



Points East

THE SINO-JUDAIC INSTITUTE 中國猶太研究院 מכון סיני יהודי

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Is Anti-Judaism Behind the Present Difficulties of the Kaifeng Jews?

By Jordan Paper

In the last issue of Points East, there is a letter to the editor by David Buxbaum responding to my article "Why Foreign Jews are Responsible for the Problems of the Kaifeng Jews" (Vol. 22/3, Nov. 2017) He asserts that the reason for the current difficulties of the Kaifeng Jews is "malevolence" towards Jews by certain Chinese authorities, rather than the activities of certain foreigners. He correctly points out that the reasons are not due to the results of the Opium War, China now being strong enough to resist Western aggression. My point in that regard was that the effects of the French language version of the treaty following the second war giving extraterritoriality to Chinese who converted to Christianity, meaning that they were no longer recognized as Chinese, led to a massive slaughter of them decades later. Thus, asking to no longer be considered Chinese in China could be dangerous for the Chinese Jews in the long term. My main point regarding state and religion in China was the fact that virtually all regime change or attempted change throughout the history of China, excepting foreign invasion, was due to religious institutions revolting against the government. The last, the indigenous Christian Taiping insurgency (ironically put down with the help of Western armies, led by the English general "Chinese" Gordon, due to Western Christian countries considering a Chinese Christian messiah anathema) devastated much of China in the mid-19th century including Kaifeng, and this was the "last straw," following major flooding of the Yellow River, in the dissolution of the Kaifeng synagogue community.

Buxbaum is probably correct in that past history is not the explanation. Due to the effects of adopting simplified logographs and the Cultural Revolution, most Chinese, including those highly educated, save for specialists in Chinese history, have a very weak knowledge of their past.

It is the present concern for religious institutions threatening Chinese sovereignty that is more likely in the minds of Chinese government officials. The following is detailed in my article "Chinese Policies Regarding Religion and Chinese Judaism" in Points East 24/1 (March 2009); I will not bore readers with repetition but provide a very brief summary. The present threats understood by the Chinese government include the Tibetan government in exile which is under the nominal rule of a Buddhist abbot (the Dalai Lama, designated by England in the 19th century for its own purposes to be the ruler of Tibet) claiming most of China, reflecting the territory controlled by Tibet when the Kingdom of Tibet conquered much of China in the late 8th century; the Falun Gong, which ineptly tried to take over the government, claiming that its leader, who is posited to have supernatural powers derived from alien entities, is the true ruler of China;

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Summary of the Special SJI Managing Board Meeting, 3 June 2018

Illinois Holocaust Museum and Education Center

Dr. Hochstadt summarized the special meeting of the SJI Board well: "It was not just important; it was historic."

The reason for his statement was the presence of two important guests: Liu Jun, Deputy Consul General, and Gan Longyun, both from the Chinese Consulate in Chicago. The meeting marked the first time that representatives of the PRC had attended an SJI meeting and probably the first meeting of SJI and PRC on American soil.

The special meeting was convened by Beverly Friend, Steve Hochstadt and Anson Laytner. It began with the usual introductions. Besides the guests, attendees were: Arnold Belzer, Joel Epstein, Beverly Friend, Tracy Friend, Steve Hochstadt, Irv Kaplan, Anson Laytner, Dan Levitsky, Dottie Levitsky, Kevin Ostoyich, Rebecca Ostoyich, Daphne Ostoyich, Eleanor Parker, Diane Rabinowitz, Michael Rabinowitz, Eric Rothberg, Vera Schwarcz, and Danny Spungen.

The morning's session consisted of reports on the three main areas of SJI interest: Shanghai/Harbin, Kaifeng, and Jewish Studies in China.

Shanghai/Harbin

Reporting on developments regarding Shanghai and Harbin, Dr. Hochstadt noted that there has been much progress in acknowledging Jewish refugees and their contributions to China's culture from the 1980s until now, notably the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. Dr. Xu Buzeng was a brave pioneer in this field.

The Museum is expanding and will need artifacts and documents. Its expansion shows the interest of Chinese government but he stressed that accuracy is important. For example, the Museum exaggerates the number of Jewish refugees, which was less than 20,000, not the 30,000 it claims. SJI scholars will work with the Museum to try to ensure accuracy.

He reminded attendees that Harbin also has a Jewish history museum in its synagogue and SJI could support it and also that SJI supports academic research through its grants.

Kaifeng

Rabbi Laytner's report on Kaifeng was shortened to allow time for Mr. Jun's presentation and dialogue. His full report is available on request. He said that China should be proud of the history of Jews in Kaifeng, one of the few places in the world where Jews were able to live in peace and harmony—and for more than 1000 years. Today there are maximum 1000 people who may be descendants. After 1980, Western Jews began to visit Kaifeng; SJI members were among the first. Later we sent teachers to help descendants learn their heritage. Today there is some controversy because government considers Kaifeng

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Globalization, Translation and Transmission: Sino-Judaic Identity in Kaifeng, China

SJI MEMBERSHIP

<u>Country</u>	<u>Total</u>
United States	133
Canada	11
China	20
Israel	16
England	7
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Japan	2
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Switzerland	1
South Africa	1
Taiwan	1
Total:	197

FROM THE EDITOR

There is a renewed energy apparent in the Sino-Judaic Institute following its special meeting on June 3rd in Chicago. From our conversation with Chinese Deputy Consul General Liu Jun to our review of and commitment to a set of objectives to the election of new officers and board members, the meeting helped set SJI to do significant work to assist the Kaifeng Jewish descendants; to research European Jewish life in Shanghai, Harbin and elsewhere; to promote Jewish studies programs in China; to further scholarship, primarily Chinese scholarship, in these areas by offering grants; and to continue the publication of *Points East*. As its newly elected president, I pledge to do my utmost to help members of the Institute and others accomplish these goals and, since I maintain my position as volunteer editor of *Points East*, I intend to make sure that our new president doesn't slack off.

Our outgoing (in both senses of the word) president, Rabbi Arnold Mark Belzer, noted in his remarks that his presidency witnessed the highs and the lows regarding the Kaifeng community, the high being the New York Times coverage of our school and the seder Barnaby Yeh organized there and the low, of course, being the Kaifeng suppression. But, as Dr. Beverly Friend noted, we have also witnessed the growth of Jewish studies programs in China, and as Dr. Steve Hochstadt didn't need to tell anyone, the Shanghai refuge story has become big business both for tourists and academics. Besides all this, Rabbi Belzer arranged for the Hebrew Union College to give copies of its Kaifeng prayer-book manuscript collection to Mr. Yeh so that he could begin recreating an authentic Chinese Jewish ritual and SJI continued to give out annual research grants. In fact, Rabbi Belzer's four years of service were highly productive ones for SJI. A big thank-you to him and to our retiring board members, and a hearty welcome to our new ones: Wendy Abraham, Dan Levitsky, Kevin Ostoyich and Danny Spungen!

This issue features some wonderful articles: a typically provocative piece by Dr. Jordan Paper, an analysis of Catholicism in Henan that helps in our understanding of the situation for the Kaifeng Jewish community, and two perspectives on Chinese life in Indonesia, which we include because of the economic and social similarities of overseas Chinese and Diaspora Jewish communities. Enjoy!

Anson Laytner

Points East

Anson Laytner, Editor

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Henan's Difficult Choices for the Catholic Church

By Francesco Sisci

Excerpted from *Settimana News*, 30 April 2018

<http://www.settimananews.it/italia-europa-mondo/henan-difficult-choices-for-the-catholic/>

The province of Henan ("South of the He River"), China's cultural heartland, seems to oppose the next historic normalization of ties between the Holy See and Beijing's government. Recent accounts say children were forbidden from attending Christian masses, and Catholic priests refused to register with the local authorities for fear of religious meddling.

With developments like these, it looks like an open and shut case: the Holy See can't and shouldn't talk with Beijing.

Yet as in a good detective story, there is more than meets the eye. The reality is that both the Chinese government and the Holy See are trying to wade through uncharted territory.

Consider the children kept from mass first. Despite what happened in some churches, this is not a national policy; otherwise it would have been applied all over the country not just in Henan. Yet, there is a real problem here.

The issue comes from the restive region of Xinjiang, with a serious problem of Muslim extremism. The Chinese government for decades was oblivious to radical proselytization there. Since the early 1990s, Muslim extremism started to seep in via young students coming back after periods of studies abroad.

In the past couple of years, Beijing began a massive crackdown. When it realized that even local Muslim schools were indoctrinating kids, the government then closed those schools. Moreover the government didn't want to make all Muslims, most of whom are law-abiding citizens, feel they had been singled out, so then it issued a carpet warning against all religious education for children under 18. This in theory also covered Christian schools. In practice, in many places Christian education for children is tolerated.

