



# Points East

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

Vol. 37 No. 2  
July 2022

A Publication of the Sino-Judaic Institute

## Influencer Lu Kewen Promotes Antisemitism in China

By Tuvia Gering

This story originally appeared in *Tablet magazine*, February 15, 2022, at [tabletmag.com](http://tabletmag.com), and is reprinted with permission

If you ask Chinese diplomats stationed in Israel, they will tell you that “there is no antisemitism in China.” Their Israeli counterparts in Beijing will likely tell you the same: that an observant Jew can stroll down any main street in Shanghai with a yarmulke on his head without fear of verbal or physical harassment—which cannot be said for a growing number of European and American cities—and that the only swastikas he is likely to see are in Buddhist temples.

But this oversimplification is contradicted by other Chinese realities. Since the most recent conflict in Gaza in May 2021, antisemitic tropes and sentiments have been propagated on Chinese state media, encouraged by top Chinese diplomats, and rehashed by well-known Chinese political commentators. Not that China was unique in this respect: Antisemitism masquerading as legitimate criticism of Israeli policy pops up all over the world when Israeli-Palestinian hostilities flare; according to the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency annual report, antisemitic incidents soared in dozens of countries as a result of the 2021 Gaza crisis, not just in the People’s Republic of China.

The key difference in China’s case is that it is a country where speech is heavily regulated, monitored, filtered, and self-censored, and so a new wave of Jew-hatred there must be seen as not only tolerated, but openly promoted. Indeed, a new generation of Chinese cyber nationalists, well-connected pundits, and media-savvy “influencers” have been granted *carte blanche* to make careers out of poisoning the minds of China’s billion-plus active internet users with paranoid clickbait, including about “the Jews.”

### Consider the case of Lu Kewen.

The 39-year-old Lu is the owner and founder of Lu Kewen Studio, a Beijing-based “self-media” online news channel that produces videos and original commentary on a wide range of military, historical, political, and economic issues. Since its establishment only three years ago, Lu’s enterprise has reportedly amassed a following of 15 million subscribers across several mainland social media platforms; in September 2021, Lu was appointed as the spokesperson for Chinese automaker behemoth BYD, which likened him to the revolutionary literary hero Lu Xun. The meteoric rise of Lu, an ex-assembly line worker turned media sen-

(continued on page 4)

## A New Take on the Ancient Kaifeng Jewish Community

By Yu Peng

Excerpted from the *Journal of Jewish Studies*, 68:2, Autumn 2017

...The debate about the origin, arrival and nature of the Kaifeng Jews is one of the most heated in the entire field of Sino-Judaica, arguably second only to that surrounding the history of the Jewish refugee community of Shanghai.<sup>2</sup> However, many previous studies were based solely upon either misleading preconceptions or the imagination of researchers instead of historical facts. There is a pressing need for serious thinkers to re-examine the story of the Kaifeng Jews.

Four stelae found at Kaifeng, with inscriptions dating from 1489, 1512, 1663 and 1679,<sup>3</sup> record the important events of a Jewish community... Many researchers believe that the Kaifeng Jews experienced neither discrimination nor persecution during the 800 years (from the Song Dynasty) of their residency in Kaifeng,<sup>4</sup> until a process of gradual assimilation proved complete about 150 years ago. However, the story of the Kaifeng Jews might not be entirely true, and the stelae offer clues as to how they misrepresent the facts. It is difficult to determine when exactly the Jewish community in Kaifeng was formed, as the stelae contradict each other and suggest three entirely different historical periods.

### The Han-entry Theory

The inscription on the oldest stela, dating from 1489, says that the religion started in India, and the Jews came to China with Western cloth, intended as a tribute for the emperor. An unnamed emperor of the Song Dynasty (960–1279 ce) welcomed them and stated, ‘You have come to Our China; reverence and preserve the customs of your ancestors, and hand them down at Pien-liang [Kaifeng].’ Meanwhile, the 1512 stela indicates unequivocally that their ancestors entered and settled in China during the Han Dynasty (206 bce –220 ce), whereas the third stela even declares that the Kaifeng Jews came to China during the Zhou Dynasty (1100–771 bce).<sup>5</sup> Chen Yuan completely rejects the Han-entry theory because the earlier 1489 inscription supports a Song Dynasty entry, and no physical evidence can be found to support the Han-entry conjecture:

Yet in the more than one thousand years from Han to [Song], if there were settlers of Jews, why have they not left a single trace of any person, event, or structure? Why does the [1489] inscription place the transmission of the religion in Song, and not before? The claim that the Kaifeng Jews are descended from those who came to China in Han is not credible. It is possible that some Jews reached China before Han, but the Jews in Kaifeng could not

(continued on page 5)

### Notice to Subscribers. Particularly Overseas Subscribers. Please Consider Receiving Points East Digitally

It is very expensive for us to mail out Points East, particularly to those of you outside the United States. Please consider receiving the electronic version of Points East and letting us put your dues to a better use. Just send an email to [Laytner@msn.com](mailto:Laytner@msn.com) and you’ll be switched over. Thanks!

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**Featured Articles:**

- Antisemitism With Chinese Characteristics..... 1**
- A New Take on the Ancient Kaifeng Jewish Community ..... 1**

**In Memoriam**

- Shelton Ehrlich ..... 13
- From the Editor..... 2
- In the Field..... 2
- Letters.....3
- Excerpts from the Minutes.....3
- Book Nook ..... 10

**Articles:**

- The Jews of Kaifeng.....11
- The Hellerstein-Eber Connection 12
- A History of Translating the Bible into Chinese.....13
- Prof. Liu Ping on the History of Chinese Bible Translation ..... 14
- Jews Try to Stay Optimistic in ‘zero COVID’ China ..... 16

**SJI MEMBERSHIP**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Total</u>
United States	124
China	16
Israel	9
England	6
Canada	3
Germany	3
Taiwan	3
Australia	2
Japan	2
Greece	1
Mexico	1
Singapore	1
 Total:	 171

**FROM THE EDITOR**

I first learned about Lu Kewen from one of my friends in Kaifeng who had sent me a long article by him in Chinese. Although my Chinese is very, very rusty, I could make out the general anti-Semitic tone of his essay. Then when Tuvia Gering’s expose in Tablet came across my computer, I was horrified. It wasn’t that I couldn’t imagine that anti-Semites exist in China—that I just assumed—but what upset was the fact that the Chinese government was allowing this man to publish his screeds. As Gering says, “China... is a country where speech is heavily regulated, monitored, filtered, and self-censored, and so a new wave of Jew-hatred there must be seen as not only tolerated, but openly promoted.” The questions abound: Why would China allow this? Who is authorizing it? Is it just what it is, i.e., anti-Semitism, or is there a reason behind it, for example, to send a message to Israel or American Jews? Regardless, for me, it represents another black mark against the faceless, nameless Chinese authorities, whether or not they are the same ones who shut down and suppress the Kaifeng Jewish community. (And I won’t even mention China’s Uighur problem.)

But speaking of Kaifeng, James Peng Yu’s revisionist article on the origins of that city’s Jewish community is excitingly new and well worth the read. He is one of a few scholars who accesses both Chinese and Western sources in his work.

And, while I am paying tribute to one scholar, let me also draw your attention to Prof. Kathryn Hellerstein, the director of the Jewish Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania. By coincidence she appears in three articles in this issue, linking her name with other prominent scholars in the field: Irene Eber, Song Lihong and Nancy Berliner. She is also the editor of the excellent posthumous collection of essays by the late Irene Eber: “Jews in China: Cultural Conversations, Changing Perceptions,” (2020).

**Anson Laytner**

**In the Field**

Sonja Muehlberger, an SJI Advisory Board member from Berlin, Germany, was one of 12 winners of the 2022 Silk Road Friendship Awards for her work and devotion to preserving Shanghai’s refugee heritage. The event was jointly hosted by the China International Culture Exchange Center (CICEC) and the Global People Magazine of People’s Daily, and co-organized by the China International Culture & Arts Co. Ltd. (CICAC) and the Peace Culture Development Group. The ceremony gathered more than 500 participants from different countries to share their stories via a virtual meeting on how they have taken part in, contributed to, and benefited from the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI).

**Points East**

Anson Laytner, Editor

*Points East* is published by the Sino-Judaic Institute, a tax-exempt, non-profit organization. The opinions and views expressed by the contributors and editor are their own and do not necessarily express the viewpoints and positions of the Sino-Judaic Institute.

Letters to the Editor and articles for *Points East* may be sent to:

**Preferred Form:**

**e-mail: [laytner@msn.com](mailto:laytner@msn.com)**

or to: Rabbi Anson Laytner  
1823 East Prospect St.  
Seattle WA 98112-3307

*Points East* is published three times a year, in March, July and November. Deadlines for submitting material to be included in these issues are January 15th, May 15th and September 15th.

**FINANCIAL REPORT AVAILABLE**

SJI members interested in receiving a copy of the annual financial report should send a self-addressed envelope to: Prof. Steve Hochstadt, Treasurer of the Sino-Judaic Institute, 34 Colgate Rd., Unit 1, Roslindale, MA 02131 USA

**Sino-Judaic Institute  
c/o Rabbi Anson Laytner  
1823 East Prospect St.  
Seattle WA 98112-3307**

**SJI Officers**

Anson Laytner, President  
Wendy Abraham, Vice-President  
Steve Hochstadt, Secretary/Treasurer  
Arnold Mark Belzer, Immediate Past President

**Managing Board**

Joel Epstein, Beverly Friend, Loraine Heller, Dan Levitsky, Ondi Lingenfelter, Abbey Newman, Kevin Ostoyich, Charlene Polyansky, Eric Rothberg, Danny Spungen, Joshua Zuo

**International Advisory Board**

Moshe Y. Bernstein, Jan Berris, Zvia Bowman, Mark Cohen, Avrum Ehrlich, Fu Youde, Jonathan Goldstein, Judy Green, Len Hew, Tess Johnston, Dan Krassenstein, Den Leventhal, Michael Li, Yonatan Menashe, Maisie Meyer, Mark Michaelson, Sonja Muehlberger, Gustavo Perednik, Andrew Plaks, Pan Guang, Shi Lei, Yitzhak Shichor, Elyse Silverberg, Noam Urbach, Shalom Wald, Tibi Weisz, Xiao Xian, Xu Xin, Albert Yee, Zhang Qianhong, David Zweig.

**Past Presidents**

Al Dien, Leo Gabow z”l

**Bequest Request**

**Please consider putting the Sino-Judaic Institute in your will.**

## Letters

To the Editor,

I'm a Chinese filmmaker interested in drawing parallels across cultures. I'm working on a short film called "Last Ship East" about two little girls, one Japanese, one Jewish, who meet on a luxury

cruise liner departing from Nazi Germany and hoping to dock in Shanghai. Their radiant bubble of childhood innocence and friendship comes up against the harsh reality of war. The script was a Raindance finalist and a Claims Conference Emerging Filmmaker finalist. I am aiming to go into production next year.

This fictional project is by no means a scholarly study but an emotional reflection on history through a singular character's perspective. As a filmmaker, I understand the nuances and the sensitivity of the subject and would like to learn more from academic discussions. Accordingly, I very much welcome comments, inquiries, and helpful information from the readers of this short write-up.

Thank you in advance, everyone!

Eris Qian <erisqian@gmail.com>  
New York University, Leonard N. Stern School of Business, Tisch School of the Arts  
www.erisqian.com

---

## Excerpts from the Minutes of the SJI Managing Board Meeting, 9 January 2022

Present: Anson Laytner, President; Vera Schwarcz, Vice President; Steve Hochstadt, Treasurer and Secretary; Wendy Abraham; Arnold Belzer; Joel Epstein; Bev Friend; Loraine Heller; Dan Levitsky; Ondi Lingenfelter; Kevin Ostoyich; Eric Rothberg; Danny Spungen; observer: Faith Goldman.

### 1. Approval of New Board Members

Jim Michaelson and Marvin Tokayer are leaving the Board. Vera Schwarcz resigned as Vice President. Joel Epstein moved to welcome three new Board members: Abbey Newman, Josh Zuo and Charlene Polyansky. The vote was unanimous in favor.

### 2. Election of New Officers

Wendy Abraham was unanimously voted as Vice President.

### 3. Nanjing University Jewish Studies & Xu Xin Update

Bev Friend read from Xu Xin's latest annual report of the 2021 activities of the Diane and Guilford Glazer Institute of Jewish and Israeli Studies at Nanjing University.

