

Education, Henan University.
11.Wong Yang, On the Jewish culture during the Holocaust. College of Arts, Henan University.
12.Duan Hetian, On the development of Jewish education from 6th century BC to 2nd century AD. Arts and Science Experimental Class, Henan University.

Prof. Zhang Ligang is Director of the Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University.

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Birobidzhan's 75th Birthday

By Grant Slater
Excerpted from the JTA, September 25, 2009

BIROBIDZHAN, Russia (JTA) — The diminutive leader of the handful of Orthodox Jews in this nominally Jewish district of Russia, 90-year-old Dov Kofman, e-mailed his friend and benefactor in Tokyo to say he could go on no longer.

Kofman was planning to return to Israel and would pass on to his protégé, Alexander Kleinerman, control of the Torah scroll that the Jewish community in Japan had provided, as well as the keys to the paint-slathered lean-to where his congregation worships.

"I am confident that the community Beit Tshoova will live," Kofman wrote in his e-mail last week. Beit Tshoova's shul is situated on the outskirts of Birobidzhan, the capital of Russia's Jewish Autono-

mous Region... near the Chinese border, in the 1930s...

The town of 80,000 is developing quickly by Russian standards, and there is a newer synagogue and Jewish community center off the main square...

The town receives a cultural budget from the government in Moscow each year to sustain Jewish activities like an International Jewish Cultural Festival the week before the anniversary. In mid-September, the Jewish educational organization Limmud held a conference here.

Nearly 4,000 miles from Moscow, the Jewish Autonomous Region is unique among the patchwork of entities that makes up the Russian Federation. All other autonomous regions were declared independent republics with the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Mikhail Chlenov, the secretary general of the Eurasian Jewish Congress, said that Birobidzhan and its environs are not strong enough to be a republic. Fearful of stepping on Israel's toes with the creation of another Jewish state, Chlenov called the region's status "a delicate matter."

"It was not easy to start and it will be more difficult to eliminate," Chlenov said as his car sped past the remnants of collective farms where Yiddish-speaking settlers attempted to tame the mosquito-plagued swamps 75 years before...

Today, however, the region is on the cusp of an economic boom. By 2014 or before, a rail bridge across the Amur River will carry granular iron and other metals from Russia into China, with its booming economy. The bridge is the first border crossing constructed together by the Russian and Chinese governments, and only the third bridge to be built across the border.

It's not clear, however, whether this will bolster the region's Jewish spirit...

"All this is beautiful, but people have started to live worse," said Igor Magadenko, a retired lawyer, who relaxed recently with visiting friends from Israel on a new riverwalk built for the 75th anniversary. "There are no jobs, and the wolves in the government are hunting the profits from the new bridge."...

Rabbi Mordechai Sheiner, a Chabad em-

issary who arrived in Birobidzhan in 2002, just before the new synagogue was completed six years ago, said that the community is going through hard times. Chabad suffered a funding crisis last year when its main donor lost a significant portion of his wealth. Roman Leder, the head of the community that runs the new synagogue and community center, said Chabad's funding to the city was cut in half.

The biggest benefactor of the Jewish community there, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, warned of impending cuts but they never came. The nine community groups supported by the center continued unscathed, he said...

Daniel Turk, the president of the Jewish Community of Japan, said his group provided a Torah to the elderly Orthodox Jews in Birobidzhan out of a sense of charity and, in part, to provide the community with a source of religious support other than Chabad.

Despite the obvious challenges, the Jews of Birobidzhan have kept Judaism alive in this remote corner of the earth.

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SINIC & SEMITIC ESOTERICA: EXPLORING THE BRIDGE BETWEEN DAOISM AND KABBALAH

by Cody Bahir

Though certain affinities and similarities between both the cultures of the Chinese and Jewish peoples have been documented, only recently have there been serious studies conducted that compare their religious and philosophical traditions. One such area that contains unexplored parallels between the spiritual traditions of Judaism and those of China are the forms of mysticism each produced. This article takes a critical look at the similarities as well as differences between Jewish and Chinese mysticism as embodied in the two traditions of Kabbalah and Daoism.

Jewish mysticism is most prominently represented by Kabbalah, a title that literally means 'that which is received' referring to the belief that it consists of an esoteric doctrine received during the revelation at Sinai as depicted in the Hebrew Bible. Though there have been numerous strains of Jewish mysticism throughout time, Kabbalah, since it gained popularity in the middle ages, has remained the dominant school. Kabbalah became the dominant form of Jewish mysticism after the propagation of the *Sefer haZohar*, literally 'The Book of Radiance', most often referred to simply as 'The Zohar'.

China has produced its own varying forms of mysticism, from ancient shamanic practices to certain schools of esoteric Buddhism. The particular form of Chinese mysticism that this study compares is that of Daoism, arguably the most popular and dominant form of Chinese mysticism as well as the only indigenous form of organized mysticism in China. The belief in a supreme, eternal, ineffable and incomprehensible force that is the source of all existence referred to as the Dao is where Daoism gets its name.

Before proceeding, a disclaimer of sorts is in order. Daoism as a religion is extremely diverse, has never been monolithic and has never had a central authority that laid claim to what Daoism truly is. The *Daozang*, Daoist canon, is composed of over 1400 volumes, many with entirely different teachings, methods of personal cultivation and religious motifs. Kabbalah is quite similar in this regard. Ever since Kabbalah became a literary genre, (i.e. it began to be written down rather than simply passed along orally), it has been extremely multivocal. In order to both respect and embrace the shared diversity of these traditions, this article focuses on the most common and widely accepted themes within each.

(continued on page 4)

THE HONG KONG HERITAGE PROJECT

by Amelia Allsop

The Kadoorie Family are Sephardi Jews who originally emigrated from Baghdad in 1880 to settle in the Far East. The family fortunes were founded by Elly and Ellis Kadoorie, who were pivotal players in the development of business giants such as the Hongkong & Shanghai Hotel Co. and China Light and Power, Hong Kong's largest electricity company. With the enduring philosophy that dictated "*wealth is a sacred trust to be administered for the good of society*", the Kadoories were keen and notable philanthropists throughout the twentieth century, with Horace and Lawrence Kadoorie, Elly's sons, taking up the charitable mantle once their father had passed away. The Kadoorie Family continues this philanthropic tradition today.

In May 2007, Sir Michael Kadoorie founded the Hong Kong Heritage Project. The Project is the first of its kind in Hong Kong - supported and driven by *business* in order to preserve *community* history. The Project does this by promoting new avenues of research, adding to Hong Kong's existing archival collection, acting to encourage young people to participate in the collection of their community history and capturing unrepresented voices in Hong Kong's historical narrative. The Project is housed in an archive facility which holds the Kadoorie family and business records and the largest oral history repository in Hong Kong, with 374 filmed interviews so far collected by the Project locally and abroad, all of which relate to Hong Kong or Shanghai's history. As one of only two business archives in Hong Kong, the Project is uniquely placed to be intimately involved in Hong Kong's history and archival community. The archive was officially opened to the public in March 2009, and since then, we have welcomed visitors from Shanghai, Israel, the U.K., Australia and within Hong Kong's academic community.

Arguably the most precious and unique collection in the archive are the records relating to the Jewish Community in Hong Kong and Shanghai. The collection is given added value and poignancy by the fact that nearly all of the community's records were either lost or destroyed during the War years. However, due to the Kadoorie Family's position within the community, records relating to the activities of the Synagogue in the early twentieth century were created, kept and preserved in the Family office in St George's Building, miraculously surviving the Japanese Occupation. Recently rediscovered, this collection has been described by some within the Jewish Community today as "*our lost records*".

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Country	Total
United States	188
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Israel	13
Canada	11
England	7
Australia	6
Germany	2
Japan	2
France	1
Indonesia	1
South Africa	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	1
TOTAL:	258

FROM THE EDITOR

My brother and his family spent a year in New Zealand and came home with an "up-side down" world map with the southern hemisphere at the top.

Now, of course, we all know that there is no up or down in space. North and south are arbitrary conventions we humans have imposed on ourselves and our planet.

So, happy summer to all of us 'down under' and to those of you on the other side of the equator: "a good winter".

This issue of "Points East" – or in keeping with my comments above – "Points West" – or any other point you choose – has some interesting firsthand accounts of recent visits to China, two fascinating comparisons of Judaism (even though there is no such entity) and Chinese faiths, and a book review that honors the writing of one of the greats in our field: Prof. Irene Eber of Hebrew University, who turned 80 last December. Imagine: turning 80 and only entering middle age! To 120, Irene! It's not quite "wan sui" but according to the Jewish counting, it will have to do, because that's as high as we go.

Anson Laytner

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Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

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The Len Hew Essay Competition and Scholarship Program

by Zhang Ligang and Zhu Xiao

The Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University organized the eighth Len Hew Jewish Essay Award and Scholarship Presentation Ceremony on June 1, 2010. Of these, 14 undergraduates and 18 graduates won prizes, and 15 undergraduates were awarded scholarships. The Essay Competition and Scholarships are named after Mr. Len Hew, a Chinese-Canadian, who sponsors the program.

Organized by the Institute of Jewish Studies, the Len Hew Jewish Essay Contest began in 2003. The aim of the contest is to encourage students' academic interest in Jewish history and Judaism. This contest has been organized successfully eight times so far. About 200 Chinese graduates and undergraduates received different awards of this contest since 2003.

With the rising reputation of the Institute of Jewish Studies, the scope of the contestants has been extended nationwide. Essay entries received this year came from eight institutions, including Nanjing University, Zhejiang University, Shandong University, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, Tongji University and three universities in Henan Province. The subjects of papers dealt with Jewish history, Jewish culture, Israeli politics, international relations and issues in Middle East, all showing the diverse academic interests of Chinese students.

The Sino-Judaic Institute, based in America, put 3700 RMB into the essay competition, so the prizes were much higher than before. The first prize increased from 500RMB to 1000RMB, the second prize increased from 200RMB to 500RMB, and the third prize increased from 100 RMB to 200RMB.

The Len Hew Jewish Scholarships were set up primarily for undergraduates majoring in history. As honorary director of the Institute of Jewish Studies, Mr. Len Hew established this scholarship program with the aim to support excellent history students and encourage them to higher academia.

Thanks all those who helped us with this program.

List of prize papers in the 8th Len Hew Jewish Essay Competition
Graduate Level: (18)

First prize:

Song Jingjing, On the political changes after the "Six-Day War" in Israel. Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University.

Second prize:

1. Wang Yong, On economic justice implied in the Hebrew Bible. Center for Judaic and Inter-religious Studies, Shandong University.

2. Li Chao, On Max Weber's idea about Jewish pariah. Center for Jewish Studies, Nanjing University

3. Lu Zhen, Jewish contributions to Italian Renaissance. History Department, Zhejiang University.

4. Cao Yin, Reconsideration of the saying "Jewish settlement in Kaifeng started in the first year of Xianping in Song dynasty". Center of Jewish Studies, Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences.

5. Cui Yujuan, Education Status of East European immigrant women in America (1881—1914). Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University.

6. Ji Zhe, Edmund Rothschild and the Zionist movement. Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University.

7. Zhu Xiao, The Expansion of English Jewish community in the first half of 12th century. Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University.

Third prize:

1. Pang Yuanning, Improvements in education plan of American Reform Judaism in the 20th century. Center for Judaic and Inter-religious Studies, Shandong University.

2. Liu Nanyang, Reevaluation the influences of Birkat Ha-Minim on the separation of Christianity from Judaism. Center for Jewish Studies, Nanjing University.

3. Zhang Xueli, Review of Martin Buber's religious thought. History College, Zhengzhou University.

4. Cheng Guili, Comparison between Chinese ancestral temple and Jewish synagogue. College of Liberal Arts, Henan University.

5. Zhang Ying, The impact of attrition war on Israeli domestic and foreign policy. College of History and Culture, Henan University.

6. Song Taoli, High Education in Israel before its national founding. Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University.

7. Zhao Juan, Analysis of Zionist influ-

ence in Israel. Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University.

8. Zhang Shaohua, On the canon of Torah. Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University.

9. Xiao Wenchao, Bnei Yehuda's thoughts and practices on the Revival of Hebrew. College of Politics and Administration, Henan Normal University.

10. Chengli, On the foreign policy of Zionism. Institute of Jewish Studies, Henan University.

Undergraduate Level: (14)

First prize:

Not awarded.

Second prize:

1. Shi Yuhan, On the dialogue between Christianity and Judaism in the global context. College of History and Culture, Henan University.

2. Wang Heng, On the comparison of conquering grief between "Jeremiah", "Lamentations" and Yu Xin's later work. Arts and Science Experimental Class, Henan University.

Third prize:

1. Zhao Wanwu, American Jewish life status in Colonial America. College of History and Culture, Henan University.

2. He Jintao, Analysis of the historical causes of differences between Western Jews and Eastern Jews in Israel. College of History and Culture, Henan University.

