

Chapter 1 : History of the Jews in China | Revolv

Many of the Jews in China later moved to found the modern state of Israel. Shanghai was an important safe-haven for Jewish refugees during the Holocaust, since it was.

In the center of the first court stood, surrounded in Chinese fashion by trees, a large triumphal arch, bearing an inscription in Chinese characters recording the dedication of the building to the Creator and Preserver of all things. The bath-houses and lavatories in these precincts were apparently used for ablution in preparation for divine service. The second court, entered by a great gate, was opened only on special occasions. Dwellings for the keepers of the edifice flanked its northern and southern walls. The third court, containing receptionrooms for guests, led through another triumphal arch into memorial chapels on each side. The fourth court consisted of two divisions separated by a row of trees. In the center of one stood a large brazen vase of incense and a marble lion upon a pedestal, on either side of which there was placed a brazen vase filled with flowers—certainly in accordance with Chinese customs and views. Adjoining the northern wall, however, was a recess in which, in conformity with Gen. The Chinese were so impressed by it that they gave the Jews the name of "sinew-pluckers. Here at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes veneration was paid in Chinese manner to the Jewish patriarchs. The mode of veneration, however, differed from the Chinese in that only the names of the Biblical ancestors were written on a tablet, and no picture was presented. Further, instead of the animal sacrifices mentioned in the inscription see below , incense was used, a censer being assigned to each patriarch; the largest one to Abraham as the most venerated, the rest for the other patriarchs the twelve sons of Jacob , Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Ezra, and other Biblical person-ages, both men and women. In the open space between these chapels tabernacles ornamented with flowers were erected every year at the Feast of Tabernacles. This was called the "chair of Moses" compare Matt. In front of this a table was placed, upon which the name of the emperor was written in golden letters, accompanied by the prayer "May he live ten thousand myriads of years! On a large table by the door stood six candelabra having three different kinds of light, a vase for incense, and a tablet recording the generous donations of incense by the emperors of the Ming dynasty. A laver for the washing of hands probably for the priests before reciting the benediction stood near. At the extreme end of the synagogue was the Holy of Holies which was totally dark containing the Ark. In the latter were placed the thirteen scrolls of the Law, each in a separate case and enclosed in silk curtains; that in the middle, which was the one most venerated, representing Moses, and the others representing the twelve tribes. The whole of this part of the synagogue was elevated, stairs leading up to it on both sides, and was inaccessible to any one but the rabbi and the priests, probably because the scrolls were too sacred to be handled by any but the rabbi, and because the priests used the place for the "dukan," or blessing, both priests and rabbi undergoing ablution before the services. As in most Eastern countries, the worshipers put off their shoes on entering the synagogue. During service they wore a blue head-dress in contradistinction to the Mohammedans, who wear a white one. A remarkable custom prescribed that he who read the Law should cover his face with a transparent veil of gauze, in imitation of Moses Ex. At the side of the reader stood a monitor, to correct his reading if necessary this is probably a survival of the meturgeman. The practise of calling up laymen to read from the Law does not seem to have been known. In the inscription of these rules are given regarding divine service: Very singular, and indicative of powerful Chinese influence, is the following: Twice in the year—in spring and in autumn—he offers them oxen and sheep together with the fruits of the season" compare Tobit iv. Noteworthy also are the following passages: One entire day [Day of Atonement] he abstains altogether from food, devoting the time to prayer and repentance. Services for the Fast of Ab and for Purim are also included in their liturgies. Their celebration of the New Moon as a festival is proof of a pre-Talmudic tradition compare Soferim xix. Their calendar was regulated by the moon like that of the rest of the Jews, and like that of the Chinese. In this connection the fact should be noted that their division of the Torah is into fifty-three weekly portions for the Sabbaths of the year, as is stated also in the account of the handing down of the Law given in the inscription of Abraham is "the nineteenth in descent from Adam, who in the year of the Chow dynasty B. His sublime doctrine was submitted to Moses, who in the six hundred

and thirteenth year of the Chow dynasty B. From him were the fifty-three portions of the Torah, together with the tradition handed down to Ezra, the great reformer and contemporary of the founder of the Chinese religion [Confucius]. Their pronunciation of Hebrew was found by the Jesuit fathers to correspond with the one generally accepted by the Jews; also their views of the Merkabah and of the future. Bibliomancy was practised by them. Their literature also bears the stamp of various epochs, a fact not fully kept in mind by Jewish writers on the subject. According to a description given by the missionaries Finn, l. These last, together with Judith and Ben Sira, in their possession, are another indication of a greater antiquity than has been assigned them by many writers. What these books contained was not ascertained by the Catholic fathers; possibly they were of a Midrashic character, and, if so, they would be of great value to students if they could be obtained. Their liturgy, as preserved in the books taken to Europe, bears quite a different character. These books, after careful examination by Neubauer and Elkan Adler "Jew. Parts of the Mishnah are quoted in their prayer-book, but nothing from the Gemara. The Pentateuch shows observance of the same soferic rules regarding the letter "waw" and the as are found in the Yemenite scrolls see G. Hebrew and Samaritan MSS. The Aramean language is used in special supplications and songs; also in the announcement of the New Moon, which is strongly tinged with Messianic hopes. So also in the Elijah song for the close of the Sabbath. As Elkan Adler "Jew. Another characteristic name for a copyist is "ha-melammed" the teacher. They are each written in a fine legible hand on thick sheepskins sewed together, and are without points, or any of the modern divisions into sections or even books. They are in excellent preservation, except one, which was injured by a flood during the Ming dynasty, but is considered critically of the greatest value. Forty smaller Hebrew manuscripts were also brought away, which, on further examination, may possibly throw light on their early history and migration. The last page contains the following note: The Rabbi Akiba, the son of Aaron, the son of Ezra, heard it. Shadiavor, the son of Bethuel, the son of Moses, read it. Mordecai, the son of Moses, witnessed it. And he believed in Jehovah: The following note is appended to the last page: The learned Rabbi Phinehas, the son of Israel, the son of Joshua, the son of Benjamin, heard the reading. I have waited for Thy salvation, O Jehovah, Amen. London, April 6, , p.

Chapter 2 : China Virtual Jewish History Tour

*The Jews of China: v. 1: Historical and Comparative Perspectives [Jonathan Goldstein, Benjamin I. Schwartz] on calendrierdelascience.com *FREE* shipping on qualifying offers. This interdisciplinary study examines patterns of migration, acculturation, assimilation and economic activity of successive waves of Jewish arrivals in China from approximately AD to*

Before the perfection of maritime navigational techniques, it was the primary route of trade between China and its eastern neighbors. During the time of the Silk Road, many Jews become involved in international trade. In many ways, they were uniquely qualified for the profession. There existed significant Jewish communities in India, Persia, the Arab nations, and in cities throughout Europe; in almost all these communities, a good number of Jews were already merchants. As tensions between Christians and Muslims heated up around the time of the Crusades, many of them refused to or were not permitted to trade with each other, while Jews throughout the world had no problem selling goods to their kinsmen. Persian Shiites and Arab Sunni Muslims would sometimes be at war with each other, or with Hindu Indians or with Christian Europeans, yet the Jewish community stayed united and continued trading between countries. As there were a disproportionately high number of Jews in the trading profession, it should not be surprising that some of these Jews became involved in trade with China. Up until the past century, there was a significant Jewish population in Persia, and since the Persian Jews traded with the West, there is no reason to think they did not trade with the East as well. Although there is no evidence of the existence of a Jewish community in China before the Song Dynasty, a few historians still claim that the Kaifeng Jewish community was founded in CE or earlier. Most evidence supports the theory that a significant number of Jews, hundreds or perhaps thousands, migrated from Persia to Kaifeng some time during the Northern Song Dynasty. Some historians believe the Jews of Kaifeng originated in Bukhara, a city in Uzbekistan that was once part of Persia. An inscription states that 70 families came to Kaifeng, although it is unclear as to whether this meant 70 clans surnames or 70 families households. No one can say for sure why this mass migration occurred; perhaps there was a famine, drought, or other natural disaster, or maybe local Persian authorities were hostile to the Jews. All evidence seems to indicate that the Kaifeng Jewish community enjoyed its early decades in the city, as a pillar at the site of their synagogue states that the Song Emperor invited them to stay in Kaifeng and practice their religion freely. Perhaps no two cultural groups revere scholarship more than the Jews and the Chinese, and this common bond perhaps made the Jews feel at home. While some Jews continued to be merchants, a profitable yet less respected profession, the most talented became scholars of either Jewish culture or Chinese culture. While the pillar states that the Jewish community arrived during the Song Dynasty, it does not state what year or the name of the Emperor. The city of Kaifeng was ravaged in by Jurchen invaders, who conquered most of Northern China, forcing the remains of the Song dynasty to flee south, where a new Song Emperor continued to rule over Southern China from Hangzhou. When the Jurchens established the Jin Dynasty over Northern China, Kaifeng was decimated, and more than half the population either died or left the city. A pillar outside the Kaifeng synagogue infers that a significant number of Jews fled with the imperial family to Hangzhou, the new Song capital. This disaster leads many historians to speculate that the Jews moved to Kaifeng at least 40 years before the chaos of theorizing that the Jews would have all left the city had they not spent several good decades there. Likewise, since Kaifeng must have been a large, attractive city before the Jewish community decided to migrate there, historians think that the large Jewish community migrated there sometime in the 11th century. The Jin Dynasty After the attack on Kaifeng, the city was taken by the Jurchens and became part of the Jin Dynasty, when it lost the prestige of being a capital. Much of the city was destroyed, and it took several decades for the city to be rebuilt. The Jewish community took advantage of the opportunity, and built their first synagogue in Yet the Jewish community in Kaifeng always had fond memories of the Song Dynasty, and continued using the Song calendar even after the Jin took control, as the synagogue dedication pillar was dedicated using the Song calendar date to write the year. Due to the war with the Mongols in the North, the Jin moved their capital to Kaifeng in , where it remained until the Jin dynasty fell to the Mongol in. While Kaifeng never served as a