### 4. Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum Update

Danny Spungen detailed his activities with the SJRM over the past few years. Steve Hochstadt noted that the Museum has sponsored two conferences, one to welcome the members of the new International Advisory Board in October 2019 and one in connection with the forthcoming book of articles edited by Kevin Ostoyich and Yun Xia. According to Danny Spungen, Qian Xiaoyan is now the best "expert on the Shanghai ghetto": he has taken many photographs in Hongkou and said the government has moved people out of the area to make way for development. Kevin Ostoyich explained the origins of the recent conference and said that students who took his course at Shanghai University were working for the Museum. He says that the Museum director Chen Jian understands the need for dialogue with the West.

### 5. Kaifeng Update

Anson Laytner made a report on the situation of the Kaifeng Jews, based on conversations with Kaifeng Jews and a Jewish visitor to Kaifeng. Kaifeng Jews are currently reluctant to engage with foreigners. There is camera surveillance of the old school, which has become a center for propaganda about Chinese religious policy only recognizing 5 legitimate religions and calling others "evil cults". The small exhibits that Guo Yan had created in her home were moved to a second floor apartment, and are now much less accessible, and a threatening poster has been put up across from her apartment. The Kaifeng Municipal Museum has been moved to the suburbs and the stela are no longer accessible to anyone. The Jewish Studies department at Henan University has been changed to Israeli Studies and there is a new head of the department. There is no longer any discussion of the Kaifeng Jews in Chinese media. There still are some quiet meetings of Kaifeng Jews to celebrate Jewish holidays. There is no mention of Kaifeng in the SJRM.

These developments were characterized as authoritarian, not anti-Semitic, because the measures are being applied to all "illegal" religious. Ondi Lingenfelter called this process "Hanification". Wendy Abraham noted that Jews were close to being declared a national minority in 1952, but this idea was abandoned shortly after the 1955 Bandung Conference in Indonesia, when the decision was made to support the Arabs in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Jews were never declared a national minority, and Judaism was never recognized as an official religion.

Joel Epstein said it would be good if the Israeli government offered support. Anson Laytner said that he had contacted the Israeli Foreign Ministry, but they would offer no information other than to say that they had discussed it with their Chinese counterparts. Arnold Belzer said that the Israeli government does not care about Kaifeng. He argued that too much publicity about their activities a few years

ago doomed them. He said that the solution would be to develop a patriotic Jewish community from within.

### 6. Treasurer's Report

Steve Hochstadt reported that SJI has about 140 paying members. Our total assets are below \$30,000, so if we wish to keep all our activities going, we need to raise money. The two possible sources are our own members, individuals with a capacity to give, and foundations. Thus far, we have not been able to raise any money from foundations.

### 7. President's Report

Anson Laytner noted the new and much improved website created by Wendy Abraham. Our Facebook page needs an administrator and new information. He said we could save money on postage by not sending print copies of Points East to overseas members.

There was a long discussion about Anson's proposal to open an Israeli office. He presented his proposal and argued that Israel is a perfect market for SJI, with so many Jews there and numerous Chinese Studies programs. His proposal said, "Israel is the country with the largest Jewish population and the only one with any claim to speak on behalf of the Jewish people. It is also home to a number of Chinese and East Asian Studies programs whose faculty and students by and large are Jews. As such it makes sense for SJI to open up an Israeli branch in order to further its own mission." Vera Schwarcz, who now lives in Israel, said that Israel is the primary place in the minds of Chinese who think about Jews. She believes the Jewish American-Chinese connection is dying. She suggests that we should take the Kaifeng Jews off the table because this would just complicate the Israeli-Chinese connection.

Steve Hochstadt said that he was not convinced that opening an office in Israel is a good idea. The main problem is funding: the size of the stipend needed would exhaust our resources in a few years, so that we could no longer give out grants. A secondary issue is that Israeli interest in SJI is actually very low: there are only 6 Israeli members, and only 2 or 3 paying members. Steve also disagreed with Anson's philosophical justification that Israeli Jews have a legitimate "claim to speak on behalf of the Jewish people". He is concerned that Israeli disinterest in advocating for the Kaifeng Jews would contradict SJI's long history of support for them.

Ondi Lingenfelter noted her reservations about the idea and urged more systematic research. Arnold Belzer called for a vote but Steve Hochstadt suggested a motion to postpone any decision until we talk further about an Israeli office. Joel Epstein suggested an amendment to create a committee to talk about opportunities by expanding our presence in Israel, which would make a recommendation.

The vote was 10-2 in favor of creating that committee. Volunteers were Ondi, Eric, and Joel, with Anson and Steve as ex officio members.

Wendy Abraham suggested another committee for fundraising. Wendy, Arnold, Kevin and Loraine volunteered.

Wendy suggested that the committees report back in 6 months and this suggestion was agreed to by all.

**Influencer**, *continued from page 1*

sation, has sparked envy, admiration, and derision among some Chinese academics and journalists: One typical critic attributes his success not only to his colloquial and user-friendly content, but his willingness “to completely disregard the facts and sensationalize reports for the sake of traffic.”

On May 29, 2021, about a week after the Gaza ceasefire went into effect, Lu posted an 8,000-character screed in five parts titled “What Should We Make of the Jews?” The manifesto is not an original work; it combines antisemitic tropes from medieval Europe with more recent libels from the Middle East in a way that would strike most Western readers as almost pitifully familiar. Entire sections of the work, in fact, appear to be plagiarized or directly translated into Chinese from the darkest corners of the English-language internet. In certain parts, Lu adds his own musings to the mix; in others, he just quotes at length from *Mein Kampf* and the *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Long after last year’s Gaza conflict had subsided, Lu continued to publish articles arguing that even if “beaten to death,” he “will never agree that Jews are a good partner to the Chinese people.”

But if Lu’s work is as hoary and derivative as any standard-issue Stormfront post, he has nevertheless been effective at making such hate speech more relatable to an otherwise unfamiliar Chinese audience.

‘The Anglo-Saxons, who control the military, send their aircraft carriers into the South China Sea to threaten China, while the Jews use the BBC, New York Times, Washington Post, and other media to demonize and stigmatize China in order to brainwash the Chinese and mentally colonize us’ Lu Kewen Studio

According to Lu’s videos and commentary, Jews are manipulators, penny-pinchers, loan sharks, and drug dealers. More than an ethnic group bound by blood and history, they operate like a private club, an elitist cabal whose members are linked by a web of common interests, “especially the American Jews.” It is through these social connections that Jews have infiltrated key global positions and “took control of the three cornerstones of American society, namely finance, media, and culture.” The Jewish penetration of American power is so far advanced that the Bush, Obama, and Biden families and administrations have all fallen prey to Jewish influence. Because Jews control the anti-China U.S. media and hold key positions in Biden’s anti-China cabinet, they are the “ideological voice” of the

United States, the spearhead of the West’s accelerating crusade against the Chinese government and people.

One of the conspiracies outlined by Lu (itself a product of foreign neo-Nazi forums from the late 1990s, around the time of the handover of Hong Kong) accuses Jews of being “the world’s most powerful drug barons” and therefore of being responsible for the eruption of the mid-19th-century Opium Wars, which to this day represent the nadir of contemporary Chinese history. Impressed on every Chinese boy and girl from a young age, the official historical narrative of the Opium Wars is of an Imperial China that was utterly humiliated by foreign, Western powers and forced to sign unequal treaties that violated its sovereignty and left its people drugged, backward, and exploited. And in Lu Kewen’s fantasy, the Jews are to blame for everything.

Why has Lu’s antisemitic content found an audience among a people with very little historical experience or even present concern with Jews? Racist remarks about Jews mixed with admiration for the Zionist movement is an old story, and not uncommon among Chinese reformers, intellectuals, and visionaries such as Liang Qichao, Hu Shi, and Sun Yat-sen. But the widespread adoption of social media by China’s 1 billion internet users over the past two decades has done something different, turning Chinese extremism and cyber-nationalism into a cross-cultural, cross-national phenomenon that feeds antisemitic discourse online.

There are two opposing trends at play: On the one hand, China is an open, globalized superpower connected to the outside world more than ever before; on the other, the fragile Chinese state has turned inward in the face of perceived external threats, including COVID and ongoing strategic competition with the United States. By pitting themselves against the “otherness” of foreign groups, Chinese nationalists hope to rally round the flag and unite disparate Chinese social groups behind President Xi Jinping’s vision of an integrated, civilizational “Chinese” identity.

While Chinese media scholars are divided on whether nationalism is on the rise under Xi, multiple studies and news reports have documented rising rates of racism, chauvinism, populism, homophobia, xenophobia, and Islamophobia in the country. This is no accident: Xi has been personally involved in fostering “patriotic education” designed to imbue Chinese people with “cultural confidence” in their civilization’s “excellent traditional culture,” which is often contrasted with

the insidious corruption and evil of various “others” that have put “China under threat.” To the average party official or state censor, even if Lu’s antisemitic content seems a little peculiar, his ideas are seamlessly couched in state-sanctioned nationalistic narratives that warn against foreign encirclement and influence. His calls for stronger government control to safeguard China’s “media sovereignty” from the Jews are likewise more welcome than not.

Furthermore, given the hypersensitivity of Chinese state media to internal criticism, as well as its consistent portrayal of Western countries and political systems as failing and inferior to China’s “matchless superior socialist system,” provocative content on outsiders and international affairs is always a safer bet than anything that touches domestic politics. Something as foreign and faraway as “the Jews” also ensures that there will be no demand for further knowledge or context from the average Chinese internet user, who does not bother with illegally sidestepping the Great Firewall.

Nor is Lu Kewen the only prominent antisemite in contemporary China. A list compiled by the author includes a large number of mainstream antisemitic influencers, celebrated academics, state-affiliated scholars, and renowned strategists with access to elite policy circles. In a recent study, communication scholars Yang Tian and Fang Kecheng from the Chinese University of Hong Kong show how many of these figures collaborate and coordinate content. This network of toxic nationalists—as well as deep-seated philosemitic stereotypes that paint Jews as educated, naturally smart, and good with money—overshadows the many Chinese journalists and academics who have tried to engage the general public on Judaism, Jews, and Israel in good faith.

Unless challenged by Chinese authorities, antisemitism in China is certain to grow. Bigots like Lu Kewen, who believe they speak for the entire population, are emboldened by the ability of Chinese policymakers to whitewash any trace of local racism. Israeli and Chinese officials should begin by acknowledging the existence of this problem, no matter how small it seems now, and utilize current and future platforms on Holocaust education and Jewish history to nip the poison of antisemitism in the bud.

*Tuvia Gering is a research fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS) and a Krauthammer Fellow specializing in Chinese security and foreign policy. Follow him on Twitter @GeringTuvia.*

**Ancient Kaifeng**, *continued from page 1*

possibly descend from them.<sup>6</sup>

If we compare the above translation by Shapiro with Chen Yuan's original text in Chinese, we note an apparent error in the translation of the first sentence. The correct translation should be: 'Yet in the more than one thousand years from Han to Ming' rather than 'to Song'. That is to say, Chen Yuan not only rejects the Han-entry theory, but also doubts the Song-entry theory. Although most scholars now accept that the Kaifeng Jews came to China at the end of the tenth century, during the reign of the Song Dynasty, Chen Yuan's doubts should still be borne in mind when we re-examine the possibility of the Song-entry theory.

**The Song-entry Theory**

It is quite strange that there are no historical records relating to the community during the Song Dynasty. Leslie attributes this merely to an official lack of enthusiasm for non-Chinese cultures,<sup>7</sup> but this is a far from satisfactory explanation. Tributary trades, a form of international business in the Song Dynasty, in which foreign traders brought presents to the emperor, and the emperor rewarded them with more valuable goods, were typically documented events. Detailed information of 49 such trades during the Song Dynasty was recorded in the history book *Ce Fu Yuan*.<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, we cannot find any clue to the Jews' arrival in China with Western cloth for any Song emperors.

