



How the Sino-Judaic Institute Began

by Anson Laytner

For a number of years in the late 1970s, Michael Pollak had been tirelessly and thoroughly tracking down leads and references to the Kaifeng Jews, which resulted in the publication of his book, *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries*, in 1980. Through his correspondence, Pollak became connected with almost every living authority and activist on the subject of the Kaifeng Jewish community past or present.

Simultaneously, as China began to open up following the purging of the so-called "Gang of Four", foreign visitors and journalists began to visit Kaifeng again for the first time since the mid-1950s. A number of people who became the Sino-Judaic Institute's founders were among them. Prof. Al Dien went first in 1980 and was there twice in 1981.

He recalls that he had brought a copy of the map of Kaifeng that is in the front of Bishop White's book, which was from 1910. As he remembered:

There were no maps for sale, especially to foreigners at that time, so I had no way of locating where our hostel was on White's map. But when we were taken to the Longting, or Dragon Pavilion, a temple on a hill that overlooked the city, I spotted a steeple which I took to be the Catholic church that was on White's map, near to which was the Plucking the Sinew Religion Lane.

So after lunch, when everyone was taking siesta, it was terribly hot, I set out for the church. It of course had long since not served as a church, but was a storage facility, with broken windows and birds flying around inside. So I followed the map and headed down Caoshi or Straw Market Street, toward where the synagogue had been. On the way a crowd gathered around me, it had been years since a foreigner had walked down that street.

I of course wanted to be unobtrusive, especially since I had not gotten permission to make this walk. Luckily, a mentally disturbed person decided to clear a path for me through the crowd and parked bicycles. He soon got into a quarrel with someone who objected to his moving a bicycle, and the crowd gathered around the quarreling pair, and I was able to slip off. When I got to the lane, and saw the street sign, Tiaojin jiao *hutong*, the hair on the back of my neck literally, in the only time in my life, stood up. I walked a bit down the lane, then asked some women standing there if there were any Jews (Youtairen) on the lane.

They pointed to a house, I knocked on the door, and an old lady came out with her daughter-in-law. This was Mrs. Zhao. I had some pictures from White's book, especially the one on p. 130, 16A, of an old man, his son and a grandson. When some

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Excerpts from the 2014 Annual Report of the Diane and Guilford Glazer Institute of Jewish and Israel Studies at Nanjing University

I. Major Events

A. Glazer Chair Professor Position

According to the agreement between Nanjing University and Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles, **The Diane and Guilford Glazer Chair of Jewish and Israel Studies** was created. Prof. Xu Xin, Director of the Institute, has been appointed to take the position for six years.

B. Faculty Promotion

Lihong Song, Deputy Director of the Institute, was promoted to full professor at the beginning of 2014. He was the only one who received promotion in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies in 2014.

C. State Grant

Dr. Zhenhua Meng (Jeremiah), associate professor and Director of the Center for Israel Studies, was awarded a State grant from the Ministry of Education of China, which enabled him to take leave to go to Harvard University to do research for the 2014-2015 academic year.

D. Project Completed

The Institute has completed its survey and analysis on the economic, scientific and cultural collaborations between Jiangsu Province and Israel.

E. Xu Xin Prize Established

The Alberta and Henry Strage Foundation from Britain established Xu Xin Prize at Nanjing University. It aims to give the Prize for two outstanding scholars or graduate students who have achieved a positive result in their study of Jews in China.

F. Revenue Generated

The Diane and Guilford Glazer Endowment received the third and final payment from the Jewish Community Foundation of Los Angeles. The Endowment generated, with matching funds from Nanjing University, revenue of 518,839.73 yuan in 2014, which is available for the 2015 budget of the Institute.

The Institute also received funds from the Sino-Judaic Institute, The Florence and Laurence Spungen Family Foundation, and Beverly Friend family.

II. Faculty Activities

Academically, the Institute has done very well. Ten courses were offered and taught for both undergraduates and graduates. Three books and seven articles were published. Manuscripts of four books have been turned in for publication in 2015.

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FROM THE EDITOR

2015 marks the 30th anniversary of the Sino-Judaic Institute’s founding and that, for those of us involved—and hopefully for you too—is something to celebrate. To record for posterity how SJI began, I have attempted to reconstruct the events of those early years. Sadly, a number of key individuals are gone—Leo Gabow, Louis Schwartz and Michael Pollak, to name but three—whose recollections would have been invaluable for this purpose. I did share drafts of this article with many of the founding board members and so what you will read in my front-page article represents our best collective effort at remembering those days of long ago.

When I look back at all SJI has accomplished over the years, I am amazed at what a small band of dedicated volunteers can do. To mention but a few things:

- ◆ Installed an exhibit in the Kaifeng Municipal Museum to highlight its Jewish artifacts (primarily the synagogue stelae)
- ◆ Created and installed an exhibit on the Kaifeng Jews in the Song Dynasty theme park in Kaifeng
- ◆ Published monographs, scholarly books and an academic journal (Sino-Judaica), not to mention Points East
- ◆ Provided scholarships to emerging and established Chinese academics working in the fields of Jewish studies or Israel; supported Jewish studies programs in China; assisted in supporting conferences and colloquia; offered stipends to creative endeavors in the arts relating to our interests
- ◆ Sent individuals to Kaifeng to assist with the renewal of the Jewish community there.
- ◆ Set up the most comprehensive and accurate website on Jewish life in China.
- ◆ Worked with the Hebrew Union College to send facsimiles of its Kaifeng manuscript holdings to the Jewish community in Kaifeng.

More details regarding our many accomplishments may be found on this website: www.sino-judaic.org.

Over the lifespan of an organization, priorities change. SJI started out cautiously reaching out to the Kaifeng Jewish descendants but came to focus initially on the academic side of things. We were pioneers in supporting the emerging Jewish

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Points East

Anson Laytner, Publisher

◆
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FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE

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

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c/o Rabbi Arnie Belzer
34 Washington Avenue
Savannah, GA 31405 U.S.A.

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Past Presidents

Al Dien, Leo Gabow

In Memoriam, z"l

Marshall Denenberg, Leo Gabow, Phyllis Horal, Teddy Kaufman, Rena Krasno, Michael Pollak, Louis Schwartz

SJI MEMBERSHIP

Country	Total
United States	156
Canada	35
China	18
Israel	16
Australia	5
England	5
Japan	2
Germany	1
Cyprus	1
Indonesia	1
South Africa	1
Switzerland	1
Taiwan	1
TOTAL:	243

From the Editor

(continued from page 2)

studies field in China; now these programs have connections with counterparts in Israel and America, so our support is much less necessary. But, as China has opened up, the Kaifeng community has been able to benefit from the support of organizations such as ours and Shavei Israel. May there come a time when that community is self-sufficient enough and Jewishly knowledgeable enough to stand on its own two feet. Then our real work will have been done and we can rest easily on our laurels. I'll be long-gone by then.

Best wishes for the Chinese New Year!

Anson Laytner

IN THE FIELD

♦ E-Newsletter Launched

Dr. Wendy Abraham, long involved with SJI and now on its Advisory Board, has launched China Orientations (www.chinaorientations.com), a multi-purpose website featuring tours, talks, tips and trivia. She also offers a terrific e-newsletter with links to her Twitter and Facebook feeds. Her initial e-newsletter highlighted her talks, but future Newsletters will highlight Sino-Judaic history, little blurbs about current Sino-Judaic research being done by U.S., Israeli and Chinese scholars, Sino-Judaic travel tips, Chinese Jewish trivia quizzes, info about Sino-Judaic organizations around the world, etc. Just enough tidbits to whet people's appetite for more information so that they will click on the links to other websites for further info. Check out her website and sign up for her e-newsletter. It's worth taking note of.

♦ Website Re-Launched

Dr. Beverly Friends informs us that, thanks to Richard Smith, a new web site is being constructed for the China Judaic Studies Association. The original site—linked to Oakton Community College—was closed because of confusion between the Association and the College's new Judaic Studies department. The new site will be updated and improved. You can see the work-in-progress at www.chinajudaic.org.

How the Sino-Judaic Institute Began

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of the women saw it, they murmured "Lao die," or Old Grandpa. The little grandson in the picture is now the head of the household, in his 50's. His mother, the elderly Mrs. Zhao, was rather apprehensive—this was still close to the end of the Cultural Revolution and contact with foreigners was still considered suspicious. Mr. Zhao was at work, so I said I would come back later in the day.