Does mass attendance count as religious schooling? Are Christian camp schools included?

The general regulations are vague, but some local officials, fearful of being found lacking, may wish to over-interpret them.

These are very clumsy and coarse measures of a controlling government trying to come to grips with the scourge of Muslim extremists. It may backfire in Xinjiang, but it is not totally unreasonable.

Then there are the priests. For decades, since the Vatican and Beijing broke ties in the early 1950s, some priests and bishops have

been underground and others accepted or were forced to join the Communist-backed Catholic Patriotic Association. Rome thus declared there were two churches in China: one underground and loyal to the Holy See and another official and loyal to the party.

Since the 1980s, things have improved, and after Pope Benedict's 2007 letter to the Chinese, Rome announced it recognized only one Church, although the two communities, people originally underground or official, are often still bitterly split.

Here there is not just an issue of faith, but also of money. According to Chinese law, the bishop, once officially recognized, is also the legal representative of the assets of the diocese. Therefore the government is reluctant to cede those assets to someone in open contrast with the party.

On the other hand, millions are flowing in to support of the underground clergy. It is often unclear where this money goes or how it is spent.

In the case of normalization of ties, both Rome and Beijing will want this money to be accounted for.

Moreover, some priests may be suspicious of the Chinese government wanting to interfere in the Church issues, but in many Western liberal countries, priests are registered with a local authority. Within the Catholic Church, control over the clergy is strict, as priests have to obey their bishops and can't leave the diocese without permission.

Until a decade ago, things were very loose. Since the Pope's letter things are clearer, but many aspects are still uncertain. It may be understandable then that some priests are wary of the Patriotic Association, but mustn't they register somewhere? And certainly they ought to account for how they spend the money they receive.

Here, it all becomes very tricky. There may be cases of persecution, but also instances of swindlers who smear the holy vows for their own gain. Or there may even be people who pretend to be priests despite not being ordained.

In all of this, there is no way Rome can work to bring the Chinese Church together without an open presence in China and thus without some form of collaboration with Beijing.

This is not ideal, but short of this, the Church and anybody else would need to wait for the fall of communism in China. But even this is not a sure bet. It may take a long time to happen, if it will happen at all, and we are not sure whether the next rulers will be better disposed to the Church.

Therefore there is no real alternative. In fact, an official presence of the Holy See in Beijing will enable Rome to address all concerns more directly and clearly with the central government.

Beijing is not an ideal government to deal

with religious issues, but neither are many other countries, and the history of the Church is made of frictions and clashes with civil authorities.

Yet there are also reasons to be hopeful. The Chinese government for the first time in its history allowed a foreign spiritual entity, the Vatican, to have a role in China, in this case with regard to the Catholics. It is a historic breakthrough that might help to find a way forward in addressing the many problems of Chinese religious life.

From China to Jerusalem

By Arutz Sheva Staff

Excerpted from *Israelnationalnews.com*
2 May 2018

Five young women from the ancient Chinese-Jewish community of Kaifeng, China, completed their conversions to Judaism on Tuesday, in an emotional ceremony in Jerusalem.

Two years after Gao Yichen ("Weiwei"), 25, Yue Ting, 27, Li Jing, 30, Li Yuan, 29, and Li Chengjin ("Lulu"), 30, made Aliya in February 2016 via the Jerusalem-based NGO Shavei Israel, the five completed the conversion process at the Jerusalem Rabbinical Court on Tuesday.

All five were born and raised in Kaifeng...

With the help of Shavei Israel, the five young women studied at Jerusalem's Midreshet Nishmat – the Jeannie Schottenstein Center for Advanced Torah Study for Women.

"The Chinese Jews of Kaifeng are a living link between China and the Jewish people," said Shavei Israel Founder and Chairman Michael Freund...

"After centuries of assimilation, a growing number of the Chinese-Jewish descendants are returning to their roots and embracing their Jewish identity," Freund said. "These five young women were determined to re-join the Jewish people and we were delighted to help them realize their dreams."

In recent years, Shavei Israel has helped nearly two dozen Chinese Jews to make Aliyah.

"Being part of the Jewish people is an honor, because of the heritage and wisdom," said Li Jing, who studied economics and global commerce in China. "My prayer to return to Judaism has been answered." "Israel is where our ancestors lived, and my father always told me that one day we would come back," said Yue Ting, who is fluent in both English and Hebrew. "Every one of us is put in this world to contribute and to make a difference, each in our own way. I will try my best to do everything I can, no matter how small it seems, just to do something good. I feel very proud to be a Jew and to call Israel my home."

Is Anti-Judaism Behind Difficulties

(continued from page 1)

the “house churches,” stimulated by American and Canadian Evangelical ministers illegally in China, which deliberately defy Chinese authority; and a Catholic Church in China over which the Vatican, a sovereign country, claims control (a problem now being resolved by the present Pope). The first of these definitely, and the second and third probably, are due to the machinations of the CIA in seeking to weaken China. This is why foreign missionaries are not tolerated, and all that happened recently with regard to foreign Jewish missionaries interacting with the Kaifeng Jews could be perceived as similar to the Chinese government’s response to the activities of Evangelical missionaries and “house churches.” The negative actions of the government with regard to these current situations are not due to suppression of religion, as claimed by anti-Chinese American propaganda, but concern with sedition.

If these current concerns are ignored, then Buxbaum is reasonably left with anti-Judaism being the motive for the crackdown. (I refuse the use of the term “anti-Semitism,” because in Israel the Ashkenazim call the Palestinians anti-Semitic, while the Ashkenazim are not Semites, but the Palestinians are; hence, the use of the term nowadays defies logic.) So is there anti-Judaism in China?

Surely it is understood that in the past there was no anti-Judaism in China, else the Kaifeng synagogue community would not have been the longest continuous diaspora Jewish community outside of Baghdad and arguably the most successful. The synagogue was built and rebuilt with government support, and Chinese Jews served as government officials far out of proportion to their numbers. Hence, they had the wealth to build what might have been the largest synagogue ever (see the existing Great Mosque in Xian for a set of structures similar in size and exterior architectural design to the former synagogue in Kaifeng). At the time the Kaifeng community began there were at least a half-dozen large Jewish communities in the seaports of China. The disappearance of all of them, as well as the Kaifeng community, was due to factors other than anti-Judaism, as they affected the entire populations of the relevant areas: the seaport synagogue communities disappeared when the entire population along the coast was moved inland in the late Ming period, due to the Ming regime having done away with their salt water navy and having no means to stop raids on the coastal cities by Japanese pirates; and Kaifeng was depopulated for decades in the mid-19th century due to the combined effects of major Yellow River floods, the destruction by the Taiping armies and further destruction when the government defeated that army.

So what about today? First I would like to point out that I am well experienced with anti-Judaism so that I can recognize it; hence,

please pardon this autobiographical digression. I was brought up in Baltimore at a time when segregation was rampant, not just against African-Americans but Jews as well, although not as severe. Jews could only live in distinct neighborhoods, swim in but a few pools, etc. As a child, I had to run home from the nearby streetcar stop chased by a teenage Christian gang. Parents, including my own, had to set up a separate Boy Scout troop for Jews.

I went to the College of the University of Chicago for my undergraduate education where a majority of the students were Jewish because it was the only university of its caliber that did not have a quota on Jews – one Ivy League university recruiter explicitly told me that its minuscule quota for Jews was filled and there would not be another opening for my area for several years. In my first summer in Chicago, when I sought employment at a time when declaring one’s religion was a part of job applications, I was turned down for twenty-three jobs in a row until I applied to a Jewish firm and was immediately hired. I along with another Jewish colleague – the only Jews in the department – were the first with doctorates and publications turned down for tenure by the Department of History at Indiana State University because, as I was explicitly told, we were Jewish (“We do not give tenure to your kind”), and religion was discussed at the tenure and promotion meeting. (Fortunately for me, it turned out well as I ended up with a better position – in a religious studies program – at a better university – York University in Toronto.) York University had been recently founded at that time and was to have been a subordinate campus of the University of Toronto, but the Jewish community was powerful enough to have it designated a separate university, because Jewish students, when accepted, did not receive equitable treatment at the University of Toronto.

In Victoria to where I moved on retirement, a couple who had become close friends, on realizing I was Jewish, was so enraged by what they must have considered being deceived, that they literally sought to have my wife and myself killed by encouraging the bulldozing of our house with ourselves in it (unsuccessfully, of course). When we recently moved to a senior condominium, I made certain that the mezuzah on our door was highly visible, so all the residents would realize I was Jewish and not feel fooled if my being Jewish was later discovered, with possible violent consequences due to rage.

