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The role of Confucian and Jewish educational values in the assimilation of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, supplemented by Western observer accounts, 1905–1985

Abraham, Wendy Robin, Ed.D.

Columbia University Teachers College, 1989

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THE ROLE OF CONFUCIAN AND JEWISH EDUCATIONAL VALUES
IN THE ASSIMILATION OF THE CHINESE JEWS OF KAIFENG,
SUPPLEMENTED BY WESTERN OBSERVER ACCOUNTS, 1605-1985

By

Wendy Robin Abraham

Dissertation Committee:
Professor William C. Sayres, Sponsor
Professor Hope Leichter

Approved by
the Committee on the Degree of Doctor of Education

JAN 23 1989

Date

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requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education in
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1989
ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF CONFUCIAN AND JEWISH EDUCATIONAL VALUES
IN THE ASSIMILATION OF THE CHINESE JEWS OF KAIFENG,
SUPPLEMENTED BY WESTERN OBSERVER ACCOUNTS, 1605-1985

Wendy Robin Abraham

Archaeological evidence dates the existence of Jewish traders from Persia and Yemen in Chinese territory to the 8th century of the Common Era. Although mentioned tangentially in writings by Arab traders and European travellers from the 9th century, it was not until 1605 that the first account of a meeting between a Westerner and a Chinese Jew was recorded, by the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci, writing from Peking.

Since that time scores of visitors to China have either personally recorded or reported to others their observations of the Chinese Jews, charting the course of their acculturation and eventual assimilation into their Chinese environment over the centuries.

While some have attributed the reasons for Jewish assimilation into Chinese society to isolation from the rest of the Jewish world since the Ming dynasty (1368-1644), if not before, or the lack of persecution by the Chinese government, others have posited that their assimilation was due, rather, to the fact that the Jews took and passed the Chinese civil service exam in disproportionate numbers to
their population, leading to their being assigned cities other than their own, to the Confucianization of intellectuals, intermarriage in their newly adopted towns and the acculturation of the Kaifeng Jewish community which was still under the influence of these Jewish Confucians.

After first documenting three hundred years of Western contacts with the Chinese Jews, this study explores further the possible reasons behind initial Jewish attraction to the civil service exam at the time they first settled in Kaifeng, during the Song dynasty (960-1279), and to the Chinese educational system which spawned it, maintaining that the educational values held by the Jews at their time of entry into China and through the time they were most likely cut off from the rest of world Jewry, were so similar to those held by the Chinese at the time that it could not have done otherwise but attract them.

The historical and cultural basis for the development of both people's educational values, in particular the perceived link between the cultivation of individual and communal ethics in the educational process, and national survival, is explored. Similarities between Talmudic and Confucian methods of teaching and learning are explored. All of these reasons, in turn, led to their inevitable participation and success in the civil service exam, with the resultant assimilation into Chinese society.
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Many people both in the East and the West have contributed to the final version of this dissertation, in its form, content and spirit.

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Concerning the nuts and bolts of researching and typing this dissertation, my thanks must go to the entire staff at the Computer Center of Teachers College, for their humor and help during many nerve-wracking days and nights in Horace Mann Hall this past semester. In particular, Mr. Wang Cung was of great help and support during trying times, as were Mr. Nii Nartey, Mr. Francis Wilson, Mr. Jonathan Sloane and Dr. Carol Righi.

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Chapter I
INTRODUCTION

As late as 1988 there have been Chinese people in the city of Kaifeng, Henan Province, numbering only into the hundreds, claiming Jewish descent. Available archaeological and other evidence indicates that their ancestors originated most likely in Persia and Yemen, travelling primarily overland along the Silk Road to trade in the "Middle Kingdom" (China) as early as the 8th century C.E., during the Tang 唐 dynasty (618-906 C.E.). During the next dynasty, the Song 宋 (960-1279 C.E.), they settled in Kaifeng, then China's capital, where they were granted permission by the Chinese emperor to build a synagogue in 1163, thus solidifying and perpetuating their Jewish way of life in yet another foreign land. These people gradually became isolated from other Jewish communities, both in China and throughout the Diaspora, as political and natural vicissitudes of fortune circumvented communication between them.

That the Chinese Jews maintained their distinct religious and communal life through much of the 19th century, despite centuries of isolation, has been a subject of considerable interest among scholars. That they gradually assimilated into their Chinese environment, while maintaining a full Jewish life and even, in the 20th century, some sort of ethnic identification and sense of
pride in their unique background, has alternately been emphasized by others. While admitting to an equal fascination with the question of how the Kaifeng Jews were able to retain their Jewish life and sense of Jewish identity for so long, we will nevertheless, in this dissertation, focus upon the other side of the coin, namely, the eventual assimilation of the Chinese Jews into their Chinese environment. In particular, the role of educational values held by the Jews at the time of their entry into China and those held by the Chinese, in the process of their assimilation, will be explored.

Statement of the Problem

Scholars have long debated the reasons for the eventual assimilation of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng. Leslie (1972) and others have posited their long isolation from the rest of world Jewry, and even from other Jewish communities which had sprung up around the coastal areas of China, by the 16th century, as the major reason for their assimilation. Pollak (1980) and others have pointed to the lack of persecution on religious grounds--traditional forms of anti-Semitism which had in other countries tended to make the Jews an even more cohesive unit--and their generally favorable treatment by the Chinese government, as a major factor in their assimilation. Still others have pointed to intermarriage or the lack of religious materials written in Chinese as
reasons the Jews no longer, after centuries of isolation, held on to their customs and traditions.

Song Nai Rhee (1973) has posited a most interesting and thoroughly plausible theory for the major reason for Jewish assimilation in Kaifeng. Rhee believes that "... the primary factor, directly responsible for the Jewish demise was the overwhelming impact of Imperial China's civil service system and Jewish participation in the system."¹ The passing of the civil service exam in Imperial China, which depended upon the mastery of the Confucian Classics, assured one an official post in the government. It was assumed that the civil servant would, after all of his studies, heed the Confucian principle of 'government by moral guidance.' Such a person would concomitantly climb the social ladder of success in Chinese society.

Having passed the civil service exam and been given an official post, however, the new government servant was assigned to a different city than his own to assure that no favoritism could take place. Rhee states that this depletion of the Jewish population in Kaifeng due to official appointment elsewhere was one of the four "calamitous side effects" of the civil service system which, "over a period of many centuries ... continued to weaken the

sociocultural cohesiveness of the Jewish community, inexorably eroding away its sense of Jewishness."²

The other three side effects Rhee mentions are: 1) The self-imposed Confucianization of Jewish intellectuals whose character and philosophical as well as religious perspective were forever changed. "In other words, a membership in the literati necessarily involved internal as well as external metamorphosis."³ 2) The acculturation of the Kaifeng Jewish community which was influenced by these Jewish Confucians, who subjected Judaism to religious syncretism. "The very presence of the Confucian scholar-officials in the midst of the Jewish community rendered it inevitable, since as men of wealth, power, and prestige, they were the elite and most influential group of men in the community and were bound to have an authoritative voice in the community life and affairs."⁴ 3) Intermarriage due to assignment elsewhere led to increased mobility for the new Confucian literati, new contacts within that official world and an evolving status-conscious mentality. "... the practice of intermarriage was to leave a devastating effect upon the cultural as well as racial identity of the Chinese Jews ..."⁵

Dan Ross (1982) counters this argument by stating the reverse:

² Ibid., p. 125.
³ Ibid., p. 121.
⁴ Ibid., p. 122.
⁵ Ibid., p. 125.
... it was precisely while the Jews were most successful in the civil service that Kaifeng's synagogue was in its heyday. Not until later did Judaism perish in Kaifeng. The problem was not that Kaifeng's Jews became Chinese, but that they lost the strength to remain Jewish at the same time.\(^6\)

Ross goes on to state his premise that, if anything, assimilation helped Kaifeng's Jews survive rather than disappear. By internalizing Chinese values, he posits, Jews were able to succeed in Chinese society. "Their success in the civil service sparked a Jewish mini-renaissance. And while adopting many Confucian customs they never violated basic Jewish principles."\(^7\)

Irene Eber (1985) maintains that by the 16th and 17th centuries a degree holder was usually a member of a prominent family.

Family status depended on local prominence and on family members who held bureaucratic positions by virtue of their degrees. In the case of the Jews local prominence included their status in the Jewish community, which in turn was the result of both wealth and learning. A Jewish son who was instructed towards passing the examinations and gaining a place in the bureaucracy had also to acquire Jewish learning in order to maintain the family's local status. It is therefore possible to argue that to some extent the degree holders were also educated in Jewish precepts. 'Confucian indoctrination' would thus seem an unimportant issue.\(^8\)


\(^7\) Ibid., p. 189.

The persistence of Jewish identity is judged by Eber to lie in the way the Jews referred to themselves.

They were never known by the modern terms Yu-t'ai-jen (Jew) or I-ssu-lo-yeh (Israel), but called themselves members of the sinew-plucking religion ... or scripture teaching religion ... Both names are concrete rather than abstract, and they refer to practices within the Chinese context and not to a historic and largely forgotten tradition.

While the degree of influence Confucianized Jews wielded in the life of their community is debatable, since such Jews were, as first stated, assigned to other communities after their appointment to official posts (returning to Kaifeng perhaps only during holidays and traditional Confucian periods of mourning for a parent), we will nevertheless assume that the status conferred upon such individuals carried over to their families and was enough to exert considerable influence during the brief periods of time they did spend back in Kaifeng. This, then, is not our primary concern.

However, Rhee mentions that the primary impetus for the Jews wishing to take the civil service exam in the first place was to climb out of their despised mercantile class, "to which most Jews belonged." "The more ambitious Jews, living in a traditionally anti-mercantile society such as Confucian China, were bound to find the enticing temptations of the civil service system all the more palatable for the extraordinary social mobility provided by the system." 10

9 Ibid., p. 140.

While Rhee states that another main factor which enhanced the Confucianization of the Jewish intellectuals was "their discovery, through intensive study of the Confucian Classics, of a highly organized ethical system not dissimilar to that of Judaism,"\textsuperscript{11} he nevertheless goes on to state that this awareness of a basic "equivalence" between Judaism and Confucianism was what gave the "Jewish Confucians ... a rationale for justification of their Confucianization," implying that the primary motivation for taking the civil service exam was still to attain social mobility and rid themselves of the mercantile class label, only along the way realizing the similar ethical tenets held by Confucians to their own.

It can be argued that the reasons motivating the Jews to take the civil service exam were more diverse than a desire to take themselves out of the mercantile class, since the Jews who passed the civil service exams were of many other professions. Ross (1982) even states that "at one point Kaifeng's Jews included twenty Confucian degree-holders, fourteen military officers, and four official physicians--an extraordinary achievement for a community whose population is estimated at less than one thousand."\textsuperscript{12} Rather, this dissertation will take a deeper look at the educational values held by both the Chinese and the Jews at the time of their initial contact with each other, i.e.,

\textsuperscript{11} Ibid., p. 125.

\textsuperscript{12} Dan Ross, \textit{Acts of Faith}, p. 175.
during the Tang dynasty when they first entered China, and the Song dynasty when they first settled in Kaifeng. It will focus on the similarities between Confucian and Jewish educational values and traditions in an attempt to show how such values, combined with a great reverence for the written word and for teachers, and a belief that the cultivation of ethics through education played a prominent role in both people's conceptions of Heavenly protection for the survival of their respective nations. These notions and values could not help but attract the Jews to a Confucian education for their children just as contacts with the West were dwindling and, later, completely cut off. It is not just the similar ethical tenets held by the Chinese which attracted the Jews that concerns us here, but rather the educational systems of both peoples which held such ethics to be the guiding factors in their traditions and systems for teaching and learning since ancient times. This in turn led to their mastery of the Confucian Classics and successful competition in the civil service exams, with the resultant effects pointed out by Rhee.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to compare the historical and cultural contexts within which the Chinese and the Jewish educational systems developed through the 13th century, suggesting that, while the civil service system greatly contributed to the assimilation of the Chinese Jews
(who took and passed it in numbers far out of proportion to their population in China), for the reasons stated above, the prime motivating factor for their participation in this system was larger and deeper than simply wanting to work their way out of the despised mercantile class as Rhee argues. Rather, certain basic and crucial similarities existed between Confucian and Jewish attitudes towards education and the role it played in the survival of both people as a nation. These similarities were most prominent just at the time in history in which the Chinese and the Jews found themselves in contact with each other, which led to an inevitable attraction by the Jews to the educational system of their host country.

To support this argument, this dissertation will compare the major ideas underlying Jewish and Confucian attitudes towards the purpose of education in society and amongst their respective peoples, including brief examinations of the two representative treatises on education found among the Jews and the Chinese--the Book of Proverbs in the Hebrew Bible and The Great Learning, one of the four Confucian Classics, respectively. This will show that the educational values with which the two peoples were instilled from an early age, were so similar that the Jews gravitated quite naturally towards Confucian education.
Significance of the Study

While much has, surprisingly, been written about the little-known community of Jews in China, their history and religious life, over the centuries since their discovery by Matteo Ricci in 1605, only speculative ideas as to the reasons for their eventual assimilation into their Chinese environment have been given, and those seemed to appear in passing.

A thorough study with the sole aim of discovering the reasons behind such a phenomenon was only made in 1973 by Song Nai Rhee, whose resulting article, "Jewish Assimilation: The Case of Chinese Jews," concluded that the civil service system and Jewish success in it, was a prime factor in the assimilation of the Chinese Jews. The underlying question of why the Jews may have been motivated to take the civil service exam in the first place, however, has never been addressed. Rhee only speculated that it was their desire to move out of the despised mercantile class and attendant social prestige which so motivated the Jews, who passed the exams in greater proportions to their small numbers.

This dissertation is the first attempt to compare the educational values and the historical and cultural frameworks behind them, held by the two oldest surviving civilizations on earth, just at the time they were coming into prolonged contact with each other.
By using first-hand accounts of foreign observers from the year 1605 until 1985 to chart the progressive acculturation and assimilation of the Jews, such sources of information have been clarified and presented in chronological succession for the first time in the literature of the Chinese Jews. By using informal, observer accounts over the centuries (sometimes even blatantly biased), a unique approach to recording the phenomena of acculturation and assimilation, ordinarily left to strict rules of anthropological research, has been attempted. This, however, was due more to necessity than sudden innovation, as it was the only way to obtain as accurate an account of the daily life of the Chinese Jews and hence, their stages and methods of assimilation, as possible. These are the only records we have of the daily life and actions of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng since their entry into China.

The subject of the Chinese Jews, while having interested many and been painstakingly researched by a handful, nevertheless remains an obscure topic. For this reason, and to serve as witness to the existence and vicissitudes of this small Jewish community and their descendants still living in Kaifeng, from the 9th century to the present day, this study is unique and beneficial.
Methodology and Procedure

In order to document the existence of the Jews in China, and systematically trace the process of acculturation and assimilation which they underwent in the city of Kaifeng, accounts by foreigners who visited China as early as the 9th century, when the first mention of Jews in China was made by Abu-Zaid of Siraf, an Arab traveller, will be researched and chronologically presented. Discovering the roster of visitors to China who may have had contacts with the Jews, and later visitors to Kaifeng, from the 17th through the 20th centuries, will be done by first researching the few but comprehensive bibliographies available on the subject. This would necessitate first consulting Rudolf Lowenthal's pioneering work, The Jews in China: An Annotated Bibliography, and his The Early Jews in China: A Supplementary Bibliography, published in 1940 and 1946, respectively. Donald Leslie's The Survival of the Chinese Jews, published in 1972 and still the most comprehensive work with the most thorough bibliographical reference on the subject, will be the main guide for establishing which accounts were first-hand and which were written second-hand, by contemporaries of the visitors to Kaifeng--many of whom never wrote of their experiences or observations. To bring the subject of visitors to Kaifeng

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13 The Lowenthal bibliographies were re-published jointly by the Sino-Judaic Institute and Hebrew Union College, the latter of which houses the largest collection of Sino-Judaic religious manuscripts in the world, in 1988.
up to the twentieth century, Michael Pollak's *Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries* will be consulted. The most recent bibliography on the subject by Dennis Leventhal of the Hong Kong Historical Society, will also be used.

My own observations of the Chinese Jewish descendants still living in Kaifeng in the 1980s, recorded in articles written for various magazines since 1986 concerning the two trips I made to Kaifeng in 1983, as well as unpublished taped conversations I made while discussing memories the older generation still claim to have about their Jewish heritage in 1985, will also be drawn upon as sources of first-hand information.

In the second chapter, these sources of information will be systematically analyzed for the information they give about the various stages of acculturation and assimilation of the Chinese Jews over the centuries.

Once this information is presented, we can ascertain at what point the Chinese Jews began to assimilate increasingly through the civil service exam, and the possible correlation between this and the time they were cut off from further contact with foreign Jews, or even Jews in other parts of China.

The third chapter will focus on the educational values held by the Jews from ancient times until their entry into China, since my study is based on the premise that the Jews desired to take the civil service exam due to the great similarity in educational values and systems and the ethical
tenets inherent therein, held by both the Chinese and the Jews. To do this, a brief survey of Jewish education from ancient times through the time of their migration to China will be presented first. An overview of education in the Torah and the Talmud will then be given, as these works formed the basis of Jewish education throughout its existence until the present day. This will be followed by a look at the educational and ethical tenets presented in the Book of Proverbs, which is the work representative of such values. Finally, the role played by the family in Jewish education, and the Jewish concept of ethics and righteousness as the prime guiding factors in Jewish education and national survival will be discussed.

This format will be paralleled for the fourth chapter, on Chinese educational values, in which I will give first a general overview of Chinese education through the 15th century, followed by a brief survey of Confucianism, the civil service exam and their importance in China's educational system through the ages. I will also look at one of the Four Books of the Confucian Classics, The Great Learning, which is most representative of specific values Confucianism attached to education. The role of the family in Chinese education and the notions of ethics and righteousness in the educational system and the survival of the nation will finally be explored.

In the conclusion I will first sum up the process of assimilation which took place among the Jews in Kaifeng as
revealed by eyewitness accounts of foreigners in Kaifeng from 1605 to 1985. I will then review the basic educational values held by both peoples from ancient times in light of the historical and cultural framework within which these values were developed by both the Chinese and the Jews, which led to inevitable Jewish participation and success in the Chinese civil service exam.

The pinyin system of romanization of Chinese characters, adopted by the People's Republic of China in 1958, has been employed throughout this dissertation. Since much scholarly work has traditionally used the older, Wade-Giles, romanization system, however, a comparative chart showing where these two systems differ has been appended for easy reference. Spellings of such well-known place names as Canton, Nanking and Peking remain unchanged. Henan Province, where the city of Kaifeng is located, will not retain its old spelling of "Honan," and the Song dynasty, during which time the Jews first settled in Kaifeng, will not be written as "Sung."
CHAPTER II

A CHRONOLOGICAL ACCOUNT OF FOREIGN CONTACTS WITH THE CHINESE JEWS AND OBSERVATIONS OF ASSIMILATION, 9TH-20TH CENTURIES

Early Arab Sources (9th-14th Centuries)

Long before the rise of the Mongols when Marco Polo and other European travellers ventured as far as China and recorded their observations, Arab and other Persian speakers, mostly Muslims but including some Jews, were voyaging to China. Some of the travellers' tales can only be treated as fiction, but others are completely convincing.¹

Donald Daniel Leslie (1972) here remarks upon the earliest known sources of information by foreigners to mention Jews in China. That early reports should have been written by Arabs in the 9th and 10th centuries during the Tang dynasty is only fitting, when one considers that most of the trade between Europe, India and China was carried on by Arabs and other Persian speakers from the 8th through the 13th centuries. Foreign trade under the Tang was greater than at any previous time in Chinese history, and the country thrived.²

A strong connection between Jews and Arabs has been noted throughout both peoples' historical experience in China in terms of their origins, places of residence, language and terminology used by the Chinese for them.

The Jews of China almost certainly originated in a Moslem country, either Persia or Yemen (Leslie, 1982), and were known to speak Persian. Chinese cities where Jews were known to have lived (Ningbo, Ningxia, Hangzhou, Canton, etc.) all had flourishing Moslem communities as well. Later on, such key terms as "qing zhen si" for "temple", and "man la" for "leader of the community", were used interchangeably by both Moslems and Jews, although it has not been determined which group used them first. And indeed, when the Jews later assimilated, they tended to do so by converting to Islam due to the many similarities in religious observance between the two, including abstention from pork and special slaughtering laws.

The Chinese referred to both Jews and Moslems as "hui hui". Israeli (1984) notes that this term most likely originated from "hui he", "the Chinese term for the Uighurs, who converted to Islam during the Yuan." Jews were distinguished by wearing blue skull caps (yarmulkes) as opposed to the white ones worn by Moslems, and hence were called "lan mao hui hui" or "qing hui hui", meaning "blue-capped Muslims".

Abu-Zaid Hassan, Sulaiman and Ibn-Wahab

To Abu-Zaid Hassan (10th century) of Siraf, located on the Persian Gulf, is attributed the first reference by a foreigner ever to mention the existence of Jews in China.

And men experienced in their affairs have mentioned that he killed 120,000 Moslems, Jews, Christians, and Magians who lived in this city and
became merchants in it, apart from those killed among the Chinese inhabitants. The amount of the numbers of these four sects was known only because of [their] taxation [by] the Chinese people [according to] their numbers.  

This part of the account of the rebellion of Huang Chao in Canton in 878 C.E. is a supplement (written c. 916) to an anonymous report commonly attributed to a merchant named Sulaiman (pre-851 C.E.), who had made voyages to India and China. Abu Zaid supplemented his account some time after 886 (Levy, 1955) with information from Ibn-Wahab (late 9th century), who claimed to have visited the capital of China, Chang An, in the late 9th century. Ibn-Wahab ostensibly had an audience with the emperor, during which he was greatly impressed by the latter's knowledge of the tenets of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. 

The 851 report of an anonymous Arab traveller, attributed to Sulaiman (certainly not a Jew of Andalusia), gives valuable information on the Muslims in China, but does not mention Jews there. Abu Zaid's supplement, somewhat before 916,  

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5 Many scholars question the authorship of the first part of this account as being that of Sulaiman. See Rudolf Lowenthal (1940), Yule (1916) and Levy (1955).

6 Here Leslie is obviously referring to Allen Godbey's (1930) mistaken contention that this was a Spanish traveller.

7 See Levy, Biography of Huang Ch'ao, pp. 110-111.
based partly on the report of another traveller, Ibn-Wahab, does mention Jews in Khanfu in 878.  

The large number of people killed as recounted by Abu Zaid was said by him to come from the records of taxes imposed upon non-Chinese residents of Khanfu.  

**Ibn Khurdadhbih and Ibn Al-Faqih**

Already in the 9th century Ibn Khurdadhbih, a geographer from Baghdad, made mention of Jews being in China. Both he and Ibn Al-Faqih (9th-10th century) wrote of the trade routes along the Silk Road taken by the Jewish merchants known as Radasanis.

**Al-Mas'udi, Ibn Al-Athir and Abu'l-Fida**

Abu-Zaid's account of the Canton massacre was repeated by other Arab chroniclers, most notably by al-Mas'udi (ca. 943), an Arab historian and geographer, in his work called *The Golden Meadows* (Muruj al-Dhahab).

Later on, Ibn Al-Athir (1160-1234) and Abu'l-Fida (1273-1331) mention the same account of the Huang Chao rebellion, based upon al-Mas'udi's account.  

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10 Yule (1916) offers the information that Ibn Khurdadhbih's real name was Abu'l-Kasim 'Ubaid-Allah (Yule's spelling), born ca. 820-830.

11 Buzurg Ibn-Shahriyar of Ramhurmuz (10th century) has apparently also given an account of this, but Leslie (1972)
never mentions Huang Chao by name, but it is a story
modelled after those of Abu-Zaid and Mas'udi nevertheless.
He never mentioned the exact number of foreigners who
perished, merely saying it was "an incalculable number."
Abu'l-Fida's account was even briefer than that of Ibn Al-
Athir. Both reveal, as well, the extent of commercial
relations between China and the Arabic countries, from which
the Jews possibly originated, in the 9th century. Levy
(1955) has noted that Chinese sources are entirely silent on
the whole event.

**Ibn Battutah**

Lastly, Ibn Battutah, an Arab traveller in China
writing in 1354, mentions visiting Al-Khansa (Hangzhou)
eight years earlier and seeing a Jewish quarter there.

These Arab reports are entirely convincing. We
may add to them the suggestion of the Kaifeng Jew
Ai, quoted by Ricci in 1605:

'He said that they had preserved the
tradition that many Moors, Christians and
Jews had come with the King Tamerlane, when
he conquered the whole of Persia and also
China 800 years ago (i.e. c. 800).'

**Summary of Information Obtained from Arab Sources**

The Arab sources of information on the early years of
the Jews in China, our first available observations noted by
Westerners, tell us little about the daily life of the Jews

believes that "this is at best hearsay, similar in value to
the story of Eldad Ha-Dani" (p. 166).

in China. They do, however, give strong clues as to the origins of the Chinese Jews, pointing to Moslem countries, primarily Persia, and the fact that they lived in the same major cities as did the Moslems, having arrived approximately the same time and in the same manner.

Although an overland journey along the Silk Road is the generally accepted view of scholars as to the route which the Jews took to get to the Middle Kingdom, a southern route through the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea to Canton and other coastal cities has been posited by others. Lipman (1984) noted that this was the main route through which Arabs entered China, and, as later evidence will bear out, Jewish communities in coastal cities such as Ningbo, Chuanzhou, etc., thrived in addition to that of Kaifeng.

We learn from the account of the Huang Chao rebellion by Abu-Zaid that there must have been a sizable Jewish community in Canton by the end of the 9th century. Ibn-Wahab's audience with the Tang emperor, whose knowledge of the three major Western faiths so impressed him, points to the fact that as early as the Tang—which showed great tolerance towards foreigners and foreign religions—the Jews were a distinct identifiable ethnic community somehow known to and respected by the Chinese rulers, although native Chinese sources on the subject, as shall be shown, are almost non-existent.

Ibn-Battutah's mention of a Jewish section in Hangzhou attests to their thriving in the coastal regions outside of
Kaifeng as identifiable, generally unassimilated Jews, as late as the 14th century.

Early European Travellers in China (13th-16th Centuries)

Marco Polo

With the entry of the Italian traveler Marco Polo to China in the late 13th century, comes the first mention of Jews in the Middle Kingdom by a European. Dictating his account in Italian to Rusticello in a prison in Genoa in the year 1299, Polo refers to Jews in China only once. Perhaps even more interesting is the fact that Polo mentions the fact that Kublai Khan himself observed the festivals of Moslems, Christians and Jews. Olschki (1960) believes that this points to the existence of an organized Jewish community which was granted official recognition at the time.

13 Eldad ha-Dani, a 9th century European Jewish traveller, claimed to have been forcibly taken to China by cannibals around the time Sulaiman and Ibn-Wahab were reporting their observations of the Far East, including the mention of Jews. Most scholars, however, doubt his claim of ever having visited China. Three centuries later, around 1170, a Jewish traveller named Benjamin of Tudela described a route to China but never actually went there himself. Nevertheless, his mention of Jews living in areas accessible to China would seem to support the idea of Jewish trading with China. Pollak (1980) notes that the Jewish geographer, Abraham Farissol in 1524 listed various Jewish communities in Asia "from which travel to China would have been quite feasible."


15 See Sir Henry Yule, (1871), Travels of Marco Polo, Volume I, p. 310.
John of Monte Corvino

Also in the late 13th century, the first Archbishop of Khan-baliq (Peking), a Franciscan monk named John of Monte Corvino (born ca. 1247), mentioned casually that Jews lived in China. At this time missions were flourishing under the patronage of the Khan himself.

Andrew of Perugia

In a letter written in January of the year 1326, Andrew of Perugia, Bishop of Zayton (Chuanzhou) gives us the next tantalizing wisp of evidence for Jews in China by complaining of his lack of success in converting them to Christianity.16

John of Marignolli

Jews were reported to have been at Khan-baliq again some twenty years later by John of Marignolli, a Franciscan writing in 1342, who mentioned participating in many discussions with them. Marignolli and his party had arrived at Khan-baliq in response to "a mission from the great Kaan." (Moule, 1930) This was written during the first of Marignolli's four years spent at the court of Peking as legate sent by the Pope. (Yule, 1916)

16 In 1307 the Pope sent seven more Franciscan brothers to John of Monte Corvino after he was consecrated Archbishop. Only three of these ever reached China, in 1313, and three more were added over the subsequent two years, although none wrote of the Jews.
Francis Xavier

It was not until two centuries later that further word was heard (or written) about Jews in China. Letters written by Francis Xavier in 1546 and 1552 from Malacca and Cochin, respectively, relay rumors of a Jewish presence in China, but that is all.

Galeote Pereira

Slightly more than a decade later, Galeote Pereira, a Portuguese who was imprisoned in China from 1549 to 1561, mentioned Jews along with Moores and Gentiles as "all having their sundry oathes" in the Chinese empire.

Pollak (1980) makes mention of the Jewish physician, botanist and author, Christoval Acosta—a contemporary of Pereira's who was in China while the latter was incarcerated,\(^{17}\) as well as of Mexican Jewish merchants trading in China in the 1600s.\(^{18}\)

Jerome Xavier and Benedict Goes

Francis Xavier's nephew, Jerome (died 1617), and Benedict Goes (born ca. 1561), both Jesuit travellers, echo the same rumors as the first Xavier towards the beginning of the 17th century.

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\(^{18}\) Ibid., p. 367.
Summary of Information on the Chinese Jews Obtained from Early European Travellers

For all of the various "sightings" or rumors of Jews in China by European travellers and Catholic missionaries from the 13th through the 16th centuries, none describe individual Jews or Jewish communities. Jews seem to be mentioned only tangentially, and with not much interest at that.

It is clear from Marco Polo's report that the Jews, along with other foreigners, were treated well by the Mongol government—its foreign in Chinese territory. And it is evident that when Andrew of Perugia was in China in the early 14th century, the Jews were sufficiently intact as a religious entity to resist attempts at converting them by the missionaries, or to be otherwise swayed from their convictions (witness John of Marignolli's discussions with them in Peking shortly after Andrew's report).

It is difficult to ascertain the extent of the presence of Western Jews in China from the 13th through the 16th centuries from the literature available, except to say that it was negligible, if it existed at all.

What these early reports tell us is that during not only the Tang and Song dynasties, but as late as the Yuan (1279-1368) and possibly Ming (1368-1644) the Jews in China had contact with, or at least exposure to, other foreigners in China, and that their religious life and
identity as Jews remained intact--undisturbed and unchallenged by the Chinese government or people.

While Ibn al-Athir was reporting from China in the 12th century, the already established Jewish community of Kaifeng was being granted permission by the Xiao Zong Emperor (r. 1163-1189) to erect its first synagogue in the new capital of the Song dynasty. This same synagogue, it is related in the stele erected by the Jews in 1489, was revamped in 1279, while Marco Polo mentioned seeing Jews in Peking, but half a century before either Ibn Battutah or Andrew of Perugia ever made their cursory mention of Jews.
Silent Testimony I: Native Chinese Sources of Information

Although the leaders of the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty, themselves foreigners in Chinese territory, adopted Chinese customs, immigrants of many different races and cultures shared in the administration of the country. (Latourette, 1962)

Moslems gained increasing influence during this period. The Chinese empire at this time was not greatly influenced by any intellectual, social or religious movements. Latourette (1962) believes that

... to the triumph of the examination system must be assigned at least some of the responsibility for the unprogressive conservatism. Whatever the cause or causes, the Mongol conquest marks the end of a period of creativity and the beginning of a long era of relative lack of originality.19

Religious tolerance was a keynote of the Yuan dynasty. Kublai Khan himself seemed to favor the primitive shamanistic practices of his ancestors, while also inclining towards Tibetan Buddhism. He officially supported several faiths and exempted Daoist and Buddhist monks, Nestorian priests and Moslem teachers from taxation. He also used clergy of different faiths in local administration. Extensive contact with foreign peoples and cultures was one of the unique features of the Yuan dynasty, during which time commerce flourished. It is therefore not surprising that the only bits of information on the Jews found in

official Chinese government sources should appear during this dynasty.

Yuan Government Documents

Statutes of the Yuan

The first time Jews are ever mentioned by name in any official Chinese sources is in the year 1280 in the Statutes of the Yuan (Yuan dian zhang 元典章). On January 27 of that year is written:

Henceforward, Musulmen and Jews, no matter who kills the meat, will eat it, and cease killing sheep by their own hands, and will cease the rite of Sunnah, such as the namaz (prayers) of five worships per day. 20

During the Yuan dynasty foreigners were favored with support by Kublai Khan and his successors. It is most likely that Jewish communities thrived not only in Kaifeng, but also in Hangzhou, Peking, Chuanzhou and Canton, where offices for foreign traders had been established in 1277 and 1293 (Leslie, 1972). Jewish communities may have also sprung up by this time in Yangzhou, Ningbo, Ningxia and Nanking. These are all cities which had been named by Arab sources.

In addition, an office for the Wo-to (Ortaq) Muslim merchants, was set up in 1283. The importance of the Muslims in Chinese foreign trade and probably internal finance at this time was considerable, though what part the Jess numerous Jews took is impossible to estimate. 21

21 Ibid., p. 16.
Leslie (1972) notes that this passage comes under a section entitled: "Prohibition against Muslim slaughter of sheep and the rite of Sunnah," which is obviously aimed at Moslems rather than Jews, and though the passage is quite extensive, Jews as such are named only this once.\textsuperscript{22}

It has already been shown through the writings of Marco Polo that Kublai Khan himself knew much about the Jews as well as other foreigners in the midst of his empire. So it is not all that surprising to find instances of such foreigners being mentioned in official documents.

Over a half century later the Statutes once again mention Jews--for the last time--in July-August 1320, this time with regard to the payment of taxes. Again they are mentioned in the same breath as Moslems and Nestorians, showing a great lack of distinction or favoritism on the part of the government.

\textbf{The Shan ju xin hua by Yang Yu}

Later, the Shan ju xin hua 山居新話, written by Yang Yu 楊肱 around 1360 (but referring to the period between 1277 and 1294), mentions that officials in the Hangzhou sugar board were all rich Jewish and Moslem merchants and were punished for using false weights. This seems to be the only reference to Jews as merchants (Pollak, 1980). The "Wo-t'o" (Mongolian Ortaq), who were Moslem merchants of the Yuan, are not believed to have included Jews.\textsuperscript{23}

\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., p. 14.
The Official History of the Yuan

Rudolf Lowenthal (1940) has identified the remaining instances in which Jews were mentioned during the Yuan dynasty. These all occur in the Official History of the Yuan dynasty (the Yuan Shi 元史) for the years 1329, 1340 and 1354. Jews were prohibited from tax exemption and the levirate, and they were no longer exempt from conscription into the army.

Pollak (1980) notes that the proscription against the levirate (a Biblical Jewish custom whereby a widow is expected to marry her deceased husband's brother) most likely simply reflects the Mongol aversion to marriages within certain degrees of kinship, rather than as a means of harassing any particular ethnic group.24

Local Gazetteers

Xiangfu xian 祥符縣 was a district which formed the central city of Kaifeng prefecture of Henan Province 河南省. It was here that the Jews lived. Gazetteers from the Xiangfu district and Kaifeng prefecture and, to some degree, those from Henan Province, give much information on individual Jews who were successful in Chinese society—the latter two sources including much information given already in the first. Chapters listing natives of the area who


24 For an interesting analysis of how and when the Levirate was alternately forbidden and promoted by the Mongols, see Leslie, Survival, pp. 12-13.
obtained degrees as well as those with short biographies of outstanding personalities are those which have been studied by scholars.

Local gazetteers are the only sources of official documents to give biographical information on individual Chinese Jews—all of which attest to the success of Jews in the civil service exam and in Chinese society in general from the 16th through the first decade of the 20th centuries.  

Leslie (1972) has discovered through the gazetteers that the Kaifeng Jew Zhao Chengji 趙承基, for example, held the rank of major in the army from 1657–1661; Li Yao 李耀, a Jewish Company Commander, died in action fighting against the rebel Li Zicheng 李自成 in 1643; Ai Yingkui 艾應奎 was a personal physician to the prince of Zhou 周 at the beginning of the Qing 清 dynasty (1644–1911) and owned a pharmacy near the synagogue; Ai Xi’s 艾熙 widow was honored for her fifty years of chastity in 1734; the mother of Shi Hongji 石洪基 was honoured for saving her son in the fighting at the end of the Ming; and Zhao Shifang 趙士芳 was the leader of a group of residents concerned with the repair of a Confucian shrine next to the synagogue in 1652.

The synagogue itself is not indicated on a map of the eastern part of the city in the Xiang Fu district.

Not one of the local gazetteers of Hsiang-fu hsien, of K'ai-feng fu, or of Honan Province, writes a word of the Jews as such, before the 20th Century. All that we find is a Lane of the Teaching of the Scripture Chiao-ching hu-t'ung on the Street map of the 1898 Hsiang-fu hsien-chin. Nor does the Sung description of Kaifeng, the Tung-ching Meng-hua-lu by Meng Yuan-lo, mention the synagogue, which was first built about this time.*

The Zhao Clan

The success of the Chinese Jews in their society due to the civil service exam can be most clearly seen in the Zhao clan, about whom we have the most information from local gazetteers. In the Dictionary of Ming Biography (1976) Donald Leslie offers an in-depth look at Zhao Cheng 趙誠 (originally An San 倪三 and later also referred to as An Cheng [An Ch'eng]倪言誠), who was a leading member of the Jewish community around the early 15th century.

It is believed that Zhao Cheng, originally a physician, was a member of a family which was descended from An Dula who built Kaifeng's first synagogue in 1163. In 1421 it was Zhao Cheng who was responsible for the reconstruction of the synagogue.