The daughter-in-law led me back to the main street by a series of alleys that was a short-cut. On the way she complained that everyone said she was Jewish though she was Chinese.

I felt that I could not keep this from the others in the group, so late that afternoon, I told them about the meeting and said anyone who wished to could go back with me. Of course this time, with a whole troupe/troop of foreigners coming, there was much more excitement in the neighborhood. But for the Zhao's it had been enough. When we knocked, no one answered, the people around said they had gone out. We walked further down the lane to see the site of the synagogue, but of course it was occupied by some sort of factory, I no longer remember what it was.

Later, I believe it became a hospital. Thus ended my first encounter with the Kaifeng Jews. It had been an emotional experience for me, but I am afraid there was not much learned. The next year, 1981, I returned to Kaifeng twice, but neither time was as dramatic as that first time.

Dr. Ron Kaye and his wife visited Kaifeng in 1981. Because of the medical aid he provided there, the local people, who had said that the steles no longer existed, reversed their position and took the Kayes to the basement of the Kaifeng Museum where Dr. Kaye saw the steles and took rubbings of them. While there, he also led a *seder* with some of the Jewish families.

Leo Gabow visited Kaifeng for the first time in 1982, while Dr. Wendy Abraham led the first official group tour from America to Kaifeng in August of 1983. They both met Shi Zhongyu and Zhao Pingyu—the only two descendants that local authorities would allow to be "shown" to visitors. On Dr. Abraham's trip, security guards kept a close watch

on the gathering, monitoring questions and responses. During their very first meeting, her group took some photos and, after she gave one to Shi Zhongyu, he quietly handed it back to her. She noticed he had written his name and his home address on the back of it rather than his *danwei*, or work unit. She took this as the signal that he would like to communicate and that's how her long correspondence and connection with the Shi family began.

Rabbi Joshua Stampfer also went to Kaifeng in 1983. His group met with members of the Shi, Zhao and Ai families. Rabbi Stampfer recalled that they showed his group pictures of their recent ancestors wearing "Jewish" caps but that they knew nothing of their history or of their connection with Jews elsewhere.

Shortly after Dr. Abraham returned to the States in September of 1983, she thought about creating an organization to help the descendants. Dr. Abraham spoke about this with Prof. Donald Leslie, in Australia, with whom she had been communicating about her dissertation on the Chinese Jews. He told her that an organization with a similar aim of reconnecting with the descendants was already being seriously discussed and he put her in touch with other interested parties.

Prof. Donald Leslie was one of the field's foremost scholars and his faraway presence was crucial to SJI's beginnings. Leslie had studied directly under Joseph Needham (in fact he was his protégé) and, along with Prof. Al Dien, provided SJI with the academic expertise it needed, just as Art Rosen, then President of the National Committee on U.S. - China Relations, provided it with political *savoir faire*. Rosen had served with the U.S. Consulate in Shanghai shortly after WWII and he headed the National Committee for decades, overseeing it during the most exciting time in U.S.- China relations, beginning with his organization's arranging for the first American ping pong team traveling to China while Nixon was in office.

Leo Gabow is considered by everyone to have been the primary moving spirit in the founding of SJI. Gabow was not an academic but someone who was deeply committed to scholarly research on the Jews of China. He had developed this interest while pursuing a business career in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. Leo

had great energy and enthusiasm for our subject and began to gather other interested parties together for discussions in the Palo Alto area, where he, Prof. Al Dien, Dr. Ron Kaye and others lived. Michael Pollak and Rabbi Joshua Stampfer would fly in from Dallas and Portland respectively for meetings.

In December of 1984, Leo received a letter from Prof. Louis Schwartz who was spending an academic year teaching in Beijing. Schwartz had already been in correspondence with Rabbi Stampfer on the subject of the Kaifeng Jews.

With Gabow's encouragement, Schwartz and David C. Buxbaum, a bilingual Shanghai-based lawyer, travelled to Kaifeng and made contact with the Jewish descendants, establishing close relations with Jewish families there, visiting their homes on frequent occasions, and conducting many interviews.

Not only did Schwartz visit with the Chinese Jews, but he made friendly contact with Kaifeng's mayor, the curator of the Kaifeng Museum, the manager of Kaifeng's C.I.T.S., and university administrators and scholars. After many discussions with the Chinese Jews as well as with the authorities, the concept of a Jewish Museum or at least a Judaica exhibit in the Kaifeng Museum was born.

After Louis Schwartz returned from China, he lived and taught on the West Coast of the U.S.A., and corresponded widely with other activists and Leo Gabow in particular.

Al Dien doesn't recall there being much activity in Palo Alto until Louis Schwartz and Leo Gabow established contact. Then it was Leo's indefatigable efforts that brought together such a large and interested group utilizing the network that Michael Pollak had established through his own correspondence as well as Louis Schwartz's more recent correspondence.

On June 27th, 1985, an international group of scholars and activists gathered in Palo Alto, California to establish the Sino-Judaic Institute.

In the beginning, Rabbi Stampfer was proposed as the head of the organization but since most of the interested parties lived in the Bay Area, it was decided that the organization be incorporated in Califor-

nia and that its initial president also come from the Bay Area.

Leo Gabow was elected president; Michael Pollak, vice-president; Rabbi Anson Laytner was elected secretary and editor of *Points East*; and Prof. Al Dien, treasurer. Prof. Louis Schwartz was elected honorary chairman. The founding board consisted of Dr. Wendy Abraham, Rabbi Arnold Mark Belzer, David Buxbaum (Shanghai), Mark Ejlenburg (Hong Kong), Helaine Fortgang, Seymour Fromer, Dr. Ron Kaye, Lawrence Kramer, Prof. Donald Leslie (Australia), Arthur Rosen, Rabbi Joshua Stampfer and counsel Robert Grodsky.

The primary point of contention in its early meetings concerned SJI's mission. Even prior to SJI's founding, the initial question was "Are there really Jews—or just descendants—in Kaifeng?" Only after a number of positive visitor reports was a majority on the Board convinced that the descendants still actually identified as Jews. Subsequently, long hours were spent discussing whether SJI was primarily interested in doing research about the Jews in Kaifeng and other parts of China or in helping to re-develop Jewish life in Kaifeng. Eventually SJI adopted both goals, with an emphasis on the former.

After SJI's founding, Rabbi Belzer visited Kaifeng in 1985. He toured the sites, conducted a *havdallah* service with the Kaifeng Jewish descendants without incident, and interviewed a number of them. Shortly thereafter, however, Dr. Abraham traveled to Kaifeng to gather oral histories from six of the heads of Kaifeng Jewish clans (two heads of the Shi clan, two of the Ai clan, one Zhao and one Li), before being arrested and expelled. (The original tapes of these oral histories were donated to the Hoover Archives at Stanford University in 2010, and will be open to the public in 2015.)

When Rabbi Marvin Tokayer led a Jewish tour group to China, they were in Xian and had chartered an aircraft to take them to Zhengzhou, the airport closest to Kaifeng. They checked in, the plane was there, as were the pilot and crew, but they sat in the airport waiting for two days to board. Finally, the authorities called in Rabbi Tokayer and said that the group would be arrested if they went to Kaifeng and instead flew the group to Canton for free.

These events put a damper on SJI's early activism in support of the Kaifeng Jews and led to its focus on academic research, educational efforts and the study of other Jewish communities in China. Only in more recent years, with the further opening up of China, has SJI returned to the activism of its earliest days.

During Leo's tenure as president, SJI consolidated itself as an organization, launched its journal, *Points East*, edited by Rabbi Anson Laytner, and its scholarly journal *Sino-Judaica*, edited by Prof. Al Dien, and published various articles by Michael Pollak, including the reprinting of *The Sino-Judaic Bibliographies of Rudolf Lowenthal*, Michael Pollak, ed., with the Hebrew Union College Press in 1988.

The early years were notable for many presentations on the Jews of Kaifeng. In 1986, SJI played a major role at a conference hosted by the University of San Francisco's Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History entitled "Culture, China and the Jews" by providing many speakers, most notably Prof. Donald Leslie. These speaking engagements led to the creation of a traveling exhibit on the Kaifeng Jews consisting of slides and a taped narrative in 1988, which enabled SJI to go where its speakers didn't.

Meanwhile, across the Pacific, The Jewish Historical Society (JHS) of Hong Kong was established in 1984. When SJI was founded, the JHS chairman, Mark Ejlenburg, was elected to the SJI Board. That same year, Ejlenburg asked Den Leventhal to take over the JHS chairmanship. In 1986, SJI invited Leventhal to become its Hong Kong representative, replacing Ejlenburg.