I became a Sinophile because, in contrast and in part, I never experienced the slightest anti-Judaism living in Taiwan, save by American nuns when I became a visiting professor at a Catholic university in Taichung, the nuns not realizing that I was Jewish when I was offered the position. The basic reasons for anti-Judaism in Christian culture was never a part of Chinese religion and culture: first, the belief that all Jews, regardless of

time and place, are guilty of deicide, of killing Jesus; and secondly, the embarrassment of the validity of their religion being denied in that the foundation of their religion continues not to accept Jesus as their savior. (The reason the Jesuits and Bishop White were fascinated by and sought to convert the Kaifeng Jews, was the assumption that if they could convert the Chinese Jews then the rest of the Chinese would somehow follow.

When I first lived in Taiwan (1965-66), my closest friends, a couple of decades older than myself, were of the last generation to have had the pre-modern traditional Chinese education, and while fascinated by a Westerner who had, to a lesser degree, a similar education, had not the slightest interest or concern about my being Jewish. Living in Taiwan was my first experience of living in a context without an iota of anti-Judaism – it was a wonderful breath of fresh air engendering a feeling of freedom and complete safety.

When I next lived in Taiwan and on visits to the Mainland, I did discover that there are conceptions of Jews gained from Christian missionaries, mainly that Jews are misers and usurers, which Chinese reinterpreted as frugal and excellent at business dealings. That particular Western negative appraisal of Jews arose from the past when Jews in Europe were forced to serve as lenders to governments, often from the occupation of goldsmiths, because Christians were prevented from lending at interest. This led to a hatred of Jews, because people owed money to them, as seen for example, in Shakespeare’s play, “The Merchant of Venice,” leading to such incidents as the massacre of Jews in York in 1190 to avoid paying back loans. Ironically, what was meant to be a negative perception of Jews was understood by Chinese in the opposite vein, as a highly positive example to their own business people, and several books have been written in Chinese to that effect.

Thus, based on my personal experience, I can conceive of no reason why the recent crackdown on Chinese Judaism had anything to do with anti-Judaism; it simply never has and does not now exist in China, except among some Western Christians. This leaves the only explanation to be the clampdown on foreign proselytizing, as well as the suppression of a religion not recognized in China, such as the Falung Gong.

China officially recognizes only five religions (five being the common number for examples in China, replacing the number six over two thousand years ago): Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism. The last two were never understood in China as being a single religion, “Christianity,” since the missionaries of each accused the other of not being Christian. Judaism, as well as Chinese Religion (a.k.a. “Familism”), is not recognized.

Let me digress here to talk about Chinese

Religion (a.k.a. “Familism”). I have been lecturing by invitation in China for a number of years on Chinese Religion. Familism is the primary mode of religion at the heart of Chinese culture and society in which the numinous is the family and the primary rituals are offerings to the family and clan ancestors, later extended to the state as the “father and mother of the people.” This religion goes back to the Neolithic period and its mode of rituals influenced later Daoist and Chinese Buddhist rituals. It has yet to be recognized in China as religion rather than as folklore, even though it is presently promoted by the Chinese government. Familism is the religion that the Chinese Jews synthesized with Judaism to create their own brand of Judaism, just as most American Jews have incorporated Americanism into their Judaism and ritual practices, for example by celebrating Thanksgiving and displaying the American flag in shuls.

Confucianism—invented by the Jesuits—is a political-social-economic philosophy based on Chinese Religion, but Chinese Religion predates Confucius by well over a thousand years. In the West, I have been trying for a half-century to overcome this deliberate obfuscation of religion in China by the Jesuits in the late 16th century so they would not be burned at the stake on returning to Europe by the Inquisition for serving in the Chinese government, in itself a religious entity. Confucianism does not refer to Chinese Religion (Familism), although Confucius based his teachings on the relevant rituals. World religion textbooks still ignore Chinese Religion (the religion of a fifth of humanity) in treating religion in China. The standard exposition is of three religions—Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism—none of which is the primary religious modality.

Since Judaism and Jewish history are now taught as a subject in Chinese universities, there may be an opening for Judaism to be recognized as one of the five officially recognized religions and then to seek recognition of the religion of the Chinese Jews as licit. Given the Chinese seeming commitment to recognizing only five official religions, if Catholicism and Protestantism were recognized as aspects of a single religion, Christianity, just as Islam itself exists in several sects, then Judaism could be the fifth religion. It would help if the Israeli government diplomatically hinted that it would be a nice gesture if China recognized Judaism as a religion (with no reference to the contemporary situation).

It would, of course, be extremely difficult for the standard understanding of religion in China to be changed but perhaps this might be a more productive activity of the Sino-Judaic Institute to pursue than trying to have China and Israel recognize the Kaifeng Jewish descendants as Jews by ethnicity, something that is contrary to existing Chinese policy and Jewish law (halacha).

Buxbaum points out, “Surely Professor Paper is right that many people do not know

you can be Han (Chinese) and also Jewish.” Ethnicity and religion are often muddled together, Israel being one of the few countries that merges Jewish ethnicity (nationality) with Jewish religion, but Israel’s Jewish nationality is premised on a shared pre-Exilic ancestry, something that, after two thousand or more years, is more mythic than real. Even though the Israeli rabbinate would acknowledge that centuries ago the Kaifeng Jews were “real” Jews according to the halacha, whatever Jewish ethnicity the Kaifeng Jewish descendants had in the past has long since been absorbed by their Han genes. So the real question today is whether or not some of China’s citizens, who had Jewish ancestors, might be permitted to practice Judaism in some form by their own government—and this depends on China’s recognizing Judaism as a legal religion.

However, just as Jews (and semi-Jews) in the Diaspora practice Judaism any way they want and only worry about whether or not Israel accepts them as Jews if they plan on making aliyah, so too the Kaifeng Jewish descendants. As Han Jews, the same standard should apply to them: Ideally, they should be able to practice Judaism as they interpret it and not worry about Israel’s rabbinate unless they want to emigrate there, in which case they would have to convert according to the halacha. The Israeli rabbinate only has jurisdiction if and when a Chinese Jewish descendant makes aliyah.

Given that Chinese identification recognizes ethnicity not religion, even if the Chinese Jews were to be recognized as a Jewish ethnicity, then the question arises as to which Jewish ethnicity? There are, in fact, many Jewish ethnicities, although some Ashkenazim like to think that theirs is the only one. Since Judaism was, and for many remains, a diaspora religion, there are no non-ethnic Jews, for as human beings we are all enculturated. Even among the ultra-orthodox in Jerusalem there are recognized different ethnicities; hence, two Chief Rabbis. The ethnicity of the Chinese Jews can only be Chinese. They speak Chinese, not Yiddish, Ladino, Arabic or Farsi (although a thousand years ago they spoke and wrote Judeo-Persian); eat Chinese rather than Baltic-Slavic or Mediterranean food; etc. Accordingly, they must be understood as Chinese (Han) Jews, not Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Mizrahim, etc. They cannot be just Jews with no ethnicity; else they would not be human. Therefore, the only reasonable understanding of the Chinese Jews is that they are indeed Chinese (Han) Jews; that is, their religion was and could again be Judaism, and their ethnicity was and is Han (Chinese).

ADDENDUM

According to Reuters World News September 7, 2017, “China’s cabinet on Thursday passed new rules to regulate religion to bolster national security, fight extremism and restrict faith practiced outside organizations approved by the state.” The new law (http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2017-09/07/content_5223282.htm) is to replace the one of 2005. The focus of the regulations is that the management of religious affairs should adhere to the principles of protecting “legitimate religious activities, curbing and preventing extreme practices and resisting infiltration.”

Wang Zuoran, the director of the State Administration for Religious Affairs was quoted in the Global Times (a Chinese government publication) in July 2017 saying that religion in China needed to be “sinicized” and for religious groups to focus on parts that are “beneficial to social harmony and development...Foreign forces have used religion to infiltrate China, and extremism and illegal religious activities are spreading in some places, which have threatened national security and social stability.” The new law stresses the need to protect China’s national security against threats from religious groups. President Xi Jinping has been reported as emphasizing the need to guard against foreign infiltration through religion and to prevent the spread of “extremist” ideology, while being tolerant of officially recognized religions that he sees as a means to ameliorate social ills.

The new law, which came into effect on Feb. 2, 2018, places new oversight on online discussion of religious matters, on religious gatherings, the financing of religious groups and the construction of religious buildings, etc. It increases existing restrictions on unregistered religious groups and includes explicit bans on foreigners teaching about religion or encouraging Chinese to go abroad to take part in training or meetings. The new law includes provisions on the raising of religious funds, and donations from foreign groups or individuals are banned.

