

fused with the relatively recent marriage regulations). His outrage over this assumed discrimination was the impetus for him to write this novel about the "Henan Jewish (sic)."

Most Chinese are unaware of the existence, let alone the history of the Kaifeng, Henan Jews. It is generally understood that the Chinese are composed of a number of major ethnic groups, and Jews are not listed as one of them. From this standpoint, the book could have been informative and educational. Because of the author's background, most readers will assume that the details about the Chinese Jews described in the book are factually true.

The author's seems to have a vague knowledge about Judaism, but his sources are problematic. Indeed, the very term he uses for Jews – *youtairen* – is relatively modern and not the term traditionally used for the Kaifeng Jews. His general understanding of Judaism includes knowing that they do not eat pork and that they ate unleavened bread during an unspecified festival, as found in Chapter 1. But in Chapter 7, one of the characters states that each Henan Jewish family had their own sheepskin scroll (Torah) and that the Western sheepskin scrolls were different from the Chinese ones because they were written in different scripts. According to the novel, the

Western sheepskin scrolls are written in "Assyrian" script while the Chinese ones were written in "Rashi" script. This is typical of the author's knowledge of the Kaifeng Jews.

Clearly the author has a very confused understanding of both Judaism in general and Chinese Judaism in particular. Unfortunately, many Chinese will take the novel as a compendium of data about the Henan Jews living along the Huanghe (Yellow River – meaning, of course, Kaifeng). Indeed, for many Chinese, this will be their only source for knowledge about the Kaifeng Jews. For those who can read Chinese and are interested in a fictional account of the descendants of the Kaifeng Jews, as well as prison life during the Cultural Revolution, it could be an interesting read, as I found it. It is a work of fiction, however, that must be read with a critical eye regarding Chinese Judaism.

### *China Journal: A World of Difference*

by James Friend  
Friendly Books, Lincolnwood IL, 2008.  
402 pages  
reviewed by Jennifer Anderson

This book consists of James Friend's daily journal covering a semester (Sept '85-Jan

'86) when he was teaching at Nanjing University. He was an American (and Jewish) professor of English Literature, who specialized in the work of Ernest Hemingway. He died suddenly, only two years later, at the end of 1987. His widow, Beverly Friend, has transcribed and edited his 868 page hand-written journal for self-publication.

Jim Friend's impressions and reactions as he travels and works, and his descriptions of friendships he developed are interesting and informative from the perspective of an American foreigner in China at that time. However, the book is overly long and repetitive and there are some extremes of both effusiveness and vituperativeness that would have been better omitted. One also gets the feeling that had James Friend wished to incorporate his journal material into a memoir, he would have edited it more rigorously and rearranged some material so that it had greater thematic coherence. And he would, I expect, have changed the names of some persons and other identifying features to preserve anonymity in sensitive situations.

Jennifer Anderson, Research Professor Emeritus of Biostatistics, Boston University School of Public Health, lives in California.

## A THOUSAND JEWS CANNOT BE MISTAKEN

by Rami Tai

excerpted from Ynetnews.com (*Yediot Ahronot*) 01 Sept 08

...In Chinese terms, the city of Kaifeng, about 800 kilometers southwest of Beijing, is reminiscent of the Israeli city of Hadera: the number of its residents is 700,000 (as opposed to 15 million in Beijing and 20 million in Shanghai) and it doesn't even have its own airport... And Kaifeng had a Jewish community, small but thriving, whose story is unique in the history of the Jewish people...Only in the past twenty years has there been a reversal of this [assimilation] process, as the descendants of Kaifeng Jewry - who number approximately 1,000 people - have begun to return to their roots and their Jewish tradition. Some of them have considered undergoing proper conversion and making aliyah, and a few of them have done so already.

Thirty-year old Shi Lei does not try to hide his excitement when he takes his guest, an Israeli journalist, to the central room in his parents' home. His family, which is of Jewish descent, has lived in this home for more than one hundred years. After the death of his grandmother and grandfather, Shi, together with his father, turned this room into a mini-museum and a small Jewish center, where he gives classes on Jewish tradition to children and adults of Jewish descent.

Shi Lei, who graduated with a degree in English from the University of Kaifeng, spent close to three years in Israel studying at Jerusalem's Machon Meir and at Bar-Ilan University. "I was the first person from Kaifeng that studied in Israel. I was privileged to receive a wonderful welcome at the Machon Meir yeshiva, and I was treated as a Jew in every respect, although I am not technically a Jew according to Jewish law, and had not yet undergone conversion. However, I decided to return to Kaifeng and to develop my mini-museum, because if I would leave here then there would be no one to teach the younger generation. We feel connected to the Jewish people and to the State of Israel. It is in our blood", he said, and then translated his words into Chinese for his father, who was standing alongside him and nodding excitedly in agreement.

Genetic testing that took place in the past several years on the Kaifeng descendants disclosed a certain relationship to the Jews of Armenia, Iran and Iraq. Most of the researchers, as well as the Kaifeng descendants themselves, tend to suggest that the original Jews in China were merchants from Persia that came by way of the Silk Route - a series of continental pathways that connected Antiochia (today, in South Turkey) to the city of Xian in central China...

(continued on page 5)

## MEETING SUMMARY OF THE SJI MANAGING BOARD

A meeting of the SJI Managing Board was held on August 3, 2008 in Seattle. In attendance were: Rabbi Arnold Belzer, Joel Epstein, Beverly Friend, Seth Garz, Mary-Anne Graham, Prof. Steve Hochstadt, Rabbi Anson Laytner, Dana Leventhal, Dennis Leventhal, Ondi Lingenfelter, Lily Yuan Ninburg, Albert Yee, Prof. Xu Xin

The agenda included a discussion of action options regarding Kaifeng, approval of a grants policy and a discussion of grant requests received, and discussions of SJI work on and with other Jewish communities in China, SJI's outreach activities, the proposed symposium on adoptions, revising our website and starting up *Sino-Judaica*, our scholarly journal, once again.

It was noted, with regret, the resignation of Linda Frank as secretary and from the Board.

### Situation in Kaifeng

The agenda item of most importance had to do with analyzing the situation in Kaifeng. SJI President Laytner presented a summary of reports he had received, the content of many of which was substantiated by Prof Xu Xin.

This is a summary of the situation in Kaifeng to the best of our knowledge: The "community" of Jewish descendants is fraught with internal conflict. There are two groups, one that studies with Shi Lei and another that studies with a Hong Kong-based "messianic" (Christian-proselytizing) group. The messianic Jews provide English and Hebrew classes (English attracts students). Other Board members confirmed the presence of proselytizing groups targeting the Kaifeng descendants. One report suggested that the messianic study group wants to become more Jewish. Kaifeng in general and the Jewish descendants too are poor. Several reports concerned the economic motivation for both Jewish affiliation and *aliyah* (immigration to Israel).

According to Shi Lei, the descendants need opportunities for Jewish education and to travel to Israel (as he has had). Prof. Ehrlich reports that he has arranged for scholarships for Kaifeng descendants to study in Jinan, where he is based.

Several reports had to do with the *aliyah* issue. One report stated that the Israelis have received many *aliyah* applications (not necessarily from people in Kaifeng); another reported that Israeli diplomats avoid visiting Kaifeng to avoid political trouble with the Chinese government.

(continued on page 6)

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## SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	203
China	21
Israel	13
Canada	10
England	7
Australia	4
Japan	2
France	1
Germany	1
Indonesia	1
South Africa	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	1
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>266</b>

## FROM THE EDITOR

Over the last two issues, I have asked the authorities in Kaifeng to do three things:

1. To return to the descendents the artifacts that are rightfully theirs after having safeguarded them during the turbulent 20th century;
2. To permit the descendents to register as Jews and to learn about their cultural heritage as Chinese Jews; and
3. To work with the descendents, SJI and other groups to build a cultural center for the descendents and a quality tourist destination for both Chinese and foreign tourists.

In keeping with the introspective mood of this season in Jewish tradition (*shana tovah*, btw, to all our Jewish readers!), this column will examine our behavior vis-à-vis the Kaifeng Jewish descendents and the authorities.

As detailed in the "Meeting Summary" article, the issues of Jewish identity and immigration to Israel (*aliyah*) remain controversial in China. What we attempt to do in Kaifeng can have repercussions for the descendents, for the future of Jewish studies at Chinese universities, and for Israeli-Chinese relations.

Do we seek to direct the descendents along a certain path for our own religious or ideological reasons? This, to me, is the key question we need to pose and answer honestly. And once answered, we need to ask if what we seek to accomplish is legitimate and what the effect of pursuing this objective will be in the long run.

Speaking personally, I think we ought to be guided in what we do in Kaifeng by the descendents themselves because it is their lives we are dealing with. But, if their desires jeopardize the larger situation—making *aliyah*, for example, or doing things that might create ethnic unrest in Kaifeng—then we need to ask them to defer acting on their desires while we collectively attempt to work through any political sensitivities or concerns. Maverick activities, even if done with the best of intentions, may cripple or doom all our efforts for years to come.

Anson Laytner

## Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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SJI members interested in receiving a copy of the annual financial report should send a self-addressed envelope to: Steve Hochstadt, Treasurer of the Sino-Judaic Institute, Illinois College, 1101 W College Ave., Jacksonville IL 62650.

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choice was crystal clear: All members of my body were in complete agreement cheering for China, and only for China, with no confusion at all—hovering under a huge Chinese flag with anticipation and screaming "Zhong Guo Jia You" (literally, "China, add more oil") in rhythmic unison with my long lost countrymen. So, exemplified by my actions, which surprised even myself, identity is at one level very simple—blood relations.