Leventhal spearheaded SJI's move to get support from the American Jewish Committee's Pacific Rim Institute so that books on the Holocaust could be sent to Prof. Xu Xin, who wanted to develop a Nanjing University course on that topic. Leventhal also worked with both JHS and SJI to get funding for Prof. Xu Xin's Chinese language *Encyclopedia Judaica* project. Lastly, at the request of SJI, Leventhal visited Kaifeng in June 1990 to confirm the rumor that the Kaifeng Synagogue steles were lying unprotected on the property of the Kaifeng Museum. The detailed report (sent to the SJI president)

on his meeting with Kaifeng governmental officials and the museum director included pictures that confirmed the rumors. The first and second steles (Ming period) were on the ground inside a storage building, and the fourth (Qian Long period) was lying on its side, leaning against another storage building, both on the museum's property. This report was the catalyst for SJI's working with the Museum to create a proper exhibit featuring the steles and SJI-donated materials on the top floor of the Kaifeng Municipal Museum. Although safe now from the elements and nicely displayed, the exhibit is open only to foreign guests and then only upon request.

Prof. Al Dien succeeded Leo as president in 1990. During his 17-year tenure, SJI greatly expanded its work and also began funding fledgling Jewish Studies programs at various Chinese universities.

Among its projects during this period:

- Support for Chinese edition of *Encyclopedia Judaica*; Prof. Xu Xin, project director, 1991.

- Books for Chinese scholars, funding included \$1000 from the Pacific Rim Institute of the American Jewish Committee, Neil C. Sandberg, director, 1991.

- a) Shanghai Judaic Studies Association
- b) Yao Yi'en, specialist on Sholem Aleichem
- c) Ohel Moshe Synagogue Museum, Shanghai
- d) Center for Judaic Studies, Harbin

- Printed:

- a) *The Jews of Dynastic China: A Critical Bibliography*, by Michael Pollak, in association with the Hebrew Union College Press, 1993
- b) Facsimiles of Kaifeng materials in the manuscript collection of the Hebrew Union College, Cincinnati
- c) The scholarly journal *Sino-Judaica*, Prof. Al Dien, editor, vol. 1 (1991), vol. 2 (1995), vol. 3 (2000), vol. 4 (2003)

- Upgraded the traveling exhibit of photographs to include rubbings of the Kaifeng stela, maps, and explanatory materials, 1997. A copy of the material was sent to the Kaifeng Municipal Museum.

- Funded the creation of a Kaifeng Jewish exhibit and provided copies of the SJI photo exhibit in the Riverside Scene Park, Kaifeng, part of the Song Dynasty theme park. (This too remains open only to for-

eign guests and then only upon request.)

- Contributed toward the funding of the international scholarly conference "Jewish Diasporas in China: Comparative and Historical Perspectives," Jonathan Goldstein, organizer, Harvard University, 1992. This was the first such conference ever convened.

- Distributed materials by the following individuals:

- a) Wang Yisha, *Annals of the Chinese Jews* (in Chinese)

- b) Xu Xin, *Chinese Encyclopedia Judaica* (in Chinese)

- c) Al Dien, *Guide for the Jewish Traveler in China* (in English)

- d) Frank J. Shulman, compiler *Directory of Individuals interested in the Jews and the Jewish Communities of East, Southeast and South Asia*,

- Grants were provided to numerous individuals, including:

- a) Wu Guifu, Director of the Institute of Strategic Studies, China's National Defense University

- b) Xu Xin, Nanjing University Institute of Jewish Studies, to Israel

- c) Zhao Xiangru, Institute of Minority Studies, to participate in the Harvard conference

- d) Summer workshops on Jewish history and culture for teachers of world history in Chinese universities, organized by Xu Xin, Center for Jewish Studies, Nanjing University, 1997, 1999 & 2001

- e) Jonathan Goldstein, in support of his research on Jan Zwartendijk, Dutch consul in Vilna

- f) Dvir Bar-Gal, in support of his project to preserve tombstones of Jews buried in Shanghai

- g) Pu Rongjian, University of Science and Technology, Hefei, Anhui

- h) She Lei, a Kaifeng Jew, to study in Israel

- i) Fan Yuchun, to assist in the translation of Chaim Herzog's *Heroes of Israel* into Chinese

- j) Xiao Xian for publication of his *The Jews, A People of Mystery* (Chinese)

- Hosted visiting lectures concerning Jews in China by:

- a) Dr. Pan Guang (Center for Jewish Studies, Shanghai)

- b) Dr. Shirley Wood (Henan University, Kaifeng)

- c) Ben Levaco (former resident of Tianjin and Shanghai)

- d) Ernest Heppner (author of *Shanghai Refuge*)

- e) Dr. Wang Qingyu (Yale University)

- f) Sidney Shapiro (member, Chinese People's Political Consultative Council)

- g) Co-sponsored "Home Afar: The Life of Jewish Communities in Shanghai during WWII", a public lecture by Dr. Peter Vamos, Lecturer in Chinese Language and History at Karoli Gaspar University, Hungary at University of San Francisco

- Set up the SJI Archives at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University in 1993 and updated them in 1998. Rena Krasno was the principle person responsible for building the collection.

Rabbi Anson Laytner took over from Prof. Dien in 2007. The following are some of the things accomplished during his tenure:

- SJI established a website (www.sino-judaic.org) that serves as an informational hub for all aspects of Jewish life and Jewish studies in China.

- *Points East* was digitized and made available on the SJI website.

- SJI resumed direct activity in Kaifeng, funding a Jewish school there, helping to send Western Jews to teach at there and sending annual delegations to visit both Kaifeng and other places.

- A logo was commissioned and a new Chinese name applied to the Institute.

- The SJI Board was greatly expanded and, in 2008, was divided between a managing board, comprised of North American members, and an international advisory board with members from North America, Europe, Israel, China, Australia and elsewhere.

- Den Leventhal formalized SJI's grant-making and developed an on-line application. Beginning in 2007 and continuing through 2014, the Grants Review Committee awarded grants to numerous individuals and institutions, including:

- a) Dr. Cao Jian, for a post-doctoral project at Hebrew University on the topic "Men & Ideas of the Tanakh in Modern Chinese Thought."

- b) Prof. Fu Xiao-wei, to help establish the Center for Judaic & Chinese Studies, Sichuan International Studies University (Chongqing). The program involved conferences, research & publication projects, curriculum development, etc. She leveraged SJI's grants into matching and expanded grants from the Chinese government to grow the Center.

c) Prof. Jonathan Goldstein, for the translation & publication of a Hebrew language version of his *China and Israel, 1948-1998*.

e) Mr. Richard Peritz, for the production of one or more videos on "Jews and Jewish Studies in China."

· Stipends for the Jewish school in Kaifeng, the Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University, the Institute of Jewish Studies at Nanjing University, the Center for Jewish Studies Shanghai (Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences), and the Center for Judaic & Chinese Studies at Sichuan International Studies University became annual allocations in the SJI budget.

· Shi Lei, a Kaifeng Jew who had studied in Israel, was brought to the USA for a speaking tour.

In 2012, Rabbi Arnold Mark Belzer succeeded Rabbi Laytner as president. Among early accomplishments during his tenure, SJI was able to convince the Hebrew Union College Klau Library to digitize its Kaifeng Jewish manuscript collection and make it available both to SJI scholars and the Kaifeng Jewish descendants. Work with the Kaifeng Jewish community has intensified while, at the same time, the various Jewish Studies programs and scholars have grown less dependent on SJI's support as their relationships with academic institutions abroad have developed.