At the ceremony of commemoration [of the synagogue] even the resident prince of Kaifeng, the first prince of Chou, Chu Su ..., was obliged to send a present of incense, probably for the ceremony at the imperial tablet. Barely two years later (1423) An Ch'eng was awarded the high military rank of a commander of the

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26 Leslie, Survival, p. 204.

Embroidered-uniform Guard for rendering conspicuous service to the emperor. His name was changed from An San to Chao Ch'eng. As Chao Ch'eng he later served as an assistant commander in the Chekiang regional military commission. The entrance of Chao Ch'eng and his family into Ming officialdom, with all the attendant implications of social prestige, power, and influence, undoubtedly accelerated the process of sinicization of the Kaifeng Jews.28

Three members of the Zhao clan were particularly successful and prestigious in the community during the mid-17th century: Zhao Yingcheng 趙映乘 (born 1619, attained the jin shi 进士 (doctorate degree) in 1646, and died c. 1657); his brother Zhao Yingdu 趙映斗 (a gong sheng 贡生 [the equivalent of a master's degree] of 1653), and Zhao Chengji (1642-1663), a military officer who was most likely their cousin.

The Zhao brothers and other leaders of the community are credited with having saved several Torah scrolls after a flood in 1642 was created by the rebel forces in Kaifeng who diverted the Yellow River during the siege of that city, which destroyed the synagogue.

In 1653 they actively helped rebuild the synagogue and restore the manuscripts. Zhao Chengji was promoted in 1657 and was back in Kaifeng in 1663. A good idea of just how successful they were in Qing society is given in the Dictionary of Ming Biography:

28 L. Carrington Goodrich and C.Y. Fang (Eds.), (1976), Dictionary of Ming Biography 1368-1644, New York: Columbia University Press, p. 122. For information on why such honors were bestowed upon Zhao Cheng, see subsection on the 1489 stele below.
Chao Ch'eng-chi, who held the rank of captain-adjutant to the Kaifeng intendant in 1653 (appointed some time after 1642), was promoted in 1657, under the new dynasty to a majority and then lieutenant-colonel at Ku-yuan 國原, Shensi (at present in Kansu). He was back in Kaifeng in 1663. Chao Ying-ch'eng, after becoming a chin-shih, served in the ministry of Justice, rising to a department directorship. In 1650 he was appointed intendant of the Chang-nan circuit 潭南道, Fukien, with the rank of surveillance vice-commissioner with headquarters at Shang-hang 上杭. There he suppressed some armed brigands, built a cultural hall 謹堂 (1653), cleared up judicial cases, and won the praise of the people. He was replaced that year and returned to Kaifeng for a period of mourning. In 1656 he was appointed military intendant of the Lower River circuit 下江道 in Hukuang with his headquarters at Ch' i-chou 衢州 where, it is reported, he died in office, probably the following year.29

So great were the contributions of Zhao Guangyu 趙光裕 and his two sons that a memorial archway was erected in 1678 at the entrance to the synagogue's courtyard, with their names prominently displayed. In it the Zhao family's many contributions to the synagogue were commemorated. A stele dating to 1679 mentions that Zhao Yingdou and another brother, Zhao Yingkun 趙映雲 erected a stone tablet celebrating the completion of the Zhao family archway. This tablet was put in the Zhao ancestral hall to the south of the synagogue.

Leslie further notes that most of the sponsors of the synagogue were friends of the Zhao brothers. "Even in the twentieth century the head of the community was a descendant of the Zhao family, indicating that the influence of Zhao Cheng and his line lasted some five hundred years."30

29 Ibid., p. 123.
Much detailed information is available about Zhao Yingcheng and his family. The life that emerges is one of great dedication and service to both country and kinsmen, in addition to his great success in the civil service, having attained the highest degree of jin shi in 1646. Most details of his career are found in biographies written about him in the gazetteers of Henan and Fujian provinces.

Zhao Yingcheng was a Hebrew scholar as well as a member of the Confucian literati, and wrote a work called "The Vicissitudes of the Holy Scriptures" about the recovery of the Kaifeng Torah and its restoration after the 1642 flood. He also authored the Jie nan tu 難園 in 1651, which described the sufferings of the populace due to the rebellion. He submitted this to the governor of Fujian, Zhang Xuesheng 張學聖. In addition, he is credited with having written the Si zhu tang ji 四竹堂紀鶴, a work in 240 zhuàn 卷, or sections. Unfortunately, none of these works are extant. "What have come down are two small pieces entitled Hang-ch'uan she-hsueh jì 杭州社學記 and Lung-wen-hui hsu 龍文會序 included in the section on literature of the Shang-hang district history." 32

Leslie (1972) has reconstructed the career of Zhao Yingcheng from information gleaned from local gazetteers,

30 Ibid., p. 124.


32 Goodrich and Fang (Eds.), Dictionary of Ming Biography, p. 124.
and has pointed out that the key elements in Zhao's career while in Shang Hang were the defeat of bandits and the construction of a lecture hall, both of which are described in the two extant essays noted above. However, his career in Shang Hang was cut short when he had to return home in 1653 to observe the traditional Confucian three-year mourning period for a parent. It was while in Kaifeng that he actively helped rebuild the synagogue and helped collate and reconstruct scrolls of the Law which had been ruined in the 1642 flood.

Clearly, Zhao Yingcheng was well educated in Judaism as well as Confucianism. His father, Zhao Guangyu, was especially honored on account of him, and was given many honorary titles and positions. He is also known to have contributed financially to the synagogue.

Zhao's younger brother, Yingdou, was himself successful in his own right in Chinese society, becoming a gong sheng in 1653 and taking on the position of district magistrate in three different cities. His help in rebuilding a school in I Liang was commemorated on a tablet. His name also appears in several synagogue inscriptions. "Religious Jews in Kaifeng, the brothers Chao were upright Mandarins when on duty in Fukien and Yunnan, taking part no doubt in Confucian ceremonies and building Confucian schools." 33

Chen Yuan (1920), Leslie (1963-65) and Fang Chaoying (1965) have all discovered references to Jews of other clans

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33 Leslie, Survival, p. 46.
who attained high degrees in the Civil Service system and distinguished positions in Chinese society in various local gazetteers.

Leslie (1967) cautions that research which employs the local gazetteers may prove somewhat inconsistent, as later gazetteers often summarize and omit parts of earlier ones, and again that research in gazetteers may still shed further light on individual Jews, but also cautions against expecting too much.34

Summary of Information Obtained from Native Chinese Sources

The few official Chinese sources of information on the Chinese Jews—the Statutes of the Yuan, the Shan ju xin hua and the Official History of the Yuan Dynasty—attest to the cognizance of a Jewish presence in the Mongol empire by its rulers, as well as the tolerance shown foreigners during this period. Their prohibition at times from practicing such traditional rituals as circumcision, the levirate, and koshering food, speaks for the degree to which Jews still adhered to their religious principles through the 14th century.

While the local gazetteers attest to the great success Jews had in Chinese society by virtue of their disproportionate numbers having passed the civil service examination, they also serve as the first indication in Chinese sources of the tremendous degree of assimilation.

which must have perforce taken place in advance of the Jews having been able to master the Confucian Classics by then, which were essential for any hope of passing the exams.

We find mention in the gazetteers of individual Jews being soldiers, scholars and physicians alike, thus tempering Rhee's notion that Jews were primarily merchants, eager to make their way out of that despised class by passing the Civil Service exam.

While the gazetteers attest to the loyalty and pride of these new Jewish Confucian scholars, it is evident that they remained also committed Jews, loyal to their Kaifeng community.
Silent Testimony II: Native Jewish Sources of Information

Writings by the Chinese Jews

To Zhao Yingcheng is credited the authorship of three other works, in addition to the two extant pieces in the Shang Hang district history mentioned above. None of these may have actually been published, but all were mentioned in the various gazetteers.

The Jie nan tu

The Jie nan tu, which the Fujian gazetteers say he drew in 30 ci 本 (volumes), concerns the beginning years of the Qing dynasty. This work is said to consist of charts of the pillage and suffering of the population. (Leslie, 1972)

A Record of the Vicissitudes of the Holy Scriptures

Zhao's next piece was a commemorative work called "A Record of the Vicissitudes of the Holy Scriptures" and was mentioned in the 1663 stele.

Record of the Oddities of the Four Bamboo Halls

Lastly, the "Record of the Oddities of the Four Bamboo Halls" is attributed to Zhao Yingcheng as well. Chen Yuan noted that this work was mentioned in the Xiang fu gazetteers (1739, 22, p. 58; 1898, 19, p. 6A) and the 1695 Kaifeng gazetteer (38A, p. 14B), in their bibliographical lists. It is impossible, however, to ascertain the contents of this work as it is no longer extant.
Introduction to the Understanding of the Doctrine

In addition to the several works authored by Zhao Yingcheng mentioned above, there is one work on the Hebrew religion written in ten chapters by his younger brother, Zhao Yingdou, entitled "Introduction to the Understanding of the Doctrine" 明道序. To date this document has not been found, although it is speculated that it may still be extant, either in Rome or in Peking. (Leslie, 1972) This was written some time before 1663, as it was mentioned on the stele dated that year.35

Record as in a Dream and The Diary of the Defense of Bian

Two other works had for some time been attributed to the Chinese Jews: 1) Record as in a Dream 如夢錄, written around 1650 and giving a description of Kaifeng before the 1642 flood, and 2) The Diary of the Defense of Bian 守汴日志, possibly written in 1642. Both of these works are said to have been written by Li Guangtian 李光賢 who White (1942) incorrectly identified as a Jew. Nevertheless, as it has been shown that records of the Jews in native Chinese sources are remarkably lacking, the two books are worth noting here insofar as they touch upon the Jewish community in Kaifeng.

In the San yi tang zong shu 三怡堂叢書, edited by Chang Maolai 常茂徕 around 1852 (pp. 33A-B) one finds the following:

35 For speculation as to the whereabouts of this work, see Leslie, Survival, pp. 129-130.
"Going east along the Xian er Li family lane, there is a Temple of worship of the Religion that extracts the sinews."

Leslie adds:

The exact position of this synagogue is not easy to fix from the Ju-meng-lu description. The synagogue is reached by going from the Ta-wa-ssu to the Earth Street 上街, then eastwards to the Li family lane. Ch'ang Mo-lai 常茂傑 in his 1852 commentary states that the Ta-wa-ssu was situated where the present (1852) Pai-yi-ke 台西閣 is; and this, on the street maps in the 1898 Hsiang-fu gazetteer (end of vol. I; see our map p. 149), is directly west of the Fire God Shrine 火神廟, and just north of the 20th century site of the synagogue according to White I in his map "E" of the eastern section of the city of K'ai-feng ...

This fits perfectly. The Earth Market was almost certainly at the crossroads of the Earth Street with the Fire God Shrine Front Street (as White II, p. 24, had surmised). The Ta-wa-ssu was actually NE of this crossroads, the synagogue site SE of it. We can conclude, with near certainty, that the Yuan dynasty synagogue was on the identical site to that of the 19th century. 36

On page 29A of the Record as in a Dream, the pharmacy of Ai Wensuo 艾文所 (the Jew Ai Yingkui) is mentioned. The editor's commentary adds that the synagogue was in a state of decay at the time.

Lowenthal adds:

Ch'ang Mao-lai ... the editor of an earlier edition of this description of Kaifeng, states in his preface of 1852 that for 30 years he had been unable to find this work. According to the tradition, Li Kuang-t'ien (Hsi-liang) ... is the author, but the book was apparently compiled after Li's death in Nanking ca. 1650.

36 Leslie concludes that the Yuan dynasty synagogue was on the identical site as the Qing dynasty synagogue. See Leslie, "The Kaifeng Jew Chao Ying-ch'eng," p. 159.
f. 35a-b. On the south side of the Earth Street ... there is a small shop for eye medicines belonging to the Ai family. ... In addition there is a general pharmacy belonging to Ai Ying-k'uei (Wen-so) ...

f. 40b. In the Hsien-erh Li-chia Hu-t'ung ... there is a synagogue (Li-pai-ssu) of the T'iao-chin-chiao ...

The Diary of the Defense of Bian, possibly written in 1642, mentions a Moslem or Moslem-Jewish company as well as hui troops led by a Jewish company commander named Li Yao. Li Yao is also mentioned in the 1663b stele as well as the Memorial Book of the Dead.

From these two works we can ascertain that the Chinese Jews in the 17th century were a well-established part of the Kaifeng community--neither scorned nor held back from advancement by the Ming society.

The Chinese Jews themselves left only a few records dealing specifically with the religion which set them apart from their neighbors, as well as the history of the

37 While Lowenthal noted that this appears on pp. 35 a-b, this author was only able to locate it on p. 29a of the Ru Meng lu.

38 Again, although Lowenthal has indicated that this citation appears on p. 40b, this author has located it instead on p. 33b.


40 A translation into English of The Diary of the Defense of Bian is currently being undertaken by Prof. Shirely Wood of the English Department of Henan University in Kaifeng, and Mr. Wang Yisha, former curator of the Kaifeng Municipal Museum, who has also recently completed two books of his own on the history of the Kaifeng Jews.
community which they had become over the centuries. Among these records we count the following:

1) Steles with inscriptions dated 1489, 1512, 1663 and 1679

2) Archway inscriptions from the synagogue compound

3) Vertical and horizontal inscriptions on the synagogue wall (mostly dating from the mid- to late-17th century)

4) The Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book of the Dead (closed ca. 1660)

In addition to the above, Hebrew manuscripts have been found and bought at various times during the course of foreign contact with the Chinese Jews. These include Torah scrolls, section books of the Law, books of the bible, the Talmud and prayer books. It is with these manuscripts that we deal first.

**Hebrew Manuscripts**

Although the extant Hebrew manuscripts consist of works for religious observance rather than containing any direct information about the community or about individual Chinese Jews written by themselves or by first-hand observers, it is necessary to point out the significance of these religious writings as existing and being used in the Kaifeng community as late as 1850.

Obtained by two Chinese Protestant delegates who visited the community in 1850 and 1851 (see subchapter on the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the
Jews), most of these manuscripts are now held in the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati.\textsuperscript{41} They shed a great deal of light upon the origins of the Kaifeng community, contacts with foreign Jews, and most importantly on the religious practices still maintained by the Jews. It is with this in mind that we must take a look at the significance of the religious manuscripts.

The use of Judaeo-Persian in the colophons attached to the religious works is one factor which stands out in any study of the extant Hebrew manuscripts. As Persian was the lingua franca of foreigners in Central Asia and China during the Tang dynasty, it is understandable that there should be evidence of Persian having been spoken and written by the Kaifeng Jews. Leslie (1972) doubts anything can be deduced from analyzing the grammar or spelling of these texts as they were greatly influenced by Chinese, evidencing the degree to which even the religious life of the Chinese Jews had become affected by their environment. (An interesting fact which has been noted is that the Chinese Jews mixed up the Hebrew letter "lamed" (which has an "l" sound) and the "resh" (which has an "r" sound), as attested to by the inscriptions on the synagogue walls, of common Hebrew prayers which were copied by the 1850 delegates. Leslie maintains that their limited ability to read and write

\textsuperscript{41} Permission has recently been secured from Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati to donate microfiche copies of the Chinese-Hebrew genealogy and several Hebrew manuscripts to the Kaifeng Municipal Museum for its slated JuGaica Wing, and to Mr. Wang Yisha, who plans to use them for research.
Hebrew without any real understanding of it lasted until about 1800, or possibly a little longer.)

The extent to which knowledge of Judaeo-Persian clung to the Kaifeng community can be seen in the Kaifeng Haggadah, the book used to recite the story of Exodus during Passover, which included a piyut, or long poem, in Hebrew with a Judaeo-Persian translation. The Haggadah itself may have been copied from earlier copies, but the colophons in them date to 1620 and 1626, attesting to a knowledge of Judaeo-Persian surviving in China at least until that time.42

Although it has become clear that the Kaifeng Jews were able to read and write Hebrew at least as late as the 17th century, it is most likely that they did not fully comprehend the written word. It is even less likely that they ever spoke Hebrew, although there is no evidence to either support or refute this possibility.

After the purchase of several Torah scrolls by two delegates from the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews in 1851, a spate of articles was written on the subject of the Hebrew manuscripts found in the possession of the Chinese Jews at this relatively late date.

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The London Missionary Society Press immediately published facsimiles of the Hebrew manuscripts obtained at the Jewish synagogue in "K'ae-fung-foo" under that exact name in Shanghai in 1851. And on August 16 of the same year the North China Herald carried an article entitled "The Kae-Fung-Foo Manuscripts" by Reverend W. H. Medhurst, who had played a major role in having the two delegates sent to Kaifeng in the first place.\(^{43}\)

Within the following two years the Jewish Chronicle (IX, 1852-53, pp. 130-1 and 145-6) published "Hebrew Prayers Lately Discovered at Kae-Fung-Foo," taken from the Jewish Intelligence 19 (January 1853), pp. 1-7. In the remaining decades of the 19th century, an increasing number of Jewish magazines, as well as the Journal of the American Oriental Society, carried articles on the subject of the Hebrew Manuscripts discovered in Kaifeng.\(^{44}\)

In 1924 the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati acquired nearly all of these manuscripts. Interest in the manuscripts and Torah scrolls has been evidenced well into the 20th century.\(^{45}\)


Scrolls of the Law

In 1642, as the 1663 stele relates, a disastrous flood ensued from the forced diversion of the Yellow River by the military in an effort to defend Kaifeng from a rebel army. As a result, tens of thousands of Kaifeng residents drowned, and the synagogue itself was completely destroyed. The 13 Torah scrolls which the synagogue was said (by the 1663 stele) to possess, were swept along with the flood—ten of which were eventually retrieved (along with 26 pieces of other religious manuscripts). These were pieced together, after the damaged parts had been removed, to make up one complete Torah scroll. This one was thereafter referred to as the "Scroll of Moses." Twelve other copies were again constructed, and it was these which served the community for the next two centuries.46 These scrolls, later scholars have realized, suggest Persian and Yemenite similarities.

The "need for renewed examination of the scrolls" called for by Leslie in 1972, noting that most of the descriptions of them were from the 19th century, was taken up by Michael Pollak only a few years later. In The Torah Scrolls of the Chinese Jews, published in 1975, Pollak


46 For the location and details of each of the surviving scrolls, see Leslie (1972), pp. 143-144 and Pollak (1975).
reports on his remarkable findings. He notes, for example, that the evidence points to the later scrolls having been copied from more than one source.

In 1512 there were only four scrolls. It is believed, due to the Judaeo-Persian colophons to the Pentateuch section books that were found, that the Law was copied between 1620 and 1621 and again between 1622 and 1626 (Leslie 1972). While these extant Torah scrolls clearly show those who prepared them to be rote copyists rather than knowledgeable scribes, they still in and of themselves disprove the notion presented by the first Western observers in Kaifeng in the 17th century that the Jews had lost their sense of Jewishness. The very willingness of these scribes to undertake such a laborious process suggests that in the middle of the 17th century "the ties of the Jews of Kaifeng to their ancient faith were still very much alive." (Pollak, 1975).

Section Books of the Law

The Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati possesses 29 out of 53 separate section books, in addition to the scrolls of the Law which were bought in 1851. However, only four of these sections were ever published. In his Abr-Nahrain article (1963-1966), Leslie has also given the eight Judaeo-Persian colophons found with these. The 1850 delegates came away with six of these section books and two prayer books. A year later they purchased 29 more, with 28 prayer books and six Scrolls of the Law.
The fact that the books of the Law were divided into 53, rather than 54 sections gives further credence to the belief that the Kaifeng Jews had a Persian origin, for while Ashkenazi Jews divide the Pentateuch into 54 sections, the Sephardi Jews (to which the Persians belonged) combined the 52nd and 53rd sections into one.

The Talmud

The Kaifeng Jews followed Talmudic prescriptions in their prayers. A single page autographed by Father Jean-Paul Gozani in 1713 (see subsection on 18th century Jesuits) lists most of the titles of the sections of the Talmud. Leslie (1967) notes that this implies that some knowledge of the Talmud, if not the tractates of the Talmud themselves, existed in Kaifeng. The actual physical existence of any Talmud at all in the Kaifeng Jewish community, however, is doubtful, since the Persian and Yemenite Jews who most likely made up the bulk of the community, owned few in their countries of origin to begin with.

Prayer Books

The prayer books of the Chinese Jews may point to a Yemen origin for the community, for, as Leslie points out, the liturgy of Maimonides (12th century), and to the Yemen Siddur [prayer book] follow Maimonides, are remarkably alike.\footnote{For a complete list of the Kaifeng Prayer Books see Leslie, \textit{Survival}, pp. 154-156.}
The summaries giving the order of the prayers point to this original following of Talmudic prescriptions.

The Jews of Kaifeng possessed prayer books, as noted by 18th and 19th century western observers. These imply that the Jews were able to observe the Sabbath as well as all the major festivals, pointing to the potential for a thriving religious life among the Kaifeng Jews at least as late as the 18th century. While there are no extant prayers for circumcision, redemption of the firstborn or wedding ceremonies, it is most likely that these were held, at least for the first few hundred years.

**Hebrew Inscriptions from the Synagogue**

We may note also that Jesuit visitors to Kaifeng in 1721 and 1722, as well as the Protestant delegates of 1850, copied some of the Hebrew inscriptions which were said to be in the synagogue. These were copied rather poorly, and contained many errors in the Hebrew. But they also evidenced Chinese phonological influence, often confusing the lamed ("l" sound) with the resh ("r" sound).

**Stone Inscriptions**

The stone inscriptions of the Chinese Jews are the only extant writings we have about the community's history and religious practices which were written by the Chinese Jews themselves. These fall into two categories: 1) Steles with inscriptions dating to 1489, 1512, 1663 and 1679, and 2) Inscriptions found in the synagogue itself. The latter
category is further divided into archway inscriptions and vertical or horizontal inscriptions which were found on the synagogue wall. Most of these were created between 1656 and 1688.

The Steles

Two of the three steles which were put up in the courtyard of the synagogue at Kaifeng are still in existence today. The inscriptions dated 1489 and 1512 are on one stele, back to back. The latter inscription mentions that this stone was originally set up in a special pavilion erected in the synagogue's courtyard, which was the customary practice of Confucian and other temples, as well as of mosques. (White, 1942)

In 1912 the Canadian Church of England's Mission in Henan was made caretaker of these stones by the Jews. Bishop William Charles White, who lived in China for 40 years (25 of which were spent in Kaifeng) was the head of this Mission. One stone was then set up on each side of the western entrance of Trinity Cathedral. A second stone dated 1679, which had been found built into the wall of the Zhao family house, was also given to the cathedral. The uproar created by this new status of the steles has been related by White:

Having occasion to be away from home on tour in the province, the writer returned to find the city in an uproar, with placards posted on public walls stating that the Anglican Bishop had obtained the stones and intended to send them out of the country. The head Jew, Chao Yun-chung ... had been thrown into prison, and members of all the Jewish clans were clamoring for
his release. The authorities were insistent that Chao should request the return of the stones, and finally offered him a bribe of eight hundred dollars if he would do so. His reply was 'If you give me eighty wan of dollars ($800,000) I will not ask the Bishop to return the stones. They are stones that belonged to a religion. This religion has come to an end, but the Anglicans ... are our successors, and the stones remain in their hands.' He refused to be moved from this stand, and his fellow Jews concurred, in spite of threats and persecution and danger of imprisonment for themselves. A memorial was prepared and sent to the Governor of the province, pointing out that the stones had not been cared for, and that one was already badly cracked through exposure to the elements, and that the purpose of the petitioner was to preserve these stones, which were of such historical importance. The Governor, in a courteous reply, commended the petitioner for his good purpose but pointed out that the stones belonged to China, and that the Chinese authorities would carefully preserve these historic relics. A deadlock was reached, until through the influence of good friends among the officials the Governor agreed to a compromise. The Bishop and his successors were to be the custodians of the stones, which were never to leave K'ai-feng, and which were to be roofed over for protection from the elements. They were to be safeguarded from ill-use, but yet must be accessible for examination by authorized scholars and officials. This agreement was duly signed and recorded, the chief Jew was released, and amicable relations were restored. Shortly after this when the Western powers had formally recognized the new Republic of China, both the civil and military provincial governors, accompanied by many scores of high-ranking officials, came to the cathedral formally to join in a Service of Thanksgiving. They brushed by the two stones which stood one on each side of the western door of the cathedral, but it is doubtful whether anyone noticed them or recalled the historic dispute over their acquisition.48

The 1679 stone mentioned here by White was the least decipherable, as children had for a long time tossed coins on it. It was built into the wall of the Zhao family's

house on South Teaching Scripture Lane and was removed by an American engineer by the name of Jenks in 1904.

A third stele, dating to 1663, has never been found, although rubbings of it had been made and published, most notably by Jerome Tobar in his *Inscriptions Juives de K'ai-fong-fou*, published in Shanghai in 1912. Delegates to China in 1851 mentioned its existence, so it was standing, purportedly in a pavilion, as late as that date. The very fact that steles were erected at all points to assimilation, as it has never been a Jewish custom to do so, but was, however, common among the Chinese.

**The 1489 Stele**

Entitled "A Record of the Rebuilding of the Synagogue

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49 Leslie (1972) maintains that Zhang Xinglang's assertion that it is extant is erroneous. David A. Brown mentioned during his 1932 visit to Kaifeng that it is "said to be in the possession of the Moslems."

50 Jerome Tobar was the first to translate these completely into a Western language. In "Inscriptions Juives de K'ai-fong-fou" (1900) he has reproduced the original Chinese in addition to providing his French translation. Bishop White translated these into English based upon the Chinese given by Ch'en Yuan (1923). The first complete translation of the steles was done by W.H. Medhurst after 1850, based on the copies of the steles made by Jiang Rongji, one of the two Chinese Protestant delegates to visit the Chinese Jews on behalf of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews in 1850. These copies were themselves full of errors, though, due to the difficult conditions under which they had to be copied. For details on the whereabouts of the various rubbings and copies made of the steles as well as of their many translations, see Leslie (1972), pp. 132-135.
重建清真寺記, the earliest of the steles, dated 1489, describes the history of the Kaifeng Jewish community and its religious beliefs.

This stele represents the first source of information we have on the Chinese Jews during the Ming dynasty, and is the first one written by the Jews themselves. It shows the great strides the Jews had made in Chinese society by then, as well as the efforts they were making to blend in with their neighbors.

A reproduction of the 1489 stele is now in the Chinese Library of the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, where Bishop White brought back many of the pieces of Chinese-Judaica he acquired during the course of the 25 years he spent in Kaifeng alongside the Jews.

Beginning with the declaration that the patriarch Abraham (阿無羅漢), who founded the religion of the Israelites, was a 19th generation descendent of Pan Gu Adam 盤古阿爹, Pan Gu being the first man in the Chinese mythological story of creation, it becomes clear that the writer (and by extension those in the community he represented) was already an assimilated Jew. "The lotus-carved base on which the stone rests also shows this, for it reveals a tolerance in regard to the use of the common Buddhist symbol of the lotus flower."51

What follows in this stele is an explication of the Jewish religion and ceremonial practices replete with

51 White, Chinese Jews, Volume II, p. 3.
quotations from the Confucian Analects, couched in the most florid of Buddhist and Daoist terms as well.

What was the common practice of the patriarchal worthies in their reverential ceremonies? First they washed their bodies, and changed their garments; then they purified their mind (t'ien ch'un), and regulated their natural faculties (t'ien kuan); and so with great respect and veneration they then entered in before the Scriptures of the Way (Tao Ching). The Way (Tao) has no form or figure, but is just like the Way of Heaven which is above. 52

Jewish practices already exhibited differences from those of Jews in the rest of the Diaspora. "In every month there should be four days' fasting." 53 Basic Confucian practices such as ancestor worship were clearly followed.

Truly, in the matter of honouring Heaven, if a man did not venerate his ancestors (tsu) he could not then properly offer sacrifices to the forefathers (hsien). Thus, in the spring and autumn sacrifices to the ancestors, one 'served the dead as he would have served the living; he served the departed as he would have served those present' (Doctrine of the Mean, Legge, XIX:5). He offered oxen and sheep, and seasonal food (cp. Doctrine of the Mean, XIX:3), and did not fail to honour the ancestors because they had already passed on. 54

In this stele the Jewish religion is said to have originated in "Tian zhu," or India, as it was known. The Jews, it relates, came to China with seventy 55 Jewish

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52 Ibid., p. 9.

53 Ibid., p. 10. This "custom" may have been passed down through the 20th century. During this author's own talks with a descendant of the Li clan in August of 1985, Mr. Li Rongxin also stated that he learned that Jews were supposed to fast every Sabbath as a way of honoring it.

54 Ibid., p. 10.

55 This is most likely a mistake for the number 17. See Leslie (1964-65), pp. 2 and 5, for more details on this misinterpretation of the stele.
families bearing tribute of Western cloth to the Song Emperor. Of the statement "... they entered (the court of) Sung, and the Emperor said: 'You have come to Our China (Chung-hsia); reverence and preserve the customs of your ancestors, and hand them down at Pien-liang (K'ai-feng)." Nothing has thus far been located in Chinese official government sources to corroborate this.

In the year 1163 a synagogue was built, relates the 1489 stele. Most likely this was the first synagogue—at least from information we have from the inscriptions—and in 1279 it was renovated. It was said to be located at the south-east of Earth Market Character Street.

The 1489 stele names Levi as having been charged with the administration of the Religion and mentions at least fourteen others who were "well-versed in the Canonical Scriptures" who were designated "Man-la's." As Leslie (1962) points out:

Though the Confucian influence on the Jews and Jewish inscriptions of Kaifeng is abundantly clear, no real evidence exists of a Moslem influence. The terminology of the inscriptions does not show such influence, and the names of the Patriarchs are transliterated from Hebrew with no connection whatsoever with parallel Moslem transliterations into Chinese. The term Man-la is probably not to be identified with Mullah as previously assumed. White's term Yen-tu-la is almost certainly non-existent, a specific man Yen Tu-la being intended. The remaining term Wu-ssu-ta is probably a transliteration of the Persian Oustad, but even here no

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56 White, Chinese Jews, Volume II, p. 11. White points out that Kaifeng was known as "Pien-ching" during the Song dynasty, but was known as "Pien-liang" during the Yuan. The Ming dynasty, which immediately succeeded the Yuan, was the one in which this inscription was written, obviously erroneously.
evidence exists that the Chinese Moslems also used this term. The Jews probably brought it from Persia (around the 10th century) quite independently. 57

From the use of the term "wu-ssu-ta" we can surmise that the Jews could not have entered China well before the 10th century. Use of the transliterated term "ustad" for "rabbi" denotes a New Persian, as opposed to Pehlavi or Middle Persian, language, since it contains an Iranian element which seems to have developed ca. 10th century. Even the name for the Jews as recorded in the Yuan Shi uses the exact phonetic transcription of New Persian: "Djuhud" or "Djahud," with an initial "j" sound, as opposed to the word "yahut" in Middle Persian, corresponding to the Hebrew "Yehudi" or the Arabic "Yahud," the change of the initial "y" sound to an initial "j" sound being peculiar to New Persian.

That Persian speaking Jewish traders were in Chinese territory as early as the 8th century, however, has been proven by two archaeological finds along the northern and southern caravan routes of the old Silk Road.

The first, discovered in 1910 by Sir Marc Aurel Stein, a Hungarian-born British Jewish archaeologist and Orientalist, was of a business letter written in Judaeo-Persian. Found at Dandan Uiliq along what used to be the northern caravan route of the Silk Road, this letter dates to 708 C.E.

Seven years after this discovery, Professor Paul Pelliot unearthed a selichah, or Hebrew devotional prayer sheet, in the caves of Dunhuang in Eastern Turkestan along what used to be the southern caravan route. This has turned out to be the oldest known Hebrew manuscript in existence.

From these two finds we can deduce that an overland northern route of entry into China was used by the Jews, perhaps at the same time a southern sea route may have been used, thought by many scholars to explain the many coastal cities in China which the Jews inhabited.

The turning point for the Kaifeng Jews is marked by the following paragraph which appears in the 1489 stele:

Yen Ch'eng, the physician, in the nineteenth year of Yung Lo (1421), received from the Emperor, through Chou-fu Ting Wang, a present of incense and (permission) to rebuild the synagogue (Ch'ing Chen Ssu). In the synagogue (was placed) the Imperial Tablet (Wan Sui P'ai), acknowledging allegiance (feng) to the ruling Emperor of the Ta Ming Dynasty. In the twenty-first year of Yung Lo (1423) a memorial was presented on the merits (of the above-mentioned physician), and by Imperial decree he was given the surname Chao, and there was conferred upon him the grade of Embroidered Robe Body-guard (Chin Yi Wei-chih-hui), and he was promoted to be colonel in the constabulary (Chih-hui) of the Chekiang (Che-chiang) Province.  

With the conferring upon Yan Cheng of the surname Zhao, was to begin the illustrious and fairly well-documented career of Zhao Cheng and his family, as well as of his descendants. Even well into the 20th century, it will be

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seen, the Zhao clan has retained its reputation as being spokesmen for the community, and is amply proud of its many contributions over the centuries to the Kaifeng Jewish community. During the Ming dynasty the Jews were given seven surnames, by which they can be identified to this day: Ai 艾, Gao 高, Jin 金, Li 李, Shi 石, Zhao 趙 and Zhang 張.

The 1489 stele continues to recount a flood of the Yellow River "in the fifth year of T'ien Shun" (1461), after which the Jews were again granted official permission to rebuild the synagogue on its original site. It is to the reconstruction of the synagogue that the stele was dedicated and thus erected.

The stele continually relates the many individual Jews of the community who contributed their money and labor to the rebuilding of the synagogue. The receipt by the community of a Torah scroll from Ningbo is noted, thereby affirming the existence of a Jewish community in that city at least as late as the 15th century.

The successes and accomplishments of various Jews from Kaifeng and Ningxia (again, pointing to solid evidence for communities in other cities) in Chinese society, is evidenced by their having passed different levels of the civil service exam, as well as having attained various military and civilian posts.

The close contacts which Jews in Kaifeng still had at this time with other Jewish communities in China is
exemplified by the Jin clan who cooperated with each other between Kaifeng and Ningxia to purchase additional land for the synagogue and set up the stone slab for the inscription.

The synagogue was said to have been built on a grand scale. It was compared with Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian Temples, which were all built to honour their respective creeds.

Confucianism and Judaism were said to "agree on essential points and differ in secondary ones" by this stele, with the principles embodied in the Five Relationships (the wu lun 五倫). The message of the stele ends with invocations for blessings on the Ming Emperor and for universal peace.

The 1489 stele was composed by Jin Zhong 金鐘, written by Cao Zuo 曹佐, and had the seal characters of Fu Ru 傅儒, all Confucian literati of Kaifeng. It was set up by Jin Ying 金瑛 of Ningxia and Jin Li 金禮 of Kaifeng.

That there may have been a stele of an earlier date is mentioned by Liu Longguang 刘龙光 in his article "The myth of the Jews in Kaifeng" (關於開封的猶太) which appeared in the Kabun Osaka Mainichi (華文大阪每日) on February 15, 1941 (4:56, pp. 23-24). Here he stated that "A stele from the Yuan period (1280-1367) was sold several decades ago to a Shanghai curio dealer ..."59

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The 1512 Stele

A little less than a quarter of a century after the 1489 stele was erected, another inscription was carved on to the back of the same stone. While it gives no new information about the Kaifeng community, but rather repeats the basic information found in the first stele, it nevertheless is an important work in judging the process of assimilation which was going on in the Kaifeng Jewish community at this time. "... it is clearly apparent that the authors were attempting to win the favour of the "literati," for the whole inscription is an apology for the Chinese Jews in relation to Confucianism." Even the phoenix designs at the top of this side of the stele show the influence of their non-Jewish environment. In particular, the stele apologizes for the fact that the Jewish scriptures were not written in Chinese.

Leslie (1972) mentions the possibility that the Jewish community of Yangzhou first wrote this inscription, later copied in Kaifeng. He also speculates on evidence of other Jewish communities with which the Jews of Kaifeng had contact.

The composer of the 1512 stone inscription may or may not have been a Jew,

for though his surname is not one of the Seven Clans, yet there was a Tso included in the names of the large group of Jews who came to the capital in the Sung Dynasty. This many was a native of Chiang-tu (Wei yang or Yang Chou), where it is known that Chinese Jews were resident, and where probably a synagogue was established.\textsuperscript{63}

Contrarily, the writer of the inscription itself was probably not a Jew, although he had a Jewish surname, according to White.

\textbf{The 1663 Stele}

This stone was erected "to commemorate the restoration of the synagogue and its Scriptures, following the destruction consequent upon the inundation of 1642." (White, 1942). The obverse side of the 1663 stele was composed by a non-Jew named Liu Chang. Although again recounting the history of the Jewish religion and its entry into China, the story now takes on fantastic dimensions, claiming that the Jews arrived in China during the Zhou dynasty (ca. 1100–221 B.C.E.)

It again mentions honors bestowed upon the more successful men of the community and relates how very much they all contributed in time, labor and money, to reconstruct the synagogue after the disastrous flood of 1642.

In between the flood and the completion of the new synagogue, the Jews worshipped in a rented house on the north side of the river. It took the Jews who had fled

\textsuperscript{63} White, \textit{Chinese Jews}, Volume II, p. 47.
Kaifeng during the flood over ten years to return, and another ten years to mobilize their resources well enough to rebuild the synagogue.64

Although no date is given on the reverse side of the 1663 stele, entitled "Names Inscribed on the Reverse of the Stone," it was most likely inscribed at the same time. This side of the stone mentions all the Jews who helped in rebuilding each section of the synagogue, from the marble balustrades outside to the pairs of bronze censers and vases inside.

