tourists. In the 5 days I spent in Kaifeng I only counted 3 other foreigners in the entire city, of whom I spoke to 2. The lack of foreigners was a refreshing change and

meant that I got a more impartial impression of the day-to-day life led by the city's inhabitants, regardless of annoying tourists. One thing that stood out was the city's night market, which is the nicest, most authentic one I've found in China. The very prominent Muslim population is very nice and inviting. Though the Muslims at the local mosque spoke no Arabic, they were quite happy to meet someone who did and responded with surprise and interest. And they make the best food in town (with no pork on the menu!). The "iron pagoda" was nice though unremarkable. Longting Park was a pleasant place to spend an afternoon. The Shanshangan guild hall was nice too. The old synagogue's well was exactly what it was said to be – a well in a boiler room, attended by Chinese laborers. All of these sites were nice, though not enough to justify a special trip to Kaifeng.

I also saw the municipal museum, a boring grey group of exhibitions in a boring grey building. The exhibition about the Jewish history was a little underwhelming and less than what I expected. A museum worker took me up to the forsaken 4th floor of the museum, and opened the door leading to the exhibition. When he turned on the lights it was made quite clear that the place is not visited too often. It was quite dusty and dark. The exhibits are all located in one room; it seemed that the adjacent, smaller room was being prepared to display some more exhibits though none were on display at the time. The items on display were all in Chinese, as were the signs accompanying the various exhibits, of which very little, if at all, was translated into English. Only based on my prior reading did I realize the importance of these items. This being said, the visit to the museum was definitely worth my time as it enabled me to visualize some of the things I had read about.

Here it would be interesting to mention a coincidence that occurred a few weeks later, in Xi'an. I was waiting for a friend in his hotel. While waiting, I started talking with an Australian woman who worked in China as an English teacher. She said she had a friend who was very interested in Kaifeng's Jewish history, and that this friend had decided to take it upon herself to translate all of the exhibits in the above mentioned exhibition into English. It was quite a funny coincidence that I happened to meet another person who'd actually been to Kaifeng, let alone

come to know such interesting and pleasant information. That conversation was brief and lasted only about 10 minutes, and I didn't get any more information about the matter. I don't know if her friend's intentions were serious or if they were carried out. This was in December, and quite some time has passed – it would be very nice to go back now and see the entire exhibition accompanied with comprehensive English translations and explanations. If it has not yet been done – it's definitely a task well worth undertaking.

On the morning of my 3rd day in Kaifeng, I met Jason – a local tour guide\ tricycle driver who spoke English and offered to take me around town. I tried my luck, telling him that I wasn't interested in going around town but only in meeting some of the city's Jewish inhabitants. I was fairly surprised when he said that he could arrange that. He said he knows some Jews and could take me to meet them on the next day. I immediately agreed and we set a date for the next morning.

When I met Jason the next morning, we got right to it. I got on the tricycle and he started pedaling towards the old synagogue. Jason is not his real name, only the English name he chose for himself as many Chinese do nowadays, to make communication with foreigners easier. He is a self-taught English speaker and speaks relatively good English. He is a devout Christian and so on the way he kept reciting full passes from the new and Old Testament in English with great pride. He told me about some other foreigners that he'd taken around the city, of whom many were Jews, interested in meeting other Jews. He thus came to know a few Jews around town. After I told him I'd already seen the old synagogue well, we turned into what later turned out to be "Teaching the Torah Lane South". This narrow alleyway, built in the old traditional Chinese style, is very close to the place of the old synagogue. This is where the Jewish community was centered in the past and where some of the Jewish descendants still live today. This is, geographically speaking, very close to both the center of the old walled city and to the place of the municipal market – a location that seems to indicate some importance, as it was given to the Jews by the authorities with the intention of them making it their home.