List of Officers and Board Members

Founding Officers:

President: Leo Gabow

Vice-president: Michael Pollak

Secretary: Anson Laytner

Treasurer: Albert Dien

Honorary Chairman: Louis Schwartz

Founding Board:

Wendy Abraham; Arnold M. Belzer;

David C. Buxbaum; Mark Ejlenburg;

Helaine V. Fortgang; Seymour Fromer;

Ronald L. Kaye; Lawrence Kramer; Donald

D. Leslie; Art Rosen; Joshua Stampfer

Counsel: Robert Grodsky

March, 1990: New Officers

President: Albert Dien

1st Vice-president: Joshua Stampfer

2nd Vice-president: Michael Pollak

Treasurer: Leo Gabow

Public Affairs: Rena Krasno

Honored Founder: Louis Schwartz

Board of Directors Chairman: Art Rosen

Editor: Anson Laytner

Treasurer: Norman Fishman, 1993-1996

Shelton Erhlich, 1996-2007

July, 2007: New Officers

President: Anson Laytner

1st Vice-president: Arnold M. Belzer

2nd Vice-president: Wendy Abraham

Secretary: Linda Frank

Treasurer: Steve Hochstadt

Editor: Anson Laytner

Archivist: Rena Krasno

Counsel: Mark Cohen

Board of Directors Chairman: Art Rosen

Later Board Members:

1986: Frederic Kaplan; Den Leventhal;

Andrew Plaks; Marvin Tokayer

1988: Phyllis Horal; Rena Krasno

1991: Nigel Thomas; Wu Yuan-li; Harriet

Rosen; Vera Schwarz; Kenneth

Lubowich

1993: René Goldman (Vancouver)

1997: Mark Chen; Steve Hochstadt; Elyse

Silverberg (Beijing)

1999: Judy Green (Hong Kong)

2004: Linda Frank; Prof. Albert Yee

2007: Mary Cha; Joshua Singer

2008: Joel Epstein; Bev Friend; Seth Garz;

Mary-Anne Graham; Len Hew

(Winnipeg); Dana Leventhal; Ondi

Lingenfelter; Lily Yuan Ninburg; Tibi

Weisz

2010: David Marshall (Toronto)

2011: Eric Rothberg; Marvin Tokayer,

2012: Denise Yeh Bresler, Jim

Michaelson, Cynthia Zeiden

2012 New Officers

Arnold Mark Belzer, President

Vera Schwarcz, Vice-President

Steve Hochstadt, Treasurer

Ondi Lingenfelter, Secretary

Anson Laytner, Immediate Past President

Managing Board

Denise Yeh Bresler, Joel Epstein, Bev

Friend, Seth Garz, Mary-Anne Graham,

Ron Kaye, Dana Leventhal, Den

Leventhal, David Marshall, Jim

Michaelson, Art Rosen, Eric Rothberg,

Marvin Tokayer, Tibi Weisz, Albert Yee,

Cynthia Zeiden

International Advisory Board:

Wendy Abraham, Jan Berris, Mark Cohen,

Irene Eber, Avrum Ehrlich, Fu Youde,

Jonathan Goldstein, Jerry Gotel, Judy

Green, Pan Guang, Len Hew, Tess

Johnston, Teddy Kaufman, Rena Krasno,

Donald Leslie, Michael Li, Maisie Meyer,

Mark Michaelson, Sonja Muehlberger,

Gustavo Perednik, Andrew Plaks, Art

Rosen, Shi Lei, Yitzhak Shichor, Elyse

Silverberg, Josh Stampfer, Shalom Wald,

Xiao Xian, Xu Xin, Zhang Qianhong,

David Zweig.

Excerpts from the 2014 Annual Report

(continued from page 1)

Prof. Xu Xin, Director of the Institute, visited Australia from Dec. 1-18. During his visit, he gave seven public lectures and met with a number of scholars and the leaders of the Zionist Federation of Australia.

He was invited to lecture at 4 universities in China. He has been taped for a MOOC course on "Jewish Diaspora in Modern China" in English. The course is expected to be available worldwide on the platform of *Coursera* in 2015.

He published three essays and completed two books entitled respectively: *Anti-Semitism: Past and Present* and *An Overview of Western Culture*. Both are expected to get officially published in 2015.

To serve the fast growing cooperation and collaboration in economy and culture between China and Israel, he led a delegation of the Heyuanxiang Group in Shanghai to visit Israel in February.

He spoke at a number of conferences including the conference on "Kaifeng and Beyond: Jewish Life in China, Past and Present" organized by the University of San Francisco via skype on May 2.

Prof. Lihong Song, Deputy Director of the Institute, was promoted to full professor at the beginning of 2014. He has finished two books. *Rome and Jerusalem* mainly addresses the Jewish interaction with the Roman Empire. The other book is a Chinese translation of Werner Sombart's classic, *The Jews and Modern Capitalism*. Both books are expected to come out in 2015.

Meanwhile, Prof. Song, teamed with Prof. James Ross of Northeastern University, to edit a volume on the image of Jews in contemporary China, which is scheduled to be published in English and is under contract with a publisher in Boston. He also published a paper on Jews and China.

Prof. Song gave several talks on Jewish topics for conferences in Beijing, Shanghai, Jinan, Chengdu, Hangzhou and Zhengzhou. He was also invited to lecture for the summer workshop on the Holocaust Education at Henan University of Kaifeng that was organized by the London Jewish Cultural Center. He served as external examiner to attend a PhD dissertation defense held by the Judaic Studies Program of the University of Shandong.

Dr. Zhenhua Meng (Jeremiah), associate professor and Director of the Center for Israel Studies at Nanjing University, currently serves as a visiting scholar at Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University from July 2014 to May 2015.

Dr. Meng attended a number of international conferences including Nishan Forum on World Civilizations in Jinan, China May 21-23; Meeting of the Society of Asian Biblical Studies in Chiang Mai, Thailand, June 22-26; Symposium for New Approaches to Religious Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong in Hong Kong June 27; Colloquium of Hebrew Bible Scholars in Boston Area, Newton, MA Society of Biblical Literature 2014 Annual Meeting, San Diego, CA November 22-26.

He taught two courses at Nanjing University in the spring semester. He also served as guest professor at Shantou University and taught a BA intensive course with 60 students on "Judaism and World Civilizations".

III. Visitors

The Institute invited **Dr. Steven Windmueller**, to serve its visiting professor at Nanjing University at the recommendation of John Fishel. Dr. Windmueller lectured on topics that reflect his area of expertise, such as American Jewish organizations and Communities. The faculty and students had wonderful meetings and discussions with him. The Glazer Institute also arranged for him to visit and lecture at the Institute of Jewish Studies at Henan University and the Center for Judaic and Inter-religious Studies of Shandong University during his visit to China.

His visit and lectures not only deepened Chinese academia's understanding of American Jewry, their life, and their roles in American society and politics, but also the dynamics of Jewish participation in the societal and political development of the USA and the evolving relationship to Israel. His lectures are to be translated into Chinese and will be published in Chinese journals.

Jason Lustig, a Ph.D. candidate at UCLA, selected by the Center for Jewish Studies' Faculty Advisory Committee UCLA as one of two recipients of the Stephen O. Lesser Chinese Travel Grant in Jewish Studies for the 2014-15 academic year.

A number of other visitors came or lectured at the Institute. They were: **Mr. Arnon Perlman**, Newly-appointed Israeli

Consul General in Shanghai and **Mr. Oren Rozenblat**, Deputy Consul General, visited the Institute; a delegation from **the Heyuanxiang Group** came to visit for a meeting about a musical opera "Jews in Shanghai"; **Dr. Shi Xingguo**, Director and Representative Office China, De Gruyter, a German publisher; **Dr. Shaye Cohen**, the Littauer Professor of Hebrew Literature and Philosophy in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations of Harvard University; **Dr. Shlomo Neuman**, Regents Professor in the Department of Hydrology & Water Resources at the University of Arizona, USA and a Member of the U.S. National Academy of Engineering; **Prof. Sergio Waisman**, Chair of International Affairs Department and **Dr. Xiaofei Kang**, Associate Professors from the George Washington University; a delegation from the **Helongjiang TV** visited the Institute to consult Prof. Xu Xin about its TV program on Jews in Modern China; **Dr. Zaki Shalom**, professor of Ben-Gurion Research Institute at Ben-Gurion University and Institute for National Security Studies; **Dr. Michael Kagan**, scientist, inventor, serial entrepreneur and author of *the Holistic Haggadah*.

Chinese-Israeli Relations Examined

by Sam Chester

excerpted from <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/136348/china-israel-united-states>, 28 June 2013

"Like it or not, when President Peres celebrates his 100th birthday in 10 years' time, this [conference] will be half Asian," the Chinese real-estate tycoon Ronnie Chan boldly declared at last week's Presidents Conference in Jerusalem, as he sat alongside outgoing Bank of Israel Governor Stanley Fischer and former U.S. Treasury Secretary Larry Summers. "I guarantee you."

With Chinese-Israeli relations enjoying a new honeymoon capped by Prime Minister Netanyahu's recent state visit to Beijing, Chan is one of many observers now speculating that Israel's future lies in the east. At the same time, China's dependence on Arab and Iranian oil and the growing rhetoric from Beijing about the Israeli-Palestinian peace process are often depicted as the obstacles that could overshadow Sino-Israeli relations...But the re-

ality is that Israel is less worried about the Arabs challenging its relationship with China than it is about the United States. Israeli officials at a recent meeting on China were concerned about how Jerusalem can strike a balance between Beijing and Washington. These officials remember that the previous era of close Sino-Israeli relations was brought to a sudden halt by American pressure.