Chinese capital again, the Jewish community of Kaifeng would continue to flourish for centuries to come. As neither the ruling Mongols nor the Jews were ethnically Chinese, the Jews were among the groups that benefitted when the Mongols dropped all laws that gave the Han majority legal advantages over minorities. As the Mongols distrusted the Chinese, they ended the civil service exam system that had been used to select government officials. As a way of decreasing Han power, they place foreigners, such as Jews, in positions within the bureaucracy. Yet there were also disadvantages to Mongol rule, as a Yuan decree banned all Jewish and Muslim ritual slaughter because the Emperor felt insulted that certain subjects felt that the meat fit for him was not good enough for them. Additionally, it is important to note that the Yuan era was a time of great migration movement throughout their empire. As the Mongols brought many slaves back from Persia and Arab states, it is likely that some Jews were brought to China as slaves. This may explain how Jewish practices from Yemen, as well as from the 13th Century Rabbi Maimonides came to Kaifeng, as many of their liturgical traditions and prayers were not around before Jews moved to China. Unlike Jews in many other nations, Chinese Jews could fully engage in society, including public affairs and government service. A flood destroyed the synagogue, but the community rebuilt it soon after, and obtained new Torahs from the Jewish communities in Ningbo and Yangzhou. Not only were the Jewish people successful in their own community, but they also were productive members of Chinese society during this Golden Age. Four different inscriptions from , , , and list the names of 80 different Kaifeng Jews who passed the exams and became Chinese officials. Additionally, the inscription lists names, including 21 community officials and 38 civil, military, scholar, and medical official in Chinese society. These numbers are incredible coming from a community of under 5, people. He was promoted to be the assistant commissioner of the Regional Military Commission on Chekiang. Jews were often very successful as Chinese officials, as throughout the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there are records that show at least three Jews were awarded the title Kung Sheng, one was awarded the title Gong Sheng, five Jews were awarded the title Ju Ren, one Jew reached the incredibly high status of Jing Shi, and another served as the official physician to the Prince of Zhou. Thus, it should not be surprising that the social status of the Jewish community rose significantly during the Ming Dynasty. Clearly, the most important sources of information about the Jewish population of Kaifeng come from the four inscriptions made outside the site of the synagogue. These four inscriptions, made in , , , and , all commemorated the rebuilding or renovation of the synagogue. They all mentioned the names of non-Jews who contributed to the rebuilding of the synagogue. The fact that each successive inscription had more and more important non-Jewish names on it indicates an increase in the status of the Jewish community. Unfortunately, there were negative effects of the secular successes of Chinese Jewry. Many of the greatest Chinese Jewish minds went to study the Chinese Classics in preparation for the civil service exams. These talented Jews could not have had time to learn Hebrew or much about Judaism, so they had to abandon religious studies to succeed in the secular world. Unfortunately, the plan backfired, and roughly half of the , people living in Kaifeng were killed. The Practice of Judaism in Kaifeng As in most Jewish Diaspora communities, the practice of the Jewish religion in Kaifeng took on some aspects similar to the practices of the native Chinese. This is not to say that the Jews of Kaifeng fundamentally altered their religion; quite the opposite is true, as the Jewish religion maintained its integrity and unique monotheist aspects for centuries. It would be more accurate to say that the Jews in China naturally focused on the values within their own religion that were compatible with the native Confucian way of life. Judaism is in many practical ways, a very flexible religion, as Judaism has adapted to its surroundings while keeping its core theological tenets, moral values, and religious identity intact. This adaptability allowed Judaism to survive outside of Israel and gave Jews the ability to flourish in almost any culture they are transplanted to. Non-American Jews would never think of giving gifts in December, as there is no reason to, yet American Jews began the practice in order to fit into their surroundings. Similarly, although polygamy is permitted in the Jewish religion, Rabbi Gershom ben Judah issued a rabbinical ordinance years ago forbidding all European Jews from practicing polygamy. Rabbi Gershom did this not because Judaism forbade polygamy, but rather to allow Jews to fit in better with their neighbors; to this day, there is no Jewish law forbidding non-Ashkenazi Jewish men from having multiple wives. It is necessary to view the Kaifeng Jewish community through this context to better understand what effect Chinese culture had on their religion. In truth,

the Jews of Kaifeng held remarkably faithful to their religion for an incredible amount of time considering their small number and near isolation. Kaifeng Jews continued to give their children Hebrew names for an incredible seven or eight generation before adapting only Chinese names. In contrast, many American do not have Jewish first names, and many altered their surnames upon entering the country. The Kaifeng synagogue was built in , and it was rebuilt, renovated, or enlarged at least a dozen times over the next years by the generations of Jews who made use of it. While the building had Chinese architecture, the Jewish synagogue differed from all other Chinese places of worship in that there were no idols or pictures inside. During their time in Kaifeng, the Jews embraced many elements of Chinese culture, yet continued to adhere to their own faith. Interestingly, the Jews of Kaifeng did, however, adapt the Chinese practice of ancestor-worship. Perhaps because of the similarities between this and the Jewish custom of Yizkor and Yahrzeit services for the dead, Jews seemed to find this practice acceptable. Since there is nothing in Judaism to prohibit such practice, the Rabbis of Kaifeng must have concluded that it could be done, although it must be done in a Jewish way. The Chinese would burn incense and give offering to tablets and depictions of their ancestors; the Jews, however, would burn incense and leave offerings, but they would never allow themselves to worship or leave an offering to any depictions, as that would border on idolatry. While some practices the Kaifeng Jews adapted were adaptations they chose, they also yielded to the Chinese Imperial law when it conflicted with their practices. There are two good examples of how Jews dealt with these legal conflicts. This conflicted with Chinese custom, and the Yuan Dynasty made such marriages illegal. The Jewish community in Kaifeng was forced to yield to Chinese law. In another example, a Chinese emperor demanded that a portrait of him must be in every house of worship. Even though this conflicted with Jewish custom, the Jews did put up the portrait in the entryway of their synagogue. It appears that for most of their existence, the Kaifeng Jews practiced most traditional Jews customs and rituals. They clearly kept the Jewish dietary laws , as they were known to only eat meat they slaughtered according to the laws of Kashrut; even some of their descendants today do not eat pork. They also established ritual bathes, cemeteries, and charitable institutions. They read Torah, taught their children Hebrew, and even ritually circumcised their sons. Kaifeng Jews wore blue kippot, although besides that the Jews wore the same clothes as the rest of the Chinese. In terms of marriage, it appears that in the early days, the Jews married only within the community. As time went on, it seems that Jewish men marrying Han or Hui wives became more acceptable, although almost all Jewish women married Jewish men. This was possible because polygamy was legal ad acceptable, although it is likely only wealthier men could afford it. As the community got smaller, the Jews ended up permitting their daughters to intermarry, although sources claim that families preferred their daughters marrying Muslims if Jewish men were not available, as there were some similarities between Judaism and Islam. This may explain why all Kaifeng Jews today look Chinese. It is also important to note that the Jews of China were not entirely isolated during their early centuries there. Certain Yemeni practices indicate that some Yemeni Jews must have entered the community. Furthermore, the Jews of Kaifeng practiced some of the legal interpretations of the famous Rabbi Moses Maimonides, who was born in . As the Jews entered Kaifeng before , this proves, that there must have been some contact with the outside Jewish community, and that the Kaifeng Jews updated their Jewish customs along with the rest of the Jewish community that they had contact with. As stated earlier, a inscription states that 70 families came to Kaifeng originally during the Northern Song Dynasty, although it is unclear as to whether this meant 70 clans surnames or 70 families households. Some historians believe that this meant 70 families and 17 clans, as historically as many as 17 surnames can be linked to Kaifeng Jews. The population grew and shrunk throughout the decades through growth, as well as through mass migration and natural disaster. Many Jews left the city when a Jurchen attack became apparent in , and other Jews left after the attack to live in the new Song capital in Hangzhou. However, even despite this exodus, a inscription states that there were 73 clans, and more than families altogether when the synagogue was built in . Many floods plagued the city throughout the centuries, which caused both the Han and Jewish population to shrink, the largest of which occurred in , when a flood destroyed much of the city. For the first seven or eight generations in China , it appears Jews continued to give their children Hebrew names. Most likely, the other ten clans were either killed by the flood, or left the city for other reasons.