Within the lane, we stopped by just an-

Of their many contentious views, one that does enjoy broad-based support is that the people of Lebanon should decide their own fate. That much is clear from the featured blog on Sina.com's EyeonLebanon, which is a first-hand diary written by the wife of a Chinese doctor working in Lebanon. Her impressions are emotionally raw, analytically sharp yet ultimately, quite well-balanced. Over the weekend of July 22, for instance, she noted that Lebanese people want the same concessions out of Hezbollah as does Israel. "From the Lebanese government down to the common people, everyone dares to despise at Hezbollah but dares not speak out." Hezbollah, she continued, pays no electricity or water bills to the Lebanese government, is better armed than the Lebanese army, and threatens Lebanese officials. "Thus a lot of Lebanese people very much support the present war. They call it 'scraping off a sarcoma'." But then she describes why the Lebanese cannot act on this impulse – just the opposite. She quotes a Lebanese soldier: "Israel, first you say the Lebanese army should not fight back, and then you come and hit us!" ...

The next day, her compatriots online erupted over the death of a countryman. And her blog was understandably silent.

Won Ton or Kreplach? Raising Our Chinese-Jewish Family

by Jack Botwinik

This article is excerpted from one on www.InterfaithFamily.com, a member of the Jewz.com Media Network.

I grew up in a Jewish neighbourhood of Montreal. My mother is Sephardic Italian and my father is a Holocaust survivor from Poland. I speak Italian with my mother and Yiddish with my father and siblings. My wife, Belinda Cheung, was born and raised in Hong Kong and came to Canada when she was 17.

I married Belinda in 1999. Our marriage has been working wonderfully well. Despite our cultural differences, our worldviews and approaches to life are remarkably identical. We are busy raising our two young children, and our lives are meaningful and fulfilling.

Picture frames reflecting both Chinese and Jewish influences adorn our home. We are keen on learning about each other's cul-

ture. We make a point to learn each other's languages through tapes and books. Although we are both fully fluent in English, my wife chooses to speak Cantonese to our children, and I speak Yiddish. Between us, we converse in English. Our children identify with their Yiddish and Chinese names, in addition to their English names. Our elder son, Asher (age three), seems to handle the different languages well. We make an effort to be consistent in our use of languages with our children. We expose them to both Chinese and Jewish games, as well as Chinese, Yiddish, Hebrew and English books, songs and videos...

I am fascinated with Chinese history, language and culture. Belinda's roots are almost as important to me as my own. I am constantly looking for ways to infuse more Chinese culture into our lives. Even my favourite ties display ancient Chinese scripts and I often wear them on Sabbath. The Chinese and the Jews have a lot in common in their ethical teachings.

We keep a kosher diet and celebrate all Jewish holidays, including the holy Sabbath. We are grateful that my parents, my Chinese in-laws, as well as our secular relatives and friends are respectful of our Jewish observances. My brother-in-law, who is Protestant Christian, had joined us on several occasions and experienced Sabbath and Sukkot (Festival of Booths), and even had a taste of *matzah* on Passover. We give *lai-si* (red packets containing money, decorated with characters and drawings symbolizing luck and wealth) to our children on Chinese New Year. We may catch a dragon boat race during the Dragon Boat Festival, or play with Chinese lanterns around the August Moon Festival. When we are sick, we seek medical treatment and advice from both Chinese and western doctors. A year ago, I had the opportunities to meet many of my wife's relatives and childhood friends in Hong Kong, as well as to visit her schools and converse with her former teachers. Belinda also enjoyed meeting my aunts and cousins in Rome. These experiences are very special and memorable to us.

While we cherish both backgrounds, when we have to choose between them, Jewish holidays and observances take precedence over Chinese holidays and customs. Belinda finds Judaism meaningful and she has learned to love it more than Chinese traditions. Judaism is central to us, and it helps imbue meaning and direction in our lives.