3. Huang Jinling, On the emancipation of the Jews in France. College of History and Culture, Henan University.

4. Zhang Huanmin, Analysis on the religious factors in the Palestinian-Israeli conflicts. College of History and Culture, Henan University.

5. Zhao Xiaohuan, On the causes of Jewish humor. College of History and Culture, Henan University.

6. Zhang Rui, On the difficulties of the Palestinian refugees. College of History and Culture, Henan University.

7. Lu Lizhen, Analysis of the inevitability of European anti-Semitism from the Greek culture. College of History and Culture, Henan University.

8. Qi Bing, On the suffering of the Jews. Arts and Science Experimental Class, Henan University.

9. Zhong Yanfei, Confucian terms of Kaifeng Jewish inscriptions. Arts and Science Experimental Class, Henan University.

10. Qi Xiao, The impact of Jewish culture on Freud's psychoanalysis. College of

modern Chinese to define Shereschewsky as a sophisticated and culturally sensitive translator who did not attempt literalness.⁷ She argues that because “omissions, changes, and vocabulary choices were made, the transposed text was not merely a translation into another language. More than any other early scripture translator, Schereschewsky recognized and tackled the problem of Chinese cultural and linguistic factors in expressing foreign ideas.” (p. 85).

Eber continues her analysis of biblical translation in “Notes on the Early Reception of the Old Testament,” a broader and more theoretical discussion of China’s encounter with the West in general and with Christianity in particular. In “Translation Literature in Modern China: The Yiddish Author and His Tale,” Eber notes the impact of Yiddish writers on modern China. She provides us with the remarkable insight that approximately forty works of Yiddish literature were translated into Chinese. Although modern Chinese writers could not read Yiddish, they familiarized themselves with this literary corpus via translations from Yiddish into Esperanto and English. Eber elaborates on this extraordinary translation scheme in her full-length volume *Voices from Afar: Modern Chinese Writers on Oppressed People’s and Their Literature*.⁸

“Destination Shanghai: Permits and Transit Visas, 1938–41” is the result of Eber’s long-term research collaboration with the Hebrew University Japanologist Avraham Altman. Drawing on a vast cornucopia of multilingual source material, ranging from Yad Vashem’s Jerusalem archive to the Shanghai Municipal Police files, Eber provides the definitive account of the seaborne exodus of Central European Jews to Shanghai in the late 1930s and early 1940s. She delineates the intricate process whereby Jewish refugees acquired the indispensable entry permits and transit visas which ultimately brought them to Shanghai. The entire enterprise ground to a halt in the summer of 1941 when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union, thereby effectively shutting down all avenues of escape.⁹

Eber’s final chapter, and the most contemporary in terms of its focus, concerns Martin Buber (1878–1965) and Daoism. She traces a process of reverse osmosis whereby Chinese philosophy influenced

arguably the most illustrious and dynamic philosopher on the faculty of the Hebrew University. Buber sought to find congruence between basic concepts of Daoism and some of the basic concepts of Judaism. His sustained interest in Chinese philosophy stands in stark contrast with the dilettantism of Jews writing in Yiddish and German in Shanghai. Most of those migrants (with the notable exception of the Bundist Lazar Epstein, writing from Tianjin) expressed a transient and superficial interest in things Chinese. Many of their writings are reproduced in translation in Eber’s *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China*.¹⁰

Mechanical errors are few and far between in this retrospective tome.¹¹ With respect to omissions, Eber began her chronological sweep with the Jewish community of Kaifeng and then skipped forward to the Baghdadi Jewish community resident in Shanghai in the early 1840s. She omits the American Jewish traders who had begun to arrive in south China by the late 1700s. They included Benjamin (1798–1875) and Horatio (1805–91) Etting, Philadelphia merchants of German Jewish origin, who traded and resided in Guangzhou (Canton) and Aomen (Macao). Lionel Moses (1825–95), from New York and apparently of Spanish or Portuguese Jewish origin, also traded and resided in Canton and Macao.¹² Apart from the single article on Martin Buber, Eber makes sparse reference to substantial Sino-Israeli cultural ties. They have flourished since the establishment of full diplomatic relations between the two countries in January 1992.¹³ Nor is there reference to cultural ties between Israel and Taiwan and Israel and Hong Kong before and after 1992. These omissions can easily be remedied in a second edition of this most worthwhile book. Vallentine Mitchell, a relative newcomer to the field of Asian studies, is to be congratulated for bringing out this concise representative sampling of the work of the preeminent living Sino-Judaic scholar.

1. See Eber’s articles “Kaifeng Jews: The Sinification of Identity,” in *The Jews of China*, vol. 1, *Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, ed. J. Goldstein (Armonk, NY, 1999), 22–35; “The Hebrew University’s Research Project on Jewish Communities in Modern China,” in *The Jews of China*, vol. 2, *A Sourcebook and Research Guide*, ed. Goldstein, 127–34; and “China and the Jews” in *China and the Jews*, ed. V. Gilboa (Cambridge, MA, 1992), 7–11.
2. Raoul David Findeisen, Gad C. Isay, Amira Katz-Goehr, Yuri Pines, and Lihi Yariv-Laor, eds., *At Home in Many Worlds: Reading, Writing, and Translating from Chinese and Jewish Cultures. Essays in Honour of Irene Eber*

(Wiesbaden, 2009).

3. Irene Eber, *Sinim vi-yehudim: Mifgashim ben tarbuyot* (Jerusalem, 2002). Eber’s autobiography has been published as *The Choice: Poland, 1939–1945* (New York, 2004).

4. Eber, *Chinese and Jews*, xvii.

5. The bulk of this article was published in *AJA Quarterly* 16.5 (1971): 19–23 and in *Monumenta Serica* 41 (1993): 231–47; Eber, *Chinese and Jews*, xvii.

6. Susan Naquin, “The Transmission of White Lotus Sectarianism in Late Imperial China,” in *Popular Culture in Late Imperial China*, ed. D. Johnson et al. (Berkeley, CA., 1985), 255–91.

7. The Schereschewsky piece was previously published as “Translating the Ancestors: S. I. J. Schereschewsky’s 1875 Chinese Version of Genesis,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 56.2 (1993). See also Eber, *The Jewish Bishop and the Chinese Bible: Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky, 1831–1906* (Leiden, 1999); Eber, Sze-kar Wan, and Knut Walf, *Bible in Modern China: The Literary and Intellectual Impact* (Sankt Augustin, 1999); and Eber and Marian Galik, *Influence, Translation, and Parallels: Selected Stories on the Bible in China* (Sankt Augustin, 2004).

8. Eber, *Voices from Afar: Modern Chinese Writers on Oppressed Peoples and Their Literature* (Ann Arbor, MI, 1980).

9. Avraham Altman and Irene Eber, “Flight to Shanghai, 1938–1940: The Larger Setting,” *Yad Vashem Studies* 28 (2000): 51–86. For the land-borne exodus especially of Jews from Kovno, Lithuania, see Jonathan Goldstein, “Motivation in Holocaust Rescue: The Case of Jan Zwartendijk in Lithuania, 1940,” in *Lessons and Legacies 6: New Currents in Holocaust Research*, ed. J. M. Diefendorf (Evanston, IL, 2004), 69–87.

10. Eber, *Voices from Shanghai: Jewish Exiles in Wartime China* (Chicago, 2009). The bulk of Eber’s essay on Buber is derived from her introduction to *Chinese Tales, Zhuangzi: Sayings and Parables and Chinese Ghost and Love Stories* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1991), ix–xxiii. See also Eber and Jonathan R. Herman, “I and Tao: Martin Buber’s Encounter with Chuang Tzu,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 60.3 (1997).

11. One small error of personal interest: the first volume of my book *Jews of China* was published in 1999, not in 1991 (p. 180).

12. Benjamin Etting, “Journal of Voyages to Canton, 1822–1837,” Philadelphia Maritime Museum; Letters: Henry McKean [Philadelphia] to Benjamin Etting [Canton], July 8, 1836; Richard Coe [Philadelphia] to Benjamin Etting [aboard *Liberty*], June 25, 1825, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; “Solomon Moses’s Journal on a Voyage to Madras and Calcutta, 1798” and Letter: H. Murray [Canton] to Lionel Moses [Macao], March 15, 1855, American Jewish Historical Society Library, New York; *Canton Press*, September 3, 1842; *China General Price Current* [Canton], September 6, 1842; *Chinese Repository* [Canton] 8 (January 1844): 6–7.

13. On Sino-Israeli ties, Jonathan Goldstein, ed., *China and Israel, 1948–1998: A Fifty Year Retrospective*. (Westport, CN, 1999); Goldstein, ed. *China-Jews-Israel, 1903–2003: A Hundred Year Retrospective* (in Chinese; Beijing, 2006); and Goldstein, “The Republic of China [ROC] and Israel, 1911–2003,” in *Israel: The First Hundred Years*, vol. 4, *Israel and the World*, ed. E. Karsh (London, 2004), 223–53.

Jonathan Goldstein is a Research Associate of Harvard University’s Fairbank Center for Chinese Studies and a Professor of East Asian History at the University of West Georgia, Carrollton, Georgia, U.S.A.

IN THE FIELD

♦ Update from Center of Judaic and Chinese Studies at SISU

Prof. Fu Xiaowei reports that her translation of I.B. Singer’s *In My Father’s Court* came out in April and that the Center and the Sichuan Arts and Literature Publishing House have agreed to co-publish a series of Jewish culture. The first four books are *Resurrection: The Power of God for Christians and Jews* by Kevin J. Madigan and Jon D. Levenson, *The Slayers of Moses: The Emergence of Rabbinic Interpretation in Modern Literary Theory* by Susan Handelman, *Answers to the Questions about Jewish Culture* by Ruth Wisse, and *Kabbalah and Criticism* by Harold Bloom.

She further reports that, since she is now in the school of International Relations at SISU, they plan to focus on Middle East Studies, with an emphasis on Sino-Israel and Sino-American relations. The school will be the first to train undergraduate students in this orientation and it intends to send students to Israel for short-term training or for advanced studies in international relations, such as Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University.

♦ Call for Papers

The 10th Annual Conference of Asian Studies in Israel (East, South and Central Asia) will take place at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Wednesday, May 25–26, 2011.

Scholars are invited to submit a proposal to be considered for the Annual Conference. Priority will be given to thematic panels, but individual paper submissions will also be considered for inclusion into an appropriate panel. The deadline for submitting proposals for either organized panels or individual papers is December 19, 2010.

The proposal should include the title of the panel or the individual paper together with a short abstract (150–200 words). With the exception of round tables, panel proposals should also include the title and abstract of each paper. Please indicate in your proposal what equipment, if any, will

be required for your panel or lecture.

The conference will be bi-lingual (Hebrew/English). Abstracts can be submitted in either English or Hebrew (preferably both).

Proposals for panels/papers, as well as all enquiries, should be submitted by email to Prof. Gideon Shelach (msshe@mscc.huji.ac.il) with copies to two of the committee members: Prof. Michal Biran (biranm@mscc.huji.ac.il) and Prof. Yuri Pines (pinesy@mscc.huji.ac.il).

Conference guests are welcome to stay at the Beit Maierdorf Hotel, located at the conference venue. Priority will be given to foreign participants. The Frieberg Center for East Asian Studies at the Hebrew University will cover the accommodation costs of a limited number of foreign participants (but please bear in mind that the Center will not be able to participate in the cost of the flight to/from Israel).

Please distribute this call for papers among your colleagues. Both Hebrew and Non-Hebrew speakers are welcome.

On behalf of the organizing committee, Prof. Gideon Shelach, Coordinator, Prof. Yuri Pines, Prof. Michal Biran, Dr. Nissim Otmazgin, Dr. Orna Naftali.

♦ Student Delegation Brings Israel Photographic Exhibit to Harbin

A StandWithUs student delegation showcased Israel with a special photography exhibit entitled “Inside Israel” at Harbin’s world-famous International Ice and Snow Festival on January 5–10, 2010. StandWithUs is an international Israel education organization with chapters throughout the United States, Israel and the UK (www.standwithus.com).

Harbin’s governor opened the exhibit on Wednesday, January 6th at the Harbin Jewish Research Center, together with Israel’s Ambassador to China, Amos Nidai, and with a video message from Yuli Edelstein, Israeli Minister of Public Diplomacy and

Diaspora Affairs.

The student delegation comprised Bar-Ilan University students, who conceived the idea of the China exhibit during their year-long StandWithUs Fellowship program, which annually identifies and trains 150 student leaders from six Israeli universities to be effective global representatives for Israel.

The exhibit, assembled by curator Iris Elhanani in partnership with the Israel Asia Center, includes 50 photographs by 30 of Israel’s leading artists and showcases Judaism, and modern Israel’s landscapes and natural beauty, lifestyles, ethnic groups, and architecture. The student delegation also distributed StandWithUs educational materials and booklets describing Israel’s environmental and technological innovations, and its humanitarian projects and diversity, all of which were translated into Chinese for the event.