But there's another source of identity even more powerful that can veto one's intrinsic identity—choice.

Matthew Herman, Jewish National Fund JNFuture Board member who identifies himself as a Jewish American, commented after visiting the 700-year old *mikvah* of the ancient Kaifeng synagogue in China: "Identity is a choice, which is very easy to maintain once you decide, especially in America. Now that there's Israel, having a Jewish identity around Zionism is very easy to maintain, cultivated by caring about Jewish history while growing up...I guess maintaining Jewish identity is easier today than a thousand years ago because there's less of a cost; but it's harder today because there are many other competing identities. A thousand years ago choices were more costly—you may be persecuted—but the cost forced people to attach more value to it."

Kaifeng Jews, descendants of Jewish tradesmen who traveled to China via the Silk Route in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and settled

in the Song Dynasty's imperial capital, are rejected as Jews at the Israeli Embassy in Beijing. Today the community counts 300-500 members and though their last rabbi died more than 150 years ago, the Kaifeng Jews distinctly regard themselves as Jews. Despite being denied minority group status by the Communist government because they no longer speak their own language nor practice the customs of their fathers—the Kaifeng Jews have one man who can change their fate. Shi Lei, a native Kaifeng Jew, was the first to be sponsored to study in Israel in 2001, and since his return he has dedicated himself to the revival of his community in their knowledge and practice of Judaism.

The Kaifeng Jews have no confusion about who they are—they are as Jewish as they are Chinese. However, identity is subjective, just like the results of the Beijing Olympics—the U.S. ranks countries by total medal count and thus was ahead of the pack; on the other hand, China ranks countries by gold medals and finally realized its "Great Leap Forward."

Likewise, mainstream Judaism around the world and across all its sects deems itself to be a matrilineal society; the Chinese Jews in Kaifeng still uphold a patrilineal order mirroring the Torah. So, if I marry a Jewish man in New York, my kids would not be considered Jewish here; but if I marry a Jewish man from Kaifeng, then my kids would be considered Jewish there.

The question regarding who is Chinese is less frequently asked than the ques-

tion of who is a Jew, but in my seeking the answers to both, I've realized that it's less a matter of who your mother and father are, and more what you deliberately choose for your life and how you diligently live it out. An ancient Chinese proverb goes, "if you have one year, plant rice; if you have ten years, plant trees, and if you have a hundred years, educate your children." The future of the world rests on our shoulders and those that come after us—it is the appreciation of our customs and traditions that we teach to our children that will result in thriving civilizations instead of assimilation.

The secret is in the scroll—in the final moment of the Opening Ceremony, as the Chinese gymnast Li Ning ran ahead of all the historical moments that came before him and lit the great Olympic torch, he represented all those who chased after their dreams and prepared the way of the future...the story doesn't end here—the scroll is constant unfolding before our eyes: "If you will it, it is no dream!"

For any questions related to the contents of this article, please contact me at jingwangpro@gmail.com.

Jing Wang was born and raised in Beijing and currently lives in New York City working on Wall Street. She studied International Business and Judaic Studies at New York University, and is very active within the Jewish community—namely, Congregation Beth El of Manhattan, Jewish National Fund JNFuture, and Fuel for Truth.

## BOOK NOOK

### Henan Jewish

by Chun Lai Wang.  
Taipei: Tai Dian Dian Ye Gu Fen Company, Ltd. 2006. 486 pages. [This Taiwan publication uses traditional logographs; the Mainland publication uses simplified logographs.]  
reviewed by Li Chuang, Victoria, BC

*Henan Jewish* is supposedly a semi-autobiographical novel about a 14 year old boy called Shi Quan Yi Le. The story takes place during the Cultural Revolution in a labor re-education prison factory. The novel's characters includes the boy's family – the father was the manager of the factory – and Chinese intellectuals and

ex-Nationalist army officers who were detained in the factory for re-education. It is a story about Shi Quan's growing up and the search for his Jewish identity, as well as of the other Chinese Jews around him.

Chun Lai Wang, the author of the book, is a member of the police force and worked as a prison administrator for 20 years. He is a member of the Chinese Prison Association and the Henan Prison Association. He has written books on prison management, as well as novels set in prisons that have been quite popular in China. His unique background pro-

vides us a glimpse of a Chinese prison and the lives of the prisoners and guards.

The author's father was a prison administrator as well, and as a child the author grew up in a Chinese low-security prison, playing with the prisoner's children and talking with the inmates. In the Preface, the author writes that these prisoners included those descended from the Kaifeng Jews. He also writes that he studied painting with one such prisoner who told him about Chinese Judaism. In 2004, he heard on the radio that in Israel it was illegal for Chinese Jewish men to have sex with Israeli women (obviously, this was con-

## Olympic Meditations: A Search for the Fire for Identity

by Jing Wang

Israeli President Shimon Peres, who attended the Opening Ceremony in Beijing on 08-08-08, tasked himself with promoting diplomatic ties between China and Israel upon its establishment 16 years ago. Why? He remembers Israel's founding father David Ben-Gurion writing to him saying "please look at China in a far-reaching way; it is a great nation and will be the world focus one day." He praised the Opening Ceremony and poetically referenced the National Stadium, otherwise known as the Bird's Nest, "birds are singing, flying, birds are nurturing their fledgling young."

What is the Jewish connection with the Olympics? I journeyed to Beijing to partake in the unofficial Olympic sport of cheering, as well as to visit the various places of Jewish heritage in China for the first time; the former induced a revelation of personal identity; the latter, a much clearer understanding of what identity really entails, especially in the Diaspora.

### Why the obsession with the Bird's Nest?

The bird's nest is a very pricey delicacy in China whereby whole blocks of windowless developments are built to grow birds in order to harvest their nests, skipping the plumbing and foregoing the condo profits. The National Stadium, made of 110,000 tons of steel (out of the 3 millions tons of steel used for the complete makeover of Beijing, approximately equal to 50 Empire State Buildings), is also a proud statement that China has finally fulfilled Mao's dream of surpassing Great Britain and the US in steel production.

But President Peres evokes a much softer image—the bird's nest is where the eggs are laid, where parents nurse the young, feeding them through their own mouths until the fledgling wings gain enough strength to adventure into the real world. Here, the ingredient that makes young wings strong is the single most indispensable connection between the Chinese and the Jews: scholarship—scholarship through education, education through

traditions, traditions through literature, and literature through ancient texts.

I watched a Chinese language competition for foreign students in July where the host applauded their efforts to study Chinese because the heart and soul of China is recorded in the written word; therefore, the Bird's Nest is the ultimate self-expression for China because the root of the word "write" is a bird depicted under a roof. Let's take a look at the following:

Write: The character originally depicted a magpie bird under a roof; the magpie bird was known to tidy the house by finding bright objects and hiding them; to write, then, is to put one's thoughts into order, or to find ways of self-expression through a medium, which the ancient Chinese were very innovative in facilitating.

Written Word: The top of the character is the same as the character "to write" above, which depicts a roof; the bottom portion is the character for "son;" the Chinese treasured the written word as much as they treasured their children, so people began inscribing written word on bamboo strips in order to preserve them; reciprocally, by studying and teaching the written word, the father preserves his son also.

Nest: Ancient character depicting 3 fledgling birds in a nest on top of a tree; today's version has the character "fruit" on the bottom.

Learn: The bottom portion is the same character for son (similar to the character above for written word); the top signifies the teacher's folded arms and laying on of hands, a steady burden that pressures knowledge into the mind of the student.

The level of significance education plays in the Chinese family is self-evident from the root and evolution of these characters above. Many people claim that the reason why Jewish-Chinese intermarriages are so common today is this dual emphasis on family and education. I agree with this statement, however, this modern phenomenon is merely a reflection of deeply rooted traditions of scholarship that the two cultures have separately cultivated.

Deuteronomy 17: 18-20 is a good illustration of the Jewish model for scholarship:

"Now it shall come about when he [the king] sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall *write for himself a copy* of this law on a scroll in the *presence of the Levitical priests*. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may *learn* to fear the Lord his God, by carefully *observing all the words* of this law and these statutes, that his heart may not be lifted up above his countrymen and that he may not turn aside from the commandment, to the right or to the left, so that he and his sons may continue long in his kingdom in the midst of Israel."

The above excerpt from Deuteronomy 17 is a model of preservation—of generations—diligent learning through writing of the given word/law, with a continual presence of teachers ready to correct and impart wisdom. The method of copying and memorizing verbatim is not popular in western education, but it was certainly in practice in the time of Torah and, since paper was invented in China, it has never lost its popularity. Pedagogical debate aside, it is exactly this familial educational environment that President Peres was alluding to — in both Jewish and Chinese culture. It is through education that fledgling wings are made strong and through scholarship that success is defined. And in the Diaspora, where one is always at some level of disadvantage for being a foreigner, it is the value of scholarship that has maintained generations of both Jews and Chinese, and pushed them to achieve excellence even in places where their knowledge was not welcome.

### What is identity and which one prevails?

Prior to the Olympics, I was unsure who I'd be cheering for if China and the US were to go head to head—I have a childhood attachment to Beijing, but I just became a US citizen last year and would be voting for the first time in this election as my first patriotic act....I felt equally torn regarding my identity and the plethora of factors that weigh into split loyalties....