Over the last several months, unregistered churches, including huge and expensive structures (one reportedly having the capacity of 50,000 congregants) have been torn down and illegal religious leaders arrested. Since these new directives have been circulated for several years, it seems to explain the context of what has happened in Kaifeng, carried out on the local level, seemingly over enthusiastically as an attempt to gather favor with the central government. Two aspects should be kept in mind by those interested in the Kaifeng Jews:

First, the concern about sedition in the above quotations should be understood as genuine. As I have reiterated many times in this publication, all of this suppression has to be understood in the context of Chinese history: virtually all regime changes have been due to revolts by new religious movements. Even when unsuccessful, as the Five Pecks of Rice Movement at the end of the 2nd century and the Taiping Movement in the mid-19th century, putting them down led to the collapse of the Chinese government. Given that the unregistered evangelical churches have tended to speak against the Communist

Party and the government, were often led by foreign missionaries, and were maintained by foreign funds, seemingly supported by American intelligence agencies, the assumption of sedition can be readily understood. One can take the viewpoint that the past does not affect the present (not my view, of course), but Chinese culture is the most historically oriented culture in the world; Chinese historical writing is the earliest in the world; and historical documents were a major part of traditional education. A Westerner may ignore history, but the Chinese do not.

Secondly, the law is not aimed at Jews; it is aimed at unregistered Protestant churches (so-called "house churches"), underground Catholic churches (soon to be solved by an agreement with the Vatican), the spread of Salafism in Chinese Islam supported by Arabian money (which I have witnessed in my study of religion in China), and funds made available to Uighur terrorists. Judaism is not a recognized religion; thus, any expression is ipso facto illegitimate (accept exclusively among foreigners). Hence, Judaism virtually accidentally falls within the purview of the law. Therefore, it must be understood that any flouting of the law internally will be automatically perceived as sedition and by foreigners as an attack on Chinese sovereignty. Deportation has already taken place; jail sentences will be next. The same is the case with regard to money and any other support.

Also my previous writings on the means for the religion of the Chinese Jews to be recognized are now moot, as the new law has means for such recognition and needs to be studied carefully. Unfortunately, the new regulations tie the hands of those who want to support the revival of Judaism in China. Judaism in China was Sinified for many centuries, but the fact is that Chinese Judaism has been defunct for nearly two centuries. In the mid-19th century the Kaifeng Jews went to Shanghai to request support from the newly arrived from abroad Jewish merchants to no avail. Had a Chinese-speaking rabbi been sent at that time, as well as funds to rebuild the flood-destroyed synagogue, since the Jews still held the land, Chinese Judaism probably would not have died. But it did, and revitalization requires a germ which can be brought back to life. Thus the attempted revitalization has not been that, as it does not come from within. Instead, there has been the introduction of a non-Sinified (Ashkenazi) Judaism from without, and this is precisely what the new regulations strictly prohibit, and this is what Xi Jinping opposes.

As a Sinophile, in general, I applaud Xi Jinping's direction, but this means that now any attempt to proselytize a foreign Judaism to the Chinese, no matter how well-meaning, or to bring Chinese to Israel to train them in a non-Sinified Judaism will be met with severe penalties. I suggest that those wishing to support the remnants of the Kaifeng Jewish community think hard and long before doing anything in this regard, because what has been done before under the new regulations

can only be interpreted as attempts to subvert the Chinese government. Local authorities, in order to appear to follow central directives, may impose the regulations even more harshly than originally intended.

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Summary of the Board

(continued from page 1)

Jews as Han and, in 2015, a drastic change occurred: the school was closed; museum exhibits closed; signs marking Jewish part of town were removed; no more community gatherings were allowed. Laytner concluded by asking if there is a way for SJI to work with the Chinese government to allow the Kaifeng Jewish descendants to observe their culture.

Rabbi Belzer noted he visited Kaifeng in 1985. The history of Kaifeng Jews is an invaluable asset for China and the 1000-year existence of the community should be celebrated, not hidden or ignored.



Personal Comments of Deputy Consul General Liu Jun

Mr. Jun began his remarks by alluding to the values Jews and Chinese share and the good relations Chinese have with Jews for 1000 years. China is proud to have helped Jewish refugees in WWII, referencing Ho Feng Shan and 18,000 refugees in Shanghai. He also noted the involvement of 2-Gun Cohen, Dr. Jakob Rosenfeld and other Jews who helped during Revolution; Jewish members of Flying Tigers; and Jewish businessmen helped Hong Kong Chinese refugees. All this results in good feelings to this day.

Mr. Liu then reviewed Kaifeng's history and Chinese policy: Descendants today are Han Chinese even though their ancestors were different (foreign). Jews are not one of 57 official minorities recognized after 1949. Someone mentioned the Hakka group and Mr. Liu noted that they are a cultural subset of Han. The point was raised: Why couldn't Jewish descendants be considered like the Hakka and

entitled to practice their unique culture too?

Rabbi Belzer asked with whom in the government should we talk and Mr. Rothberg, a former SJI teacher in Kaifeng, pointed out that some clans have disappeared but the others have an oral tradition still that their ancestors came from the west. Kaifeng Jews are both Chinese and Jewish so the best outcome would be to find a way that Kaifeng Jews could be Jewish in Chinese way. Rabbi Laytner again urged that Kaifeng Jews be permitted to observe their culture.

Mr. Liu then discussed China's new NGO law of 2015, which is meant to control the activities of NGOs because some have engaged in separatist anti-Chinese (i.e. anti-government) activities. SJI should abide by Chinese laws, register and work with the government. He concluded by reminding the group that both the Jewish and Chinese nations have suffered a great deal, albeit in different ways. Stability is #1 priority of China's government and it believes that the western democratic model won't work in China with its focus on development and economic growth. Now is a critical time in US-China relations and American Jewish community can help to keep relationship good.

Jewish Studies in China

Due to time constraints, Dr. Friend had to curtail her report. Her full report is available on request. She noted, with pride, that we have witnessed the birth and growth of Judaic studies in China. Dr. Xu Xin started this process after being in the USA and Israel in 1988. After he founded the China Judaic Studies Association to promote the Jewish studies program at Nanjing U and publication of the Chinese version of Encyclopedia Judaica, Dr. Friend became its Executive Director. Today 200 undergrads take courses each year and the library has 30,000 books.

She quickly reviewed activities at Shandong U; Dr. Dan Ben-Canaan's work in Harbin, and the programs at Sichuan International and Beijing U. 14 PhDs, all disciples of Xu Xin, now teach at 9 universities. He also is now the chair of the Chinese National Institute for Jewish Studies, an umbrella body.

The morning concluded with a group photo and the departure of the guests.

SJI Business Meeting

After lunch, SJI President Rabbi Arnold Belzer gave his remarks, noting that his presidency has witnessed the highs (NYT article about Barnaby Yeh and the seder in Kaifeng) and the lows (Kaifeng suppression). He is depressed about Jewish life today, about America and Israel, and the troubling role that Christian fundamentalists play in both countries. The silence of American Jewry is disheartening. The Board applauded Rabbi Belzer for his years of service as SJI President.

Dr. Hochstadt, SJI Treasurer, reviewed SJI's financial situation. If SJI continues to give out grants, it will run out of money in a few years. SJI needs a more aggressive, organized fundraising effort. Board members should

contribute beyond dues and help in this effort. A number of comments and suggestions were made. First, SJI needs credit card access for easier donations. Second, SJI needs a unified email list. A motion was passed asking Dr. Hochstadt to hire a student to upgrade File-Maker Pro and create a useable email list of members. Third, it was recommended that he visit Stanford U and reactivate SJI's relationship with the Hoover Archives.

Rabbi Laytner reported on Points East. It costs approximately \$1190 to print and \$430 to mail each issue of PE. The Board decided that, given the costs, SJI should encourage people to receive PE electronically or pay \$20 annually to cover the cost. PE should be sent to all members electronically, asking them to forward issues to interested friends and family. It was also decided that the "members only" access to PE archives should be terminated and made open to everyone. Lastly, website info should be listed prominently in PE so readers know about it!

SJI elections followed, with Rabbi Laytner being elected president, Dr. Schwarcz being re-elected as vice president, and Dr. Hochstadt being elected as Secretary/Treasurer (after the decision was made to combine the positions).

Denise Yeh Bresler, Joel Epstein, Dr. Beverly Friend, Dr. Ondi Lingenfelter, Jim Michaelson, Eric Rothberg and Rabbi Marvin Tokayer remain on the Board. Mary Anne Graham decided to end her years of service on the Board and Dana Leventhal, Tibi Weisz, David Marshall, and Cynthia Zeiden were removed. (Mr. Weisz is moving to the Advisory Board.) Dr. Wendy Abraham, Dr. Dan Levitsky, Dr. Kevin Ostoyich, and Danny Spungen were elected to the Board.