♦ SJI Member Speaks at International Conference on Jewish Genealogy

SJI member Faith Beckerman Goldman delivered a talk “Slow Boat From and To China” on Wednesday, July 14th at the 30th International Conference on Jewish Genealogy, hosted by the Jewish Genealogical Society of Los Angeles (JGSLA).

Part family memoir, part historical narrative, her presentation is a dynamic project chronicling the early life of Robert Goldman’s long journey from the Shanghai Ghetto to the streets of New York City. What started out as a vow to finish her late husband’s story evolved into Faith’s compelling journey of self-exploration from research halls to the streets of Shanghai. Along the 12-year path, she created an archive of 46 first-person refugee testimonies, collaborated with journalists, academicians, authors, and historians to reflect the larger Shanghai Jewish experience in the World War II and the postwar era. For more information about the conference please go to: www.jgsla2010.com.

♦ Shi Lei Completes North American Tour

Shi Lei, a member of SJI's Advisory Board, completed a hugely successful tour of North America that took him to Baltimore and Fulton, MD; Tarrytown and New York, NY; Marblehead and Lexington, MA; Wilmette, IL; Waco and El Paso, TX; Toronto, Canada; Poway, Encino, Pasadena and Tustin, CA; Savannah, GA; and Wayne, NJ. The trip was coordinated by the organization Kulanu, with support from SJI.

♦ Trips to Jewish China

SJI Board member, Dr. Wendy Abraham, is reviving her highly-regarded tours to China. Two "Year of the Tiger" trips, led in China by Prof. Xu Xin, will take place from October 4-21 and November 8-25, 2010. For more information, go to: <http://www.kaifengtours.org>

Readers: Visit our improved and greatly expanded website: www.sino-judaic.org.

SJI Members: Email info@sino-judaic.org to receive the user name and password needed to access the "members only" section.

Sinic & Semitic Esoterica

(continued from page 1)

Another point concerning this study must be stated. The goal of this article is not to uncover some universal truth that both the Kabbalists and the Daoists deciphered through intellectual or intuitive investigation. Nor do I propose that there was some form of communication or influence between the adherents of these traditions. Rather, the purpose of this study is to explore the many striking similarities between each of these traditions as they exist in their own context. This is done in the hope of stimulating further investigation into the mystical traditions of the Jewish and Chinese peoples in order to find firmer common ground and understanding between two separate, yet connected cultures and traditions.

Part I: The Divine

It should not be surprising that Kabbalah, being a tradition within the monotheistic religion of Judaism, views the God of the Hebrew Bible as the source of all life and truly the entire universe. What was revolutionary about Kabbalah when it was first promulgated during the Middle Ages was how definitively it portrayed the God of the Hebrew Bible. The transcendent God, which was believed to be above all description and portrayal, is analyzed, categorized and even 'graphed out' in Kabbalah. This graph is structured according to what is often referred to as the Tree of Life. The Tree of Life is most usually composed of ten *sefirot*, 'spheres' or more correctly 'levels' or 'aspects'. These *sefirot* were originally portrayed in the Zohar as being the ten dimensions of God's inner essence. Thus, Kabbalah

became very close to employing a definitive, divine pantheon in order to explain the very nature of divinity. Overtime, however, a debate among Kabbalists arose over whether the ten *sefirot* were 'pieces' of God himself, or merely vessels that held his divine essence. Due to the theological problems the former idea presented the monotheistic religion of Judaism, the consensus of the tradition for the past few hundred years has been the latter.

Daoism viewed the source of life as the Dao, which originally translates as 'path' or 'way'. The Dao, much like the God of the Hebrew Bible, is believed to be above all description or conception; absolutely eternal and ineffable. The most foundational Daoist scripture, the Daodejing, (Tao Te Ching) opens with

In Memoriam Samuel Kotz

Samuel Kotz was born in Harbin, China, on August 28, 1930. After graduating with honors in 1946 from the Russian School in Harbin, he studied electrical engineering at Harbin Institute of Technology during 1947-1949. In 1949 he immigrated to Israel, where he studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, obtaining an M.A. with honors in Mathematics in 1956. Following two years at the Israeli Meteorological Service, he entered graduate school at Cornell University and obtained a Ph.D. degree in Mathematics in 1960. After research positions at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and the University of Toronto, he joined the latter institution as an Associate Professor in 1964. He moved to Temple University, Philadelphia, in 1967 as Professor of Mathematics and then to the University of Maryland, College Park, in 1979 as Professor in the College of Business and Management. He took early retirement and moved to George Washington University in 1997 and served there until his death on March 16th, 2010.

Kotz made substantial contributions in several areas of statistics. He was an author or editor of several standard reference works in statistics and probability theory and, over the course of his career, he authored or co-authored over three dozen works in the field of statistics and quality control and over 280 papers.

He co-founded the thirteen-volume *Encyclopedia of Statistical Sciences* with Norman L. Johnson and served as its senior editor-in-chief. He was an author or co-author of over one hundred and fifty articles on statistical methodology and theory, twelve books in the field of statistics and quality control, three Russian-English scientific dictionaries and co-author of the often-cited four-volume *Compendium on Statistical Distributions*.

His contributions were recognized by the award of honorary Doctor of Science degrees from Harbin Institute of Technology (China) in 1988, from the University of Athens (Greece) in 1995 and from Bowling Green State University (Ohio, U.S.A.) in 1997. In 1997 a volume containing thirty-eight essays was published in honor of his sixty-fifth birthday. He was awarded membership in the Washington Academy of Sciences in 1998. He is a Fellow of the Royal Statistical Society, Fellow of the American Statistical Association, Fellow of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics and an elected member of the International Statistical Institute.

BOOK NOOK

Chinese and Jews

reviewed by JONATHAN GOLDSTEIN
reprinted from The Jewish Quarterly Review, Vol. 100, No. 4 (Fall 2010)

IRENE EBER. *Chinese and Jews: Encounters Between Cultures*. London and Portland, Oregon: Vallentine Mitchell, 2008. Pp. 187.

Since the demise of Harvard University professor Benjamin I. Schwartz over a decade ago, Irene Eber, the Louis Frieberg Professor Emerita of East Asian Studies at the Hebrew University, has emerged as the preeminent Sino-Judaic scholar educating us about both ancient and modern Chinese Jewish communities. Eber is of Galician Jewish stock, was educated in Sinology at the Claremont Graduate School, and has both the linguistic and analytical tools to describe this complex historical interaction in a nuanced and scholarly way. She is fluent in Yiddish (her mother tongue), as well as biblical and modern Hebrew, classical and modern Chinese, English, German, and other languages. She delivered papers about Harbin, Kaifeng, Shanghai, and Tianjin Jewry at Harvard University's 1992 "Jewish Diasporas in China" conference, of which Professor Schwartz was the Senior Scholar. She contributed to both published volumes of essays which emerged from that symposium. She also wrote the introduction to the exhibition catalog of rare Sino-Judaica which Harvard showcased at that conference.¹ A major commemorative volume of the work of other Sinologists was published in Eber's honor on her eightieth birthday, December 29, 2009.²

Eber remains vigorously productive. One expression of that vitality is this retrospective anthology of some of her work which was published in 2008 under the overarching title *Chinese and Jews: Encounters Between Cultures*. A scholar of lesser ability might have shied away from as daunting a task as defining the contacts between two cultures on opposite sides of Eurasia over a period of more than a thousand years. The essence of seven of the eight articles in this anthology—all but her chapter on the translation of the Psalms into Chinese—was previously published in Hebrew.³ Seven

of the articles in this collection deal with the arrival and influence of Jews in China, as migrants, immigrants, and conveyors of ideas. Her final chapter discusses a reverse osmosis, namely, the Chinese influence on a major Western Jewish philosopher.

Her first article, "Jewish Communities in China: A Brief Overview," originally appeared as the introduction to the aforementioned Harvard library catalog.⁴ Eber contextualized some of Harvard's rarest Sino-Judaic publications and photographs. She begins with Jewish merchant/adventurers in Tang dynasty China (608–906 C.E.), continues with the nineteenth- and twentieth-century arrival of Baghdadi and Russian Jews, and concludes with the arrival in China in the 1930s of Central European Jews fleeing Hitler.

Eber's second article, "Kaifeng Jews: Sinification and the Persistence of Identity," was presented as a paper at the Harvard conference.⁵ She sees Kaifeng Judaism as an integration of Jewish and Confucian belief. According to Eber, the Judaism of Kaifeng was a form of Chinese sectarian religion similar to that of the "White Lotus" movement which persisted over centuries in Chinese history and which the historian Susan Naquin has analyzed.⁶ The persistence of memory and lineage, rather than ritual practice or even a widespread knowledge of Hebrew, defined the distinctly Chinese Judaism of Kaifeng.

"Translating the Ancestors: S. I. J. Schereschewsky's 1875 Chinese Version of Genesis" is the essence of Eber's full-length biography of the Lithuanian/Jewish convert to Christianity who rose to become Episcopal Bishop of Shanghai. Unlike earlier missionaries Robert Morrison (1782–1834) and Elijah Coleman Bridgman (1801–61), Schereschewsky translated Genesis into readable colloquial *guanhua* (later *guoyu*), the northern Chinese dialect which was becoming increasingly popular in the late 1800s. Moreover, Schereschewsky worked directly from the Hebrew (p. 110). In this article as well as in "Several Psalms in Chinese Translation," Eber marshals her knowledge of biblical Hebrew and classical and

and his group has not met on a regular basis for some time. The youngsters in the Yiceleye School were formerly part of his group. I believe that most of the funds that we sent to Shi Lei for his group (\$250 in 2009) have not yet been spent. A question for us is whether Shi Lei's lecture activities in the US, such as his current tour, mean that he does not need our financial support any more.

Finally I visited the Jewish Refugees Museum in Shanghai and spoke for a long time with Mr. Chen Jian, the curator. The museum is housed in the former Ohel Moishe synagogue and is small but impressive. They offer an introductory video, exhibits about the general history of the German and Austrian refugees and about many individuals and their stories. The English translations are quite good. The guides were knowledgeable and well-spoken in English. Mr. Chen hopes to expand the exhibits to a now underutilized third floor space.

Up to this point SJI has focused our attention on supporting Xu Xin's Glazer Institute and the Kaifeng Jewish descendants. On the basis of my visit, I have recommended to the SJI board that we expand our programs of support to include all 5 of the sites I visited. All are viable sites of Jewish studies, and of the connection of Jews and China. They are all in their own ways expanding knowledge in China about Jews, and attracting attention from Jews outside China. They all need financial support for their programs, as well as other kinds of help. In each case a little support can go a long way.

Over the past twenty years Jewish studies has grown unexpectedly into a significant academic discipline in Chinese universities. Jewish descendants in Kaifeng have begun their own program of study to recapture their heritage. SJI has played a significant role in both of these processes, through the generosity of our members and by connecting major donors to Chinese scholars. I hope that we can continue and expand our encouragement of Chinese Jewish studies in the coming years, as the increasing openness of the Chinese government provides opportunities to revive the long history of Jews in China.

Dr. Steve Hochstadt is Professor of History at Illinois College and Treasurer of the Sino-Judaic Institute.

My trip was mainly financed by Professor Xu Xin and the Glazer Institute of Jewish Studies at Nanjing University, and I spent most of my trip at 3 academic institutions of Jewish studies in Nanjing, Kaifeng, and Shanghai.

SJI has a long relationship with Xu Xin and the Glazer Institute, which appears to me to be the most ambitious site of Jewish studies I visited, and possibly in China. The Glazer Institute has three faculty: Professor Xu Xin, the Director, Professor Lihong Song, Deputy Director, and Prof. Zhenhua Meng, whom I did not meet because he was in Canada. The Glazer Institute offers both the MA and the PhD in Jewish Studies, and is the oldest (1992) such teaching institute in China. It currently has 15 graduate students.

The Glazer Institute has very spacious quarters in a new building on the Nanjing University campus, and enjoys a favored relationship with the University administration. This is due to Xu Xin's extraordinary fund-raising abilities from Jewish individuals and foundations outside of China. The SJI acts as a funnel for American donors seeking a tax write-off for donations to the Glazer Institute. Xu Xin hopes to add to the Institute's endowment before he retires, which may happen in 4 years when he turns 65.

The graduate students are pursuing research over a wide range of Jewish studies topics, including historical and religious ones. They have learned some Hebrew from an Israeli student who has been attending Nanjing University, but not enough to do research in Hebrew sources. Some of them have spent a year at Tel Aviv University.

The Glazer Institute has a fine library of books in Chinese and English, but it is not deep enough for serious PhD students. I did not ascertain whether books from other Chinese libraries can be obtained through interlibrary loan, but I don't think this is possible.

The Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University in Kaifeng is not as old (1998), but currently has more faculty (5) and more students (about 30). The Director, Professor Zhang Ligang, and another faculty member, Professor Hu Hao, were both Xu Xin's PhD students at Nanjing. Only the MA is offered and the best stu-

dents are sent to Nanjing for the PhD. The library at Henan is much smaller, although Wendy Abraham just donated \$1000 for the Institute to buy books.

The Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, directed by Professor Pan Guang, was founded in 1988 and is purely a research site. Pan Guang and Xu Xin, both in their 60s, are the two leading figures in Jewish studies in China. It appears to me that Pan Guang's Center is well funded by the government and Pan Guang is better known around the world as an authority on Jews in China. He is Director of the Shanghai Center for International Studies and holds a UN appointment to the Alliance of Civilizations. There is less focus on the Jews of Kaifeng in Shanghai and more interest in the modern history of Jews in China.

All of these institutions do considerable outreach throughout China for Jewish studies. Professor Xu Xin offers an intensive summer course for teachers from other universities so they will incorporate more Jewish studies material into their courses. Professor Zhang Ligang runs an annual paper competition for Chinese university students on any topic in Jewish studies, with a 1000 RMB prize. This year students from 10 universities participated and nearly 100 papers were submitted to be judged by a panel of scholars. Professor Zhang Ligang would like to expand this competition and make it the signature activity of his Institute. The prizes are donated by Len Hew, an SJI Board member who lives in Winnipeg, supplemented by \$1000 from the SJI.

Pan Guang will initiate a Young Scholars Conference on Jewish Studies in Shanghai in August 2010. So far, about 40 young scholars from many universities have signed up to participate. He would like SJI to help support the travel expenses for the scholars from over China. He has also organized international conferences on Jews in China and on the Holocaust. Under the auspices of the Center, schoolchildren are Hebrew.

Both Xu Xin and Pan Guang support an important publication program. Xu Xin has written a number of books in Chinese and English on the Kaifeng Jews, and done significant translations into Chinese, notably the Encyclopedia Judaica. Pan Guang has edited collections of photographs of refugee Jews in Shanghai and

of papers from his conferences.

I also visited the community of Jewish descendants in Kaifeng, and met quite a few of them. I visited the "museum" of the Zhao family in Teaching the Torah Lane. I use quotation marks because this is part of one room in the small dark apartment of the elderly widow of one of the Zhao descendants. A few photocopies of photographs hang on the walls and she has a few other artifacts. She does not appear to consider herself Jewish.

Her granddaughter, Guo Yan, however, identifies as Jewish and is actively trying to create a more attractive site and better-printed materials. She is energetic and can speak some English. She would like support from the SJI in the form of prayer materials that she can use to create Hebrew-Chinese translations.

With the assistance of Eric Rothberg, I was introduced to some descendants of the Li family. They have a more spacious apartment on the outskirts of Kaifeng, which contains many Jewish artifacts, such as menorahs and an Israeli flag. This family, consisting of grandparents, a daughter and her husband, and grandchildren, identifies as Jewish and proudly displays a large sign above their front door that says a Jewish family lives here.

Eric has been teaching Hebrew prayers for almost a year to more than a dozen people in the "Yiceleye School". For my benefit they held a Shabbat service on a Tuesday, singing many prayers from a Hebrew Siddur, led by Mr. Gao Chao. The students had made great progress and were very pleased with what they had learned and the social contact within the class. They were mainly middle-aged, although a few youngsters apparently also come to the class every week.

Eric has done this work actively as a volunteer and his year in Kaifeng is nearly over. The Yiceleye group needs another teacher in order to continue their progress and maintain their cohesion. They have a solid structure through a council headed by Gao Chao, which makes financial decisions, but I am not sure that they will be able to maintain cohesion over the long term without a teacher.

Shi Lei was not in Kaifeng while I was there, but I talked with a member of his group. I believe that Shi Lei has been very busy in recent months as a tour guide,

the line, "The Dao that can be spoken of is not the true Dao. The name that can be named is not the true name."

Unlike the God of the Hebrew Bible, however, the Dao itself is never personified, it never gets angry, jealous, sad, or happy nor does it issue commandments or dish out punishment. But like Kabbalah, later Daoists incorporated an extremely extensive pantheon in order to explain how the Dao is made manifest in phenomenal reality. Nevertheless, it would be just as much of a misnomer to categorize Daoism as polytheistic as it would to say the same about Kabbalah, which was the subject of such accusations in its earliest heyday by a number of rabbinic figures. Such accusations were one of the root causes of what led Kabbalah to eventually curb its doctrine of the *sefirot* as mentioned above. Rather than believing that these various gods are actual divine beings in their own right, they are viewed as being manifestations of the Dao just as every aspect of the universe is.

Thus, both Kabbalah and Daoism are founded on the view that the divine, either God or the Dao, is absolutely eternal, inexplicable and incomprehensible. Perhaps due to the fact that such divinity is quite difficult to relate to, both traditions produced more comprehensible forms to depict the divine in a way that would make it possible for religionists to interact with.

Part 2: The Universe

The cosmological paradigms, ("maps" of the universe) as well as the metaphysics by which the universe is believed to be governed are very similar in these two traditions. The cosmologies of Kabbalah and Daoism are both built upon an almost identical foundational cornerstone; a dualistic view of the universe based on the binary gender paradigm. In simple terms, all aspects of existence were believed to be of a either female or male nature, negative or positive, dark or light, etc. The "stuff" of which the universe is made was believed to have either one of these two qualities or more commonly, a mixture of them. Because of this, both traditions perceive everything that exists as an extension of their respective cosmological structures and to be connected through an invisible web of sorts, giving everything a sympathetic relationship to everything else. This is one aspect of these two traditions that has been some-

what embellished, though understandably so, by modern, eclectic religious movements and pop-culture spirituality.

The dualistic, gender enriched symbology of Chinese cosmology is often referred to as the Yin Yang theory. In a nutshell, it is the belief that all that exists in the perceivable universe is both created by and is composed of an amalgamation of the forces of yin and yang. Yin represents the female aspects of reality and is associated with earth and darkness. Yang represents the male aspects and is associated with heaven and light. The belief that the world was created by an interaction between the female force of Yin and the male force of Yang is rooted in ancient Chinese mythology, which attributed the creation of the world to a divine coupling between a supreme father and mother goddess. The terms Yin and Yang respectively originally referred to the shady and sunny sides of a hill. This is at the heart of the well-known circular symbol of the *taiji*, usually simply referred to as a "Yin Yang", which has one black and one white half. The martial art of *Taiji Chuan*, (Tai Chi Chuan), was given its name because its circular foot and hand movements resemble this symbol. The roots of this cosmological structure are most dramatically embodied in the book of the *Yijing* (I-Ching) the ancient Chinese divinatory system and philosophical text. The title, *Yijing* translates as 'The Scripture of Change' and is evocative of the book's divinatory qualities; for one who is able to discern and interpret the signs of the *Yijing* correctly is believed to be able to predict the changes in the timeline and thus predict the future. Though the contents of the *Yijing* serve as a source of inspiration for much of Daoism, it is not actually a Daoist work as it predates any organized religious or philosophical tradition in China.

Kabbalah, much like Chinese cosmology, is entirely dualistic. It views all of reality including all levels of God's own being, the Tree of Life and all ten *sefirot* except for the highest, as being an extension of either male or female. As already stated, the Tree of Life, the cosmological structure which all Kabbalah is based upon was originally believed to be God; they were the ten aspects of God's very own being as well as his anthropomorphic body. Since the entire world is both a representation and extension of God, Kabbalah looks to the structure of the Tree of Life to discern the inherent, hidden nature of exist-

ence. Much like Yin and Yang, the Tree of Life is divided into male and female aspects. This is the foundation of the Kabbalistic version of creation, which is believed to be an ongoing process, which occurred by the coupling of God's male and female aspects. Thus, both Kabbalah and Daoism see creation and existence as the ongoing process of the divine having sexual intercourse with itself.

What exactly the universe is made of, the building blocks of creation, the primordial substance even more foundational than atoms or their subatomic components are explained in both Kabbalah and Daoism. Kabbalah referred to this substance as *shafa* meaning 'outpouring' and usually translated as emanation. This *shafa* is the productive substance that is subsequent to the divine coupling between God's male and female aspects and is the source of all creation.

In Daoism, the world is believed to be composed of *qi* (Chi), usually translated as 'energy' but also means 'breath' and 'steam'. *Qi* is believed to be the substance that emanates from the root of all life and the universe, the Dao.

Both Chinese and Kabbalistic cosmology thus view the universe as being both the product and continuation of a form of supernatural, sexual intercourse. Though such a similarity between two entirely independent and separate cosmologies is so striking, their differences are equally interesting.

In the Yin Yang theory, both the female and male aspects are considered equal; separate and different, yet equal. They are not viewed as contradictory forces, which need to be appeased through compromise, but harmonized through balance. Though Yang is considered to be dominant and Yin to be submissive, this view is not one of value but one of function, much like the positive and negative poles of a battery.

Kabbalistic dualism, on the other hand, always depicts the female as an afterthought or accident. Much like the version of the second creation story in Genesis in which Adam, the male, is first created alone and then Eve, the feminine, is created as an afterthought as well as an offshoot of the masculine.

Part 3: Humanity

Another striking similarity between Daoism and Kabbalah is how each tradition views the composition of humanity.

In Kabbalah, the human soul is most often divided into three parts, *nefesh*, *ruah* and *neshamah*. The *nefesh* is considered to be the lowliest of souls, one that animates the body and gives it life. Animals are also believed to have a *nefesh*. The *ruah* a word that translates as ‘wind’ or ‘spirit’ is considered the root of the intellect. The *neshamah* is portrayed as being akin to a piece of God’s own divine being. Thus, the Kabbalists imagine a human as existing primarily of three levels of existence, physical, mental and spiritual.

In much of Daoist literature, there is a similar soulful trinity, the *po*, *hun* and *shen*. The *po* is much like the *nefesh* that gives life to the body. The *hun* is quite similar to the *ruah* as it is considered the root of all mental activity, though this similarity is not entirely parallel or universal within Daoism. Echoing ancient Chinese beliefs that gave rise to the practices associated with ancestor veneration, the *po* is believed to reside in the underworld after an individual’s death. The *hun*, if the individual is worthy, is believed to ascend to a heavenly realm. Many rituals associated with ancestor veneration and even practices that are included in the Chinese art of *Feng Shui*, literally ‘Wind and Water’, are intended to appease the restless spirits of departed family members.

The *shen* is much like the *neshamah* in the sense that it was considered to be eternal and the part of the individual that gets admitted to an afterlife paradise. In certain forms of Daoist internal alchemical practices, the aims of which are explained later in this article, the *shen* is portrayed as the most purified form of *qi* that an individual harnesses to construct a spiritual body of sorts to house his or her *hun* in the afterlife.

Though these categorical designations are not universal, as both Kabbalah and Daoism are quite diverse and break up the constitution of humanity differently, these are their most common and better-known views of humanity’s composition.

The core similarity between the goals of Daoist cultivation and Kabbalistic practice

are rooted in the belief in the macrocosmic/microcosmic respective relationship between the universe and humanity. In simple terms both God and the Dao which, though quite different, are considered to be the source of the universe as well as its totality and are seen as the macrocosm, human beings, on the other hand, are viewed as the microcosm, meaning that a human being is believed to be much like a smaller, distilled version of the entire universe; much like a small reproduction, photocopy or print of a larger, original piece of artwork.

In Kabbalah, the passage from Genesis that states that “God created man in his own image” is taken quite literally. The human body itself is seen as a representation of God as it is depicted as being constructed according to the structure of the ten *sefirot*. So in essence, the universe is constructed according to the ten *sefirot* as is humanity.

In Daoism we find another striking parallel. The human body is shown to be inhabited by and a manifestation of the primary gods of the universe. Each of the five organs of classical Chinese physiology is believed to be inhabited by one of these five gods. These ‘bodily gods’ play a large role in Daoist internal alchemical practices.

Thus, in both Daoism and Kabbalah, not only are the various aspects of human soul believed to contain a piece of the divine, but even the human body is depicted as being a representation and embodiment of the whole of the divine as well as the entire universe.

Part 4: Goal

Because of this relationship between each human individual and the entire cosmos, both Daoism and Kabbalah place most of their emphasis upon the personal, inner spiritual life of the individual rather than stressing external works. This is not to say that neither Daoism nor Kabbalah are very much concerned with the fate and well being of the world and all of its inhabitants, quite the contrary. Rather, since each human being is believed to have a direct relationship with every aspect of the created universe, if an individual focuses on elevating his or her spiritual state, they inevitably bring redemption to the entire universe. For the Kabbalist, this process is referred to as *tikkun*, meaning ‘fixing’ or ‘repairing’. As

the world is believed to be in a fallen state caused by Adam and Eve’s eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the entire universe is constantly in need of spiritual repair; an idea similar, but not identical to, the Christian notion of “Original Sin”. Though usually the *tikkun* that the Kabbalist is intent on enacting is a personal *tikkun*, it has cosmic ramifications due to the relationship between the micro and macro.