Both Chen Changqi and Wei Qianzhi argue that the Jews went to China in 998, as Song History records that in the year 998 monk Ni-wei-ni and others had travelled for seven years from India to pay homage to Emperor Song Zhenzong.<sup>9</sup> They take it as given that Ni-wei-ni was not a Buddhist monk but a Jewish rabbi. Zhang Qianhong and Liu Bailu even cite one statement in Song History as proof that a large population of Jewish expatriates, having followed monk Ni-wei-ni all the way from India, went to Kaifeng on 20 February 998.<sup>10</sup> Since these Chinese scholars are influential historians, the idea is popularly accepted in China. Nevertheless, if their arguments are correct, why do the Jews not mention the name of the emperor in the 1489 inscription to make their certificate of residence seem more authentic? The account in Song History is far too brief to tell what gifts monk Ni-wei-ni and his followers took to the emperor. Were there records of monk Ni-wei-ni in any other chronicles from the Song Dynasty, we might solve the problem once and for all. Unfortunately,

Zhou Baozhu has searched in almost all the relevant historical books and documents, and he could find no document concerning the arrival of monk Ni-wei-ni.<sup>11</sup> However, after careful research in *Fozu Tong-ji* (Buddha Almanac), a Buddhist book composed by monk Zhi-pan in the Song Dynasty, I found the following statement: 'In 998, the Central Indian monk Ni-wei-ni and others came to China to meet Emperor Song Zhenzong with Buddhist relics, scriptures, banyan leaves and several banyan seeds.'<sup>12</sup> The description in the book uses the term Sha-men Ni-wei-ni rather than Seng Ni-wei-ni, as used in Song History, though both words mean 'Buddhist monk' in Chinese. From this we learn that monk Ni-wei-ni did not bring Western cloth with him, and that he was not a Jewish rabbi.

There is also no physical evidence to support the Song-entry theory except for the stela inscriptions made during the Ming Dynasty. According to the 1489 stela, a synagogue was established by An-dula in Kaifeng in 1163, and at that time Lie-wei (Levi) Wu-si-da (Oustad, which means 'Rabbi' in a Jewish context in Persian) was given charge of the religion.<sup>13</sup> There is, in fact, compelling evidence that the synagogue may not have been built in ancient times, after all. Leslie notes that White translates one sentence of the 1512 inscription as 'the synagogue of the ancient temple was rebuilt', but Chen Yuan's punctuation suggests an alternate translation, 'the temple was an ancient temple [Ku-ch'a], and was converted into a place for venerating this scripture'. Therefore he doubts that the synagogue was converted from a non-Jewish temple if it was truly ancient.<sup>14</sup> Ancient Chinese grammar seems to support Leslie's suspicion concerning the information in the 1512 inscription. But if the information in the 1489 inscription is also considered, the Kaifeng Jews did mean that their synagogue was an ancient temple, because they used the word Ku-ch'a twice as modifier of the word Qing-zhen-si (Temple of Purity and Truth, a term often used for a mosque). Notwithstanding this, the temple cannot be ancient if it bears the title Qing-zhen-si. The word Qing-zhen-si has only been prevalent since 1448, according to a stela in Beijing Dongsi Mosque.<sup>15</sup> The Jews were called the Lan-mao Hui-hui (Blue Hat Hui-hui),<sup>16</sup> and the word Hui-hui (Muslim) only became popularly used in the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. During the Tang and Song Dynasties, foreigners who lived in China were called Fan-ke (literally 'foreign guest') ...

Thus, it is impossible to deny that the Jewish community did exist; yet it is also quite hard to accept that the Kaifeng Jews

did not copy any Torahs during their 300-year history through the Song and Mongol Yuan Dynasties.

I suggest that the answers to these riddles lie in what has been avoided, not in some hypothesis colligating the clues themselves. Many Chinese historians and Western scholars believe that the Jews went to China during the Song Dynasty; this is on account of their reluctance to refer to the political and social context of the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644). The assumption of an uncoercive and gradual assimilation of the Kaifeng Jews during the Ming Dynasty is to manifest unwarranted confidence in spite of the facts. A careful review of social circumstances during the early Ming Dynasty will reveal that pressure from Chinese society would provide the Jews with a motive to falsify their history.

**Social circumstances during the early Ming Dynasty**

Zhu Yuanzhang, the founder of the Ming dynasty, established his reign in the name of expelling Mongols and other foreigners in order to recover the dominion of ethnic Han Chinese. During the Mongol Yuan Dynasty, the Semu people (diverse ethnic groups including Muslims and Jews) had been privileged over the Han Chinese but below the Mongol caste. To guard against the millions of these Semu people, the emperor issued many discriminatory decrees, which may have greatly changed Jewish social and linguistic traditions, as well as the ethnic make-up of the Kaifeng Jews.

Above all, as one of the Semu groups, the Jews saw their social and linguistic traditions undergo enforced change under the severe social conditions of the early Ming Dynasty. Tan Qian notes that in February 1368 the emperor ordered resumption of the wearing of the traditional clothing of the Tang Dynasty, and forbade foreign clothing, the use of foreign languages, surnames and given names.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the imperial policy of discrimination and forced assimilation was also reflected in the marriage system, which eventually changed the ethnic make-up of the Kaifeng Jews during the Ming Dynasty. According to *Ming Hui Dian* (The Record of Laws of the Ming Dynasty), Volume 22, the Ministry of Revenue stipulated that as Mongols and Semu people had already been living in China, they were free to marry Han Chinese people but not within their own ethnic groups. Those who broke the law would be sent to government ministries as slaves, and their property confiscated.<sup>20</sup> A similar decree can also be found in Volume 141, in which the Ministry of Justice ordered that, while any Mongol or Semu people were free to marry Han Chinese people, as long as the marriage

was agreed by both families, they were not free to marry within their own ethnic groups. Those who broke the law would receive 80 strokes of the cane and be sent to government ministries as slaves.<sup>21</sup> These historical documents confirm that inter-marriage between Jews and other ethnic groups was undoubtedly prescribed by the government in early Ming Dynasty. Although there is no record of whether or not these policies were consistently enforced, researchers note that the assimilation of the Kaifeng Jews intensified and escalated during the seventeenth century, which resulted in changes in Jewish social and linguistic traditions, as well as inter-marriage between Jews and other ethnic groups, such as Han Chinese and the Hui minority in China.<sup>22</sup> Therefore pressure from Chinese society can still not be excluded as one of the possible reasons for the assimilation of Kaifeng Jews into the Chinese population. It is also important to note the possibility that the Kaifeng Jews fabricated their own history in order to avoid being discriminated against or persecuted as foreigners. As during the early Ming Dynasty foreign merchants were not allowed to enter China, and if it is assumed that the Kaifeng Jews did not enter China during the Song Dynasty, the only remaining possibility is that they went to China during the Mongol Yuan Dynasty.

### The Yuan-entry Hypothesis

Chen Yuan claims that Chinese sources do not mention the existence of Chinese Jews until the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. Cognate terms such as Shu-hu, Zhu-he, Zhu-wu or Zhu-hu are found in Yuan History and Yuan-shi Yu-jie (Thesaurus of Yuan History).<sup>23</sup> However, there is no reliable historical record about where the Kaifeng Jews came from. The Kaifeng Jewish community offered very unclear information concerning this issue. The inscriptions of 1489 and 1663 claim the religion of those Kaifeng Jews as being transmitted from Tian-zhu, while the 1512 inscription uses a term Tian-zhu Xi-yu.<sup>24</sup> Xi-yu is an umbrella term used to describe lands west of China, but Tian-zhu has only been associated with India throughout Chinese history. Pan Guangdan believes that Tian-zhu refers to India, while Xi-yu, in the context of Kaifeng Jews, means Persia.<sup>25</sup>

In many ways, various forms of evidence contradict the notion that the Kaifeng Jews originated in India. First, words of Persian origin are found on the stelae. For example, the word Man-la (1489, 1663 inscriptions) equates with the Persian word Mullah.<sup>26</sup> Another example is use of the word Wu-si-da (1489, 1663 and 1679 inscriptions), a transcription of the Persian word *oustad*, which is used to mean *rabbi* by Persian

Jews.<sup>27</sup> Second, in a seventeenth-century Torah scroll in the British Museum, text was copied in a Hebrew square script similar to that used by Persian Jews.<sup>28</sup> Third, Leslie notes that sections of the Pentateuch of the Jewish community have short colophons in Judaeo-Persian.<sup>29</sup> Elkan Adler even finds that the Persian rubrics in the liturgies of Kaifeng Jews are in the Bokharian dialect.<sup>30</sup> All of this evidence seems to suggest that the Kaifeng Jews came from Persia, and it therefore seems strange that the 1489 stela claims the Jews were from India.<sup>31</sup>

I believe that the Kaifeng Jews entered China together with the Hui-hui people (Muslims) during the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. The Jews lived in the Muslim district in Kaifeng, and they used the same terms, such as Man-la and Qing-zhen-si, as the Hui-hui people. What is more, the Jews were called Lan-mao Hui-hui (Blue hat Muslims) by the local Chinese. In much the same way as the Jews, the Hui Muslims in China even today still firmly insist that their ancestors arrived in China during the Tang or Song Dynasty, although historical records show that the dominant population of the Chinese Hui Muslims are descendants of the Hui-hui people of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. Consequently, it is rational to hypothesize that, like the Hui-hui people, the Kaifeng Jews were originally brought to China from Persia by the Mongols.

If the Yuan-entry hypothesis is correct, the conflicts in the stories of the community's origins can be easily understood. One of the largest immigrations in the history of China was the 160,000 artisans, craftsmen and young men drafted into the Mongol army from Samarkand and Bukhara after the conquest of Khwarezmia in 1220.<sup>32</sup> If this fact is taken into consideration, it becomes easy to understand why the Kaifeng Jews used Persian words or even spoke the Bukharan dialect. Moreover, the obsession of the Kaifeng Jews with ancient lineages, as Michael Pollak comments, was less of a mistake and more of a 'protective maneuver'.<sup>33</sup> The Jews pushed their phase of immigration from Mongol Yuan to Song Dynasty, Han Dynasty or even Zhou Dynasty to make it seem that the Jews had been settled in China for almost as long as the Han Chinese. Therefore it is understandable that the Kaifeng Jews claimed that their ancestors came from India rather than Persia due to the same manoeuvre, as India had long been a holy land of Buddhism in Chinese people's minds since it was introduced into China at the end of the Han Dynasty. It is reasonable to believe that the Kaifeng Jews tried every means to disguise their true identity serving as the ruling caste in the Mongol Yuan Dynasty, and to show that they were the same as

their Han Chinese neighbours. However, even if the Kaifeng Jews intentionally concealed their history, some clues must remain that indicate when the synagogue was actually built.

### The 1489 Stela Mysteries

The 1489 stela offers information on the early history of the Kaifeng Jewish community. Its inscription records that in 1163 Lie-wei (Levi) Wu-si-da was charged with the administration of the religion, and that the An-du-la began to build the synagogue. In 1279, the Wu-si-da rebuilt the ancient temple, the Qing-zhen-si. The synagogue was restored by An Cheng, a physician, in 1421, and enlarged in the years 1461 and 1489. There are more than 30 names mentioned in the inscription; however, only An Cheng's life story is recorded in detail. That said, An Cheng, the physician, must be a very important figure in the history of the Kaifeng Jewish community. Fang

Chaoying considers that the story about An Cheng was written in a cryptic way that misled researchers into making incorrect interpretations regarding his identity.<sup>34</sup> Weisz translates the life and times of An Cheng as follows:

Ancheng,<sup>35</sup> a physician in the 19th year of Yongle [1421], received a proclamation from the Prince Ding of the Zhou Prefecture<sup>36</sup> making it public that he 'bestowed incest' [sic]<sup>37</sup> to rebuild and restore the Pure and True Temple. In the temple was (placed) the Order of the Great Ming the 'Long Long Life' tablet. In the 21st year of Yongle [1423], an imperial memorial conferred upon him for his meritorious services the surname Chao.<sup>38</sup> He received the rank of Military Commissioner in the Embroidered Uniform Guard,<sup>39</sup> and was promoted to Assistant Military Commissioner of Zhejiang.<sup>40</sup>

Weisz has studied White's translation, but...he makes a serious mistake in his translation, as does White. Both omit one important detail, Zou-wen You-gong, which translates as 'made a report to the throne and was adjudged meritorious for it'.<sup>41</sup> Fang Chaoying translates an official record in Ming Tai-zong Shi-lu (Life Record of Emperor Yong-le):

Yung-lo 18th year, 12th month, wu-shen (14th) day [18 January 1421], An San, a soldier of the Honan Central Bodyguard Division, was promoted to be an assistant commissioner of the Embroidered Uniform Guard and received the new surname and name, Chao Cheng. This was on the substantiation of his accusation of treason against Su, the Prince of Chou.<sup>42</sup>

The above official record reveals several inaccuracies in the inscription of 1489. An Cheng's real name was An San, who was

a soldier in the Honan Central Bodyguard Division and not a physician. It is true that the surname Chao was conferred on An San by Emperor Yong-le, but the inscription does not mention that the given name Cheng was also an imperial memorial. An San received a promotion because he accused the Prince of Zhou of treason, but the date of his promotion was 1421 rather than 1423, as the 1489 inscription records.