The final part of the meeting was devoted to reviewing SJI's objectives and fundraising. After some discussion, the current objectives were ranked and identified. They are:

- The study of the ancient Jewish community of Kaifeng, where Jews have been living now for over a millennium, and assisting the Kaifeng Jewish descendants to reconnect with their cultural heritage as appropriate.
- Providing grants to scholars, authors, filmmakers and others engaged in the study of Jewish life in Shanghai, Harbin, Tianjin, Hong Kong and elsewhere in the 19th and 20th centuries.
- The support of Jewish Studies programs in China and fostering scholarship in this field.
- Working cooperatively with scholars and students in Jewish Studies and Chinese Studies programs around the world, and with other NGOs on Sino-Jewish subjects.
- Engagement with the contemporary Jewish communities in China on matters of mutual interest.

Rabbi Belzer re-proposed his idea of commemorating the 1000th year of Jewish life in China and it was agreed that this would be explored further in SJI's discussions with Chinese officials.

BOOK NOOK

Globalization, Translation and Transmission: Sino-Judaic Identity in Kaifeng, China

Moshe Yehuda Bernstein

Bern: Peter Lang, 2017. 253 pp. Paperback US\$72.95, ISBN 978-3-0343-2543-1 pb. ISBN 978-3-0343-2544-8 ebook.

Reviewed by Anson Laytner

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Since China's "Reform and Opening" in 1978, Kaifeng, home to that country's ancient, thousand-year old Jewish community, has played host to numerous foreign visitors, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Most only stayed a few days, met several official "show Jews", toured the city and then left, usually bearing the story that these state-sanctioned Jews were not Jews per se but "Han Chinese of Jewish ancestry" whose only connection with Jewish culture were some dim recollections of what their grandfathers had done around the time of the Spring Festival.

Few were the Jewish visitors who spoke Chinese and thus could dispense with the government provided interpreter and fewer still remained in Kaifeng long enough to penetrate beyond the official line that there are no Chinese Jews in Kaifeng, only Jewish descendants.

Moshe Yehuda Bernstein, a Hasidically-trained Rabbi turned Sinologist in later life, intends to clarify the issue of Chinese Jewish identity. His three visits to Kaifeng, mostly in the second decade of the 21st century, resulted in a doctoral dissertation at University of Western Australia. This dissertation has just been published in book form with the rather intimidating title of *Globalization, Translation and Transmission: Sino-Judaic Cultural Identity in Kaifeng, China* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2017). Hopefully his book will put to rest any lingering questions about how the remnants of this long-isolated community view themselves: Despite not having a rabbi since the early 1800s, nor a synagogue complex since the mid-1800s, and having been basically isolated from the outside world by war, revolution and poverty from the Taiping Rebellion until the 1980s, the descendants still identify as Jews.

Their unflagging sense of Jewish identity stands in marked contrast to how both Beijing and Jerusalem view them. For the latter, the matter is clear-cut. For centuries now,

the Kaifeng Jews have determined their lineage patrilineally in keeping with normative Chinese custom. This obviously puts them at odds with the halacha (Jewish law), which asserts that Jewishness is acquired matrilineally (or via conversion). Add to this their lack of Jewish knowledge, a touch of racism on Israel's part because they are racially Chinese (not "Jewish"), and fears both of antagonizing the Chinese government or of being overwhelmed by ordinary Chinese seeking a better life, Israel has consistently denied the Kaifeng Jews' claims to Jewish identity. (Nonetheless, the Israel-based NGO Shavei Israel has successfully brought some 19 Kaifeng Jews on aliyah to Israel, subject to their engaging in Jewish studies and then converting according to the Orthodox Israeli standards of the Ministry of the Interior.)

For China, the question of their identity was seemingly resolved back in 1953 when the Central Committee of the United Front of the Communist Party set down the policy that persists to this day. Prior to this document, some Kaifeng Jews and their allies had been pushing for national minority status and several Kaifeng Jews had been to Beijing and made some headway in this regard. After pointing out that the Kaifeng Jews lack the objective (Stalinist) criteria that China was using to determine nationality (shared economy, language, geographic region, culture), the document declared:

Kaifeng Jewry should be treated as part of the Han nationality. The major issue is that we should take the initiative to be more caring to them in various activities, and educate the local Han population not to discriminate against or insult them. This will help gradually ease away the differences they might psychologically or emotionally feel exists between them and the Han.ⁱ

But this was a case of wishful thinking—and not just because the document itself clearly demonstrates that a perceivable difference in identity exists. On the local level, in Kaifeng, identity papers (hukouben) continued to designate the descendants as "Youtai"—Jews—through the mid-1990s.ⁱⁱ This contradiction between national and local policy in turn allowed for some official doublespeak: While the local branch of the CITS (China International Travel Service) was considering building a "Kaifeng Jewish Assembly Hall Site Museum" in the mid 1990s, the Religious Affairs Bureau of the State Council of China could declare "In China there used to be Jewish people, but they have long been assimilated into the Han nationality. Our country does not have a Jewish minzu (national minority) and does not have Jewish religion; therefore the question of building a synagogue does not exist."ⁱⁱⁱ Similarly, for many years, if asked by foreign tourists to visit Jews in Kai-

feng, guides would often first assert that there were no Jews in Kaifeng, only later to relent under persistent questioning and take the tourists to meet several Jewish descendants.^{iv}

In the nearly 40 years since Kaifeng has opened its doors to foreigners, hundreds of Jewish tourists have visited Kaifeng, but only a handful have actually studied the Jewish descendants based on interviews and direct observation. Dr. Wendy Abraham, an American Sinologist, was the first. On her first trip, in 1983, Abraham's group met Shi Zhongyu and Zhao Pingyu—the only two descendants that local authorities would allow to be “shown” to visitors. Security guards kept a close watch on the gathering, monitoring questions and responses but Shi managed to slip Abraham his home address. This began her long relationship with the Shi family.

On her second trip to Kaifeng, in August 1985, Abraham conducted interviews with six leaders of Kaifeng Jewish clans (two heads of the Shi clan, two of the Ai clan, one Zhao and one Li) before being arrested, interrogated and expelled. Her interviews, which resulted in a PhD dissertation and several articles, comprised the first in-depth look at the Kaifeng Jews.^v Ten years later, another American, Mathew Eckstein, was awarded a scholarship and spent several months there, writing up his observations in an essay for the Sino-Judaic Institute's academic journal.^{vi} In the spring and summer of 2000, five years after Eckstein's visit, the Israeli Sinologist Noam Urbach conducted many formal and informal interviews with Jewish descendants and various Kaifeng officials, but the focus of his writings to date has been on the fate of a proposed synagogue/tourist site rather than Jewish identity itself.^{vii} Mention should also be made of the analysis of the community by M. Avrum Ehrlich, then a professor of Jewish Studies at Shandong University and Liang Pingan, a former official of the Kaifeng CITS (China International Travel Service), based on their personal experiences with the community.

As the Chinese allowed interactions between the Jewish descendants and foreign Jews to flourish, both the Sino-Judaic Institute, a Diaspora-based organization founded in 1985, and Shavei Israel, an Israeli organization devoted to “returning” marginal Jewish groups to Judaism and Israel, both sent Chinese-speaking teachers to live and work in Kaifeng. Although these young American and Israeli Jews are probably the most knowledgeable about and experienced with the contemporary scene in Kaifeng, all are reluctant to put pen to paper and perhaps lack the skill set to do proper observation and reportage. Eric Rothberg and Barnaby Yeh, SJJ's teachers in Kaifeng, came back badly bruised from the internecine factional strife for which the Jew-

ish community is infamous. The Israeli Eran Barzillay, who ran Shavei Israel's program in Kaifeng, is elusively quiet, and Timothy Lerner, the American Judeo-Christian who pioneered Jewish cultural programming in Kaifeng, remains secretive and silent about his work.

It is in this context that Moshe Yehuda Bernstein did his fieldwork. He was fortunate to do it when he did because his visits coincided with the high point of Western Jewish activity in Kaifeng. His firsthand observations comprise much of the second half of his book but are evident throughout the volume.

Bernstein begins his book autobiographically, with a moving tale of how he came to be sensitized about marginal Jewish groups and to learn about the Kaifeng Jews, but then he proceeds in the Introduction with a discussion of key technical terms—globalization, cultural hybridity, translation, transmission, critical holism and research methods—much of it based on the work of Nederveen Pieterse. While this, no doubt, was appropriate and necessary for his dissertation, it represents an unfortunate digression for the lay reader.

But Bernstein recovers nicely in Part One to weave together the story of the historical community, and how it was perceived by Han Chinese, the Hui (Muslim) minority, the Jesuit and Protestant missionaries, and visiting Western Jews. It is thanks to the Jesuit missionaries in the 17th century who preserved in letters and drawings almost all that we know about the ancient community when it was still in its prime. Likewise a debt of gratitude is owed to the English Protestant missionaries who first drew world attention to the ailing and decrepit community beginning in the mid-1800s.