Though not present in the Zohar, the doctrine of *Shevirat haKelim* “The Shattering of the Vessels” taught by the sixteenth-century Kabbalist Isaac Luria, further developed the Kabbalistic notion of *tikkun*. As Lurianic Kabbalah represents a later phase in the development of Kabbalah, it did not view the *sefirot* as God Himself but as vessels that contain His divine essence. When God created the universe, he utilized the *sefirot* and the channels which connect them as a ‘pipeline’ of sorts to direct *shefa* down from His undifferentiated divine being into phenomenal reality in order to plant the seeds of creation. As lofty and magnificent as the *sefirot* were, they were not able to adequately contain the flow of *shefa* and “shattered”, dispersing “sparks” of divinity throughout the entire universe. The goal of *tikkun* in the eyes of Luria was to repair the *sefirot* by uplifting these sparks through *mitzvot*.

Daoism, on the other hand, does not see the world as fallen. Things simply are as they are. The different levels of existence, whether positive or negative, are based on how pure and unadulterated they are; i.e. how close to communion with the ineffable Dao. In Daoism, there is a sense of reward and punishment, though these are sometimes depicted as being divvied out by various deities, are in essence viewed as more the inevitable consequences of either adherence to or transgression of universal principles and laws. Rather than seeing the opposite poles of existence as being in opposition, they are viewed as complimentary. Unlike Kabbalah, where there is a definite aim of subjugating the negative to the positive, Daoism sees no struggle to be won, rather a balance to be stricken.

Part 5: Life and Death

The very definition of what ‘goodness’ truly entails at its root is the same in both Daoism and Kabbalah: life. At face value, this fact may appear deceptively

But although Ben-Canaan participated in the planning and cataloging and says he supplied about 80 percent of the museum’s photographs, he has his quibbles. One, he says, is an overemphasis on the Betar movement at the expense of Hashomer Hatzair, which he attributes to the influence of the Olmert family and of Teddy Kaufman of the Landsmannschaft group in Israel (such political carping is characteristically Israeli). Another complaint is the repeated theme of Harbin as a glorious welcoming refuge for Jews, which the historian attributes to the Chinese Communist Party. “You must understand,” he mutters, “everything here is done for propaganda purposes. Everything in China is political.”

Still, the exhibits are lavish, from the reconstruction of Jewish cemetery plots, complete with what appear to be real birch trees, to the recreations of Jewish households in Harbin’s past. Yet the pure-white mannequins in these tableaux – a businessman at his desk, a mother and child at a piano lesson, children playing with blocks – are spectral and spooky and serve to reinforce the melancholy I can’t shake in Harbin. The only other museum patrons who appear during my visit are two Chinese teenagers who are touring the city and “just happened to wander in.”

Ben-Canaan and I finish the day with a visit to his Sino-Israel Research and Study Center at Harbin’s Heilongjiang University. The university is a virtual city within a city, with 70,000 students and about half that number again in faculty, staff and service personnel. Begun in the 1940s, the campus was built in the Stalinesque style of the university that perches up in the Moscow Hills. Heilongjiang University does have some sparkling new buildings, but the endless avenues of rather shabby student housing blocs are depressing. Ben-Canaan’s offices are on the fifth floor of a nine-story Soviet-style building with no elevator and with the Office of Party Discipline just down the hall. “Every university department has one,” Ben-Canaan says in reply to my query.

In his office, Ben-Canaan introduces me to several of his students and research assistants, who among other things handle inquiries from Jews around the world seeking information about possible Harbin connections. He also discusses

Jewish Harbin projects he is carrying out with scholars in Toronto and Heidelberg and the colloquia he sponsored with scholars from Bar-Ilan University and the Hebrew University. Lastly, Ben-Canaan shows me samples of the correspondence and documentation he constantly receives in the mail.

“People everywhere,” he says with weary happiness, “in the US, in Australia, in Israel, are forever coming up with old diaries and letters and memoirs written by relatives who lived in Harbin. They’re in Yiddish or Russian or some other language. People don’t know what to do with them. But fortunately they’ve learned to send them to me. I think they’re absolute treasures...”

A Report to the SJI on Jewish Studies in China

by Steve Hochstadt

Jews have lived in China for nearly 1000 years. When traders from western Asia traveled the Silk Road into China, Jews were among them. Well before European Christians discovered the Middle Kingdom, Jews had settled in Kaifeng on the Yellow River, the capital of the Northern Song dynasty, and perhaps the largest city in the world in the 12th century. The small Kaifeng Jewish community survived floods and wars over many centuries, but was gradually absorbed into Chinese culture. By the 19th century, there was no longer a synagogue and the descendants had lost their Jewish identity, although they still practiced some customs unusual in China, such as avoiding pork. Only a few inscribed stone stele recalled the long history of Jews in China.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, several waves of Jews again entered China. Jews of Baghdadi origin accompanied the British colonists into Shanghai after Her Majesty’s gunboats defeated the Manchu Emperor in the Opium Wars of the 1840s. While 2 million Jews from the Russian Empire escaped Tsarist persecution by going west after the 1880s, a few thousand Russian Jews went east and south into China, settling in Harbin, Tianjin, and Shanghai. More followed in the wake of the 1917 Revolution and later Stalinist anti-Semitism. Finally in 1938 and 1939 a much larger wave of refugees from the Nazis poured into Shanghai, perhaps the most cosmopoli-

tan city in the world, because it was the only place that imposed no restrictions on the entry of foreigners.

Even when the Japanese occupiers of China forced the refugees into a kind of ghetto in Shanghai’s slums, their lives were never threatened. The Jewish refugees in Shanghai survived the Holocaust because anti-Semitism in China and Japan was unfamiliar.

After the end of the war, the foreign Jews in China dispersed to the US, Israel, and across the world. During the Cultural Revolution in the late 1960s, Jewish graveyards were destroyed and all signs of the former presence of foreigners were removed.

After Mao’s death, the government initiated far-reaching economic and political changes, now officially referred to as the period of “reform and opening up”. One door that was being reopened in the 1980s was to Jews: the Jewish past in China and the Jewish present, represented by Israel, became acceptable subjects of discussion. First economic, then military, and finally diplomatic ties between China and Israel developed, until formal relations between the two were announced in 1992.

At the same time, an institutional structure for Jewish studies was being developed. The Shanghai Judaic Studies Association (SJSA) was founded in August 1988, with a Constitution printed in English. One of its purposes was to establish an academic research center, and soon the Center of Jewish Studies Shanghai became the first institution in China to devote itself to studying Jews. From the outset, studying Jews in China was linked with trading with Jews outside of China. Among the “Academic Activities” listed in the Constitution was the “establishment of economic cooperation between Chinese and foreign industrial and business enterprises”.

Since 1988 Jewish studies have expanded and flourished in China. I spent two weeks in April 2010 visiting some of the most important sites of Jewish studies and meeting the leaders of this growing discipline. My visit to China focused on sites of Jewish study of all types. I would like to report on each of 5 sites, what they do and their relationship to SJI.

Our Man in Harbin

by Matt Nesvisky
excerpted from *The Jerusalem Report*,
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Today Harbin is an anomalous city. Twenty million Chinese inhabit the greater Harbin district centered around an urban setting that doesn't look in the least Chinese. Beijing's current mad dash into Marxist-capitalism further confuses the landscape – three Wal-Marts, agencies selling Land Rovers and Audis, and Col. Sanders peddling Kentucky Fried Chicken on every other street corner.

Yet while Harbin today is best known for its annual ice sculpture festival, numerous Jewish landmarks in the city are well preserved, with many bearing informative historical plaques.

Such preservation is thanks to the Chinese government, which hopes it might encourage Jewish tourism, to the Association of Former Residents of China in Israel, headed in Tel Aviv by the octogenarian Harbin native Teddy Kaufman, and to New York attorney and Harbin descendant Paul Kerson, who presides over the American Friends of the Sino-Israel Research and Study Center at the School of Western Studies in Harbin's Heilongjiang University.

That research center is headed by Dr. Dan Ben-Canaan, Harbin's sole Israeli resident (and presumably the city's only Jew). Born in 1948 on Kibbutz Givat Hashlosha, near Petah Tikva, Prof. Ben-Canaan is married to a member of China's Foreign Ministry and is essentially the curator of Jewish Harbin. For the past decade he has been conducting research, publishing books and articles, collecting artifacts, working to preserve buildings and grave sites, advising the city's Jewish museum, organizing symposia and, amid these and other duties, serving as the unofficial tour guide to the odd Jew – such as your reporter – who happens to wander into Harbin.

Ben-Canaan, who holds degrees from the City University of New York and from the American University in Washington, D.C., is ebullient when talking about Jewish Harbin.

But this social scientist – he teaches Research and Writing Methodology at Heilongjiang University – is also scru-

pulously dedicated to historical accuracy. In books and monographs, such as his scholarly essay "Nostalgia vs. Historical Reality," Ben-Canaan argues against any attempt to romanticize the Harbin Jewish experience.

"Yes, Jews found refuge here," Ben-Canaan says, "and many of them prospered. But people tend to downplay or forget that the Jews also suffered from the floods, the plagues, the political uncertainties, the violence and, yes, poverty as well. I've videotaped interviews with more than 100 former Harbin Jews. No one remembers any bad times."

Ben-Canaan is also a determined critic of any physical manifestations of Jewish Harbin that ring false. He is quick to point out, for example, the Stars of David and other Jewish symbology that the local government placed on the street in front of the Old Synagogue on the occasion of an Ehud Olmert visit...Similarly, the lobby of the grandly refurbished Modern Hotel where I stayed – built by a Jew in 1909 and now operated by a government concern – has photos and display cases celebrating Harbin in the days when Jews provided much of the city's cultural and social life...

A certain element of ersatz history is also found in Harbin's Jewish cemetery. First of all, the cemetery, established in 1902, is no longer in its original location, which today is the site of the city's fairgrounds. Along with other graveyards (Chinese, Russian Orthodox, Protestant, Muslim), the Jewish cemetery was relocated to a distant suburb in 1958 by local authorities for "reasons of sanitation." All of these cemeteries are now immediately adjacent to each other, surrounded by vast corn fields and reached via a long driveway guarded by statues of lions, rams, elephants and mythical creatures in the Chinese style; the Chinese section for cremated remains, by far the largest, features a handsome structure in which burnt offerings to ancestors are made; the Russian graveyard has a special plot for Soviet troops who supposedly died fighting the Japanese in World War II (Ben-Canaan doubts any troops actually lie under these tombstones).

According to Ben-Canaan, fewer than 700 of the original Jewish cemetery's 3,500 Jewish dead were reinterred here. Numerous tombstones disappeared (Ben-Canaan theorizes they were pinched by

local farmers for building materials), and the stones one sees today are a mix of old and new. One monument, erected by Ehud Olmert, unaccountably incorporates part of a Masonic symbol with its Star of David (it was apparently copied by a Chinese artisan from some other grave). "In fact," says Ben-Canaan, "I'm pretty certain many of these graves are empty."

Also on the grounds is a near-full-scale reproduction of Harbin's Old Synagogue. "The Chinese," sighs Ben-Canaan, "somehow got the impression that a Jewish cemetery is supposed to contain a synagogue."

Never used for religious purposes, the building currently functions as an elaborate garden shed for the cemetery's groundskeepers. In all, although the Jewish cemetery is nicely maintained and landscaped, the place strikes this visitor as a source of more than usual sadness and melancholy.

Returning to the city, Ben-Canaan points out some of the villas built by Harbin's Jewish millionaires, this one turned into a Mao Zedong Museum, that one a rest home for Communist Party bigwigs. We walk around the huge former Jewish school, and nearby Ben-Canaan shows me the former Jewish hospital, welfare agency, pharmacy, bank, watchmaker shop, insurance office, cinema, restaurant, on and on. Nearby courtyards conceal modest and sunless apartments that oddly recall Jerusalem's ultra-orthodox Me'a She'arim neighborhood. But the main thoroughfares boast gorgeously designed and decorated buildings that would not be out of place in Prague or Paris. Once again I'm staggered by the footprints of a Jewish community that suddenly thrived and just as suddenly evaporated.

Now it's time for the museum, currently housed in the former New Synagogue. The Museum of the History and Culture of Harbin Jews (admission 25 yuan, about \$3.50) is at 162 Jingwei Street, just off Harbin's central pedestrian mall and a block from the Holiday Inn. The exhibition is in the largest synagogue, or former synagogue, in China and, following its renovation in 2004 by the municipality, the edifice remains a handsome and well-maintained affair with a soaring dome and colonnade. Its three floors of exhibits are well presented.

simple, for of course life is good. This fact is true for most philosophies and religions save for forms of nihilism as well as certain strains of Buddhism and Christianity. But it is not merely that life is good, but goodness *is defined* by life.