**The 1679 Stele**

A younger brother (or possibly first cousin) of Zhao Yingcheng, the most successful of all the Chinese Jews, by the name of Zhao Yingkun, composed a stele dated 1679 which was built into what was most likely the wall of the Zhao ancestral hall of the synagogue compound. Erected in commemoration of the many contributions by the Zhao clan to the synagogue and the Kaifeng community over the years, this stele repeats the history of the community as recited in the 1489 and 1663 steles, adding only that the Zhao clan archway was completed and the synagogue was repaired.

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64 For details on specific contributions made by individual Chinese Jews to the reconstruction of the synagogue and the religious scrolls, see Leslie, *Survival*, pp. 38-39.
The Archway Inscriptions

The Chinese have long put up memorial archways to honor meritorious men or virtuous women. By 1656, the date of the first archway inscription, the Jews were already well assimilated into their environment. The 1679 stele, in fact, was erected to commemorate the building of the Zhao Family Archway the previous year. Two of the three archway inscriptions were erected in honor of the successes of the Zhao clan. The third was dated 1797 (over a century after the erection of the arch itself).

From these inscriptions we learn of the high ranks in Chinese society the various Jews of these clans attained, and can clearly see the Confucian influence in the admonitions chosen for inscriptions, taken from the Confucian Classics.

Vertical and Horizontal Inscriptions on the Synagogue Wall

The Horizontal Tablets

Twenty-four short horizontal inscriptions, six of which fall under the archway inscriptions category above, were found in the synagogue compound. Although of little religious significance, the information they give us concerning dates and names of officials who honoured or were honoured by the synagogue are quite valuable. Eleven of the twelve horizontal inscriptions which were signed by individuals were by non-Jewish officials. They attest to the
extent of the Kaifeng community's success in Chinese society during the 17th century by virtue of the fact that most were composed by non-Jewish senior Confucian officials, dating between 1656 and 1679, showing their respect for the Jewish community. Two tablets dated 1658 were even labelled "by Imperial decree." (Leslie, 1972)

Many of the three- or four-character horizontal inscriptions were phrases from one of the Confucian Classics, the Book of Odes. The use of phrases from the Confucian classics to express sentiments about the Jewish religion are clear in these inscriptions.

The Vertical Tablets

While the horizontal inscriptions give us little information regarding the community or its knowledge of Judaism, the seventeen vertical ones describe various aspects of the religion. Almost all were written by Jews.

While also honorary tablets, unlike the horizontal inscriptions, these all carried the donors' names. The only vertical inscriptions which are dated are from 1663, 1668 and 1676. The conscious combination of Chinese and Jewish philosophy is again evident in the vertical tablets:

INSCRIPTION XXVII

A. From the time of Noah, when beauteous creation arose, until now, talented men of Western India have sought the principal that produced Heaven, Earth, and Man

自女娲煉化以至西方立奇靈 求生天生地生人之本
B. From the time of Abram, when our religion was established, and subsequently, men of China have diffused instruction, and obtained complete knowledge of Confucianism, of Buddhism, and of Taoism.

由阿羅開宗而後中華衍教得學儒
學釋學道之全

And again:

INSCRIPTION XXXI

A. The First Ancestor (Abram) alone received the religion from Heaven and honoured Heaven, therefore we remember the Ancestor

祖獨承天敬天因而念祖

B. When living he was able to prevent and abstain from killing (Isaac), therefore we preserve life

生能止殺戒殺所以存生

Although not a Jew this writer must have been deeply impressed with Judaism, for he presented no less than four inscriptions to the synagogue, and the sentiments expressed reveal a knowledge of the history and ideas of the Jewish religion.  

The Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book of the Dead

What for years had by scholars been considered a genealogical register which, by the time it was closed (ca. 1670) with a few later entries appended sometime thereafter, contained 106 pages of information, including over 70 pages

65 White, Chinese Jews, Volume II, p. 138. White mentions that sentences from the vertical tablets marked "A" were those which were hung on the right. Those marked "B" were hung on the left.

66 Ibid., p. 142.
of name lists—was discovered by Donald Leslie (1972) to actually be a Register of the Dead of the Kaifeng Jewish community.

This is the only manuscript from the synagogue which contained Chinese writing, the others all having been written in Hebrew alone or accompanied by Judaeo-Persian or Arabic interpolations. This was probably produced from separate registers of the clans. Leslie notes that the Ai clan records are the most extensive, dating to the early Ming, while the Zhang clan kept the most accurate for the 17th century.

Purchased in 1851 by delegates from the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, this has been held by Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati since 1924 when it was donated by Dr. A.S. Oko.

In The Chinese Jews (1942) White has reprinted Berthold Laufer's 1930 article, "A Chinese-Hebrew Manuscript: A New Source for the Chinese Jews," published in the American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures, Vol. XLVI, no.3 (April, 1930). This was the first time a serious examination of this manuscript was made. Leslie points out, however, that although Laufer gave an extended analysis of the register, he failed to understand its significance as for the dead.

Others after Laufer, using his analysis, became rightly puzzled by obvious omissions if it indeed were a
genealogical register for the living. Godbey's confusion reads thus:

This marks a period of transition not considered by Dr. Laufer. There were probably many discouraged persons who did not report their Hebrew names at all; many who in the twenty years preceding had merged with the Moslems or Confucianists. The register gives first the names of four hundred and fifty-three men: then the names of two hundred and fifty-nine women; and no children. Why were there nearly twice as many men as women? Had more women than men perished in the flood? Or had surviving women been sold to Confucianists? Proselyting is shown by the fact that there are family names for women that are not those of the seven clans of the men.67

The register is an important resource for information on assimilation, the size of the Jewish community, about individuals and about clans. Leslie's definitive study of this manuscript produced much conclusive evidence on the above issues.

The Memorial Book is thus transformed into an invaluable tool for determining, inter alia, the prevalence of intermarriage, from generation to generation, between Jewish males and non-Jewish females, and, by extension, for evaluating the degree of the community's assimilation into its Chinese surroundings.68

Summary of Information Obtained from Native Jewish Sources

Native Jewish sources give us a wealth of information pertaining to the origins and life of the Chinese Jews in their community in Kaifeng. Literary works by the Chinese Jews themselves point to assimilated Confucian scholars,


patriotic to their country, who were at the same time learned and pious Jews as late as the early Qing dynasty.

Those works previously thought to have been written by Jews, mentioned above, while discovered to have been written by non-Jews nevertheless show an awareness of the existence of a Jewish community in their midst, identifiable as such.

The possession by the Jews of a vast array of Hebrew manuscripts, including prayer books, scrolls of the Law and section books of the Law, point to the possibility that Jews were able to observe their laws and celebrate their festivals theoretically right up until the mid-19th century, when these manuscripts began to be purchased by Western visitors in 1850. However, by at least the 18th century the Jews had already lost most of their knowledge of Hebrew and many of the ceremonies and rituals, so the manuscripts in their midst more likely served as sore reminders of how far away they had drifted from their ethnic roots, with their inability to understand them.

From the steles erected in the synagogue courtyard we learn of the probable origin of the Chinese Jews, and their date of settlement in Kaifeng. Knowledge of their history and religion was displayed in these writings, as was their obvious acceptance and assimilation into their Confucian surroundings. From these steles we also learn of the existence of Jewish communities outside Kaifeng, and of the efforts by them in conjunction with the Kaifeng Jews to maintain and restore the synagogue near South Teaching
Scripture Lane after the various floods and fires the city endured throughout the synagogue's over half millenium of existence. We learn of the high ranks attained by the Jews through the civil service exam. They also show the great amount of respect bestowed upon the community by non-Jewish Confucian officials.

And finally, the Memorial Book of the Dead, closed ca. 1670, shows us the great degree and kind of assimilation which had occurred among the Jews by the early 17th century, just around the time they would be discovered by the first Westerner.
Jesuit Contacts (17th Century)

Matteo Ricci

When the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) entered China in 1583 he could not have imagined that scarcely a quarter of a century later he would be the first Westerner to come face to face with a Chinese Jew and bring the existence of this community to the attention of the West.

Ricci founded the first permanent Christian mission in China. His success in winning the trust and hearts of the Chinese is evident from the fact that his work was subsidized by the Qing Emperor Wan Li 萬曆 who also donated a plot of ground for his burial and a palace residence as a home for his successors.

Ricci's diary, which included an account of this first meeting, was originally written in Italian. It was centuries later reprinted under the title Opere storiche del P. Matteo Ricci, S.J., edited by Father Tacchi-Venturi in 1911-13, published on the 300th anniversary of Ricci's death, and again by Pasquale M. D'Elia as Fonti Ricciane from 1942-49. But the first publication of Ricci's diaries, however, was in Latin by the Jesuit father Nicholas Trigault on January 14, 1615. A narrative account of the China Mission from the first Jesuit settlement at Macao in 1565 to the time of Ricci's death in 1610, this was soon translated
into French, German, Spanish and Italian once again—all during the 17th century.

In addition to using Ricci's diary, Trigault drew from other sources such as Annual Mission letters, Ricci documents to other missionaries, and personal narratives by him which he had omitted in the diary. Trigault himself was said to have passed through Kaifeng in 1623 and it was he who founded the Mission in Henan. Only weeks after Ricci's death in 1610 he went to Peking to assist Longobardi, who also encountered the Jews, for the next three years in the administration of the Jesuit Missions in China.

In between the time the second stone inscription was carved in 1512 and the year 1605, nothing had been written about or by the Jews of Kaifeng. The story of the first meeting between a Chinese Jew and a European is an often told one. Its original version by Matteo Ricci himself can still be found today in the Jesuit Archives in Rome.

The story of the first meeting between a Chinese Jew and a European is an often told one. On a summer day in the year 1605 the Jew Ai Tian found his way to the Jesuit rectory in Peking. He had come to the Chinese capital to take the civil service examination for the jin shi degree, having already obtained the licentiate. Along the way he had read in a book called "Things I Have Heard Tell" that there were Europeans living in the Middle Kingdom who proclaimed their faith in the one true God, yet steadfastly maintained they were not Moslems. What else could they be,
he reasoned, but Jews, having never heard of such a thing as
Christianity.

After knocking on the door of the rectory and being
greeted by none other than Matteo Ricci himself, the Jew Ai
proudly proclaimed himself to be his co-religionist, never
once using the term for "Jew." Ricci must have been equally
delighted, thinking he had come face to face with a Chinese
Christian, even before serious proselytizing efforts were
underway in China.

Writing in his diary a few years later, Ricci,
referring to himself in the third person, recalls the comedy
of errors which then ensued due to this basic
misunderstanding:

On entering our home he seemed to be quite excited over
the fact, as he expressed it, that he professed the
same faith that we did. His whole external appearance,
nose, eyes, and all his facial lineaments, were
anything but Chinese. Father Ricci took him into the
church and showed him a picture above the high altar, a
painting of the Blessed Virgin and the child Jesus,
with John the Precursor, praying on his knees before
them. Being a Jew and believing that we were of the
same religious belief, he thought the picture
represented Rebecca and her two children, Jacob and
Esau, and so made a humble curtsy before it. He could
not refrain, as he remarked, from doing honor to the
parents of his race, though it was not his custom to
venerate images. This happened on the Feast of St.
John the Baptist.

The pictures flanking the altar were those of the
four Evangelists and the Jew asked if they were four of
the twelve children of the one represented on the
altar. Father Ricci, thinking that he had made
reference to the Apostles, nodded in agreement.
Actually, however, each one was mistaken as to what the
other had in mind. When he brought the visitor back to
the house and began to question him as to his identity,
it gradually dawned upon him that he was talking with a
believer in the ancient Jewish law. The man admitted
that he was an Israelite, but he knew of no such word
as Jew. It would seem from this that the dispersion of
the ten tribes penetrated to the extreme confines of the East. Later on Ngai saw a royal edition of the Bible, printed by Plantin, and though he recognized the Hebrew characters he could not read the book. We heard from him also that there were ten or twelve families of Israelites in his home town and a magnificent synagogue, which only recently they had renovated at a cost of ten thousand gold pieces. In this same temple, as he related, the five books of Moses, namely the Pentateuch, had been preserved in the form of scrolls, and with great veneration, through a period of five or six hundred years. In Hamcheu, the capital city of the Province of Ceqian, he claimed, there were a far greater number of families, with their own synagogue, and others scattered about, who had no place of worship because their numbers were almost extinct. 69

Ricci came to learn much from the Jew Ai about the community from which he came and the extent of knowledge about Judaism and observance of the ancient traditions. Ai Tian, reported Ricci, knew much about stories from the Old Testament, and although he himself had devoted all his time to the study of the Confucian classics in preparation for the civil service exam, to the exclusion of the study of Hebrew, his brother and other Jews were said to be "quite expert in the Hebrew language."

The anguish this educationally assimilated Jew may have been causing the more observant and religious-minded of the Kaifeng community is evident from the following related by Ricci:

It was no secret with him that in the judgment of the high priest of the synagogue, he himself, because of his Chinese studies, was considered to be almost unworthy to associate with his Hebrew brethren. This, however, made little difference to him, if he could acquire the doctor's degree. 70

Only a few months after Ai's visit, a letter dated July 26, 1605 to Claudio Aquaviva was sent by Ricci describing the events mentioned above which were later written in his diary. 71

In 1608 Ricci sent a Chinese lay brother to Kaifeng to verify the account of the Jews given by Ai Tian. All that he had been told about the community, it turned out from this man's visit, was indeed true. By the end of this visit the brother had copied portions of the books held in their synagogue and compared them to the Pentateuch held by the Jesuits back in Peking. Everything was found to be identical and written in the same characters, "save for the points, which the ancients did not use."

A second visit was made by this same brother at Ricci's request. This time to the head of the synagogue. He came to Kaifeng with a letter, informing the rabbi of the books of the Old Testament which the Jesuits had in Peking, as well as the New Testament, since the Messiah, he asserted, had already appeared.

The Archisynagogus took exception to this last remark and replied that the Messiah would not come for another ten thousand years. He added, however, that since they had heard so much of Ricci's reputation and learning, they would confer upon him the dignity of high priest of the Synagogue, if he would join their faith and abstain from eating pork. 72

70 Ibid., p. 108.

71 This letter was translated by Rudolf Lowenthal into English. See Lowenthal, The Early Jews In China (1946), pp. 396-398.

Some time later (by 1609) three other Kaifeng Jews came to Peking for business and apparently were baptized. They were said by Ricci to have been generally ignorant of Jewish law and of the Hebrew language, and railed against the impracticality of having to observe the laws of kashrut (i.e., dietary laws by which food is made kosher according to Jewish law) along the way to Peking. They were said to eagerly accept the Christian faith. Leslie (1972) notes that this segment of Ricci's story may be somewhat exaggerated, or perhaps was only an indication of the customary Chinese humility and politeness, expressed by the Jews. He notes the renewal of effort and faith on the part of the community as evidenced by the 1663 stele and in reports of Jesuits of the 18th century.

Ricci's letter of March 8, 1608 details these later events. With Ricci's death in 1610, the position of Superior of the China Mission was taken over by his colleague, Nicolo Longobardi, who had also met the Jews in Peking the year before.

**Nicolo Longobardi and Jean Fernandez**

Nicolo Longobardi (1559-1664) had arrived in China in 1597. His follow-up attempts, after Ricci's death, to convert the Jews of Kaifeng to Christianity failed, as did those of Ricci, save for the three Jews who Ricci was said to have won over to the Catholic faith in 1609. On November 23, 1610, he, too, wrote to Aquaviva from Shaozhou in Canton.
Province about the Kaifeng Jews, and requested that several
Jesuits who knew Hebrew be sent for further inquiry.

Around the year 1619 Longobardi passed through Henan
Province together with another Jesuit, Jean Fernandez
(1581-1624). They estimated then that the number of Jews
was about 10,000.

Emmanuel Diaz

In 1624 the Portuguese Jesuit Emmanuel Diaz (1559-1639)
wrote what he had heard per Longobardi and Fernandez's visit
to Kaifeng. Diaz was himself the Superior of the Mission in
the South of China from 1603-1609, and spoke about the Jews
in Relatione delle cose più notabili scritte ne gli anni
1619, 1620 & 1621 della cina, published in Rome in 1624.

Giulio Aleni

It has been said that the Italian Jesuit Giulio Aleni
(1582-1649) visited the Kaifeng Jewish community in 1613,
but since he was not allowed to see their books he left, and
never wrote of his experience there. According to the 18th
century Jesuit, Antoine Gaubil, in a letter dated 1723,
Aleni also mentioned a synagogue which existed in Hangzhou,
"but this may refer to Aleni's Chinese Life of Ricci"
(Leslie, 1972), for Ricci's diary had been translated into
Chinese by Aleni. Pollak (1980) speculates that Aleni's
arrival in Kaifeng aroused considerable excitement, due to
the restrictions on travel to and from foreign lands during
the Ming. The Jews had by now been cut off from contact
with foreign Jews for at least a century.

Several generations having thus passed since they had
last met a coreligionist who was not himself a Chinese
national, the sudden appearance of Aleni in their midst
presented them with a golden opportunity for
discovering what was happening to their fellow Jews in
other parts of the globe. They seem even to have
thought at first that Aleni was himself a Jew, an
impression that may well have been strengthened when
they learned that he could read Hebrew--and better,
perhaps, than their own rabbi, whose professional
competence was of necessity limited to what he had been
able to pick up from his father, whose office he now
held. The Jews had every reason to expect,
accordingly, that Aleni would be able to clarify
certain scriptural and liturgical passages that they
themselves could no longer understand.\footnote{Pollak, \textit{Mandarins}, p. 16.}

Löwenthal (1940), however, contends that Aleni's trip
to Kaifeng never even took place.

The Rev. P. Henri Bernard, S.J., drew [my] attention
... to the fact that Aleni, who arrived in China in
1613, at that time could not possibly have visited
Kaifeng. This erroneous information was given by
Semedo and later repeated by Pfister. For Aleni's
itinerary cf. J. Dehergne, S.J.: "Le premier voyage
missionnaire d'est en ouest dans la Chine des Ming
(1620)." Bull. de l'Univ. l'Aurore, Shanghai, series
III, v. III, no.3, 1942, pp. 618-642. At the earliest
Aleni could have gone to Kaifeng in 1621-22, if he went
at all.\footnote{Lowenthal, \textit{The Jews in China}, (1940), p. 355.}

\textbf{Alvaro Semmedo}

Aleni himself was written about by the Jesuit Alvaro
Semmedo (1585-1643). In \textit{The History of that Great and
Renowned Monarchy of China}, published in London in 1655
(translated from the Italian of 1653), Semmedo relates his
discoveries under the title "Of the Moores, Jews, and other Nations, that are in China."

Although Leslie (1972) has not confirmed the following story which seems to come from letters Semmedo wrote, and which were then published in 1627, Pollak (1980) relates how Semmedo came to discover that there were Jews living in Nanjing who were recently converted to Islam:

During his stay in that city, Semmedo declared, he was told by a Muslim of four Jewish families—the last Jews in Nanking—who, abandoning their faith because they no longer had a qualified religious leader, had embraced Islam. In 1642 Semmedo published a work that included a summary of Ricci's contacts with the Chinese Jews and chronicled Aleni's 1613 visit to Kaifeng. This went through several editions in a number of languages.75

Other 17th and 18th century Jesuit reports claimed that there were also Jews in Peking who assimilated to Islam.

The claim that Bell of Antermony found Jews in Peking in 1720 (Chinese Repository 13, p. 361), as Leslie (1972) notes, would almost certainly refer to Kaifeng Jews visiting there.

**Francois Sambiasi, Rodriguez de Figueiredo and Antonio de Gouvea**

In 1628 the first Jesuit mission was established in Kaifeng by Francois Sambiasi (1582–1649), and three years later its administration was taken over by Father Rodriguez de Figueiredo (1592–1642). Towards 1631 the latter was said to have been in contact with the Chinese Jews. Figueiredo died in the great flood during the rebel siege of Kaifeng in

75 Pollak, *Mandarins*, pp. 5-6.
1642. Prior to this the Jesuit lay brother Francois Ferreira (1604-1652) was sent to persuade de Figueiredo to leave since Kaifeng was under imminent attack. De Figueiredo, however, preferred to remain faithful to his followers and stayed in Kaifeng.

While de Figueiredo never wrote anything about his contacts with the Jews of Kaifeng, Sambiasi was able to give some information on their observations about the Jews to Antonio de Gouvea (Portuguese, 1592-1677). de Gouvea had arrived in China in 1636 and became Vice Provincial of China from 1669-1672. In 1644 a manuscript by him was written in Asia Extrema, part of which was entitled "Tratase dos Judeos e Xpaos da Cruz" (Treatise on the Jews and the Christians of the Cross). Leslie and Dehargne (1980) have republished the original as well as given translation of it in French and English.

A contemporary of Longobardi, de Gouvea reported on the Jews following the basic gist of Trigault, although he based his report on information obtained from Longobardi and Sambiasi. He was able to fill us in on the personal experiences of Longobardi, which the latter never thought to write himself.

Relating Longobardi's story in de Gouvea's words, Michael Pollak (1980) writes that Longobardi went to Kaifeng to call on the Jews in 1644, and he

... spoke a few words in Persian [New Persian, probably, the old lingua franca of Asiatic trade, which some of the Kaifeng Jews still knew.] Everybody was highly delighted, believing that their guest was of
their own nation. And when they learned the Father was there, they wanted to invite him immediately. They fixed the day, the following Sabbath. And when the Father entered the synagogue they treated him with great honor, being certain that he was of the same stock and of the same faith as themselves.

... So long as they thought that the Father was of their faith, they gave him a magnificent welcome and listened with great joy to the stories of the Old Testament patriarchs; but once they noticed the pictures in his Bible, abominable in their eyes, they understood he was a Christian of the Cross who worshiped Jesus whom they called Isai ... a name taken from the Moors, and they immediately changed about, urging the Father to leave the synagogue, which they thought had been profaned by his presence. He would have liked to discuss the Bible with them, but it was of no use. They had suddenly grown distrustful, and conversation no longer suited them.76

Christian Enriques

After the devastating flood of 1642, it was Christian Enriques (1625-1684) who rehabilitated the Mission in 1676, shortly after his arrival in Henan. He was said to have visited Kaifeng and the synagogue between 1662 and 1663, although no writings on this subject by him have been discovered. "... nothing is known about the contacts which Figueiredo and Enriques made with the Jews of Kaifeng other than that such contacts are reported to have occurred."77

Joseph Provana

Father Joseph Provana (1662-1720) was the last to witness the life of the Chinese Jews at the close of the 17th century. While in charge of the Henan mission in 1699,

76 Ibid., p. 18.
77 Ibid., p. 19.
and again from 1701 to 1724, it is assumed that he had contacts with the Jews of Kaifeng, although he wrote nothing on the subject.

From 1700 to 1701 the mission in Kaifeng was closed by order of the local Mandarin, a presage of things to come less than a quarter of a century later. The Jews at this time must have understandably been eager to gain information from the Jesuits about Jews from the West, in addition to obtaining more of their rapidly diminishing knowledge of Hebrew and the Bible.

Writing about the relationship and contacts between Jews and Jesuits through the end of the 17th century, Pollak notes:

... they went about their work openly, and they tried zealously to proselytize anyone who would listen. Given their special interest in converting the Jews, acquiring samples of the synagogal manuscripts, and learning as much as they could about the kehillah's attitudes respecting the rites of Confucianism, it would be strange if in the more than sixty years of their residence in Kaifeng their personal contacts with the Jews were as few as the archives of Europe have so far indicated.  

Jesuit Interest in the Kaifeng Torah

Prevalent among Christians during the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe was the conviction that

... the New Testament contained several quotations which although purporting to be from the Old Testament could not be found in the Old Testament. Therefore, the Old Testament texts that were available to them were incomplete. Moreover, it was utterly inconceivable to men of their convictions that the Jewish Scriptures could have failed to foretell the

78 Ibid., pp. 113-114.
coming of the Christ in very specific terms; and as the
texts they owned lacked any prophecies relating to
this epochal event or, at any rate, as others saw the
matter, prophecies so clearly enunciated that even the
Jews would not be able to deny them, it was self-
evident that all such prophecies must have been excised
or rewritten. The Christian theologians therefore
concluded that the rabbis of the talmudic era had
blasphemously expunged or altered a number of verses
predicting the birth and ministry of Jesus of
Nazareth.\footnote{79}{79 Ibid., pp. 25-26.}

It was Alvaro Semmedo who, in the mid-1600s, first
proposed the importance of finding the Kaifeng Bible which,
being a "pure" Bible, used by people who knew nothing of
Christianity, would supply the necessary proof that the
European Talmudists had done nothing but distort the true
word of God. It was with this aim in mind that the Jesuits
of the next century entered the Province of Henan, intent
upon befriending the Chinese Jews.

\textit{Summary of Information Obtained from 17th Century Jesuits}

Matteo Ricci's discovery by chance of the Kaifeng Jew
Ai Tian in 1605 brought the existence of this little-known
community to the attention of the West. From Ai Tian we
learn that in the early 17th century the Jews, while tending
to assimilate increasingly and taking part in civil service
exams on a scale most likely way out of proportion to their
numbers, nevertheless maintained all the customs and
traditions as did their European brethren. They had a full
religious life with a synagogue and rabbi, although the
latter was acknowledged to have lost some understanding of the Hebrew language.

The Confucian reverence for ancestors was seen in the Jew Ai Tian, combined with a knowledge of the Bible. The Jews at this time possessed complete Books of the Law, prayerbooks and other Hebrew manuscripts.

Other Jesuits during the 17th century who went or were reported to have visited Kaifeng, and those of their contemporaries who wrote about them, left sparse records of their journeys. What little they told only confirmed the existence of a full religious life in Kaifeng at this time among the Jews. The great flood of 1642, however, caused the destruction of the synagogue and the death of many of the city's Jewish residents as well as some Jesuit missionaries who had made Kaifeng their temporary home.

The flood took its toll not only on the Jewish population, scattering many of them to other cities (it would be at least a decade before they could return and start to rebuild their synagogue), but also on Jewish religious life when it did try to rejuvenate itself in Kaifeng, since many of the Hebrew manuscripts were destroyed in the flood. The decrease of knowledge of Hebrew attested to by Jesuit visitors to Kaifeng during the next century may have been a result of the breakdown in the community caused by the flood of 1642 as well.
In spite of it all, at the beginning of the 18th century the Jesuit missionaries were to come upon a still thriving community of Jews in Kaifeng.
Jesuit Contacts (18th Century)

Jean-Paul Gozani

The first Jesuit to have actually visited Kaifeng and written about his own observations of the Chinese Jews there was Jean-Paul Gozani (1659-1732). In Kaifeng only briefly in 1698, four years after his arrival in China, Gozani was soon assigned other locations. He was able to return to Kaifeng again only in 1703 for a year, then again in 1711 and 1713, finally living in Kaifeng from 1716 until 1724. That year all missionaries were ordered confined to Canton and Peking by the Yong Zheng Emperor.

Writing to Father Joseph Suarez (1656-1736) on November 5, 1704—a letter which would be published in French three years later in the "Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses" held by the Vatican today—Gozani relates his first encounter with the Jews of Kaifeng in which he "shewed them the utmost Civility, which they returned ..." Gozani was able to visit their temple and see their inscriptions, some of which he reported were in Chinese, the rest in Hebrew. They showed him religious books, and permitted him to go into "the most secret Place of their Synagogue, which they themselves are not allowed to enter. This Place is reserved solely for their Cham-kiao, or Ruler of the Synagogue, who never goes into it but with the most profound Reverence." (Lockman, 1743)
Gozani describes in detail the thirteen Torah scrolls which he was allowed to see, twelve representing the twelve Tribes of Israel and the thirteenth in honor of Moses. The ruler of the synagogue was prevailed upon by Gozani to show him part of one of the scrolls, after which Gozani noted the clear writing style and the fact that one of these scrolls happily escaped the devastating flood of 1642, as well as the great care with which these and other manuscripts were kept in the synagogue. He saw many section Books of the Law kept in "several old Chests," as well as Prayer Books, some new, the rest "old and half torn." "All these Books are preserved with greater Care than if they had been of Gold and Silver."

Gozani then mentions a "Chair of Moses," upon which the Torah was placed when it was read on the Sabbath. Above this was the "Wan Sui Pai," 王司牌. Gozani, unable to read Hebrew, was also unaware that above the Chinese characters proclaiming "Long Live the Great Qing Emperor (a custom which was practiced in Confucian, Buddhist and Daoist temples as well, until the end of the Qing dynasty in 1911 when the Republic of China was established, were written in Hebrew letters the "Shema," Judaism's confession of faith, proclaiming the absolute unity of God: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One" (Deuteronomy 6:4). This allowed the Jews to acknowledge secretly to themselves (since Chinese visitors would not be able to read the
Hebrew) that to the Eternal God alone did they ascribe the highest position.

Gozani observed that the synagogue was devoid of statues or images, and realized that the synagogue itself faced West--towards Jerusalem. It was in this direction, he said, that the Jews turned when they prayed.

The names employed by the Jews for God and religious concepts were said to have been taken from the Chinese Books. Further evidence of assimilation appears as Gozani notes that in a great Hall which led out of the synagogue were many "incense-pans." These were to honour the great Men of the Law--one for the Patriarch Abraham, another for Isaac, one for Jacob and his twelve sons, one for Moses, and so on.

Upon leaving, Gozani showed the Rabbi his own Hebrew Bible, which he asked the Rabbi to look at. They "compared the several Descendants from Adam down to Noah, with the Ages of each, and found a perfect Conformity between them". They then reviewed the chronology of the Bible and Gozani discovered that the Kaifeng Bible was divided into 53 sections rather than the 54 commonly used by the European Jews. While they had some books of the Bible there were others they were not at all acquainted with, and certain books had been altogether destroyed by the flood.

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Gozani's own biased point of view about the Jews and their Bible, which only reflected the prevailing European Christian mentality, is clearly seen when we read on page 14 in Lockman (1743):

A Circumstance which surprized me still more is, that their ancient Rabbis have blended several ridiculous Tales with the genuine Facts related in Scripture, and even interspersed the five Books of Moses in this Manner. They told me such extravagant Stories on this Occasion, that I could not forbear laughing; whence I suspected that these Jews are Talmudists, who pervert and corrupt the Sense of the Bible. No one but a Person well skilled in the Scriptures, and in the Hebrew Tongue, can set this Affair in proper Light.

The Jews told Gozani that Fathers Figueiredo and Enriquez visited the synagogue. It was Gozani's conclusion that since neither of these two Jesuits even bothered to procure a copy of the Jewish Bible, "tis my Opinion, that they found it corrupted by the Talmudists, and not pure and interpolated as before our Saviour's Birth."

We learn from this first letter of Gozani's that the Jews were called Tiao jin jiao, "the religion which extracts the sinew," derived from the practice in Jewish dietary law in which the blood and sinews are extracted from meat before it is prepared. They observed all the ceremonies of the Old Testament, including circumcision, and kept all the major Jewish festivals as did their European coreligionists, in addition to observing the Sabbath.

Gozani was told that many families of Jews entered China during the Han dynasty, but they were now of only seven surnames and marry only amongst themselves.
In spite of all this, they revered Confucius and honored their ancestors as well in the spring and autumn, as was Chinese custom. While they did not keep inscriptions or images in honour of their ancestors, they did keep incense pans for this purpose, as noted above.

This first letter of Gozani's was translated from Portuguese into French by Father Charles le Gobien, who then wrote a letter to the Jesuits of France commenting upon this news from Gozani. Le Gobien requested that Father Beauvollier, who was then in China, be sent to Kaifeng since he was well versed in Hebrew, whereas Gozani knew very little. Beauvollier would be in the perfect position to ascertain any differences between the Bible of Kaifeng and that of the European Jews.

John Lockman, who translated many letters of the Jesuits from the "Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses," noted that he never came across any further mention of Beauvollier having been sent to Kaifeng in other letters, so we do not know what, if anything, ever came of this.

Le Gobien's own biases in this regard are also evident when he maintains that the Jews have always corrupted the sacred Books by either omitting or transposing whole chapters, changing words and phrases if it "did not suit their purpose." (Lockman, 1762) He goes on to maintain that had Father Gozani understood Hebrew, he might have been able to point out the most minute distinctions introduced by the Cabbala, and would have "furnished us with weapons to combat
the ridiculous Fables of the Talmud." (Lockman, 1762). It was inconceivable, le Gobien went on, that the Chinese Jews upheld traditions similar to "that monstrous Assemblage of frivolous, impure, superstitious, and sometimes impious Decisions, with which the Talmud is stuffed." (Lockman, 1762)

Le Gobien concludes by saying that if they could only get a copy of the Kaifeng Bible they could then persuade the European Jews as well as those in Kaifeng of the errors of their ways, with conversion to Christianity en masse being the likely result.

Gozani's next letter, written on August 25, 1712, reiterates the information given in the first, as he had not yet been back to Kaifeng (and wouldn't for another year), when an answer was requested. He speaks again of the traditional festivals and rituals observed in Kaifeng as in Europe among the Jews, and also mentions that they could read and write Hebrew, which they continued to learn from early childhood. Gozani still hoped to purchase a Torah for the Jesuits "discreetly, and with not a little amount of money."

In addition to these letters Gozani sent the Jesuits pages of Hebrew and Latin, listing the names of the books of the Bible and the Talmud which the Jews possessed. He was also the first one to send Rome copies and perhaps rubbings of inscriptions in Chinese of the steles. Philippe Grimaldi (1638-1711) signed two manuscript copies of seven Chinese
inscriptions from the synagogue which were presumably copied by Gozani and dated April 8, 1705 and November 8, 1705. Donald Leslie (1972) then discovered yet another page from Gozani with Grimaldi's signature dated November 8, 1705 in the Jesuit Archives in Rome.

François Nöel (Belgian 1651-1729) published a work in the Philosophia Sinica in Prague in 1711 which gave original information on the Kaifeng Jews, presumably obtained first-hand from Gozani on June 30, 1705. This was published two centuries later by Paul Pelliot in T'oung Pao XXII (1923), p. 202 under "Les traditions Manicheenes au Fou-kien".

Jean Domenge

While Father Gozani was still in Kaifeng another Jesuit visited there to inquire about the Jews. Father Jean Domenge (French, 1666-1735) arrived in Canton at the age of 22. He later lived in Nanyang prefecture of Henan Province and was able to visit Kaifeng for eight months in 1721 and again for two months the next year. Domenge was in close contact with the Jews and had a good command of Hebrew and the Bible, but not of the Jewish liturgy, it seems. Nevertheless, until 1850 almost all of our knowledge of the Hebrew writings possessed by the Chinese Jews came from Domenge.

Domenge wrote six letters between 1721 and 1725 to Father Etienne Souciet. An earlier letter of April 6, 1717 was written in a "Journal of what happened in China in the year 1717" by Father de Govilie in Canton on December 17,
1717. Until 1980 only the earliest letter of August and September 1721 had been published—once translated into Latin by Ignaz Kogler (German, 1680-1746) and published first in 1779 by C. T. von Murr with the latter's French translation, and again in German in 1806 by von Murr. Donald Leslie and Joseph Dehergne then published translations of all of these in both French and English in their masterly work, *Juifs de Chine*, in 1980.

Domergue also sent back basic accounts of the books of the Bible held in Kaifeng as well as of other Hebrew books which existed there. He copied a Judaeo-Persian colophon to the Pentateuch and gave information on the festivals the Jews celebrated, their pronunciation of Hebrew as found in the writings, as well as the opinions of the Jews themselves concerning their origin and date of arrival. Perhaps most valuable of all were the sketches he drew of the synagogue's exterior and interior, which were the only ones ever made.

Set in a traditional Chinese courtyard structure befitting any Buddhist or Confucian temple, the synagogue's exterior displayed various halls for ancestors, all with Chinese-style architecture. There was also a hall for the ritual slaughter of animals on the synagogue grounds. Two marble lions on pedestals adorned the entrance to the synagogue. Its interior matched the description made by Gozani, complete with the Chair of Moses on which was placed the Torah when read, the "Wan Sui Pai" above it, a long table for incense sticks in honor of the ancestors at the
entrance, and a place for the Torah scrolls in the Ark at the back of the synagogue.

Domenge's next letter of 1721 was a response to questions which had been sent from the Jesuits in France concerning the Kaifeng bible. This letter was marked as having been received on November 5, 1722 by a Father Fouquet. He notes the great care with which the Jews treat their Torah scrolls. As for any differences between their Bible and that of the Jews of Amsterdam, Domenge replied that there seemed to be no difference in the content, only in the look of the letters, that their vowels, points and accents appeared slightly different, and that they counted 27 letters in their alphabet, making "10 of the 5 doubles." Domenge noted that due to their lack of a European teacher for a very long time their pronunciation of the Hebrew letters was considerably different. While the Jews compared the paper and writing of the Amsterdam Bible brought by Domenge with that of their own and were impressed with the binding and whiteness of the paper, "they showed no desire to have it, neither in exchange nor to take from it what they lack." (Dehergne and Leslie, 1980) Domenge comments on the greater legibility of the Kaifeng Torah.

Domenge concludes his letter with the recommendation that various European Jewish religious articles and books be sent to the Jews in Kaifeng. "With these and other curiosities that we may suppose are liked and used by the Jews of Europe, we would obtain their esteem and friendship,
and we would succeed in discovering within a few years everything about their books, customs and ceremonies."  
(Dehergne and Leslie, 1980)

An interesting confirmation of the linguistic assimilation of the Chinese Jews is made at the end of Domenge's letter when he copies the second inscription (made of gold letters) which the Jews hung toward the center of the synagogue, between the Pulpit of Moses and the great table of incense which was burned in front of the thirteen Torah scrolls:

'Hear O Israel, the Lord is Our God, the Lord is One; blessed is the Name of the Glory of His Kingdom for ever and ever' (We suspect that the word MARHUTO [MALCHUTO "His kingdom"] is wrongly written).

Domenge's next letter was undated and unsigned, but probably written by him in 1722. With it were sent the drawings mentioned above. It was written obviously as a follow-up to the attempts to gain a copy of the Chinese Torah, which still proved futile. Those in charge of overseeing the synagogue's possessions did their job well. Very few individuals had Bibles of their own at home. However, Domenge managed to get the names of several of these people. His attempts at actually procuring a copy from these, however, were useless.