When the US-China baseball game finally came, I was pleasantly shocked that the

## IN THE FIELD

### ◆ Kaifeng

Shi Lei reports that he received his requested ten copies of Rena Krasno's Chinese language version of her children's story, *Red Kite and Blue Cap*, which tells the story of a Kaifeng Jewish boy and his friend. SJI VP Rabbi Arnie Belzer paid for the shipping of the books.

### Canberra, Australia

Donald Leslie, the dean of our field of study, now retired at 86, has just published an article "Jews and Judaism in Traditional China: Prospects for Research" in Peter Kupfer's new book *Youtai—Presence and Perception of Jews and Judaism in China*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 2008. His health is good and he also reports that he has sold his collections on Jews and Judaism in China and on Islam in China to the TBC Library of Chinese Studies, Beijing Centre for Chinese Studies, University of International Business and Economics, in Beijing, China.

### ◆ Israel

In September, the first Chinese tour group visited Israel, opening a channel for tourists to see Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, Israel's Tourism Minister Ruhama Avraham-Balila announced.

Previously, Chinese tourists needed invitation letters to get business visas to visit Israel. The tour group to Israel visited famous sites such as Jerusalem, the Dead Sea and Eilat in the 10-day trip, which also included some scenic spots in Jordan.

China and Israel signed an agreement last year, making Israel an approval destination for Chinese tour groups. More than 10,000 business tourists visited Israel last year, and the number is expected to rise sharply this year, Avraham-Balila said. Israel is making preparations for receiving Chinese tourists, including providing brochures printed in the Chinese language.

### ◆ Denver

One of the more surprising candidates to meet at a pre-convention event of the National Jewish Democratic Council was Congressional hopeful Hank Eng, the son of Chinese immigrants to the United States and a convert to Judaism.

The New York-born Eng, who will be vying for Colorado's 6th District in the U.S House of Representatives on election day, November 4, says he's very comfortable to be part of the Jewish community, and that his daughter Kendall recently celebrated her bat mitzvah.

"Between 1994 and 2000, I discovered the Jewish tradition at the growing community in Beijing, and I decided to do what Jews do—to make the world better," he told Haaretz.

### ◆ Jerusalem

In a historic decision, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert has decided that all 7,232 members of the tribe of Bnei Menashe who are living in northern India will be allowed to make aliyah...

The decision came a short while after Meir Shitreet, Minister of the Interior, who had led the opposition to their aliyah, removed his objections. After Rosh Hashanah, Shitreet, together with Eli Afflalo, Minister of Absorption, will fly to northern India, where the Bnei Menashe reside, and will meet with them. Upon the Ministers' return, the decision will be brought to the Prime Minister for formal approval. Their aliyah will take place, in all probability, with a monthly quota system of a few hundred olim per month, with the anticipation that within two years, the entire group will be brought over to Israel.

The Israeli government is aware of the sensitivities of the Indian Government with regard to the emigration of thousands of Bnei Menashe from their country within a short period of time. Therefore, their aliyah will take place over an extended period, with the quota system. Of course they will undergo conversion in Israel with the assistance of the Shavei Israel organization.

### ◆ Knoxville/Kaifeng

Gilya Gerda Schmidt, Head, Department of Religious Studies, Professor of Religious Studies and Chair, The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville visited the Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University, July 3-10. She spent one week with about twelve students and teachers whose academic discipline is Jewish Studies, and a few more who took advantage of the opportunity to practice their English.



Jewish Studies students at Henan University with Prof. Zhang Qianhong and Visiting Professor Gilya Schmidt

## TO THE EDITOR

My name is Uri Ben-Avraham currently a final year student at the University of Western Australia. In the new year I will be contending with an honours programme which will be focusing on Taiping refugees who arrived in the state of Victoria, Australia during the 1860s.

I have two questions:

1. Did the ranking Taiping personalities Shi Dakai, Li Fuzhong and Li Xiucheng have links to the Kaifeng Jewish community?
2. These previously mentioned men were characterised as Hakka, do the Hakka have any Jewish clan links (historically Hakka and Jewish settlement appear to overlap)?

Shalom, Uri Ben-Avraham, benavu01@student.uwa.edu.au

## Kaifeng Jews in Israel

by Anshel Pfeffer  
 excerpted from *haaretz.com*, 13 June 08

Jin Jin and Nina Wang are students in Hebrew University's preparatory program. They will soon commence their BA studies, but they already have long-term dreams. Jin wants to eventually serve as a diplomat in the Foreign Ministry. Wang hopes to use her diverse knowledge of languages to represent Israeli companies in China. The two women belong to one of the smallest Jewish communities in Israel - immigrants from Kaifeng, China - which numbers just 10 souls.

Jin, 22, and Wang, 21, arrived in Israel at the beginning of 2006, together with two other friends from Kaifeng on tourist visas. They received temporary resident status after they begun conversion studies and received citizenship after undergoing a conversion ceremony in a rabbinical court. Wang explains that as children their parents and grandparents "told us we are Jews and that one day we'd return to our land." Jin Jin boasts, "We have a family burial plot that goes back dozens of generations, and we have genealogy books showing our connection with earlier generations of Jews."

Kaifeng Jews do not object to undergoing a "giyur l'chumra" - a conversion ceremony done for the sake of removing any doubt, in contrast to other groups such as Ethiopian Jews...

The town's Jews reconnected with mainstream Jewry thanks to visits by Jewish tourists, who brought learning materials and religious objects to local Jews. Jin's uncle Shlomo Jin went to the Israeli embassy in Beijing eight years ago seeking to immigrate to Israel. Embassy officials didn't want to hear about it, so he eventually came to Israel with his family via a European country. Shavei Israel, an organization, which reaches out to lost Jewish communities, helped community members get accepted into a conversion program.

The girls describe their year in the conversion institute as stressful. "We felt we needed to learn because that's what we lacked," says Wang. In contrast to other conversion candidates, they didn't feel insulted by being required to strictly observe Jewish commandments. Michael Freund, the head of Shavei Israel, esti-

mates the potential number of immigrants from Kaifeng to be no more than a few hundred. However, he described the community members as "people with very high motivation who we need to help them." Neither the Israeli government nor the Jewish Agency currently encourages the immigration or conversion of Kaifeng Jews, but Jin Jin and Nina Wang believe that within a generation a proper community of Jewish Chinese immigrants will be established in Israel.

## Jewish Beijing

by Dan Levin  
 excerpted from *The Forward*, July 31, 2008

Beijing — The Chabad House here sits at the end of a quiet street in an upscale gated community just inside this city's Fourth Ring road and down the block from the Israeli Embassy. A caged duck and a stroller guard the entrance, as does a small army of young Chinese men who patrol the neighborhood of gaudy McMansions.

Ask a local to describe Shimon Freundlich, Beijing's Chabad-Lubavitch rabbi, and that person probably will raise hand to chin and stroke an invisible huzi, or beard...

Today, roughly 2,000 Jews call this city of 17 million home. Yet, building a thriving Jewish community in Beijing takes patience, humor and flexibility, especially as the capital has been gearing up for the Olympic Games.

"We try to fly below the radar," Freundlich said. As preparations for the Olympics have made clear, China is still a very centralized state — and one that has not historically had an easy relationship with religion of any color. Jewish locals take great care to work within the system, given that Chinese authorities are on constant alert against proselytizing and Western spiritual practices. Chabad allows only holders of foreign passports to attend prayer services and cultural activities, and refrains from public advertising. The synagogue is technically in Freundlich's home, since free-standing religious buildings are forbidden. Even bringing in Hebrew prayer books requires government permission.

Some Chinese have, in fact, expressed interest in conversion, according to Freundlich, who firmly discourages such inquiries. "When you come to live in a country that has vastly different rules and regulations, you have to pay close attention to the government to make sure everything you do is respectful," Freundlich said. But "at the end of the day, they're not worried about us. We're not Mormons."...

The success of Beijing's Jews, as a religious community, has come from many years of toil. Much of the groundwork was laid by a small group of liberal North American Jews who first came to Beijing in the late 1970s.

"When I first got here there was nothing but a few Jews living in hotels," said Roberta Lipson, one of the founders of the Kehillat Beijing congregation, which is affiliated with the Reform movement.

Lipson arrived in 1979 with the first handful of Western entrepreneurs, students and journalists. Along with some friends, Lipson, CEO of the medical technology company Chindex, organized the first Passover Seder in 1980 in a member's home and then High Holy Day services in a hotel conference room, starting Friday night Sabbath open houses shortly thereafter.

Over the next decade, they were joined by Jews from Europe and the Soviet Union, and in 1992, when China and Israel established diplomatic relations, Kehillat Beijing held a joint Seder with the Israeli Embassy.

In 1995, the community began holding regular Friday night services in a local activities center, followed by the first brit milah in 1997, the same year that Kehillat Beijing established a Sunday school. Today that school, Ahavat Yitzchak, teaches 40 children. Despite never employing a permanent rabbi, Kehillat Beijing now has around 50 families.

Yet because Kehillat Beijing was a progressive community that held egalitarian religious services and lacked kosher food, Beijing (and China) remained a major headache for halachically observant Jews, who were coming in increasing numbers as China was becoming a major source for kosher-ingredient manufacturing and Jewish-owned businesses.

Pollak's assessment that "it would be wiser to conclude that the Moshe Leah scrolls were very old family heirlooms."

Michael Pollak's article on the Moshe Leah Scroll, in a January 1987 addendum in *Points East*, called for a reassessment of the writing and spelling styles of surviving medieval Hebrew manuscripts from Kaifeng. His conclusion is that "the possibility of a Dead Sea tie-in to these texts seems never to have been suspected in the past. That possibility... now demands investigation."