This fact plays out in Kabbalah most poignantly in its cosmology and metaphysics. Being that Kabbalah is wholly dualistic, it should be of no surprise that mirroring the Tree of Life is the Tree of Death, or more correctly, the "Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil"; another motif inspired by the Book of Genesis. Building upon the creation story and the exile of humanity from the Garden of Eden, mirroring the lofty realm of God's ten *sefirot* is the realm of the demonic and the ten *sefirot* of evil. What truly defines each of these realms or trees are their relationships to *life*. The Tree of Life is productive, constantly emanating *shefa* and the all life giving force. The Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil on the other hand, is shown to be entirely sterile and actually parasitic in nature. All perceived struggles between good and evil such as an individual's personal battle with sinful temptations as well as violence between one person and another are believed to be manifestations of the continuous cosmic struggle between the Tree of Life and the Tree of Death. Related to the Kabbalistic view of the feminine, the Tree of Life is always portrayed as masculine and the Tree of Death as feminine.

Just as all existent phenomena in the universe are perceived as either belonging to the male or female aspects of the divine realm, they are also viewed as manifestations of either the Tree of Life or the Tree of Death. These two opposing poles are referred to by many names. The side belonging to the Tree of Life is often referred to as 'the right side', 'south', 'silver', 'the side of holiness' and of course the masculine. The side belonging to the Tree of Death goes by such terms as 'the left side', 'north', 'gold', 'the other side', 'the side of impurity' and of course the feminine.

Daoism for the most parts lacks the belief in such a cosmic struggle but its very definition of 'goodness' is equally related to *life*. Being that the Dao is viewed as the inexhaustible source of all life, it is logical that life and the forces of life are believed to be positive while the forces that

cause death are believed to be negative. This, one may assume, lies at the heart of the Daoist quest for transcendence, often referred to as the quest for immortality. In the west, this quest is often portrayed as one of the defining facets of the religion of Daoism, though modern scholars of Daoism have pointed out that such an emphasis is a mistake. Though there are a number of strands within the diverse religion of Daoism that sought some sort of form of immortality, for the most part, this is not necessarily the most important goal. Rather, communion with the ineffable Dao and is the goal. Most Daoist traditions that place a great emphasis on the immortality of the individual, still believe that physical death of the current body is inevitable. Many texts speak of a celestial body, the *shen* mentioned earlier, that the *hun* enters after it is 'liberated from the corpse'.

Whether a Daoist seeks a form of physical immortality or spiritual transcendence, such cultivation is based on the belief that life is inherently positive and superior to death.

Part 6: Practice

Kabbalah infuses all existing Jewish ritual and scripture with the belief in the Tree of Life. It views the aims of every Jewish *mitzvah*, commandment, as being a way to subvert the forces of evil to the forces of good while at the same time facilitating the divine intercourse between male and female aspects. Whether it be washing one's hands before breaking bread or reciting the daily liturgy; each act is believed to bring about the emanation of divine *shefa* if done correctly. The primary requisite for correct performance of *mitzvot* is to have the correct *kavanah*, 'intention'. In reality, these *kavanot*, 'intentions', are a form of meditation. This form of meditation entails having in mind the influence each particular act has on the Tree of Life. In order to make sure one has the correct intention before performing a commandment, certain incantations are recited, usually stating that one perform the ritual "for the sake of uniting the male and female aspects" of the divine. Thus, every human action, particularly religious acts, is believed to have a cosmic effect upon the entire universe.

Daoist cultivation, for the most part, contains two distinct yet related forms of meditation. One is aimed at achieving a

form of union with the universal Dao; a unity that truly always existed, but because of our human limitations we have become unaware of throughout the course of our lives. This is achieved through various forms of meditation where the one who is meditating "sits and forgets" his or her corporeal limitations, banishing all forms of mental discrimination as well as physical and emotional appetites and cravings.

Though quite distinct from the Kabbalistic goal of uniting the different aspects of the divine, both have a similar aim: unity.

The other primary form of Daoist meditation is often referred to as 'internal alchemy', where one aims to purify and refine the energies of the body in order to enter a higher level of existence. This form of cultivation not only entails meditation, but also prescribed rituals, physical practices sometimes referred to in the west as "Daoist Yoga" and dietary restrictions. The root of these internal alchemical practices highlights a bold difference between Jewish and Daoist mysticism regarding the body. Though the Kabbalists views the human body as being a smaller version of God's own 'body', they embrace a separation between the physical and spiritual aspects of human existence. Often times the body is portrayed as the jail cell in which the loftiest level of the soul, the *neshamah* is constantly trapped and tormented by its physical appetites. Daoism views the human more holistically, with no true separation between the spirit and the flesh. In much of Daoism, such a separation is absolutely inconceivable, as the body is perceived as the root of both physical and spiritual life. To explain this mindset and its subsequent internal alchemical practices, the noted Daoist scholar Russell Kirkland coined the term 'biospiritual'; a term eloquently expressing the Daoist belief that each cause that has an effect on the physical body of an individual has equal spiritual ramifications and vice versa.

Where Kabbalah is concerned with bringing about an outpouring of *shefa* from the divine, Daoist biospiritual practices are often concerned with purifying the practitioner's *qi* and rectifying its circulation through the body. Thus the meditative and ritual practices of both traditions are deeply rooted in how they understand the construction of the universe.

Conclusion

The core commonalities between the mystical traditions of Daoism and Kabbalah are thus their metaphysics, cosmologies, views of humanity and emphases on achieving a form of cosmic unity. Their differences are primarily rooted in their perceptions of the divine and physical reality.

Both place a great emphasis on the personal, spiritual life of the individual for the individual is perceived to contain every aspect of the universe. This emphasis on the individual was not rooted in any form of selfishness or self-centeredness, for the spiritual cultivation and purification of the individual is believed to have cosmic repercussions. Though I primarily discuss the personal practices of these two traditions, it would be imprudent to neglect the fact that both traditions place a great deal of emphasis on the communal religious experience. The most adept Kabbalist is still obligated to pray three times a day with a *minyan*, a gathering of at least ten individuals. Communal Daoist rituals aimed at creating sacred space, commemorating life cycle events as well as fluctuations and flow of the earth's *qi* as perceived in the changing of seasons have always been a core aspect of the religion.

Both traditions are also particularly concerned with their societies, countries and current state of the world. Daoism was often sanctioned as the state religion by many a Chinese emperor who was often coroneted via Daoist ritual performed by Daoist clergy. One key difference between the two traditions in this respect is definitely rooted in the fact that Daoism, until the foundation of the People's Republic of China, was always primarily based and practiced in the land and country in which it originated. Additional to the 'bodily gods' mentioned earlier, Daoism employs other pantheons that are depicted as the governing forces over time and nature. These external gods are commonly arranged according to a structure that mirrors the classical bureaucratic government. Thus, Daoists saw themselves inherently linked with the bureaucracy and government structure; a structure that was usually the model upon which their pantheon was based. Being that Kabbalists produced their doctrines and ideas while living in Diaspora communities, many a times amidst religious intolerance and political oppression, they did not feel any affinity with the govern-

ing class.

Being that both traditions are so diverse, this study has hardly crossed the entire expanse of the bridge that lies between Kabbalah and Daoism. Hopefully, however, the issues raised and facts highlighted will help lay the ground for further inquiry into the shared beliefs between these two traditions as well as the spiritual life of the Chinese and Jewish peoples.

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The Hong Kong Heritage Project

(continued from page 1)

The Project's Jewish Collection includes the 1902 Rules and Regulations of the Ohel Leah Synagogue, the oldest surviving record in this series. The Ohel Leah Synagogue was the first formal synagogue built in Hong Kong in 1901-2, and commemorates Leah Sassoon, the mother of the Sassoon brothers. The Rules and Regulations document is rare in terms of its date – as most of the collection spans from the 1930s until the 1950s, such as Lord Lawrence Kadoorie's 1939 speech given at the Jewish Recreation Club (the JRC was conceived by Elly Kadoorie and established as an Association in 1905, then expanded by the Kadoories in 1909) in which he described the turmoil in Europe, the plight of Jewish communities abroad and the actions that needed to be taken by the Hong Kong Jewish Community to help relieve such suffering. Full financial accounts of the Synagogue in the inter-war years (including 1941), also form part of the collection – which are of particular interest in that they give the names, numbers and particulars of members of the community at that time.

One recently unearthed file retraces the history of a little known, or indeed unknown, group of individuals during the Second World War. These were the Jewish soldiers who were stationed in Hong Kong in the summer of 1941. The records are unusual in that they focus on the social aspect of the soldier's stay, showing the community pulling together and helping as best they could – lighting a candle in the dark days of the War. Lawrence Kadoorie procured a list of soldiers of the "Jewish Persuasion" who were stationed with His Majesty's Forces in Hong Kong and asked a Mrs. Odell, an active member of the Jewish Community and a lady who had been able to stay in Hong Kong (most women and children had been evacuated) "*whether you would join a committee ... whose duties it would be to plan and carry out a programme for the entertainment of these men*". Such a committee was formed and entertainment provided. As Lawrence wrote, the hope was to "*make these men feel at home, more especially as most of them are away from England for the first time and are feeling the separation from their relatives and friends*".

Kaifeng Jews had to adapt in other ways in order to survive in imperial China. They had to figure out how to show proper reverence to the emperor—which meant displaying the Ming and then the Qing imperial tablets in their synagogue. These tablets were dedicated to the emperor and were set on the wall above and in front of the *Chair of Moses*. Some would find it surprising that the Jews were praying in front of the tablet. In Jewish communities around the world, this front and center tablet—declaring *wansui, wansui, wanwansui*, that the emperor should live forever⁷³—would have been viewed as bordering on idolatry, particularly in European communities. However, in the minds of Kaifeng's Jews, they were not worshipping the emperor, especially since they had the *Shema* (the most important Jewish prayer which declares God's oneness) inscribed above the tablet in the synagogue.

Along with the presence of imperial tablets and Chinese-style architecture, the *kehilla's* traditions came to resemble those of other faiths in Chinese society.⁷⁴ For example, the *kehilla* had a black jade chime used to call worshippers to pray,⁷⁵ something foreign to other Jewish communities. Also, the aforementioned marble lions at entrances, though not objects of worship, were traditionally meant in Chinese culture to scare away spirits.⁷⁶ Such use of statues also was very foreign to other Jewish communities. In addition, the names of many of the synagogue's halls corresponded to the names of halls in other Chinese temples.⁷⁷

Another possible imitation of other temples was the synagogue's decorative floral stone carvings. If the flowers were meant to be lotus blossoms then they were probably modeled after those in Buddhist temples, because the lotus blossom is a common architectural motif in Buddhism.⁷⁸

Aside from possible Buddhist influence, the *kehilla* obviously took heavy influence from "secular" Chinese society. As aforementioned, this was greatly expressed in their synagogue's architecture and also in their prayer and philosophy. As illustrated by Domenge's drawing of Jews reading the Torah,⁷⁹ the Jews wore the same garb as other Chinese. Yet, the Jews came to be known as the "blue-hat *hui-hui*,"⁸⁰ comparing them to the Muslims who wore white hats instead.⁸¹ Interestingly, as much as the Jews imitated

the Chinese, the Muslims kept their own distinct culture, demonstrating how much stronger (and larger) the Muslim community was...

In its heyday, at the time of the visits by the Jesuit missionaries, the *kehilla* had successfully combined a Confucian lifestyle with a Jewish one, observing the precepts of both sets of forefathers. This development was unprecedented in the Jewish world. The Jewish community became thoroughly Chinese and yet amazingly retained its Judaism for hundreds of years and its Jewish identity down to our own day. And now, here I am, studying in Kaifeng and interacting with the Jewish descendants as much as I can while they continue their efforts to learn more about their Jewish heritage and culture.

Eric Rothberg has just completed a year of study at Henan University in Kaifeng, where he also worked with the Kaifeng Jewish community. He may be reached at rothberg_3@hotmail.com.

¹ White, p 174

² Leslie, p 34

³ Leslie, p 33

⁴ Leslie, pp 35, 49

⁵ Leslie, pp 31-35

⁶ Leslie, pp 174-175

⁷ Leslie, pp 177-179

⁸ Leslie, p 48

⁹ Pollak, p 88; White, p 12

¹⁰ Leslie, p 48

¹¹ He and other Jesuits used this fact to argue that the rites were not idolatrous, which would have made converting the Chinese much easier

(Pollak, p 88).