Chapter 3 : The Jews of China by Jonathan A. Goldstein

*Jewish History Tour: China | Hong Kong | Synagogues in China Origins of China's Jews The Northern Song Dynasty ()
For hundred of years, the Silk Road served as a link between East and West.*

Cheap labour and willing slaves are the Jewish dream and the Chinese fit the bill perfectly. The Jews, with their control over the west, have created an absolute shit-storm on the horizon because China needs other countries to buy all their manufactured goods. Without any other countries rich enough to buy all the Chinese crap, the Chinese will soon find themselves with little to do. The West has almost reached the point of having nothing to offer. Think about how much more we import from China than we export. The Jews are having a hard time finding ways to keep pretending that the west is still productive. This is why we have all these stimulus programs. This never works of course because printing money does nothing in any real terms to the real economy! The Jews and their mad drive for world domination is a genetically innate thing in them. Being a parasite means enslaving and destroying the host eventually. As host nations, the Jews are just about done with us. They always destroy nations then look for new hosts. I think its unlikely China will be a welcoming host. Certainly not when they realise that all their buyers have nothing to offer them in return. If they pull the pin on the west fast collapse , or it just collapses as it inevitably will slow lingering death ; either way the Jews are fucked and so are we like the tree and the mistletoe. It really is an insane situation they have gotten the entire world into, and there is no easy solution to the upcoming global financial shit-storm either! This shows how the Jews are not that smart but in fact of bunch of genetically driven lunatics. They would have kept a workable balance in Western national economies, since manufacturing, agriculture, and service less so industries are all essential if you want to keep them propped up. More on Jews not China: People who are wise to the Jew seem to have a habit of assuming that the Jew is a sane creature; that he makes all his decisions based on well thought out careful plans. Nothing could be further from the truth! He is actually an alien creature, unlike ALL other humans of any race, and he is definitely not sane. He acts based on his insane genetic inclinations and they are destructive, parasitic, and funnily enough, suicidal. All parasites are suicidal. They kill the host then die themselves. The Jewish parasite seeks to enslave, kill, and exterminate everyone and everything they get their hands on! Their behaviour is genetically driven above all, and it is their genetics that make them conspire!!

Chapter 4 : About | Association of Former Residents of China in Israel | The Jewish Community of China

The Kaifeng Jews are members of a small Jewish community in Kaifeng, in the Henan province of China who have assimilated into Chinese society while preserving some Jewish traditions and customs.

Other Jewish ethnic divisions are also represented, including Ashkenazi Jews , Mizrahi Jews and a number of converts. The Jewish Chinese community manifests a wide range of Jewish cultural traditions, and it also encompasses the full spectrum of Jewish religious observance. Though a small minority, Chinese Jews have had an open presence in the country since the arrival of the first Jewish immigrants during the 8th century CE. Relatively isolated communities of Jews developed through the Tang and Song Dynasties 7th to 13th centuries CE all the way through the Qing Dynasty 19th century , most notably the Kaifeng Jews the term "Chinese Jews" is often used in a restricted sense in order to refer to these communities. Unlike other places, the Chinese authorities had tremendous respect for Jewish communities and they did not face significant anti-Semitism in comparison to Europe and America. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Jewish merchants from around the world began to trade in Chinese ports, particularly in the commercial centers of Hong Kong , which was for a time a British colony; Shanghai the International Settlement and French Concession ; and Harbin the Trans-Siberian Railway. In the first half of the 20th century, thousands of Jewish refugees escaping from the Russian Revolution arrived in China. Jews remain a small minority in China, but unlike Jewish communities in many other parts of the world, Jews have historically lived in China without any instances of antisemitism from the Han majority populace contributing to mutual respect and admiration between the two peoples. They eventually assimilated into Chinese culture, learned the language, and began to intermarry with the Han populace. He mentioned the presence of Jewish merchants in a number of Chinese cities, and the important economic role they played transporting merchandise as well as transmitting scientific and technological expertise by land and sea all the way from Spain and France via the Middle East to China. Many of these Jews were of Sephardic Indian or Iraqi origin, due to significant British colonialism in these regions. Many more Jews arrived as refugees from the Russian Revolution of A surge of Jews and Jewish families was to arrive in the late s and s, for the purpose of seeking refuge from the Holocaust in Europe and were predominantly of European origin. Over the centuries, the Kaifeng community came to be virtually indistinguishable from the Han Chinese population and is not recognized by the Chinese government as a separate ethnic minority. This is as a result of having maintained already-Jewish and adopted many Han Chinese customs including patrilineal descent and extensive intermarriage with the local Han population. Some of them, as well as international Jewish communities are beginning to search for these descendants to help them revive their interest in their Jewish roots. This is especially important in modern China because belonging to any minority group includes a variety of benefits including reduced restrictions on the number of children and easier admission standards to tertiary education. The study of Judaism in China has been, like other Abrahamic religions, a subject of interest to some Westerners, and has achieved moderate success compared to other Western studies in China. History It has been asserted by some that the Jews who have historically resided in various places in China originated with the Lost Ten Tribes of the exiled ancient Kingdom of Israel who relocated to the areas of present-day China. Traces of some ancient Jewish rituals have been observed in some places. Three steles with inscriptions found at Kaifeng bear some historical suggestions. The third is dated and commemorates the re-rebuilding of the Qingzhen si synagogue and recaps the information from the other two steles. It was also stated in the manuscripts that there was a greater number of Jews in Hangzhou. This could be taken to suggest that loyal Jews fled south along with the soon-to-be crowned Emperor Gaozong to Hangzhou. In fact, the stele mentions how the Jews "abandoned Bianliang" Kaifeng after the Jingkang Incident. Many Jewish communities were established in China in the Middle Ages. However, not all left evidence of their existence. The following are those known today: Kaifeng , Hangzhou , Ningbo , Yangzhou , and Ningxia. Jews have also been called the Blue-Hat Hui Chinese: Xu Xin translates this phrase as "Chosen people, endowed by God, and contented with their lives and work". The earliest evidence showing the presence of Jews in China is from the beginning of the 8th century: The text is