Scholars still disagree about the age of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and research is still left to be done. But all of the scholars I have contacted have come to the same conclusion that the Moshe Leah Scroll is not a forgery, nor is it based on Milik's copies of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

It would be in the best interest of the scholars who believe in the antiquity of the Dead Sea Scrolls to discredit the Moshe Leah Scroll because of its striking paleographic similarities to the Dead Sea Scrolls. If those scholars acknowledge it as authentic, however, the obvious conclusion would be that the Dead Sea Scrolls would have to be dated in the medieval era — after A.D. 500 — at the earliest, and the myth of the Dead Sea Scrolls' antiquity will have run its course.

*[Neil Altman is a Philadelphia-based writer who specializes in the Dead Sea Scrolls. He has a master's degree in the Old Testament from Wheaton Graduate School in Wheaton, Ill., and was an American Studies Fellow at Eastern College.]*

## Turkic Ashkenazim

by Daniel J. Frim

Ashkenazic Jews have a nearly forgotten historical connection with China. During the Middle Ages, a Turko-Mongolic tribe known as the Khazars converted en masse to Judaism and established a primarily Jewish empire extending from the Ukraine to Central Asia. In addition, neighboring Turkic tribes, such as the Avars and Cumans, are believed to have converted to Judaism as well, and genetic research suggests that these Turkic proselytes account for approximately 25% of the Ashkenazic Jewish population.<sup>1</sup> Although the Jewish Khazars, Avars and Cumans did not reside in China, their Turkic cousins, the Uighurs, continue to do so to this day. Furthermore, accord-

ing to Turkic legend, all Turkic peoples originated in the northwest region of China known as Xinjiang. Finally, medieval Chinese sources mention the name *ko-sa*, suggesting to some scholars that the earliest Khazar tribesmen lived in the areas surrounding Xinjiang before migrating westward to southern Russia.<sup>2</sup>

But what have Ashkenazic Jews inherited from their East Asian ancestors? Indeed, at first glance, they appear to be an entirely European people. For example, their language, Yiddish, is composed primarily of Germanic words, and they share many of their more superstitious beliefs with their Slavic neighbors. There is an Ashkenazic custom, however, which may have Turko-Mongolic roots. The practice of placing pebbles upon grave monuments is one of the most widely recognized Ashkenazic traditions of mourning. However, despite the common nature of this practice, its original meaning has always remained a mystery. It may be explained, though, through comparison with the burial practices of the Turkic peoples.

Across the Eurasian steppe, from western China and Mongolia to Poland and Hungary, lie thousands of burial mounds known as kurgans. Many of these kurgans were built by Turks, and they frequently contain not only human remains, but those of horses as well.<sup>3</sup> In addition, these burial mounds are often surrounded by stones, known as *balbals*, each of which is believed to represent an enemy killed in battle by the deceased.<sup>4</sup> Presumably, these *balbals* were regarded as a sign of great honor. However, when Turks converted to Judaism, rabbinic law limited their burials to small, modest graves. Nevertheless, perhaps they continued to view *balbals* as an essential part of a respectable burial for a warrior. If so, as their graves grew smaller and less elaborate in accordance with rabbinic law, their *balbals* would have gradually shrunk as well, until they were replaced by mere pebbles. When the descendants of the Turkic Jews ceased to remember the original meaning behind *balbals*, they would have begun placing pebbles upon all gravestones, just as Ashkenazic Jews do today, instead of restricting them to the graves of warriors.

There is some evidence, albeit sparse, for the Turkic origins of this Ashkenazic custom. The first man to have recorded the tradition was the Austrian Rabbi Shalom of Neustadt in his 1395 work entitled *Minhagei Maharash*.<sup>5</sup> Although few Turkic Jews settled in Austria, Rabbi Shalom of Neustadt established a yeshiva

in the Bulgarian town of Vidin.<sup>6</sup> This would have given him the opportunity to observe the customs of Jews with Turkic ancestry, because they are known to have established communities in Bulgaria.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, in Chelarevo, Serbia, archaeologists have discovered a large cemetery that, although clearly Jewish, also exhibits Turkic characteristics, such as horse burials. Therefore, some archaeologists have surmised that the individuals buried in the Chelarevo cemetery were Jews of Avar descent, who died in the late eight or early ninth century. Significantly, the graves are strewn with fragments of brick. Some of these brick fragments are decorated with Jewish motifs, such as menorahs, shofars, and etrogs.<sup>8</sup> This may suggest that the Avar Jews buried in the cemetery were already attempting to Judaize their originally pagan custom of placing *balbals* around graves.

Ashkenazic Jews have a significant, yet hardly remembered historical connection with the Chinese. Their ancestors, the Turkic peoples of southern Russia, originated in Xinjiang, the northwest region of China. Furthermore, although more archaeological evidence is needed to confirm this theory, it is quite possible that the Ashkenazim have preserved a cultural link with their East Asian ancestors in their custom of placing pebbles upon grave monuments. Hopefully, awareness of this historical connection will help foster understanding between two of the world's most distant, yet similar peoples: the Jews and the Chinese.

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Alan Brook, *The Jews of Khazaria* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), pp. 247-253, 281.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3, 6-7.

<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Shepard.

"The Khazars' Formal Adoption of Judaism and Byzantium's Northern Policy." *Oxford Slavonic Papers*, New Series 31 (1998): 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> Wendy Doniger, *Asian Mythologies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), p. 336.

<sup>5</sup> Shalom Sabar. "RE: Slavic Origins of Ashkenazic Custom." Email to author. 8 March 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, Volume 17 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> Kevin Alan Brook, *The Jews of Khazaria* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2004), p. 205.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250.

with Professor John Trever, paleographer and original photographer of the Dead Sea Scrolls, who assumed the Khotan segments I sent him were from the earliest Dead Sea Scrolls. Trever wrote, "as I look at your sheet of... scroll fragments, I am not inclined to date them very much earlier than most of the [Dead Sea Scrolls], but perhaps somewhat."

Using Trever's method of comparing various scrolls letter by letter, I made a chart showing the Hebrew scripts of the Khotan text, the Genesis Manuscript (A.D. 1489-1679), a Hebrew text from China (A.D. 1772), the Qumran Isaiah Scroll and Qumran Testament of Kohath. One of the scholars to whom I showed the chart was Milton Fisher, professor emeritus of Old Testament and twice president of the Philadelphia Theological Seminary. Fisher said that on a scale of 1-10, with 10 being exactly the same, the paleographic comparisons ranked "8 to 9."

These paleographic details provide some solid evidence about the age of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Dating them not in antiquity but in the Middle Ages, at the earliest, explains the connection to medieval texts, as well as unusual things like the Chinese symbol for God in the Isaiah Scroll. University of Pennsylvania's Mair dated this character, which also appears in The Order of the Community, another Dead Sea Scroll, no earlier than A. D. 100 and perhaps 700 years or more later.

Donald Daniel Leslie, an Australian sinologist and leading expert in Kaifeng Jewry, agreed with Mair's dating and wrote in *Points East* that it's unlikely the Jews and the Chinese knew much, if anything, about each other before the time of Jesus. Leslie wrote that "there is no hint in Western sources of any knowledge of the Chinese language or writing until perhaps a thousand years later."

In later scholarly reports, E. Bruce Brooks, research professor of Chinese and director of an international group of sinologists at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, confirmed Mair's findings and other possible Chinese characters on some of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These Chinese connections, especially the symbol for God dating after Christ, and the fact that the characters are native to the Chinese Central Asian area, begin to explain the time frame of the Dead Sea Scrolls and their possible place of origin. Mair

identified Chinese Central Asia as the area from which the Chinese symbol for God in the scrolls came.

The medieval Khotan text is from the same region and period. Ironically, the area is where Leah's ancestors traded with the Hsiung-nu.

Clues to the cultural context of the time show several possible influences. In the eighth century, Nestorian Christians reintroduced the gospel to China. One of their bishops translated the Gospels into Chinese and possibly "parts of the Pentateuch and Isaiah," as professor Samuel Moffett of Princeton suggests in his book, *A History of Christianity in Asia*.

There was also the Karaite movement of the Middle Ages. Composed of Jews who rejected rabbinic teachings, the Karaites moved north into Russia and east into Central Asia.

Nor can we ignore the Central Asian Turks known as Khazars who converted to Judaism around A.D. 740. These three communities show a Jewish-Christian influence early on. As Moffett brings out, "Jews in these parts lived with Christians" during the Middle Ages. In fact, there are scholarly accounts of Nestorian Central Asians heading toward Jerusalem in the 1300 s.

When a text such as the Moshe Leah Scroll shows up in China, the Asian connection with the Dead Sea Scrolls is no longer strange.

Why haven't we heard about the Moshe Leah Scroll before? Gabow dismissed it, thinking Professor Leslie had solved the mystery when he said he had evidence of a forgery.

Leslie compared the Moshe Leah Scroll with a Dead Sea Scroll photo in J.T. Milik's *Ten Years of Discovery in the Wilderness of Judaea*. That photo, Leslie wrote, contained a section of the Isaiah Scroll that included all the passages in the Moshe Leah photo, thus indicating that the Moshe Leah scroll was a copy.

But Professor Fisher, of Philadelphia Theological Seminary, in an extensive January 2000 report, wrote that the text in the Moshe Leah photo starts in Isaiah 38: 8 or earlier, which is text that was not in Milik's photo.

"There is little reason to call or classify this [Moshe Leah] manuscript a hoax or a forgery," Fisher wrote, after comparing Milik's photo of the Isaiah text with Leah's.