How did we get to this arrangement? From the moment we began dating, we enthusiastically explored each other's cultures through visiting many ethnic establishments and participating in various cultural activities. Our goal was to broaden our horizons and to take the best of both worlds. However, as my parents were vehemently opposed to my dating Belinda because my religion prohibits intermarriage, we delved deeper into Judaism while also examining other religions. We read voraciously on different spiritualities. We attended Chinese churches, Buddhist and Taoist temples; took part in Jews for Jesus, Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Jewish synagogues and events; visited a Sikh Gurdwara, a Muslim mosque; and toured Israel for a month. It was a long but worthwhile journey. Through it all, we inspired each other in our spiritual growth, and helped shape each other's outlook on life. Belinda eventually converted to Judaism after more than four years of exploring and learning. She genuinely loves Judaism. An important reason that my wife and I have adjusted to each other so well is that we had developed a common vision for ourselves before we got married.

We are now connected to a Torah-observant community where people are accepting of us and our Asian-looking Jewish children. We were forewarned by the Rabbinical Court which presided over my wife's conversion that there would always be some Jews who, out of ignorance of Judaism, look down at converts and their children as being "not really" Jewish. Thank God, we have not experienced this kind of debasement.

We hope that as our children grow up, they will question, investigate and re-new their commitment to our Jewish heritage, and respect and honour their Chinese roots. We wish that they will carry their Jewishness into their own relationships and raise their children with healthy and life-affirming values and practices.

[Editor's Note: Belinda Hang-Yee Cheung (a.k.a. Bina Ester) gets the last word: I converted to Orthodox Judaism seven years ago. My husband was a secular Jew. Our interfaith dating experience compelled us to re-examine our roots and led us both to become committed to Judaism after four years of soul-searching and exploring different religions. He has written about it in a book, Chicken Soup with Chopsticks: A Jew's Struggle for Truth in an Interfaith Relationship. See our website: www.PaperSpider.Net.]

experiences. Add to this these people's profoundly different perspective regarding things such as religion, gods (the Catholic priest's church was just around the corner from the Confucian temple, which was across the street from the city god's temple), morality etc. It's easy to see just how hard it would be for a person from such a different school of thought to grasp the mere foundations on which Jewish thought and belief are based.

I answered questions about politics, Sharon, Hamas, Hizballah, Jabotinsky, Ben Gurion, Iraq, Iran, The U.S.A, China and Maccabi Tel Aviv (then the European basketball champions). What I had to say was taken very seriously and attentively. I was photographed and examined and became quite an attraction. Not every day do these people meet a foreign Jew, let alone an Israeli – they study all about people just like me. And for me – to be taken in with such warmth and so happily in a class for graduate students at Henan University in Kaifeng – who would have thought? I ended up answering questions for about two hours and then turned to speak to Prof. Zhang, who showed me the first hard copies I had seen of "Points East", and told me about her work and about the time she spent in Israel. I talked to the students and the professor for another half-hour or so and shared a taxi with Prof. Zhang back the city center.

Whatever it was that I was looking for when I decided to go to Kaifeng, I found it. I had also been to other places with Jewish history, such as Shanghai and Harbin, but none were as interesting and surprising as Kaifeng. Both meeting the local people and attending the class in the university were more mind-opening than I could have hoped for to begin with. I found traveling to China to be extremely interesting and important. I now suggest going there to everyone I know. My visit to Kaifeng was definitely one of the highlights of my travels.

Arab, Jew, Chinese

by Jonathan Ansfield
 excerpted from: <http://www.spot-on.com/archives/ansfield/2006/07/post.html>
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J-e-w.

It's not typed on my resume currently. But were I applying for a job with a Chinese employer, I might consider adding it. Seri-

ously. Right at the top of the page, where young Chinese grads customarily note their ethnic background, whether Han, Hui, Hakka or one of the 50-odd other official minorities, anyway. Tell them you're a *youtai ren* (Jew), and it's a bit like dropping casual mention of your M.B.A. from Harvard.