thirty-seven lines in length and was written on paper, a product then manufactured only in China. The text spoke of the reinforcement of a tax levied on "dissenters" and of a government decree that the Jews come en-masse to Beijing, the capital. Famous Venetian traveler Marco Polo, who visited China, then under the Yuan Dynasty, in the late 13th century, described the prominence of Jewish traders in Beijing. Similar references can be found in the notes of the Franciscan John of Montecorvino, first archbishop of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Beijing in the early 14th century, and the writings of Ibn Batuta, an Arabian envoy to the Mongol Empire in the middle of the 14th century. Genghis Khan called both Jews and Muslims Huihui when he forbade Jews and Muslims from practicing kosher and halal preparation of their food, calling both of them "slaves" and forcing them to eat Mongol food, and banned them from practicing circumcision. Yet you do not eat our food or drink. How can this be right? Because the poor people are upset by this, from now on, Musuluman [Muslim] Huihui and Zhuhu [Jewish] Huihui, no matter who kills [the animal] will eat [it] and must cease slaughtering sheep themselves, and cease the rite of circumcision. It is recorded that when he saw a Christian image of Mary with the child Jesus, he took it to be a picture of Rebecca with Esau or Jacob, figures from Hebrew Scripture. It was later discovered that the Jewish community had a synagogue Libai si, which was constructed facing the west, and housed a number of written materials and books. The Jews who managed the synagogue were called "Mullahs". Floods and fire repeatedly destroyed the books of the Kaifeng synagogue, they obtained some from Ningxia and Ningbo to replace them, another Hebrew roll of law was bought from a Muslim in Ning-keang-chow in Shen-se Shanxi, who acquired it from a dying Jew at Canton. Crossworshippers Christians were called "Hwuy who abstain from animals without the cloven foot", Muslims were called "Hwuy who abstain from pork", Jews were called "Hwuy who extract the sinews removes the sciatic nerve". At Kaifeng, Jews were called "Teaou kin keaou "extract sinew religion". Jews and Muslims in China shared the same name for synagogue and mosque, which were both called "Tsing-chin sze" Qingzhen si "Temple of Purity and Truth", the name dated to the 13th century. The synagogue and mosques were also known as Le-pae sze Libai si. A tablet indicated that Judaism was once known as "Yih-tsze-lo-nee-keaou" israelitish religion and synagogues known as Yih-tsze lo nee leen Israelitish Temple, but it faded out of use. Following this dislocation, they returned to Kaifeng, yet continued to be small in number and to face hardships, as is recorded in the early 20th century. The community was composed mainly of "Asian," Sephardi German, and Russian Jews, though there were a few of Austrian, French, and Italian origin among them. Jews took a considerable part in developing trade in China, and several served on the municipal councils, among them being Silas Aaron Hardoon, partner in the firm of E. During the early days of Jewish settlement in Shanghai Jews were involved in the trade in opium and Bombay cotton yarn. Jewish life in Shanghai had really taken off with the arrival of the British. Mizrahi Jews from the Middle East came as traders via India and Hong Kong and established some of the leading trading companies in the second half of the 19th century. At the early 20th century many Russian Jews fleeing pogroms in several towns in Russian Empire decided to move to northeast China for permanent settlement Rabbi Aharon Moshe Kiselev served in Harbin from until his death in These included, among others, Dr. Abraham Kaufman, who played a leading role in the Harbin Jewish community after, [50] the parents of future Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and Teodor Parnicki at the age of According to estimates, over 20, Jews lived in Harbin and played a key role in the shaping of local politics, economy and international trade. Sun Yat-sen, founder of the Republic of China, held admiration for the Jewish people and Zionism, and he also saw parallels between the persecution of Jews and the domination of China by the Western powers. He stated, "Though their country was destroyed, the Jewish nation has existed to this day All lovers of democracy cannot help but support wholeheartedly and welcome with enthusiasm the movement to restore your wonderful and historic nation, which has contributed so much to the civilization of the world and which rightfully deserve [sic] an honorable place in the family of nations. Until, the Russian Jews were about 5, in Shanghai. In, the occupying Japanese army required these 18, Jews, formally known as "stateless refugees," to relocate to an area of 0. Many of the Jews in China later moved to found the modern state of Israel. However, it was not easy to get there. The Japanese, who controlled the city, preferred to look the other way. However, some corrupt officials also exploited the plight of the Jews. By, nearly 20, European Jews had found shelter there. However, the Japanese had no intention of

further provoking the anger of the Allies after their already notorious invasion of China and their additional invasion of a number of other Asian nations, so they delayed the German request until the War ended. Structured Jewish life returned to Beijing in with the founding of Kehillat Beijing, an egalitarian lay-led community serving ex-patriate Jews from all over the world. Leiwi Imas, who had to leave Germany for Poland in , arrived in Shanghai the same year. He spent his final years in Shanghai until , prior to the beginning of the Cultural Revolution. Many formerly Jewish-owned hotels and private residence have been included in the preservation project. A myriad of Jewish self-help and personal finance books on wealth building, entrepreneurship, investing, business success and succeeding financially can be found on every major Chinese city street bookstall. In addition, Jewish seminars on wealth building and business success are held in five and four-star hotels across big cities in China. The community has its own Hacham , who functions as a teacher and chazan , in addition to Rabbi Ephraim Bezalel, who manages local community affairs and kashrut needs. In May , the Ohel Rachel Synagogue in Shanghai was temporarily reopened to the local Jewish community for weekend services. As of , over 50 mashgichim have been stationed in China, 7 of them from the Orthodox Union.

Chapter 5 : Project MUSE - The Jews of China. Volume 1, Historical and Comparative Perspectives (review)

The book, "The Jews of Kaifeng, China: History, Culture and Religion," by Xin Xu is a wonderful work which describes in great detail the culture, religious rites and history of the community of Jews that settled in Kaifeng back when it was the capital city.

Jews were certainly treated better than Muslims but almost anyone is treated better than Muslims in China these days. There is such a wide variety of Christian sects in China now, and some are treated well and some are persecuted. Jewish liturgy is [forbidden in China]. You are not allowed to pray in a synagogue. You are not allowed to read Jewish liturgical books. My colleague Song Lihong is in Israel right now and there, I assume he is allowed to read it. This makes it difficult for scholars who teach Judaic studies to understand what Judaism really is. Even if historically the Chinese were more tolerant of Jews than of Christians, is this still true today? And their assumption that I was rich and smart because I am a Jew. I found that really awkward. I tried to suggest several times, without making any progress, that any kind of stereotyping was dangerous and could turn to bad directions very easily. One of the central issues in all this is that the Chinese have lost their belief systems. Now that everything is focused on getting rich and attaining power, there is not much to believe in, and the interest in Jewish people involves what Jews believe in, even though the Chinese cannot study what Jews believe in. So it is still a mystery to them. They feel that they want to be like Jews, but have no idea what Jews believe in. Reportedly, in China there is no concept of tzedakah. Has the interest in Jewish traditions succeeded in making any local billionaires more aware of social justice? Can any hope for assimilation be believable with such an aggressive, dominant superpower? Do Chinese computer hackers accept modernity and hope to merge into Western society? Well, when I was teaching in Nanjing, one of my graduate students had just returned from the Muslim areas of Western China and she was basically running these programs that were trying to get Muslims to become more like Han Chinese. I asked whether she found anyone there who resented her. Her answer was, very typically: When I return to teach at Nanjing next spring, I will do a study on the memorial of the Nanjing Massacre. The folks who did the design had been to Yad Vashem and hoped to get the same respect for the Nanjing Massacre as Jews have for the Holocaust. How can we conclude anything concrete about Chinese attitudes to Jews from that word? Would you agree with the historian Daniel J. I would agree with it. Benjamin Ivry is a frequent contributor to the Forward.

Chapter 6 : History of the Jews in China - Wikipedia

>According to YnetNews, a group of Chinese Jews living in Kaifeng may be the descendants of Jews who came to China from Persian and calendrierdelascience.com scholars have identified them with a remnant of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