What is remarkable about the historical community is that it flourished for some 800 years, making it one of the longest-lived (if unknown) Jewish communities in the world, before succumbing to multiple floods, warfare and economic decline. Following in the footsteps of scholars such as Irene Eber, Andrew Plaks and Jordan Paper,^x Bernstein holds that “sinicization represented a preservative function that enabled this miniscule community...to endure as a distinct and tangible religious culture for a remarkable eight centuries and more.”^{xi} While their “theology” as expressed in the memorial stones (or stelae) and synagogue plaques was decidedly Chinese—God was called “Tian” or Heaven, and Torah “Dao” or “the Way”—their way of life was traditionally Jewish and observant for many centuries, but in a uniquely Chinese cultural way. Their one major departure from rabbinic Judaism—and the

one that continues to challenge their claim to be Jews—was in their adoption of patrilineal descent, following Chinese custom, and Bernstein devotes a chapter to a full discussion of this issue from various perspectives. Like these aforementioned scholars, Bernstein admires the synthesis of Chinese and Jewish cultures that the Kaifeng Jews created, sees it as the key to their survival, and considers that it merits “a place on the map of world cultures generally and in Jewish history particularly.”^{xiii}

Part Two looks at the contemporary community in all its complexity and, again, from multiple perspectives: the national government, the municipal government, various foreign NGOs, and the Kaifeng Jews themselves. It is in these chapters that Bernstein truly shines as he consolidates a number of contemporary accounts and weaves them, along with his own fieldwork, into a coherent history of the modern period. From all this it is clear that, by their own self-definition, the Kaifeng Jews survive as a distinct entity, regardless of how the Chinese or Israeli governments or the halacha (Jewish law) view them. Put another way: the contemporary community managed to survive by transmitting Jewish identity from one generation to the next when identity was all that remained to be shared. Then, when China began to allow Western Jews access to Kaifeng, all that was needed was for Jewish teachers to kiss the somnambulant community with some Jewish education and it immediately began to revive.

Sadly, this marks the apex of the contemporary period. Shortly after Bernstein completed his work, China clamped down on its renascent Jewish community, removing all historical signage and closing museum exhibits, forbidding visiting Jewish tour groups and all communal gatherings, even filling in and closing off the revered well, the sole remaining feature of the ancient synagogue complex. Bernstein references all these developments, which remain in force as of this writing, and they were covered by Chris Buckley in a September 24th, 2016 *New York Times* feature (which makes it official). As various NGOs deliberate on how best to address this situation, one can only second Bernstein's hope that “there is a palpable sense that, despite the many uncertainties, [the Kaifeng Jews] will not be deterred from further developing their cultural identity.”

Notes

¹ Xu Xin, “Chinese Government Policy Toward the Descendants of the Jews of Kaifeng,” in M. Avrum Ehrlich, ed., *The Jewish-Chinese Nexus: A Meeting of Civilizations*, (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 204-05. Reprinted in Moshe Bernstein, *Globalization*, p.

229.

² This designation was removed by the central authorities after several Kaifeng Jews attempted to use their local identity papers to convince the Israeli Embassy to let them make aliyah. Thereafter, Kaifeng Jews had to identify either as “Han” or “Hui” (Chinese Muslim).

³ Quoted in Noam Urbach, “What Prevented the Reconstruction of the Chinese Synagogue? Kaifeng Jews Between Revival and Obliteration,” in *Youtai—Presence and Perception of Jews and Judaism in China*, P. Kupfer, ed. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2008), pp. 94-95. See also the “Three No’s” policy, referenced by Urbach, p. 98: 1) Judaism is not an official religion in China; 2) Jews are not an official ethnic minority in China; and therefore 3) There are no Jews in Kaifeng.

^{iv} See, for example, the experience of Dr. René Goldman, recounted in Michael Pollak, *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries: The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire*, (New York: Weatherhill, 1998), p. 248.

^v Wendy Abraham, “A Chinese Jewish Identity,” *Hadassah Magazine*, August-September, 1987, pp. 20-23, “Conversations with Kaifeng’s Jewish Descendants, August 1985 (Excerpts),” *Points East* (August 1993), pp. 1, 5-11; “Memories of Kaifeng’s Jewish Descendants Today: Historical Significance in Light of Observations by Westerners Since 1605,” Jonathan Goldstein, ed., *The Jews of China: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Vol. 1, (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 71-86 and her doctoral dissertation, “The Role of Confucian and Jewish Educational Values in the Assimilation of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, Supplemented by Western Observer Accounts, 1605-1985,” Columbia University Teacher’s College, 1989.

^{vi} Mathew Eckstein, “Identity Discourse and the Chinese Jewish Descendants,” in *Sino-Judaica: Occasional Papers of the Sino-Judaic Institute* 3 (2000), pp. 23-38. His updated essay was republished in Anson Laytner and Jordan Paper, eds., *Chinese Jews of Kaifeng: A Millennium of Adaptation and Endurance*, (Lexington Books, 2017).

^{vii} Noam Urbach, “What Prevented the Reconstruction of the Chinese Synagogue,” pp. 65-138.

^{viii} M. Avrum Ehrlich and Liang Pingan, “Condition of the Jewish Descendants of Kaifeng,” in Ehrlich, *The Jewish-Chinese Nexus*, pp. 175-96.

^{ix} I use the term “Judeo-Christian” in place of the more common “messianic Jew” because all traditional Jews are “messianic” whereas “Judeo-Christian”

more aptly describes their blending of Jewish and Christian theologies.
^x See Irene Eber, “Kaifeng Jews Revisited: Sinification as Affirmation of Identity,” in *Monumenta Serica*, Vol. 41 (1993), pp. 231-247; Andrew Plaks, “The Confucianization of the Chinese Jews: Interpretations of the Kaifeng Stele Inscriptions,” in *Sino-Judaica: Occasional Papers of the Sino-Judaic Institute* 1 (1991), 47-62; Jordan Paper, *The Theology of the Chinese Jews, 1000-1850*, (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2013). Both Eber’s and Plak’s essays appeared in Jonathan Goldstein, ed., *The Jews of China: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, Vol. 1, and have been republished in Laytner and Paper, eds., *Chinese Jews of Kaifeng: A Millennium of Adaptation and Endurance*, (Lexington Books, 2017).
^{xi} Bernstein, *Globalization*, p. 90.
^{xii} Chaim Simons, in *Jewish Religious Observance by the Jews of Kaifeng China*, (Seattle: Sino-Judaic Institute, 2010), provides halachic justification for all known Kaifeng Jewish practices, even though there is no evidence to show that the community knew of these sources. They simply were observant Jews, following rabbinic dictates without knowing or studying the Talmud or later materials.
^{xiii} Bernstein, *Globalization*, p. 49.
^{xiv} Chris Buckley, “Chinese Jews of Ancient Lineage Huddle Under Pressure,” *The New York Times* online: Sept 24, 2016.

Briefly Noted

Mark O’Neill, *Israel and China: From the Tang Dynasty to the Silicon Wadi*, Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 2018. Paperback. 408 pages. ISBN 9789620442971. HK\$168.

The Jews first arrived in China during the Tang dynasty (618-907 AD) and settled as businessmen, civil servants and professionals. They assimilated into Chinese society and lost their Jewish character. The next wave came in the mid-19th century with the opening of the treaty ports and settled in Shanghai. They went into trading, especially opium, and diversified into property, manufacturing, finance, public transport and retail. Another Jewish community settled in Harbin after the opening of the China Eastern Railway in 1903. Prospered in trading and business. Both communities built synology, schools, social clubs and welfare institutions. During World War Two, 25,000 Jews from Nazi-occupied Europe took refuge in Shanghai, one of the few cities

in the world open to them. Many received visas from Asian diplomats who defied their governments to issue them. The Japanese military refused the Nazi demand to carry out ‘the final solution’ of the Jews in Shanghai. After 1945, inflation, civil war and Communist rule made most Jews leave China for new homes in Israel, North America, Australia and elsewhere. The new state of Israel worked hard to establish diplomatic ties with the People’s Republic; it became an important supplier of weapons in the 1980s. But it took 42 years for the two countries to sign the ties, in 1992. Since then, relations have blossomed and China has become one of Israel’s biggest foreign investors. In the reform and open-door era, Jewish people have returned to China to form important communities in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and other cities. Part of this narrative are outstanding individuals who have left a deep imprint on China – Karl Marx, Sir Victor Sassoon, Silas Hardoon, the Kadoorie family, Henry Kissinger and Sigmund Freud.