Fisher and I found many discrepancies between the photos of the Moshe Leah Scroll and Milik's photo of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among them, the Moshe Leah text has far fewer lines and words per line than the Milik photo.

Also in Milik's photo, there is writing sideways, and there are scattered Masoretic vowels (vocalization marks from the 10<sup>th</sup> century or later). The Moshe Leah Scroll has none of this. Nor does the Moshe Leah Scroll have the modern Western numbers that are seen in the Qumran scrolls.

More importantly, the Moshe Leah photo shows the letter "Yod" from an earlier chapter plus words that are cut off in Milik's photo. An additional word which refers to God as the "living God" appears on the Moshe Leah scroll and not on the Qumran scrolls. "Living God" is a term used by Chinese Jews. Obviously, Leah could not have copied what does not exist in Milik.

Observing differences between the Milik and Moshe Leah photos, Middle Eastern archaeologist Peter W. Pick of Petaluma, Calif., stated in October 2004 that "the Moshe Leah Isaiah Scroll is not a copy from Milik" and suggested, as Fisher did several years earlier, that "the Moshe Leah Scroll may date earlier than the Qumran Isaiah text."

These were just some examples that have led a number of scholars in the past few years to conclude the Moshe Leah Scroll is not a forgery, because a forgery, of course, would try to be as true to the original as possible.

Documentation released in mid-March this year by the Sino-Judaic Institute revealed an investigation in the 1980s by scholars into the scroll's authenticity. Their research also showed parallels between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Moshe Leah Scroll as well as the Dead Sea Scrolls and medieval Hebrew texts.

My efforts to reach Leah, who may still reside in Taiwan and would be in his late 50s, have been unsuccessful.

This new scroll would have perhaps come to light sooner had Gabow accepted

"When we were the only outlet for Jewish religious practice in Beijing, we felt a lot of pressure to be all things to all people," Lipson said. "We knew we weren't fulfilling more traditional religious needs."

Indeed, Orthodox Jews were forced to schlep suitcases of kosher food with them from abroad and to live and travel amid a society that was by and large ignorant of Judaism. To address these pressing issues, Chabad's Freundlich arrived in Beijing in 2001.

"My goal was to build a Jewish infrastructure starting from almost scratch," he said. Freundlich's presence has provided a place for Jewish children of all stripes. In 2002 his wife, Dini, opened Ganeinu International School an accredited Montessori school that today educates 50 children, up to age 12, from a diverse range of Jewish backgrounds and various levels of observance. This openness is a major theme that connects Chabad and Kehillat Beijing.

"We focus on what unites us, not what divides us," Freundlich said. "I'm God's agent, not his policeman. I need to be able to balance a Satmar in a shtreimel with a guy who brings his non-Jewish girlfriend to Shabbat dinner."

Chabad provides teachers for Kehillat Beijing's Sunday school, which shares both Ganeinu's building and the financial responsibility for it, Lipson said. The two also come together for religious holidays and coordinate their Seders to avoid schedule conflicts.

"I'm sure some visitors will look askance at our close ties," Lipson said, "but we realize Jews come in all colors, shapes and sizes, and we are very grateful to Chabad for helping us make a community where all Jews can feel at home."

In the past seven years, the Jewish community has grown to 1,500 people from 700, Freundlich said, and Chabad has established a downtown location in the city's central business district as well as a community center, in addition to the Chabad House, that holds a synagogue. Satmar Hasids donated the funds for Mei Torah, a women's-only mikveh and spa complete with massage, showers and manicure and pedicures.

Just as vital for the observant community is a readily available supply of kosher food. A ritual slaughterer flies in from South Africa every three months to shecht beef and chicken for the Jewish community, including those who are customers at Dini's, Beijing's only kosher restaurant, which opened in March 2007...

### A Thousand Jews (continued from page 1)

Many of the Jewish descendants of Kaifeng continue to live in the old section, not far from where the synagogue stood. The Jewish names of two streets in the neighborhood that lead to the synagogue still appear (in Hebrew and English) with the words - "Torah Study Lane South" and "Torah Study Lane North". The houses are 100 to 150 years old and were built after the great flood in the mid-19th century. The community is now slated for "evacuate/build" - a process which most of the cities in China undergo: The old buildings are destroyed, and the residents are moved to new high-rise apartments. The young people in general are very pleased with this move, while the older people would prefer to stay where they are. However, the decision is not in their hands...

Twenty percent of China does not belong to the largest national group - the Han. During the deliberations that took place at the time, it was decided to recognize 55 different national minorities, but the Jews (known as "Youtai" in Chinese) were not included in the list. The decision was taken personally in 1953 by Mao and a group of very senior officials, but was kept a secret. By that time, nearly all the tens of thousands of Jews that lived in the cities of Harbin and Shanghai had already left China. There is no doubt that the lack of recognition of the Jews as a national minority was not related to anti-Semitism. In China there is not - and never was - anti-Semitism. The Jews actually enjoy a very positive image in China. The decision not to recognize them stemmed from the fact that their number was so insignificant, a few hundred in a country of a billion people. They also did not have their own national language and did not live in a defined area.

In the 1980's, as China started moving over to a free economy, and opened up to the west, Jews from Canada and America came to Kaifeng, and met with the descendants in the city. These visits aroused and strengthened the Jewish awareness of the descendants. Shi Lei, for example, met American Rabbi Marvin Tokayer in the year 2000. "When he saw my interest in Judaism, he offered to arrange a scholarship for me to study in Israel and I gratefully accepted..."

Shavei Israel tries to forge a bond with descendants of Jews who have maintained emotional and religious attachments to the Jewish people..."Even more importantly, we [Shavei Israel] have already assisted ten young adults from the community to make Aliya and get settled here in the country"...

While many of the descendants are interested in a much more intensive connection with Jewish tradition, those that have expressed an actual interest in making aliya and converting actually constitute a very small group. Thirty year old Zhao Lee, a cousin of Jin Jin's, is a manager of a local supermarket and is studying law in parallel. He is married to a young Chinese girl who does not hail from the descendants of the Jewish community. Zhao Lee describes to us how he makes Kiddush, lights candles, and ritually washes his hands before eating, just like many other descendants of the Jews in Kaifeng. "On Passover we prepare matzah here in Kaifeng. We don't have 'marror' (the bitter herbs), so we eat wasabi in its place." They also read the Torah, but not the Passover Haggadah. Zhao Lee says decisively that he has a real interest in studying Jewish history as well as Hebrew, ("I love Hebrew", he says) and in deepening his connection to the Jewish people, but he also says that he has no plans to leave China.

As of now, all of Shavei Israel's activities amongst the descendants of the Kaifeng Jews take place without the cooperation of official Israeli authorities. Michael Freund is critical of the fact that the State of Israel ignores, in his words, the descendants of Kaifeng Jewry. He claims that even though many of the Jewish descendants of Kaifeng are interested in such a connection, the staff of the Israel embassy in Beijing will not meet with them.

The spokesman for the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem responds to this claim by saying that in the 17th century, the Jewish community in Kaifeng completely assimilated with the local population. "There is no Jewish community in Kaifeng, but there are people who are aware at one level or another of their Jewish roots in their distant family history. The official Israeli representatives in China visited Kaifeng more than once and were impressed with their important Jewish connection to their history and tradition".

This careful diplomatic wording suggests that there is a basis to Freund's claim that there is an official disregard of the descendants of Kaifeng. However, things are not so simple. Many of those that are considered experts claim that Freund and his organization are like a "bull in a china shop" and could cause damage to the relationship between Israel and China. "China is the country just behind Russia in its influence on Iran", says one of these experts who wishes to remain anonymous. Israel, he insists, "requires the assistance of China in this area, as well as in other areas, such as politics and economics, in which China's weight is steadily increasing. The subject of the national minorities is a very sensitive one for China, not only because of the Tibetan problem, but also because of the large Muslim minority, mainly in Western China in the area that borders with the Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union. The government of China is concerned about national movements that will try to break away from China and establish an independent state. While it is clear that the Jews do not pose any such threat, the Chinese government prefers to maintain the status quo and that includes the Jewish descendants in Kaifeng. Israel cannot and should not anger the Chinese government on such a delicate topic."

While this sensitivity may be understandable, at the local level it does not appear that the Chinese authorities are at all opposed to the activities of Shavei Israel, which take place openly in Kaifeng. Indeed, Shi Lei reports that the authorities even encourage groups of Jewish tourists to visit the city. "The groups are from the US", he says. "Israeli tourists rarely visit at all." And what about the Israeli embassy? "I have never seen them here

at all, but I would be very happy if they would come", Shi Lei says.

Freund concludes that, "We must not turn our backs on these wonderful people. And if eventually a few hundred of the descendants of Kaifeng decide to return to Judaism and to the Jewish People – and I believe that will be the case – it will be an act of very important historical and emotional closure."

### Meeting Summary of SJI Managing Board

(continued from page 1)

It was noted that in early 80's, the descendants' ID cards said "Jews" but since the Jin family immigrated to Israel, the descendants have had their ID cards confiscated and were given a choice between Han, i.e. Chinese, and Hui, i.e. Islamic, ethnic categories. (The Hui minority designation has some benefits – including burial, more children, etc.)

Lastly, a number of reports raised the question about the motivation of Western Jewish involvement in Kaifeng: Is it to promote a revival of the Jewish community in Kaifeng or the *aliyah* of the descendants to Israel, or both? Anything to do with *aliyah* might spell trouble for the descendants with the authorities, threaten the Jewish studies program at Henan University and elsewhere, and adversely affect Chinese-Israeli relations.