Fang believes the author of the 1489 inscription concealed anything of an unsavoury nature about the history of the Kaifeng Jews. First, the author combined the two names, An San and Chao Cheng, to form the name An Cheng to suit the status of a physician of non-Chinese ancestry about to be honoured with a Chinese surname by imperial order. Second, An San's military status was intentionally omitted from the inscription in order to conceal the truth of his betrayal against Prince of Zhou. An San's division was one of the three bodyguard divisions hereditarily in the service of the Prince of Zhou. Third, as An San informed the prince in 1420, which put him in danger of the death sentence, the presentation of the incense or gift by the prince in 1421 could not have been a voluntary act of friendship towards the Jewish community. Therefore the writer of the inscription cleverly disguised An San's conduct by setting it two years later, in 1423 instead of 1421. Fourth, Fang believes that the statement in the inscription that places Chao Cheng's promotion to the provincial post in 1423, though not corroborated, may be taken as factual.<sup>43</sup>

It seems that Fang has solved all the 1489 inscription mysteries; however, following in-depth review of the passage quoted above, along with other passages about the Prince of Zhou translated by Fang, the story of An San becomes more fascinating. On the one hand, his name was cleverly crafted. An San literally means 'An the Third'. Such a name indicates that An San was the third male child of his family according to traditional Chinese custom, and might have been born poor because his name was not a formal personal name. In contrast, the name Chao Cheng means 'Chao the Honest', which befits the status of an officer. He was considered 'honest' on account of his accusation of treason against the Prince of Zhou, and his new family name Chao was the surname of the emperors of the Song Dynasty. During the Ming Dynasty the emperors granted Chinese surnames to subjects who petitioned for new family names according to their own suggestions.<sup>44</sup> If An San had not offered the information that his people came to China during the Song Dynasty, he would not have received the family name of Song Emperors. It seems that this

Kaifeng Jew, An San, tried to obtain some official endorsement from a Ming emperor that his ancestors had come to China during the Song Dynasty. On the other hand, An San's true identity was carefully covered up. As mentioned earlier, Fang believes that An Cheng's identity in the inscription as a physician served to conceal An San's military identity. He believes that 'any mention of An's earlier military service would have revealed his relationship to the prince as that of a slave to the master and to inform on one's master, however justified, was always an unworthy act.'<sup>45</sup> Fang's explanation seems plausible; though even if An San was a physician, to inform on his superior was still considered unethical. I think the real reason to present An San as a physician was mainly because the writer of the inscription hoped to raise An San's social status. As Prince of Zhou was a botanist and physician, there were many physicians composing medical books under his leadership at the palace.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, the author of the 1489 inscription presented An Cheng (actually An San) as a physician rather than a low-ranking soldier. Having said that, I doubt that his true identity was even that of a soldier. How would a common soldier dare to repeatedly accuse of treason a prince, the younger brother of the emperor? And how did An San's report secretly appear on the emperor's desk? Based on Fang's translation of other paragraphs in Ming Tai-zong Shi-lu, a timeline of events can be created as follows.

On 10 November 1420, the Prince of Zhou was summoned by edict to be present in the capital in March 1421. Prior to this, An San and others had repeatedly lodged accusations against the prince for plotting treason.

Then, on 18 January 1421, An San got his promotion and received the new surname and name. After that, on 16 March 1421, the Prince of Zhou arrived at the capital. Emperor Yong-le showed him the documents supporting the accusation submitted by An San and others. The Prince of Zhou banged his head on the ground and said repeatedly 'My crime warrants the death penalty'. The emperor did not pursue the case on account of their fraternal relationship. On 5 May 1421, the Prince of Zhou was allowed to return to his principality. Finally, on 10 June 1421, the Prince of Zhou, grudgingly offered to return the officers and men of his three bodyguard divisions to the emperor.<sup>47</sup>

The above account does not mention what evidence An San offered to accuse the prince of treason, and it seems strange that the prince was not punished for his treason, the most serious crime in ancient feudal China. However, the outcome

seems to explain everything. The prince lost all his army despite the official history recording that the Prince of Zhou surrendered his command willingly. That is to say, An San successfully helped Emperor Yong-le remove the potential threat from the Prince of Zhou, even if the prince, the botanist and physician, had never plotted treason. Such meritorious service as An San performed definitely qualified him for promotion from common soldier to assistant commissioner of the Embroidered Uniform Guard or Jin-yi-wei. Jin-yi-wei was the imperial military secret police that served the Ming emperors. And San's new position seems to suggest that his true identity was that of a spy who served the emperor as a common soldier in the bodyguard division of the Prince of Zhou. This can be the only explanation for why a low-ranking soldier dared to accuse a prince, and succeeded in having his report delivered to the imperial desk of the emperor. In addition, I agree with Fang that the presentation of incense or a gift by the prince in 1421 could not have been a voluntary act of friendship towards the Jewish community because An San accused the prince in 1420, put him at risk of the death penalty. In Chinese Buddhism, the expression 'bestow incense' actually means more than burning incense before the image of Buddha and presentation of gifts to monks in the temple; it may also be regarded as the donation of money to the temple.<sup>48</sup>

It seems to me that the Prince of Zhou bribed An San in the form of supporting the Jews to build a synagogue. However, I do not agree that the writer of the inscription intentionally disguised An San's conduct by setting it two years later, in 1423 instead of 1421. I discovered that Chao Cheng was actually promoted to the provincial post in 1424. Fang found no record of this because it is recorded in a book that he did not examine. The promotion is recorded in Ming Ren-zong Shi-lu (Life Records of Emperor Hong-xi).<sup>49</sup> Chao Cheng was promoted by Emperor Hong-xi, son of Emperor Yong-le, about one month after the demise of Emperor Yong-le. It seems most probable that the writer of the 1489 inscription simply ran the two promotions together by mistake, as the inscription was written 65 years after Chao Cheng's second promotion.

Comparing the 1489 inscription and the official Ming history books, the life of a Kaifeng Jew, An Cheng in the inscription, is revealed. However, this is still not the end of his story. Many researchers believe that An-du-la was the title of the person who supervised construction,<sup>50</sup> and White explains that in the inscription of 1679 An Cheng (or Chao Cheng) is seen to have been an An-du-la.<sup>51</sup> However, Löwenthal points out that 'the 1679 text in no way

mentions Chao Yingcheng (or Chao (Yen) Cheng) as the An-du-la. It is clearly referring to the one and only An-du-la mentioned in the other two inscriptions, as having built the synagogue in 1163.<sup>52</sup> I agree with Löwenthal that An-du-la is the name of a person rather than a title; nevertheless I believe White is definitely correct to make the connection between An-du-la and An Cheng. There is an important fact about An-du-la on the 1679 stela, which recounts the history of the Chao clan. One sentence reads:

Looking back from the present to the past, we see that the one who inaugurated (the synagogue) was our embroidered uniform ancestor (Jin-yi Gong) An-du-la; the one also who preserved what we now have was our Lieutenant-Colonel (Chao) Cheng-ji.<sup>53</sup>

Although White notices this information on the stela, he fails to explain who An-du-la really was. The 1489 stela indicates that the synagogue was established by An-du-la in 1163, and rebuilt by An Cheng in 1421. As indicated earlier, An Cheng had the surname 'Chao' conferred on him by Emperor Yong-le, so he can be considered the founding patriarch of the Chao clan in Kaifeng. If An-du-la in the Song Dynasty was also the ancestor of the Chao clan, then An-du-la must be the ancestor of An Cheng. However, the 1679 stela also mentions An-du-la as Jin-yi Gong (Our embroidered uniform ancestor); therefore, the only possibility is that An-du-la was An Cheng, assistant commissioner of Jin-yi-wei or the Embroidered Uniform Guard. It is more likely that the Kaifeng Jews moved the story of their synagogue's founding from 1421 far back to the Song Dynasty in 1163, as Jin-yi-wei only existed during the Ming Dynasty.<sup>54</sup> Löwenthal thinks that An-du-la is the transliteration of Abdullah.<sup>55</sup> I believe that An-du-la or Abdullah was the 'religious name' of An Cheng.<sup>56</sup> In addition, it seems that the Kaifeng Jews were not familiar with the history of Song Dynasty because Kaifeng had already been ruled by the Jurchen people of the Jin Dynasty for 37 years by 1163.

Despite this, the assumption that An-du-la was An Cheng, a person who lived in the Ming Dynasty, still seems unreliable because history can only be based on facts, not just rational analysis. In fact, there exists circumstantial evidence regarding the Kaifeng community, which is information on another important Jewish clan, the Li clan. The 1489 inscription records 17 surnames which are believed to be those of Kaifeng Jews in the Song Dynasty. Li is the first surname mentioned in the in-

scription, and An (later Chao) is the second. The inscription also mentions 14 Man-la, among which 9 were from the Li clan. According to White, Rev. D. MacGillivray even thinks that the Jewish meaning of the surname Li is Levi.<sup>57</sup> That is to say, the Li clan was as important as, or even more important than, the An clan. White includes an excerpt from a book, *Diary of the Defence of Pien*, which contains a genealogical sequence of the Kaifeng Jewish Li clan. White translates the first sentences of this excerpt as: 'The Li family formerly lived in Peking. Previous to the Hung Wu period, at the beginning of the Ming Dynasty, the family moved to Pien (Kaifeng).'<sup>58</sup> There is a mistake in White's translation of the word Qian ('previous'). As the excerpt was taken from a version of the diary printed in the Qing Dynasty, it was required at that time to add the word Qian before the reign title of a previous dynasty. Therefore the correct translation is: 'Originally, the Li clan lived in Peking. During the early years of the Hung Wu period (1368–98) of the previous Ming Dynasty, the family moved to Pien (Kaifeng).' This evidence confirms that Li clan, the clan of Man-la or synagogue leaders, went to Kaifeng during the early Ming Dynasty. If so, the community must have been established during the Ming Dynasty. Therefore An-du-la probably lived in the Ming Dynasty, and he was very likely An Cheng.<sup>59</sup> In other words, the synagogue was initially built rather than rebuilt or restored in 1421.

### Conclusion

The recent discovery of records totally dismisses the only evidence that supports the Song-entry theory of the Kaifeng Jews. The assumption that monk Niweini in Song History was a Jewish rabbi and that the Kaifeng Jews arrived in China in 998 was initiated by Chen Changqi. Wei Qianzhi later discussed Chen's idea and supported it. As Zhang Qianhong was Wei's student, and Liu Bailu was Zhang Qianhong's student, the assumption has been repeated and not questioned. I believe the Kaifeng synagogue was first established during the Ming Dynasty in 1421, and that two figures in the 1489 inscription, An-du-la of Song Dynasty and An Cheng of Ming Dynasty, were actually one person. The earliest reliable date for Jewish arrival in Kaifeng is the Hung Wu Period (1368–98) of the Ming Dynasty. In addition, it was the coercive decrees during the early Ming Dynasty that forcibly accelerated the assimilation of the Kaifeng Jews into the Chinese population. Facts supporting this research are not difficult to find; however, researchers tend to believe that the Jews went to China

during the Song Dynasty because they wish to believe that there existed, in human history, a unique 800-year continuous history of a Kaifeng Jewish community that did not suffer from discrimination or persecution. Nevertheless, it is the responsibility of historians to restore historical truth, whatever that truth might be. As there are definitely no events particularly against Jews and Judaism recorded throughout Chinese history, the story of the Kaifeng Jews is still unique, although in reality it may be 300 years shorter than has hitherto been believed.

*James Peng Yu, now teaching in Montreal, Canada, was formerly at Hebei University of Science and Technology. He may be contacted at: py2445@mun.ca*

**Notes** [not renumbered but adhere to original article]

3. See W.C. White, *Chinese Jews: A Compilation of Matters Relating to the Jews of K'aifeng Fu* (2nd edn; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), vol. II, pp. 3, 5. See also D. Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews: The Jewish Community of Kaifeng* (T'oung pao, 10; Leiden: Brill, 1972), p. 18; T. Weisz, *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions: The Legacy of the Jewish Community in Ancient China* (New York: iUniverse, 2006), p. xvii; Q. Zhang and B. Liu, 'A Study on the Social Condition of Kaifeng Jews from the Remaining Stone Inscriptions', *Journal of Henan University* 46:6 (2006), pp. 97–100; p. 100.
4. See, for example, S.M. Perlmann, *The History of the Jews in China* (London: Mazin, 1913), p. 37; see also G. Pan, *Some Historical Problems of Jews in China* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1983), p. 10; S. Shapiro, *Jews in Old China: Studies by Chinese Scholars* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1984), p. xviii; Zhang and Liu, 'A Study on the Social Condition', p. 98.
5. See White, *Chinese Jews*, vol. II, pp. 11, 43, 62.
6. See G. Pan, 'Jews in Ancient China – A Historical Survey', in Shapiro (ed.), *Jews in Old China*, p. 71. See also Y. Chen, 'Study of the Israelite Religion in Kaifeng', in Z. Wu (ed.), *Selected Historical Essays by Chen Yuan* (Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1981), p. 78.
7. See Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews*, p. 111.
8. See J. Zhang, *Maritime Trades between Ancient China and West Asia/Africa* (Beijing: Maritime Press, 1986), p. 42.
9. See C. Chen, 'Buddhist Monk or Jewish Rabbi?', in Shapiro (ed.), *Jews in Old China*, pp. 139–42; see also Q. Wei, 'Investigation of the Date of Jewish Settlement in Kaifeng', *Historical Monthly* 5 (1993), pp. 36–41; p. 39; and Tuo-tuo, 'Annals of the Reign of Song Zhenzong', in *Song History* (Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Works Publishing House, 1986), vol. 6, Zhenzong 1.
10. Zhang and Liu, 'A Study on the Social Condition', p. 97.