Last year I managed to speak to a Jew who is a T'ien-wen-sheng [junior official in the observatory] named Kao T'ing who has not practised his religion at all since the death of his father, and who was left by his deceased uncle known as Kao San a very well written Bible when he died. Unfortunately, he had deposited it several years earlier in the li-pai-ssu [synagogue] as several do in order to exempt themselves with honour from going to the meetings and from other duties in the
synagogue. He has made a weak effort to get it back this year, but in vain. The T'ang-chia to whom he went straightforwardly to ask for it flatly refused to give it to him with the reproach that he was willing to sell the Bible to a European who eats the black beast (that is what they call the pig) besides the infamy that there is in selling the ta-ching [Torah] which is according to them the same thing as to sell the Lord ... [to sell the scripture is the same as to sell the Lord]. In fact, this Bible is today the centre of their worship and it is perhaps because of this that several do not dare to keep it at home and in their great festivals they have a procession of their Bibles ...\textsuperscript{81}

Domenge's inability to obtain a Torah even surreptitiously is proven again in the same letter:

One of the Jews I know named Ai Wen, had these 4 volumes at the synagogue, belonging to him, and he wanted to sell them to me; being caught in the act one festival as he was carrying them off, he was compelled to leave them behind and sent away with a rebuke; he has not been permitted to come and see me since, and give me hope of obtaining them sooner or later.\textsuperscript{82}

A letter written next, on October 25, 1723 again to Father Etienne Souciet in Paris, relates how Domenge was graciously shown a portion of the Bible, the many differences in script and other details of which he duly noted. He noticed, too, that they sometimes used Persian words in their conversation in the languages "that they and the Mahometans call Farsi." He concludes from this that since they spoke of Doctors coming to see them (but not in a long while) from the west, the word they use for west may actually mean Persia. They were also said to call


\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., p. 149.
themselves "blue-capped Hui's" to distinguish themselves from the general term "hui-hui" which the Chinese had given the Múslíms, but which were applied to them as well. In fact, Domenge comments, they do wear blue skullcaps at prayers in the synagogue. 83

Just one day later Domenge again wrote to Paris exclaiming the difficulties (and probably impossibility) of obtaining a copy of the Torah. He suggested that another Jesuit, well-versed in Hebrew (as Gozani, still in Kaifeng, was not), be given sufficient funds to stay in Kaifeng for several months. During this time he could get to know the Jews well and prevail upon them to make a copy of the Torah, if nothing else. Again, in this letter the divisions of the separate books of the Bible are clearly spelled out.

Domenge's next letter, to Father Souciet (via Father Orry), dated December 20, 1724, clarified earlier remarks concerning the Bible and Jews of Kaifeng. He again mentions specific technical differences between the Kaifeng Bible and that of Amsterdam, and says:

[the] K'ai-feng Jews obtained their ancient Bible or Pentateuch from a Mohammedan they met at Ningxia in the Province of Shensi after the conflagration of their first synagogue. And this Mahommetan had got it from a Jew, who dying in Canton had entrusted it into his hands as a valuable security and deposit (for a debt?). This is the very one which was later saved from the

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83 Interestingly, this color skull cap must have been passed down for many generations among the Kaifeng Jews, as during this author's 1985 visit there, Mr. Zhao Pingyu, a spokesman for the community of Jewish descendants which still resides in Kaifeng, gave me a skull cap which his daughter had begun to make by hand for possible future sale to tourists. It was dark blue with gold and black trim.
flood in K'ai-feng, and from which 12 copies in scroll form were made by copyists they had at that time to replace (the lost ones of) the Bethel or their Holy of Holies ...  

It was already about 200 years since they had had any visitors from the West, and Domenge reported that they told him that since they lost a grammar with which they used to study the Bible, few applied themselves to study.

No particular sacred clothing, no incense bowls, nor musical instruments were employed by them in prayer. And all were barefooted, he noted.

It is only at a procession of their Bibles that they make in the precincts of their synagogue on the day after the week of their great festivals that their chief, as leader of the ceremony, wears a sash of red silk passing over his right shoulder and under his left arm, and when they read the Bible, the one who is at the Pulpit of Moses covers his face with a very thin cloth made for this purpose, but he alone.  

This last letter of his, showing all he had been able to accomplish while in Kaifeng, contrasts sharply with the first letter of April 6, 1717. Included in the "Journal of what happened in China in the year 1717" by Father de Goville written on December 17, 1717 in Canton, Domenge wrote that on his first trip to Kaifeng he was not able to obtain even a single convert, as opposed to the 300 baptisms he had performed in Henan Province altogether.

... the only one I saw, who, so I was told, is one of their most honest people, seemed to me to be highly ignorant of his faith and a strong believer in the transmigration of souls. As he seemed little inclined to arrange for me to see the Jewish bible, I did not

85 Ibid., p. 189.
show any great eagerness to see it. They boast that their books are 3000 years old. But I believe they are in a very poor condition. They keep the bible in a room behind the temple into which they let no one enter. 86

Antoine Gaubil

In 1970 Renee Simon published Correspondance de Pekin, 1722-1759 par le P. Antoine Gaubil S.J.. To date there is no English translation of the letters written by Antoine Gaubil (French, 1689-1759) from China. In these letters Gaubil described his discoveries in Kaifeng, which he visited shortly after arriving in China in 1722. He stayed for only a few days at the end of March 1723, during which time he experienced great difficulties in communication. In 1725 Gaubil again tried to enter Kaifeng, but by then the Jesuits were ordered expelled from China, and anti-foreign sentiment had set in.

Although he spent a brief amount of time with the Chinese Jews, Gaubil managed to write back to Peking about the stone inscriptions, giving short summaries of the 1489/1512 and 1663 steles as well as noting seven four-character inscriptions. These are seen especially in his letters of August 18, 1723 and September 4, 1725. Leslie (1972) notes that these were the first real accounts of the steles and their contents, "though unfortunately with some mistakes."

86 Ibid., p. 201.
In 1735 Gaubil wrote to the Academie des Sciences in St. Petersburg informing them of an exhaustive but unsuccessful search for a Bible supposedly held in Peking. Other letters from Gaubil are of less significance. His letter of November 12, 1725 discussed contacts with other Jewish communities, opening up the possibility of a Yemen origin. And his letter of November 8, 1749 refers to an interview in Peking in 1730 with a Manchu prince. "Of considerable interest for the statement that the Manchu princes had not previously heard of Jews in Kaifeng but made investigations, and promised to bring the Jewish writings to Peking, but did not do so."87

While the letters of Gaubil do not compare to those of Gozani and Domenge in terms of new information given, they nevertheless point to the excellent questions he felt it necessary to ask in the short time he did spend in Kaifeng.

The letters of all three preceding Jesuits were collected and summarized by Abbe Gabriel Brotier (French, 1723-1789), although not without some errors. Pierre-Martial Cibot (French, 1727-1780), another Jesuit, also wrote some letters from Peking in 1769 and 1770 on the Chinese Jews according to what he knew from Gozani, Domenge and Gaubil. Jean-Joseph-Marie Amiot (French, 1718-1793) wrote a letter on September 16, 1779, but it was "full of doubtful matter" (Leslie, 1972), referring to the copies of the Chinese inscriptions he had sent to the Bibliotheque

Nationale in Paris. Gottfried-Xavier Laimbeckhoven (1707-1787), a Jesuit arriving in China in 1739, wrote a letter from Huguang 湖廣 Province (present-day Hubei 湖北 Province) on December 3, 1739 in which he mentioned that the present Chinese Jews know the Scripture in Hebrew and may be descended from the Babylonian exiles.

The activities of the Jesuits in Kaifeng came to an end in January of 1724 when the Yong Zheng Emperor officially banned proselytizing. All churches were closed except for the four then functioning in Peking. Jesuits were limited to living in Peking or Canton, and finally were banished from the mainland altogether and sent to Macao. They could not have known that it would be over a century until Westerners would be able to meet face to face with the Chinese Jews again.

**Summary of 18th Century Jesuit Observations**

Fathers Gozani, Domenge and Gaubil were able to preserve for posterity many of the stele inscriptions and writings of the Chinese Jews. The first to make in-depth contact with the community, these Jesuits and their reports remain the only sources of first-hand information on the daily life of the Chinese Jews which captured their existence in both the heyday and twilight of their lives as a religious community. While their knowledge of Hebrew was said to be somewhat tenuous at this point, the Jews nevertheless held fast to their religion and each other,
taking great pride in their beautiful synagogue, which was captured for eternity in the sketches made by Domenge in 1722. The synagogue had stood by now for 600 years. Although obvious signs of assimilation into their Confucian surroundings abounded, their ties to their Jewish ancestry proved too strong, and attempts to purchase copies of the Kaifeng Torah were still futile.
Letters to and from China (1760-1850)

Letters to the Kaifeng Jews

In between the time Antoine Gaubil visited the Jews of Kaifeng and their next visitors bearing greetings from the West, elapsed a period of over 125 years. After 1725 the Qing dynasty rulers had increased the momentum of anti-Christian and anti-foreign sentiment. Any letters the Kaifeng Jews may have received from the West or from Western Jews may on the one hand have given them some comfort in the knowledge that they were indeed remembered, but may also have been cause for anxiety, as contact with foreigners at this time was hazardous at best.

During this time Jews from the West had heard increasing rumors of the existence of their long-lost brethren in China. However, all contact with other Jews was lost by the community. This isolation only hastened the assimilation process for the Jews.

The synagogue was allowed to decay, no new stones were carved, and we have only two small inscriptions more recent than the 17th Century. One is undated, but its author, the graduate Chao Tso-meï, is thought to be the same man as a junior official of c. 1729. The other, by Ai Ch'eng-kung, is dated 1797. These inscriptions tell us almost nothing of the state of the community. Most of the other information between 1723 and 1850 is equally bare.88

The first to attempt to reach the Kaifeng Jews by letter was Isaac Nieto who wrote a letter in Hebrew, dated

88 Leslie, Survival, p. 52.
Adar 1, 5520 (February 18, 1760). The original is now held in the British Museum Library, Add. MSS. 29868. A complete English translation of this was made by Moses Edrehi, a Moroccan Rabbi, in An Historical Account of the Ten Tribes settled beyond River Sambayton, in the East (London, 1858), taken from a Hebrew manuscript of 1817-1818. Edrehi stated that an answer to this letter was actually received, in Chinese and Hebrew, and the original placed in the museum at the India House.

In the Jewish Chronicle of August 2, 1901 (p. 10) it was suggested that this letter was written by George Mendes da Costa and sent to a member of the East India Company. However, future attempts at locating this letter proved futile, increasing the suspicions on the part of scholars about the credibility of Edrehi's statement. Leslie (1972) believes Edrehi's whole story to be doubtful.

There was also an unsigned accompanying letter in English attached to Nieto's letter, which is also now in the British Museum Library (Add. Ms. 29868).

In this letter, written in the name of the London Jewish Community, Nieto implored them to tell him as to their condition and their origin, and posed a list of questions. Appended to this was a letter, unsigned, addressed by the writer at the request of his friend, Mr. David Salamons, to a member of the East India Company, asking him for his help in delivering the letter to the Jewish community in China. It would be highly unlikely
that, even if the Jews did receive this letter in Kaifeng, any could actually have understood the elegant Hebrew in which it was written, by then.

In 1986 the year-old Sino-Judaic Institute of Palo Alto, California published a lithographic reprint entitled "A China-London Jewish Literary Mystery," written by Samuel Sokobin (1893-1986), a retired member of the American Consular Service who had represented the United States from 1914 to 1937 in China. Sokobin discusses the many possibilities for the actual date and authorship of the attached letter in English, and the impossibility of anyone being able to come to any conclusions about it. Sokobin believes that this attached page was written by the Chinese scholar, John Francis Davis, "whom David Salomons recommended to the London Jews for help in getting in touch with the Jews of China. But who wrote the letter?"\footnote{See Michael Pollak, Mandarins, pp. 125-127, for a disputation of the possibility (broached by Solomon [1900]) that the author could have been Isaac Nieto.}

Other letters were sent to Kaifeng but presumably none actually reached their destination. We may note that Benjamin Kennicott, an English biblical scholar, sent a letter in 1769 via Sir Frederick Pigou, who received help to that end by the titular bishop of Henan Province. This letter was published on page 65 of the \textit{Dissertatio Generalis in Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum}, Volume 2 (Oxford, 1776-80). Pollak (1980) notes that Kennicott was compiling a "massive project, collecting hundreds of Old Testament manuscripts
and a subsequent accurate text," so he especially wanted to see the Kaifeng Bible. In his letter he asked to purchase a copy of their Scriptures in order to compare it to one of his own.

Olav Gerhard Tychsen, a Danish Hebraist, sent letters via friends in Batavia in 1777 and 1779, also to no avail.

The last letter to be sent to the Jews during the 18th century was one written entirely in Hebrew composed jointly by Solomon Joseph Simpson and Alexander Hirsch, representing the Portuguese Jews in New York and dated the "New Moon, Month of Shebat, 5555," or January 21, 1795. The original letter was held by Ansel Leo in 1859. This letter was brought by a Captain Howell who was on his way to China, but was never able to deliver it to Kaifeng. It was returned unopened, and, as Pollak notes, written on the envelope was "Captain Howell could not discover them."

In 1815 a letter in Hebrew from the Jews of London was sent to China with the Protestant missionary Robert Morrison. Morrison then gave it to "an itinerant Chinese bookseller" (Pollak, 1980) who was on his way to Kaifeng.

The bookseller later swore that he had presented this letter to an individual in Kaifeng who was able to read its Hebrew text. The letter, he insisted, was taken away by the man to whom it was delivered, but not before the latter promised to provide a written response within a few days. When the bookseller was asked by Morrison to hand over the letter of reply he explained that he had never received it—-that rumors of an impending civil war had come to his attention before his Jewish contact in Kaifeng could meet him again, forcing him to leave the city immediately.90

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Letters from Foreigners in China

In 1832 the Chinese Repository published the only part of Morrison's Journal which dealt with the Chinese Jews, dated October 10, 1818:

Had a conversation with a Mohammedan gentleman, who informed me, that at Kaefung foo, in the province of Honan, there are a few families "renominated the Teau-kin kaou, or 'the sect that plucks out the sinew,' from all the meat which they eat. They have a Le-pae sze, or house of worship; and observe the eighth day as a Sabbath."

On November 25, 1842 the Reverend Joseph Rizzolati, vicar apostolic of Huguang, wrote to Father Joseph D'Alexandrie. This was published four years later in the Chinese Repository. After speaking of the difficulties and even physical threats he was encountering in China as a foreigner and a Christian, Rizzolati proceeded to discuss religion in China, noting how rigidly they adhered to the practice of worshiping their ancestors. He then described other religions existing in China and went on to talk about the Jews.

Besides the native religions, the Jewish and Mussulman worship has been planted here. ... the Jews ... form a less considerable population. ... Here, as everywhere else, those strangers are the object of an instinctive and universal hatred. It is, no doubt, to escape public animadversion by diminishing themselves, that they live as much as possible dispersed; for, in the provinces I have above stated, you would not find a single village entirely composed of Hebrews.

91 Chinese Repository I (1832), 44.  
92 Chinese Repository 15 (1846), 43-44.
A year later, on January 10, 1843, the Reverend William C. Milne, also in China, wrote the following:

The Mohammedan priest ... brought with him a follower of the prophet, who had recently come to town. This stranger gives very distinct information of a class of religionists in Kaifung fu ... the capital of Honan, his native province, who from his description resemble the Jews. He says they refrain from eating 'the sinew which is upon the hollow of the thigh,' and they do not touch the blood of animals. He recognized the Hebrew letters as those used in their sacred writings, and could trace, in the sound of Hebrew characters, a connection with words which he had heard them utter. The testimony of this individual precisely coincides with the brief notices published by Dr. Morrison, and with some of the lengthened details laid down in Grosier's History of China, vol. IV., chap. 11. 93

And in the following year an anonymous report on the Chinese Jews (which Leslie hazards the guess may have been written by Walter Macon Lowrie) appeared yet again in The Chinese Repository:

It is well ascertained that certain Jews did enter China as early as B.C. 258. Their descendants still remain a 'peculiar' race in the midst of those around them, and even yet distinguished by the trait which took its origin in Jacob's time. 'The children of Israel ate not of the sinew which shrank.' Gen. 32:32. They call themselves the Tiao-kin kiao ... "the sect which Plucks out the Sinew." Their residence is at Kaifung fu the capital of Honan. Some of them have attained an honorable rank in literature, and several have been governors of provinces and ministers of state, but at present they are few in number, degraded in condition, and their wisest men are very ignorant of their own religion. 94

93 Chinese Repository 13 (1844), 79. (Taken from "Art. IV. Notice of a seven months' residence in the city of Ningpo, from December 7th, 1842, to July 7th, 1843. Communicated by the Rev. W.C. Milne.")

Letter from the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng

Then came a breakthrough in communication with the Chinese Jews. James Finn, a career diplomat, scholar and missionary, who was fluent in Hebrew and knowledgeable about Judaism, wrote a letter addressed to the Kaifeng Jews in 1847. In 1844 he heard of the departure of Mr. Temple H. Layton who was going to Ningbo as British Vice Consul. Finn gave Layton several copies of a work he wrote in 1843 entitled The Jews in China: Their Synagogue, Their Scriptures, Their History, &c., to distribute to the missionaries there who might be able to communicate with Kaifeng. A member of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, Finn was able through the success of his book to bring in enough money for the London Society to sponsor the historic visits in 1850 and 1851 of two Chinese Protestant delegates to Kaifeng.

Finn's original Hebrew letter was sent with the aid of a Mr. E. Norris, librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society in London, who agreed to forward it via the son of Sir Alexander Johnstone who was going to Hong Kong. Finn gave the English translation of this letter to Consul Layton at Ningpo. It was unsigned, with the instructions to please answer via Consul Layton as well, who would then forward it.

It was sent via Le San-yay, native of Shan-se. An earlier packet was sent 'by way of Han-kow, directed to Mr. Tieh at the Tallow-chandler's shop in Hwang lane, South Mud Street in Kae-fung (for the Pluck Sinew religion).' The directions on the face of the envelope were: "From the Head of the Honourable Israelitish (Pluck sinew religion) synagogue with instructions to inquire in Pluck sinew lane in the Great Streat within
the Prefectural city of Kaefung and give it to the Teachers of the religion in the Temple of Purity and Truth (Synagogue) to be by them opened."

These letters arrived in Kaifeng in 1850 a few months later. The answer stated 'We heard that a letter had last year been received by one T'ieh, from a country of the West (Hai Yang), but this to our regret we never got a sight of.'

Addressed "To the hands of the Maghid or Chief Rabbi of the Sacred Congregation of the Children of Israel," Finn's letter was so beautifully written in Hebrew that its erudition may have actually been too advanced for their by then limited knowledge of Hebrew.

To the Sacred Congregation dwelling in Kae-fung-foo, in the province of Ho-nan. Peace from (certain) men in the islands of the English, which are large, and from your land are very far off.

We have heard concerning you, and as at this day we seek your peace, as it is written that Jethro the Midianite said, 'And all this people shall also go to their place in peace.'

By the favour of the Lord (He is One and there is none other; He putteth down one, and setteth up another); we English are a people strong and mighty, and learned in various ways, and we call on the name of the Lord. And there are among us many congregations of the children of Israel."

So impressed were they, in fact, with the language with which this letter was written, that in their answer they wrote back to the "Rabbi" who had kindly written to them.

Finn, after this elegant introduction, proceeded to ask the Kaifeng Jews a series of twenty questions about their history and origins ("How many are the generations that ye and your fathers have been in the land of your sojourn?"

95 Leslie, Survival, p. 190.

are ye children of Judah and Benjamin, or children of the
other ten tribes of Israel?"), the scriptures and books of
the law that they may possess, their degree of knowledge,
observance and adherence to the Mosaic law, and whether or
not they were safe and free to practice the Jewish religion
in China.

Some of the questions Finn posed were not new. "Some
of the topics had been already affirmed as ascertained, in
the "Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses;" but it was desirable
to have them established direct from themselves, and in our
time. Others, again, were such as the Jesuit inquirers did
not think it worth while to meddle with."97

Only three weeks after sending this letter to China,
Finn was made Consul of Jerusalem and Palestine, leaving
word to forward any replies via London to Jerusalem.

It would take another 25 years before Finn received a
reply, even though it was written only one year after the
Jews received his letter.

In 1849 Finn received word from Layton who had been
moved from Ningpo to Amoy, in the form of a letter written
on January 15th of that year. For five years Layton had
inquired of the Jews but to no avail. Finally he met a
Chinese Moslem solder by the name of Tie Dingan who
was a native of Kaifeng and had lived within half a mile of
the synagogue. Tie related that there were altogether eight
families of Jewish descent remaining there, in all about one

97 Ibid., p. 20.
thousand people. Although the head of the Shi family, he relates, has forsaken the Jewish rites, he nevertheless repaired the synagogue. Much intermarriage had taken place, and their knowledge about their history and religion had faded considerably.

Tie then describes the synagogue, in front of which "strangers and carriers of pork cannot pass." To the right of the synagogue was a tablet of inscriptions (the steles), and the synagogue was walled all around. Two stone lions were placed in the courtyard. However, for all its beauty, not one Jew was said to be able to read or write Hebrew, even though the Jews would still "never allow a book to be taken away."

Layton then related that the Hebrew letter with a Chinese translation had been forwarded to Kaifeng through a skin and fur merchant who traded extensively on the borders of Henan Province. Should he hear any news he would write again immediately.

On January 20, 1849, another letter was written by Layton in which he relates that thus far all inquiries through various and sundry channels have proved fruitless. And again, on March 24, 1850, another letter along the same lines was written by Layton to Finn. In it, he recounts the difficulties with which anyone trying to deliver a letter to the Jews of Kaifeng must perforce encounter.

The great difficulty of local dialects throughout the various provinces of the empire, the jealous and eager watchfulness of the mandarins over all travellers in the interior, the frequent questionings and searchings
which a traveller is liable to, and the danger which he might incur should the real object of his journey be discovered, all combine to make me believe that it would be many years before such a person could be found amongst the Chinese natives of Amoy who would successfully undertake the task of a special visit to Kae-kung. [sic] I assure you that I do not magnify the difficulty; and were you a resident in China, and a Consul, you would find your every movement watched most narrowly. 98

Layton then related other possible ways he had thought of to get a letter to the Chinese Jews. The Moslem sergeant Tie even promised to ask his friends to send drawings of the synagogue. "The Chinese writer of this consulate, who is an intelligent and respectable old man, is decidedly of the opinion that the Jews would be afraid to receive a letter if it was known to be written by foreigners, as it might be the cause of accusations against them, but this point has been attended to."

Layton concludes this letter with great feelings of disillusionment which he has experienced in China. "The country does not improve upon acquaintance, and the people appear in each succeeding year more and more dishonest, vile, treacherous, and lying."

The next year Mrs. Layton wrote to say that Mr. Layton had died soon after his last letter. She also mentioned that a letter had indeed finally arrived at Amoy from the Jews of Kaifeng.

You have waited long and patiently for news of real import from Ho-nan, and I have now the pleasure to tell you that, at last, an answer has arrived at Amoy, brought by the fur merchant to whom the last of your

98 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
letters was intrusted; and I will await your
instructions respecting its transmission to you by
post, for it seems something to me so precious that I
shall hardly like to risk it when once safe in my hand.
... The expected Chinese letter, I hear, is directed to
Mr. Layton, and does not say very much more than we
have already been told, viz., that the community of
Jews have arrived at nearly the last stage of decay,
though less than 40 years ago they must have been able
to keep up the forms and ceremonics of their religion,
perhaps but imperfectly, but they did keep them up
someway.99

The letter in question was received by James Finn only
in April of 1870 due to difficulties in locating him. It
had been translated from the original Chinese into English
by M.C. Morrison, son of Robert Morrison, who was also in
the British Consular Service in China until 1867. When the
letter was received from Kaifeng the younger Morrison was
employed in Amoy under Consul Layton.

The reply was written by a member of the Zhao clan—
Zhao Nianzu—in 1850. Leslie (1972) notes that this letter
is of considerable value, especially for the festivals
celebrated by the declining community. Although
the original Chinese text of this letter is now missing, we
know that Finn had it from 1870 until 1872. A copy was also
sent to the Bishop of Victoria, George Smith.

In his letter, Zhao laments the sorry condition in
which the Jews now find themselves, and bemoans the fact
that there are none who understand the Hebrew writings which
they possess.

It happens only that there yet survives an aged female
of more than seventy years, who retains in her

99 Ibid., pp. 36-37.
recollected the principal tenets of the faith. Morning and night, with tears in our eyes and with offerings of incense, do we implore that our religion may again flourish. We have everywhere sought about, but could find none who understood the letters of the Great Country, and this has occasioned us deep sorrow. But now the unexpected arrival of your letter fills us with happiness. We heard that a letter had last year been received by one Tie, from a country of the Western Ocean (Europe), but this to our regret we never got a sight of. However, the receipt of your present letter assures us that the holy religion ... contains still a germ of vitality, and that in the great English nation the history of its origin has not been lost. If it shall be possible again to erect our temple, it will give joy not only to our own community, but likewise the holy men of Tien-chuh [India] will rejoice exceedingly.100

This letter revealed that the community had long been without ministers, and the structure of the synagogue was sorely in need of repair--both of which caused considerable pain to the Jews who remained. "If we could again procure ministers, and could put in order our temple, our religion would have a firm support for the future, and its sacred documents would have a secure repository. This it needs no divination to be assured of."

Zhao relates, too, the many achievements of the members of his own clan, and continues by answering Finn's questions about the festivals and days of worship celebrated in the synagogue, as well as his own recounting of the history of the Jewish religion. In the synagogue the Jews possess a map of the Temple in Tien zhu, which here refers to Jerusalem. The letter ends with Zhao declaring the names of "persons who would mortgage or sell the temple Buildings and

100 Finn, Orphan Colony, p. 40.
materials. ... If any person be deputed hither, measures should be taken to put a stop to the scandalous proceedings of these people."

This was the only letter ever received from the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng, the original Chinese of which is not now to be found. In November of 1850 when two delegates were sent to Kaifeng by the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, they carried with them one more letter, this time by Isaac Faraj ben Reuben, a Jew from Baghdad who had come to Shanghai in 1845 to do business. To this letter written in Hebrew, however, the Kaifeng Jews did not respond.101

101 We may note just two more unanswered letters sent to Kaifeng during the 19th century. I.J. Benjamin (also known as Benjamin II) wrote a book of his travels entitled Eight Years in Asia and Africa (from 1846-1855). In it he mentioned that while he was in Canton he was told of Chinese Jews by a Jewish trader. Although he himself could not visit them, Benjamin provided a copy of a letter which a Rabbi Arnaud Aron of Strasbourg had received from his cousin Aaron who was a resident of Shanghai, in which the latter tells of having been visited by several Chinese Jews with whom he spoke in Hebrew and who complained of their Torah scrolls having been "stolen," or at least obtained under false pretenses. (This presumably refers to the two Chinese delegates in 1850.) Pollak concludes that the cousin who in all likelihood did write to the well-known Rabbi of Alsace may have "been embellishing a wild tale he had heard by asserting that he himself had been involved in dealings with the Chinese Jews." (Pollak, 1980)

The other letter, written in London by a "J.C." and printed in a New York journal in 1859 mentioned a strikingly similar story to that which was told by Rabbi Aron's cousin. Although ":J.C." himself had never met any Chinese Jews, his informant had, and told of their strict adherence to Jewish customs and traditions, although they no longer understood Hebrew, the last rabbi having died early in the 19th century.

A final interesting note is that Cecil Roth (White, p. viii) refers to an article in the Jewish Chronicle of June 8, 1906, p. 17, entitled "A Jewish Native of China, Mr.
Summary of Information Obtained from Letters Written to and from China, 1760-1850

All letters which were written by Westerners to the Kaifeng Jews, except one, between the years 1760 and 1850, were either never received or never acknowledged by the Kaifeng community. These letters show that the momentum of interest by the West in the Chinese Jews—in particular by Western Jews who were first learning of the existence of their co-religionists in so far away a place as China—was increasing.

Westerners in other parts of China wrote back with an increasing number of reports of the existence of a Jewish community being mentioned to them by other Chinese, including, especially, Chinese Moslems.

The one letter received from Kaifeng in response to James Finn's letter of 1847 was a cry for help from the Jews of the West, as their poverty and by now general ignorance of Hebrew and most of Judaism's religious tenets had turned them into a desperately isolated community on the threshold of, if not already to a great extent, being totally assimilated into their Chinese surroundings.

Salem Shaloam David" (from a Bombay Correspondent); and again on August 30, 1861 in the same newspaper was an article on page 7 entitled "Chinese Jewish Coolies."
The London Society for Promoting
Christianity among the Jews (1850–1851)

James Finn's book on the Chinese Jews published in 1843 had brought this segment of the Jewish diaspora to the attention of Europe once again. As a result, Bishop George Smith of Victoria, who was stationed in Hong Kong during the 19th century, ventured to Shanghai in 1850 to discuss with Dr. W.H. Medhurst, a missionary associated with the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews,\textsuperscript{102} of which Bishop Smith was a member, the possibility of sending a Christian into Henan Province to rekindle a connection with the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng.

Medhurst suggested two Chinese Protestant converts whom he knew from Shanghai, Qiu Tiansheng and Jiang Rongji for the task. Qiu had been educated by Dr. Medhurst in his Mission school at Batavia and later worked as a printer in the Mission at Shanghai. According to Bishop Smith, Jiang was "a somewhat older man, and a literary graduate of the fourth or lowest degree, [who] had been for some years a teacher of Chinese to one of the Missionaries at Shanghae." Although not knowledgeable in Hebrew, they could at least attempt to purchase some of the Torah scrolls and other Hebrew manuscripts said to be in the possession of the Jews. Three Jewish merchants in Shanghai originally from Baghdad and connected with the opulent

\textsuperscript{102} For background information on the London Society see Pollak, Mandarins, pp. 146-149.
Jewish firm of Sassoon & Co. at Canton also contributed valuable help. One wrote a letter in Hebrew to their Jewish co-religionists to introduce the two Chinese messengers, and to invite the Jews to visit Shanghai. (Smith, 1851)

During their journey to Kaifeng the two Chinese Protestant delegates kept diaries and accounts of their trip which were published in 1851 in Shanghai by Bishop Smith under the title: The Jews at K'ae-Fung-Foo: Being a Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry, to the Jewish Synagogue at K'ae-Fung-Foo, on Behalf of the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews. These first-hand observer reports by the two delegates were the first since the time of Domenge and Gaubil, over a hundred years before.

Bishop Smith noted the poverty, destitution and depression among the Chinese Jews which was related by the delegates in their journals. It was a far cry from the thriving religious community described by the Jesuits the previous century.

Not a single individual could read the Hebrew books; they had been without a Rabbi for 50 years. The expectation of a Messiah seems to have been entirely lost. The rite of circumcision, which appears to have been observed at the period of their discovery by the Jesuits two centuries ago, had been totally discontinued. The worshipers within the synagogue faced towards the west; but whether in the direction of Jerusalem or towards the suspended tablets of the emperors, no clear information was obtained. The synagogue itself was tottering in ruins; some of the ground had been alienated to pagan rites, and a portion of the fallen materials sold to the neighbouring heathen. Some time previously, they had petitioned the Chinese emperor to have pity on their poverty, and to rebuild their temple. No reply had been received from Peking, but to this feeble hope they still clung ... a few families also lived in the temple precincts, almost
destitute of raiment and shelter. According to present appearances, in the judgment of our native messengers, after a few years, all traces of Judaism will probably have disappeared, and this Jewish remnant have been amalgamated with and absorbed into surrounding Mohammedanism. 103

The delegates managed to bring back to Shanghai eight Hebrew manuscripts on their first visit to Kaifeng from December 9-14, 1850. On their second and last trip the following year, which lasted two weeks, they returned with further purchases of six Torah scrolls and approximately fifty to sixty more Hebrew manuscripts in addition to the Chinese-Hebrew Memorial Book of the Community, all of which can now be found in the Klau Library of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

The journal of Qiu was written in English. Jiang's was written in Chinese and later translated by the Reverend Joseph Edkins (1823-1905), himself a Protestant missionary in China. Both delegates gave rather long descriptions of their journey from Shanghai to Kaifeng, and short accounts of the actual contacts they had with the Chinese Jews. Jiang also gave a separate account of the religion in some detail, having copied the 1489/1512 stele. Although these copies were not as good as those made by the Jesuits and preserved in Rome, it was not until 1900 that the Jesuit copies, checked against the extant stone in Kaifeng, were

103 Bishop George Smith (Ed.), (1851), The Jews at K'ae-fung-foo: Being a Narrative of a Mission of Inquiry to the Jewish Synagogue at K'ae-fung-foo on behalf of the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews Shanghai: Missionary Society Press, p. vii.
published by Jerome Tobar. Until then, all the western accounts were based on this 1850 copy and its translation. (Leslie, 1972)

During their second journey the delegates learned that the population was not estimated at 200, as they had heard on their first trip, but rather was more in the vicinity of 300 to 400. And they discovered that circumcision was still being performed. But the fact they the Jews would even think of selling their scriptures, let alone actually do so, bespeaks the dire financial and spiritual situation they had found themselves in by that time.

Throughout their journals the atmosphere of fear is significant. In Qiu's journal for Friday December 13, 1850, we read:

Yesternight we had great fear and trouble, on account of the Jews who came to our inn to visit us; in the inn we had many of the Canton men who sold opium, and some Sze-chuan men belonging to one of the magistrates' offices, who overheard that we were talking with the Jews about our and their religion. As soon as the Jews had gone, we went to bed, and about 11 at night, we heard them talking loudly about our business; there were in one room three people, one of whom said, I will accuse them to the district magistrate ... Their religion is not the same as ours (Mohammedans), but they come hither as spies and breakers of the law; we will certainly bring them to the magistrate, and get them beaten, and put in jail; by doing which, they will be obliged to give out some money. That whole night we could not sleep, for pondering upon this matter; I told my friend, we had better remove to-morrow to another inn, for if we do not remove from hence, we shall fall into their snare; so we continued that whole night, with our hearts quaking with fear and consternation, not knowing what evil would come upon us. We found almost every inn had Canton men, traders in opium, but we did not make friends with them; they always stared
at us, on our going out and coming in, as if we were going to catch them or rob them.\textsuperscript{104}

Zhao Wenkui and Zhao Jincheng, both circumcised Jews, had been persuaded by the two delegates to go to Shanghai to visit the Christian Mission there. Zhao Jincheng, the older and less educated of the two Jews who went to Shanghai, stayed only briefly. Zhao Wenkui, however, remained until he died, and was buried in the communal cemetery which the 19th century Jewish emigrants from Central Asia and Europe had established in Shanghai.

Joseph Edkins later wrote of his contacts at Shanghai with members of the Kaifeng community. Writing in \textit{Religion in China}, published in London in 1878, he says:

The last among them that could read Hebrew died nearly a century ago. They evince no wish to recover the knowledge of that language, nor do they seem to have any idea of a future revival of their condition, which could occur only in the case that the Emperor may be induced to command their synagogue, called, after the Mohammedan style 'the temple of the pure and true,' to be rebuilt at the public expense. ...

One or two things they retain of their national characteristics, namely, reverence for the law and the seventh-day Sabbath. They had, till their synagogue was destroyed, an autumn festival, when they walked in procession round the hall of the synagogue, taking the rolls of the law with them. It was called the festival for the circulation of the law. They had till recently twelve copies of the Pentateuch; but with some of these they parted, and they were brought to England a few years since.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{104} Smith, \textit{Mission of Inquiry}, pp. 31-32.

The Taiping Rebellion

Floods of 1841, 1849 and 1860 of the Yellow River in Kaifeng contributed greatly to the destruction of the synagogue and the religious life of the community as well—whatever was left of it by the time the two Chinese Protestant delegates visited there. The fear of which the two delegates spoke was also related to the onslaught of the Taiping Rebellion (1850–1864) which caused much damage and death.106

Towards the late 1840s the Taiping Rebellion began in the southwest province of Guangxi, pitting Hong Xiuchuan (1813–1864) and his Christian followers against the government's army which had been dispatched to arrest them.

While the delegates were visiting the Chinese Jews in Kaifeng, the Taipings were quickly spreading north, taking the trading port of Hangzhou without difficulty, as well as Nanking, the administrative center of Central China. On March 20, 1853 it became the new capital of the "Heavenly Kingdom."

106 See J.C. Cheng, (1963), Chinese Sources for the Taiping Rebellion 1850–1864, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, Oxford University Press. The main source of information on the early history of Hong Xiuchuan and his movement had traditionally been a pamphlet written by Theodore Hamber entitled "The Visions of Hung-Siu-Tshuen and Origin of the Kwang-si Insurrection," originally published in Hong Kong in 1854. Hamburg had gotten his information directly from Hong Rengan, a cousin of Hong Xiuchuan's who was in Hong Kong. Dr. W.H. Medhurst, too, had gotten some information on the Taipings from the Peking Gazette and wrote a pamphlet entitled "History of the Kwang-se Rebellion."
The highly influential literati of Chinese society, however, would have nothing to do with them. This was not only due to their profession of faith in Christianity—as un-Chinese a religion as one could get—but also because the vast majority of the Taiping rebels came from the lower classes. While the literati disliked the Manchus as much as the Taipings did, they "preferred it to the disorder and licence that existed among the ruling circles in Nanking."