#### SJI Response

The Board looked at variety of options to help deal with this situation. Clearly a long-term presence in Kaifeng is needed, but SJI is a small organization with a limited budget.

With this in mind, the Board decided to create two scholarships for Chinese students to attend Jewish studies institutions in China. One of the scholarships will be for interested Kaifeng residents, i.e. the descendants, the other for any interested Chinese student. Both could strengthen the Jewish presence in China.

A second motion concerned strengthening Shi Lei's efforts in Kaifeng with other descendants. To help him, we agreed that when he has a proposal for supporting Jewish communal activities there, he

should make a request for funding, which will be voted on by the SJI Board.

Turning to other matters, the Board passed a grants policy. SJI now has a grants policy and a committee to review applications from individual scholars, filmmakers and others. This will help with outreach efforts. *Points East* will publish a notice on this in upcoming issues and eventually it will be available on our website.

The Board also voted to proceed with a proposed academic conference on adoptions with the expectation that finding the proper conference host is the next step. A sub-committee was formed to explore and develop idea.

Lastly, a cyber-strategy committee was set up to improve our website, including putting all past issues of *Points East* on line, and a sub-committee will explore reviving our scholarly publication *Sino-Judaica*.

### Israel Epstein (1915-2005): A Biographical Sketch

by Jonathan Goldstein  
reprinted from *The Biographical Dictionary of the People's Republic of China*, 2007

Israel Epstein, prominent Chinese author and Editor-in-Chief of *China Reconstructs* magazine, was born in Warsaw, Russian Poland, in 1915. He was the only child of a middle-class Jewish family. Shortly after his birth, his family sought a better economic future in Kobe, Japan, where his father entered the maritime insurance business. This was a rare opportunity in the middle of the First World War. Because Germany had hermetically sealed off Russia's Western front, the Russian war effort was supplied by maritime shipments via Kobe to Vladivostok or Dalian and then westward across the Trans-Siberian Railway. By 1919 business opportunities brought the Epsteins to Harbin, the rail and commercial hub of northeast China. In 1920 the Epsteins went to Tianjin, the port servicing Beijing, and lived there continuously from 1920 until 1937.

Like most Jewish children in Tianjin's Foreign Concession, Epstein was educated in English. He attended St. Joseph's

many respected scholars arguing that the texts were much more recent.

Today, a growing number of scholars doubt the Dead Sea Scrolls were produced by a Jewish sect at Qumran but think they actually originated elsewhere. No one, however, has pointed to Asia, where new information has turned up, including a possibly new scroll called the Moshe Leah Scroll from China.

In 1991, I wrote articles for the *Washington Post* and *Boston Herald* about the idea that a number of previously undeciphered markings in the margins of two Dead Sea Scrolls were Chinese. Victor Mair, graduate chairman of Chinese at the University of Pennsylvania, wrote in a report that the Chinese character "ti," which was found on the Dead Sea Scrolls, meant "god, divine king, deceased king, emperor." Word of Chinese characters in the scrolls triggered an interesting chain of events. Early in 1992, Leo Gabow, president of the Sino-Judaic Institute in California and now deceased, sent me an August 1987 copy of his institute's journal, *Points East*, by which I came to know of Moshe Leah.

In the journal, Gabow wrote: "In July of 1983, a curious article appeared in the Israeli newspaper *Maariv*... 'A Jew Looking for Correspondents.' His name is Moshe Leah. He is 35 years old.... His occupation: clerk in a printing company. He lives in Taiwan...."

Leah had written a letter to an Israeli newspaper saying: "I am the son of Abraham, from the Jewish community of Kaifengfu. My grandfather fled with my parents to Taiwan."

Gabow wrote to Leah, and in correspondence that lasted over three years, Gabow learned that Leah was Jewish on his mother's side and that he and his brother were given Jewish names. Leah knew very little about Judaism, but at age 24, just before his mother died, he learned of his Jewish background.

Leah told Gabow that his mother told him that their ancestors "came to China from a land where they were deported to by their enemy. And a King of Babylon defeated our enemy... and allowed Jews to return to Israel [516 B. C.] but our ancestor... came to Orient for the deal of tea and ivory with the tribes of Hsiung-

nu [who dominated Central Asia at the time]." Gabow noted that that "would place Moshe Leah's ancestors' entry into China during the Han dynasty [206 B. C. to A. D. 220]."

Gabow also said that Leah "mentioned that his mother previously owned two ancient Hebrew scrolls that had been destroyed by a leaky roof. One scroll dealt with 'Moshe's Law of the Book of Geshayeher,' possibly Isaiah, and the other scroll exalted human 'virtues' in Chinese style [in Hebrew script]."

During the course of their correspondence, Gabow received two photos of Leah looking at the scrolls. The first photo was "of poor quality and the letters... difficult to identify even with a magnifying glass. Photo number two, however, had considerably more clarity," Gabow wrote in the *Points East* article. Speculation immediately arose as to whether the language of the scroll in the photo could be Judeo-Persian or Judeo-Chinese or even Aramaic, Gabow wrote.

Through the years, Gabow contacted other scholars connected with the Sino-Judaic institute to help unravel the mystery of the Moshe Leah Scroll. According to Gabow's article in *Points East*, Michael Pollak, vice president of the Sino-Judaic Institute, author of five books and a leading expert on Chinese Jewry, was the first to make a breakthrough. "This I am sure of," Pollak wrote in a report cited by Gabow: "The lettering is Hebrew and is in Chinese calligraphic style. Especially the long, giraffe-like lamed."

The mention of this style of lamed, or "L," caught my attention, since I have spent years studying the subject, and this style of lamed is a signature of the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Gabow wrote, "For the first time the Moshe Leah 'Isaiah Scroll' is associated with Dead Sea texts" because of the similar style of writing.

Besides finding Aramaic words mixed with the Hebrew on the Moshe Leah Scroll, Rabbi Nathan Bernstein of La Habra, Calif., was also the first to think that the section of the scroll shown in the second Leah photo was from the Book of Isaiah, and other paleographers identified the text as Isaiah 38-40.

Rabbi Emanuel Silver, curator of the Hebrew section of the British Library, department of Oriental Manuscripts, saw the similarities, and Gabow says Silver wrote, "Anybody slightly acquainted with the Dead Sea Scrolls will notice at a glance the overall similarity of the hand that wrote the Moshe Leah scrolls to that of certain documents of the Dead Sea caves, and anyone a little familiar with the Dead Sea texts will be struck by the resemblances in orthography."

But interestingly, the Qumran Isaiah Scroll has no Aramaic in those chapters, indicating that the Moshe Leah Scroll was not a copy of a Qumran scroll.

Gabow later sent me the photos of Leah holding the scrolls. Since the text in the second photo (that of the Isaiah Scroll) was written on what appeared to be paper, it was difficult to tell whether it was a copy of an earlier scroll or, far less likely, an original scroll. It would only be natural that the Chinese would write their scrolls on paper, since they invented paper. Could this be an early copy of a new Dead Sea scroll or possibly even an original scroll? Gabow also sent me texts in Hebrew from China. In one, known as the Genesis Manuscript (1489-1679) from the Kaifeng Synagogue, the "meme" (Hebrew "m") were also like those in the Dead Sea's Isaiah Scroll and the Moshe Leah Scroll.

More importantly, Gabow enclosed a copy of the Khotan text, a business letter written on paper that came from Chinese Central Asia and had been dated from the eighth century. It had numerous Hebrew letters matching those in Dead Sea texts: the unique wishbone shape gimels, diamond-shaped kophs, S-shaped nuns, giraffeneck lameds and mems.

If the Dead Sea Scrolls were written before Christ's time and then buried in caves until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, how could the same script show up in China in the eighth century — or even later?

Jews have written their spoken languages (Syriac, Chaldee, Judeo-Persian, Yiddish, etc.) in Hebrew script since the fourth and fifth centuries. For example, the medieval Khotan text, whose Hebrew script matches the Dead Sea Scrolls, is written in Judeo-Persian Hebrew script. I used this Khotan text as a litmus test

sher, up 150 percent from two years ago, according to Bloomberg News. Green Tree first looked into kosher certification in 2005, about the same time the company began exporting its products.

"We met a Jewish customer who wore a small hat on his head," recalls Lucy Zhang, Rodin's interpreter from Green Tree. "He asked us if our food was kosher. He explained if it was kosher, then Jewish people could eat it."

"The only way to explain kosher to a company here is to explain it's for export," says Rabbi David Markowitz of Shatz Kosher Services, a kosher certification label.

Kosher certification costs \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year on average, Markowitz says. In exchange for access to the \$11.5 billion kosher food market in the United States, many Chinese companies are willing to pay the price.

Markowitz opened Shatz Kosher Services in China five years ago and recently added a location in Vietnam. The rabbi lives in Israel but spends about two weeks each month working in China.

Aside from its office near Hong Kong, Shatz also has one in China's Shandong Province, where many fruits and vegetables are grown and processed. Canned, frozen and dried fruits and vegetables are the most common kosher products from China, but many chemical additives and finished products like candy also are certified here.

Providing kosher supervision means paying strict attention to a product's components. Instead of conducting scientific health tests, kosher inspectors check a company's compliance with rules about its ingredients and preparation. Most factories have a few scheduled inspections each year. In situations where sweeping changes are required to make a product kosher, kashrut services usually decline to certify.

During his visit to the Green Tree plant, Rodin is as interested in what lies behind closed doors as he is with what's on the apple chip production line.