Jews, from what many well-educated Chinese have heard, are smart, well-off, and in proportion to their numbers, highly influential in international politics, media and business. Yes, their knowledge of the *youtai ren* is often limited to those "stereotypes", as we call them. But it's best not to take this penchant for profiling too personally, insofar as, until recently, few Chinese really grasped our concept of stereotypes, or the political incorrectness we attach to them. Chinese have never made much pretense of color-blindness.

And so the knowing masses of the Middle Kingdom, who over the millennia leading up to the humiliations that began with the Opium Wars rated themselves and their achievements unrivalled, have in recent decades developed a special affinity for that tiny minority of people who call themselves "chosen". The Confucian and Judaic traditions, educated Chinese are often quick to note, share certain priorities: education, family, a zest for debate, and a spirit of entrepreneurship. Some older Chinese fondly recall how during the Holocaust, when the whole world closed its ports to Jews fleeing Hitler, Shanghai took in an estimated 50,000. In several cities on the eastern seaboard today, China's best-travelled merchants hold competing claims to the moniker "Jews of the East". Speaking before a crowd of 100 at my nuptials a few years ago, my father-in-law, who's Chinese, could not contain his pride in my heritage. "Jonathan, as you all know, is a Jew," he kvelled. "And Einstein was a Jew," he added. "And Oppenheimer was a Jew," he went on. "And my wife and I, as Communist Party members, also have a Jewish ancestor - Marx!"

So does that mythic status of Jews in China translate into sympathy for Israel? Not necessarily. With respect to the current conflict with Hezbollah, the answer would increasingly seem to be "no"—particularly after a Chinese observer with the UN was felled by an Israeli bomb, which the U.N. Security Council did not condemn. A day afterward, a long litany of Israel-bashing by readers at the popular Chinese news portal, sina.com, read like this:

"I recommend that China send arms to Lebanon via a third country, like Iran."

"What is Israel? Before World War II, was there such a country as Israel? All of the land in the current nation of Israel was seized from Arab countries?"

"If Lebanon doesn't resist as a nation, why are groups formed among the populus called terrorists?"

And in response to a letter home by a journalist from the *Global Times*, a hawkish tabloid published by the Communist Party flagship *People's Daily*, the 50,000-plus messages posted included this one:

"The Chinese people have a new enemy – Israel."

Of course, such venom reflects the extreme patriotic impulses that take over when the loss of Chinese lives bring a far-away conflict home. One anonymous commentator blamed it on the "angry youths," who often dominate opinion on China's electronic bulletin boards.

Until last week, in fact, popular opinion was not nearly so one-sided. The state media airwaves and news wires, trained to take the anti-imperialist diplomatic cues of the Chinese government, concentrated on the ugliness of the fighting and the suffering of Lebanese and Palestinians, but without strong partisanship or opinions on how resolve the issue. And an early sampling of the reaction to daily dispatches suggests that the Chinese actually leaned, more than the country's leadership, toward Israel. "Israel is the epitome of righteousness. Long live the people of Israel," read one message repeated over and again. Others wrote soliloquies on Israel's commitment to save the lives of just a few soldiers, or remembered the aid Israel provided after the Tangshan earthquake of 1976.

Interestingly, people have plenty of news to form informed opinions, more than ever. Much of the original Chinese-language news comes straight off the Xinhua news agency, but certain press and Web outlets can get away with translating local news reports or even using their own correspondents. Censors are considerably more relaxed than they are, say, when it comes to the North Korean nuke issue, since Beijing is not directly involved in the Middle East conflict and has little direct role to play outside of the United Nations Security Council...

other house and got off the tricycle. In the front courtyard there was a sowing circle of three elderly women. Jason turned to one of them, introduced me to her and told her why I was there. She said hello. She left the sowing circle and invited us into her house. The house was made of one room which had in it a kitchen, a bed, and a table at which we sat. The house seemed rather old and gloomy, and was spotted with Judaica – *hanukiot* (Hanukkah candelabras), *hamsot* ("no evil eye" hands), Hebrew signs, drawings of the old Jewish synagogue etc. I even spotted a *mezuzah* on the doorstep.