To tell this extraordinary story, Mark O’Neill conducted many interviews with rabbis, businessmen, entrepreneurs, professors and journalists in Beijing, Shanghai, Hong Kong and Israel. It is, largely, a joyful page in Jewish history.

About the Author:

Mark O’Neill was born in London and educated at New College, Oxford University. He has worked in Asia since 1978, in Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, China and Japan, for the BBC, Reuters, the South China Morning Post and other media. He has written eight books: *Tzu Chi — Serving with Compassion*; *Frederick, the Life of My Missionary Grandfather in Manchuria*; *The Chinese Labour Corps*; *From the Tsar’s Railway to the Red Army*; *The Second Tang Dynasty — The 12 Sons of Fragrant Mountain Who Changed China*; *The Miraculous History of China’s Two Palace Museums*, *Ireland’s Imperial Mandarin: How Sir Robert Hart Became the Most Influential Foreigner in Qing China*, and this one. Five have Chinese editions, both traditional and simplified, as well as English. He lived in Beijing and Shanghai for more than 16 years. Now he works as an author, journalist and teacher, based in Hong Kong. He speaks and writes Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), French and Japanese.

Are the Chinese the Jews of Indonesia? Two Views

By Blake Smith

Excerpted from *Tablet Magazine*, www.tabletmag.com, 17April 2018

Home to only a tiny number of Jews, Indonesia is a hotbed of anti-Semitism. The disturbing popularity of Nazi imagery in the country came to international attention with stories of a Third Reich-themed restaurant and a museum where visitors could take selfies with Hitler... But while these bizarre and ghastly expressions of anti-Semitism have shocked international opinion, they are only the most recent phase of a long history of prejudice and violence in Southeast Asia, one that links Jews and local Chinese communities, both of which are seen as dangerous minorities. This tragic common fate is a heritage of colonial rule, when anti-Semitic officials compared the Chinese of Southeast Asia to the Jews of Europe.

For Indonesia's small Jewish population, life is precarious. Until 2013 there were two synagogues in the country, one in a relatively remote part of the island of Sulawesi, the other in Surabaya, a city on the island of Java, the heart of Indonesia's economic and political life. Radical Islamist protestors targeted the latter with protests, threats and attacks, forcing it to shut down. As is often the case throughout the world, local Jewish communities are regularly identified as agents of, or stand-ins for, the state of Israel, which is deeply unpopular in Indonesia...

Yet physical intimidation of Indonesia's Jewish communities and violent rhetoric against Jews and against Israel can only be partially explained in terms of the growth of radical Islamic movements inside the country. Indonesia's rampant anti-Semitism is also entangled with hatred of the country's Chinese minority, who are often compared to Jews. Journalists and scholars have made the comparison, most notably in a 1997 volume that explored the parallels between anti-Semitism in Europe with anti-Chinese prejudice in Southeast Asia. Such analyses reveal that, like Jews in twentieth-century Europe, Chinese communities in the region have been scapegoated as everything from communists to capitalists, and have been the victims of repeated episodes of mass violence.

Making up about one percent of the archipelago's 260 million people, the Chinese community has been formed through centuries of immigration to the region and assimilation with local cultures. Many of their ancestors became merchants or shopkeepers in their new homes, with some families of Chinese origin becoming wealthy and powerful. Their success has fueled resentment, and governments across Southeast Asia have promoted anti-Chinese policies, such as banning the use of Chinese names and public displays of Chinese cultural events. In a par-

adox familiar from the history of anti-Semitism, however, such policies of forced assimilation only foster accusations that people of Chinese origin are secretly still attached to their ethnic roots and are not 'real' members of the national community.

Indonesian leaders themselves invoke comparisons between Chinese and Jews, although they do so in order to vilify them, attacking both groups as greedy, selfish minorities bent on controlling the world. Towards the end of his tenure, President Suharto, who ruled Indonesia from 1967 to 1998, began to spin conspiracy theories in which Indonesia's Chinese minority and "international Zionism" were plotting together. These speculations contributed to violence against the Chinese. In the anarchic conditions after Suharto's fall from power in 1998, nationalist groups blamed the Chinese for Indonesia's political and economic problems. Chinese-owned business and homes were destroyed, over a thousand people murdered, and many victims brutalized in mass rapes.

Yet the horrific pogrom of 1998 was not unique in Indonesian history. Just as his reign ended in mass violence, so too had Suharto's presidency begun with a campaign of collective murders of Indonesian communists and their suspected sympathizers, particularly among the Chinese minority.

In fact, the lineage of organized anti-Chinese violence in Indonesia reaches still further back to the eighteenth century, when Indonesia was part of the Dutch empire. The first pogrom of Indonesia's Chinese community was organized by the Dutch in 1740, after economic tensions between Chinese workers and colonial soldiers spilled over into violence. The Dutch colonial government responded with the systematic killing of the Chinese population of Batavia (now Jakarta), their headquarters on the island of Java. Some 10,000 people died.

The violence of the Dutch colonial state was rooted in a widespread belief that Chinese communities of Indonesia were "like the Jews." Applying anti-Semitic stereotypes forged in early modern Europe to the Chinese of Southeast Asia, European travelers and colonial officials of the period often remarked that the Chinese "like Jews" were "tricksters" bent on robbing both the Dutch and native people. This strategic conflation of anti-Semitism and anti-Chinese prejudice was politically useful as the Dutch consolidated control of the archipelago. Crushing local powers and traditional elites that had long ruled the area, they insisted that it was not they but the Chinese who were the real foreign oppressors. The colonists, then, could pose as protectors of "true Indonesians."

One of the most bitter critics of the Chinese,

the Dutch colonial official Dirk van Hogendorp, proposed in the early 19th century that these "bloodsuckers" and "parasites," whom he compared to "the Jews here in Europe," should be subject to onerous taxes in order to encourage their emigration. Many echoed his sentiments. Historian Nicolaas Godfried van Kampen wrote in 1833, for example, that the Chinese were "Jews of the East," who "thwarted and obstructed" Indonesian progress. Later in the 19th century, an association of colonial plantation owners used anti-Semitic clichés against their Chinese competitors, saying that the local Chinese were "as bad" as German Jews who exploited peasants and workers. Such views were shared by British and French officials in their own nearby colonies.

By the beginning of the 20th century, the conflation of Chinese and Jews had spread widely throughout Southeast Asia and its leaders. King Wachirawut of Siam wrote a notorious 1914 pamphlet *The Jews of the Orient*, in which he systematically applied anti-Semitic stereotypes to local Chinese populations. During the 1930s, as anti-colonial movements were emerging in Southeast Asia and violent anti-Semitism erupting in Europe, Indonesian nationalists condemned Chinese merchants as Jews and began to speak of violent, eliminationist solutions to the country's "Chinese problem." Such thinking opened the path to legislation discriminating against the Chinese minority, and to the massacres of 1965-8 and 1998.

After a two-decade lull since the 1998 riots, anti-Chinese sentiment is returning to Indonesia along with a revival of its old companion, anti-Semitism, and prejudice and discrimination are reasserting themselves. Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, a politician of Chinese origin, became governor of Jakarta in 2014 when the previous governor stepped down. In 2017, as a new election loomed, many nationalists voiced opposition to Purnama's decision to seek another term. Military officials warned that the Chinese minority was becoming "arrogant," and Islamic clerics insisted that non-Muslims should not have such powerful offices (nearly all of Indonesia's Chinese minority are non-Muslim). Following these signals from the state and civil society, Purnama was arrested on charges of blasphemy and sentenced to two years in prison.

With many fearing that history may soon repeat itself, the intimate entanglement of anti-Jewish and anti-Chinese hatred in Indonesia's history offers a warning about the long reach of colonial legacies and the disturbing power of anti-Semitism to shadow and sustain other hatreds.

Blake Smith is a doctoral student in History at Northwestern University and the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, researching European interactions with India in the early modern era.

A Rebuttal: Many Hopeful Signs in Jewish-Indonesian Relations

By Niruban Balachandran

Excerpted from *Tablet* magazine, www.tabletmag.com, 19 April 2018

I was disappointed by the headline and central argument chosen for the historian Blake Smith's article, "Indonesians Hate the Chinese Because They Are Jewish". I'm an American of Sri Lankan descent working in Indonesia for about six years, and am quite familiar with the country's ethnic Chinese and Jewish communities. Unfortunately, there is a prickly thing standing in the headline's way and that is evidence.

First, both the headline and the central argument of the article are shamefully reductive: Although Indonesia is the country with the world's largest Muslim community, it also comprises more than 360 ethnicities, 707 languages, and dozens of religions, scattered across the archipelago's 13,000 islands and 34 provinces, with a broad range of worldviews, belief systems, and political attitudes.