Indeed, Israel has found itself forced to choose between China and the United States at several critical junctures in the recent history of both nations. Although Israel was the first Middle Eastern state to recognize China, the two newly independent states failed to establish official ties due to U.S. opposition at the outbreak of the Korean War. Israel and China had to wait until Nixon went to China in 1972 to begin a bilateral relationship.

The two sides quickly found common ground in the sale of Israeli weapons to China; for the next two decades—secretly during the 1980s but with increasing openness after the establishment of official ties in 1992—arms sales defined Sino-Israeli relations.

Even as Israeli leaders anticipated a profitable future partnership with China, they failed to address growing U.S. unease with Sino-Israeli weapons sales. With China the key rival for U.S. strategists in the post-Cold War era, Jerusalem's sale of advanced weapons to Beijing came under heavy scrutiny in Washington. During the 1990s, U.S. officials accused Israel of illegally providing China with weapons such as the Patriot missile, Lavi jetfighter, and Phalcon airborne radar system.

American pressure on Israel to cancel the Phalcon reached a fever pitch during the final years of the decade. During a historic visit to Israel in 2000 by Chinese President Jiang Zemin, Prime Minister Ehud Barak assured his guest the Phalcon deal would go through. But two months later the Israeli leader gave in and canceled the billion dollar deal. Having personally insulted the Chinese president just as China was prepared to usher in a new era of strategic ties, Jerusalem's eastern aspirations imploded. Whatever was left of Sino-Israeli strategic ties collapsed five years later when the United States prevented Israel from upgrading Harpy drones previously purchased by the Chinese. Forced to again choose between

Washington and Beijing, Jerusalem committed to no longer selling weapons to China...

Since Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's visit to Beijing in January 2007, and especially since 2010, Sino-Israeli relations have rebounded to encompass new forms of commercial, military, political, and cultural exchange.

In the absence of arms sales, the trade and investment at the core of contemporary Sino-Israeli ties may seem fairly harmless to U.S. interests. However...cyber-security is just one cutting-edge field, along with drones, in which Israel excels and China wants to improve—and where civilian applications blur the line over whether these dual-use technologies can be sold to China under Israel's 2005 agreement with the United States.

Although China and Israel are no longer in the weapons business, both sides are still driven by similar motives that guided their trade in arms. Israel remains addicted to the export potential of the vast Chinese market. China is still interested in acquiring Israeli technology. A key difference from the past is that China's interest in Israel is no longer only about modernizing the Chinese military. With Beijing trying to build an economy that relies on innovation rather than imitation, Israeli technologies are desired across a range of industries...

Shipping gas to China and having the Chinese run an Israeli railroad that competes with Egypt's Suez Canal are political projects masquerading as commercial ventures. In this sense, they are similar to a restoration in Sino-Israeli military ties that began in 2011 but whose true importance is difficult to measure. In 2012, Israel augmented the recent chorus of visits by generals, admirals, and spy chiefs from both countries by appointing a senior military figure to the position of ambassador in Beijing. Some observers assume the renewed prominence of security officials signals the emergence of a new clandestine arms trade between the two countries. With Syria enmeshed in violence, Chinese military strategists are in need of accurate intelligence and friendly ports of call as Chinese influence expands in the Eastern Mediterranean. Israel is uniquely positioned to supply both needs.

If Israel and China have secretly returned to the arms business, it is far more likely to be taking place with covert U.S. permission than without. It is hard to imagine that within a decade of the Phalcon and Harpy scandals, Israeli leaders would so blithely disregard America's hypersensitivity to the transfer of advanced weapons to China. If the military meetings are about sharing intelligence and port access, American officials who keep a careful eye on China's naval ambitions have greater reason to be concerned. Were Chinese flotillas to make a regular practice of patrolling the Eastern Mediterranean, the U.S. Navy's Sixth Fleet would likely step up its own activity off of Israel's shores, bringing the threat of conflict between the great powers to Israel's doorstep.

Whatever impact the Arab Spring has had in stimulating China's military collaboration with Israel, the upheaval has certainly caused Beijing and Jerusalem to adopt similar positions on regional crises—a development that takes on greater significance with China's intent to ramp up its political involvement in the Middle East. In Egypt and Syria, Israeli preferences are not too different from China's desire for stability and a return to the status quo. Neither country is enamored with America's inchoate policy of hesitating to support opposition groups before rushing to abandon traditional allies like Hosni Mubarak. China and Israel both remain largely disinterested in actively embracing the peace process, despite Beijing's past and present rhetorical embrace of the Palestinian cause. When it comes to Iran, Beijing and Jerusalem clearly disagree what if any level of outside pressure should be applied to Tehran. However, China's leaders have responded to Israeli lobbying by becoming increasingly critical of Iran's nuclear program.

While China is generally the lead actor in other avenues of Sino-Israeli relations, Israeli government and especially non-government programs have taken the lead in developing academic and cultural ties. These Israeli programs are responsible for a vast range of activities that include academic centers, cultural exhibits, translated literature, language courses, tourist initiatives, and expanded and informed media coverage. Together these activities have had great success in rebranding Israel in China as the Start-up Nation—a center of dynamic commercial innovation and eco-

nomonic development—rather than a religious conflict-zone. Although Beijing has opened a Confucius Institute in Tel Aviv and is planning a second such language and cultural center in Jerusalem, Israeli interest and understanding of China have largely developed independently. The allure of China's economic growth makes Chinese languages the most popular (besides English) in Israeli universities, with over 800 college students studying them every year.

Although academic and cultural ties between China and Israel are far less likely to unnerve American officials than military and political initiatives, the former are uniquely capable of truly transforming ties between the three countries. The most fundamental obstacle to Sino-Israeli relations remains the fact that China and the East remain foreign concepts for Israelis whose personal and professional connections are often embedded in Europe and the Americas. With a vibrant American Jewish community and a shared democratic and Judeo-Christian heritage, Israel and the United States appear unlikely to back away from six decades of incredibly close bilateral ties.

Nevertheless, the Phalcon crisis that destroyed Sino-Israeli ties in 2000 did not come out of nowhere. American pressure on Israel stemmed from the deterioration of U.S. ties with China. Today, the two great powers are again divided by naval face-offs in the East and South China Seas, ever-growing trade disputes, and are one mistyped cyber-attack away from causing an amount of damage far greater than the 1999 embassy attack in Belgrade. If U.S. and China ties came undone, Israel can take solace in knowing that the complex reality of its modern ties with Beijing will ensure that any American pressure will not cripple ties as occurred in 2000. At the same time, the changing Sino-U.S. dynamics in the Middle East present valuable opportunities for Israel to leverage its ties with both countries.

Sam Chester is an expert on China-Middle East affairs and a graduate of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. His regular commentary on Sino-Middle East issues can be found on Twitter @Shaihludata.

China Looks West at the Middle East

by David P. Goldman

excerpted from *BESA Center Perspectives*, 1 February 2015

A May 2014 map released by China's state-owned Xinhua News Agency shows Beijing's bold visions for a "New Silk Road" and "New Maritime Silk Road."

China's "New Silk Road" might become history's most ambitious investment in infrastructure. Some Chinese strategists predict an Israeli role in the project on par with, or possibly even more important than, that of Turkey. China calls the project "One Belt and One Road," referring to a belt of railroads, highways, pipelines and broadband communications stretching through China to the West, and a "maritime Silk Road" combining sea routes with port infrastructure from the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean.

Israel's location makes it possible for the Jewish state to "play the role of bridgehead for 'One Belt and One Road' with the completion of the 'Red-Med' rail project," said Dr. Liu Zongyi at a November seminar at Remnin University. Dr. Liu, based at the Shanghai Institute of International Studies, spoke of a \$2 billion, 300 km rail line linking Ashkelon with the Red Sea. The "Red-Med" project is usually presented in more modest terms, as a way of absorbing excess traffic from the Suez Canal, or as an alternative route in the event of political disruption.

What China calls "One Belt and One Road" proposes that China, with the Mediterranean on the East-West axis, will have the opportunity to create high-speed rail lines in Southeast Asia, India, and Africa. China aims to double its 12,000 kilometers of railway track by 2020, with high-speed lines comprising most of the expansion. It is building a rail network south through Thailand, Laos and Cambodia to Singapore, and west to Istanbul.