¹² Pollak, p 96

¹³ Leslie, p 48

¹⁴ Pollak, p 96

¹⁵ Leslie, p 48

¹⁶ Pollak, p 96

¹⁷ Pollak, p 96

¹⁸ Pollak, p 94

¹⁹ Pollak, p 96

²⁰ Pollak, p 94

²¹ Pollak, p 94; Leslie, p 217; White, pp 12, 16, 174

²² Leslie, p 217; Pollak, p 94; White, pp 12, 16, 174

²³ White, p 146; Leslie, p 87

²⁴ Pollak, p 96

²⁵ Pollak, p 96; White, p 174

²⁶ Leslie, p 49; Pollak, p 96

²⁷ Pollak, p 96

²⁸ Sketch of synagogue interior (White, p 6);

explanation (White, p 7)

²⁹ Sketch of synagogue exterior (White, p 2);

explanation (White, p 3)

³⁰ Leslie, p 178

³¹ Leslie, pp 118-119

³² Leslie, p 178

³³ Leslie, ch. 1

³⁴ The Jews in Kaifeng claimed on their steles that the first Jews either arrived in the Zhou or Han dynasties, yet there are no clear historical references of Jews in China before Arab travelers and geographers from the 9th to 10th centuries (during the Tang) telling that they came as merchants and traders (Leslie, p 5).

³⁵ Leslie, pp 24, 86; Pollak, pp 297-298

³⁶ Leslie, p 157

³⁷ Leslie, p 178

³⁸ Pollak, p 296; Leslie, p 86

³⁹ Leslie, pp 86-87

⁴⁰ Leslie, pp 154-156

⁴¹ White, p 147

⁴² White, p 171

⁴³ White, p 12

⁴⁴ White, p 172

⁴⁵ Leslie, p 49; Pollak, p 86; White, p 116

⁴⁶ White, p 7

⁴⁷ White, pp 13, 14, 15; Pollak, p 86

⁴⁸ White, p 8

⁴⁹ White, pp 6-8, 14-15

⁵⁰ White, p 8

⁵¹ Spanish/Middle Eastern-Jewish

⁵² Arab-Jews

⁵³ Leslie, pp 86-90; White, p 174

⁵⁴ Book read on Passover⁵⁵ "Remembrance of the Souls"—a practice for remembering the departed

⁵⁶ Leslie, p 156

⁵⁷ Service ending the Sabbath and festivals

⁵⁸ Redemption of the first-born

⁵⁹ Leslie, p 156

⁶⁰ Booths

⁶¹ White, p 95

⁶² White, p 116

⁶³ White, pp 141, 144

⁶⁴ Leslie, p 58; White, p 116

⁶⁵ Leslie, p 34

⁶⁶ Leslie, p 93

⁶⁷ White, p 116

⁶⁸ White, p 7

⁶⁹ White, p 116; Leslie, p 58

⁷⁰ Only in the Ethiopian Jewish community is such a practice observed, and that may have been modeled after the Ethiopian Orthodox Church's practices. It is not certain how this practice originated.

⁷¹ White, pp 15, 54

⁷² White, p 116

⁷³ White, pp 13, 171, 176

⁷⁴ White, p 176

⁷⁵ Pollak, p 290; White, p 24

⁷⁶ White, p 172

⁷⁷ White, p 173

⁷⁸ White pp 18, 19, 24, 38, 172

⁷⁹ White, p 8

⁸⁰ Leslie, pp 38, 108, 215

⁸¹ White, p 170; Leslie, pp 35, 37, 49

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These liturgical formats corresponded to the traditions of Maimonides, or the *Rambam*, who lived in the 12th century.³⁵ That the Jews' liturgy came from Persia, presupposes that there were prayer books following the tradition of Maimonides existing in Persia, which, if they ever existed, have not survived. However, Judeo-Persian rubrics common in the community's writings hint at such a conclusion.³⁶

Gaubil was the next Jesuit visitor, although he did not make as important a contribution as Domenge or Gozani did. On the other hand, he did summarize four Chinese inscriptions from two of the tablets at the synagogue. His accounts were the first to really describe the steles.³⁷

One thing is certain from these Jesuit accounts: the Kaifeng Jews followed rabbinic Judaism.³⁸ This meant that their prayers and traditions were not markedly different from most other Jewish communities around the world. Though it is not certain if they had tracts of the Talmud (a prime characteristic of most Jewish communities), they were, however, practicing the Talmudic traditions of prayer and observing festivals like Hanukkah and Purim,³⁹ which are primarily Talmudic. Surprisingly, many of the community's prayers have survived because they were written down⁴⁰ but, because they never translated their liturgy into Chinese, when they lost the ability to read Hebrew, there was no way back.⁴¹

Another similarity that the Kaifeng *kehilla* had with other Jewish communities was their modeling of synagogue architecture after the architecture of the surrounding non-Jewish community.⁴² In fact, Kaifeng is a prime example of this phenomenon. The synagogue was constructed much like any other temple or mosque in Kaifeng,⁴³ with the exception that it contained no images, except for the two stone lions at the entrance of the synagogue compound and the sanctuary.⁴⁴

Like other Jews, the Kaifeng Jews faced toward Jerusalem in prayer, although in China, the Jews faced west; likewise, their synagogue was situated back to the west as well.⁴⁵ Even though they constructed their synagogue much like Chinese temples, they still maintained the traditional Jewish orientation.

Another similarity to mainstream Judaism was the *kehilla's* reverence for the *Torah*. In other Jewish communities, the *Torah* scrolls are kept in a special ark in front of all the worshippers. Likewise, the Kaifeng Jews stored their *Torah* scrolls in the "Ark of the Revered Scriptures" in the front of the synagogue. Inside the ark, they stored their original twelve scrolls in cases, covering the ark with frontal drapes.⁴⁶

When taken out to be read, the *Torah* scroll was carried to the *Chair of Moses*.⁴⁷ Although constructed according to Chinese design, this *Chair of Moses* was very similar to the *bimah* in most other Jewish communities. Both consist of a raised platform with a table on which the *Torah* was placed and read. From the drawing provided by Domenge,⁴⁸ it appears that the *Chair of Moses* served the same purpose.⁴⁹ Also, according to another of Domenge's drawings, the *Torah* was placed standing vertically,⁵⁰ as in *Sephardi*⁵¹ and *Mizrahi*⁵² communities.

In addition, like in other Jewish communities, the Jews in Kaifeng observed all of the major festivals in Judaism and prayed regularly.⁵³ They observed "...Daily and Sabbath prayers, the Day of Atonement, New Year, Tabernacles, Passover and Pentecost, Purim and Hanukkah, the 9th of Av, the New Moon; and also for the Reading of the Law (and Haphtarah), Grace after Meals, and Kiddush, the [reading of the] Haggadah,⁵⁴ the *Hazkarat Neshamot*⁵⁵...Evening morning, additional, afternoon and closing prayer books were held for the Sabbath and for almost all the festivals and fasts."⁵⁶ *Havdalah*⁵⁷ was also held. There aren't any surviving texts for ceremonies like the circumcision, the *pidyon ha'ben*⁵⁸, or the wedding, yet they must have been practiced at least for a few hundred years.⁵⁹

These observances were adapted to their very Confucian synagogue. The Jesuits saw that the Jews erected their *Sukkot*⁶⁰ for the festival of Tabernacles in the courtyards.⁶¹ Therefore, although the synagogue's courtyards were designed according to Chinese custom, they still used them for observing the festivals as any *kehilla* would. 'On the 24th of the eighth Chinese month they hold a great festival...which is perhaps the Feast of Tabernacles, called by them *Chuan Ching Chieh*, the "Festival for perambulating round the sacred writings," be-

cause they then walk in solemn procession round the hall of the temple.'⁶²

Leading these rituals were different religious clerics. These positions included the rabbi, the "sinew-extractor" (probably the *shokhet*),⁶³ and the "propagator of doctrines."⁶⁴ Interestingly, in Ricci's letter, the Jews were only allowed to eat animals slaughtered by the rabbi.⁶⁵ This means that the positions gradually shifted.

Not only were there these three positions of leadership but there were defined rules governing the method of worship. Disciples had to bathe⁶⁶ in an appointed place before entering the sanctuary when consecrated days came.⁶⁷ In addition to immersing in the ritual bath, congregants would ceremonially wash their hands over a stone drain mouth in the synagogue.⁶⁸ These practices date back to Temple times and are preserved in some Jewish communities today. In some circles, everyone goes to the ritual bath before Sabbath and festivals.

On these festive occasions, after the congregation entered the sanctuary, the rabbi would sit "on an elevated position" and "a large red satin umbrella" would be held over him.⁶⁹ In other Jewish communities, it is common for the rabbi to be seated in a similarly honored and heightened position; but using an umbrella as a token of honor is very uncommon in Jewish custom.⁷⁰

Nonetheless, as in all communities, the Kaifeng Jews wore special garb for Sabbath and festivals. The reader would don festive robes and a turban consisting of a cap wound with a cloth that hung behind him. The turban and robes were just like those the Chinese Muslims used in their worship. Donning festive garb, congregants were required to observe certain specifications when reading the *Torah*. Two other individuals would join the reader in the ceremony.⁷¹

In addition to the rituals for reading their *Torah* scrolls, the Jews had certain practices for prayer. As one account describes that when "...calling upon God in Chinese language they use the word Heaven (Tian)."⁷² Also they had specifications for performing the prayers: stepping back three steps and then stepping forward three steps. This practice is common in many Jewish communities.

As European Jewish refugees sought refuge in Shanghai after Kristallnacht, November 9 1938, many organisations were established in Shanghai and elsewhere to support the burgeoning refugee population. Our archive holds pamphlets and letters relating to this cause, such as from the *Hilfsfond Fuer Deutsche Juden*, the *International Committee for granting Relief to European Refugees* and the *Committee for the Assistance of European Jewish Refugees in Shanghai*. Included in this series are meetings regarding the welfare of a group of little known European refugees who temporarily resided in Manila, the Philippines in 1938, as well as pleas for help and funds to overseas individuals such as Viscount Samuel of the *German Jewish Aid Committee*. As part of this effort to help the Shanghai refugee community, Horace Kadoorie established the Shanghai Jewish Youth Association (SJYA) in February 1937 after a visit to the Shanghai Jewish Youth School in early January 1937. There, he found the children malnourished, plagued by tuberculosis and with little to no opportunities for employment in Shanghai after their schooling. Soon after establishing the SJYA, an educational programme was in full force, including business classes and an "Employment Bureau" at the Nieh Chih Kuei School, which was loaned to the Association by the Shanghai Municipal Council until 1941 when they were compelled to leave.

With the tag-line "*Jewish Children's Fresh Air Camp*", the SJYA hosted summer camps to physically strengthen refugee children during the difficult summer months, when school was out and families had to fend for themselves. The first camp took place on July 18 to August 5 1937. 86 boys and girls were present at the camp, which took place in the grounds of the Shanghai University. In 1938, Summer Club Activities were held. A diary was kept by Yenta Kleiman, an SJYA teacher, along with photos and memorabilia from the camp (all of which are kept in the archive). Yenta writes eagerly about the Fun Fair, the evening film showings, sport heats and amateur theatre productions that were enjoyed by the children. Complementing are oral history interviews collected by the Project from Jewish refugees who escaped to the visa-free haven.

In the post-war years, hundreds of refugees passed through Hong Kong on their

way out of China, prior to and after the founding of the People's Republic of China. Victor Zirinsky was the agent for the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society and the American Joint Distribution Committee in Hong Kong, which helped the refugees with money and assistance, evidence of which can be found in his letters written to the Kadoories. Lawrence and Horace Kadoorie paid weekly visits to the Hong Kong Immigration Department in the 1940s and 1950s to ensure that those due to arrive in Hong Kong would have their necessary visas ready for resettlement to Israel and elsewhere. The Kadoorie brothers wrote thousands of letters to governments, NGOs and individuals to guarantee successful repatriation, all of which are stored in our archive.

All of these materials are never before seen and are now open to the public. An exhibition of the Project's Jewish Collection, held at the Jewish Community Centre and in conjunction with the Hong Kong Jewish Historical Society, will showcase these materials and more, in autumn 2010. If you would like more information on our interview clips, please visit: <https://www.hongkongheritage.org/html/eng/index.html>.

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China 2010: Building Bridges

by Beverly Friend

Six times, over the past 25 years, I have stood on the Great Wall of China, each time filled with awe. But the Wall – magnificent as it is – is not what brings me back to China. I return each time not primarily to see what was intended to divide people – a wall – but to work on breaking down walls by participating in what unites them – a bridge. My particular bridge is the unique one provided by the China/Judaic Studies Association, furthering the study of Judaism in China.

This most recent visit fell into three neat divisions. We began with what might be termed the appetizers – sightseeing in Beijing with the Tiananmen Square, the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, the Olympic Park, and the Temple of Heaven, and

then moving on to the scenic wonders of Guilin and a Li River Cruise. We ended with what I consider the dessert – bustling, thriving Shanghai, where we culminated our two weeks with an exhausting but exhilarating visit to the 2010 World Expo.