In one of two Taiping documents\(^\text{107}\) which are still extant, entitled "The New Draft of the Heavenly Administration," written by Hong Rengan in 1859, is a portion entitled "On the Jews." It reads, in part:

As far as China is concerned, there are, in the Hsiang-fu district, K'ai-feng county, Honan province, many Jews who write Hebrew characters on parchment. But since the Sung dynasty these people have been away from their home so long, that they can only perform the ceremonial without understanding the characters and the true meaning when asked why they observe their religion, they answer that they are expecting the descent of Christ the Saviour. The same applies to the Jews in every state, who do not believe in the Saviour born one thousand eight hundred and fifty-nine years ago.\(^\text{108}\)

As a result of the Taiping march on Kaifeng in 1857, "the Jews, with the rest of the population, were scattered far and wide, and only a few returned home including most of those who had gone to Shanghai." (Leslie, 1972)

\(^{107}\) The other document written by the Taipings in 1853, "The Land System of the Heavenly Dynasty," details the classification of land into nine categories, its distribution and administration.

\(^{108}\) J.C. Cheng, *Chinese Sources*, p. 50.
Summary of Information Obtained from the
London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews

By the time Qiu Tiansheng and Jiang Rongji, two Chinese Protestant converts chosen by the London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews, arrived in Kaifeng in 1850, the religious life among the Chinese Jews had come to a virtual halt. While the synagogue still stood, it was in ruins, and the last rabbi had died several decades before, taking with him the last vestiges of knowledge of Hebrew.

Although the Jews were said to still observe circumcision and some of the dietary laws, their desperate financial condition obviated any attempt to retain what was left of their religious manuscripts, and they were persuaded to sell them.

The fear which the two delegates reported all throughout their journey was also something which kept them apart from the Jews. For although the Kaifeng Jewish community had benefited from Emperors of previous dynasties who had allowed them to rebuild their synagogue, the Qing emperor was not favorably disposed towards foreigners, and granted neither permission nor funds for the restoration of the one structure which kept the Jews together as a religious community.

The mistrust of foreigners and dangers inherent in communicating with the remnant community of Jews in Kaifeng, exacerbated by the Taiping Rebellion, served to inhibit contact with the Chinese Jews throughout much of the 19th
century. Their already desperate situation now seemed almost hopeless by the few who managed to visit them.
Other Foreign Contacts with Kaifeng Jews, 1850-1899

Several visitors to the Chinese Jews and "sightings" of Chinese Jews in other regions of the globe have been noted before the more well-known visit of the Reverend Dr. W.A.P. Martin in 1866, at which time he declared that the synagogue itself no longer even stood on the site at which it had been for the past seven centuries, and which, although in a dilapidated state, had been reported by the 1850 delegates.

We have already noted the claim by "J.C." in 1859 of a similar story as that told by Rabbi Arnaud Aron's cousin then living in China, which had been reported in 1855 by I.J. Benjamin (II).109

An unidentified British traveler (possibly John Scarth, pseudonym of the author of Twelve Years in China) made brief statements pertinent to the Kaifeng Jews in the year 1860, noting "their peculiar physiognomy; and it is stated that the rearing of silk-worms was formerly a trade confined almost entirely to Jews."110

Also in 1860 Henri Cordier was said to have met two or three Kaifeng Jews (Leslie, 1972, p. 75). "Cordier, (L'Anthropologie 1890, p. 550), met Jews (c. 1870?), and wrote 'ils avaient, comme les deux qui etaient venus a


110 See [John Scarth], (1860), Twelve Years in China Edinburgh, pp. 90, 93 and 171-172.
Chang-hai en 1851, les traits caracteristiques de leur race (juive)."

Cecil Roth noted that seven Chinese Jews "...and also one described as a Sabbath observer, were among the coolies imported to work in California in 1860-61; in 1862, a Chinese Jew, born in Hangkow in 1854, and named Feba was sent to Bombay and circumcised there. His portrait in 1906 shows him to be of Chinese origin. We have no proof of Kaifeng connections however."  

In 1864 two young Kaifeng Jews were said to have gone to Shanghai, but nothing of them was ever reported.

The report in 1867 that Aaron Halevi Fink claimed to have been in Kaifeng for eleven days beginning on July 6, 1864 was discovered by Michael Pollak (1980) to have been fallacious. Pollak was the first to point out that too many similarities existed between Fink's account and that of J.L. Liebermann (discussed below).

... the Jewish Chronicle, which reprinted the ...
Liebermann report in its issue of July 11, 1879, had nearly twelve years earlier published a three-part English rendition of a somewhat emotional Hebrew letter dated 2 Heshvan 5628 (October 31, 1867), Shantung Province, and signed by an early professional photographer, one Aaron Halevi Fink, telling of a visit he purportedly made to the Kaifeng Jews for an eleven-day period beginning 2 Tammuz 5624 (July 6, 1864). ... Fink's story differs in no more than a few minor respects from Liebermann's; and not only are the revelations in the two accounts uncannily similar in the details they offer, but the order and manner in which they are presented (and some of the phraseology as well) are also very much alike. It is obvious to

111 Leslie, Survival, p. 106.
112 Ibid., p. 75.
even the most casual reader that the tale told in one of the two letters was either plagiarized from the other or that both stories were pirated from an unknown third source. A week after they had completed the printing of the Fink account, incidentally, the editors of the Jewish Chronicle, totally unaware at this time of the existence of Liebermann, stated that they considered Fink's report entirely factual. When they published the Liebermann material in 1879, however, they seem to have forgotten completely about Fink.113

Pollak concludes that it is possible that Liebermann really was in Kaifeng in July 1867 and had his account published in a lesser-known publication which may have then been seen by Fink, inspiring him to write his story predating that of Liebermann. Or he could have somehow been privy to the letters Liebermann wrote to his father, deciding to write his story from them.

On the whole, Liebermann's report appears to be the more plausible, though perhaps because it does not include ... the plea for financial assistance that Fink's does--a plea, it should be recorded, which is expressed in embarrassingly fervid prose. To this should be added the consideration that after meeting Liebermann and presumably questioning him at some length about his experiences in Kaifeng, Rabbi Lowy was willing to devote a good deal of his time and effort to editing and translating Liebermann's account and then risk his own professional reputation by submitting it for publication to such an esteemed organization as the Anglo-Jewish Association.114

W.A.P. Martin

On February 17, 1866 the Reverend W.A.P. Martin became the first person to visit the Kaifeng Jews after the delegates of 1850-51, as well as the first Caucasian after the 18th century Jesuits to meet with them. His "Account of

113 Pollak, Mandarins, pp. 189-190.
114 Ibid., p. 190.
an overland journey from Peking to Shanghai, made in
February and March 1866," published in the *Journal of the
North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* III
(December 1866, pp. 26-39) described the travails which
awaited any non-Chinese traveller to Kaifeng, and may
explain why so few dared even attempt the trip.

The plight of the Jews of Kaifeng by this time is
poignantly conveyed by Martin when he relates learning that
after the last rabbi had died the Jews still cared enough to
leave a copy of their Torah in the marketplace in the hopes
that a Jew from afar who might perchance be in Kaifeng would
notice it and teach them once again its contents.

When Martin visited Kaifeng he was told by an unsympa-
thetic Moslem resident of that city that the synagogue was
no longer standing, and that the Jews themselves were
impoverished and scattered to other cities. When Martin was
finally taken to the site of the old synagogue all that he
reported standing was a solitary stone.

'Are there among you any of the family of Israel?' I
inquired. 'I am one,' responded a young man whose face
corroborated his assertion; and then another and
another stepped forth, until I saw before me
representatives of six out of the seven families into
which the colony is divided. There, on that melancholy
spot where the very foundations of the synagogue had
been torn from the ground and there no longer remained
one stone upon another, they confessed with shame and
grief that their holy and beautiful house had been
demolished by their own hands. It had for a long time,
they said, been in a ruinous condition; they had no
money to make repairs; they had, moreover, lost all
knowledge of the sacred tongue; the traditions of the
fathers were no longer handed down and their ritual
worship had ceased to be observed. In this state of
things they had yielded to the pressure of necessity
and disposed of the timbers and stones of that
venerable edifice to obtain relief for their bodily wants."

Martin continues his story by relating that the Chinese Jews went to his inn that evening to ask questions about their Torah which they could not read. He learned that the rebellion in the central provinces "had told sadly on the prosperity of Kai-fung-fu." Their population was estimated to be between three and four hundred, and by now they neither met as a community nor kept any registers. Some had recently converted to Buddhism or Islam. Martin met the son of the last rabbi who had died in Gansu Province some thirty or forty years ago.

Martin compared the situation of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng to the rock known as the "Little Orphan" near the Boyang Lake:

Such to me appeared that fragment of the Israelitish nation. A rock rent from the side of Mount Zion by some great national catastrophe and projected into the central plain of China, it has stood there, while the centuries rolled by, sublime in its antiquity and solitude. It is now on the verge of being swallowed by the flood of paganism, and the spectacle is a mournful one. The Jews themselves are deeply conscious of their sad situation, and the shadow of an inevitable destiny seems to be resting upon them. Poor, unhappy people!

Martin's account was reprinted in his work of 1881 entitled The Chinese, their Education, Philosophy, and Letters, and later in A Cycle of Cathay, published in 1896.

116 Ibid., p. 278.
A summary of this account can also be found in Martin's *The Awakening of China*, (pp. 41-44), published in 1907.

At the end of the chapter in which his account of the visit to Kaifeng occurs in *A Cycle of Cathay*, Martin notes that three years after visiting Kaifeng he had sent a letter to the editor of the Jewish Times of New York urging the formation of a Jewish mission and the rebuilding of the synagogue as indispensable to the sense of unity and future for the Kaifeng Jews.

On September 20, 1867 the Jewish Chronicle of London published a copy of an article which had appeared in the Jewish Intelligence on February 11 of the same year in Peking. In it, the Rev. Kaufmann, chaplain to seamen in Shanghai, had received a letter from W.A.P. Martin, which he had then published in the Jewish Intelligence. The Jewish Chronicle now published both Martin's words as well as his original letter to Kaufmann, with the entreaty to its readers:

... we cannot but deplore that communal apathy which allows, as it were, under our eyes, a Jewish colony to be totally estranged from the God of Israel and to be absorbed by the mass of Gentiles. There is still a remnant to be saved. The interior of China is now more accessible than ever. Can nothing be done for the preservation of this remnant in the ancestral faith? 117

Martin had hoped that his report to Kaufmann would be forwarded to the Jews' Society in London or to other correspondents. He strongly urged that a missionary be sent

117 *The Jewish Chronicle* [London], September 20, 1867, p. 7.
to Kaifeng as soon as possible to save the remnant colony of Jews. "One of the first essentials, in order to keep them together as a body and win them over to Christ, would be to rebuild their synagogue. It might not be so large or splendid as its predecessor, but 'the glory of the latter house would be greater than that of the former house,' for Christ would be there." Neither the Jews of London or Shanghai cared to listen to Martin, however, fearing the ultimate goals he obviously had in mind for the Jewish community.

**Kaifeng Jews in Peking**

In March of 1867 three young Kaifeng Jews arrived in Peking with three of the remaining Torah scrolls, which they gave to Joseph Edkins "for safekeeping and for display to potential purchasers." It is impossible to know if they acted on their own or as representatives of the Kaifeng community. Martin bought two scrolls, one of which he gave to S. Wells Williams, which is now at the American Bible Society in New York; the other can now be found in the library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. A third was bought by the Austrian diplomat Karl von Scherzer and is now at the Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna. A French official then in China, M. Simon claimed that other Jews existed in China, in particular in the northern provinces.

Jews had in the past been hunted down, he said, as putative members of such insurrectionary societies as the White Lotus League, and they now found it prudent
to let people think they were Muslims. Simon claimed
too that a Chinese Jewish employee of his had reported
the presence in Tientsin of 250-300 Jews, where they
had 'a small oratory and a rabbi.' He himself had met
the rabbi, Simon added, and was told by him that two or
three Jewish families lived in Hangchow.\textsuperscript{118}

\textbf{Samuel Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky}

Between April and June of 1867 a Jewish convert to
Christianity who had become a Protestant Reverend and would
later become a Bishop, spent 25 days in Kaifeng. Samuel
Isaac Joseph Schereschewsky (1831-1906) was "compelled to
leave because of the anti-foreign and anti-Christian
feeling, and, though he stayed there some 25 days, he
achieved very little." (Leslie, 1972)

Schereschewsky had met three young Kaifeng Jews in
Peking right after Martin's visit to the community. In
fact, it was Martin's visit which prompted the missionaries
to pick Schereschewsky, with his knowledge of Judaism, to
visit Kaifeng. One of the 13 languages in which he was
fluent (and one of the 20 which he could read) was Hebrew,
which was deemed essential now by the missionaries.
Although his report is no longer extant, a summary of
Schereschewsky's experiences in Kaifeng was written by a
friend of his surnamed Blodget on July 23, 1867. Pollak
(1980) notes that Schereschewsky made no great effort to
meet the Jews while in Kaifeng, but his allusions to them
are based on what he learned second-hand in conversations
with non-Jews.

\textsuperscript{118} Pollak, \textit{Mandarins}, pp. 391-392, footnote #24.
In the end Schereschewsky was driven out by a mob from Kaifeng. That, even after disguising himself by shaving the front of his head in the Chinese manner and wearing Chinese clothing. And while he was there all he managed to discover was that the Jews had by now all assimilated.

**J.L. Liebermann**

Shortly after Schereschewsky's visit, the first Western Jew visited Kaifeng for ten days in July of 1867. An Austrian Jewish merchant, Jacob Liebermann "was perhaps also the first Westerner in modern times, Jewish or Christian, who traveled to Kaifeng to see the Jews on his own initiative rather than on behalf of a religious organization." (Pollak, 1980)

Liebermann wrote a series of ten letters to his father in Bielitz, Austrian Silesia, in which he described his exciting journey to Kaifeng, attempts to meet with the Jews and the sorry state of assimilation which he encountered among them there. These letters were condensed and translated from the Hebrew by a Dr. Lowy, appearing in the Annual Report of the Anglo-Jewish Association for 1878-1879. This final translated letter was then published in the Jewish Chronicle, July 11, 1879, and again quoted in part in the North China Herald, October 3, 1879 (pp. 321-322) as well as in Israel's Watchman in August that year (p. 248).

While the Jews whom Liebermann met in 1873 lamented their degree of assimilation, they also recounted stories of a brighter past:
I was informed that two hundred of their families had removed to Pekin, and had taken with them three Scrolls. It was mentioned to me by some of my informants that in this town they had formerly a very fine synagogue, which was built on the model of the Temple in Jerusalem, and had existed for several centuries. In a certain part of the synagogue court, they used to burn incense by day and by night. A part of that building was called Bethel (the House of God). Only Cohanim (descendants of Aaron) officiated there on Sabbaths, Festivals and New Moons. Men, women, and children used regularly to assemble in the synagogue on days of the New Moon. Here the Jews made votive offerings, burnt incense, and chanted hymns and religious songs, which were accompanied by the beating of drums and by other instruments. On such occasions the Jews feasted and made merry, distributed gifts among the poor, and suspended at the doors and windows of their houses, as also at those of their synagogue, blue and purple streamers of silk. On the nights of New Moons and Festivals every Israelite's house was illuminated.119

Later on, they related, their situation changed drastically:

When the last of their elders died, the knowledge of the Scriptures completely ceased among them. By order of the Government, Scrolls of the Law were exhibited in the open market place, and an advertisement in Chinese was inscribed by the side, offering a reward and a leading position to anyone who would be able to explain the wording of the Scroll. Also the Jews made similar offers in other places, but to no avail. This caused them to despair of their synagogue, which was completely abandoned, and of which not one stone was left on the other. They were ordered not to adopt another religion before the arrival of persons who could read the Law, and who might re-introduce amongst them the knowledge now fallen into oblivion.120

Leslie (1972) believes Liebermann's story is at least somewhat suspect owing to his description of a section of

119 The Jewish Chronicle, July 11, 1869, p. 12.
120 Ibid., p. 12.
the law (the second portion of Exodus) with a short colophon in a Kaifeng mosque.

For the identical colophon, attached to the eleventh portion of Exodus, was taken to Shanghai and published there in 1851. However, he quotes four Hebrew words, which in fact only appear in Exodus 6.6, which is in the second portion as he said. He also mentions the report of a golden bell, with a dated inscription, stolen by Muslims.121

Pollak, too, is not at all convinced Liebermann ever even made the trip. A report in the Chicago Inter-Ocean on December 31, 1899 has also been attributed to Liebermann, implying he visited Kaifeng again that year.

Although Martin had experienced no ill-will on the part of the residents of Kaifeng, both Schereschewsky and Liebermann had been hurried out of the city by howling, anti-foreign mobs.

I assumed the garb of the natives, and plaited my hair in the Chinese fashion. Thus I travelled from place to place, and was always on the alert to obtain some intelligence about the Jews in that country. I had placed myself under British protection, and was therefore supplied with a permit to visit the interior of the country. Although I had been furnished with such a document my safety was often endangered owing to the existence of feuds in different districts. Sometimes I was regarded as a spy, and had many miraculous escapes. I was on some occasions fortunate enough to receive letters of protection from the leaders of the hostile parties. ... In betaking myself to the 'foreigners' inn,' I was guarded right and left, in front and behind, by armed men, until I reached my destination, for the inhabitants of the place behave fiercely and cruelly towards Europeans. Many missionaries, both of the Catholic and the Protestant religion, who visited this place, had, I was told, never quitted it without being exposed to serious insult.122

121 Leslie, Survival, pp. 63-64.
122 The Jewish Chronicle, July 11, 1869, p. 12.
And finally we read:

I had ... been ten days in the city of Kae-fung-foo. On the eleventh day my inn was surrounded, and I was expelled from the city without being able to communicate with my new acquaintances. I had already spent there so many days, whilst ordinarily a stranger is not permitted to remain longer than three days.  

J.J. Liebermann

Right after Liebermann's visit an unidentified Jewish traveller in China, although not in Kaifeng, was said to have talked of the Jews there. According to Leslie (1972), Alexander Wylie's article "The Jewish Roll from Kai-fung-foo," in Notes and Queries on China and Japan 2 (1868), (pp. 159-160), mentions a J.J. Liebermann who visited Kaifeng that year.

J.J. Liebermann did write an article entitled "Jews in China" in the Chicago Inter-Ocean on December 31, 1899, which was then reprinted in the American Hebrew on January 12, 1900 (pp. 320-323). Some believe that this was written by Colonel Lehmann (see below), although Leslie is not convinced they are connected, noting that without the original Hebrew it is difficult to accept any of the 1899 account.

123 Ibid., p. 13.

124 While Pollak (1980) cites this article as having appeared in The Jewish Chronicle on July 30, 1868, this author has been able to come up with nothing. A weekly magazine, The Jewish Chronicle appeared that year on July 24, July 31 and August 7. None of these issues contained any articles on this subject. (No specific page number was given in Pollak's reference.)
T. Dunlon, T. Scarella and Unidentified Christians

In the Jewish Chronicle of 1900 on October 5, 12, 19 and 26, Elijah Solomon wrote on "Jews ... in China and India," noting that a T. Dunlon visited Kaifeng in 1876.

And in 1880, while Edkins spoke with several Kaifeng Jews who had come to Shanghai, Louis Pfister noted that a missionary surnamed Scarella was in Henan that year and visited the Jews.125

The Jewish Chronicle of July 27, 1888 carried an article about an unidentified Christian traveller in China who had tried to visit Kaifeng for 18 years, and was not allowed so much as to enter the city gates of Kaifeng when he finally arrived. He reported, however, that his Manchu companion did so and told of the synagogue site having been "in a dust heap" and having become a public urinal. He also learned that two men had gone to Shanghai, "but of the ten who were taken as students to Pekin twenty years ago he could learn nothing."

On August 23 of the following year the Jewish Chronicle again carried an article by E.T. Williams who wrote from China that "there are several thousands of Jews in Kai Fung Fu, most of whom are lapsing into heathendom, but still possessing some Scrolls of the Law, although not a single one can read Hebrew. ... Cannot the Alliance find an

enthusiastic traveller to do for the Kai Fung Fu Jews what M. Halevy did for the Falashas, especially now that with the opening up of improved communications with that city it will be more accessible to foreigners than formerly?"\textsuperscript{126}

\textbf{Reverend Dennis J. Mills}

China's Millions, a missionary journal, published an article in 1891 by the Reverend Dennis J. Mills, who had a year before visited the Jews of Kaifeng. In "Ho-nan Province: An Eventful Itineration," Mills relates that he easily found the Jews "for the street ... where they were once congregated is called by their name." He reported about 200 families to be scattered about in that city. The demolition of the synagogue had occurred about 1855, and one could hardly help weeping at seeing the desolation of this spot, where for so many centuries the God of Abraham had been worshiped; especially knowing that now this seed of the natural Israel is entirely given to idolatry, and utterly indifferent to the gifts and calling of God, which are without repentance.\textsuperscript{127}

A member of the Gao clan who had been to Peking told Mills that he alone possessed a copy of the remaining Scriptures, "all the rest having been spoilt by damp, etc., with the exception of one copy, which, during a violent wind, had been carried right up into heaven." He intended to take this last copy to Shanghai to give to the Jews there.

\textsuperscript{126} \textit{The Jewish Chronicle}, August 23, 1889, p. 5.

Writing again in China's Millions six years later, in an article entitled "The Jews in Honan," Reverend Mills adds the information that during 1888 while he lived in "Chau-kia-k'eo" one of the Kaifeng Jews called upon him and his guests.

... I well remember how interested the native Christians were in thus meeting for themselves one of Israel's scattered race—in himself a tangible proof of the Divine origin of the Holy Scriptures they had so lately come to know about.\footnote{128}

This same Jew, Mills later relates, later was baptized in Nanking.

We learn, too, that the man Gao whom they had met had lived in Peking with some Catholic missionaries for over two years.

These had cherished the idea of rebuilding their synagogue, and Christianizing their worship. To this end, he said, they had commissioned him to obtain for him twelve young boys who might be trained with this object in view. However, on his return to K'ai-feng Fu he failed to persuade any of the parents to give up their children for the purpose, and the project was abandoned. (Afterward we were told by another that Kao, given a considerable sum for the travelling expenses of the boys, had used it to open an opium shop!)\footnote{129}

Even in Mills' brief stay of two days in Kaifeng he could observe the feuding and dissension among the Jews. One Jew was even said to be in prison awaiting trial for the murder of another. Pollak notes that the murder "may have been related to the blood feud that ... [broke] out between


\footnote{129} Ibid., p. 40.
the Chang and the other clans, the Chang having been accused of selling the old synagogal ark to a mosque." ¹³⁰

A.S. Annaud

The ostracism felt by the Zhang clan is attested to only a few years after Mills' visit when, in 1893, A.S. Annaud of the National Bible Society of Scotland came to Kaifeng to see the synagogue site and noted the Jewish families who still live near it. It was Annaud who first stated that only six clans remain in Kaifeng. Annaud had met a young Jew named Gao Huigui who "had some Jewish features." Gao estimated that about 500 Jews remained in Kaifeng. Pollak (1980) adds that the Zhang may have moved away or become completely assimilated by then.

Monsignor Volonteri

In 1899 the Apostolic vicar of the Henan Mission, Monsignor Volonteri, bought a Torah and other smaller documents from an elderly Chinese Jewish widow.

This scroll was the last of the ten which are specifically known to have passed into foreign hands. Volonteri sent his purchases to the Siccawei Mission, a Catholic institution near Shanghai, from which the scroll was shortly forwarded to France for detailed study. It has since disappeared without trace. ¹³¹

Jérôme Tobar, whose Inscriptions juives de K'ai-fong-fou gave the world the first complete transcriptions and translations of all the Kaifeng steles in the original

¹³⁰ Pollak, Mandarins, p. 395, footnote #5.
¹³¹ Ibid., p. 200.
Chinese and in French, was in contact with Volonteri at this
time. The missionaries had sent Tobar rubbings of the 1679
stele around 1898, which at the time was still imbedded in
the side of the Zhao home on South Teaching Scripture Lane,
not to be removed until 1904.

Colonel Lehmann

One last note upon which to close a section on Western
encounters with the Chinese Jews during the 19th century
must surely include Colonel Lehmann (no first name ever
given) of the German army, who has been credited with
finding a colony of 500 Jews in Tangchuang (about 100 miles
southwest of Kaifeng) in 1899.

On November 18, 1899 the secretary of the Shanghai
branch of the Royal Asiatic Society reported this story in a
letter later reported by Marcus Nathan Adler in 1900.

The story allegedly presented by Lehmann was either
totally or partially a hoax, and although it was
believed on the whole by many of the people who read
it, there were others who scoffed at it, a few going so
far as to suggest that Colonel Lehmann was himself the
product of someone's overworked imagination. Who, they
asked, had ever heard of a Jew being permitted to hold
the rank of colonel in the Kaiser's regular army? And
if a Jewish settlement did really exist in Tang-chwang,
how was it that nobody after this Lehmann was ever able
to rediscover it?132

Pollak notes that there was indeed a Jewish officer by
the name of Lehmann in the German army, but in 1899, at
least, he was a captain rather than a colonel.

He was in fact Jonas (also known as Jon) Lehmann, son
of the prominent rabbi and literary man Marcus Lehmann

132 Ibid., p. 201.
and elder brother of Rabbi Oskar Lehmann. Jonas, born in Mainz in 1865 and thirty-four years old when his visits to Kaifeng and Tang-chwang are supposed to have taken place, gained a modicum of renown as a publisher, playwright, and poet after his five-year-term of military service, and died at Breslav in 1913.\footnote{\textsuperscript{133}}

Pollak correctly points out that the story attributed to Lehmann contains too many implausibilities, there being no agreement on the original contents of the story. (If, as Pollak notes, Lehmann was reported to have deciphered some Hebrew there with difficulty, how could he be this "son of a famous rabbi ... who, at his father's funeral a few years earlier, had delivered an eulogy adorned by a number of appropriate Hebraicisms?"\footnote{\textsuperscript{134}}

In the lecture given by Marcus Adler in London in 1900, which paraphrased Elijah Solomon's statements about Lehmann, Adler made no mention of the latter having ever been in Kaifeng. And the Chicago Inter-Ocean which carried the disputed article a few months before Adler's lecture, printed a first-person account by "J.J. Liebermann" (thought by Adler to really be Colonel Lehmann), which described his visit to Kaifeng. However, it mentioned nothing about a stopover in Tangchuang.

The officer referred to in both the American Hebraic and the Inter-Ocean was undoubtedly Lehmann, "but whether he ever was in Kaifeng and met any Jews there is highly

\footnote{\textsuperscript{133}} Ibid., p. 202.
\footnote{\textsuperscript{134}} Ibid., p. 206.
questionable. Whether he personally wrote the article attributed to him is equally questionable." (Pollak, 1980)

This unusual story is the culminating event in the 19th century saga of the contact between the West and the Jews of Kaifeng. It is not with this sense of lost hope expressed by both the Chinese Jews and those who visited them during the 19th century, that Western Jews living in Shanghai during the opening of the 20th century chose to deal with their long-lost brethren in Kaifeng. In fact, it is at this point that they finally mustered their financial and human resources in one last attempt to save the Kaifeng Jews from total material and spiritual oblivion.

Summary of Information Obtained by Visitors to Kaifeng, 1850-1899

Reports from the latter half of the 19th century by first-hand observers in Kaifeng are conflicting at best, with some describing the Chinese Jews as retaining their distinct "Jewish" features, while others insisting they were by now completely Sinicized racially.

Chinese Jews at this time were also reported to have gone as far afield as Shanghai, Peking, Bombay and California, although little about them was heard.

W.A.P. Martin's account in 1866 was the most reliable and detailed since the two Chinese delegates from the London Society had visited Kaifeng. It was some time between the 1851 visit of the delegates and Martin's visit that the synagogue was destroyed for the last time, for he reported
nothing was on the spot except one solitary stele. Any vestiges of the Jews as a community were gone, too. The urgency of their plight was not unnoticed by the Jews themselves, either, as they wound up selling their manuscripts and portions of the synagogue itself just to stay alive. Martin's entreaties to Western Jews to help the Kaifeng community rebuild their synagogue went ignored, as mistrust for his missionary intentions proved more powerful.

An atmosphere of fear pervaded most of the reports by foreigners trying to contact the Chinese Jews at this time, as great anti-foreign sentiment had set in due to the Opium War and the Boxer Rebellion. Conversions to Islam and Christianity were taking place in greater numbers now as Jewish religious practices were dying out even amidst the reported attempts at retaining their community and obvious angst at having grown so far apart from the customs and traditions of their forefathers.
20th Century Contacts with the Chinese Jews

The Shanghai Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews

Following the Opium War of 1839-1842, the Sassoon family of Baghdad settled in Shanghai, the city which was to become known as the Paris of the Orient. The Sassoons had gone to Bombay in the early 19th century and from there joined the British China trade after 1840.

By the first decade of the 20th century, the Sassoons, along with the Hardoon and Kadoorie families, had made considerable fortunes in land speculation, banking, transportation and construction. Their activities greatly contributed to the growth and development of both Shanghai and Hong Kong.135

These families from Baghdad created the first Jewish cultural institutions in Shanghai and Hong Kong. The Ezra and Hardoon families started the Shanghai Jewish School soon after 1900, and others founded the Shanghai Jewish Club, now the Shanghai Conservatory of Music. The Sassoons and Hardoons built many synagogues as well, the Beit Aharon Synagogue being torn down only in 1981.136

The Baghdadi community probably never numbered over 1,000, but they were soon joined by poor Jews from Poland and Russia, fleeing pogroms after the end of World War I. Between 1936 and 1939, Jews seeking refuge from Nazi Europe


136 Gao Wangzhi, "Jewish Sites in Shanghai," Points East (a newsletter of the Sino-Judaic Institute), Volume 2, No. 1, February, 1987, pp. 3 and 11. See this same article for a comprehensive listing of former Shanghai Jewish sites and their present-day status and location.
found their way to Shanghai, where they were treated well by their Chinese hosts, and even by the Japanese occupiers of Shanghai during the War years.

Population figures are hard to come by. A 1933 estimate mentions 10,000 Jews in Shanghai, with no breakdown for the Baghdadi and Russian-Polish communities. In 1937, 4,500 persons were officially affiliated with the Kehila [community] Ha'ivrit Ha'ashkenazit, but there were many more unaffiliated Ashkenazi Jews, who had migrated from Manchuria, in Shanghai at that time.137

Both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews developed their own communal institutions, including charitable societies, educational organizations, weekly newspapers and theatre groups. The last wave of refugees came primarily from Poland and Lithuania between 1940 and 1941, making their way to Shanghai via Russia and Manchuria or Kobe, Japan.138

When news of Volonteri's purchase of a Torah scroll from Kaifeng reached the Jews living in Shanghai, forty-four of them immediately signed a letter which had been drafted in Hebrew (with a Chinese translation) chastising the Kaifeng Jews for having assimilated to the point of abandoning their Jewish ways. The Shanghai Jews, led by S.J. Solomon and David Ezekiel Abraham, offered help to the Jews of Kaifeng return to Judaism.

137 The Jerusalem Post, June 20, 1986, p. 18.

138 With the end of World War II, between 1947 and 1950 many tens of thousands of Jews were shipped out of Shanghai with the aid of the Joint Distribution Committee. In June 1951, around 800 Jews remained in Shanghai and several hundred more were scattered throughout north China, Manchuria, and as far away as Sinkiang province.
Only two months later, on May 14, 1900, the home of E. M. Ezra was the site where thirty-one Shanghai Jews met to form the Shanghai Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews. Among the founding members were S.J. Solomon, David Ezekiel Joseph Abraham, E.M. Ezra, and Edward Isaac Ezra. In contact with the Shanghai Jews on this matter were Nathan Adler, Chief Rabbi of London, and his son Marcus.

The stated objectives of the Society were to study the origin, development, and history of the Jewish Colonies in China; to preserve such sites and monuments [as still exist]; [to] erect monuments where advantageous; and to bring back to Judaism all Chinese Jews lineally descended from Jewish families.¹³⁹

This letter was sent to Kaifeng via Protestant missionaries, but was intercepted due to the Boxer Rebellion which was raging at the time. Writing in 1902, Edward I. Ezra told of this letter by the Society having been "destroyed by a party of Boxers when looting one of the Protestant missions." (East of Asia Magazine, p. 293).

Undaunted, a second copy was sent by a Chinese messenger that August, perhaps after the second meeting of the Society which took place also that month.

On October 24, 1900 a cautious reply to this letter was written by the Jew Li Jingsheng. Published on page 15 of the Jewish Chronicle on January 4, 1901, it stated:

> We conversed with you at Kai-feng-fu and arranged to leave on September 25th to proceed to Takang and there join you in a journey to Shanghai, to see our compatriots in that city of the Jewish religion. But the news of war in the North is on. At present peace

¹³⁹ Pollak, Mandarins, p. 211.
is impracticable. Constantly we have in Kai-feng-fu troops passing and repassing. Everyone is disturbed in mind. Besides the Government has not become settled in its decisions. A synagogue could not just now be erected, nor can we leave our homes for a long journey. We therefore think it best to write this letter to send to you. Do not wait for us if you have important matters to be attended to, requiring you to go at once to Shanghai. Kindly proceed in advance of us. When you see our Jewish compatriots tell them that we find it better to wait till the country is quieter. We will then certainly set out to go to Shanghai and confer with them personally on all matters. The site of the synagogue remains as it was, but our people are very much scattered. We wish you in conclusion a prosperous journey.

This prompted another letter by the Society on November 17, 1900, published in the same article.

To our Brethren in faith in Kai-Feng-Fu:
We have a few months ago addressed you a letter in Hebrew signed by members of our Community and forwarded it to you with its translation in Chinese, but it was, unfortunately, lost in transmission before reaching you. As soon as we became aware of the fact we sent you copies of the letter and its translation. The messenger returned some two weeks ago bringing a letter addressed to him by some of your members asking him to carry a message to us, that the writers intend to come and see us as soon as the disquietude which is now raging in some parts of the country has disappeared. You cannot imagine how welcome was the news received by everyone of us. We write now this letter to inform you that a Society has recently been formed for the purpose of considering the best means of reviving the religion of our Fore-fathers among your Community. The members of the Committee of our Society are anxiously awaiting the arrival of some of your members so that they can discuss with them as to the best method to attain the aim in view. In order that no more precious time be lost we ask you again to send two or three of your members to Shanghai with as little delay as possible so that some steps may be taken for your early relief from your present state of knowledge of our religion.

Again Li replied, in January of 1901, and added that he would indeed come to Shanghai in the Spring.

On April 6, 1901, 52-year-old Li Jingsheng arrived in Shanghai with his 12-year-old son, Li Zongmai. They stayed
this first time only three weeks, before returning to Kaifeng with a letter from the Society. While in Shanghai, Li told the Western Jews that only about 140 families of Jewish descent remained in Kaifeng. He said that

... his Jewish townsmen no longer extracted the sinews from the meat they ate, had given up observing the Sabbath and the festivals, and did not circumcise their infant sons. In spite of all this, he stressed, they were not idol worshipers, and they still refrained from eating pork.140

On March 10, 1902, the elder and younger Li returned to Shanghai—this time with six other Jews from Kaifeng. They visited the home of E.M. Ezra soon after their arrival, on March 26:

With the kind help of a friend, a meeting with these eight Chinese Jews was held at my residence on Wednesday evening, March 26th, when I subjected them to a thorough cross-examination lasting over two hours. The information I was able to elicit I embodied in a report to the Rescue Society. From the answers to a number of questions put by me it appears that they regard themselves as quite separate from the Chinese. Questioned as to whether any of them knew anything of their religion, they said that for a long period before the Taiping rebellion they were gradually declining and their faith was rapidly being forgotten. At present they do not observe any of the ordinances of the Jewish religion, nor do they observe the idolatrous practices of the heathen.141

They stressed that the flood and the Taiping rebellion hastened their demise as a community, and "the new generation was brought up in utter ignorance of everything

140 Ibid., pp. 211-212.

141 Edward Isaac Ezra, (1902), "Chinese Jews," East of Asia Magazine, I, p. 294. Another account of this visit was given by S.M. Perlmann, also a member of the Shanghai Society, who was at the meeting on March 10. This can be found in Perlmann's The History of the Jews in China, pp. 23-27.
connected with their religion and history." A great sense of shame was reported by Ezra on the part of these Jews, as they no longer had a Rabbi, nor a synagogue nor even a school in which to educate their children. Still:

There are a few traditional commands they still remember and are trying to observe. They are under no circumstances allowed to consider Mohammedans as the same race, nor to use heathen musical instruments in marriage. They are to take out the sinews before preparing meat for food, and are forbidden to eat pork. ... Their leader closed the interview by expressing a hope that the Synagogue in Kaifengfu may soon be rebuilt and the remnants of the ancient settlement once more rejuvenated. 'And this,' he continued 'can only be done with the assistance of our foreign brethren. We are desirous of being instructed--teach us, and raise us from the dust.' From all appearance these men show great sincerity and their honesty was further proved when one of their number proposed and then allowed his eldest son, aged fifteen years, to be circumcised, which ceremony was successfully performed on the 27th May last. The lad was named Israel and he is now receiving instruction.\footnote{Ibid., p. 295.}

This circumcision was performed in the home of D.E.J. Abraham. Ezra's article ends by saying that the Jews of Shanghai and London were working on collecting the funds to rebuild a synagogue in Kaifeng, which, in accord with Martin's injunction as well on this matter, was perceived to be the only option left which would revive even a semblance of the sense of community that once united them.

But the proposed synagogue in Kaifeng was never to be. Suddenly overwhelmed by the effects of the pogroms occurring in Russia and the resulting Jewish immigration, both the Shanghai and London Jewish communities found themselves short of the funds necessary to rebuild a synagogue.
Severely disappointed that nothing could be done to help their community, six of the Kaifeng Jews returned home three months after their arrival. Li Jingsheng remained in Shanghai until his death in 1903, when he was buried in the Jewish cemetery. In one of Michael Pollak's many illuminating footnotes in Mandarins, Jews and Missionaries, it is noted that a report written in 1903 by Simon A. Levy, vice-president of the Shanghai Rescue Society, states that following the death in Shanghai of Li Ching-sheng on August 4 of that year ... it was discovered, presumably by the hevra kaddisha which prepared the body for burial, that 'he bore the covenant of Abraham.' Yet Li, Levy then adds, had told the Shanghai Jews that he was ignorant of the rite of circumcision. Li was born in Kaifeng on July 18, 1851. Levy's report thus confirms the Chinese delegates' announcement of their discovery, only two weeks before Li's birth, that 'circumcision also appears to be practiced, though the traditions respecting its origin and object appear to be lost among them [the Kaifeng Jews].'