Past-History The "big aliah" of Jews from China started in the year and ended in These were the years of the biggest ingathering of the exiles from around the world to Israel, and among them the Jews from China, most of the immigrants were settled temporarily in transit camps, "Maabarot", that were put up all over the country. The Jewish immigrants left China during the final stages of the Chinese civil war, as a result of which its economy was going through a period of very deep inflation. This caused the Jews to arrive in Israel with no financial means at all and in addition to this, with no useful profession. The ages of these immigrants were comparatively high average age over The immigration from China to Israel followed two main routes: Those from Shanghai traveled by sea, and their journey nearly circled the world. There were three main departures from Shanghai direct to Haifa, two by the ship "Wooster Victory" and the other by the ship "Anna Salen". There were also other sailings from Shanghai, but these ships did not sail direct to Haifa and changes of ships had to be made at several transit ports, eventually all those immigrants arrived to Haifa from Italy on Israeli Ships. The Jews from Harbin traveled by several means of transportation: First by train, to Tientsin, by sea to Hong Kong and from there by air via various countries to Israel. A small group established an agricultural settlement in "Amikam" and other groups in "Suchmata" and "Kfar Tabor". A small office was rented at Mr. The largest concentrations during this period were in Nathanya and Migdal-Haemek where clubs functioned every evening for meetings and social activities. These organizations too offered aid to the Igud in Israel. As a result the Igud began to distribute monthly financial aid and small loans to the needy. This activity is carried on to this very day but on a much larger scale. In thanksto, to a very generous contribution by the Ponve family, two adjacent apartments were purchased on Gruzenberg Street in Tel-Aviv. These apartments were rebuilt and connected into offices and a reception hall. In , as a result of development projects carried out by the Shanghai authorities, the Ashcenazi Synagogue in the City was demolished. The Chinese Government transferred to Israel via the Embassies of China and Israel in Bern, Switzerland, a sum of money, which was considered equal to the value of the demolished synagogue, with an explicit condition that the money be used to build a synagogue in Israel. With the money that was received from China plus donations from ex-China residents and the Ponve family, a synagogue was built in memory of the Jewish communities of China. It was inaugurated in Plaques were attached to the walls of the Synagogue in memory of the leaders of the communities and those of the former China residents in Israel and the World who donated towards the building of this Synagogue. They are remembered every Sabbath by the congregation praying there. This Synagogue is the property of the Igud and is maintained out of the Iguds budget. This group organizes various social activities and publishes several pages in the English supplement of the Iguds bulletin. As a result of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Israel and with the initiative of the Igud "The Israel-China Friendship Society" was formed. This organization carries out various social activities and hosts delegations from China visiting Israel. It publishes a supplement to the Bulletin under the name of "The Voice of Friendship". This supplement reports on its activities and is distributed to our friends in China and contributes to strengthen the friendship with the Chinese people. Igud Yotsei Sin is registered at the registrar of societies at the Ministry of Justice as an "association"- A non-profit organization, its financial activities are controlled by an auditor as specified by the law. The activities of the Igud are performed mainly by volunteers, except for the secretary and a technical aide for the publication of the Bulletin, The "Igud" is able to function thanks to the donations of former China residents in Israel and around the world, which are channeled to various funds by means of which the Igud carries out the following activities. Since its establishment the Igud distributes monthly monetary allowances and loans at very low interest rates and in special case at no interest at all, to the needy among the former China residents. In later years help was also given to immigrants from the former Soviet Union who were born or resided formerly in China. In the Igud began granting scholarships

to students who were former China residents, this was made possible by a fund which was established by ex-China residents in New York. In the first year of the establishment of the scholarship fund only one scholarship was awarded. In the year , scholarships were awarded to the offsprings of former China residents - Sons and daughters, grandsons and granddaughters, and even great grandsons and daughters. Up to date scholarships was distributed reaching the total sum of approximately half a million US dollars. Holiday Gifts to Soldiers: For over 20 years the Igud has distributed twice a year On Rosh Hashana and on the Day of Independence gifts to soldiers serving in the Israel Defense Forces who are the offsprings of ex-China residents. Up to date the gifts were distributed to approximately soldiers. Initially in was published in Russian language and later on, Hebrew and English supplementa were added. Today the Bulletin is published in the above three languages in copies. About copies are distributed in Israel among the former China residents and various institutions and the rest are sent to former China residents abroad. The cost of publishing the "Bulletin" is covered mainly by the fees paid by the subscribers and by various announcements published by families and lastly from the budget of the Igud. The aims of the "Bulletin" are to maintain a permanent link between the former China resident of the Diaspora with their compatriots in Israel, to strengthen their bonds with the State of Israel, to update the readers on the activities of the Igud, to reconstruct and publish the rich history and culture of the Jews of China, to signify the contribution of the Jews of China to the State of Israel and to maintain the memories of the Jews, ex-China residents, who passed away. In the offices of the Igud at "Ponve House" there is a collection of historical chronicles in various forms on the history of the Jews in China. Scientists and researchers from Israel, Russia, the United States, Britain, Germany, Japan, China and others were all helped in their various researches by the documents stored in this collection. The Immortalization of the Heritage of the Jews of China: Two generations of Jews immigrated to Israel from China. Very few of the elder generation are still here with us. Of the second generation, all are in their fifties and sixties by now. These people are the only ones who can still contribute to the perpetuation of the glorious heritage of the Jews from China. Plans also exist in China, which are in various stages of execution, to establish museums in Shanghai and Harbin to perpetuate the memory of the Jews who resided in China. There is a wide interest in the academic world and by the press in China on this subject. In Israel, however, nothing is being done on this matter except on the subject of the chronicles in the archives of the Igud to perpetuate the memory of this Jewry so that it will be easily accessible to anyone who is interested and especially to the younger generation who were born in Israel to former residents of China. The money that will be contributed to this fund will be used solely for this purpose in China and in Israel. The Igud is in contact with "Beit Hatfutsot" who is experienced in matters of perpetuation of the memories of Jewish communities around the world, in order to decide on the most suitable way to accomplish this, with the utilization of the most advanced methods in use today. Today, the Igud has branches in the three big cities of Israel. The main activities are held in the "Ponve House" in Tel Aviv: Social meetings of members of the Igud take place there every Sunday. The "Ponve House" also houses the administrative offices of the Igud, where the meetings of the directorate take place. Lately, a committee was formed with the sole purpose of organizing meetings on various subjects which are of interest to ex-China residents and with the purpose to draw the younger generation, the scions of the founders who are the second and last generation born in China, to participate in the activities of the Igud and thus ensure the continuation of its existence in the future. Future-Plans and Hopes The aim of Igud Yotsei Sin is to continue with all the activities mentioned above and in addition have new activities as the need arises and according to its resources at hand, human, financial and others which change continually within the community among who the Igud operates. The main activity of the Igud today can be summed up at two time levels: Since its establishment the Igud stands on two main foundations without which it could not have continued with its blessed community work. Receiving contributions from ex-china residents living today in Israel and Diaspora. The active volunteers whose numbers among the elder generation are regrettably dwindling, although their places are being gradually filled by active volunteers of the younger generation. Our hope is that this younger generation will not be the last one active in Igud Yotsei Sin.

Chapter 7 : Why Are the Chinese So Obsessed With the Jews? – The Forward

The Jews of China JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW Bird's-eye view of the Temple Buildings at K'ai-Fung-Foo, China. Jews of K'ai-Fung-Foo, China. HAMODIA 26 SHEVAT

In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content: Maram Epstein bio Jonathan Goldstein, editor. *The Jews of China*. Volume 1, Historical and Comparative Perspectives. When I was reading *The Jews of China* at the Detroit airport, a businessman interrupted me excitedly, asking: He left, satisfied and pleased with his new knowledge, while I kept hoping that these essays would shed light on one of the most compelling questions about the highly assimilated community in Kaifeng, namely, what exactly their Jewish identity meant to them. Before turning to what the various contributors have to say about this, let me give a sense of the breadth of the essays in this interdisciplinary volume. The first five contributions focus on the "Kaifeng Experience," and the following section contains three essays that compare the Jews of Kaifeng with the Cochin and coastal Bene Israel communities in India. Linking all these essays is their common interest in analyzing how these established Jewish communities balanced the need to assimilate to the larger culture while maintaining a sense of Jewish particularism. The rest of the anthology is made up of nine essays on sojourning Jews of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries who settled for shorter or longer periods in Baghdad, Calcutta, Nagasaki, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Harbin. These essays take up such disparate topics as the role of Jews in developing the economies and expatriate communities of Hong Kong, Shanghai, Bombay, and Baghdad; Jewish refugees who settled in Harbin and Shanghai; and two essays on the influence of Jewish musicians on the musical scene of Shanghai. Particularly interesting is the connection drawn by two contributors between Jewish businesses and the opium [End Page] trade. Overall, these essays are straightforward historical narratives of various individuals or groups from a Jewish, rather than a sinological, perspective. Few of these businessmen or refugees interacted in any meaningful way with the larger non-Jewish culture, with the exception of Hardoon, who married a Chinese woman and became a patron of traditional Chinese arts and education. Exemplifying the Jewish tendency to remain separate from the larger culture are the refugees from World War II studied by Vera Schwarcz. In an act of cultural self-preservation, these men and women constructed an entirely self-enclosed Jewish community in Shanghai that supported a thriving yeshiva, Jewish religious and secular publishing concerns, and Yiddish theater. Because the second half of the book is likely to be of lesser interest to those readers who are looking for specifically Chinese content, I will focus my comments on the Kaifeng material. Its Impact on Western Messianic Thought," *The Jews of China* represents a useful intervention in the control and interpretation of the materials by Christian missionaries. There was a long-standing Christian belief that the talmudic rabbis You are not currently authenticated. View freely available titles:

Chapter 8 : Communities | The Jewish Community of China

In China today, shoppers snap up self-help books about how be smart, rich, and have successful children supposedly by imitating Jews. At least ten universities in China offer Jewish Studies programs.