But to me, the best part was the main course – Nanjing, the city which had been my initial goal in 1985 when I visited my late husband, Jim Friend, who was teaching English at Nanjing University. There, I met the man who was to change all of our lives – Professor Xu Xin – then deputy chair of the English Department, now the leading Judaic Scholar in China. His meeting with Jim, the first Jew he had ever known, was the catalyst for all that followed, even though Jim did not live long enough to see the aftermath.

On trip number five, in 2006, my oldest daughter Tracy, her partner Lynn, and I stepped onto an official academic bridge between the Chinese and Jewish peoples when we attended the dedication of the Glazer Institute for Jewish Studies at Nanjing University – the realization of Xu's dream. For Xu Xin, "not to understand the contribution of the Jews to world history is not to understand the world." For me, "not to understand another people is a failed opportunity to counteract hatred and bigotry."

Now I was returning with my younger daughter Marla, her husband Steve, their children, and my dear friend Irv Kaplan, to see what the Institute is achieving.

Nothing can compare with the thrill of sitting down with 15 graduate students to learn about their current studies. Several have spent a year in Israel, at Tel Aviv University, and for others this lies ahead. The depth of their dedication was evident as we proceeded around the conference table, each of them proudly announcing current projects. The varied studies are impressive and range from historical to religious topics.

On the MA level, students are working on topics that include an "Analysis on Medieval Anti-Semitic Cartoons," "The Rennes Court Martial and the Reaction of British Society," "A Survey on the Functions of Synagogues," "The Separation of Christianity from Judaism," and "A Study on Educational Ideology of Samson Raphael Hirsch: the Jewish Religious Education Facing Modernity."

Doctoral dissertations deal with “The Status of Jewish Women in Medieval Europe,” “The Creation and the Influence of the Promulgation of the Jewish Declaration of Vatican II of the Roman Catholic Church,” “A Study of the Berlin Haskalah Movement,” “A Study of Ahad Ha-am’s Cultural Zionism,” “Sources of Ideology of the Reform Movement in Germany” and “The Battle Against the Opposition — A Study of the Jewish Peoples’ Fight Against Holocaust Denial”

It was equally exciting finally to meet Professor Lihong Song – who will succeed Xu as Director of the Institute four years from now when Xu retires at age 65. I had not had the opportunity to meet him during Song’s studies at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Philadelphia, last year, but had read several of his fine articles and knew he was preparing himself for the post. We also met Israeli Enav Sinshi, who has been teaching Hebrew at the Institute for the past three years while completing his MA at the University. Unfortunately, we were not able to meet Professor Zhenhua Meng who was currently attending a Hebrew Bible Conference at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Looking at the students and faculty of the Institute, I could see what they had accomplished and – even more important – were planning to accomplish in the time ahead. And I also saw the pride with which the University regards the Judaic Studies Program when university dignitaries Vice President Ren Lijian, Director Zuo Chengci, and Deputy Director Dai Zehua, met with us formally and then informally at a banquet, to discuss these future plans.

It is so amazing to have watched the growth of the Judaic Institute from its seedling days, planted when Xu met Jim – and growing through such wonderful projects as the translation of the Encyclopedia Judaica into Chinese, and Nanjing’s summer institutes held for professors of history and world civilizations from other Chinese colleges and universities in order for them to incorporate this information into their own classes. To continue the metaphor: the harvest is in this thriving Institute!

Or with another metaphor, it can all be can be likened to a pebble falling into a

pond and generating concentric circles. Just as an example, when Xu taught his first classes in Judaic Studies to 15 students, they asked questions that dealt with Jewish identity, family values, anti-Semitism, the connection to Israel, and keys to Jewish success and contributions to science, medicine business and the arts. At that time, over 20 years ago, I solicited answers from clergy and laymen alike and sent them all off to Xu. Later, I listed the questions on the Association web site at www.oakton.edu/~friend/chinajews.html. Reading these questions online so many years later, American Jewish physician Eric J. Friedman was inspired to answer. The result is the book “Seven Chinese Questions, Seven Jewish Answers,” written in English and translated into Chinese by Xu Xin, and published in a provocative dual-language edition and one of the most recent of Xu’s many projects. (I brought back several copies and can be contacted at friend@oakton.edu for further information).

Xu has also just completed a translation of “The Years of Extermination” by Saul Friedlander and he is currently writing about the history and current state of anti-Semitism, a book which he hopes to finish this summer.

As time passes, however, both Xu and I are feeling our mortality: he, because of his recent death-threatening cerebral aneurism, and me simply because of advancing years. As he recovered, Xu decided to donate a considerable amount of his own earnings – including all the royalties from his books – to the Institute. In addition, I have decided to establish a James Friend Memorial Endowment to provide the much-needed scholarships for worthy students. As the school has just created a Nanjing University (NUJUEF) Educational Foundation, tax deductible donations can be made and sent to a U.S. address: NJUEF, 2207 Concord Pike Suite 106, Wilmington, DE 19803. Please note ‘Judaic Studies’ on your check.

Leaving Nanjing, we travelled through Jiangdu, Xu’s hometown and Suzhou, home of his wife Kong Defang, and in each place experienced heart-warming moments with Xu’s mother and many other family members. What a trip down memory lane – we are all one family!

During our final morning in China, we returned to our cultural bridge, visiting an important site where Xu takes all of his graduate students: the Jewish Refugees Museum in Shanghai. Located in the former Ohel Moishe Synagogue, the museum offers a well-conceived 8-minute video followed by exhibits about the history of and artifacts from refugees who were sheltered in the city during World War II. The synagogue is situated in the Hongkou ghetto district – which is now much smaller in area than in former years. Much has been torn down to make way for new buildings. According to Xu, 10,000 new apartments go up in Shanghai each month and a vast complex is currently being built to accommodate docking and shopping malls for those planning to enjoy future cruises into the city. What remains of the ghetto itself has been renovated and, while it gives some idea of what life must have been like for those fleeing Europe, it has been sanitized some and is not nearly as daunting as I recall it from earlier trips.

What lies next? I told Xu it was his turn now and he should plan to visit the U.S. I believe he may do so, possibly next October. And as for me? Will there be a seventh trip, or an eighth? Who knows what the future holds? But what I do know and hope for is the future success of the Institute. May it outlive all of us and thrive in future years to be a bridge between our two peoples.

Dr. Beverly Friend, an SJI Board member, is Executive Director of the China Judaic Studies Association.

Chinese Judaism: Confucian or Jewish?

by Eric Rothberg

The Jews of Kaifeng had a rich culture, thoroughly unique in that, though it had strong Chinese influences, they maintained their Jewish identity for hundreds of years. Preserving their Judaism meant adapting to Han Chinese culture while keeping unique in their own ways. Judaism, as practiced in Kaifeng during the 17th and early 18th centuries, at the time of the Jesuit missionaries, was a *Judeo-Confucian* synthesis.

In order to examine the unique Chinese-Jewish religious observances, this essay will focus on Kaifeng Judaism, primarily as portrayed by the Jesuit accounts and

supplemented by nineteenth century accounts by Protestant missionaries and others...

The West gradually gained understanding of these observances as Jesuits met Chinese Jews, beginning with the Jesuit, Matteo Ricci...From meeting Ai and sending a Chinese Christian “brother” to meet with three from the community, Ricci discovered that the Jews preserved customs such as circumcision¹ and *kashrut*—abstaining from pork, removing sinews from slaughtered animals, and only eating animals slaughtered by their rabbi.² They had five Torah scrolls written on parchment made from sheepskin.³ Also, he learned that they were referred to as the “*hui-hui*, who extract the sinews from the meat which they eat.”⁴ However, according to a second hand account by the Christian “brother,” he learned that the community’s knowledge of Hebrew and the practice of the religion were decreasing.⁵

After Ricci, other Jesuit missionaries visited the Jewish community without leaving significant information. They were Nicolo Longobardi in 1619, Giulio Aleni in 1613, Rodriguez de Figueredo in 1640, and Christian Enriques around 1644, during the early years of the Qing dynasty.⁶

Though the “discovery” by Ricci was important, the single most important period for understanding the Judaism of Kaifeng came a century following Ricci’s information. In the period between 1704 and 1723, a series of three Jesuit missionaries visited the community. They were Jean-Paul Gozani in 1704, Jean Domenge in 1721 and 1722, and Antoine Gaubil in 1723.⁷

Gozani gave very telling accounts of the synagogue. He told of the prominent level at which the Jews had become *sinicized*.⁸ As evidence of this Chinese influence, the synagogue was constructed so similarly to other Chinese temples and inside were incense burners. Gozani related that one of the synagogue’s halls had incense bowls of various sizes in rows. They were consecrated in the names of biblical figures, which included Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his twelve sons, Moses, Aaron, Ezra, and Joshua. They were also dedicated to the patriarchs of Judaism, Confucius, and to their immediate ancestors.⁹ They all honored Confucius at pretty much the

same level as other Chinese.¹⁰ They took part in the same ceremonies as Confucians, except with offerings of sheep and oxen instead of pig, and without image, as that would be explicitly prohibited by Jewish law. Gozani was surprised that the Jews did not consider these acts idolatrous, but the Jews rationalized that since they did not have images of these figures, they were simply honoring them and not by any means worshipping them.¹¹

Though these rites were not common in other Jewish communities, the truth is that the Jews had probably practiced Confucian rites mixed with their Jewish ones for quite some time.¹² In addition to offering incense, the Jews kept a detailed memorial book of their ancestors, which contained some basic prayers and biblical passages as well. In a religion where lineage is of such paramount importance, keeping detailed records of ancestors and honoring them with incense is not really that different from other Jewish traditions of veneration, like *yahrzeit* (memorial) candles in Ashkenazi Jewish communities and the portraits of great rabbis that are common today.

Similarly, they honored their ancestors much like other Chinese did. In spring and autumn they made solemn offerings in their ancestral hall near the synagogue.¹³ At other occasions, they performed the kowtow after offering food in porcelain dishes.¹⁴ They did not have ancestral tablets in the ancestral hall or in their homes. They performed the same incense ceremonies as for the prophets—of course, highly Confucian-influenced. Ancestors who became mandarins were honored with tablets in the ancestral hall.¹⁵ Gozani noted that, at the time of his visit, the Jews still followed Jewish burial ceremonies¹⁶ but later these would cease to be observed.¹⁷

Gozani’s letters focused on the religious life of the Jews.¹⁸ He noted some of their observances: circumcision, Passover, the Sabbath,¹⁹ “and other festivals of the ancient Law.”²⁰ He explained that their non-Jewish countrymen referred to their religion as the “*Tiaojinjiao*” “the religion which extracts the sinew,” describing the Jewish practice of not eating the sinews of animals based on the biblical account of Jacob wrestling with an angel. Also, Gozani related that the Jews cut an animal’s veins and nerves when they killed it so that they would not consume its blood, which was prohibited.²¹

Gozani’s depictions of their practices of keeping *kosher* show that the Kaifeng *kehilla* observed *kashrut* much like other Jewish communities. As the Jesuits discovered, the rabbi insisted on slaughtering the animals for the community, which meant that the practice of *shechitah* Jewish ritual may have been followed according to the Talmudic prescriptions.²²

In addition to these practices of *kashrut*, Gozani describes the Jews’ practices on the Sabbath. Apparently, the Jews observed the Sabbath like Jews throughout the world. They abstained from lighting fires²³ or cooking and therefore would cook their food for the Sabbath before its arrival.²⁴

Gozani also learned of some of their prayer ceremonies. Unlike most Jewish communities, the congregation would don transparent veils, covering their faces while the *Torah* was recited. This was symbolic of Moses’ covering his face when he came down from Mount Sinai after learning the *Torah* from God.²⁵ He also discovered that the Jews preserved the traditional prohibition against marrying with people not adhering to Judaism.²⁶ During this period, they did not even mingle with Muslims. Another tradition that Gozani mentions is not shaving one’s facial hair.²⁷

As Gozani described the Judaism practiced in Kaifeng, Jean Domenge greatly contributed to our knowledge of their synagogue from his 1721 visit. In fact, Domenge drew full sketches of the interior²⁸ and exterior²⁹ of the synagogue and described the community’s festival observances, their pronunciation of Hebrew, their opinions of their geographical origin and arrival period, and their biblical books.³⁰ He also “copied a *Judaeo-Persian*³¹ colophon of the Pentateuch.” Not only did Domenge keep himself close to the Jews, he also had a working knowledge of Hebrew and the Bible. In fact, until 1850, most of our information of their Hebrew liturgy came from Domenge.³²

As Domenge and others would come to discover, it is not certain where the Jews in Kaifeng came from³³ or when they arrived in China.³⁴ Nonetheless, as the *Judaeo-Persian* colophons from Domenge show, the *kehilla* clearly had Persian Jewish influences. On the other hand, in many instances their prayers strongly resembled Yemenite prayers.