We talked for a while. The conversation was held in English on my part and in Chinese on her part, with Jason the tricycle driver translating. She turned out to be Han Chinese and not Jewish by origin. This woman's late husband was a prominent figure in the Jewish community and died only shortly before my arrival. She had accepted her husband's religious beliefs and now believes in one god, according to Judaism. She also refrains from eating pork.

She has five daughters, whom she considers to be Jews – though if she was Jewish and not her husband, she would not consider them to be such. It was interesting to find out that in Chinese culture a child's religion is decided according to his or her father's religion (like in Islam) as opposed to Judaism where the child is considered Jewish if the mother is Jewish. This raises the obvious *halachic* (Jewish legal) problems in recognizing these people as Jews. None of the people I talked to knew that in Judaism it's the mother's religion that determines the child's religion and no one seemed to care too much.

On the wall were pictures of her late husband and his family. She claimed the *menorah* and *mezuzah* were centuries old. It was obvious, going by the amount of Judaica objects and pictures and English and Hebrew on the walls, that she was visited by other foreigners before us. And indeed she said the house was frequented by foreigners – especially Jews – who come to meet her (and her husband, in the past) quite often. She said that she is in touch with other Jews in Kaifeng, but not in contact with Jews from outside of Kaifeng. She claimed that in their family, like in other families in Kaifeng, the Jewish identity results in almost no religious

customs – they don't take the tendons out of the meat like people used to do and they don't conduct any religious ceremonies such as Bar Mitzvah, Brit or weddings.

Before we came into her house, Jason warned me that this woman is a little weird. I kept asking questions, about Jewish life in general and her family's life in particular. At some point, with no prior warning, she asked us to leave. She tried to sell me some of the artifacts she had in her house just before that. I thought I'd asked too many questions, Jason said she expected me to give her some money or something. This way or the other, we were told to leave and so we did. Indeed, a weird weary old woman.

It seemed like this woman was used to meeting foreigners and was expecting some sort of payment for her hospitality – not exactly the warm welcome I was expecting. Moreover, this made me feel like she was beyond any interest in meeting foreign people, like she was at the point where her entire interest was in taking advantage of the opportunity to sell something and get money or gifts. This made me feel a little uncomfortable and not particularly welcome, even before we were told to leave.

I had come out of this encounter thinking that Jews are truly assimilated in Kaifeng – that marriages and trade relations have brought them to be a fully equal part of the local society. And yet it was weird to see just to what extent this household was keen on showing that it was different – with the amount of Judaica artifacts on her walls, with the silent statement of having a *mezuzah* on her doorstep. I thus didn't know exactly what to expect from the other Jews in Kaifeng, when we left "Teaching the Torah Lane South" and headed out to meet another Jewish family that Jason is acquainted with.

After a short while we arrived in another neighborhood, still within the walled city (which we didn't leave during the entire day). There, out in the street where we stopped, we met another woman, who was younger than the first woman. She took us up to her apartment in the top floor of an apartment building, which was dirtier and seemed to imply a lower socioeconomic status than the house we'd just been to – which didn't seem to suggest a very high standard of living to begin with.

As we entered the apartment, two things stood out: a *mezuzah* on the kitchen doorstep and a seemingly old picture of a man in traditional clothes which hung on the wall. In the house were this woman and an older woman, who was lying in the next room. We were very pleasantly invited to sit at the kitchen table and were served some tea. The hospitality was much warmer than in the first house and there was some festivity attached to this uncalled visit by a foreigner so interested in this Jewish family. We sat down and started talking. Once again, Jason explained who I was and what I was doing there. The woman who hosted us also introduced herself as Han, not Jewish, and spoke of her late Jewish husband as the reason for her adopting Jewish customs and beliefs.