Before the perfection of maritime navigational techniques, it was the primary route of trade between China and its eastern neighbors. During the time of the Silk Road, many Jews become involved in international trade. In many ways, they were uniquely qualified for the profession. There existed significant Jewish communities in India, Persia, the Arab nations, and in cities throughout Europe; in almost all these communities, a good number of Jews were already merchants. As tensions between Christians and Muslims heated up around the time of the Crusades, many of them refused to or were not permitted to trade with each other, while Jews throughout the world had no problem selling goods to their kinsmen. Persian Shiites and Arab Sunni Muslims would sometimes be at war with each other, or with Hindu Indians or with Christian Europeans, yet the Jewish community stayed united and continued trading between countries. As there were a disproportionately high number of Jews in the trading profession, it should not be surprising that some of these Jews became involved in trade with China. Up until the past century, there was a significant Jewish population in Persia, and since the Persian Jews traded with the West, there is no reason to think they did not trade with the East as well. Although there is no evidence of the existence of a Jewish community in China before the Song Dynasty, a few historians still claim that the Kaifeng Jewish community was founded in CE or earlier. Most evidence supports the theory that a significant number of Jews, hundreds or perhaps thousands, migrated from Persia to Kaifeng some time during the Northern Song Dynasty. Some historians believe the Jews of Kaifeng originated in Bukhara, a city in Uzbekistan that was once part of Persia. An inscription states that 70 families came to Kaifeng, although it is unclear as to whether this meant 70 clans surnames or 70 families households. No one can say for sure why this mass migration occurred; perhaps there was a famine, drought, or other natural disaster, or maybe local Persian authorities were hostile to the Jews. All evidence seems to indicate that the Kaifeng Jewish community enjoyed its early decades in the city, as a pillar at the site of their synagogue states that the Song Emperor invited them to stay in Kaifeng and practice their religion freely. Perhaps no two cultural groups revere scholarship more than the Jews and the Chinese, and this common bond perhaps made the Jews feel at home. While some Jews continued to be merchants, a profitable yet less respected profession, the most talented became scholars of either Jewish culture or Chinese culture. While the pillar states that the Jewish community arrived during the Song Dynasty, it does not state what year or the name of the Emperor. The city of Kaifeng was ravaged in by Jurchen invaders, who conquered most of Northern China, forcing the remains of the Song dynasty to flee south, where a new Song Emperor continued to rule over Southern China from Hangzhou. When the Jurchens established the Jin Dynasty over Northern China, Kaifeng was decimated, and more than half the population either died or left the city. A pillar outside the Kaifeng synagogue infers that a significant number a Jews fled with the imperial family to Hangzhou, the new Song capital. This disaster leads many historians to speculate that the Jews moved to Kaifeng at least 40 years before the chaos of theorizing that the Jews would have all left the city had they not spent several good decades there. Likewise, since Kaifeng must have been a large, attractive city before the Jewish community decided to migrate there, historians think that the large Jewish community migrated there sometime in the 11th century. The Jin Dynasty After the attack on Kaifeng , the city was taken by the Jurchens and became part of the Jin Dynasty, when it lost the prestige of being a capital. Much of the city was destroyed, and it took several decades for the city to be rebuilt. The Jewish community took advantage of the opportunity, and built their first synagogue in Yet the Jewish community in Kaifeng always had fond memories of the Song Dynasty, and continued using the Song calendar even after the Jin took control, as the synagogue dedication pillar was dedicated using the Song calendar date to write the year Due to the war with the Mongols in the North, the Jin moved their capital to Kaifeng in , where it remained until the Jin dynasty fell to the Mongol in While Kaifeng never served as a Chinese capital again, the Jewish community of Kaifeng would continue to flourish for centuries to come. As neither the ruling Mongols nor the Jews were ethnically Chinese, the Jews were among the groups that

benefitted when the Mongols dropped all laws that gave the Han majority legal advantages over minorities. As the Mongols distrusted the Chinese, they ended the civil service exam system that had been used to select government officials. As a way of decreasing Han power, they place foreigners, such as Jews, in positions within the bureaucracy. Yet there were also disadvantages to Mongol rule, as a Yuan decree banned all Jewish and Muslim ritual slaughter because the Emperor felt insulted that certain subjects felt that the meat fit for him was not good enough for them. Additionally, it is important to note that the Yuan era was a time of great migration movement throughout their empire. As the Mongols brought many slaves back from Persia and Arab states, it is likely that some Jews were brought to China as slaves. This may explain how Jewish practices from Yemen, as well as from the 13th Century Rabbi Maimonides came to Kaifeng, as many of their liturgical traditions and prayers were not around before Jews moved to China. Unlike Jews in many other nations, Chinese Jews could fully engage in society, including public affairs and government service. A flood destroyed the synagogue, but the community rebuilt it soon after, and obtained new Torahs from the Jewish communities in Ningbo and Yangzhou. Not only were the Jewish people successful in their own community, but they also were productive members of Chinese society during this Golden Age. Four different inscriptions from , , , and list the names of 80 different Kaifeng Jews who passed the exams and became Chinese officials. Additionally, the inscription lists names, including 21 community officials and 38 civil, military, scholar, and medical official in Chinese society. These numbers are incredible coming from a community of under 5,000 people. He was promoted to be the assistant commissioner of the Regional Military Commission on Chekiang. Jews were often very successful as Chinese officials, as throughout the Ming and Qing Dynasties, there are records that show at least three Jews were awarded the title Kung Sheng, one was awarded the title Gong Sheng, five Jews were awarded the title Ju Ren, one Jew reached the incredibly high status of Jing Shi, and another served as the official physician to the Prince of Zhou. Thus, it should not be surprising that the social status of the Jewish community rose significantly during the Ming Dynasty. Clearly, the most important sources of information about the Jewish population of Kaifeng come from the four inscriptions made outside the site of the synagogue. These four inscriptions, made in , , , and , all commemorated the rebuilding or renovation of the synagogue. They all mentioned the names of non-Jews who contributed to the rebuilding of the synagogue. The fact that each successive inscription had more and more important non-Jewish names on it indicates an increase in the status of the Jewish community. Unfortunately, there were negative effects of the secular successes of Chinese Jewry. Many of the greatest Chinese Jewish minds went to study the Chinese Classics in preparation for the civil service exams. These talented Jews could not have had time to learn Hebrew or much about Judaism, so they had to abandon religious studies to succeed in the secular world. Unfortunately, the plan backfired, and roughly half of the ,000 people living in Kaifeng were killed. Kaifeng Jewish Community The Practice of Judaism in Kaifeng As in most Jewish Diaspora communities, the practice of the Jewish religion in Kaifeng took on some aspects similar to the practices of the native Chinese. This is not to say that the Jews of Kaifeng fundamentally altered their religion; quite the opposite is true, as the Jewish religion maintained its integrity and unique monotheist aspects for centuries. It would be more accurate to say that the Jews in China naturally focused on the values within their own religion that were compatible with the native Confucian way of life. Judaism is in many practical ways, a very flexible religion, as Judaism has adapted to its surroundings while keeping its core theological tenets, moral values, and religious identity intact. This adaptability allowed Judaism to survive outside of Israel and gave Jews the ability to flourish in almost any culture they are transplanted to. Non-American Jews would never think of giving gifts in December, as there is no reason to, yet American Jews began the practice in order to fit into their surroundings. Similarly, although polygamy is permitted in the Jewish religion, Rabbi Gershom ben Judah issued a rabbinical ordinance years ago forbidding all European Jews from practicing polygamy. Rabbi Gershom did this not because Judaism forbade polygamy, but rather to allow Jews to fit in better with their neighbors; to this day, there is no Jewish law forbidding non-Ashkenazi Jewish men from having multiple wives. It is necessary to view the Kaifeng Jewish community through this context to better understand what effect Chinese culture had on their religion. In truth, the Jews of Kaifeng held remarkably faithful to their religion for an incredible amount of time considering their small number and near isolation. Kaifeng Jews