As the fourth largest population on Earth, at 260 million, one out of every 30 humans are Indonesian. Ethnic Chinese Indonesians comprise about 1 percent of the archipelago nation's population. The Jewish-Indonesian population is comprised of mostly 200 descendants of Dutch or Iraqi Jews spread throughout the islands, and the world's largest menorah, at 62 feet tall, is located in Manado.

To his credit, Smith adroitly provides a history of how anti-Semitism has been marshaled for centuries against ethnic Chinese Indonesians to justify horrendous atrocities and hate crimes. (For instance, my friend's ghoulish account of how her family had to arm and barricade themselves during the May 1998 anti-Chinese purges, in which thousands were murdered, burnt to death and raped throughout Indonesia, was one of the most disturbing stories I've listened to.) Smith is also correct about the high degree of anti-Chinese and anti-Semitic sentiment in Indonesia. It is a nation that is growing both more liberal, and more conservative.

But amazingly, Smith provides no current measures of Indonesians' public attitudes to support his thesis, nor a breakdown of these attitudes by subnational region or ethnolinguistic group.

If he did, he might have drawn somewhat different conclusions.

For example, the recent Indonesia National Survey Project found that when asked if it is hard to be close friends with ethnic Chinese Indonesians, 44.1 percent of Indonesians surveyed agreed, but 29.3 percent

disagreed, and 30 percent neither agreed nor disagreed. Similarly, when asked if it is inappropriate for pribumi (indigenous) Indonesians to inter-marry with Chinese Indonesians (arguably the greatest test of a society's level of prejudice), 33.7 percent agreed, 35.8 percent disagreed, and 30.6 percent neither agreed nor disagreed. Indonesian census data is limited, but these mixed marriages with ethnic Chinese are fairly common across the country, especially in Java, West Kalimantan, and Sumatra. For instance, even I know of at least five such couples.

When asked if they are comfortable with ethnic Chinese Indonesians as political leaders, 37 percent of Indonesia's majority Javanese population said yes, as did 60 percent of North Sumatra's Batak population surveyed. An astonishing 100 percent of the majority-Hindu population of Bali surveyed were comfortable with the idea of ethnic Chinese Indonesian political leadership.

There are two takeaways that have important implications for the future of Jewish-Indonesian relations. For one thing, oversimplified narratives of "hate" such as Smith's can misinform the world's Jews and Indonesians about each other—two civilizations that are already far too misunderstood by each other (let alone by most of the world). It also strikes me as poor historical scholarship. Indonesians are not a monolith. And of course, neither are the Jewish people. Reductive, discouraging headlines that set the tone for such articles can promote defeatism and fatalism by default: If the implication is that Indonesians simply "hate" the Chinese ethnic minority, then it suggests that the country's hearts and minds are not worth fighting for. (Note: They are.) As a result, some readers might unfortunately conclude that it is a fait accompli that Indonesians will forever be anti-Chinese (and by extension, forever anti-Semitic).

This, of course, would be an incorrect notion. It would collide with the preponderance of evidence to date that there are still opportunities for the world's Jews and Indonesians to shatter stereotypes and exaggerated beliefs about each other. For example, my research finds there are approximately half a million Likes by Indonesian citizens on several Facebook groups that favor strengthening Indonesian-Israeli relations. Annually, between 11,000 and 15,000 Indonesians visit Israel, and recently, at least five Indonesians have written courageous, eloquent op-eds calling for diplomatic relations with Israel...

It's also worth noting that the ADL's latest Anti-Semitism Index score for Indonesia is relatively high (48 percent), but far lower

than that of most Arab societies (ranging from 74 to 93 percent), as well as its small neighbor Malaysia (61 percent), which is the most anti-Semitic country surveyed in Asia outside the Middle East. Last April, I successfully organized an interfaith dinner primarily for bringing Indonesians and Israelis together in Boston. Last November, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem organized a groundbreaking conference titled "Introducing Indonesia". And just a few weeks ago in Sydney, a delegation of 30 Indonesian youth held discussions with Jewish leaders and visited the city's majestic Great Synagogue. "The meeting was not open to the public," writes Jeremy Jones of the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council (AIJAC), "but I will report that there was not a shred of hostility."

These are all small but irrefutable signs of hope.

Secondly, the broad variance in Indonesia's local attitudes provides an invaluable clue as to how the world's Jews might want to strategically engage with the archipelago nation: [As I argued previously in a *Jerusalem Post* op-ed,] Jews should more proactively reach out to the people of Indonesia via the Internet and social media in a warm, inviting and respectful way—ideally by subnational region and ethnolinguistic group. Project Interchange, the Israel-Asia Center, Hadassah of Indonesia, and other exemplary conveners should organize more debates, exchanges, and collaborations about the Palestinian question, as well. The three Jewish-Indonesian communities here still need Torahs and sacred texts, secure houses of worship, and empowerment. And yes, more Jews and Indonesians need to learn each other's languages, literally and figuratively. A two-state solution cannot be effectively brokered with only one of the parties.

There is unequivocally no doubt that Chinese and Jewish Indonesians need to be treated better by both their fellow citizens and the state. As the historian Margaret MacMillan wrote, "History, if it is used with care, can present us with alternatives, help us to form the questions we need to ask of the present, and warn us about what might go wrong." We should therefore peer into the past to identify exactly when inter-ethnic rapprochements throughout world history were effective, then carefully apply the most relevant lessons to today's diplomatic deadlocks.

If we want peace in the Middle East, then Jews and Indonesians need to talk. By facilitating this, one day we might end up surprised at how close we brought them, as well as the world, together.

Niruban Balachandran is an American working in Jakarta.

In Memoriam
Ronald Lee Kaye, M.D.
 1932 – 2018

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden passing of Ron Kaye, a founding and still active member of the Sino-Judaic Institute Managing Board, on March 3, 2018.

Ron was born on April 15, 1932 in Toledo, Ohio to Philip Kaminsky and Gertrude Mae Berman. He met his beloved wife, Tobye Fay Davidson, at summer camp in 1949, when Ron was 18 and Tobye 14½, and the two were married in 1955 in Detroit.

Ron received his A.B. (1953) and M.D. (1957) from the University of Michigan and after a year of internship at Sinai Hospital in Detroit, moved to Rochester, Minnesota, where he completed an Internal Medical residency and Rheumatology fellowship at the Mayo Clinic. Ron interrupted his post-graduate medical training to serve his country as a captain in the U.S. Air Force.

Ron and Tobye moved to Palo Alto in 1963 where Ron founded the Rheumatology Department at the Palo Alto Clinic (now the Palo Alto Medical Foundation – PAMF), and served as chair of the department until his retirement from clinical practice in 1997. He continued as Director of Continuing Medical Education at PAMF until this past December, completing more than 54 years of service at PAMF.

Once China was opened to Western visitors, Ron and Tobye were among the very first Americans to visit that country. Ron set up scientific interchange between the Peking Medical School and Stanford University. On a trip in 1981, Ron and Tobye were among the first Westerners and the first Jews since the Communist Revolution of 1949 to visit the Kaifeng Jewish descendants, sparking his lifelong interest in Chinese-Jewish relations. Because he offered medical treatment to some Kaifeng citizens, the Kayes were admitted to the basement of the Kaifeng Museum where Ron saw the steles and took rubbings of them. While in Kaifeng, he also

led a seder with some of the Jewish families. A few years later, Ron helped co-found the Sino-Judaic Institute and was an active Board member and donor until his death.

Ron's many professional achievements included teaching numerous medical students, residents, and rheumatology fellows as a Clinical Professor of Medicine at Stanford University. He was chair of the California Medical Association's Committee on Continuing Medical Education (CME), which established continuing medical education re-licensing standards for all physicians in the state, and later for the nation through the American Medical Association's Committee on CME. Ron authored or co-authored almost forty scientific papers and book chapters, and served as president of several local and national medical organizations. He received the first Philip S. Hench Award for Excellence in Rheumatology at the Mayo Clinic, was elected to the Royal Society of Medicine (London) and the American College of Physicians, and was honored by the Arthritis Foundation and the Santa Clara Medical Society.

Ron was also very active in the Jewish community and at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, where he and Tobye were members for almost 55 years. He led the Israel Bond drive at Stanford after the Six Day War, served on the Magen David Adom national board, co-organized the first Jewish bioethics conference at Hebrew Union College.

He was a talented artist, a clarinet and saxophone player, a fan of Stanford and University of Michigan sports, and a collector of minerals, stamps, coins, and toy soldiers.

Ron's family was the most important part of his life. He was a devoted husband to Tobye and father to 4 sons: Brian, Todd, Douglas and Jeffrey. He is also survived by his 10 grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild, and his brother, Jerry.

Ron was a special friend to many, including his numerous patients, and went out of his way to help countless people. Zichrono l'vracha—may his memory and wonderful deeds live on to inspire us.

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