It seemed to me at this point that due to gender-related reasons, women were probably expected to give up their religion in favor of that of their husbands. In addition, the two women I'd met spoke of themselves as Han and not as Jews, so to say that they could not turn into Jews overnight, not even by marriage. Unlike other minorities, such as Muslims who dress and look different, this woman could not be told apart from any other Chinese person. Both women I'd met accepted Jewish religion, but there was a clear separation between that and being Jewish, which seemed to be a term describing one's ethnic origins. It is interesting to see the dichotomy they make between the two parts of their identity – ethnic identity and religion (which are accompanied by nationality to fully define one's reference group). Both of the women I'd met were Han Chinese who accepted Jewish faith and considered their children to be Jewish. I was later to find out that there are some who do identify being Jewish with Jewish ethnicity, or "blood".

I have no idea as to what this woman was doing before I came in, and we did not give any prior notice but rather just showed up at her doorstep – and yet she accepted us very nicely and hosted me and was quite happy to accept this visit from a foreigner. As we started talking, I looked around the room. In the pantry, visible from the kitchen, was a picture of an old man with a black cloth wrapped around it and incense burning in front of it. Apparently this woman's Jewish husband died only a little over a week before my arrival. This was definitely a Chinese,

non-Jewish custom, to burn incense before a picture of the deceased. They were still mourning, of course, though there was no official [Jewish] mourning process like "*shiv'ah*". This man was, as his wife told me, a public official. She explained that in the past, special permission from the government was required to speak to foreigners – to make sure that they weren't spies, she said. It wasn't clear whether she meant that everyone needed such permission or only the Jews. In any case, since her husband was a public official, their house was rather frequently visited by foreigners in the past. I could only imagine what it meant to meet foreign Jewish (and other) delegations, while representing both the local Jewish community and the Chinese government.

We talked for a while. I, the weird big-nosed foreigner, answered some questions about my travels, who I was and why I was there. I also asked some questions. The picture on the wall, depicting a man in traditional mandarin clothes, which seemed to be quite old, depicts (according to the woman) one of her late husband's ancestors from centuries ago. He migrated to China with his father and grew up to become an honorable Jewish mandarin. I learned that they are in contact with some other Jewish families in Kaifeng.

As we were talking, a man came into the house – this turned out to be her son. From the moment of his arrival, the focus of the conversation shifted from his mother to him, and we chatted for a while. He is a cook in the county university, and had just come home from work. Unlike his mother, who considers herself a converted Han, he thinks of himself as Jewish "first-hand". He had been in a synagogue in Shanghai once, but has no recollection of the event and knows "almost nothing" about Judaism, other than what the rest of the Jews I met knew – he doesn't eat pork and believes in one god. He had no knowledge about "*shiv'ah*" and mourned his father's death at home for only 3 days after his father's death. However, he said that his father was buried with a *kippa* (skull cap) on his head in a family graveyard which has been used for centuries, and is in another county. I wondered if I could see this cemetery but was told it was too far away.

According to this man, the last person in his family to be circumcised (he seemed

to know what that means) was his great grandfather. He has relatives – the broader family is comprised of hundreds of people. One member of his family is in Israel and they stay in touch with telephone calls. Another member of his family (in Kaifeng) has a *menorah* and they light candles every Friday evening. He rests on Shabbat and refrains from working on that day. He said he would be very interested in studying more about Judaism and visiting Israel and his family there, but he has not enough time or money to do either. I asked about his family – his wife is not Jewish and does not believe in Judaism. He has a son whom he would like to go to Israel. When talking about this possibility regarding his son, his eyes shone. He was truly excited about the mere thought of such an option. When this man talked, he kept swinging back and forth and not standing still. This reminded me a bit of a religious Jew praying, and I found the analogy to be funny.

After a while he escorted me downstairs. I got on the tricycle and, as Jason and I were about to leave, the man came to me, shook my hand and said "*shalom*". This one word gave me a new perspective for this matter and was more touching than hours of stories about familial history. It made it seem as though maybe we do share something after all. After this we left their home.