The younger Li was raised by the family of D.E.J. Abraham, and when he was circumcised was given the name Shmuel (Pollak, 1980). Writing from Deepwater Bay, Hong Kong to the editor of the Jewish Chronicle on October 12, 1962, Mrs. R.D. Abraham adds that Samuel was educated at the Shanghai Jewish School and was employed as a clerk in her father-in-law, D.E.J. Abraham's, firm.

Other Kaifeng Jews came to Shanghai over the years, one of which was a cousin of Shmuel's named Jacob. He was employed by E.D. Sassoon and Company, while another cousin

143 Ibid., pp. xxxi-xxxii.
144 The Jewish Chronicle, October 12, 1962, p. 20.
worked as a watchman in the home of the Abrahams. Shmuel stayed in Shanghai for almost 50 years and returned to Kaifeng after World War II, where he died. His son was said to later be sent from Shanghai "to the interior" after the Communists gained power in 1949.

**Summary of Information Obtained by the Shanghai Committee for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews**

Until the turn of the 20th century relatively few Jews had heard of the Kaifeng Jewish community, and even fewer made the journey there, since they had not the financial backing afforded representatives of missionary groups.

The successful Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews who had taken up residence in Shanghai during the 19th century, represented best by the Sassoons and the Kadoories, however, became alarmed when they learned of the sale of Torah scrolls and the generally decayed state of the Kaifeng Jewish community.

Banding together they formed the Shanghai Committee for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews in 1900, hoping to save the Kaifeng Jews from spiritual oblivion. Communication with the Kaifeng community thus took place, prompting several Kaifeng Jews to travel to Shanghai where they reported that they still observed some of the Jewish dietary laws, and that some were even circumcised, but the community no longer consisted of practicing Jews.

When pogroms and immigration of the Russian Jews began to occur, however, attention and funds were diverted from
the original intention of rebuilding a synagogue for the Kaifeng Jews. Almost all those who had come to Shanghai in the hopes of finding some Western Jews who could help them rebuild their community, returned to Kaifeng with their hopes dashed and their hearts heavy, realizing that the former grandeur of their synagogue and pride as a Jewish community was never again to be.
Other Visitors to Kaifeng (1900-1910)

Robert Powell, Abbot Lloyd, James A. Thomas, W.B. Pettus, Berthold Laufer, Edward Jenks, Phillipppe Berthelot and Oliver Bainbridge

About the time the Shanghai Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews was created, the Reverend Robert Powell had begun to live in China. Powell relayed information to S.J. Solomon of the Shanghai Society, who wrote to Herman Marcus, the Chief Rabbi of Britain on June 10, 1900, with his new-found information. In "The Jews in K'ai-feng Fu, Ho-nan," published in China's Millions in 1903, Powell related this letter, which mentioned that he had been visited by the brother of a Jew who had become a Buddhist priest. The Jews were said to know little about their religion, although they had for the most part not yet become idolators. While they did not intermarr, and their numbers had diminished, Powell relates, "there are still representatives of the eight houses which came here in the first instance. All have dwindled, but none are extinct."\(^{145}\)

Writing in 1930, Allen Godbey mentions that Abbot Lloyd of Durham, North Carolina, was in Kaifeng from 1902 until 1914 and helped him examine copies of the inscriptions published by Tobar. Godbey also mentions a James A. Thomas "who was also many years in Kaifeng" and helped gather various historical materials for him. Thomas reported that

"he frequently heard the local community spoken of as 'Black Jews,' a regular term in India for Judaized natives ..."  

Abbott Lloyd related to Godbey that they for the most part owned small shops "selling hot water and a few sweetmeats."

The whole puts vividly before us the slow dwindling of a Jewish community of 'sacred people' on a large tract of sequestered land until its final extinction. The handsome shrine of sixty years before, with its block of community buildings, had disappeared. The very soil had been sold and carted away by the poor people.  

Dr. W.B. Pettus of Peking was also said by Lloyd to have visited Kaifeng and found "the poor Jews watching for an opportunity to sell a rubbing of their stone." Pettus added that the Jews would charge him nothing, however, since he was "a friend of our people."  

Rudolf Lowenthal (1940) informs us that the next visitor to Kaifeng was Berthold Laufer, who wrote an article in German entitled "Zur Geschichte der chinesischen Juden" in Globus in April of 1905. Laufer met several Chinese Jews in 1933 and submitted the results of his "investigations" before the International Congress for the History of Religions which was held in Basel, Switzerland in September of 1904.

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147 Ibid., p. 418.

148 Neither James Thomas nor W.B. Pettus had ever been mentioned before in literature on the Chinese Jews.
That same year an American engineer by the name of Edward Jenks was said by Phillippe Berthelot (a French diplomat who himself was in Kaifeng in 1905) to have removed the 1679 stele from the wall of the Zhao family house. Berthelot had written "Notes sur les Resultats scientifiques d'une Mission Diplomatique en Chine" in the Bulletin de l'Ecole Francaise de l'Extreme Orient, and included in part III of this a section on "La Colonie Juive de K'ai-fong et les Steles de la Synagogue." Berthelot noted that he met the heads of six of the original seven Jewish clans--the Zhang were missing, as has been noted before.

Only a year later, in 1906, the English writer Oliver Bainbridge visited Kaifeng. He reported that there were eight Jewish families with approximately fifty people, and that they were quickly assimilating into Islam, even though there seemed to be much animosity between them. Bainbridge was told that of the two Torah scrolls they had possessed, one had been sold to a missionary (possibly Volonteri in 1899) and the other had "vanished to Heaven." This story had been related by others, who either heard the Jews say that a Daoist priest had stolen the scrolls by telling the Jews to leave them to air and when they returned the scrolls were gone, or of a Moslem mullah who borrowed it and when he didn't return it, insisted that the Torah had been swept away by a gust of wind and wafted to the heavens.

Oliver Bainbridge photographed some of the Jews he met, and was given a petition by one of them to remit to fellow...
Jews in the west. It asked that they help those in Kaifeng rebuild their synagogue and help them out of their poverty. Nothing ever came of these petitions, however.

**Summary of Other Visitors to Kaifeng, 1900-1910**

A tale of poverty, intermarriage and conversions among the Chinese Jews is told by the handful of Western visitors to Kaifeng during the first decade of the 20th century. Assimilation now was taking place at a quickening rate, although the seven major clans were still identifiable in Kaifeng. Poverty had by now reduced them to actively trying to sell their religious scrolls, even while they petitioned the Western Jewish community, through these foreign visitors, to help them rebuild their synagogue and regain some semblance of Jewish life.
Bishop William Charles White (1910-1933)

No other Westerner lived among the Chinese Jews as long as Bishop William Charles White, who was consecrated the Canadian Church of England's first Anglican Bishop of Henan Province in 1909, and proceeded to live in Kaifeng from 1910 to 1933.

Bishop White succeeded in getting the heads of the seven clans agree to have his church take over protection of the two extant stone inscriptions in 1912, soon moving them to the cathedral compound. Two years prior to this, the Jews would not agree to give up legal title to the synagogue site. A year later, however, after a conflict over the possession of the steles with the local authorities, White was able to purchase the stones on the condition that they not leave the province. And in 1914 the site of the synagogue itself was sold by the Jews to the Mission, "which proceeded to clean it up and eliminate the stagnant pool." (Leslie, 1972) This was the first time in over seven centuries that someone other than the Chinese Jews owned the site.

By now no more scrolls of the Law were left and parts of the synagogue were already being used by others in Kaifeng. A Confucian temple had obtained one of the marble balustrades of the former synagogue for over fifty years; two stone lions were said to be outside one of the Buddhist
temples, and even the green roof tiles were now part of the local mosque.

In May of 1919, Bishop White and the Reverend J. H. Blackstone held a series of meetings for the Chinese Jews to try to educate them and revive some kind of communal ties between them. Heads of all seven clans were present, and

... 40 families out of the estimated 200 enrolled. They did not know one another. There was not one scroll left, and all were given the bible in Chinese. Only the Shih clan had kept family records. We may note the evidence of the three generation tablets copied by White at the time. Only in one case, most surprisingly surnamed Chang, out of four were the wives of Jewish surname.149

Under "Missionary News" in The Chinese Recorder of November 1919 we are told of the difficulty encountered by Blackstone and White in managing to hold any kind of meeting with the Jews at all:

It was difficult to get the Jews interested at first. They were utterly disintegrated, having no link of religion, or clan register, or even social relationship, to form a point of approach. Most of them, though known to each other by name, were not on terms of acquaintanceship. Not one of them followed any Jewish practices of any kind, and though one family of the Stone clan had been attending a Mission in Kaifeng, the others were practically idolaters, differing in no respect from the heathen round them. As far as could be found, none were Mohammedans, though we heard that, in times past, some had joined that religious body.150

When Bishop White returned to Canada he served as Assistant Professor of Chinese Archaeology and Keeper of the

149 Leslie, Survival, p. 70.

Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, before becoming Assistant Director of the Museum and Director of its School of Chinese Studies. The many Chinese-Jewish artifacts he purchased while in Kaifeng have since passed into the hands of the Royal Ontario Museum where they now remain.\textsuperscript{151}

In 1942 White published \textit{Chinese Jews}--the magnum opus until that time on the subject--in three volumes: History, Genealogy, and Inscriptions. White used many excerpts from the Jesuits, James Finn, the 1850 delegates, and 20th century observers such a David Brown (1932), W.A.P. Martin and Samuel Schereschewsky. Leslie (1972), however, has noted the numerous misidentifications of Jews made by White in this work.

Although he had encouraged the Jews to recoup their old community, they may have sensed that he, too, hoped that this would only be the first step in winning them over to Christianity, as this was one of Bishop White's stated goals.

\textit{Summary of Information Obtained from Bishop White}

Living among the Chinese Jews for a quarter of a century, Bishop William Charles White was in the prime

\textsuperscript{151} Among those bits of Chinese-Judaica in the possession of the Royal Ontario Museum are a black marble chime used to call the Jews to prayer on Sabbaths, two stone lotus-carved bowls and a large, cylindrical case for the Torah scroll. These and other Sino-Judaic items have been on exhibit around the United States since 1986, in conjunction with an exhibit assembled at the Museum of the Diaspora (Beth Hatfutsoth) of Tel Aviv, Israel.
position to give a detailed first-hand account of the life and times of the by now remnant community of Chinese Jews in Kaifeng. His magnum opus, *Chinese Jews*, written in 1942, brought together much of the available information by observers to Kaifeng until that time, but was marred by inaccuracies in identification of Chinese Jews from Chinese sources, among other things. Leslie notes:

> Looked on as a Source Book, *Chinese Jews* is still valuable ... Its many beautiful photos, sketches, maps, notes and lists of names are very handy. But as a synthesis, it is inadequate. White himself pointed out that he was not attempting to write a history of the community. Moreover, many of his additions and conclusions are invalidated by his enthusiasm and lack of critical sense.  

One of White's main contributions while in Kaifeng was to attempt to revive the community by bringing together the seven major clans and documenting the occasion with photos and articles on the subject. However, nothing came of these meetings, as the Jews had by now lost all sense of community and all hopes of rebuilding their synagogue or re-learning Judaism, much less practicing it.

As a community the Jews had by now come to an end, although a strong individual sense of ethnic identity remained with them, as shall be seen, throughout the 20th century.

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Other Visitors to Kaifeng, 1910-1948

The 1910s: Zhang Xiangwen, Charles D. Tenney and Shi Jingxun

Several other Westerners visited the Chinese Jews while Bishop White was there. The first, Charles D. Tenney, however, was preceded by eight years by a native-born Chinese, Zhang Xiangwen 張相文, who was the first Chinese to visit Kaifeng with the express purpose of studying the steles.

A historian, Zhang met with a member of the Zhao clan who invited him to his home. Zhang noted at the time "their highbridged noses and deepset eyes likened rather [to] those of the Caucasian race." He was also told of an English visitor two years prior by the name of Pan 阮 --most likely Oliver Bainbridge.

When Charles D. Tenney, an American diplomat, arrived in Kaifeng he was sorely disappointed with the small number of Jews and the poverty in which they lived. Apart from noting some "Jewish physiognomies" occasionally spotted by him on the street, nothing of Jewish import seemed to remain. Tenney, after summarizing the history of the Kaifeng Jewish community which he gleaned from the steles, observed "the extraordinary absorptive or assimilating force of Chinese society."

The enormous mass of the Chinese makes a human ocean in which the rivulets from outside soon lose their identity. Christianity established itself here not later than the 8th and again in the Yuan Dynasty in the 13th Century, but the Church has been smothered. The
Jews have established themselves, but little by little, the tenets and ceremonies of their religion have been modified and adapted to the hereditary beliefs and superstitions of the surrounding Chinese population, until the Jewish religion has disappeared like the small stream in the ocean. 153

A year after Tenney’s visit, another Chinese scholar, Shi Jingxun 許精訓 went to Kaifeng (ca. 1919). He wrote a guide book entitled  Henan dizhi 河南地志 published that year in Kaifeng.


Then came the visit of Harry A. Franck in 1923. An American traveler, Franck wrote in Wandering in Northern China that the Chinese Jews seemed to have lost every vestige of Jewish identity. And, contrary to the observations of Tenney and Zhang noted above, Franck reported that

all those I saw looked less Jewish than do some of the Chinese; certainly their features would not definitely distinguish them from their neighbors, though the ‘head Jew’ boasts that several persons have come to take his photograph ‘because he has such a big nose.’ 154

However, Franck observed that the extreme excitement and friendliness shown him by these Jews indicated a still strong sense of identification with a foreigner. It seems Franck had actually spoken to the member of the Zhao clan


who had been jailed for murder (the blood feud noted earlier by Pollak).

The merry little father, it seems, has twice been in jail charged with murder, if that really means anything concerning a man's character in China; the fact that he had gotten out again suggested that there could scarcely have been much evidence against him, for the Jews of Kaifeng are not wealthy. 155

During the summer and autumn of 1924 the Shanghai Society briefly resuscitated itself with the help of Simon A. Levy, George Sokolsky, Arthur Sopher and others. Short on funds but with much enthusiasm, the Society decided to finally send someone to Kaifeng. A Chinese man from Xinjiang who claimed to be a Jew, by the name of David Levy Wong, was chosen to go to Kaifeng for the Society to ascertain its exact condition. Wong related that on August 13 he took a picture in the garden of the Anglican Bishop's compound with over ten heads of Jewish families present. The next day he gave a talk at the Mission "attended by about a thousand people, Jews and Christians." He later asked one member of the Zhao clan and Shi Zhongyong to make a plan of the synagogue property and write a report. This report, which Wong enclosed and sent back to the Society, said that only 99 Jews were left in Kaifeng, most of whom were poor. Mr. Zhao was noted to be willing to contribute his own house to help the Jews, if need be. This report also listed the names of the men, women and children of Jewish descent in Kaifeng.

155 Ibid., p. 335.
After Levy returned to Shanghai he made a report in person, at which time he told the Society that he had been to the homes of many of the Jews, and they all seemed eager to reorganize the community. They even suggested that a school be built first, "and the younger generation instructed in the rudiments of Jewish faith." Mr. Wong was even willing, on his own initiative, to move his whole family to Kaifeng for the rest of his life and devote his time to teaching the Jews there.

Of David Wong, George Sokolsky has this to say, in his article on "The Jews in China" published in the *Menorah Journal* of November, 1928:

He could speak Mandarin, Turki and some Russian. He could read Hebrew. He was seventy years old, but looked like a man of forty. ... David Levy was an amazingly versatile gentleman, who could be all things to all men and make money as he went along. He told us that he had raised $10,000 in Chinese currency for the establishment of a synagogue and Hebrew school in Kashgar and that his principal donor was the Tuchun of Charhar, General Ma Fu-hsiang, a military man of considerable importance, whose father is said to have been a Jew, but whose mother was a Moslem.  

Pollak (1980) notes that at the time of writing, Sokolsky was obviously unaware of the fact that Levy had gotten safely to Kaifeng and then returned to Shanghai.

Also in 1924, Arthur Sopher of the Shanghai Society himself went to Kaifeng and reported meeting a man surnamed Zhao who kept a tea shop near the site of the old synagogue.

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who remarked happily on Sopher's being a member of the same tribe as he.

That same year the Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle of September 1924 cited an article by an E.M. Berthel, who was said to have gone to Kaifeng, which appeared in the North China Herald, but no date was given for it, and hence, has been impossible to locate.

An article in Israel's Messenger appeared on July 4th, also in 1924, by an A. Horne. In it he expressed his utter dismay and disappointment upon reaching Kaifeng, only to find a totally assimilated group of people who live in different quarters of the town, never meet for religious or communal purposes and observe no Jewish customs. His article ends with the statement that "the Jewish Colony is no more. A once-flourishing branch of the Jewish tree has withered and died."\textsuperscript{157}

Between 1925 and 1927 a Soviet military advisor by the name of A. Klimoff was in Kaifeng. He reported that "almost all the Jews they saw looked typically Chinese, no one remembered any Hebrew or Judaic laws, other than the prohibition against eating pork. They reported that religious ceremonies were conducted according to some ancient handwritten books, a claim difficult to accept in view of all the testimony that nothing was left of the religion as such at this time."\textsuperscript{158}

The 1930s: Noach Mishkowsky, David A. Brown, Xu Zongzi, Harrison Forman and Pierre Gilbert

Noach Mishkowsky was next to claim contacts with the Chinese Jews, around 1930. He had spent four years in Mongolia and Manchuria, and while in China he met two Chinese Jews on the Chinese Eastern Railway.

They assured him that they were of Jewish descent, though they knew neither the Jewish rites, nor the Hebrew script. One of them, however, a sales agent for crockery, had marked his goods with Chinese characters, supposedly corresponding to the numbers of the Hebrew alphabet. 159

Pollak (1980) believes Mishkowsky's price-coding story to be fictional, "derived from an old nonsensical claim that the Japanese often used Hebrew characters as their price-code symbols."

Of all the reports received by first-hand Western observers of the Chinese Jews during this period of the 20th century, that of David A. Brown, publisher of an American Jewish periodical, in 1932, is the most detailed and convincing. Brown visited Kaifeng in November of 1932 with Bishop White, and met representatives of five of the seven clans. He was a very "well-connected" visitor, having been supplied with a boat by T.V. Soong, Minister of Finance in the Nationalist government which was headed by the latter's brother-in-law, Chiang Kai-shek. "Bishop White and Brown were the last to make an attempt to educate in Judaism those

158 Leslie, Survival, p. 71.
159 Pollak, Mandarins, p. 177.
few still willing and able to trace their ancestry. But
with no success." (Leslie, 1972)

Writing a five-part series of articles in The American
Hebrew and Jewish Tribune from January to March 1933, Brown
wrote of the history of the Chinese Jews and of the Western
visitors they had had in the past several hundred years.
His interpreter had been G. Findlay Andrews, who was born in
China and was fluent in several Chinese dialects. Among
other things, he was told by a member of the Ai clan, with
whom he was able to have a long conversation about the
community, that the most pressing need of the Jews was a
school for their children. Of their own identity as Jews,
Brown wrote that "they know they are Jews, but know nothing
of Judaism. They realize they are Chinese, completely
assimilated, yet there is pride in the ancient people who
are different from the other Chinese in Kaifeng." In
fact, his whole report is tinged with the discovery that the
Chinese Jews were still very much aware of and eager to
renew their ancient heritage.

Xu Zongzi 徐崇澤, also known as Joseph Zi, a Chinese
scholar, visited Kaifeng in 1934. Four years later he
published a History of Chinese Christianity in Shanghai
which contains a large segment on the Kaifeng Jews. It also
includes a 1931-32 article by Shen Gongbu 沈公部 which

160 David A. Brown, (1933), "Brown RedisCOVERS China's
Ancient Jews," The American Hebrew and Jewish Tribune,
January-March, p. 229.
translates most of Gozani and Brotier into Chinese (Leslie, 1972).

Four years after Brown's visit, an American journalist and photographer named Harrison Forman went to Kaifeng. Although he took many photographs of them, Forman's only comments on the Jews were that when he visited them in 1938 he could find only a handful, perhaps a dozen, families of Jewish descent who had "preserved nothing in written Hebrew, nor could any of them have read it if they had. ... When questioned, all they knew of their Hebrew heritage was that it was 'different' from the Chinese."\(^{161}\)

Pierre Gilbert, a French diplomat, was also in Kaifeng during the time of the Japanese occupation of that city in 1938, although he wrote nothing of his observations. He did, however, later tell President Yitzhak Ben-Zvi of Israel of meeting some Jews engaged in camel transport and agriculture. Pollak (1980) reports that "they preferred to speak of themselves, Gilbert remembered, not as Jews who happened to be Chinese, but as Chinese who happened to be Jews."\(^{162}\)


The 1940s: Shizuo Sogabe, Teicho Nikami, Giorgi Borea, Antonio Cattaneo, Jimmy Burke, Archibald Steele, Marjorie Soroka, Joseph Buchhalter, Ernst Lippa and Rudolf Hoferichter

In 1940 two Japanese who had been involved in the occupation of Kaifeng which had begun two years earlier--Shizuo Sogabe and Teicho Mikami--made semi-official reports about the Jews.

According to Sogabe, approximately 80 souls (Mikami says 100), of only six families, still counted as Jews in Kaifeng, with a further 100 living in Shanghai and elsewhere. The Kaifeng Jews were impoverished and had little intermarriage with other Chinese, even though their culture was identical. Sogabe also leaves out the Shih clan ... Mikami states that the Chang clan had quarreled with their coreligionists and had left Kaifeng.163

Lowenthal (1940) reported that Sogabe also spoke of learning that in 1918 a foreigner had bought a family register from the Jews.

In April of 1941 a little-known publication called the Benedictine Orient ran an article entitled "Chinese Lad of Jewish Descent Chooses to Become a Priest," which was then run in the Catholic Lumen News Service, Peiping [Peking], two months later on June 20.

The article claimed that Paul Shi Zhongyang, a descendent of the Kaifeng Jews, had been baptized in 1924 followed by the baptism of his son, Louis Shi Kailing, as well as another son and his wife a year later. Louis had

163 Leslie, Survival, p. 73.
enrolled in 1941 in the local theological seminary but soon afterwards left, later to become a Buddhist.

A year after this appeared the Italian Giorgi Borea Regoli visited Kaifeng and wrote an account in Il Marco Polo entitled "Gli Ebrei Cinesi" in Shanghai in January of 1942. Lowenthal (1946) says that this account is a "rather confused and incoherent narrative of the history of the Jews, of their synagogue and of their scriptures. His facts are based on the writings of Semedo, Brotier, Domenge, Ricci, Martin, etc." 164

Rudolf Lowenthal also mentions that Father Antonio Cattaneo, a Catholic missionary who lived in Kaifeng, sent a letter to Lowenthal in 1943, while the latter was teaching at Yenching University, stating that "there were a few Jews left within and outside of that city and the Shih family had become Catholic in 1924," 165 thus corroborating the article in the Benedictine Orient.

Three years after that the American journalists Jimmy Burke and Archibald Steele wrote articles about their visit to Kaifeng on July 10, 1946. Although reported by Lowenthal to be in Liberty Magazine and the New York Herald Tribune, none of the articles have been located by anyone who has searched for them to date.

Between 1947 and 1948 Marjorie Soroka, working in Kaifeng under the auspices of the UNRA wrote of her

164 Lowenthal, *Supplementary Bibliography*, p. 56.
observations of the Chinese Jews to her parents in New York, copies of which are in the possession of the Sino-Judaic Institute of Palo Alto, California.

Also in 1948, Joseph Buchhalter, a friend of Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, told the Israeli president of meeting a Jewish guide in Kaifeng in 1946, and also of a Jew who held the post of deputy to the city's chief administrative official.

Between 1948 and 1949, on the eve of the Communist victory in China, Drs. Ernst Lippa and Rudolf Hoferichter, physicians practicing in Henan, sent letters to Dr. Joseph Preuss, which are now held in the library of the Museum Ha'aretz in Tel Aviv. Leslie (1972) maintains that information from Lippa is not convincing, while that of Hoferichter is more credible.

Both write of five families remaining. Hoferichter, in his letter of 25 July, 1949, says that all the Jews looked entirely Chinese, with the exception of one old lady of the Chao clan whose hair was curly, not a Chinese characteristic.166

Summary of Observations by Visitors to Kaifeng, 1910–1949

Between the downfall of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Kaifeng saw an array of visitors during the turbulent first years of the Republic of China. Some claimed to still notice physical characteristics among the Chinese Jews which harkened back to their Semitic origin, but all noted the

166 Ibid., p. 74.
tremendous amount of assimilation into their Chinese environment which had by then taken place. Nevertheless, it can be seen from conversations with the Chinese Jews that they still longed for some contact with Jews from the West which would enable them to revive at least their knowledge of Judaism. In particular they asked for schools for the young.

Their numbers fairly decimated, the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng proved nevertheless to be resilient and driven to retaining whatever sense of ethnic identity they still possessed.
Visitors to Kaifeng Since the Founding of the People's Republic (1949-1985)

The 1950s: Timoteus Pokora and Rene Goldman

After the creation of the People's Republic of China in 1949, little contact was made with the Jewish descendants in Kaifeng. Reports by Samuel Stupa Shih of Taiwan in 1954, of his Jewish ancestry and suggestions that a thriving Jewish community existed until recently in Kunming, have been almost totally discounted. Writing a letter to the editor of the Jerusalem Post on March 31, 1952, Mr. Shih expresses his eagerness to find other Jewish friends and pen-pals, and laments his loneliness in not having married yet because of his inability to find a Jewish woman to marry in Taiwan, at the ripe old age of 27.167

In February of 1957 Timoteus Pokora, a Czech Sinologue, was in Kaifeng for a few days. He wrote of meeting Jews who told him that over 200 people of Jewish descent were left in that city.

Some attend Muslim services, others are Buddhists. Most see their Jewishness as a nationality. In spite of this petrification, one can hardly say that a community still exists. Though individuals may still trace Jewish descent, they are no longer Jews by race, nor by religion, nor by culture, merely by name.168


168 Leslie, Survival, p. 74.
That same year, Rene Goldman, a Professor of Chinese studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, wrote in the Australian Jewish News in November of that year his experiences in Kaifeng while a student enrolled at Peking University, during a visit with other students to Kaifeng. The cadres informed them that "there were some 2,000 persons in Kaifeng of Jewish ancestry, of whom only 700 acknowledged this ancestry. How they came to that figure is a mystery, considering the history of the Kaifeng Jewish community."\(^{169}\)

The great discrepancy in number of Jews as cited by Pokora and Goldman was given a probably explanation by Professor Shirley Wood (Wu Xueli), a resident of Kaifeng since 1953 where she has been a professor of English at Henan University, and a member of the Provincial People's Political Consultative Council.

In 1952, Mrs. Wood explained, a census of all minority peoples in China was carried out, a minority having been defined by the authorities in Peking as a reasonably cohesive group whose members spoke a language of their own and shared certain recognizable communal traditions and cultural traits differing from those of the Han majority. The highly assimilated Chinese Jews could of course no longer qualify as a minority under the guidelines set forth in Peking, so the printed census forms which were distributed throughout the nation included no provision for those who might choose to list themselves as Jews. \(... \text{several hundred inhabitants of Kaifeng, apparently unaware that Jews did not fit into any of the minority classifications set up by Peking, trooped to the various census centers, where, to the utter bewilderment of the clerical staffs, they attempted to register as members of a minority that, officially at least, did not even exist. Their efforts were of}

course to no avail. Nevertheless, rough and far-ranging estimates appear to have been made of the numbers of persons who, either of their own volition or because they feared the possible legal consequences of failing to register, tried to record their Jewish affiliation; and it was presumably one of these estimates that was transmitted to Pokora, and another that was transmitted to Goldman. 170

The 1960s and 1970s: Eric Gordon

Only one foreigner is reported to have met the Chinese Jews during the next decade. A free-lance journalist, Eric Gordon was said by Shirley Wood to have gone to Kaifeng and interviewed several Jews in 1965, although no articles by him have ever been located.

The decade of turbulence and violence which began with the "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution" in China in 1966 precluded any other Westerners from making their way to Kaifeng until the late 1970s.

Foreign Contacts, 1980-1985

With the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976, the death of Mao Zedong and Zhou Enlai that same year, and the downfall of Mao's widow, Jiang Qing, and the "Gang of Four," who have since been blamed for all the ills of that terrible decade, came soon enough "ping-pong diplomacy" and official recognition of the People's Republic by the United States on January 1, 1979. With this came increased contact between Chinese and Americans, and eventually American tourists who

170 Ibid., pp. xvi-xvii.
travelled to China to try to meet the Jewish descendants of Kaifeng.

The first Westerner to visit the Jews of Kaifeng since the 1960s was a Peking-based United Press International journalist by the name of Aline Mosby. In January of 1980 Mosby received permission to travel to Kaifeng, then closed to tourists. She met several members of the Ai and Shi clans who told her of the existence of dozens of other Jewish descendants in the city. Although claiming to be Jews on the basis of their ancestry alone, none were said to observe any of the Jewish customs or rituals.

After being introduced to Ai Fengmin, then 73 years old, she learned of the great ignorance among them of Jewish practices and ideas. Ai’s parents, he related to her, believed it was all right to participate in Christian services (probably at the Canadian Anglican Church). They also passed on to him the information that Jews did not drink, smoke or eat pork.

Mosby was the first to discover the existence of the steles in a safe place in the warehouse of the Kaifeng Municipal Museum. This was told to her by Wang Yisha, former curator of the Kaifeng Museum and the one person in Kaifeng today who personally knows more Chinese Jews than anyone else. Wang also related to her that the steles were to be put on display when the new museum building was completed.171
The credit for preserving the steles in good shape from rampaging Red Guards during the Cultural Revolution, Pollak (1980) discovered, goes to Bishop Francis Y.S. Tseng of Kaifeng. This was first related to Pollak by Dr. Jiang Wenhan of Shanghai. In response to a letter sent him by Michael Pollak, Bishop Tseng explained that during the Cultural Revolution he learned that

a band of Red Guards planned to attack and destroy the church, which, although long confiscated from its Canadian owners, remained ... an infuriating symbol of foreign imperialism. Bishop Tseng promptly warned the appropriate municipal authorities of the impending attack. They responded quickly, removing the Jewish treasures (among other items) and transporting them to the museum. The church was eventually attacked and suffered much damage.172

Other visitors in 1980 included Professor Albert Dien of Stanford University in January and Arthur Rosen and Jan Berris of the National Committee for US-China Relations in November. Professor Dien arrived in Kaifeng while leading a tour to China

One morning ... Dien and two others sought out the site of the synagogue. After finding the 'Jew's Street,' Dien asked a bystander if there were any Jews in the neighborhood. He was directed to a house belonging to a Zhao family. The three visitors were invited in for tea by an old lady and her daughter; other family members joined them. They were told that there were 30 persons in the family. Plans were made for the Westerners to return with other tour members in order to meet the elder Mr. Zhao's son. That afternoon, about eighteen people went to the Zhao's. However, when Dien knocked, he noticed much hesitation before his knock was answered. With reluctance, the two

171 New York News Herald, ca. March 4, 1980. As of 1987 this proposed wing was still incomplete, but reports by members of the Sino-Judaic Institute indicate that plans to open the wing are set for October 1989.

172 Pollak, Mandarins, p. xxx.
ladies stepped outside into the lane where they were introduced to everyone and pictures were taken. The son never appeared, he was said to have already returned to work. Dien visited Kaifeng twice more in 1981. The first time, in June, the Zhao's were out when he called; the second time, in August, they were at home when Dien brought his group down the lane, but Dien (wisely) did not want to subject the family to the trials of another group visit. ... his was a random encounter—-not an officially sanctioned visit—and ... the family obviously was subjected to either internal or external pressure after their initially hospitable reception of Dien and his two co-travellers.

A flurry of activities ensued in 1981 in attempts to contact or research the subject of the Chinese Jews. The year before, around the time of Aline Mosby's visit to Kaifeng, Wang Yisha conducted a survey among the Jewish descendants in Kaifeng which was translated into English and published four years later by Sidney Shapiro in *Jews in Old China* in an article entitled "The Descendants of the Kaifeng Jews."

Wang states that there are still 140 former Jewish Kaifeng families in China with six surnames. Of these, 79 families live in Kaifeng and 61 have moved to other parts of China. The 79 Jewish families in Kaifeng number altogether 166 persons,

including 36 girls who have married non-Jews and left their parents' homes. It does not include Han and Hui girls who have married into Jewish families. Wang gives a breakdown according to surname:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surname</th>
<th>Families</th>
<th>Persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Li</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zhao</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ai</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gao</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jin 2 families 7 persons
Shi 32 families 67 persons

Of these, 88 are men, 78 are women.174

Research done in the 1980s by Chinese scholars shows, among other things, the lack of availability of current scholarly information on the subject in China. Wang's article, for example, speaks of the genealogical register of the Kaifeng community. During my own conversations with him in the summer of 1985 he spoke earnestly of wishing to somehow obtain a copy of the genealogies. Obviously, Donald Leslie's discovery of this twenty years earlier as in fact being the Memorial Book of the Dead rather than a genealogy, as was previously believed, had never been made available to Chinese researchers.

Elsewhere Wang states his belief that there really were 70 Jewish families which entered China according to the 1489 stele. To bolster his argument he cites the "fact" that in the Diary of the Defense of Bian

it is revealed that the ancestors of Li Guangtian, the hero of the siege of Kaifeng in 1642, had moved to that city from Beijing during the early years of the Hong Wu

174 Sidney Shapiro, (1984), Jews in Old China. Studies by Chinese Scholars, New York: Hippocrene Books, pp. 171-172. Shapiro's book has been criticized on several counts. With regard to Wang Yisha's article in particular we may note that during this author's 1985 visit to Kaifeng Mr. Wang expressed his dissatisfaction that his unpublished article was printed in this book without his permission. It contained several bits of misinformation which Mr. Wang claims he never stated. Among them are the assertion by Shapiro that, per Wang, the "Ming Dao Xu" by Li Yingdou is presently in the possession of the Kaifeng Museum. In fact, it has been unaccounted for since the 17th century. Also, the author of this work was Zhao Yingdou, not Li Yingdou.
period (1368 to 1399) of the Ming dynasty. That was certainly one additional clan. 175

Obviously, Leslie's discovery of Li Guangtian's non-Jewish identity never reached Chinese scholars either. Nevertheless, Wang Yisha remains perhaps the most dedicated and indefatigable of all scholars doing research on the Chinese Jews today, availing himself of every possible source of information on the subject, as well as using his personal acquaintance with the Chinese Jews to conduct surveys and other forms of research.

The year 1981 saw the publication of an article by Jin Xiaojing, entitled "I am a Chinese Jew." Jin, a sociologist at the National Minorities Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing, only discovered her Jewish roots in 1980 while attending a professional conference. At that time she learned that two of the men whose names were mentioned by others as being Jews, were actually paternal uncles of hers. Although her ancestral home was Kaifeng, it never occurred to her that she might be of Jewish descent, since she was raised as a Moslem. 176


176 Jin Xiaojing's daughter, Qu Yinan, has been studying Judaism and Hebrew at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles since 1985. (See "Chinese Jew Comes to U.S. to Trace Roots," Los Angeles Times, December 8, 1985, pp. 1, 16 and 17.) During this author's visit to Kaifeng in 1985 it was discovered that the Jewish descendants there do not consider Qu Yinan to be Jewish, since she is descended matrilineally rather than patrilineally. This, of course, runs counter to the rabbinical Jewish law (halakhah) which states that a Jew is anyone born to a Jewish mother (or converted by an orthodox rabbi).
After questioning her then 86-year-old mother, Jin learned that

she was descended from a Jewish merchant-adventurer named Jin Shide who came to China from "Arabia"—a catch-all designation ... for any Muslim country. This Jin Shide traveled several times in caravans going back and forth along the ancient Silk Route linking his place of origin with Kaifeng, the period being either that of the late Ming or early Ch'ing dynasties ... Eventually, he settled down in Kaifeng where, presumably, he adopted the already-old Jewish surname of Jin. Whether he married in Kaifeng or brought along a wife from "Arabia" is not known.177

Jin Shide was therefore not a descendant of the original Jewish settlers of Kaifeng dating back to the Song era. It was later also learned that Jin's father and other members of his immediate family wore blue or bronze-colored skull caps at prayer in the mosque.

While Jin Xiaoqing's story is certainly novel, it also gives us added information which, as Pollak points out, may force us to rethink our notion that there was no contact or communication between the Jews in Kaifeng and foreign Jews from about 1500 until the mid-19th century.

In 1981, according to Shirley Wood, various government and academic notables in Kaifeng were urging that a conference be held there "to investigate the feasibility of initiating serious research into the history of the area's Jews, taping interviews with those Jews who might contribute meaningfully to the subject, and preserving Jewish books, documentary records, artifacts, homes, and the like."178

177 Pollak, Mandarins, p. xxiii.
It was also suggested that a small Sino-Judaic museum be constructed on the site of the former synagogue, which now houses a hospital, which would, they all agreed, also be an excellent tourist attraction and hence more income for the city.

The Dong Da Mosque 大寺 in Kaifeng is said to possess quite a few more Jewish artifacts and books than had previously been assumed, although it is still unclear just what they hold that used to be in the synagogue.