China is seeking ways to enhance its regional security presence without attempting to play a superpower role in the Middle East.

Some Chinese strategists see "Red-Med" as emblematic of a more ambitious design for the region. For example, Sino-Israeli collaboration aims to include counterterrorism and anti-piracy opera-

tions, as well as economic support for Arab countries. Israel can provide advanced technologies, such as in agriculture, to support the industrialization of the Middle East in the context of "One Belt and One Road." The Chinese have even pointed out to Israel that their navy is conducting anti-pirate missions in the Indian Ocean and The Gulf of Aden that Israel can participate in.

The project implies a radical shift in China's perceptions of regional security in the Middle East. China's net oil imports have nearly tripled in the past decade, from 100 million tons per month in 2005 to nearly 300 million tons today, and most of the increase has come from the Persian Gulf. China's dependence on Middle Eastern oil will continue to rise. Until recently, China was content to follow America's lead on Gulf security. After the collapse of Syria and Iraq, however, China's complacency has turned to concern, and China is seeking ways to enhance its regional security presence without attempting to play a superpower role in the region.

There is a new consensus in China that the world's second superpower will have to play a more central role in the Middle East...China has joined the P5+1 negotiations with Iran and offered to become a fifth member of the Quartet (UN, US, Europe, Russia), but these are pro forma proposals to assert China's interest in the region rather than a policy per se. In the past, China has voted with the Palestinians at the United Nations, and it will not alter its diplomatic position in the foreseeable future.

There is an overarching theme to Chinese policy, though, and it stems from China's economic strengths. The transformation of the Eurasian landmass by high-speed transport and communications will lift large parts of the continent out of backwardness, China believes, and make long-term political stability possible. Building the New Silk Road, though, demands the suppression of security threats that could disrupt trade flows. In both respects Beijing is sizing up Israel as a strategic partner.

Not until 2014 did China come to the conclusion that the United States would fail to stop Iran's drive for nuclear weapons. Under the assumption that it was working under an American security umbrella, Beijing attempted to maintain a delicate balance in its relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran. One Chinese analyst observes

that although China's weapons deliveries to Iran are larger in absolute terms than its sales to Saudi Arabia, it has given the Saudis its best medium-range missiles, which constitute a "formidable deterrent" against Iran.

As China sees the matter, its overall dependency on imported oil is rising, and the proportion of that oil coming from Iran and its perceived allies is rising as well. Saudi Arabia may be China's biggest provider, but Iraq and Oman account for the lion's share of the increase in oil imports. China doesn't want to rock the boat with either prospective adversary. That policy worked well when the US stood for surety for peace in the Persian Gulf, but it has reached its best-used-by date and Beijing is still considering what to do next...

Because China's Middle East stance is in the midst of a grand reconsideration, Israel has an important window of opportunity to influence Chinese thinking. In the absence of a dominant American presence in the Persian Gulf, the risks of regional war and an interruption of China's oil supplies will rise above the threshold of acceptability to Beijing.

How India will interact with the "New Silk Road" is not yet clear, but it seems increasingly likely that India and China will collaborate rather than quarrel. After President Xi Jinping's September 2014 state visit to India, the new government of Narendra Modi may draw on Chinese expertise and financing to alleviate critical infrastructure bottlenecks. The two countries are negotiating a \$33 billion high-speed rail scheme, for example, the first major improvement in a rail system built by the British in the 19th century. Economics trumps petty concerns over borders in the mountainous wasteland that separates the world's two most populous nations.

There also is a strategic dimension to the growing sense of agreement between China and India. From India's vantage point, China's support for Pakistan's army is a concern, but it cuts both ways. Pakistan remains at perpetual risk of tipping over towards militant Islam, and the main guarantor of its stability is the army. China wants to strengthen the army as a bulwark against the Islamic radicals, who threaten China's Xinjiang province as much as they do India, and that probably serves India's interests as well as any Chinese policy might.

China's role in Egypt exemplifies how Beijing may use its economic muscle to contribute to regional stability. Egyptian President Fatah al-Sisi signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership" with China during his late-December state visit to Beijing. China envisions a second Suez Canal flanked by a high-speed rail line, as well as "cooperation in infrastructure, nuclear power, new energy, aviation, finance and other sectors," Chinese President Xi Jinping said in December. Israel may have a role in Sino-Egyptian cooperation. As aforementioned, Israel can provide advanced agricultural technologies to support the industrialization of Middle Eastern countries in the context of One Belt, One Road.

China's policy-making is careful, conservative and consensus-driven. Its overriding concern is its own economy. The pace of transformation of the Middle East has surprised it, and it is trying to decide what to do next. What China will do in the future cannot be predicted. But it seems inevitable that China's basic interests will lead it to far greater involvement in the region, all the more so as the US withdraws. Israel will remain an American ally, and this alliance strictly delimits the scope of Sino-Israeli collaboration. Within these limits, though, Israel has great room to maneuver, and the opportunity to help shape Chinese thinking and strategy in the region for decades to come.

David P. Goldman is a Managing Director at Reorient Group, a Hong-Kong based investment bank, and a member of the Board of Advisors of Sino-Israel Government Network and Academic Leadership (SIGNAL). His book, How Civilizations Die (And Why Islam is Dying, Too), was published by Regency Press in September 2011. A volume of his essays on culture, religion and economics, It's Not the End of the World – It's Just the End of You, also appeared that fall.

N.E.B. EZRA and Israel's Messenger

by Sasson Jacoby
reprinted from <http://www.jewsofchina.org/>

[Over] one hundred years ago, on April 22, 1904, a Jewish journal devoted to the interest of Jews in the Far East, was born in Shanghai, where its founder and editor, N.E.B. Ezra, and his associates named

it the *Israel's Messenger*. What made it unique is a fact that has been virtually forgotten in the course of the past century. It so happened that this journal was the first English-language [Zionist] publication to appear anywhere in the world. Zionist publications have appeared mostly in Russian, German and Yiddish. Jewish journals in English were not Zionist.

It is well to note that the Messenger appeared just three months before the death of Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism, and eight years after the First Zionist Congress in Basel. There is no doubt that this Congress and the Zionist policy preached by Herzl had a profound effect on the young Ezra and this was to affect the life of the Jewish residents of China and other Jewish congregations in the Far East. Ezra was born in India of Baghdadi parents; he was an Anglophile and an ardent believer of British influence for the establishment of a sovereign Jewish homeland.

When the Balfour Declaration was announced in 1916 in the midst of World War I, Ezra made unceasing and successful efforts for its recognition by both China and Japan. He was a prolific writer and following the influx of Russian refugees, among them a considerable number of Jews, he made great efforts to promote relations between the Russian Ashkenazis and the Baghdadi Jews in Shanghai, and his journal always had news about the life of the Russian Jews in Shanghai.

Ezra also made contact with the leaders of the Jewish communities in Harbin and Tientsin and had a close relationship especially with Dr. A. Kaufman, the leader of the Russian Jewish community in Harbin.

Ezra edited his journal with an assiduity worthy of his purpose and many of Shanghai's local community had nothing but praise for his work, which was appreciated by many of the English-language press in the city. He was noted in his writings for his impeccable Victorian English. Sadly, his work was tragically cut short when he passed away from a sudden, massive heart attack in December 1936 at the age of 53. His funeral in the Baikal Road cemetery was attended not only by the Jewish members but many of the foreign community, while the daily newspapers were full of eulogies and descriptions of his activities.

Unfortunately, of the succeeding generations a century later, some members of the Sephardi community, then in childhood and now all over the world in their seventies and eighties, may have scant or no knowledge or remembrance of the man who founded the Jewish journal that had made such an impact on Jews in the Far East. However, it is well to note that when he died, the Harbin Jewish publication, *Yevreiskaya Jizn* (The Jewish Life), had *inter alia* this to say: "As an influential figure, a prominent journalist and a man of impeccable integrity, Nissim Ezra was welcome in the drawing rooms of the first rank statesmen and policy makers at that time, and later, when the dark clouds began to appear over the European Jewry, he used all the weight of his influence to relieve the plight of the persecuted....His readers remember well his visit to Japan and his meetings with Japanese Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu and a number of statesmen in Tokyo and in Nanking and his interviews with the ambassadors of Britain and Iran. These took place three weeks before his death."