He insists on opening the doors, even inspecting a flattened cardboard box with an unfamiliar label that lies discarded in

the corner. As possible evidence of unaccounted-for ingredients that could be non-kosher, the discarded box is suspect.

"Since they don't really understand what I am looking for, they don't know what to hide," Rodin says.

Although kosher certification has been around for years in China, the landscape of food quality control in the country is undergoing drastic change. Last September, following intense negative publicity in the United States and elsewhere about the discovery of tainted food products, Chinese regulators began requiring companies to use numbered codes on packaging to identify the plants of origin for products. This way, all ingredients could be traced to their sources.

The Orthodox Union began using a similar oversight system in China as far back as 2001, a representative here said. Most Chinese who work with kosher supervisors still know little about kosher laws, but no longer are they completely ignorant about the practices of their Jewish colleagues.

Rabbi Amos Benjamin of the Baltimore-based Star-K kosher certification company has been certifying products in China as kosher since 1987. "Ten years ago when you visited a factory here, they had generally no idea what kosher certification was," he said. "Now, 10 years down the track, they understand more."

Though the food companies under inspection provide English-speaking interpreters, some of the rabbis here have picked up basic Mandarin. Benjamin, who speaks several languages, says Chinese is the most difficult to learn. Perhaps it's because his conversations in Chinese are so unusual. "I don't know the last time you sat around the coffee table discussing techniques of fermentation, but I can do that in Chinese," he says.

Not everything runs smoothly in the kosher business in China. Markowitz recalls that five years ago, one of his most popular certified products, canned mushrooms, ran into trouble when insects were found in the mushrooms. "We once brought from China to Israel 350 containers of mushrooms," he said. But after the insect trouble, "that whole industry shut down. One of the main things of kashrut is to keep no insects in the food."

Yossi Gehardy, an Israeli living in China, is the general manager of the Solbar Ningbo Food Company, which produces soy proteins and regularly is inspected by the O.U. Solbar is one of several kosher food companies in Ningbo. "Kashrut should not be an obstacle to come to China to set up a plant," Gehardy says.

For the rabbis that travel throughout China providing kosher supervision, the oft-asked question is what they themselves eat. Benjamin says it's hard to explain kashrut to Chinese hosts who insist on treating the visiting rabbi to a banquet lunch. "Many afternoons I sat there with just water and an apple at a business lunch," he says.

For his visit to the Green Tree factory, Rodin packed peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for lunch. He came home with a box of apple chips for his family, and his wife, Miriam, made a spaghetti dinner with tomato paste from a factory Rodin himself had certified in Xinjiang province.

The next morning, Rodin took an early flight to Guangzhou to do it all again.

## Connecting the Dots Between China and the Dead Sea Scrolls

by Neil Altman  
excerpted from *The Arkansas DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE*, June 3, 2006

The Dead Sea Scrolls have been...the possessions of a scholarly elite who were challenged only in the past decade to bring the scrolls to the public. Now, there is accumulating and compelling evidence that these supposedly ancient texts are medieval at best and have a connection with China...

The scrolls were first discovered in a cave in Jordan's Qumran region near the Dead Sea in 1947. By 1956, archaeologists and Arab treasure hunters found 10 more caves at Qumran that held mostly fragments of some 800 manuscripts, commonly thought to have been written between 200 B.C. and A.D. 25.

Soon after the scrolls' discovery, a scholarly debate broke out over whether the writings were indeed pre-Christian, with

Convent, the Tianjin American School and the British-oriented Tianjin Grammar School. He writes in his memoir *On Being a Jew in China* that the students at these schools "became partly Anglicized or Americanized...We were taught virtually nothing about China, its language or its culture. In the community of some three thousand Jews in Tianjin in my time there, I can remember only one Jewish child in a Chinese school...I do not remember a single Jewish-Chinese wedding."

Although isolated from the Chinese populace, the Epsteins had extensive interactions with the local non-Chinese population. One of Epstein's American School classmates was the novelist John Hersey, who became a lifelong friend. Hersey was born in Tianjin, where his father was a Protestant missionary. The Epsteins had troublesome interactions with the expatriate White Russian community which lived all over Northeast Asia. It was in that expatriate Russian context that Epstein's social consciousness began to develop. He writes that in North China he "first became aware of the 'Jew equals Bolshevik' variety of anti-Semitism...One of my memories was of hearing how a young Russian-Jewish journalist name Cherniavsky, son of the publisher of the mildly left Russian daily *Novosti zhizni* [News of life], was chased down a Harbin street and shot dead by White [Russian -ed.] officers who resented his presence at a meeting. On nearby White-governed territory in Siberia, Jews were pulled off trains and slaughtered by Cossacks under two Japanese-sponsored White Russian warlords, [Grigorii] Semyonov and [Ataman Ivan Pavlovich] Kalmykov. In Urga, Mongolia, Jews of a small merchant community were destroyed on sight or after cruel torture by the White troops of the Japanese-backed Baron von Sternberg. Some survivors told the grisly story in our home."

At age sixteen Epstein got a job as a reporter for the *Peking and Tientsin Times*. He writes that "for hands-on journalistic training, my job at the *Times* was very useful...By age 18 I had read proofs, written headlines, done make-up, reported on local affairs from weddings and funerals to police and law court matters, and even written editorials." In 1934, at the age of nineteen, Epstein married his childhood sweetheart, another Jewish

resident of Tianjin. The marriage lasted only briefly because, according to Epstein, "our aims were different. Hers was to set up a family, mine to report from China's war front."

In 1937, in a fashion totally uncharacteristic of the Russian-Jewish experience, Epstein's parents left China for the United States but he remained in the 'old country.' Epstein was hired as a war correspondent for the North China Bureau of United Press and moved to the national capital, Nanjing. Epstein writes that it was only as he began to report on Sino-Japanese hostilities from the Chinese side "that I really contacted Chinese society." In 1938-39 he joined Sun Yatsen's widow Song Qingling (1893-1981) in Hong Kong as a member of her China Defense League. There he wrote articles for *The South China Morning Post* and also his first book, *The People's War*, which Victor Gollancz published in London in 1939. That 384-page tome, with "six full-page woodcuts carved specially for this book by Chen Yin-Chiao," provided eyewitness testimony about the early phases of China's struggle against Japan.

In 1940 Epstein and Song Qingling fled Japanese-occupied Hong Kong for China's relocated wartime capital of Chongqing, in Sichuan province. There Epstein married the English social activist and correspondent Elsie Fairfax-Cholmeley (1905-84). In Chongqing they had the opportunity to see China's Guomindang government at close hand. They intermixed with a galaxy of internationally-renowned politicians, soldiers, and journalists, including all three Song sisters; their brother T. V. Song [Song Ziwen]; Sun Yatsen's son Sun Fo; United States General "Vinegar Joe" Stillwell, diplomat John Stewart Service, and war correspondent Jack Belden; and Zhou Enlai, who was the Chinese Communist Party's resident representative for inter-party affairs. Finally, it was in Chongqing where Epstein encountered anti-Semitism for the first time from the Chinese side. He writes that "the Guomindang, when criticized for being passive in fighting the Japanese and active in profiteering and suppression at home, injected anti-Semitism into its attacks on some foreign reporters. I heard Mme. Chiang Kai-shek [Song Meiling (1897-2003)-ed.], furious at *Time* magazine correspondent Theodore White, describe him as 'that

little Jew.'"

In 1944, while writing for *The New York Times*, Epstein visited Yan'an and other Communist-held areas of Shaanxi province. He interviewed Chinese Communist Party Chairman Mao Zedong (1893-1976) and Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies Commander Zhu De (1886-1976). Epstein recalls that "in Yan'an, unlike official Chongqing, the war seemed not as just between nations but as an international joint effort against fascism. I found ready understanding when I said that my belonging to the oppressed Jewish people was one source of my anti-fascism."

From 1944 on, Epstein's Yan'an experiences, and particularly his meeting with Mao, led him to commit to Third International Marxist-Leninism and to the Chinese Communist Party. In the spring of 1945 he published a second book, *Visit Yanan: Eye Witness Account of the Communist-led Liberated Areas in North-West China*. He and Elsie then traveled to the United States, where Epstein worked as a correspondent for *Allied Labor News* and published a third book, *The Unfinished Revolution in China* (1947). Elsie edited the Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy's news monthly *Far East Spotlight*. Harassed by McCarthyism, both returned to China permanently in 1951 at the invitation of Song Qingling, who wanted them to set up the English-language monthly magazine, *China Reconstructs*. Epstein's other books, all written in China, include *From Opium War to Liberation* (1956), *Tibet Transformed* (1983), *Woman in World History: The Life and Times of Soong Ching-ling* (1995), and *My China Eye: Memoirs of a Jew and a Journalist* (2005). Epstein frequently contributed to the US-China People's Friendship Association's *US-China Review*.

Epstein had been stateless since leaving Imperial Russia as an infant. He became a citizen of the People's Republic in 1957. His assistance in editing the English-language translation of Mao Zedong's four volume *Selected Works* secured him membership in China's Communist Party in 1963. During China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, Epstein and Elsie, like many Chinese residents of foreign origin, were accused of espionage. After being imprisoned from 1968 to 1973 Epstein was

publicly exonerated by Zhou Enlai. Epstein remained a Communist Party loyalist, returned to *China Reconstructs*, and rose to become its Editor-in-Chief in 1979. From 1983 on, he also served as an elected member of the Standing Committee of China's National People's Political Consultative Congress, an honorific position in a rubber-stamp advisory body.