continued to give their children Hebrew names for an incredible seven or eight generation before adapting only Chinese names. In contrast, many American do not have Jewish first names, and many altered their surnames upon entering the country. The Kaifeng synagogue was built in , and it was rebuilt, renovated, or enlarged at least a dozen times over the next years by the generations of Jews who made use of it. While the building had Chinese architecture, the Jewish synagogue differed from all other Chinese places of worship in that there were no idols or pictures inside. During their time in Kaifeng, the Jews embraced many elements of Chinese culture, yet continued to adhere to their own faith. Interestingly, the Jews of Kaifeng did, however, adapt the Chinese practice of ancestor-worship. Perhaps because of the similarities between this and the Jewish custom of Yizkor and Yahrzeit services for the dead, Jews seemed to find this practice acceptable. Since there is nothing in Judaism to prohibit such practice, the Rabbis of Kaifeng must have concluded that it could be done, although it must be done in a Jewish way. The Chinese would burn incense and give offering to tablets and depictions of their ancestors; the Jews, however, would burn incense and leave offerings, but they would never allow themselves to worship or leave an offering to any depictions, as that would border on idolatry. While some practices the Kaifeng Jews adapted were adaptations they chose, they also yielded to the Chinese Imperial law when it conflicted with their practices. There are two good examples of how Jews dealt with these legal conflicts. This conflicted with Chinese custom, and the Yuan Dynasty made such marriages illegal. The Jewish community in Kaifeng was forced to yield to Chinese law. In another example, a Chinese emperor demanded that a portrait of him must be in every house of worship. Even though this conflicted with Jewish custom, the Jews did put up the portrait in the entryway of their synagogue. It appears that for most of their existence, the Kaifeng Jews practiced most traditional Jews customs and rituals. They clearly kept the Jewish dietary laws , as they were known to only eat meat they slaughtered according to the laws of Kashrut; even some of their descendants today do not eat pork. They also established ritual bathes, cemeteries, and charitable institutions. They read Torah, taught their children Hebrew, and even ritually circumcised their sons. Kaifeng Jews wore blue kippot, although besides that the Jews wore the same clothes as the rest of the Chinese. In terms of marriage, it appears that in the early days, the Jews married only within the community. As time went on, it seems that Jewish men marrying Han or Hui wives became more acceptable, although almost all Jewish women married Jewish men. This was possible because polygamy was legal ad acceptable, although it is likely only wealthier men could afford it. As the community got smaller, the Jews ended up permitting their daughters to intermarry, although sources claim that families preferred their daughters marrying Muslims if Jewish men were not available, as there were some similarities between Judaism and Islam. This may explain why all Kaifeng Jews today look Chinese. It is also important to note that the Jews of China were not entirely isolated during their early centuries there. Certain Yemeni practices indicate that some Yemeni Jews must have entered the community. Furthermore, the Jews of Kaifeng practiced some of the legal interpretations of the famous Rabbi Moses Maimonides, who was born in . As the Jews entered Kaifeng before , this proves, that there must have been some contact with the outside Jewish community, and that the Kaifeng Jews updated their Jewish customs along with the rest of the Jewish community that they had contact with.

The Jewish Population in Kaifeng As stated earlier, a inscription states that 70 families came to Kaifeng originally during the Northern Song Dynasty, although it is unclear as to whether this meant 70 clans surnames or 70 families households. Some historians believe that this meant 70 families and 17 clans, as historically as many as 17 surnames can be linked to Kaifeng Jews. The population grew and shrunk throughout the decades through growth, as well as through mass migration and natural disaster. Many Jews left the city when a Jurchen attack became apparent in , and other Jews left after the attack to live in the new Song capital in Hangzhou. However, even despite this exodus, a inscription states that there were 73 clans, and more than families altogether when the synagogue was built in . Many floods plagued the city throughout the centuries, which caused both the Han and Jewish population to shrink, the largest of which occurred in , when a flood destroyed much of the city. For the first seven or eight generations in China , it appears Jews continued to give their children Hebrew names. Most likely, the other ten clans were either killed by the flood, or left the city for other reasons.

Chapter 9 : Are There Really Jews in China?: An Update

The Jewish Community of China Dedicated to preserving the history of The Jewish Presence In China Manzhouli Hailar Qiqihar Harbin Shenyang (Mukden) Beijing Dalian(Darien) Tianjin (Tientsin) Qingdao (Tsingtao) Kaifeng Shanghai Hangzhou Hong Kong.

Jews were not newcomers to China. Most scholars believe this indicates the formal start of the Jewish community of Kaifeng. This monument is now among the holdings of the Municipal Museum of Kaifeng. They hold firm to this belief despite the facts that their features are indistinguishable from those of their neighbors just like other Jews around the world , that they have had no rabbi for the better part of two centuries, no synagogue or other communal organization for several generations, and that they remember next to nothing of the faith and traditions of their ancestors. Quite surprisingly, the street on which only a few of them now live bears a sign that was erected somewhat little more than a hundred years ago and whose Chinese characters read "The Lane of the Sect that Teaches the Scriptures. The Jewish community Heb. However, this interest is fully justified, for the bittersweet saga of that tiny segment of Israel whose destiny it was to be hidden away for a millennium or so in one of the most improbable of diasporic sanctuaries, has a good deal to teach us about the persistence of Jewish memory and the will to survive of Jewish communities. For this reason, and also because of the curious role it was unwittingly made to play in certain pivotal European theological matters, the story of Kaifeng Jewry deserves to be told and retold. Numerous theories have been proposed that place them there, either as travelers or as settlers, at varying intervals within a time-span beginning shortly before the birth of Moses and extending several hundred years beyond that. Some of these theories, however, are totally contrived; others are patently conjectural; some are tied in with the mythology surrounding the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel; and still others are derived from the inept or idiosyncratic readings of Hebrew and Chinese texts. The fact that no corroborating evidence generally accepted by scholars has so far come to light does not necessarily exclude the possibility that Jews could have made their way to China and settled there during the time of the Han Dynasty. The proven existence of other Jewish enclaves in several of the port cities of China has been used to support the proposition that Jewish merchants or their forebears came to China from Basra, stopping in India, and perhaps from Yemen and elsewhere, a theory supported by certain etymological, ritualistic and kindred considerations that link the Chinese Jews with these countries, as well as that being the primary sea route for Muslim, Jewish and Chinese freighters in ancient times. Unfortunately, tangible evidence of this early Jewish presence in China is hard to corroborate. The first piece of tangible evidence we have of the presence of even a single Jew in the Middle Kingdom comes from a much later period--around CE. This takes the form of a business letter written in Hebrew characters on paper, a commodity then manufactured only in China. The language is Judeo-Persian, at the time a common idiom of Central Asian commerce. The writer was a Jewish merchant-adventurer who, as best as we can make out from the tattered sheet on which the letter is written, was seeking the assistance of a coreligionist in Isfahan in disposing of a flock of inferior sheep. His letter, apparently never delivered to its destination, was discovered a century or so ago at Dandan Uiliq, some seventy miles northeast of the Khotan oasis, in Chinese Turkestan. And, of course, there is no reason to suppose that these texts, which fell into our hands entirely by chance, are necessarily the very first Jewish texts to have been written in China. We may indeed surmise that Jews were traveling to and possibly settling in China substantially before these documents were composed. There is, in any event, additional credible evidence of Jewish activity in China that goes back to the latter part of the 9th century, when ibn Khurdadbih, the so-called Postmaster of Baghdad, alluded to Jewish traders known as Radhanites who traveled from such distant points as Spain and France all the way to China and back by any of four already well-established land and sea routes. His narration mentions a rather large Jewish community in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou Canton or Fujian and elsewhere in China. See David Selboren, transl. Marco Polo met several of them in Beijing around Shortly thereafter, the Franciscan missionary John of Montecorvino, writing from China, reaffirmed the existence of Jews in the country. In January , Andrew of Perugia commented resignedly that the Jews of Quanzhou obdurately refused to accede to his pleas that they