11. B. Zhou, 'A Study of the Eastern Capital in Song Dynasty' (Zhengzhou: Henan University Press, 1992), p. 611.
12. Zhi-pan, Fo-zu Tong-ji (Buddha Almanac), vol. 44; in Fo-zu Tong-ji CBETA Electronic Version (Taipei: Chinese Buddhist Electronic Text Association, 2002), p. 444, [http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/BDLM/sutra/chi\\_pdf/sutra20/T49n2035.pdf](http://buddhism.lib.ntu.edu.tw/BDLM/sutra/chi_pdf/sutra20/T49n2035.pdf); accessed 4 July 2016.
13. See White, *Chinese Jews*, vol. II, p. 37; see also Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews*, p. 23; and Weisz, *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions*, p. 12. White translates it as 'Lieh-wei (Levi) Wu-su-ta was charged with the administration of the religion'; Leslie translates it as 'Lieh-wei (the) Wu-su-ta led the religion'. Weisz translates this as 'Levites and Wusida led the religion'. In this article I use the more widely accepted Pinyin for transliterating Chinese terms.
14. Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews*, pp. 79–80.
15. See D. Wang, 'Research on "Mosque Monument Bestowed by Royalty" in Beijing Dongsi Mosque', *Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Studies*, 2010, pp. 155–61; p. 156. The 1448 stela in Dongsi Mosque records that the emperor presented to the mosque a plaque inscribed with the word Qing-zhen-si.
16. See Q. Zhang, 'From Judaism to Confucianism: Studies on the Internal Causes for the Assimilation of the Kaifeng Jewish Community', *Studies in World Religions* 109:1 (2007), pp. 109–24; p. 122.
17. See M. Ma, 'Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang's Discrimination against Semu People', *Journal of Hui Muslim Studies* 61:1 (2006), pp. 98–102; p. 98.
18. See Ming Hui Dian, Volume 22, Ministry of Revenue, No. 7, <http://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=50165&page=84&remap=gb>; accessed 5 August 2016.
19. See Ming Hui Dian, Volume 141, Ministry of Justice, No. 16, <http://ctext.org/library.pl?if=gb&file=54488&page=68&remap=gb>; accessed 5 August 2016.
20. N.R. Song, 'Jewish Assimilation: The Case of Chinese Jews', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 15:1 (1973), pp. 115–26. See also S. Zhang, *Judaism and Kaifeng Jews in China* (Shanghai: Shanghai Sanlian Publishing House, 1990), pp. 107–8.
21. See Y. Chen, 'Study of the Israelite Religion in Kaifeng', pp. 84–5. 22. See White, *Chinese Jews*, vol. II, pp. 11, 43, 62; Weisz, *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions*, pp. 10, 22, 40.
23. See G. Pan, *Some Historical Problems of Jews in China* (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 1983), p. 48.
24. See White, *Chinese Jews*, vol. II, p. 12. The word Mullah means local Islamic cleric or head of a mosque, and is still commonly used among Chinese Muslims.
25. White, *Chinese Jews*, vol. II, p. 21.
26. See Kaifeng Torah: [www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/kaifengtorah.html](http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/kaifengtorah.html); accessed 26 July 2016.
27. Leslie, *The Survival of the Chinese Jews*, p. 118.
28. E.N. Adler, 'The Persian Jews: Their Books and their Ritual', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 10 (1898), pp. 584–625; pp. 624–5.
29. The author of this article is not fluent in Persian, and therefore secondary sources have been relied on in order to make this argument.
30. See Z. Yu, *Chinese Imperial Dynasties and Islam* (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1996), p. 80.
31. See M. Pollak, *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries: The Jewish Experience in the Chinese Empire* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980), p. 259.
32. See C. Fang, 'Notes on the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 85:2 (1965), pp. 126–9; p. 126.
33. Ancheng actually contains two Chinese characters: An Cheng. White translates 'An Cheng' as 'Yen Ch'eng'. Fang Chaoying points out that 'Yen' should be changed to 'An' from the labial ending am. The character has long been used as a phonetic transliteration of am or ab. See Fang, 'Notes on the Chinese Jews', p. 126.
34. Weisz's translation is wrong. Zhou-fu Ding Wang means the prince with the posthumous name Ding, of the principedom of Zhou. See Fang, 'Notes on the Chinese Jews', p. 127.
35. This is a spelling mistake. The correct word form is 'incense'. See White, *Chinese Jews*, vol. II, p. 12. White translates it as 'a present of incense'.
36. Weisz keeps the older transliteration for the word 'Chao'; the Pinyin for it should be Zhao. To maintain consistency with previous translators, I follow Weisz in using 'Chao' in this article.
37. Embroidered Uniform Guard in Chinese is Jin-yi-wei. White translates 'Embroidered Robe Body-guard', as in *Chinese Jews*, vol. II, p. 12.
38. See Weisz, *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions*, pp. 12–13.
39. See Fang, 'Notes on the Chinese Jews', p. 127.
40. Ibid. The Pinyin for Yong-lo and Chou are Yong-le and Zhou, respectively. In this article I follow Weisz in using Pinyin.
41. See Fang, 'Notes on the Chinese Jews', pp. 127, 129.
42. See, for example, Ming Ying-zong Shi-lu ('Life Records of Emperor Yingzong'), vol. 276. When Tatar Bei-dou-nu came to surrender, he was appointed as an officer. In April 1457, the emperor conferred on him a new name, Bai Zhong ('Bai the Loyal') according to his own petition.
43. See Fang, 'Notes on the Chinese Jews', p. 129.
44. Books composed by Prince of Zhou include Shenzen-fang ('Divine Authentic Prescriptions'), Puji-fang ('Prescriptions for Common Benefit') and Jiuhuang-bencao ('Materia Medica for Survival during Famines').
45. See Fang, 'Notes on the Chinese Jews', p. 127.
46. Weisz, *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions*, p. 14.
47. Ming Ren-zong Shi-lu ('Life Record of Emperor Hong-xi'), vol. 2, <http://ctext.org/wiki.pl?if=gb&chapter=689280&remap=gb>; accessed 5 August 2016.
48. See White, *Chinese Jews*, vol. II, p. 21. White made a mistake by referring to Chao Yingcheng as the An-du-la, then identifying Chao (Yen) Cheng as the An-du-la later. Q. Zhang and Weisz also think An-du-la is a title. See Q. Zhang, 'From Judaism to Confucianism', p. 122; Weisz, *The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions*, p. 12. However, Zhang changed her opinion in her later articles; for instance, see Zhang and Liu, 'A Study on the Social Condition', p. 100.
49. See W.C. White, *Chinese Jews: A Compilation of Matters Relating to the Jews of K'aifeng Fu* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1943), vol. III, p. 120. As indicated earlier, White transliterates 'An Cheng' as 'Yen Ch'eng'.
50. See R. Löwenthal, 'The Nomenclature of Jews in China', *Monumenta Sericac* 12 (1947), pp. 97–126; pp. 104–6.
51. This is based on White's translation. See White, *Chinese Jews*, vol. II, p. 99 (English translation). Also see *ibid.*, pp. 104–5 (Chinese text). White translates Chin-yi Kung (Jin-yi Gong) as 'Gentleman with the honour of the Embroidered Robe'. There is an obvious mistake in White's translation of the word Gong (or Kung), which actually means 'ancestor', a title of respect.
52. This kind of practice was very popular among ethnic Hui-hui Muslims during the Ming Dynasty. The 1489 stela is captioned Chongjian Qing-zhen-si Ji ('Commemoration of the Restoration of the Synagogue'). Stelae captioned with the same or similar titles appear in almost all mosques in China, and the inscriptions on those stelae always claim that those Qing-zhen-si ('mosques') were originally built during the Tang or the Song Dynasty, although local history records clearly do not support such claims.
53. See Löwenthal, 'The Nomenclature of Jews in China', p. 124.
54. Except for their Han Chinese names used in public, the ethnic Hui Muslims also keep 'religious names', mainly for use in mosques. The Kaifeng Jews definitely had a similar practice, as is shown in the Memorial Book of the Kaifeng Jews. See Pollak, *Mandarins, Jews, and Missionaries*, p. 327.
55. See W.C. White, *Chinese Jews: A Compilation of Matters Relating to the Jews of K'aifeng Fu* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966), vol. I, p. 160.
56. See White, *Chinese Jews*, vol. III, pp. 158, 221.
57. A similar example can be found in the Hua-jue Mosque, one of the oldest mosques in China. The Chinese inscription on a stela dated to 742 reads 'Bai-du-er-di led the religion [in the Tang Dynasty]', while on the reverse side of the stela the Arabic inscription shows that 'Badruddin led the religion [in the Ming Dynasty], and passed away in 1545'. See J. Feng and G. Tie, *One Hundred Questions about Islamic Culture* (Beijing: China Today Press, 1992), p. 151–3.

## BOOK NOOK

**The Global Merchants: The Enterprise and Extravagance of the Sassoon Dynasty**

by Joseph Sassoon, published by Allen Lane

Reviewed by Paul French

Excerpted from the *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong), 12 February 2022

...At its height, in the early 20th century, the Sassoon dynasty far exceeded just about any other family business in history. Stretching from its roots in Baghdad, spanning the Indian subcontinent, becoming a force in the coastal cities of China and the smart drawing rooms of Mayfair, the dynasty had wealth and staying power ... until it didn't.

There is a shelf of books on the Sassoons, but this is the first comprehensive history by one of its own. Joseph Sassoon, an American academic specialising in Iraq, hails from a branch of the family descended from Sheikh Sassoon (1750-1830) that divided from the main bough in the 19th century.

Fortunately, given the wealth of archives consulted for this book, Sassoon is fluent in Arabic, Hebrew and the Baghdadi-Jewish dialect, the arcane patois of much of the family's internal business correspondence.

The Global Merchants charts the century-long trajectory of the Sassoon empire – the rise from obscurity to prominence as successful merchants in Baghdad who followed the spread of the British Empire eastward. Sassoon presents a tale of commercial derring-do and a dissection of the paperwork, the exigencies of calm but rapid decision-making that could lead to boom or bust...

It is a story of larger-than-life individuals, starting with the observant and patriarchal Baghdad-born David Sassoon (1792-1864), who moved the family to Bombay (now Mumbai) and entered the opium trade. He followed the money and sent his sons onwards to Canton (now Guangzhou), Hong Kong and Shanghai.

David's son Solomon (1841-1894) expanded the China trade. After his death, his wife Flora (1859-1936) took over the business and extended its reach into the heart of the Empire, establishing the dynasty's London branch. Flora was the first woman to helm a global business yet is rarely mentioned in other studies of the dynasty.

Contrast these somewhat austere merchants with the next generation and Cambridge-educated bon vivant Sir Victor Sassoon (1881-1961) indulging his passions for horses, saucy photographs and high-octane cocktails.

A staggering fortune was amassed from opium, of course, but also silver, gold, silk, wheat and cotton. No commodity was left unexplored, and an architectural legacy was created, too, from David Sassoon's Magen David Synagogue, in Bombay, to Victor Sassoon's Cathay Hotel, in Shanghai, so that an ever-diversifying conglomerate encompassed hotels, brokerages and rents, alongside commodity trading.

Profits were balanced to an extent by charitable endeavours and philanthropy, ranging from hospitals in Poona and schools in Calcutta to support for European Jewish refugees arriving in wartime Shanghai.