Nissim Ezra Benjamin (N.E.B.) Ezra was born in Lahore (then in British India and now in Pakistan) and in his youth went to Bombay where he attended the Jacob Sassoon School and furthered his education through private study and acquired a wide knowledge in world affairs and Jewish scholarship. He was later employed by the E.D. Sassoon firm and subsequently sent to Hong Kong and in 1899 to Shanghai. In his twenties he left the firm to become the manager of the China Palestine Trading Company, although he kept his connection with E.D. Sassoon until the great rubber boom in 1910 when he became a broker on a fulltime basis.

With his gifted abilities in public affairs he became highly popular, and with the cooperation of friends, among them S.J. Solomon and D.E.J. Abraham, he finally came to the conclusion his aims could be best achieved by an English-language journal which could provide readers with news about events in the Jewish world and promote the spiritual and traditional values of the Jewish heritage so its past glories would not be forgotten.

Many of his wealthy and socially prominent friends supported him, such as E. Jonah, I.A. Lewis, S. Moussa, and by his twin brother, J.A.B. Ezra. At the suggestion of Miriam Solomon, the journal was

named in Hebrew *Mevasser Yisrael*, which in English became the *Israel's Messenger*. Its first issue appeared in 1904 but grew rapidly larger until December 1941 (the start of the Pacific War with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor) with an interval during World War I from February 1916 to October 1918. Ezra edited the journal for 32 years until his death in 1936, and the final issues were edited by David Elias under the ownership of Mrs. K. Ezra. He was survived by his widow, two daughters in Shanghai and another daughter in New York. He left two sisters, Mrs. I.E. Sargon and Mrs. Flora Ezra.

In the last article he wrote before his death, Ezra wrote: "My principles are my belief in God to eternity...it is the duty of every man to live in hope."

Shanghai's Historic WWII Jewish Café to be Rebuilt

from *Shanghai Daily*, February 4, 2015

Hongkou District government will rebuild a cafe and renovate several historic buildings that served as iconic spots for Jewish

refugees during World War II even as the city plans to have it inscribed as UNESCO Memory of the World Register.

Shanghai was home to about 20,000 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi persecution. Many of them lived in the Tilanqiao area of Hongkou District.

The city has completed collation of the refugee list, data bank, literary, video and audio material, said Chen Jian, curator of the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum that is working with the Hongkou District government on the UNESCO application.

This year is the 70th anniversary of the end of the World Anti-Fascist War and China's victory against the Japanese aggression.

Apart from the world memory application, Shanghai has also announced plans to rebuild a cafe where Jewish refugees socialized during their sojourn in the city. The Wiener Cafe Restaurant, which first opened in 1939, will be rebuilt in a new location on Changyang Road opposite the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. It will be recreated with its original look, Chen said.

The three-story wooden and brick structure that combined Western and Eastern architecture served as a popular shelter for Jewish residents living nearby. The owner sold the cafe to a local after the war. It was demolished in 2009 to make room for a subway.

"We have kept the building's blue prints and key components such as beams and some wooden carving on walls for the rebuilding," Chen said.

After the reopening, the first floor will be a cafe while the upper floors will hold exhibitions, he said. Construction will begin soon and is expected to be completed by August.

The district government will also renovate the office of the Jewish Distribution Center, which helped Jews living in the city.

The former residence of Michael Blumenthal, a Jewish refugee who later served as curator of the Jewish Museum in Berlin and a former US Secretary of the Treasury, will also be renovated with introductions on the house, Chen said.

BOOK NOOK

How to Leap a Great Wall in China, The China Adventures of a Cross-Cultural Trouble-Shooter

by Den Leventhal
Merwin, Asia, Distributed by University of Hawaii Press, 2014
paperback \$28.80, available from Amazon
reviewed by Beverly Friend

Many years ago, I read an amazing, insightful book, *The Hidden Dimension*, by Edward T. Hall, which introduced me to the science of "proxemics," which explores non-verbal cultural differences — especially in the use of space — and its impact on such varied disciplines as personal business relations, cross-cultural exchanges, architecture, city planning, and even urban renewal.

I have no idea whether Den Leventhal ever read this book, but his entire life is a marvelous example of its application in the world of business. Steeped in China—language, history and culture—he has now written a splendid, highly personal, infor-

mative and entertaining work on the reaping the benefits of cultural immersion: *How to Leap a Great Wall in China – The China Adventures of a Cross-Cultural Trouble Shooter* (which was just nominated for the 2015 Hagley Prize in Business History).

His fascination with East Asia began after he graduated from the United States Merchant Marine Academy and became an officer on ocean-going commercial vessels. This led him to graduate work at the University of Pennsylvania in Chinese studies, followed by a year attending the Taiwan National University before beginning a job with a Chinese communications, public relations, and advertising corporation.

"I was the only westerner in this company, the reason being that the boss wanted to get the accounts of foreign subsidiaries, and they were all westerners, mostly American, and they figured I'd be ideal because I could work with his teams, help them come to understand and make presentations in English," Leventhal said in a recent interview. (www.myeasternshore.md.com/news/queen_annes_county/

article_b1dc84b0-7b61-5ca7-8481-b44e1c372c8d.html)

Over time, he also worked in China for American firms including American Cyanamid, Liberty Mutual, and a major inspection and testing company, and was part of a team that acted as a "kind of a mid-wife" in their dealings with the Chinese. He explained, "We were dealing with a supply side mentality—they had no idea of the demand side."

Drawn from the 12-volume hand-written log of his business travel from 1980-1998, the goal of his memoir—wonderfully achieved—is to share lessons he learned as a "shirtsleeve sinologist." A China market entry strategist, his work as negotiator, educator and trouble-shooter took him to 62 Chinese cities where he interacted with a wide range of Chinese people from ministers of state to factory workers.

Each chapter of his book, provocatively titled, teaches at least one such lesson. Especially tantalizing are the following headings:

- The Serendipity Factor, A Chinese Poem is Worth a Cool Coupla' Million

- The Culture Bound Mindset, or the Ability to Use Chopsticks Doesn't Make You a Business Expert
- The Middleman Mentality or the Occasional Stinker is not Necessarily on the Other Side of the Table.
- The Liberation Standard, from Blue Ant to Pink Bunny
- The Dale Carnegie Factor, or The Bottom-up and Top-down Approach
- Stopping Crime Can Be a Marketing Tool
- Chinese Law, or a Wedge or a Sledge

In Chapter II, "The Serendipity Factor, or A Chinese Poem is Worth a Cool Coupla' Million," Leventhal details how his recall of a specific poem, well known to educated Chinese, clinched a deal. As he recalls the story:

"The deputy general manager proceeded to recite from memory what was obviously a favorite poem. He gave it lilting sound vaguely reminiscent of the Peking operatic style and seemed delighted to have the opportunity of making a public performance. Here's where luck kicked in i.e. the serendipity factor."

Leventhal then relates how he had studied that particular poem (with some difficulty) during his graduate studies, and now recognized it. He responded, and nailed the contract.

The mysterious "blue ant" and "pink bunny" in Chapter VII turn out to be a metaphor for the transformation from a "worker's paradise" to a "market economy" as evidenced in the shifting garb of one female interpreter.

Repeatedly, throughout the book, he proves, "effective communication is dependent upon intercultural understandings," and then illustrates via example. Leventhal's varied and exciting adventures move between the cerebral and the physical and even include a vivid description of enduring travel as cargo on an ancient Russian propeller airplane.

Leventhal states that his book is designed for a combined audience—the business community, foreign affairs people, people in comparative studies, and those in Chinese studies. Actually, you needed not be in business, or be a Sinophile to enjoy his sprightly tales of triumph. Reading Leventhal's words, I am reminded of my late father. Dad was not a businessman and he never travelled outside of North America. The resemblance lies in their enthusiasm. Dad would return home each day from his practice as a physician with tales of difficult diagnoses made and lives saved. Both men are slayers of dragons!

Den Leventhal, a retired board member of the Sino Judaic Institute and founding chairperson of its Grants Review Committee, is also the author of "The Chess of China" (1980); "The Jewish Community of Hong Kong: An Introduction" and "Sino-Judaic Studies: Whence and Whither" (both 1985); and, with Mary Leventhal, is co-editor of "Faces of the Jewish Experience in China" (1990). He currently lives in Maryland with his wife Mary, and teaches boating safety in addition to his involvements with writing, music, archery and his work as a Volunteer Reserve Officer with the Maryland Natural Resources Police. He can be reached at den.leventhal@gmail.com.