Dr. Ronald Kaye of the United States and his wife spent part of the spring of 1980 in Kaifeng, lecturing at its medical school and treating some patients. Their request to see the Dong Da Mosque was, in part as recognition of their service to the city, granted. Once there, they were shown building tiles acquired from the synagogue around 1860.

Tea was served to the Kayes in a room crammed with objets d'art, fine furniture, and other treasures. The tenor of their conversation with the mullahs left Dr. and Mrs. Kaye unalterably convinced that a fair number of items in the mosque's collection were originally the property of the Jews of Kaifeng. 179

The Kayes were also allowed to hold a mini-seder in Kaifeng, to which were invited Zhao Pingyu, Shi Zhongyu and Shi Yulian, the three Chinese Jewish descendants who are usually brought before groups of foreign (mostly Jewish) tourists since that time.

178 Ibid., p. xvii.
179 Ibid., p. xviii.
The visit of Betsy Gidwitz in 1981, however, proved quite different from that of the Kayes. Writing in Moment Magazine in 1981, Gidwitz relates that

The experiences of foreign visitors, including myself, from 1957 through 1978 seem to point to one conclusion—that party officials then considered the subject of Kaifeng Jews politically sensitive and therefore closed them off from contact with outsiders. And, while one must assume that the number of Kaifeng Jews has declined in the years since Goldman's visit, the fact that Chinese authorities held visitors back suggests that a significant number must remain—enough, at least until recently, to warrant their isolation from foreigners.180

In 1982 many journalists visited Kaifeng, which was becoming increasingly open to foreigners. Among them were Graham Earnshaw of the Daily Telegraph, Christopher S. Wren of the New York Times, Tony Walker of the Sydney Morning Herald, Michael Weisskopf of the Washington Post, and Michael Parks of the San Francisco Examiner.181


Parks' report even went so far as to state that the Jews were openly asking for days off from work for the Jewish holidays. Previously they would just call in sick from work, he said, if they wanted to observe the holidays. One wonders where Parks got such information, since it has been demonstrated that the Jews virtually lost all knowledge of religious holidays for at least a century by the time he visited them.

It was learned from Shirley Wood that the 1642 flood did not damage the municipal archives of Kaifeng, so there may still be some materials relating to the pre-1642 Jews of Kaifeng. This, it was hoped, would lead officials to allow scholars to gain access to such materials. In 1983 Pollak stated that "the several attempts that have been made to induce Peking to explore such a possibility have made little headway."\(^{182}\)

Nevertheless, 1983 saw several articles written by Chinese scholars on the subject. Gao Wangzhi wrote an article entitled "Concerning Chinese Jews"; Li Jixian of the History Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences wrote "An San and An Cheng"; Chen Changqi, a graduate student at Henan Teachers College wrote "Buddhist Monk or Jewish Rabbi?"; "Jewish Traces in Yangzhou" was written by Zhu Jiang, Curator of the Yangzhou Museum and Vice Director of the Archaeology Institute of Jiangsu; and "An Ethnic Historian Looks at China's Jews" was written by Wu Zelin,\(^{182}\)

retired professor of social anthropology at Qinghua University in Beijing, and presently professor of ethnic history in Zhongnan Nationalities Institute in Wuhan. All of these were published the next year in Sidney Shapiro's *Jews in Old China*.

In 1985, while I was employed at Time Magazine, a telex was received from David Aikman, then Time's China correspondent. This telex was made known to me by Louisa Wright, a reporter who was to do a story on the Chinese Jews and had been awaiting word from Aikman with as much background information as he could come up with. It read in part:

... WE BELIEVE WE REALLY HAVE SOME MAJOR NEWS ON THE CHINESE JEWISH SITUATION.

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ANY PUBLICATION KNOWN TO ME, I HAVE CONFIRMED THAT THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES JEWS AS AN OFFICIAL ETHNIC GROUP IN CHINA AND WRITES THE CHINESE FOR 'JEW' ON CHINESE JEWISH RESIDENCE PERMITS. IN ADDITION, THREE JEWISH FAMILIES IN KAIFENG HAVE FORMED A GROUP TO START A JEWISH ARTIFACTS MUSEUM IN KAIFENG AND EVENTUALLY, PERHAPS, TO REBUILD CHINA'S ONLY SYNAGOGUE. THEY HAVE OFFICIAL PERMISSION TO DO SO FROM THE MAYOR OF KAIFENG. NATURALLY, IF THEY CAN FIND THE MONEY FOR THE SYNAGOGUE, IT WILL BE THE FIRST TIME CHINA'S OWN JEWS HAVE A CENTER OF WORSHIP FOR THEIR FAITH IN APPROXIMATELY 130 YEARS. FINALLY, TWO OF THE KAIFENG JEWS I INTERVIEWED AT LENGTH SHOWED REMARKABLE PRIDE IN THEIR ORIGINS. UNEQUIVOCALLY DEMONSTRATING, FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1949, AN UNAPoloGETIC SENSE OF WHO THEY ARE.\(^{183}\)

Time Magazine ran the article in its Asia edition.

Parts of personal conversations which Aikman was able to have with the Chinese Jews, however, were included in the

published article. Speaking of how certain members of the community fared during the Cultural Revolution, Aikman states:

Zhao, an amateur historian who had already begun to collect materials for a study of the Jews of China, had his papers destroyed or stolen by the Red Guards when he was sent to the countryside for "re-education." Turning his back on his customs, he tried in vain to raise pigs. 'I fed them sweet potatoes, but the pigs never grew,' he said, so after a year my family said it was a punishment from God.'184

Many of Aikman's statements about the official status of the Kaifeng Jews and their plans to build a mini-museum, proved to be premature, however. Such inaccuracies in reporting were potentially dangerous for the Jewish descendants and the goals they were reported to have, such as rebuilding a synagogue on its original site. And the Mayor of Kaifeng himself was said to have gotten into some trouble on account of statements attributed to him.

While in Kaifeng I was able to speak with six heads of Jewish-descended families and some of their family members: two of the Ai, two of the Shi clan, one Zhao family and one from the Li clan.

One member of the Ai clan could not even recognize a Star of David as relating to Judaism, and basically knew nothing of the religion or history of the Jews in Kaifeng. He only knew that he was Jewish because his father had told him so, and for some reason he, too, believed it was important to pass down this knowledge to his sons. This, I

184
surmised, was the more common situation among Chinese Jewish
descendants in Kaifeng, as opposed to those few who are
brought before groups of tourists to recount their family's
and people's history in China and religious customs.

Another member of the Ai clan, the oldest being in his
late seventies, had one of the most interesting stories of
all.

It seems that in 1952 Ai was picked by his neighborhood
committee to go to Beijing to represent the Chinese
Jews as one of the national minorities, for a ceremony
held by the three-year-old government of the newly
created People's Republic of China. ... Ai met and
shook hands with Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai and Deng
Xiaoping. This leads one to believe that the Jews were
at one point soon after the establishment of the PRC
close to being declared a national minority.185

The member of the Zhao clan whom I had met was making
plans to build his own mini-museum to commemorate the many
contributions of his ancestors to the Kaifeng Jewish
community. One of the most enterprising of the Chinese
Jews, he and one of his daughters had begun to make Chinese-
style yarmulkas (skull caps) which they hoped to sell to
visiting tourists within the next few years.

A senior member of the Shi clan regaled me with many
curious stories about childhood memories:

Mr. Shi remembered his grandfather smearing chicken
blood over the doorposts of their house during the
Passover season, a tradition apparently inspired by the
account in Exodus in which the Israelites daub their
doorposts to avert the tenth plague, the death of the
first-born. He also recalled as a child seeing a brass
Magen David [Star of David], wrapped in red silk,
tucked away in the family medicine chest.

185 Wendy Abraham, "A Chinese Jewish Identity,"
Mr. Shi's most curious recollection had to do with yarmulkes. He showed me a yarmulke presented to him by a passing tourist. It was sewn together from four sections of fabric. This perplexed him, since the yarmulkes he had seen as a young boy were divided into six parts, which, his mother had explained to him, represented the six days of creation. He was eager to know the new significance of this four-part yarmulke, fearing that he had missed something, being out of touch with things Jewish for so long ... 186

Memories such as these have been told to other visitors to Kaifeng who managed to spend time with the Jewish descendants away from government escorts or officially arranged meetings with tour groups. 187

Although meetings with Chinese Jews and conversations with them have taken place since Kaifeng became open to tourists, they have not all been without incident.

My own solo journey to Kaifeng was capped by a five hour detention by the Public Security Police on the grounds that I was collecting some kind of secret information for F.B.I.-style research and was attempting to proselytize the Chinese Jews, who, as I was told, don't even exist anymore, so there should have been nothing to interest me. Speaking to people in their homes, I was told, was illegal. Since I was there on a tourist visa I was supposed to be visiting pagodas and the like, rather than talking privately with individuals ...

While attempts to meet with the Chinese Jews under official auspices and eyes is allowed, to do so as an individual without the aid of an interpreter is still obviously suspect in Kaifeng. 188


The Sino-Judaic Institute

In June of 1985 the Sino-Judaic Institute was created in Palo Alto, California. Among its founding members are Donald Daniel Leslie, Michael Pollak, Albert Dien of Stanford University, and Arthur Rosen of the National Committee for US-China Relations, all of whom have been mentioned earlier, in addition to this author. This organization, in addition to promoting scholarly research and exchange of information on the subject of the Chinese Jews around the world, is involved in raising funds for the eventual creation of a Judaica Wing in the Kaifeng Municipal Museum. It publishes an occasional newsletter entitled "Points East" which, among other things, serves as a means of disseminating information, old and new, on the Chinese Jews, as well as accounts of recent visits to Kaifeng. And it hopes to provide whatever aid for educational or other materials, may be requested by the Jewish descendants in Kaifeng.

Reminiscent of the Shanghai Committee for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews established at the turn of the century, it is hoped that, although there is no illusion of trying to "save" the Chinese Jews from virtual "extinction" now, attention may be focused on this miniscule portion of the Jewish diaspora so that their story may be made known, and efforts to educate them about their own history may succeed. It is only the latest manifestation, it seems, of the
endless interest foreigners have exhibited in the curious story of the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng.
Chapter III

JEWS EDUCATIONAL VALUES

It was during the Ming dynasty that names of individual Jews began to appear in local gazetteers as having passed the civil service exam. This corresponds to the period in which Jews were cut off for the first time from contact with other Western Jewish traders after the Ming emperor successfully curtailed foreign contacts.

By the time the first stele was erected in 1489, the Jews had lived in China for at least 300 years. With their settlement at Kaifeng in the 12th century, the Jews brought with them the educational values and strong religious convictions borne of over a millenium of living in the "galut," or exile—a circumstance which colored their approach to life and learning in each new country in which they took up residence.

Having surveyed the history of the Jews in China since the Tang dynasty in the previous chapter, we will now turn to the educational values which the Jews possessed by the time they entered China, beginning in the 8th and 9th centuries, as well as those they held during the Song dynasty, when they first settled in Kaifeng and there erected a synagogue. These same basic educational values were held by the Jews through the end of the Yuan dynasty, when much contact between Western traders was still possible, and the beginning of the Ming dynasty when further
contacts with foreigners were cut off, during the 14th century, leaving the Jews to their own devices in matters of education.

As has been noted in the previous chapter, the Jews of Kaifeng most likely originated in Persia or Yemen. The Jewish community of Persia was one of the oldest in the world, dating its origins to the days of Cyrus (d. 529 B.C.E.). He is known for having respected the religions and customs of each part of his empire. In Yemen the Jews were said to have existed as early as the days of the Prophet Jeremiah, just before the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E. These Jews were well-settled in these two countries by the end of the 2nd century of the Common Era. It is therefore important to look at the history of Jewish education from the ancient period, continuing through the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. and ending with the compilation of the Babylonian Talmud in the 6th century C.E., when the Jewish communities of Persia and Yemen were settled, in order to understand the major factors and values underlying Jewish education which later influenced the educational ideals held by Persian and Yemenite Jews upon their entry into China.

This chapter will of necessity combine an overview of Jewish history with Jewish education and educational values, as the two have always been linked together. By doing so, an assessment can then be made of the impact Jewish educational values had on the way the Jews viewed and
reacted to their new Chinese environment— in particular, the Confucian educational system which they would encounter soon after their arrival in Kaifeng, where, as the Song capital of China, a major portion of the civil service examinations were held.

The development and goals of Jewish education will be traced over three major historical periods: 1) the native or pre-exilic period, from earliest times to the Babylonian Exile and destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E., 2) the scribal or post-exilic period, from 586 B.C.E. to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. and the dispersion of the Jews into other countries, and 3) Talmudic times, from 70 C.E. to the final redaction of the Babylonian Talmud in c. 550 C.E.

**Education During the Native Period**

Both the native and exilic periods—the former consisting of the Patriarchal period and the Settlement (18th-11th centuries B.C.E.) and the Kingdom, or Prophetic period, (10th-6th centuries B.C.E.), and the latter consisting of the Babylonian exile and Hellenistic times (6th-2nd centuries B.C.E.)—constitute the major periods in the life of the ancient Israelites which affected the course of their developing educational system.

Jewish history and religion have always influenced each other. That the Jews are both a historical people and a social body required and sustained by the Jewish religious tradition has been explained by Mircea Eliade:
That the Jews are at the same time a people and a religious fellowship is attested by the complex interplay between nationhood and religion in the course of Jewish history. ... The Jewish people was an nation before its religion achieved its mature form, and the religious tradition maintained the integrity of the people's identity when the Jews were a minority in all the lands of their residence.¹

The Patriarchal Period and the Settlement

Jewish history begins with Abraham, the first patriarch, who is considered the father of the Jews, or Hebrews, as they were first called. The terms "Hebrew," "Israelite" and "Jew" should be clarified at this point.

The name "Hebrew" was given to Abraham, possibly from the Hebrew word "ever" (over), meaning the one who passed over the Euphrates River, as Abraham came to the land of Canaan from Ur of the Chaldeas. Others have posited that this word actually originated from the "Habiru" tribe.

The name "Israel" was given to Jacob, Abraham's grandson, meaning "G-d will rule." The twelve sons of Jacob formed the twelve tribes of Israel, and were called the Children of Israel, or Israelites.

The term "Jew" originates with the tribe of Judah, which formed a separate kingdom after the death of King Solomon.

This kingdom was in the south while the remaining ten tribes of Israel were in the north. In 722 B.C.E. Israel (comprising the ten tribes of Israel) was destroyed by Assyria. Judah continued to exist as a small nation until 586 B.C.E. when it was conquered by

the Babylonians and most of its inhabitants were taken into exile. The descendants of the tribe of Judah returned to their land in the fifth century B.C.E. and rebuilt the Second Temple in Jerusalem. When the Second Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E. the Jews were exiled. Most Jews today are descendants of the tribe of Judah or Levi, the other ten tribes were lost.²

During the patriarchal period and the settlement the Jews were primarily semi-nomadic, residing in the great cultural centers of the ancient world, from Ur in Babylonia to the Eastern Nile delta in Egypt. The Israelites developed national-religious institutions, and the family was the basic socio-economic unit for all its members. The character of the Israelite nation was shaped during this period, with the promise to Abraham (Gen. 15), the exodus from Egypt (Ex. 7), and the giving of the Ten Commandments to Moses at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19-20), which united the tribes into a nation related through blood and history. It was not until later that the ideal of monotheism took shape in the Torah.

The history of Abraham himself may point to the early germs of education among the future Jewish people.

If Abraham had not been a prince of royal blood or a member of the nobility in his native country, Chaldea, he at least had been a member of a prominent and wealthy family. He also associated on terms of equality with the king of Egypt ... and with Abimelech, the king of Gerai. He was therefore at different times of his life in close contact with the Chaldean, with the Egyptian, and with the Hittite learning. Now the civilization of Babylonia (Mesopotamia and Chaldea) was at that time very far advanced. Reading and writing

were general attainments throughout the country. ... schools and libraries were flourishing in Babylonia long before Abraham was born, and the arts and sciences were fostered. ... The possibility of Abraham's having remained uninfluenced by the culture with which he was in almost continual contact, can hardly be conceived of. Josephus even goes so far as to say: "He (Abraham) communicated to them (the Egyptians) arithmetic and delivered to them the science of astronomy; for, before Abram came into Egypt, they were unacquainted with those parts of learning." ... The Jewish people then present the somewhat unique example of having as their progenitor a wealthy, influential, and highly cultured man, whose influence along educational lines was bound to be most marked. ³

Isaac and Jacob, the two other patriarchs of the Jewish people, were followed by Jacob's twelve sons. Famine in Canaan led Jacob's sons to Egypt where Joseph had been sold into slavery, where they remained until the Pharaoh began his policy of hostilities. The famous exodus from Egypt, ca. 1250 B.C.E., was marked by two important events which would shape the content and impetus for Jewish education thereafter: The laws were given to Moses on Mount Sinai, and the covenant was established between Yahweh and the people of Israel, whereby the people agreed to obey the body of laws given them, and God would in return watch over them and care for them. This covenant relationship is one of the dominant ideas throughout the Hebrew Bible.

terms of the agreement. Whenever they failed to obey the laws he had given to them, he was no longer bound to protect them or even to claim them as his own people. The prophets of later generations would call attention to this fact and thus remind their contemporaries that security for the nation could not be expected so long as they failed to fulfill the requirements of the covenant to which they had been committed. This is no doubt one of the reasons why the religion of the Hebrews exhibits moral progress which surpassed that of the other nations.  

The nomadic life of the Israelites and their sojourn in Egypt were not conducive to literary and artistic advancement, although Joseph received part of his training, and Moses all of it, at Heliopolis, the college city of Egypt.

During centuries without a stable government, efforts to establish and maintain an educational system may have been desultory, "but the strength of the hierarchical system as well as the principle of the theocracy, at least outwardly upheld, may be cited as an argument in favor of at least a partial educational system as well as one against general education."  

Instruction in the fundamentals of the Law, or moral training, was the basis of education during this period. While Jewish tradition says that there were regular established schools as early as the time of Isaac, and that Jacob and Esau both attended primary school, such claims cannot be substantiated. For the most part, parents were

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4 Charles H. Patterson, (1965), The Old Testament, Nebraska: C.K. Hillegass, p. 11.

5 Kretzmann, Education Among the Jews, p. 16.
the teachers of the children, training them in practical skills for daily life as well.

The settlement of the Israelites in Canaan is described in the Biblical books of Joshua and Judges. Tribes were united into a confederacy, and their nomadic existence gave way to permanent settlement. This new community was now more religious than political, with the government being placed in the hands of the judges. The Israelites now consisted of the twelve tribes of Israel. Samuel, the last of the judges, anointed Saul to be Israel's first king, thus starting the Kingdoms period.

The Kingdoms Period

Around 1000 B.C.E. a monarchy was established, beginning the United Kingdom. Saul, David and Solomon managed to rule the country after uniting the Northern and Southern tribes of Israel into one centralized, politically independent monarchy with headquarters at Jerusalem. Plans to build a Temple at Jerusalem by David were carried out by his son Solomon after the latter ascended the throne, but the heavy taxes and forced labor perceived by Solomon to be necessary to carry out this task led to great resentment on the part of the people and a revolt, creating in the end a new government and the end of the United Kingdom.

Over the next 400 years, in spite of an internal split into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah were able to politically control and influence neighboring peoples. Portable tabernacles and local shrines were now overshadowed by the
Jerusalem Temple which was patronized by the King and officiated at by his appointees.

The centralized monarchy and subsequent urbanization directly affected all aspects of education. The need was felt for trained professionals and skilled artisans. Religious ideals of the covenant were transmitted to the people at the Temple and sanctuaries by a recognized priesthood. In reaction to the increased social injustice found in urban society, the classical prophets appeared in the eighth century to interpret the social implications of the election of Israel to the people. ⁶

The Northern Kingdom, known as Israel, which lasted from 922-721 B.C.E., was eventually overrun by the Assyrians. The Israelites were taken into captivity and their national existence came to an end. During this time the prophets Elijah, Amos and Hosea lived, witnesses to the moral decay and resulting political weaknesses which led to the easy overthrow by the Assyrians.

The Southern Kingdom, known as Judah, fared better, however. It led a more peaceful existence than did those in the north, and all the kings could be counted as direct descendants of David. However, in 597 B.C.E. it suffered its first Babylonian conquest, and in 586 B.C.E. was completely overrun. As in the early days of Jewish history, parents still retained the primary responsibility for the religious and moral education of their children.

Prophet schools evolved and flourished during this period. These were actually boarding schools, the buildings of which were erected by the pupils themselves, supported by

voluntary contributions. (Kretzmann, 1916) Private tutors were also employed by many of the royal houses at this time. The priests and prophets who arose during the native period constituted the first public teachers. The priests maintained realistic views on life, were highly ceremonial and paid great attention to sacrificial ritual centered around the temple and shrine, whereas the prophets had a more universal outlook.

**Education During the Exilic Period**

**The Babylonian Exile, 586-538 B.C.E.**

In 586 B.C.E. Jerusalem was captured by the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar and finally destroyed. No temple, shrine or sacrificial ceremonial remained. "It was then that the people, in their extreme necessity, began to turn to the teachings of the prophets."\(^7\) Here they found consolation and hope for the future.

The Babylonians who conquered the Southern Kingdom forced a large portion of the Hebrews to live in exile. During their stay in Babylonia the Jews acquired the Aramaic language, which became the predominant language among the Jews until the rise of Hellenism in the 4th century, B.C.E.

**The Role of the Synagogue**

Although the priests and the Temple were still important, they nevertheless gave way to a new institution--

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the synagogue—which served as prayer-house, assembly hall and house of instruction during the exilic period. The family was still the main educational institution and parents still remained the primary teachers, but now the elementary school arose with the synagogues to relieve the home of its educational burden. The Temple was for sacrifice and worship, while the synagogue became a place for study and instruction. Higher schools were established for advanced study of the law.

It was after people turned to the teachings of the prophets that the synagogue arose, as an expression of the universalism of Prophecy, since it was free from the restrictions of time, place and caste. Synagogue service and temple ritual were still carried on side by side for centuries. Liturgy grew up gradually around the instruction which was the chief purpose of synagogue meetings at first.

"The universality of G-d became the cornerstone of the Jewish faith and was the base for the establishment of the Synagogue." God could be worshipped without sacrifices, so He could be worshipped outside Israel as well. This concept played a great role in the survival of the Jews after the Babylonian exile (586 B.C.E.).

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8 Fried, *Education in the Bible*, p. 35.
The Early Teachers

The earliest teachers were sent from Jerusalem to travel with copies of the book of the Law. Their method was to read and explain passages.

In course of time, a special class of teachers arose whose function was to train the people for various specific duties. These were the priests and the Levites who taught the people their laws, their history and literature, and instructed those who would be their successors. Then there came the prophets, the teachers of a lofty conception of God and of the ideals of social justice and peace. While the teaching of the priests and the Levites was in connection with the Temple services, the prophets went out to the people throughout the land and taught in public addresses, especially on Sabbaths and holidays.³

Other educators in Bible times were the Hachamim ("the wise") who were mainly concerned with daily needs and with the personal life of the individual in contrast to the prophets, whose chief interest was in the national and eternal values.

Persian Rule, 539-332 B.C.E.

At the beginning of the Second Commonwealth, Palestine was the possession of Persia. During the Babylonian exile, the small province of Judah established after the exile became politically part of the Persian empire and economically dependent upon gifts of wealthier Jews in exile. There was a period of 70 years between the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E. and the erection of the Second Temple in Jerusalem.

³ Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, p. 629.
When Babylonia was finally conquered by the Persians, Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to their homeland and rebuild their Temple. Construction of the Second Temple was completed in 516 B.C.E. Not all Jews then returned to Palestine, however. Most remained in Babylonia. Those in Babylonia began to construct synagogues for gatherings for worship and prayer. From these soon evolved "houses of instruction."

The Jews, being permitted now to return to their homeland by Cyrus, founder of the Persian Empire, heeded the words of the Prophet who proclaimed that the survival of their own nation, small and weak as it was, can be assured not by fortresses, 'not by might, nor by power, but by My spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.' These words were construed to mean that Jewish nationhood must rest on a spiritual foundation. There ensued hence a revival of all the traditional customs and laws that became more articulate with the coming of Ezra and Nehemiah into Palestine. This spiritual reawakening brought with it a parallel ideal of education. 10

This can be termed the "nationalistic ideal" of the Second Commonwealth (the First Commonwealth being the period from ancient times to 586 B.C.E.), which aimed to make religious education the goal of Jewish nationality.

Its expression is found already in Deuteronomy where Israel is admonished to observe all the commandments for the following reason: 'for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, that, when they hear all these statutes, shall say: 'Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.' This ideal is also implied in the earlier Biblical words: 'and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' 11

10 Nathan Drazin, (1940), History of Jewish Education From 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E. (During the Periods of the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaim), Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, p. 15.
The Scribe Ezra and the Period of the Soferim

After the Second Temple was built in 515 B.C.E., what is known as the Period of the Soferim, or Scribes, began. Lasting until 200 B.C.E., it overlapped both Persian and Greek rule. This period is marked by the existence of an obscure institution known as the Great Assembly. The Jewish leaders of this time were called scribes.

This name was used to connote those men engaged in writing or copying the Law and in teaching and interpreting it to the people. Another interesting example is found in the Talmud. The Hebrew word, sofer, may also mean 'one who counts.' The Talmud hence maintains that these men were called Soferim because they were so devoted to their task that they actually counted the words and the letters of the Pentateuch, classified its contents, and recounted the number of laws, Sinaitic or Rabbinic, that pertained to each subject.12

The priest and scribe Ezra returned to Israel from Babylon in 458 B.C.E. with a group of exiles, and was empowered to teach the Torah to the Jews.

On arriving in Jerusalem, Ezra's first task was to insure the strength of the family, an institution which has always been fundamentally important for maintaining a sense of Jewish identity and for preserving the traditions of Israel. Accordingly, he took stern measures against intermarriage with foreigners ... His authority for executing this unpopular policy was derived from two sources. First, he had the backing of the Persian government in the appointment of judges and magistrates who enforced the decree; second, and more fundamentally, he appealed to tradition going back to Moses and specifically to Israel's obligations as a people of the covenant.13

11 Ibid., p. 16.

12 Ibid., pp. 35-36.
Under his guidance the Torah became the accepted basis of individual and community life. Mass education matured under Ezra into new institutions, intensifying the study of Torah and raising the quality of popular knowledge. Recognized instructors were appointed to teach publicly. The Torah was read out loud and explained, being the forerunner of the regular public lection of the Torah, later connected with the synagogal liturgy and ascribed anachronistically to Ezra. The study of Torah thus filled the breach left by the loss of the Temple service.

With the rise of the Synagogue there developed an institution which served as a school for adults where the Law was read and interpreted by the teachers, the Scribes. As this instruction took place on the Sabbath, it gave the Sabbath a unique character. The entire life of the people was steeped in a religious atmosphere. The Temple, the ceremonial observances, the explanations of the priests which accompanied them, the inspired words of the prophets were all of religious educational value. During the period of the scribes, especially, religious observances, prayers, and festival celebrations in the home were so completely identified with life as to make religion interwoven with the daily activities of the people. Religion and ethics were inseparable from life. The Holy Writings became a basis for religious and ethical study.14

Greek Rule, 332-167 B.C.E.

When Greece conquered the Persian empire the Jews had to pay tribute to it. During all those years the High Priest was the head for all matters affecting Jewish life. He was first assisted by the men of the Great Assembly and


14 Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, pp. 629-630.
later by the Sanhedrin, an ancient Jewish legal and religious institution which had authority to decide questions of Jewish law.

Schools for public instruction began in Hellenistic times. Tuition-free education was introduced by Ben Sira in the late 3rd century B.C.E., and informal study sessions were said to take place at students' houses. During this period a new intellectual model emerged, when the biblical hakham, or wise man, gave way to the rabbinic scholar.

Contacts with Greek culture after the conquests of Alexander the Great in the 4th century B.C.E. greatly influenced the ideals of Jewish education in the Bible. A purer form of Greek culture and literature came to the Jewish community of Alexandria under the reign of the first Ptolemies. During the last three centuries B.C.E. and the 1st century C.E., Hellenism had a tremendous influence upon the Jews. Two main forces shaped Jewish educational thought:

Social and political conditions, after the destruction of the second temple, greatly stimulated the intellectualistic tendency. The study of the Torah became the chief expression of national life. But religious requirements, reinforced by current views on the nature of childhood, demanded attention to practical training. The result was a system of education in which study and practice, learning and doing, received equal emphasis. One was chiefly the responsibility of the school; the other of the home. 15

Jewish education therefore combined the intellectual and the practical.

The Jews of Alexandria quickly acquired Greek as their vernacular, and consequently required a Greek

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15 Morris, The Jewish School, p. 111.
translation of the Bible (the Septuagint). Not only was the Bible in Greek read in the synagogues, but the services were to a considerable extent conducted in the Greek language, and there was free association between the Jews and their neighbors. Intellectuals engaged in controversial discussions on the comparative merits of Judaism and Greek philosophy. It was probably true of the Jew that 'within a hundred years of their settlement (in Alexandria) Hebrew and Aramaic had become a strange language, and they spoke and thought in Greek'; but it is also true that Alexandrian Judaism, particularly through Philo, was working to harmonize Plato with Judaism, while Palestine was busy developing the oral law as a basis for Jewish ritual and as a means for regulating Jewish life.16

The Jews became influenced by Greek language, literature, institutions, customs and practices, but the educational activities of the past 200 years had brought about a spiritual transformation.

Jewish education now revolved around the Synagogue service, and the Scriptural readings supplied both the content as well as the form of instruction. Readings of the Law on special occasions led to weekly readings in which the Pentateuch was finished in 7 years, and later in 3 years, then finally in one year.

Before the Maccabean victory there were two opposing Jewish parties: the Hellenists who were willing to accept Greek culture and religion, and the Hasidim, or pious Jews, who were strict adherents of Judaism and who resisted the Hellenizing campaign of Antiochus IV of Syria and aided in the Maccabean revolt. About 100 years later the Hasidim gave rise to the Pharisees and possibly the Essenes, while

16 Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, p. 631.
the Sadducees became in some ways the spiritual heirs of the Hellenists.

The Pharisees accepted the oral legal traditions of their fathers which they deemed as sacred as the Written Law included in the Five Books of Moses and with remarkable diligence and precision developed the great legal literature of the Jews, thus becoming the teachers and masters of Israel for future times. The history of Jewish education is, therefore, intimately connected with the scholarly work of these men.  

The Maccabean Period, 167–63 B.C.E.

After the death of Alexander the Great, Palestine was the possession of either the Ptolemies of Egypt or the Seleucids of Syria. It continued to be a tributary state until the Maccabean revolt. The Maccabean revolt against Syria led to the establishment of an independent Jewish state which lasted 75 years. Greeks were expelled, and Jews took from Hellenism what they deemed useful.

The year 165 B.C.E. was the Maccabean victory. After this Judah became an autonomous state and the High Priest was also made King. National independence was enjoyed for a century.

Simon ben Shetah and the Beginning of Formal Schooling

Schools per se did not exist during the biblical era. Ever since the time of Ezra, scribes had conducted schools where any man could go or send his children. These were more like colleges, with elementary education still being provided by the father in the home.

It was not until the intertestamental era that formal schooling sprung up, taking the center of teaching out of the home and placing it in the school, with the decree of Simon ben Shetah (c. 75 B.C.E.), president of the Sanhedrin (Jewish court) during the Maccabean period, that children should go to school. It was he who inaugurated the first known system of community-supported public education.

**Babylonian Academies**

Before the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E. academies for learning had been set up by Johanan ben Zakkai, who was followed by the famous Rabbi Gamaliel, and the seeds of what later was to become the Mishnah (oral sayings of the rabbis of the academies), from which the Talmud was comprised, began. These academies were later abolished by the Romans, and anyone found studying the Torah was punished by death.

Beginning with Johanan ben Zakkai and ending with Judah the Prince (10 C.E.–200 C.E.) were the scholars or rabbis known as Tannaim, or students, from an Aramaic word.

[This was] the age during which the binding ties of Jewish life changed from national institutions, like a land and a government, to religious institutions, like the Synagogue and the regulations of daily life. It was then that the achievements of the religious leaders over the more than five hundred years of the Second Commonwealth were woven into definite rules of conduct. These rules, in turn, were summed up in logical order by Judah the Prince. The Mishna became a companion to the Bible. More than ever before the Jews now became 'The People of the Book.'

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Roman Rule, 63 B.C.E.-70 C.E.

In 63 B.C.E. Judah came under Roman domination. The theocracy still continued without prolonged interruption until 37 B.C.E. when a monarchy distinct from the High Priesthood was established, thus separating state and religion officially.

In 70 C.E. Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by Titus of Rome. The Jews were then dispersed into many lands. Many, however, remained in the smaller town of Palestine and tried to preserve their civilization. The large settlements of Jews in Babylonia and Egypt during the Second Commonwealth now increased heavily. An even greater increase was in Rome. There was still a semblance of national organization in Palestine. The Sanhedrin of 70 elders still continued, but functions changed. Previously it was a court. Now it was an academy of higher learning. But Jews still looked to it for authoritative guidance in all affairs of their private lives. Its head was called Patriarch and was recognized by the imperial government. This was retained in Palestine for over 300 years.

Joshua ben Gamala and Formal Education

It was not until Joshua ben Gamala, a high priest (63-65 C.E.), ordered that every town should have a school for children from the age of six, that formal schooling appeared
on a grand scale in the ancient world. The school system was then extended from Jerusalem, where it had been previously located, to other parts of the country. Regard for the educational needs of orphans, and the perceived inadequacy of a father's instructions necessitated the ordinance.

**Differences Between Jewish, Greek and Roman Education**

Religion was the dominating factor in Jewish education, rather than the Greek and Roman aim of making good citizens. In Sparta for early Athenians, individual excellence was stressed in its relation to public usefulness.

The aim of Greek education was to develop civic virtues, which necessitated the development of body and mind, leading to the establishment of the gymnasium and music school and the resulting stress on physical and military training. While the Greeks emphasized beauty and grace, the Jews emphasized good moral action or character.

Plato stressed society and Aristotle stressed the individual, but the final goal for both was a well-organized state. The aim of Socrates was to develop the power of thinking to enable man to arrive at fundamental universal moral principles. Other Greeks believed that since reflective thinking was man's peculiar function, then the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was man's highest good. There was little concern with practical problems. Rather, people were searching for the ultimate truth.
The aim of Roman education was to prepare people for citizenship. Later on there was a stress on oratory. The Hebrew specialized in religious and moral education, the Greek in intellectual and aesthetic education, and the Roman in social organization and the law.

Meantime, all Jews were required to know the Law and observe it in daily practice. Hebrew education was both theoretical and practical.

It was integrated with all the activities of life. The development of the intellectual faculty was only a by-product of that education. The Jewish spirit was generally hostile to physical and military education. The Jews sought to excel other people only in the knowledge and observance of their laws. The complete universalization of this knowledge as expressed by the Prophet Isaiah, 'for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea,' was always a Utopian dream of the Jewish people. The Jewish school system, as fully organized toward the end of the Second Commonwealth, certainly endeavored to carry this idea into practice in so far as the Jews were concerned.¹⁹

Elementary and secondary schools of the Jews were free for rich and poor alike, whereas most Greek and all Roman schools charged tuition. For the Jews all subjects were integrated with the study of Torah.

In Judaism, a learned man was considered equivalent to a religious man. Drazin (1940) points out that the educational philosophy of Dewey and other modern educators to the effect that education is activity and life properly lived, as opposed to its purpose being the storing up of

knowledge as a preparation for life, is in many respects that of the ancient Jewish system of education.

Education and Ethics in the Bible

Since, as has been shown, the Jews relied on the Torah for their major educational ideals, it is to that religious work that we now turn for more detailed study.

The Bible is a recounting of the history of the Jewish people with the following divisions: Genesis deals with the history of the creation and the patriarchs; Exodus recalls the history of the Israelites in Egypt and their redemption, to the building of the Tabernacle; Leviticus is the ordinances for the sacrifices, sanctuary, purifications, festivals, etc.; Numbers is the history of the Israelites in the desert; and Deuteronomy is a recapitulation of the history of the Israelites in the desert, and of several laws, some new enactments and the last days of Moses.

The Bible is made up of three distinct parts which were canonized at different times. The first part includes the Five Books of Moses, or Pentateuch, enumerated above.

The date these books were canonized is debatable among Biblical scholars. Some date the canonization to the time of Ezra in the fifth century B.C.E. or shortly after that, while others believe that these books were canonized even earlier, about the seventh century B.C.E. 20

The second part of the Bible includes the Prophets, which is subdivided into the historical books of Joshua,

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20 Fried, Education in the Bible, p. 212.
Judges, Samuel and Kings, the Major Prophets (such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel), and the twelve Minor Prophets (such as Hosea, Amos, Jonah and Micah). This second part of the Bible was most likely not completed before the 2nd century B.C.E.

The third part of the Bible includes the Writings, composed of Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentation, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles.

The Bible is the primary source for understanding the process of education in ancient Israel. Since there is no biblical text that formulates a philosophy, methodology, or curriculum of education, such information must be pieced together from occasional admonitions and narrative references and episodes.

The word 'Law' ... is used synonymously with the word 'Torah'. The expression Torah in the narrow sense means the Pentateuch or Five Books of Moses. The word itself means to teach. In the much larger sense ... the word Torah is defined to include the Jewish legal and traditional regulation of all of life's activities. In this sense the word Torah is also used in describing the Talmud. The Talmud is called the 'Oral Torah' and the Bible the 'Written Torah'. The word Torah can be used as synonymous to Jewish education.21

Jewish education is focused upon the study and observance of the Torah.