But the trajectory culminates with the question: what happened to the Sassoons? After World War II the trading greatness and wealth petered out. Dissipated and gone barely a century after David Sassoon found a role as a middleman between British textile firms and Persian merchants, the House of Sassoon is now

history. So naturally we ask what were the missteps? Who blew the money?

As with most things, there is no simple answer. Decisions made at earlier junctures returned to haunt them – leaving India, underestimating the Japanese threat, dependence on Shanghai, fratricidal competition that sapped their collective strength. The interdependency of the Sassoons and Empire meant that as the latter decomposed the former was left adrift.

Joseph Sassoon also suggests a more protracted and subtler problem – “anglicisation”. Too many of the family became enamoured of the English aristocracy. The hard work ethic of previous generations was lost. They spent vital energy better used on taking their business into a new, and uncertain, post-war world, on obtaining titles and status in London.

The author recounts an older Sassoon lamenting the younger members of the business arriving at the office at 11am, working for a few hours and then heading off to the racecourse.

Victims of their own success? The obsession with social and political standing of a later generation came seemingly at the expense of their ancestors' hard drive, which produced the wealth that facilitated the entrée in the first place. Succession, as television viewers now know, is a tricky business.

**China and Ashkenazic Jewry: Transcultural Encounters**

Edited by Kathryn Hellerstein, University of Pennsylvania, & Lihong Song, Nanjing University

Published by De Gruyter (Oldenbourg, Germany), 2022. 359p. PDF and eBook: \$89.99, ISBN: 9783110683943 Hardcover: \$89.99, ISBN: 9783110683776 <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110683943>

In the past thirty years, the Sino-Jewish encounter in modern China has increasingly garnered scholarly and popular attention. This volume is the first to focus on the transcultural exchange between Ashkenazic Jewry and China. The essays within it investigate how this exchange of texts, translations, images and ideas has enriched both Jewish and Chinese cultures and prepared for a global, inclusive world literature.

The book breaks new ground in the field, covering such new topics as the images of China in Yiddish and German Jewish letters, the intersectionality of the Jewish and Chinese literature in illuminating the implications for a truly global and inclusive world literature, the biographies of prominent figures in Chinese-Jewish connections, and the Chabad engagement in contemporary China. Some of the fundamental debates in the current scholarship are also addressed, with special emphasis on how many Jewish refugees arrived in Shanghai and how much interaction occurred between the Jewish refugees and the resident Chinese population during the wartime and its aftermath.

**Contents**

Kathryn Hellerstein, Introduction

**Part One: *The Bible in China***

1. Irene Eber, From Rags to Riches: Joseph and His Family
2. Fu Xiaowei and Wang Yi, Why Is Having No Posterity the Worst Unfilial Thing? A Comparison of Mencius 4A:26 and Genesis 38
3. Cao Jian, The Impact of Ancient Israelite Prophets on Modern Chinese Intellectuals
4. Zhong Zhiqing, Reading the Song of Songs in Jewish and Chinese Tradition
5. Liu Yan, The Transcultural Characteristics of the Chinese Bible Translated by S. I. J. Schereschewsky (1831–1906): A Case Study of the Song of Songs

**Part Two: Jews in Modern China**

6. Xu Xin, Jewish Communities and Modern China: Encounters of Modern Civilizations
  7. Ai Rengui, When the Muscular Jews Came to the Far East: Jewish Sports and Physical Culture in Modern China, 1912–1949
  8. Wang Jian, Tracking the Exact Number of Jewish Refugees in Shanghai
  9. Maisie Meyer, The Global Reach of Shanghai's Baghdadi Jews
  10. Nancy Berliner, Jewish Refugee Artists in Shanghai: Visual Legacies of Traumatic Moments and Cultural Encounters
  11. Yang Meng, Drama in Wartime Shanghai
  12. Marc B. Shapiro, The Mir Yeshiva and Its Shanghai Sojourn
  13. Samuel Heilman, Chabad Outreach on the Jewish Frontier: The Case of China
- Part Three: Jews and Chinese
14. Kathryn Hellerstein, Yiddish Translations of Chinese Poetry and Theater in 1920s New York
  15. Bao Anruo, Enemy or Friend: The Image of China in Yiddish Newspapers during the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905)
  16. Zhang Ping, To Speak or Not to Speak: Hanoeh Levin's Suitcase Packers and Cao Yu's Peking Man in Light of Cross-Textual Dialogue
  17. Li Dong, Teaching American Jewish Literature to Chinese College Students: Anzia Yezierska's "Children of Loneliness" as a Case Study
  18. Rebecca Kobrin, Chinese and Ashkenazic Encounters in the American Immigration Regime: Max J. Kohler, Immigration Legal Practice, and the Chinese Exclusion Act
  19. Song Lihong, A Homeless Stranger Everywhere: The Shadow of the Holocaust on an Israeli Sinologist

**Briefly Noted**

From: emile yeo [emile.kk.yeoh@gmail.com](mailto:emile.kk.yeoh@gmail.com) via Frank Joseph Shulman

"We are glad to inform you that the full issues and the individual articles of Volume 7 [#3] of Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic Relations: An International Journal (CCPS, April, August, December 2021, pp. 1-1880) can be accessed at the journal website (<http://icaps.nsysu.edu.tw/p/412-1131-13594.php?Lang=en>) for free downloading and dissemination. The journal is indexed and abstracted in Scopus (from Vol. 1, No. 1, 2015)."

This issue includes:

"China and Israel: Strategic Economic Ties under American Pressure".

By Ibrahim S.I. Rabaia (Birzeit university, Palestine) and HEND E.M.

Sultan (Egyptian Chinese University, Egypt).

"China's Interdependent Relations with the Middle East: Prospects for Reconciliation and Peace".

By Syed Fraz Hussain Naqvi (Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan) and Roy Anthony Rogers (University of Malaya)

"China-centric Economic Order in Asia: Growing Chinese Presence in the Middle East".

By Meszár Tárík (Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary) / John von Neumann University, Hungary

## The Jews of Kaifeng

By Nancy Berliner

Excerpted from the *Jewish Quarterly*, August 2021

When I was a kid in the 1960s, my father – who would never pass up an opportunity to tell a good joke, or a bad one – had a string of stories that linked Jews and Chinese people, often preposterously. At that time, in our minds, China was as far away as one could go from anything Jewish, and he populated his stories with Chinese waiters speaking Yiddish at kosher delis, elderly Jewish men speaking Chinese on cruise ships, and everything in between.

I grew up to become a sinologist. And lived for years in Beijing.

One day, an Israeli friend – a specialist in Chinese literature who spoke Chinese fluently – came to Beijing for research. During a taxi ride, the driver swivelled around and, seeing his passenger was a foreigner, asked where he came from.

“Israel,” my friend answered proudly.

“Aha!” the driver said. “Then you must be Jewish!”

My friend answered in the affirmative, to which the driver replied, “You know, there used to be many Jews in China.”

My friend had heard the line too many times. “There are more people who have written about the Jews of China than there ever were Jews in China,” he replied dryly.

“Well,” the driver said, “I am Jewish.” And he proceeded to tell the story of the Jews of Kaifeng.

My topic here is not just the story of the Jews of Kaifeng – as my friend rightly noted, they have been analysed from all angles. My topic is: why is this community so interesting? What draws us to their story? After all, there are Jews in the United States, in France, in Tunisia – why not China?...

For many years, the 625-page tome *Chinese Jews* by the bishop William Charles White, published in 1944, was considered the most comprehensive study. The Anglican bishop lived in Kaifeng as a missionary from 1910 to 1930. He became fascinated with the city’s Jews and acquired an assemblage of objects from the local community, which he collected for the Royal Ontario Museum, where they are still housed and displayed.

An oft-reproduced photograph from White’s book features two men facing a Torah scroll encased in a tall, cylindrical tiq, the container commonly used by Asian Jewish communities for storing Torahs. The tiq sits on a nineteenth-century Chinese chair. One man is of Asian appearance. He dons a round hat, a long white robe and cotton shoes. The other, with his back to us, wears a conical hat, a turban and a white robe under a darker magua, a type of short,

loose Chinese jacket. The implication is that here are two Jewish Chinese men reading the sacred text. Yet Sara Irwin, former director of collections at the Royal Ontario Museum, who has written thorough studies of the Judaica objects White collected, recently shared a little-known secret about this photograph: one of the men is the bishop himself, the other his assistant. While the bishop researched and presented – and partially concocted – a narrative of the Jews of Kaifeng, Irwin adds, his texts reveal that his ultimate agenda, like many others writing on the subject, was to convert these Jews to Christianity.

European Christians were not the only ones to write about the Jews of Kaifeng. As early as 1910, the Chinese scholar Zhang Xian-gwen researched and published the texts engraved on the stone steles. Chinese historians have continued to delve into these texts. And many Jewish sinologists, including the eminent Berthold Laufer, curator of Asian ethnology at the Chicago Field Museum, and Benjamin Schwartz, my own first professor of Chinese intellectual history at Harvard, could not resist the temptation to dive into the subject. In 1999, China scholar Professor Donald Leslie, who died last year at the age of ninety-eight, published a 291-page bibliography on the Jews of China.

Four years ago, I met David Stern and Kathryn Hellerstein, a powerhouse academic couple in the world of Jewish studies. Hellerstein is the director of the Jewish Studies program at University of Pennsylvania, and a professor of Germanic languages, specialising in Yiddish; Stern is a professor of classical and modern Jewish and Hebrew literature at Harvard. Though not obvious from their titles, both are deeply involved in the realms of Jewish China. On a snowy evening, my partner and I dined with the pair in an elegant restaurant in Cambridge. Hellerstein explained that she was organising, with Chinese colleagues Xu Xin and Song Lihong of the Glazer Institute for Jewish and Israel Studies at Nanjing University, an academic conference in Nanjing, with a focus on Ashkenazi Jews in China. Among the participants were a Chinese Talmudic scholar, a Chinese translator of Isaac Bashevis Singer’s novels, and the director of the Shanghai Jewish Refugees Museum. She invited me to deliver a paper.

During our meal, Stern showed me a photocopy of a page of Hebrew and Chinese text from a seventeenth-century document. I was beyond delighted to see, for the first time, tangible evidence of these two ancient cultures intersecting so naturally on one sheet of paper. Having spent a large chunk of my life immersed in China, I saw my two identities – as a Jew and a China scholar – merging. The page was from a booklet listing Kaifeng synagogue congregants, men and women, their names written in Chinese and Hebrew. I excitedly pointed

out where, under the Hebrew for Moshe, the scribe had noted *jinshi* in neat, brushed Chinese characters, indicating that the Jewish-Chinese gentleman had passed the highest level of civil examinations in Beijing. The 76-page booklet is now in the library of the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Laufer, the esteemed sinologist, first saw the booklet in 1927, and later wrote of his own emotional response: “The mere fact that it was the only Chinese-Hebrew manuscript I had ever laid my hands on, and presumably the only one in existence, proved a magnetic attraction in itself.”

Stern’s photocopy reminded me of the day I was in a dusty, state-owned used bookshop in Beijing, when my eyes randomly fell on a peculiarly sized, well-thumbed string-bound paperback. It was, the store’s manager explained, an Esperanto-Chinese dictionary, published in 1924. “I’ll take it,” I said without hesitation. The memory of my visit to the Polish town of Białyłstok flashed into my mind, the guide pointing out the “home” of Dr L.L. Zamenhof, the Jewish ophthalmologist who invented Esperanto in the late nineteenth century. (In fact, the house is no longer there.) What inspired me to flip through the pages to the word for Palestine? *Palastin-o* was defined there in Chinese as the “old Jewish country, now a possessed territory” – possessed by the British, presumably, given the date of publication. Those few Chinese characters recognising the existence of Jews warmed me. The book had multiple intersections of China and Jews, all of which made China less foreign for me – just a place down the road from Israel, across Asia, where so many of my forebears had travelled before me.

Recently I stumbled across a 170-year-old Hebrew letter on the internet – our only means of travel during these Covid days. Sold at a Sotheby’s “Important Judaica” sale in 2010, the letter was penned to the Jews of Kaifeng on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Heshvan, in the year 5611 (1850), by Isaac Faraj ben Reuben ben Jacob, a Baghdadi Jew who had settled in Shanghai four years earlier. Like the Kaifeng Jews, this Isaac was probably a descendant of the Jews exiled to Babylon, and like them had arrived in China as a merchant. He asks his long-lost relatives if they have a Torah or other Jewish texts, and whether the Shanghai Jewish community could send them anything. Whether the Kaifeng Jews received or understood the letter is not known. Nineteenth-century Christian visitors to Kaifeng noted that Jews there claimed they could no longer read Hebrew. Nevertheless, in time, at the invitation of the Baghdadi Jews in Shanghai, several Kaifeng Jews went to Shanghai to learn Hebrew and Jewish rituals.