undergo baptism. And in , John of Marignoli told of having engaged "in glorious disputations" in Beijing with both Muslims and Jews. Lastly, the Muslim traveler ibn Battuta also spoke of a Jewish presence in China. At about the same time, the Portuguese traveler Galleato Perera, writing about his incarceration in China from to , stated that in Chinese courts of law "the Moores, Gentiles, and Jewes, have all theyr sundry oathes," and that members of each of these religious designations are sworn in "by the thynges they do worshyppe. Though all are exceedingly brief, they cast pencils of light upon a few aspects of Jewish life in the Chinese world. Surprisingly, however, only one reference to Jews in China has been culled from the vast treasury of Jewish literature that was written outside the country prior to the 17th century. And, disappointingly, that one reference turns out to be the product of the fervid imagination of the colorful raconteur who called himself Eldad ha-Dani. It was this Eldad who, in the latter part of the 9th century, succeeded in persuading the more gullible among his coreligionists that he had once been kidnapped by a band of cannibals, brought forcibly to China, and ransomed there for thirty-two pieces of gold by a merchant whom he airily identified as a Jew "of the tribe of Isaachar. By then, the city had been reduced to the status of provincial capital, and its population had dwindled considerably. However, the interest demonstrated by well-informed Europeans regarding Kaifeng lay not in the city itself, but rather in the startling revelation that it contained an enclave of Jews who had lived there, as the Italian Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci put it, "from time immemorial. These foreigners, the author of the book explained, spoke of themselves as adherents of a faith based solidly and unalterably upon the doctrine of monotheism, a theological tenet which, as his educated readers would have known, ran parallel to the monotheistic teachings that the followers of the prophet Muhammad had brought to China many centuries earlier. What startled the author and, one would suppose, substantially all his readers, was that these Europeans persistently and indignantly denied that they were Muslims. What, then, the question therefore arose, was this strange faith to which these newcomers to China subscribed? To Ai Tian, however, the matter was quite simple: And this was an exhilarating thought, the more so because its consequences could well open a new chapter in the history of the isolated Jews of Kaifeng, whose contacts with non-Chinese Jews had now been totally cut off for several generations. So it was that Ai Tian, having arrived in Beijing and made his way to what he thought was a synagogue, but was actually the church that the Jesuits had recently established in the city. Clad in his imposing mandarin robes and looking as Chinese as all the members of his community must by then have looked, he introduced himself to Matteo Ricci, whom he took to be a rabbi, as a coreligionist from distant Kaifeng. This was, as can be readily understood, an introduction that left Ricci astounded. For the past two decades he had been searching vainly for descendants of the several Christian communities that were known to have existed in China a thousand years earlier, and nowâ€”at lastâ€”here he was, face to face with one of them. After a few minutes of excited, exploratory talk, the priest ushered his guest into the chapel where, in celebration of the festival of St. John the Baptist, a painting of Mary and the infant Jesus had been placed near the altar, together with another of a youthful St. Ricci knelt reverently before the two representations. Ai, curiously inspecting the paintings, promptly misidentified the figures as those of Rebecca, Jacob and Esau. In the end, of course, the matter was sorted out, leaving Ricci with the disappointing but still exhilarating realization that his visitor was not the Chinese Christian he had taken him to be, but rather--and even more astonishingly--a Chinese Jew. Ai, as might be expected, was equally astonished to learn that his host belonged to a faith called Christianity, but seems to have concluded that although this Christianity had taken on a veneer of customs and teachings that were strange to him, it was no less Jewish than the faith in which he had been reared back in Kaifeng. Put plainly, he declared, Ricci would have to promise to give up, once and for all, his deplorable and scandalously un-rabbinic addiction to eating pork. However, of these, we know almost nothing. It must be understood that for this period nearly all our knowledge concerning the Kaifeng Jews is derived from four sources: As detailed above, undoubtedly Chinese Jews had been active in the caravan trade across Central Asia since the route opened after the Han dynasty created a protected zone along the rim of the Tarim Basin to the Parthian Empire in West Asia in the 2ndBCE. There was much that the Roman world wanted of silk and other Chinese goods, while there was little that China wanted from the West. At the time that the Emperor Trajan forbade the wearing of silk due to this imbalance, there seems to have been more gold in the Chinese treasury than existed outside of China. After the collapse of the Han dynasty at

the end of the 2nd century CE, the trade was suspended until China again secured the route through Central Asia first with the Sui dynasty in the 6th century, shortly followed by the Tang dynasty, which flourished for several centuries. By the end of the 10th century, the Tang dynasty collapsed, terminating the security of the Silk Road, but by that time, Chinese, Persian and Jewish ships were sailing from Basra and other ports to India and Sri Lanka and then to a number of seaports along the east coast of China, the primary ones being Yangzhou and Ningpo. The central part of the coast, called Jiangnan, was the primary rice and silk producing area of China. The Song dynasty, which succeeded the Tang, was not as militarily oriented as the Tang, they did not control the Silk Road, which became defunct, and they moved the capital five hundred and fifty kilometers eastward to Kaifeng, then on the banks of the frequently flooding Yellow River. A canal had been created to move goods by barge from the Jiangnan region to the Yellow River, so that taxes, paid in rice and silk, could be moved to the new capital. Maritime trade necessitates factors in the recipient seaports, and as the British later did in Hong Kong and Singapore, Persian and Arab Muslim and Jewish communities arose in the Chinese seaports. The Chinese government found it expedient to allow these foreign communities to govern themselves, according to their own customs and laws, and so created extraterritorial enclaves within at least six of the seaports. Thus, there developed Jewish communities along the Chinese coast, as also took place along the west coast of India. These Jews were from the Judeo-Persian language community in Persia although Hebrew was their ritual language and Arabic was their theological language; Judeo-Persian had become the lingua franca of the maritime trade. Since those Jews who resided in the seaports were living under extraterritorial conditions and were traveling back and forth to Persia which included present-day Iraq, etc. Since the freighters were stopping in India on the way to China to resupply and await favorable winds, they seem to have picked up cotton fabric there to resell in China. Chinese clothing at that time was of inexpensive hemp or expensive silk. Hence, a more comfortable, easier to sew, cheaper cloth such as cotton would have been desirable. It seems the government became aware of this cloth, and in the 11th century, Jewish merchants from one of the major seaports were asked to bring the cloth as tribute to the government in Kaifeng. After they arrived, they were invited to remain in Kaifeng, undoubtedly to facilitate trade, especially in cotton. This was the beginning of the Kaifeng Jewish community. It can be assumed that these Jewish merchants were probably single, younger men, as traveling merchants from all cultures tend to be. As they settled in, they married local women, were financially successful, and after several generations, built a synagogue in with government support. The Chinese government since the Han dynasty supported the religions of foreigners. They would have sent for a rabbi, Torah scrolls, Tanach Bibles, and siddurs prayer books from Baghdad via Jewish maritime merchants through the seaports. This is a pattern of development that has continued throughout Jewish history. Of the seventeen clans whose names are listed on the stone monument of , subsequent allusions to only eight have been retrieved from the existing records: The clan names chiseled onto the monument are Chinese. The seven Chinese patronymics mentioned above are still used by those several hundred individuals of Jewish descent who live in Kaifeng and elsewhere in China today. It is unlikely that these Chinese wives of the Jews in Kaifeng were formerly converted, especially early on, as the necessary personnel were not available. But we can be certain that they adopted a Jewish lifestyle, taught to them by their husbands, for Chinese culture is so patrilocal, that women are never part of their natal family but become part of the family into which they marry and would have expected to carry out the rituals of the household into which they marry. So conversion, if the term is used, would be in the biblical rather than the rabbinic sense, as would have been the case with the early phase of diaspora Jewish communities everywhere. Keeping kosher was not difficult for these newly arrived Jews in Kaifeng. The pork commonly eaten in China, of course, would have been avoided, and there were no cattle or dairy products. Thus their protein would have come from fowl, which is easily made kosher, fresh water fish and soybean products. Once a ritual slaughterer could have been brought in, then sheep would have been added to the diet. Different from the seaports, where the Jews lived in extraterritorial enclaves with other foreigners, in Kaifeng, they lived among the Chinese people, and the first wives would have brought Chinese culture with them. At the same time, while they maintained Judeo-Persian for communication with traders in the seaports, they would have needed to become fluent in both spoken and written Chinese even to speak to their wives. Thus they would have assimilated to

Chinese culture, just as Jews everywhere in the Diaspora have assimilated to the culture in which they lived, unless segregated and persecuted. What was life like for the Jews of Kaifeng from the time they became firmly established in the city until their community fell apart? The answer is that in its everyday non-religious aspects the life of the Kaifeng Jews was not very different from that of their neighbors. They were thus farmers, merchants, artisans, scholars, officials, soldiers, doctors, and the like. In proportion to their numbers, however, they seem to have been quite successful. Some, far out of proportion to the general population, attained mandarin rank, the most noteworthy of these being the brothers Zhao Yingcheng Moshe ben Abram and Zhao Yingdou Hebrew name unknown , who in the s held prestigious governmental posts and were instrumental in rebuilding the synagogue that was destroyed in the flood of Each of the two brothers also wrote a book, in Chinese, about Judaism. To our regret, however, only the titles of these works are known. In recent years, interested Chinese scholars have instituted searches, so far altogether unsuccessful, in the libraries of Kaifeng, Beijing and elsewhere for these texts. In the event that a copy of either or both of these works is discovered, we may expect to fill in many of the gaps that now exist in our understanding of the Jewish experience in old China.