Jason mentioned a retired high-ranking public official, who, according to what he heard, is also Jewish. We went to one of the municipality office buildings and with the help of some workers there managed to locate this woman. We set pace towards her house. In a small street close to the Longting Park, Jason stopped the tricycle in front of a house enclosed by a wall. We knocked on the gate until finally someone came and, after asking who we were and why we were there, opened the door. As we got into the yard, it became clear that this house was in better condition than the previous ones we'd seen. It was a two storey house housing one family, and it was cleaner and of a higher standard than the previous houses we'd seen. The man who opened the door seemed to be in his 50s or 60s and led us into a nicely decorated house where he was busy cooking (he was wearing an apron). A woman of about the same age was sitting in the living room, playing with a baby. Like in the other houses into

which we'd invited ourselves, this woman was obviously not expecting our arrival. Who would? A tricycle driver and a foreign "laowai" knocking on your door one day, with the intention of asking stupid questions in a weird language...definitely a surprise for any person doing housework of any kind in Kaifeng.

We sat down and started chatting. She was in every way like the Jewish grandmothers I know from home and other than the slanted eyes and language – in terms of attitude and what not – could just as well be of Polish descent. She was nice and inviting and did her best to make me comfortable. She was very excited to receive such a visit from a foreign Jew, saying that I was the first one she'd ever met. She herself is of Jewish descent. Her father and grandfather were Jewish merchants and they received visits from American and Italian Jews in the 1940s. They were even invited more than once to Shanghai to study about Judaism there but were afraid of the Kuomintang, which she said persecuted Jews and this led them to hide their Jewish identity. Under Communist rule all this changed – she described life as better under the Communists, who saw Jews as equal citizens. Her brother was invited to Beijing in the 1950s as a representative of the Jews when all the different minority groups were invited to celebrate the October 1st holiday.

It's my impression that (at least until recent years) Jews were viewed as a minority, but not as one seeking political liberation and separation from the Chinese country or even cultural autonomy. The Jews who I met view themselves as Chinese Jews and do not seek any alternation of this status. I later read about the change of attitude towards Jews in the late 1990s, when they were required to register as either Han or Hui and not as Jews in the census. However I did not hear any complaints from the Jews I met about the government, be the reason what it may.

This woman in particular, having been a public official, is of course a member of the Communist Party. It's not uncommon for minority groups, especially Jews in the West, to be the foundation on which Communist groups are based. She sees no contrast between viewing herself as Jewish and a devout Communist. She says that her Judaism is void of any religious meaning and thus there is no contradic-

tion between recognizing her ethnic origins and her political beliefs. She is very proud at identifying herself as a Jew. She has never read the Bible or visited a synagogue, and she learned most of what she knows today from reading in books, newspapers and magazines. She explained that Jews are hard-working, that they put their children's education as their top priority, and that they are brave. She was happy to say that China and Israel have good relations and seemed to know about Israel's general situation. (Ariel Sharon, who was prime minister at the time, was very popular and admired everywhere in China). I told her about the Israeli version of Communism, in the form of the *kibbutz*, and she was interested in that. I asked if there were any other Jews in high ranking governmental positions, to which her answer was that she does not know who is Jewish, so she could not say. Her husband is not Jewish. She has two daughters who she is proud to describe as having "Jewish blood" and so, when I explained that in Judaism religion is decided according to the mother's religion and not the father's, she was happy.

It is necessary to say one more thing about our meeting; this woman seemed to be very intelligent and knowledgeable. She answered my questions at great length and with great detail. However, all of what she said to me and the things I said to her were said through a mediator – Jason – whose English is surprisingly good though not completely fluent. I heard some things about the Kaifeng Jews from the people I met that I didn't know before and haven't read since. This woman in particular was one of the people interviewed by the municipal museum director when he conducted research about the Jewish history of Kaifeng many years ago, though nobody has spoken with her about this matter since. I asked whatever few questions I could think of and she answered them fully. And yet it was clear that some, perhaps most, of the information was lost in translation and quite a lot of it was mistranslated. In some cases I knew more was said in Chinese than in English and could do nothing about it. There is probably more information to be had from this woman.