Here we are in 5781, or 2021, learning to be more sensitive to the diversity of our communities. The Kaifeng Jews remind us that not all Jews go back to the shtetls of Eastern

Europe. Isaac Faraj ben Reuben ben Jacob knew that, and probably never considered those distant shtetls. My boyfriend, who is of Baghdadi-Jewish descent, knows that as well (and groans when people assume he understands Yiddish).

In Kaifeng, Jews worshipped in buildings with upturned eaves and lotus-decorated bowls. Will future Jews be charmed that American Jews pray in our mid-century modern shuls, (or, shall we say, qingzhensi, “temples of purity and truth”, as the Kaifeng Jews called their places of worship, using the same term local Muslims employed for their places of worship)? My father would have smiled.

*Nancy Berliner is the Wu Tung Senior Curator of Chinese Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She may be reached at [nberliner@mfa.org](mailto:nberliner@mfa.org)*

## The Hellerstein-Eber Connection

Excerpted from <https://penntoday.upenn.edu/news/archives-class-different-communities-jews-china> 18 Jan. 2022

The moment Kathryn Hellerstein decided to change the course of her academic career is clear in her memory. It was November of 2007 and she was standing with her husband in the center of a crowded Shanghai neighborhood, a place where Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis in Europe lived during the Japanese occupation of Shanghai during World War II.

“Being there was just so intense and mind-blowing,” says Hellerstein, a professor of Germanic languages and literature in Penn’s School of Arts & Sciences. “We both became extremely interested in the Jewish-China connection.” Hellerstein... has focused her research on Jews in China for the past 15 years.

Hellerstein immediately thought of a scholar she had met seven years earlier in Jerusalem, Irene Eber, who at that time was working on a book about the Yiddish writings by Central European Jewish refugees in Shanghai. “I emailed her and I said, ‘Please teach me. I want to learn from you,’” says Hellerstein, who is also the Ruth Meltzer Director of the Jewish Studies Center at Penn. “She was an incredibly generous, welcoming person who was thrilled to have somebody to mentor.”

The relationship they created resulted in Eber giving her archives to the Penn Libraries, before her death in 2019 at the age of 89. It is named the Irene Eber Gift of the Yedidya Geminder Memorial Collection of Sino-Judaica in memory of Eber’s father, who was murdered in a la-

bor camp during the Holocaust.

Recently catalogued by the Libraries, the archive is already in use by the 21 students in Hellerstein’s first-year seminar, *Jews and China: Views from Two Perspectives*.

“Irene wanted somebody to continue her work. She did her research in archives and libraries, and she wanted her papers to be at an American university, and I was a connection,” Hellerstein says. “She really hoped for continuity of scholarship and study and curiosity about this area of Jews in China”...

The Eber materials donated to Penn fill 13 file boxes, or 13 linear feet, which translates to thousands of documents... Nearly all of the materials are related to Eber’s work as a scholar, gathered throughout her career, Hellerstein says.

“There’s not a lot of original manuscript material. They’re copies from other archives,” Hellerstein says. “But the human power, the hours and hours that go into locating, finding, selecting, these texts, I can’t even begin to tell you how much time it takes to amass this kind of research”...

For a dozen years, Hellerstein and Eber emailed regularly, had frequent video calls by Skype, and would meet at least once a year in Jerusalem. Hellerstein and her husband, David M. Stern, now a professor at Harvard University who previously taught for over 30 years at Penn, usually travel to Israel each year to visit friends and family.

“Every time I came to Israel, I would plot out with Irene what I could work on, given what I knew and what I have expertise in, and what I didn’t know, and how I could work around the gaps in my knowledge,” she says. “She guided me in my research, and in navigating the Israeli library system. She would tell me where to go in the archives, who to talk to, and what to look for.”

And Hellerstein would, in turn, help Eber. “She wrote fiction as well as scholarship and I helped her get some of her fiction published. She named me her literary executor so I could help deal with her publishing legacy,” Hellerstein says.

Published in November 2019 is a book that Hellerstein edited, *Jews in China: Cultural Conversations, Changing Perceptions*, which gathers 14 of Eber’s most salient articles and essays on the exchanges between Jewish and Chinese cultures. A book of essays by 19 authors is forthcoming in April, *China and Ashkenazic Jewry: Transcultural Encounters*, which Hellerstein co-edited with Lihong Song, a professor of Jewish Studies at Nanjing University.

The forthcoming book and Penn first-year seminar [that Hellerstein teaches on *Jews in China*] grew out of a multipronged

project that included a workshop at the Penn Wharton China Center in Beijing, and another workshop and international conference “China and Ashkenazic European Jewry: Transnational Encounters” at Nanjing University. The project was organized by Hellerstein, Stern, and Song, and funded by Penn Global’s China Research and Engagement Fund, partnering with Nanjing University’s Glazer Institute of Jewish and Israel Studies and Institute for Advanced Studies, and Penn’s Jewish Studies Program.

Teaching at Penn for 28 years, Hellerstein’s scholarship and expertise are on 19th and 20th century Jewish-American literature, specifically Yiddish literature and Yiddish poetry by women. She’s written a monograph, *A Question of Tradition, Women Poets in Yiddish 1586 to 1987*, and several books of translations...

Eber’s lifelong project, and much of her writing and translating, was related to the Jewish refugee community in Shanghai in the 1930s and 1940s, culminating in a 718-page book, *Jewish Refugees in Shanghai, 1933-1947: A Selection of Documents*, published in 2018, just months before her death.

“Irene did an enormous amount of research, compiling thousands of documents,” Hellerstein says. “I could teach a whole course just on that.”

It was during a spring evening nearly two decades earlier, in 2000 in Jerusalem, that Hellerstein first met Eber, both of them invited to give readings from their projects during a small literary salon focusing on Yiddish works. “Afterwards she said to me, ‘I love your translations. Do you want to do some translations for my book, from the Yiddish?’” Hellerstein recalls. “And I said no, that I was in the middle of my own writings on women poets. And honestly, I thought, China? Why would I be interested in Yiddish in China?”

As it turned out Hellerstein was interested, but she didn’t realize it until she went on the walking tour of the “Jewish Shanghai” neighborhood in Hong Kong seven years later and circled back to Eber, a path which resulted in Penn students reading the work that Eber assembled. Hellerstein has been taking her time in making her way through those 13 boxes.

“In one of the folders I found a Xerox of an article and there was a little yellow Post-it note in Irene’s handwriting and it said ‘must show to Kathryn,’” Hellerstein says. “So I feel like she was speaking to me from the world beyond, which was really very moving, very funny, and wonderful. And so, I guess I’m saying to her, ‘I’m doing what you told me to do.’”

## In Memoriam Shelton Ehrlich

July 21, 1934 – August 22, 2020



Shelton "Shelly" Ehrlich, SJI's founding treasurer and longtime board member, died at age 86 on Aug. 22, 2020. Unfortunately, SJI learned of his death only recently.

Shelly was born in St. Louis, Missouri on July 21, 1934, to Russian Jewish immigrant parents, Rose and Sam. He attended the University of

Missouri-Columbia from 1953 - 1957 where he was a member of Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity and received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Mechanical Engineering. He served as a Lieutenant JG in the U.S. Navy.

Shelly met his future bride, Sandy, at a Young College Graduates Club party in New York City. He married Sandy on July 4, 1962, in New York City, and then they drove cross country to California, where he attended the University of California, Berkeley and received a master's degree in Nuclear Engineering. Their life together led them to many adventures from coast to coast, and world travels where he spoke as an expert on clean coal energy. They raised their family and lived in Palo Alto for more than 40 years. In the past 4 years, Shelly and Sandy enjoyed their new home in Saratoga Retirement Community, where he was involved in the investment and hiking clubs and socialized with wonderful new friends.

Some of his happiest recent adventures were with grandson Tyler zip lining through Mexican jungles and dog sledging on an Alaskan glacier last summer.

Shelly was a cousin of SJI founding

member and longtime president Al Dien, who recruited Shelly to serve on the SJI Board. Adept at computer programs, Shelly was responsible for selecting and setting up the membership program that SJI still uses to this day. Shelly also trained his successor as treasurer and served as a consultant long after he left the SJI Board. His niece, Nancy Shanes, recalled that on many of her visits to Palo Alto, her Uncle Shelly would be working on sending out newsletters or membership processing for the Sino Judaic Institute and that he had her stuffing envelopes more than a few times. Shelton is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Sandra Ehrlich (Silver); his much-loved family -- daughter Susan, son Steven, daughter-in-law Yumiko and grandson, Tyler. He is fondly remembered by sister-in-law Rita Dahut, brother-in-law Irwin Shanes, many cousins and friends.

### Bequest Request

Please consider putting the  
Sino-Judaic Institute in your will.

## Two Articles on Chinese Christian Bible Translations

### 1. A History of Translating the Bible into Chinese

By Wang Dan. Translated by Karen Luo

Excerpted from *China Christian Daily*, 16 October 2018 [http://chinachristiandaily.com/news/church\\_ministry/2018-10-16/history-of-the-chinese-bible-translations-and-the-chinese-christians-involved-\\_7669](http://chinachristiandaily.com/news/church_ministry/2018-10-16/history-of-the-chinese-bible-translations-and-the-chinese-christians-involved-_7669)

Have you ever wondered why the Bible is translated as "Sheng Jing" in Chinese?

During the Tang dynasty, the word "Jing" was used to refer to Christian classics. In the early days of Chinese Bible translations, missionaries found that it was a tradition for the Chinese people to call important classics as "jing". As a result, they used the term to name significant Christian classics.

During the 17th century, Jesuit missionaries who preached in China added the word "sheng" before "jing". Eventually,

the Bible was called "Sheng Jing" that suggested that the Christian classic was a "divine revelation".

The term "Sheng Jing" first appeared in the True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven written by Matteo Ricci, but it exclusively referred to the Bible. Among the names of Chinese translated Bibles, the word was first officially presented in the unpublished Poirot's Chinese Bible. Since then, "Sheng Jing" was often used to refer to the Bible.

According to historical evidence, the Bible translation in China started during the Tang dynasty when Nestorianism was spread throughout the country. The earliest record of the Chinese Bible translation was the Nestorian Monument in China, [erected in 781 CE in Xi'an and rediscovered in 1625, AL].

During the Yuan dynasty, the Italian Franciscan missionary John of Montecorvino translated the Bible into the Mongolian language. However, when the Yuan Empire was replaced by the Great Ming Empire, Catholicism disap-

peared in the Central Plain, a part of the North China Plain.

Despite the fact that there were already a few Bible translations in Chinese in late Ming dynasty and early Qing dynasty, no complete Bible translation was released. The translation ministry was suspended due to the Chinese Rites controversy, stemming from the conflict between Christianity and traditional [Chinese] culture in the 17th and 18th century.

It was not until the 19th century that a breakthrough was made in the Chinese Bible translation. When Robert Morrison came to China in 1807, a new chapter of evangelism and the Chinese Bible translation was opened. The first complete Bible translation was done by Robert Morrison in 1823. One year earlier, the notable Lassar-Marshman version was published. The two translations laid a foundation for the future Bible translations and served as the blueprint.

In 1837, Archimandrite Gury's New

Testament came out which was then followed by a complete version done by four individuals was published three years later. In the same year, Guo Shila revised the Gury's New Testament that became popular among the folk and was adopted by the army of the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace. [More on the Taipings in the article that follows. AL].

Later, two representative Bible translations were released and they are the Delegates Version finished by missionaries from different missions in 1854 and the Mandarin Union Version published in 1919. The latter became the only version used by the Chinese church after twenty years and is the predominant translation used by Chinese Protestants.

Before the 19th century and in the early 20th century, Chinese people worked as assistants of record and embellishment for foreign missionaries who were mainly responsible for the Bible translation.

The earliest Chinese assistants were those who worked and interacted with foreign missionaries often, like their Chinese teachers, servants and employees. They converted to Christianity and also acted as the missionaries' helpers in literature ministry.

One of those famous Chinese Christians was Cai Gao. He helped Robert Morrison print the New Testament translation in 1808. The long-period assisting work allowed Morrison to consider whether Cai could be baptized. In 1814, when conditions were ripe, he baptized Cai, who became China's first Protestant.

The second Chinese Protestant, Liang Fa, received baptism by William Milne, the second Protestant missionary sent by the London Missionary Society to China. One of his innovations in evangelism was that he distributed Christian books to students who sit in provincial and metropolitan examinations. In 1836, Liang's tract - Good Words to Admonish the Age - was influential on Hong Xiuquan, who later led the Taiping Rebellion.