Epstein and other "foreign friends" often served as "officially unofficial" spokesmen for the Chinese government. It was Epstein who, in April 1999, publicly denounced the accidental American bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade. He represented China at international conferences, including a well-publicized reunion of former Jewish residents held in Harbin in 2004. Chinese policemen snapped to a smart salute when Epstein's red-flagged vehicle and police escort sped by.

In his later years Epstein continued to address Chinese he met on the street, and even taxi drivers, as *tongzhi* [comrade], long after China embraced free-market reforms and that term had fallen out of common usage. Looking back on his China years, he praised the "historic achievements in which Mao's leadership played a key part. There were, of course, also mistakes and setbacks, including those caused by wrong judgments Mao made late in life. But mistakes have occurred and been corrected at many points in the Chinese revolution, giving me confidence that others occurring will also be corrected."

Epstein remained publicly silent after the governmental crackdown on Chinese students in Tiananmen Square in 1989. In 2005 he died of natural causes and was cremated. He left an ethnic Chinese wife whom he married after Elsie's death in 1984 plus several adopted Chinese children. At a memorial ceremony in Beijing's Babaoshan Revolutionary Cemetery, Chinese President Hu Jintao eulogized the old warrior for his "sincere affection for China and the Chinese people" and his "outstanding contributions" to China's progress.

REFERENCES: In addition to the books cited above, see Epstein's autobiographical essay "On Being a Jew in China: A Personal Memoir" in Jonathan Goldstein, ed. *The Jews of China*. Volume Two: A

*Sourcebook and Research Guide* (Armonk, NY, 2000), pp. 85-97; John Hersey's "A Reporter at Large," *The New Yorker* 58, no. 12 [May 10, 1982], pp. 49-58; and Goldstein's "Letter from Harbin: Returning to a Chinese Refuge and Recalling Its Rich History," *Forward* [NY] vol. 108, no. 31,516 [September 24, 2004], pp. 1, 6.

## The Sino-Judaic Institute Initiates Grant Application Process

SJI is fortunate in having built up a small reserve fund over its twenty plus years in operation. These funds are the result of donations, revenue generated by memberships, and very low operational overhead.

While SJI has given small grants to various scholars down through the years, the new Board decided that a more formal process was needed, one that applied equally to all comers.

Besides publishing information about this application process in *Points East*, we also hope to publish on our website, when it is revamped.

The grants we are able to make represent the membership's dollars/euros/shekels/yuan at work. Thank you for your continued support!

### Grant Policy

SJI Mission statement: "The Sino-Judaic Institute (SJI) is a non-denominational, non-political and non-profit organization, which was founded in 1985 by a group of international scholars and lay persons for the purpose of promoting understanding between Chinese and Jewish peoples, and to encourage and develop their cooperation in matters of mutual historic and cultural interest."

In accordance with the above mission statement, and with respect to SJI's established priority areas of interests and concerns, SJI will entertain applications for grants in support of specific, definable research, publication & conference projects on an occasional basis. These priority interests include, but are not limited to, the historical Jewish communities of Kaifeng, Shanghai, Hong Kong, Harbin & Tianjin, as well as contempo-

rary foci of Sino-Judaic cross-cultural contacts.

The maximum amount of any single, board-approved grant will not exceed US\$5,000 a year/per project. No more than three (3) grants will be awarded within any one fiscal year. Proposals primarily for travel expenses are not encouraged. At the conclusion of any approved project, SJI requires a final project report and, if appropriate, a copy of the project itself for our records. SJI support must be credited formally in any completed project.

### Grant Application Procedure

Applicants may be either individuals or not-for-profit organizations, and should follow the SJI Grant Application Form & Grant Proposal Guidelines. To obtain the Application Form and Guidelines, please contact:

**Mr. Dennis Leventhal**  
143 Charnor Manor Blvd.  
Chestertown, MD. 21620  
443-480-2105  
703-622-6080 (cell)  
leventhal@md.net

A committee, appointed by the President, which includes the SJI treasurer and no less than three other board members, will review all applications. The review committee may, if it so wishes, consult with any other SJI member(s), if such additional views and/or expertise is deemed of value to the evaluation process. Following written recommendation by the review committee, consideration of all applications within any given fiscal year will be an agenda item at the SJI annual meeting. However, the SJI president may convene an e-conference of the board at any time for any particular project(s) should it be deemed appropriate.

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## Beijing Kosher

by Stephen Wade  
excerpted from the Associated Press

The capital's only Kosher restaurant opened 10 months ago, drawing the small Jewish expatriate community, tourists, curious Chinese and even a few Muslims. Business has been so good at Dini's Kosher Restaurant, that part-owner Lewis Sperber is talking about setting up a second branch closer to the Olympic venues in northern Beijing. Like many restaurateurs and bar owners, Sperber is hoping to benefit with as many as 550,000 foreigners expected to descend on Beijing for the Aug. 8-24 Games...

"I think business will be very overwhelming during the Olympics," said Minette Ramia, who manages Dini's, a modern, pastel-colored eatery located on Super Bar Street... "From the hygiene side, whether someone is Kosher or not, Jewish or not, people will want food from here because it is considered cleaner and more hygienic being that we're in China," Ramia said. "A Muslim woman came in recently because she can't eat meat anywhere else."

The staff and cooks at Dini's are nearly all Chinese. Waiters bring new Chinese customers a handout to explain Kosher, which is called "Jie Shi" in Chinese - "clean food." "When Chinese come, I don't think they know what to order," said Zhao Haixia, the assistant manager. "Normally they just rely on us to tell them what's good."

The menu features both northern European (Ashkenazi) and Mediterranean (Sephardic) food traditions. Mainstays like matzo ball soup, chopped liver and Gefilte fish are seldom chosen by Chinese, who more often go for Kosher beef dumplings (Jiaozi) or sizzling beef - Kosher style. Gefilte fish is a hard sell. "In China eating cold fish doesn't sound so good," Zhao said.

Following a string of food scandals last year, Beijing organizers launched an aggressive campaign to showcase a new way of monitoring aimed at tracing products from the field to the table. The government also unveiled the Olympic Food Safety Command Center to deal with food emergencies. "Precautions must be taken to avert any trace of terrorist attack on our food supply chain," said Zhang Zhikuan, head of the Beijing Industry and

Commerce Bureau...

At least one of the new monitoring systems - coding on packaging to trace the source of production - has long been required for Kosher certification. "The fact that there is another set of eyes coming through the plants on a regular basis - such as the Kosher auditing or Kosher supervisors - means that the companies, the factories are more careful about hygiene and sanitation," said Rabbi Mordechai Grunberg, who examines Chinese Muslims for the Orthodox Union...

Rabbi Shimon Freundlich, who also inspects for the Orthodox Union and owns a part interest in Dini's, said American-based food companies are asking him to conduct non-Kosher inspections of their operations in China. He called them "100 percent" related to recent food scandals in China. "They don't necessarily want it for Kosher purposes," he said. "They just want to make sure they can guarantee that the standard promised by the company is what's being produced..."

Grunberg is optimistic a domestic Kosher market will develop in China, fueled partly by hygiene issues. "I think there will be a big market here, and a big market could mean just a fraction of a percent of 1.3 billion. With only that you'll have a bigger market than we have for Kosher in the United States."

Both Kosher and Halal - food prepared following Islamic religious rules - will be available at the Olympic Athletes Village, a requirement of the International Olympic Committee. The Philadelphia-based company Aramark is running the catering operation and will serve 17,000 athletes and officials at dining rooms capable of feeding 6,000 at once on a 24-hour schedule.

The Olympic Kosher kitchen is being lined up by Rabbi Freundlich, the rabbi of Beijing's Jewish community. "I would be the overall supervisor of the kitchen and have a number of colleagues helping me maintain the Kosher standard throughout the Olympics," he said. "We'd expect to serve 300-400 meals a day, more than twice what I'm told was served in Athens."

Sourcing of most Halal and Kosher products in China is easy - except for meat.

No factory has been certified to export Kosher meats from China. Many factories are certified to produce Halal, though exporting Halal meat from China is difficult with some Islamic countries suspicious of Chinese certification...

"Normally it's easy to export Halal non-meat products from China, but meat products certified in China are more difficult," said Ray Chueng, a Shanghai businessman who helps factories get Halal or Kosher certification. "I think even Chinese Muslims are not so careful with Halal things," Chueng added. "They know what you can eat and can't eat, but they are not very careful if things are labeled Halal..."

## Kosher Certification: Made in China

by Alison Klayman  
excerpted from the *JTA* 10 March 2008

As the sun rises on a crisp March morning, a van from the Hebei Dongfang Green Tree Food Company arrives at Rabbi Nosson Rodin's home in this Chinese capital city.

During the four-hour journey to the company's factory in Shenzhou, Rodin calls for a break to recite his morning prayers. He wraps his tefillin at a rest stop as curious truck drivers look on, then gets back into the vehicle.

For the Amidah prayer, the van pulls off the dusty road and Rodin consults the small green compass on his watchband. He needs to pray facing west, toward Jerusalem.

It's all part of a routine day for Rodin, 24, a Chabad-Lubavitch emissary who does Jewish outreach in Beijing and also travels the countryside performing kosher inspections in China for U.S. companies.

With the kosher certification of more than 300 food factories in China, each producing multiple products, America's largest kosher-certification company, the Orthodox Union, has more than doubled the number of certifications it does in China just in the past two years.

The kosher food market here has experienced tremendous growth. Half of China's \$2.5 billion in exports of food ingredients to the United States are ko-