Seeing as I was the first foreign Jew – let alone Israeli – that this woman had ever met, she was very happy and excited to meet me. She told me, very seriously, that we are family and that I should not be

embarrassed to turn to her if I ever had any problems in China. She offered me lunch and a drink. She enquired where I was sleeping and if I needed anything. And she asked me to come visit her again if ever I was in Kaifeng again and to tell my friends who go there to do the same. I was very sorry that I could not communicate with her directly, that I could not hear everything she wanted to say, and couldn't say what I wanted. When the conversation ended, she escorted us on our way out. She explained to her granddaughter who I was and tried to get her to communicate with me as well. We parted. It was probably one of the warmest welcomes I received in all of my travels in China.

Jason and I went back to my hotel. I could say by this time that I had found out what meaning there was in meeting real live people who are those you read about in books. Meeting these people was well worth the 3 days I spent in Kaifeng without doing anything significant, and it was an eye-opening experience in more than one way. I learned to make the connection with what's written in textbooks about people and day-to-day reality. I learned about this remote and unique Jewish community. These encounters made me more aware of the problems Jews face in the Diaspora and more interested in how Israel and the religious Jewish establishment address these problems. And it also gave meaning for me to what ever it was that connected me in some odd way with these weird people who live in a place about which I can say that the geographical distance between us is only surpassed by the cultural one.

When I went back to my room, the first thing I did was to write down all that I had seen in notes, making sure I wouldn't forget anything. I went to an internet café and wrote some emails. I recalled Prof. Zhang – head of the Institute of Jewish Culture and History at Henan University, the contact that Rabbi Laytner of the SJI provided me with. I emailed her, asking her about some of the things I had heard from the people I met that day. The next day, I tried to call her on the phone. Failing at this, I turned to the university to look for her. I thought some of the information I heard to be very interesting and that she would make better use of it than me. I also thought she could perhaps benefit from talking to the people I had met. And so, just when I thought my in-

teresting encounters with Jewish-related people in Kaifeng were over, I set pace to Henan University.

The university itself is an old compound within the walled city. Arriving in the university I learned what I would later use for getting around in all of China – when no one speaks English, turn to the local English students or teachers. And so I did – and with the help of two nice English students I soon found myself in the building which houses Professor Zhang's Institute. Within a few more minutes, with the help of some faculty workers, I was led into the "Shalom" library, where a lesson was being given to approximately 10 graduate students about the Balfour Declaration, the Israeli Declaration of Independence, Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and "*Hatikva*", the Israeli national anthem. While I thought at first that I was interrupting and suggested I come back once the lesson was over, the professor and students rather found it an interesting attraction to have a real live Jew – and an Israeli on top of that – in their classroom. I therefore sat down at their invitation and watched as the class went on.

My amazement at all this must be understood – I was expecting to meet one professor at the university, and ended up finding myself in the "Shalom" (!) library, in a university the middle of an out-of-the-way city in China, surrounded by people not much older than myself who choose willingly to dedicate their life to studying Jewish culture and history. I was utterly amazed.

Within a few minutes the lesson was halted and I was turned to, and was requested to speak about the matter at hand. I spoke about the Declaration of Independence, Ben-Yehuda and the Balfour Declaration with its difficulties. The students listened very interestedly and took special care not to miss a single word I said. The professor translated every time I said something that was out-of-the-way.

It is almost impossible for me to try to understand to what extent the foundations on which Jewish thought is based are strange to these students. From discussions with other Chinese people, I learned that ignorance is widespread in everything having to do with western religions. I met a Catholic priest in another town who did not know the name of the newly-crowned pope. And there were many more such