Beverly Friend, Ph.D. is Executive Director of the China Judaic Studies Association and a board member of the Sino Judaic Institute. In 2012, Nanjing University honored her by naming her an Honorary Director of the Diane and Guilford Glazer Institute of Israeli and Judaic Studies in celebration of the Institute's 20th Anniversary. She has visited China seven times since 1986, each time promoting the study of Judaism in China under the aegis of Professor Xu Xin. She maintains a web site at www.chinajudaic.org (which is currently being updated) and has written many articles and lectures on the China/Judaic Connection.

The Haggadah of the Kaifeng Jews of China

by Fook-Kong Wong and Dalia Yasharpour
Brill, 216 pp., \$132
reviewed by David Stern
excerpted from *The Jewish Review of Books*, Spring 2013
<http://www.jewishreviewofbooks.com/publications/detail/why-is-this-haggadah-different> > :

The Haggadah of the Kaifeng Jews of China is the first scholarly monograph devoted to this haggadah. The study's authors—Fook-Kong Wong, a Harvard-educated scholar of the Old Testament in Hong Kong, and Dalia Yasharpour, a preceptor in Persian language and literature at Harvard—have mined the text for all the information it contains about the Jews of Kaifeng in the 17th and 18th centuries, the time that the two surviving manuscripts of the haggadah were written. Most of the book is devoted to a detailed study of the haggadah's Hebrew text and its accompanying Judeo-Persian instructions, and what the language of the text can tell

us about the Hebraic literacy of the Kaifeng Jews. These chapters will appeal mainly to scholars. But the larger story the haggadah tells about the Chinese Jews is of far wider interest, and the sight alone of the haggadah—one of the manuscripts is reproduced in full in the book, along with a transcription of the Hebrew text and an annotated English translation—is worth more than a fleeting look...

The two surviving haggadah manuscripts that are the subjects of Wong and Yasharpour's study are owned today by the Klau Library of Hebrew Union College (which purchased them in 1851 from the London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews). Both are modest books, one written in Jewish-Persian hand, the other in Chinese Hebrew square script (like that of the Torah scrolls). While the two haggadahs were written by different scribes about a century apart, both preserve essentially the same text. That text primarily follows the Persian Jewish rite but from one of that rite's early stages, before the haggadah had undergone many of the expansions with which contemporary users of the text are familiar. As a result, the Kaifeng Haggadah doesn't have Dayyenu, Shefokh Chamatekha ("Pour Out Your Wrath," which probably did not appear in the Ashkenazic haggadah until after the Crusader massacres), or folk songs such as Chad Gadya (which did not become a regular feature until the printed Italian editions of the 17th century). However, the most startling omission is the absence of the blessing over the matzah (that follows the standard ha-motzi). The editors suggest that the blessing may have been so well-known that the copyists did not feel the need to record it, but it seems to me even more likely that the copyist either forgot to write the blessing or that it was already missing from their tradition by the 17th century. Bread, leavened or unleavened, must have been a very unusual sight in China.

In general, however, the Passover haggadah has been one of the most universally stable texts in all the Jewish liturgy—the core text is basically similar if not identical nearly everywhere—and for all its Judeo-Persian peculiarities and missing passages, readers of the Kaifeng Haggadah will have no more difficulty in navigating this haggadah than they would finding their way through the Maxwell House version. The Kaifeng Haggadah's most revealing features, as its editors demonstrate, are its many errors. Some pages are misplaced and out of sequence; others are missing. There are many misspell-

ings and mistaken vocalizations, a good number of them resulting from phonetic transcription, that is, where the copyist wrote words on the basis of what he knew from hearing the word pronounced rather than from having seen it in a written form. This feature was complicated, in turn, by the fact (attested by the inscriptions as well as by the Jesuits' accounts) that the Kaifeng Jews spoke Hebrew with heavy Chinese accents (so that a word like le-'olam became re'oram, for example). According to one account, their Hebrew sounded more like Chinese than the Hebrew the Jesuits knew from their European educations. All these various features—the errors, the omissions, the peculiarities in order and in transcription, along with what they were able to cull from the marginal notes in the haggadahs, some of them in Chinese—indicate to Wong and Yasharpour that, by the 17th and 18th centuries, the time that the two manuscripts were written, the Kaifeng Jews may have still understood enough of the haggadah's Hebrew to be able to use the books at their Seders, but whatever literacy they possessed was already seriously impaired and presaged the complete disappearance that the community would experience not long after.

There is more than a little irony in the fact that this indication should come in the form of a haggadah. Of all the classical texts of Judaism, the Passover haggadah is the Jewish book of redemption par excellence. It remembers the story of the Exodus from Egypt in order to re-experience the salvatory power of redemption in the present, and so as to anticipate the final redemption of the messianic age. Exactly how the haggadah imagines redemption has varied from one community to another, and from one period to the next, but invariably, every Jewish community has imagined redemption in the haggadah—sometimes with the addition of new passages or through the insertion of illustrations and pictures—in the image of its own diasporic experience.

The Kaifeng Haggadah does not have a distinctive vision of redemption. What is distinctive about this book—visible in the Sinitized form of its script, in the error-filled and otherwise defective pages of the text—is not redemption but its opposite. What this book's pages capture is the specific historical moment in which this community was irretrievably on the way to its demise. The Kaifeng Haggadah is not a haggadah that looks forward to redemption. It is a haggadah of oblivion.

The Haggadah of the Kaifeng Jews of China is one of a spate of books about the Jews of China, some of them scholarly, others more popular, which have appeared in the last several decades, mainly in the English-speaking world, especially in America. This Western publishing phenomenon has been remarked upon less than the widespread interest in contemporary China regarding Jews and Judaism. Amid the massive globalization—for all practical purposes, this means Westernization—that China is currently experiencing, the Jewish people—largely thanks to Albert Einstein, Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, and Alan Greenspan (whose name I have heard repeatedly invoked in my several trips to China as a paragon of the American Jew)—have come to be viewed in China as central to Western culture to a degree that no Jew in America would ever imagine him or herself to be. And while the reports of a Talmud or books about Jews on a shelf in every bookstore are exaggerated, I can testify from my own experience—having taught Talmud in the Jewish studies program at Nanjing University to some fifteen undergraduate and graduate Chinese students (probably the most talented group of students I have ever taught)—that the appetite in contemporary China for real knowledge about Judaism and its culture and

history is virtually insatiable.

The contemporary fascination in America with the Chinese Jews is different. Obviously, it has something to do with the unique exoticism of the community. But there may be more to it. The extent of the success of Kaifeng Jews in assimilating to Chinese society without resistance and achieving cultural acceptance along with great wealth, power, and status is almost unparalleled in Jewish history. The great exception is, of course, American Jewry, which has also prospered in, and been embraced by, its host culture with a success that has been said by some to be unparalleled. And no other diaspora communities in Jewish history have experienced equivalent rates of assimilation or suffered from the same degree of Hebraic and Judaic illiteracy. American Jewry is in no danger of vanishing as precipitously as did the Kaifeng Jews, but as we sit down to our Seders and raise our glasses to drink the four cups, it may be worth remembering the haggadah of the Kaifeng Jews along with the Exodus from Egypt.

David Stern is Moritz and Josephine Berg Professor of Classical Hebrew Literature at the University of Pennsylvania, and the author, most recently, of The Washington Haggadah (Harvard University Press).



Sino-Judaica Returns with New Volume

Thanks to the extraordinary efforts of SJI Board member Dana Leventhal, SJI's academic publication, Sino-Judaica, has been revived. Sino-Judaica Volume 5 is devoted to a single academic monograph, "Jewish Religious Observance by the Jews of Kaifeng China" by Rabbi Dr. Chaim Simons of Israel. This work connects the actual observance of the Kaifeng Jewish community in its heyday with their sources in halacha (Jewish law).

It is available immediately at the following stores:



Interested readers can do a [Google Book Search](#) in order to preview the book on Google Books.

中國-猶太學院

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The Sino-Judaic Institute is a non-denominational, non-profit, and non-political organization, founded on June 27, 1985, in Palo Alto, California, by an international group of scholars and lay persons, to promote friendship and understanding between the Chinese and Jewish peoples and to encourage and develop their cooperation in matters of mutual historical and cultural interest. Its objectives are:

- 1) The study of the ancient Jewish community of Kaifeng and assisting its descendents as appropriate.
- 2) The study of Jewish life in Shanghai, Harbin, Tianjin and elsewhere in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- 3) The support of Jewish studies programs in China.
- 4) The study of cultural intersections between Chinese and Jews, for example adoptions, literature, diasporas, etc.
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