Qu Ang was the third Chinese Protestant baptized by Morrison. He devoted his whole life to assisting foreign missionaries to share the gospel and print Christian books in China and Malacca. As Liang's assistant, Qu's main work in the London Missionary Society was

to print Christian works and distribute gospel tracts and books with Liang.

Wang Tao should be mentioned, first and foremost, as the Chinese scholar for Chinese Bible translations. In 1843, Wang was hired as the junior manager for the writing of the Delegates Version's committee consisting of British and American missionary representatives. As the one in charge of the Chinese modification, he played an essential role in polishing the Bible translation into Chinese. In the translation project, every foreign missionary translator had at least one Chinese assistant.

Calvin Wilson Mateer, the first president of the translation committee, had three Chinese assistants: Zhang Xixin, Zou Liwen, and Wang Xuanchen. Their assistance contributed much to the publication of the Chinese Union Version.

In the early 20th century, the assisting role of Chinese people gradually turned into the leaders and presiders of Bible translations.

He Jinshan was the first Chinese person who attempted to translate the Bible on his own. Using English exegetical commentaries on Matthew and Mark as a reference, he wrote biblical commentaries on the two gospel books. The translations were published in Hong Kong.

Yan Fu, a famous translator and enlightenment thinker of modern China, pioneered in the Bible translation alone in Chinese. In 1908, George Henry Bondfield, the representative of the British and Foreign Bible Society, asked Yan to translate Mark in the New Testament.

In 1922, Chinese church leaders put forward the idea that the Bible should be translated completely by Chinese people in the national Christian assembly. Wang Xuanchen took the mission. Wang, one of the translators for the Mandarin Union Version and an assistant of Calvin Wilson Mateer, had his New Testament translation released in 1933.

According to the original Greek texts of the New Testament, Zhu Baohui spent six years revising the New Testament version he cooperated with Absalom Sydenstricker earlier. In this version, he translated "God" as "Shang Di" in Chinese. In 1936, the amended version was published, thanks to the fund provided by Sydenstricker's daughter, Pearl S. Buck. It was also called the "1936 version".

In the Chinese Bible translation history, Lu Zhenzhong was the first one to translate the original text of the entire Bible into Chinese. [His translation, published in 1946, was the first Chinese version translated directly from the Greek and the Hebrew. AL]

## 2. Prof. Liu Ping on the History of Chinese Bible Translation

*By Christine Lau. Translated by Charlie Li*

Reprinted from China Christian Daily, 28 September 2021 [http://chinachristiandaily.com/news/china/2021-09-28/professor-liu-ping-a-thousand-years-of-bible-translation-history-in-china\\_10644](http://chinachristiandaily.com/news/china/2021-09-28/professor-liu-ping-a-thousand-years-of-bible-translation-history-in-china_10644)

On September 20th, Professor Liu, a doctoral supervisor at the School of Philosophy of Fudan University, gave an online lecture titled "Abraham's Three Religious Systems and Chinese Bible Translation: Taking the Eight Classic Translation Examples".

Professor Liu began by introducing the main Bible translations in different periods based on Christianity's introduction into China. He demonstrated a list of nearly 100 Bible versions: Roman/Chinese Catholic Chinese Bible Version, Protestant Chinese Bible Version, Protestant Mandarin Chinese Bible Version after the "Mandarin Union Version", and Chinese dialectal versions, etc. After illustrating the eight major translations events, Liu introduced Nestorianism, the Torah of Jews in Kaifeng [which was in Hebrew, AL], Montecorvino's version in Yuan Dynasty, Jean Basset's version, Morrison-Marshman's Version, Union Version, and John Duns Scotus' Version. Showing the photos of original copies of those versions and analyzing the success or failure of each version, he discussed the process of sinicization of the Bible canon.

When introducing Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff's Version, Liu said: "Although Gützlaff's translation had not been very influential in China, it was adopted by Hong Xiuquan, who printed it in large quantities and sent the copies to his Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Army." The version was published by a team of four translators led by Gützlaff. In 1837 and 1840 respectively, the team's

'New Testament' and 'Old Testament' were published. However, when Hong Xiuquan [the leader of Taiping Heavenly Kingdom Army. AL] used it, he revised the so-called "mistakes" in Gützlaff's Versions and altered parts of the Bible...

He explained that the early Chinese versions were all written in classical Chinese or high Wenli. At the beginning of the 19th century, due to the development of language and social changes, classical Chinese had been replaced by easy Wenli [a modified version of classical Chinese literary composition, AL]. Bible translation followed this trend by publishing easy Wenli versions, such as Griffith John's Wenli Version and Samuel Issac Joseph Schereschewsky's Versions (also called as One-finger and Two-finger Version as he painfully typed out with one or two fingers his Mandarin translation due to limb paralysis). Schereschewsky was a Russian Jew [who converted to Christianity and ultimately became an Anglican bishop in Shanghai. AL]. He was proficient in Hebrew (and was) known as the Prince of Bible Translation. He was paralyzed by heatstroke during his translation work and he could only work with one or two fingers but still managed to complete it.

In the mid-19th century, Mandarin was used by Chinese imperial courts and officials all over the country. As a result, Mandarin versions were born. Walter Henry Medhurst and others translated the New Testament into Nanjing Mandarin; John Burdon and others completed the New Testament in Beijing Mandarin; Schereschewsky completed the Old Testament in Beijing Mandarin, and the British Bible Society printed them together as The Old and New Testament. The Mandarin Bible, which was translated by the Beijing Translation Committee in the 1970s was a vernacular Bible before the birth of the Chinese Union Version, had been widely used in the country for 40 years.

In 1890, the second General Conference of the Protestant Missionaries of China held in Shanghai decided to produce a nationwide translation of the Chinese Bible, which is called "The Union Version", with the prin-

ciple of "one Bible in three versions". In the following year, three committees were formed to be responsible for the translation in three Chinese language styles - high Wenli, easy Wenli, and Mandarin. In 1907, after more than ten years' translation of the three "Union Versions", missionaries held a conference again in Shanghai. At the conference, it was decided to merge the "high Wenli" and the "easy Wenli" Versions, and only publish the "high Wenli and easy Wenli Union Version". The "Mandarin Union Version" project was to be continued. In 1919, the "high Wenli and easy Wenli Union Version" and the "Mandarin Union Version" were published. The "Mandarin Union Version" was a pioneering masterpiece in the vernacular movement at that time.

After 1919, Bible translation was no longer led by missionaries but by the Chinese.

In 1715, the Russian Orthodox Church sent the first missionaries to Beijing to officially preach in China. They translated the Bible into Chinese for the first time in the late 19th century.

It is called "the first translation of Chinese Catholic Bible from the original text, with careful notes".

Finally, Professor Liu concluded that after the hard work of missionaries and Chinese people in China, the Chinese Bible enjoyed a presentation of "100 versions of brilliant works". Whether the Bible was translated under the auspices of missionaries or it was independently completed by Chinese later, in fact, there were indirect or direct efforts made by Chinese people. Bible translation in China itself was a process of communication and dialogue between the Chinese civilization and the Judeo-Christian civilization and was the fruit of mutual understanding and learning between the two civilizations.

He emphasized that the greatest and most outstanding achievement of the sinicization of Christianity was the Chinese Bible translations, among which the Chinese Union Version and John Duns Scotus' Version had the highest achievements...



The first Old and New Testament translated by Roman monks in China, which was also the first Chinese version of the Bible translated to be from the original text, was the work by the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum. There are more than 2,000 pages in the book, with a brief introduction, annotations, drawings, appendices, and many color maps.

**Visit SJI's Website**

**[www.sinojudaic.org](http://www.sinojudaic.org)**

**Featuring updated articles  
and links and open access  
to Points East archives**

## Jews Try to Stay Optimistic in 'zero COVID' China

By Jordyn Haime

Excerpted from the *JTA*, March 17, 2022

...As the two-year pandemic appears to be ebbing in North America, Jewish communities there that were hard-hit by COVID are now easing back into something that looks like normalcy. In Hong Kong and China, however, the virus is spreading with a vengeance that has made March 2022 look like March 2020.

[The] United Jewish Community (UJC), one of several Jewish communities in Hong Kong, has fluctuated between in-person, online and hybrid events for the past two years. The city is now enduring its fifth — and worst — wave. The expectation of a two- to three-week quarantine in a hotel — which could set anyone back thousands — and pandemic policies that seemed to shift almost daily have discouraged community members, most of whom came to live in Hong Kong from other countries, from leaving their city for the past two years.

"I think anyone who pretends this is easy has the bravest face ever," said Robin Roschke, president of the UJC. "One of the hardest things for congregants is to watch what's going on in their home countries and not be able to see their families and friends. We have made an effort to ensure that we have been a sounding board for many of our congregants."

The story has been similar for communities in mainland China and Taiwan. Both countries have relied on "zero COVID" policies to maintain low case and death counts, though not always as successfully as their governments have hoped. Relatively low

vaccination rates among older people, among other reasons, have allowed the virus to jump high borders and cause major policy changes and lockdowns.

In response, some Jews have left these countries permanently. Some became stuck overseas when lockdowns were initially announced, separating families.

The former education coordinator of Kehilat Shanghai — one of Shanghai's organized Jewish communities — was among those finding themselves stuck abroad. She had to host Hebrew school classes remotely from the United States and didn't end up coming back. Although in-person events and programming were possible in China by March of 2020, most activities other than holidays and Shabbat dinners had stopped.

But "it hasn't been a major exodus," said Scott Pollack, a longtime member of Kehilat Shanghai, who decided to move his 80-year-old parents to the city with him from their home in California shortly after the pandemic began. "Our last major gatherings were Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Numbers were fairly strong, but not record numbers."

For Shanghai's progressive Jews — mainly expats from around the world who have come to Shanghai for work — the pandemic has raised a challenge: Before 2020, the community relied on traveling rabbis to lead those large holiday events. Leaders were in the middle of negotiations to bring in a part-time Shanghai-based rabbi to lead the community when the pandemic hit in 2020.

Now those plans are on hold as some speculate China and Hong Kong could remain mostly closed to the world until 2024, though China's former chief epi-

demiologist has said that "in the near future, at an appropriate time, there will be a Chinese-style roadmap for living with the virus."

The absence of professional clergy to lead the progressive community in Shanghai has encouraged more community involvement in services.

"It ended up being beautiful," Pollack said, "the fact that members of the community stepped up and learned how to read part of the service that they never had to learn before."

"It's definitely interesting looking back at 2020 from 2022 to see how we moved on quite quickly, but also how now, we're one of the last countries not able to have fully normal services and events," said Hannah Maia Frishberg, Kehilat Shanghai's current education coordinator. "We still have mask requirements, we still have this assumption that everyone is mostly vaccinated, that everyone has a green QR code"...

This year, leaders have gotten savvier with technology, said Josh Lavin, communications chair and secretary of the UJC board. And that played out in the group's remote online offering, which included "more video effects and editing it to make it a video-first production," he said.

The UJC has adapted its format enough times to be prepared for any shift in policy and plans to continue with a hybrid option, even during non-COVID times. It's just become part of life in Hong Kong.

"Jewish people have gotten through tough times. We really have. And comparatively, this is tough but not even close," Roschke said. "I'm very confident that the community will grow again. It's not an easy time, but it's not something we can't handle. And as Jews, we know this."

**Mail to: The Sino-Judaic Institute, Prof. Steve Hochstadt, Treasurer, Sino-Judaic Institute, 34 Colgate Rd., Unit 1, Roslindale, MA 02131, or sign up online at [www.sinojudaic.org](http://www.sinojudaic.org)**

### JOIN THE SINO-JUDAIC INSTITUTE

Regular Member . . . . . \$60	Supporter. . . . . \$100	Patron . . . . . **\$1,000+	Benefactor . . . . . ***\$5,000+
Senior . . . . . 35	Sponsor . . . . . .250	**Receive Chaim Simon's <i>Religious Obeisance by the Jews of Kaifeng China</i>	***Donors at the \$5,000 level and above also get their choice of a copy of a book by Hochstadt, Laytner, Paper Schwarcz, Tokayer or Weisz.
Library . . . . . 60	Corp/Org/Synagogue. . . .250		
Student/Academic . . . . . 40	Sustainer . . . . . .500		

Selection: \_\_\_\_\_

I wish to become a member of the Sino-Judaic Institute and to receive Points East three times a year. Enclosed is my check for \$\_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ Work # \_\_\_\_\_ Fax # \_\_\_\_\_