The best translation of Torah, as implied also by the ancient Jewish historian Josephus, is Law, when this word is defined to include the Jewish legal and traditional regulation of all of life's activities. Torah is therefore often used as a synonym for Jewish education.22

21 Fried, Education in the Bible, p. 232.
Drazin continues:

... the Hebrew term for education used in the ancient period ... was Talmud Torah, the study of Torah. The emphasis of Jewish education is hence not on the pursuit of knowledge and the attainment of culture as in our modern systems, but rather on conduct. To say that Jewish education is entirely religious is also misleading unless the nature of Jewish religion is remembered. ...

Jewish education was never something extraneous to life or merely an instrument that served to prepare for life and that later could be discarded when its utility was exhausted. Jewish education was rather synonymous with life. It unfolded life, giving it direction and meaning. ... a modern Hebrew term for education, Hinuk, from a root found twice in the Bible in the sense of "to train," etymologically means dedication or initiation, and hence may refer to the fact that the child on receiving Jewish education was dedicating his life to the service of God and to the observance of all His laws. This has been the characteristic essence of Jewish education from the earliest times and especially so in the periods of the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaim.

Jewish education was hence essentially character education. The Pentateuch, the source of all Jewish education, was not studied as literature, but rather as the text of the Law that provided even the child with a broad outline of the complete ethical and religious life.23

Jewish education was an endless process, the Jews ever mindful that they could never learn as much as there was to learn of the Torah.

The most prominent common denominators in the Books of the Bible which give it unity are the ideas of: 1) monotheism, 2) the holiness of Israel chosen by God, and Israel's responsibility in return to keep God's commandments, 3) morality in man's conduct between God and other men, 4) the belief that human beings have free will

22 Drazin, History of Jewish Education, p. 11.
23 Ibid., p. 12.
and a choice in how to live their life, and that their life has meaning and value. (Fried, 1981)

The idea of Torah requires that there be a certain people among the nations of the world that is to study and practice Torah as the raison d'etre of its existence (and of the existence of the universe).

The notion of a people elected by God to receive the commandments of the Torah hallows the people and locates its special role in the context of world history. The Jewish tradition conceives of this election not solely as a preordained passive reception of revelation but as an active electing by the people to accept the "yoke" of the commandments. Thus Jewish religious thought transforms the mundane historical fact of the people's social existence into a joyful, voluntarily assumed obligation and responsibility.24

The nation of Israel itself is not looked upon as possessing an inherent superiority, despite the fact that at times Israel is described as 'The Chosen People.' The fact is that this choice demands from Israel moral superiority. Israel is supposed to be a 'Holy Nation,' having a responsibility to act accordingly. The importance of Israel does not lie in their origin, which according to the prophets is a mixed one and can hardly be regarded as a source for pride.

Fried (1981) has pointed out that terms used in the Bible for education include: showing, warning, training, commanding, declaring, guiding, and instructing. History is seen as an educational tool, so holidays are celebrated.

Any description of education in the biblical period is necessarily incomplete and must ultimately rely on general impressions of what was applicable to most levels of society, as it is reflected in the Bible and later Jewish sources. For example, the Book of Proverbs describes the moral, spiritual and character education gained from the family and community. Deuteronomy (6:6-9 and 11:18-20) says that compulsory teaching is incumbent upon the father.

The primitive ideas of "guiding" or "instructing" definitely gave place to the conceptions of teaching and learning in the modern sense beginning with the Book of Deuteronomy.

Despite the importance of moral and religious behavior in the Bible, no references to it exist for the formal religious instruction of children. Informal religious study is ongoing every day. In Deuteronomy 6 we read that the father must teach his children words of G-d during various daily activities. The child also learned by participating in religious celebrations and by imitating the elders. Religion was considered an integral part of life and religious training took place in the home and the community.

The unique character of Jewish education finds expression in the phrase "Torah for its own sake," giving the student two goals of fulfilling the commandment itself by studying Torah all the time, and orientating one's studies to the observance of the mitzvot.

Morality is ordained by God in the Bible. The Hebrews were among the first people to identify religion with
morality. The emphasis on morality is one of the Bible's main objectives. This does not mean that the Bible is an organized manual of religious and ethical behavior. The doctrines are not systematically written but have to be pieced together from various passages in the Bible. The Decalogue might be considered as the moral base for religious instruction; but moral instruction in the Bible extends to much more than just observing the Ten Commandments. ...

In the Decalogue only four commandments deal with the behavior of Man to G-d and six with the behavior of human beings towards one another. Believing and worshipping the one and only G-d is the beginning, the start of moral behavior and is stated in the first commandment; but, one who believes and adheres to the worship of the Lord while ignoring his fellow human beings is in the eyes of the Bible neither moral nor religious.25

While Greek and Babylonian deities needed sacrifices to sustain them, sacrifices for the Hebrews were only overt actions; a symbol of the true spirit of the giver (Fried, 1981). Sacrifices were meaningless without moral conduct; festivals and celebrations were useless without justice. Sacrifices, celebration of festivals and singing of psalms and praying were all means to the end (moral conduct), not ends in themselves.

Jewish tradition regards the study of creation in Genesis as confirmation of G-d's intention for universal human brotherhood. G-d creates one single man and one single woman, so that no man in the word can say that his ancestors are the most exalted ones. The same motive maybe can be found in the flood story when one family only is saved to perpetuate humanity.26

Jewish thought and its biblical or talmudic sources revolved around ethics.

25 Fried, Education in the Bible, p. 32.
26 Ibid., pp. 35-36.
In line with the ideal set down in Proverbs and various Psalms, and also in the Jewish Hellenistic writings and Palestinian teachings in the rabbinic period, Jewish ethics strives for moderation. It condemns excess, obviously in the sense of evil but also in the sense of good, and condemns equally greed and waste, debauchery and abstinence, pleasure and asceticism, piety and bigotry.  

The bible approves of life as it is, and makes its ethical demand compatible with social reality.

Education in the Bible is seen as preparation for the moral and religious life, as a means of developing character. Moral and religious training were the final aims of education. Later on, during Talmudic times, intellectual as well as ethical excellence was promoted. One of the principle characteristics of the Bible is the close connection between the ethical and religious realms, and therefore the central position of ethics throughout the Bible.

Wisdom in the Bible was synonymous with morality, the knowledge of right methods of living. But the moral life is seen as stable only when rooted in religion (Proverbs 9:10).

The goal of religious education was to produce "a kingdom of priests, a holy people." (Ex. 19:6). "The essence of knowledge is fear of the Lord." (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7). The law was regarded as the conditions of the covenant between God and Israel (Ex. 24:7).

Since the covenant at Sinai was accepted by all those present when they said 'We will do and obey' (Ex. 24-7), it followed that the whole nation would have to be taught the laws incumbent upon them. It is for this reason that Moses, Israel's first teacher, is

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Encyclopedia Judaica, p. 942.
repeatedly commanded to 'Speak unto the Children of Israel saying' ... The text of the covenant was read at the time of the agreement (Ex. 24:7) and an authentic copy was kept in the holy ark guarded by the priesthood (Deut. 31:9, 26). The covenant was to be reread publicly once every seven years during the Feast of Tabernacles (31:10-11); this was the earliest prescription for mass education in ancient Israel: 'Gather the people—men, women, children and the strangers in your communities—that they may hear and so learn to revere the Lord your God and to observe faithfully every word of His Teaching. Their children, too, who have not had the experience, shall hear and learn to revere the Lord your God as long as they live in the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to occupy.'

The belief in a God acting in events, coupled with a high regard for oral tradition, made the telling of history a most effective pedagogical method throughout the Bible. The laws specified man's duties and history revealed God's concern.

The general trend of social ethics was summed up by the prophets who said: 'Hate evil and love good and establish justice in the gate' (Amos 5:15); and similarly: 'He has told you, O man, what is good: and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8). These passages and their like not only summarize the teaching of ethics, but also place it at the center of the Israelite faith. A summation of biblical ethical teachings is contained in the well-known saying of Hillel: 'What is hateful to you do not do unto another' ...

And in Leviticus 19:17-18 we have the most important maxim of all: "Love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."

The Bible is not concerned with abstract definitions. Doing what is right and just is the essence of biblical

28 Ibid., p. 386.
29 Encyclopedia Judaica, p. 934.
ethics. The personal ethical ideal is the zaddik (the good man) (Ezekiel 18:5-9). "The essence of all of these acts is the proper relationship between man and man, except for one commandment, to shun idolatry, which is solely a duty of man to God."30

The strongest and most radical expression of the goal of biblical ethics is found in the rebukes of the prophets, who chastise the people relentlessly for ethical transgressions and demand ethical perfection (especially in the realm of social ethics) without compromise. But their rebukes do not really constitute instruction, for they do not always teach one how to behave in particular situations.

Both prophecy and law demand of man in the name of God that he behave properly. Their ethical outlook is a fundamental element in their demand that man do God's will, and therefore is not practical utilitarianism, even though they teach the doctrine of reward and punishment.31

There was no compensation for becoming learned, since the Torah was never seen as a means to achieve wealth. The study and performance of the commandment was an end in itself. The father had a duty to teach his son a handicraft so he could sustain a livelihood. The rationale behind teaching one's son a trade

lies in the fact that a person who cannot support himself must depend on others for his livelihood, and thus he puts a burden on other people, causing them to devote less time to their study because they must support him.32

30 Ibid., p. 934.

31 Ibid., p. 936.
Education During Talmudic Times

The Talmudic period ran from the time of the early scribes to the completion of the Talmud, (5th century B.C.E. to the 6th century C.E.). During this period the Jewish people were subjected to influences of Persia, Greece and Rome, causing various changes and adaptations in the educational system. Some common denominators of education remain constant, however, throughout the Talmud.

The 1st cent. C.E. was the time of a catastrophic destruction of the old Jewish system of education and the creation of a new one. The fall of the Temple ... and the scattering of the priesthood, the devastation caused in Palestine by war, wiped out the priestly group of teachers, whose place was now taken by the rabbis. Before Jerusalem fell, Johanan ben Zakkai had obtained permission to set up an academy in Jabneh; after its fall, Johanan began to reconstruct Jewish knowledge on the basis of the oral, Pharisaic tradition. His successor, Rabban Gamaliel, who is remembered as a teacher of most of the great sages of Israel ... directed the academy that chose the future educational leaders of Jewry ... The norms of religious life were being compiled in codes that were to eventuate in the Mishnah, and a pattern of Jewish education was laid down that became characteristic of Jewish pedagogy for centuries to come.33

The Mishnah and the Tannaim

The internal tensions between stipulations of the Torah on the one hand and the reality of the period on the other, led to a search for new meaning in the biblical text, thereby creating Midrash, which was the method of interpreting Scripture to elucidate legal points or to bring

32 Fried, Education in the Bible, p. 81.
33 Universal Jewish Encyclopedia, p. 631.
out lessons by stories or homiletics. It is also the name of the collection of such rabbinic interpretations. The Mishnah was compiled by Rabbi Judah in 220 C.E., composed of statements made by the Tannaim, who were the teachers or scholars, on legal decisions. The first generation of Tannaim began around 10 C.E. The Tannaitic period comprised approximately 200 years, from 10-220 C.E.

The Talmud

After the destruction of the Temple rabbinic Judaism made the ordinary Jew a "priest" by transforming many rituals once connected with the Temple cult so that they became a way of sanctifying one's everyday life.

The Talmud of the rabbis consists of sixty-three books known as tractates. A large and diverse work, it is the result of the work of many generations of teachers. The many subjects of which the Talmud treats can be divided into two main categories: the Halachah and the Haggadah.

The term Halacha means 'walking,' it indicates the way of life a Jew should take. It provides the community and the individual with a distinctive code of action. ... The Haggadah meaning narration is the non-legal section of the Talmud and is composed of legends, anecdotes or sayings. The Haggadah is no less important than the Halachah for understanding the world of thought evolved in the Talmud. Both parts complement each other. It may well be that the dry legalism of the Halachah alone would not have acquired as many disciples as the combination of the two. The Halachah and the Haggadah are interwoven and inseparable.34

34 Fried, Education in the Bible, p. 214.
One important point must be made here, however. The Talmud does not contain one complete page entirely devoted to education, its history, organization, or methods. Fried (1981) notes that the numbering of the pages of the Talmud was established in the first edition (1520-1523) and has been followed by all subsequent editions. Therefore,

when a Talmudic citation is given, the page alone is noted without any reference to edition, as the page will be numbered in precisely the same way whether a particular edition was published in Hamburg, Vilna or New York. In every edition, the page begins and ends with exactly the same word.\(^{35}\)

Comprised of the Mishnah and the Gemara, the Talmud is the record of discussions, interpretations, and traditions which was the basis for the legal system governing Jewish life. Amoraim, or commentators, explored Rabbi Judah's work, debating it line by line. This constitutes the Gemara. The opinions expressed in the Talmud emanate from the words of hundreds of teachers with a variety of views.

Two versions of the Gemara exist, the Israeli, or Jerusalem Talmud, and the Babylonian Talmud. The former was compiled around 400 C.E. and the latter about a hundred years later. Both the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud are based for the most part on the same Mishnah, differing only in the Gemara. The Babylonian Talmud is the larger and fuller version, and is better edited. It is considered more authoritative and is universally recognized by Jews.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., pp. 214-215.
Whereas the Jerusalem Talmud is briefer, it nevertheless contains more inner contradictions.

The Babylonian Talmud was completed by the end of the 5th century, and the Jewish community in Babylonia became the leading Diaspora Jewry. Many synagogues had classes for elementary and advanced study. Two major academies existed, contributing to Jewish scholarship and, through interpretation of the halakhah, set the pattern for Jewish religious life and the place of study in it. The stress on Talmud in higher education led to near complete elimination of the Bible and the Mishnah from schools beyond the elementary level.

In the Talmud, learning is centered around the study of the Torah, which was recognized as having kept the Jews unified throughout their exile, without their own government or central place of worship, the Temple.

A new emphasis on study for the sake of scholarship itself as well as for knowledge of the right way to live arose with Talmudic scholars. The stress for Talmudic scholars was on memory and the method of study most often employed was repetition. The Hebrew word for education, "musar," comes from the root ysr, "to chasten, to discipline."

Since the Oral Law, which could not be committed to writing, was continually expanding, accuracy in learning it was attainable only through endless repetition ... Only in this way could the vast body of talmudic thought have been transmitted intact from
generation to generation until the end of the fifth century C.E., when it was finally redacted.\(^{36}\)

Maimonides stressed the importance of studying Talmud and using one's intellectual faculties:

The time allotted to study should be divided into three parts. A third should be devoted to the Written Law; a third to the Oral Law; and the last third should be spent in reflection, deducing conclusions from premises, developing implications of statements, comparing dicta, studying the hermeneutical principles by which the Torah is interpreted, till one knows the essence of these principles, how to deduce what is permitted and what is forbidden from what one has learned traditionally. This is termed Talmud.\(^{37}\)

The solemnity and sanctity of training children for the duties of life was deemed all important by the Talmudic rabbis. Rabbinic ideas on the subject echo the biblical teachings. The formation of character is seen as the main aim of training, and the fear of God, or study of Torah, supposed to create the good life. This latter idea is still considered the foundation of wisdom.

As the child's nature is receptive, so the teacher's responsibility is great, and the need to teach early is seen. While the Bible's educational system is family-based, that of the Talmud is school-centered.

The value attached to education by the Talmudic Rabbis is exemplified by many utterances. 'The world is upheld by the breath of the children in the school-house'; their instruction must not be interrupted even for the re-building of the Temple. ... Of a great Rabbi it is told that he would never break his fast until he had taken his child to school in the morning. ... The

\(^{36}\) Encyclopedia Judaica, p. 402.

teacher's office is regarded with the utmost veneration.\textsuperscript{38}

The rabbis proceeded on the assumption that the Temple will be rebuilt only in the days of the Messiah. Their Judaism centers around the Torah, especially the oral Torah. The distinctive features of rabbinic Judaism reflect creative development as much as reverent continuity with the past. Rabbinic Judaism calls all Jews to the virtues of righteousness in deed, piety of heart, and education of the mind.

The rabbis made daily study—for its own sake and as a ritual observance—a religious responsibility of the highest significance. ... the acquisition of knowledge was a source of community esteem, a typical example of social custom strengthening rabbinic ideals. The rabbis endowed Jewish religiosity with its bookish cast, and their argumentative, analytic form of study made Jewish life uncommonly verbal and cerebral.\textsuperscript{39}

As in the Bible, ethics permeates the education and life of the Jew.

In talmudic literature, legislative concerns are never the last word. Not only does the haggadah, by means of moral lessons, complete and temper the autonomy of the halakhah, and not only is the tractate Avot an anthology of moral thought; but, more obviously, in every conflict between the legal rigidity of the law and the criteria for ethics, the latter hold sway. Fear of God is superior to wisdom; actions surpass ideas; man is called upon to take a stand in favor not of reason but of the good. Ethics appear not as speculative principles but in terms of human experience; the talmudic sages are presented as moral exemplars and the ideal of holiness is identified with a scrupulously honest and pure life.\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{39} Eliade, \textit{The Encyclopedia of Religion}, p. 131.

\textsuperscript{40} \textit{Encyclopedia Judaica}, p. 940.
Education in the Prayer Books

Jewish prayers existed since the time of the Patriarchs who instituted three periods of prayer daily. However, they existed for thousands of years before they were written down in the form of a book. The first written Prayer Book came into existence only in the ninth century C.E., compiled by Rab Amram at the request of the Jews in Spain who needed guidance as to the order of the prayers.

After the destruction of the Temple, prayers according to the Talmud took the place of sacrifices. The study of Torah was considered a form of prayer, and as such, a substitute for Temple sacrifices.

... elevating study of the Torah to the same position as prayer and thus sacrifices is a unique Jewish approach that influences education to this day. Probably, because of this concept, the Prayer Book itself became an educational book, and the synagogue service an educational setting.

The Prayer Book can be looked upon as an educational book, in which a Jew can learn the Bible, the Talmud, religion, history and Hebrew. The Prayer Book's strength and value is in the fact that it is an integral part of Jewish life. It is a common spiritual bond that unites Jews wherever they are. 41

The Talmud refers to the prayers as "oral prayers" and forbids writing them down. The rabbis originally feared the inclusion of foreign ideas, which they thought could mislead the people. After the completion of the Talmud, however, this prohibition was lifted. However, in Babylonia it was

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41 Fried, Education in the Bible, p. 147.
permitted to use written books on the Day of Atonement and on other fast days.

Looking at the various prayers found in the Prayer Book, we can trace through them the historical development of Jewish thoughts and feelings. Every significant event in Jewish history has left its mark on the Prayer Book. ... The evolution of the Prayer Book does not mean that there is no specific order to the prayers. In fact the synagogue service based on the Prayer Book remained remarkably consistent. The order of the service laid down in the first chapters of tractate 'Berakoth' for the daily and Sabbath service; and in tractate 'Megillah' for festival service remained unchanged as the fundamental order of the Prayer Book service, despite the many additional prayers incorporated in it.\footnote{42}

Fried points out the error in placing the Prayer Book on the same level as the Bible and the Talmud. "... once the Bible and the Talmud were completed, no other materials could be added to them, on the other hand the evolution of the Prayer Book as was noted never stopped. The Prayer Book for this reason reflects as it affects Jewish life; and Jewish trends throughout history are mirrored in it."\footnote{43}

Most educational ideas found in the prayer books originated in the Bible and the Talmud. In the prayer book ideas of the Bible and Talmud were disseminated and reinforced.

The Book of Psalms was the book in the Bible which influenced the prayer book most, in its content and style, since Psalms were used in the Temple service and the spirit

\footnote{42}{Ibid., pp. 217-218.}

\footnote{43}{Ibid., p. 218.}
of the Psalms is similar to that of the prayers: poems expressing moods and aspirations are evident throughout.

The influence of the Talmud on the Prayer book was also great.

... it was customary in the Babylonian academies to read one of the chapters of 'Aboth' ('Saying of the Fathers') on the Sabbath afternoons. In consequence the book became known as 'Pirkey Aboth' (Chapters of the Fathers), or simply as 'Perek' (the Chapter). Later the entire tractate was embodied in the Prayer Book. No other book, not even Psalms, has been used in its entirety in the Prayer Book.

Because of its use in the Prayer Book, this tractate became the most widely known of all the sixty three tractates of the Talmud. The tractate's major theme is moral conduct. It consists of maxims summarizing the wisdom and experience of some sixty rabbis extending from the third century B.C.E. to about the third century C.E.44

Hertz (1965) attributes to "Aboth" the influence which molded the character of the Jew, pointing out that a Jew who had no opportunity for deep Talmudic study, was usually at least well versed in the content of "Aboth" reprinted in his Prayer Book.

44 Ibid., pp. 159-160.
The Persian and Yemenite Jewish Communities

Since the vast majority of Chinese Jews originated in Persia and Yemen (Leslie, 1972) it is to these two countries that we now look to ascertain the educational environment of the Jews who lived there around the time they migrated to China, bringing with them their own educational ideals.

The Jews of Persia

The origins of the Jewish Diaspora in Persia has been connected with traditions and legends about events in Israel's ancient history, starting with the deportation of the Israelites in the 8th century B.C.E. from Samaria to the "cities of Media and Persia," the forced migration in the time of Sargon II of Assyria (d. 705), or the destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar in the 6th century.

Jewish settlements still existed and expanded in Persia after Alexander the Great's overthrow of the Achaemenid dynasty, and the subsequent rule of the Seleucids. They continued to grow under the Parthian dynasty (249 B.C.E. - 226 C.E.) and the Sassanid dynasty (226-642).

Arab Muslims defeated the Sassanid army in the battle at Nehavend in 642, thus ending Persia's national and political independence. Persia was now incorporated into the great Arab-Islamic empire. Islam replaced Zoroastrianism as the state religion, affecting negatively the legal and political status of the Jewish settlements within the Babylonian-Persian Diaspora.
The Karaite movement, founded by Anan ben David in the 8th century, began during this time. The basic tenets of the Karaites involved a denial of the talmudic-rabbinic tradition while asserting the right of every Jew to interpret the Bible for himself. This posed a challenge to mainstream "Rabbanite" Judaism, and Saadiah Gaon, representative of central Jewish authority, disputed their beliefs. Due to Gaon's intervention, rabbinic-talmudic Judaism asserted its influence on the Persian communities, although Karaite communities continued to exist well into the 16th century.45

The Islamic authorities appointed an exilarch, who represented the communal organization of Babylonian Persian Jewry. Responsible for the collection of annual taxes, the exilarch was considered, along with the gaon of the talmudic academies in Babylonia, to be the authorities for the scattered Jewish Diaspora in the East.

Babylonia was considered the center and Persia the periphery, with the latter expected to send money to the former for maintenance of the talmudic academies of Sura and Pumbedita. Babylonian authorities, meanwhile, controlled Persian education and appointed judges and rabbis for the Persian community. Great efforts were made to foster

talmudic education in the Persian communities, and finally a Yeshiva was established in Hamadan, which became the cultural center of the Persian Diaspora at this time.

When the Mongol Khan Hulagu invaded Persia in 1258, conquered Baghdad and overthrew the Abbasid caliphate, the division between "believers" and "nonbelievers" in Islam was abolished, making all the various religions which existed in Persia equal. Jews were now able to achieve political and economic power, and managed to also create much Judaeo-Persian literature during the Il-Khan dynasty (1258-1336).

The Jews of Yemen

For many centuries a pious population of some 30,000 Jews lived in Yemen, supposedly since the days of the Prophet Jeremiah before the destruction of the First Temple in the 6th century B.C.E. "They found their surroundings so congenial--so their story continues--that when Ezra invited them to return to Judea and aid in its rebuilding, they refused. Therefore, their ancestors were visited by God's punishment, and ever since then Yemenite Jews have remained poor."46

The Yemenite Jews were always in touch with the Jews of Palestine and Babylonia. Mostly artisans, these Jews considered the education of their children in Hebrew and Jewish tradition a sacred task. "A man called to the Torah was disgraced if he failed to read his portion faultlessly;

46 Grayzel, History of the Jews, p. 630.
for he had to read it himself, there being no official reader to help him."47

There were very few scholars among the Yemenite Jews. A false prophet arose who proclaimed the amalgamation of Judaism and Islam, prompting Yemen's foremost scholar, Jacob ben Nathanael al-Fayyumi, to write to the well-known and revered philosopher Maimonides for advice on how to handle this situation. Maimonides' reply, entitled "Epistle to Yemen," so impressed the Yemenite Jews that they named him in one of their prayers.

The Jews had brought with them to Yemen the Bible and a large part of the traditional Haggadah. At least a part of the Talmud was known in Yemen but it was less widely distributed there than in Europe due to the poverty of the people.

While the Yemenite Jews were not Talmudists, they acted according to the decisions of Rab Ashi in traditional law, at least after they had come under the influence of Maimonides.

Since the Persian and Yemenite Jews, who comprised the bulk of Jewish settlers in China and would have had the most influence in the tenor of Jewish life in Kaifeng, relied primarily on the Torah rather than the Talmud for their Jewish education, it must be deduced that the educational values set forth in the Bible had the greatest impact on them. This may be true whether they were Yemenite Jews

whose knowledge of the Talmud was decidedly limited, due to
their own poverty and lack of funds to purchase copies of
it, or they were, perhaps, Karaite Persian Jews who rejected
rabbinic Judaism and the Talmud altogether. As has been
shown in the previous chapter, visitors to the Jews of
Kaifeng never spoke of having seen in their possession a
copy of the Talmud, although there were indications that
they at least knew of it and were even influenced in their
prayer service by Maimonides. This, however, may have been
a result of the contacts Yemenite Jews had with the great
Medieval scholar/philosopher, as noted above.

Jewish education in Asiatic lands during geonic times
(the times of the Babylonian Academies) was quite
rudimentary. It was more limited to the Bible than the
Talmud. Occasionally, scholarly Talmudists were found among
Yemenite Jews. In Iran, during the geonic period,
elementary study of the Torah seems still to have been
popular.

As the major educational and moral ideas of the Hebrew
Bible have been considered by scholars to be found in the
Book of Proverbs, it is to that book that we now turn for a
more in-depth look at the values and ethics prized by the
Jews, which they carried with them to Kaifeng.
The Book of Proverbs

The Book of Proverbs forms one of the three books of wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible, the other two being the Book of Job and Ecclesiastes. Hebrew wisdom literature and Hebrew sages were to a great extent influenced by Babylonian and especially Egyptian thought, since the culture of ancient Israel belonged to a wider cultural tradition shared by neighboring peoples. Israel, a relative latecomer, became heir to a culture which had already flourished for centuries.

... the broad and sympathetic outlook of the Hebrew Sages was such that they welcomed everything, whatever its source, which contributed to enrich their conception of the true nature of Wisdom. They were universalistic in their ideas. Therefore they sought out the wisdom of other lands, studied it, submitted to its influence, appropriated it, and often ennobled it with a deeper and fuller content. This twofold element of indigenous Hebrew wisdom and the adapted wisdom of foreign lands, whether Egyptian, Babylonian, or Greek ... is to be found in all the books of Hebrew Wisdom which have come down to us; not least in the book of Proverbs.48

Wisdom literature was one of the types of Egyptian and Mesopotamian literature.

In Egypt the most characteristic type of wisdom book was that which is known as the Instruction. ... One of the latest of them, the Instruction of Amen-em-opet, probably to be dated at some time between 1000 and 600 B.C., served directly as a basis for one section of Proverbs (22:17-24:22). They usually take the form of advice and warnings given by a father to his son, a feature (which is reflected in Proverbs with its frequent use of the phrase 'my son').49

Others have suggested, however, that careful study of the two texts reveals that the Egyptian writing must be a translation from a Hebrew original. (Pfeiffer et al, 1975)

Originally it was state officials or scribes who founded a literary wisdom of their own, closely modeled at first on the Egyptian tradition which they had received. "The wisdom tradition in Israel was therefore from the first not a popular tradition but one which was primarily the possession of this privileged educated class." Proverbs is actually a condensation of the history of Israel's wisdom movement, coming from the period of Judaism when wisdom schools flourished.

While some sections of Proverbs must have been composed mainly for use as textbooks to educate a small scribal class, Ackroyd (1972) goes on to note that much of its teaching is of more general interest, perhaps due to the progressive enlargement of the educated class in Israel during the course of its history. "The proverb was sometimes presented with the lesson clearly taught, but sometimes it was made obscure so that its very difficulty might stimulate the desire to understand and so impress the lesson more indelibly on the mind."


50 Ibid., p. 4.

While authorship of the Book of Proverbs has traditionally been attributed to King Solomon, it is impossible to ascertain this with any certainty. Ackroyd (1972) notes that much of Proverbs as we have it now is rather the product of a continuous development of literary wisdom throughout the period of the monarchy (10th-6th century B.C.E.)

Pfeiffer (1975), however, maintains that "the fact of Solomonic authorship for the major part of this book is also in keeping with the historical accounts of this man as the embodiment of wisdom. In I Kings 3-4 it is revealed that he began his reign with a prayer for wisdom and that this request was granted by God. It is also recorded of Solomon, 'And he spake three thousand proverbs ...' (1Kgs. 4:32)."\(^{52}\)

The Proverbs were written ca. 950 B.C.E. Others were added or copied ca. 700 B.C.E., so the book was probably completed around that time.

Proverbs consists of eight sections with their own headings. It does not easily lend itself to formal analysis.

One theory has it that the book is put together as a 'house of wisdom' (cf. 9:1, 14:1), analogous to the tripartite Solomonic temple: the 'front' is chaps. 1-9; the 'nave' is 10:1-22:16; the 'inner sanctuary' is 22:17-31:31. The 'seven pillars' (9:1) are found in seven columns of text of twenty-two or twenty-three lines each (alphabetizing practice) constituting chaps. 2-7. Moreover, it is contended that the exact number of proverbs and lines is consciously contrived according to the numerical values of the letters in the

\(^{52}\) Ibid., p. 1420.
names of Solomon, David, Israel, and Hezekiah in the subcollection headings.

Fried (1981) point out that the Book of Proverbs comes closest among the different books in the Bible to being almost entirely devoted to manners and human relationships, covering most phases of the latter. It addresses itself to the ways the king, tradesman, farmer, husband, wife and child should act. Advice is given on the treatment of friends, the poor and the rearing of children as well.

Proverbs treats of various themes, such as wisdom, folly, sin, goodness, wealth, pride, etc.

There is a comprehensiveness of outlook so that no phase of human relationship seems to have been overlooked. The tone is definitely universalistic, the word 'Israel' not being found in the book. Its teaching is therefore applicable to all men everywhere.54


Common sense proverbs often consist of short, two-line sentences which treat of some aspect of the human experience: "A wise son makes a glad father, but a foolish son is a sorrow to his mother" (Proverbs 10:1); "The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn, which shines brighter and brighter until full day." (Proverbs 4:18).


54 Ibid., p. 1421.
Other, longer common-sense proverbs belong to what Anderson terms the "instruction genre," and are "in the imperative, rather than the indicative, and adduce reasons for following the advice that is enjoined." As an example, he quotes the following well-known verse from Proverbs 6:6-11:

Go to the ant, O sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer or ruler, she prepares her food in summer, and gathers her sustenance in harvest. A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, and poverty will come upon you like a vagabond, and want like an armed man.

Many proverbs seem highly secular rather than religious, showing a positive attitude toward worldly things. "Reflecting on various courses of human conduct, the sages suggest that the good life can be won through diligence, sobriety, and prudence, and that the marks of the good life are success, well-being, and a long and fruitful life."56

While the idea of rewards and punishments was originally based upon the Mosaic covenant with assurance of peace and success for Israel if it followed God's commandments, as best exemplified in the book of Deuteronomy, the sages who wrote the Proverbs believed rather that there was a divine order which could be attained through human search and reflection, and to live in harmony with this would brings happiness in life. They thus took

56 Ibid., p. 577.
the initiative from the realm of the divine and put it into
the human level instead, resulting in the identification of
Torah with Wisdom.

Anderson's second theme group, the Fear of the Lord, is
actually the one which underlies all attitudes towards
wisdom: "The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom, and
the knowledge of the Holy One is insight." (Proverbs 9:10)
Only by acknowledging the sovereignty of God can one ever
attain true wisdom. Faith in God is the starting point from
which one can seek true understanding. Reason, Anderson
points out, is thus not seen as an obstacle to faith, but
rather faith is the precondition for understanding.

In the third group, that of Theological Wisdom, the
fear of God as the beginning of wisdom is given a deeper
meaning, as the sages were preoccupied and overwhelmed with
the mystery of God's creation. Instead of, as earlier
proverbs implied, wisdom helping people to harmonize their
conduct with the order of things to achieve happiness and
success, it now sought to understand the secret of God's
plan behind the whole creation.

What Anderson has termed "Dame Wisdom" refers to the
personification of wisdom as the agent of God. It takes the
form of a female prophet summoning people to follow her ways
and turn from foolishness, as opposed to the image of the
harlot sitting at the door of her house attempting to seduce
passers-by.
Finally, under the theme of the Wise and the Foolish, we have the two divisions of people by the sages, corresponding to the righteous and the wicked. The fool is not one who is unintelligent, but rather has chosen to go against the course of wisdom due to pride or passion. The seriousness of such matters is seen in Proverbs 12:28, when we read "In the path of righteousness is life, but the way of error leads to death."

Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs is equivalent to righteousness and justice. Concepts in the Book of Proverbs include the practical, moral and religious aspects of life, which are not sharply distinguished from one another. The ethical teachings in all the biblical books are considered essential in God's demands of man. In this respect, the attitude of Proverbs is different. Most of the proverbs aim at proving to man that it is worthwhile for him to follow the good path from the consideration of simple worldly wisdom. Man is placed at the center of ethical instruction. This approach is more practical and utilitarian than the approach of the Bible in general, due to the practical educational orientation of the Book of Proverbs. Proverbs emphasizes ethical instruction to a degree that wisdom literature of the peoples of the ancient Near East did not.

Two main reasons for the prominence Proverbs gives to ethical instruction include the fact that it is geared toward the education of the young citizen (while the works of Egyptian didactic literature place more emphasis on the
training of the official), and that Israelite wisdom literature identified the righteous man with the sage on the one hand, and the evil man with the fool on the other (e.g., Prov. 10:21, 23).
Summary of Jewish Education

Jewish education and educational values held by those in the Persian and Yemenite communities at the time of their entry into China are a direct outgrowth of the history of the Jewish people from ancient times through the redaction of the Babylonian Talmud in the 5th century C.E.

The descendants of the patriarchs of the Jewish people, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were united in their belief in Yahweh and the covenant they made with Him through Moses at Mount Sinai, whereby they promised to follow God's commandments and he would in return protect and watch over them, making them a "mighty nation" and a "light unto the world." Instruction in the fundamentals of the Law, synonymous with moral training, therefore became the basis for the education of the Jewish people, along with practical skills for daily life. The father was responsible for educating his sons, and the home was to be a microcosm of right living, per God's commandments.

While it cannot be proven that Isaac and Jacob attended primary schools, as some have suggested, the patriarchs and early Israelite leaders came from countries which had great contact with other, more advanced civilizations, and were presumably influenced by these educational systems.

During the period of the Monarchy, portable tabernacles and local shrines gave way to the great Temple at Jerusalem, which served as the focal point for sacrifices by the King to Yahweh. With the destruction of the Temple and the
Babylonian exile in the 6th century B.C.E., the synagogue arose, serving as prayer house, assembly hall and house of instruction for the next few decades until the Temple was rebuilt in 516 B.C.E. The synagogue became a place for study and instruction, while the Temple was for sacrifice and worship, and gradually a liturgy grew up around the instruction which took place in the synagogue. The synagogue was to prove the saving grace of the Jewish people during their life in the Diaspora for the next two millenia, as it allowed them to continue their worship of God without sacrifices anywhere they happened to find themselves.

Early teachers of the Law traveled from Jerusalem and held public readings, and the nationalistic ideal of the Second Commonwealth period (from the Babylonian exile to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.) arose, making religious education the common goal of Jewish nationality. During the ancient period, nationalistic ideals and religious motives proved to be the basis of education. During the period of the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaim, in addition to the above two reasons, the universalization of education and combination of Torah study with a worldly occupation were stressed. Hope of becoming a great political power was now seen as impossible, so the Jews began to hope for preservation of the nation through the religion. The only way to do this was through education.

The survival of the Jew under conditions of unparalleled adversity is a riddle to some, a miracle
to others. It is in reality neither. It is mainly the result of a successful system of education, extraordinarily adequate alike for the needs of the individual as of the community. 57

To the Scribe Ezra is attributed the acceptance of the Torah as the basis for individual and community life, paving the way for mass education instituted by Simon ben Shetah and Joshua ben Gamala.

Academies for learning set up by Johanan ben Zakkai before 70 C.E. produced the Tannaim, or scholars, whose comments and arguments on the Torah later formed the basis of the Mishnah, paving the way for the redaction of the Talmud five centuries later. "... school was the largest single factor in Jewish life ... in the absence of the usual attributes of national life--political independence, territorial segregation, even community of language--education became the focus of all the vital powers of the people, supplying the content as well as the form for its collective life."58 The chief aim of education was the preservation of the people under adverse conditions. Learning was regarded as an ultimate value, rather than for any material benefit it might bring.

The aim of Jewish education was to cultivate a moral person. It was also for national survival. The need for national preservation overshadowed any aim for mere

57 Morris, The Jewish School, p. xxvi.
58 Ibid., p. xxvi.
individual perfection. Therefore, after 70 C.E. the Torah became the chief content of Jewish national life.

The emphasis of Jewish education was always on ethics in one's daily life as the way to keep God's commandments. Knowledge of the Law and its daily practice would ensure the survival of the Jewish people. To this end, the daily prayer books used by the Jews were a constant reminder of the guidelines for life set out by the Bible and the Talmud.

In Judaism the learned man was the equivalent to the religious man, and the differences between the wise man and the fool were clearly enumerated in the Book of Proverbs. Torah and education were synonymous with life itself, as it guided man's every situation and behavior. Moral and religious training were always the final goals of education, because through them one could keep God's commandments.

Ethics and righteousness can be seen throughout the Torah, Talmud and Prayer Books as the guiding forces of Jewish life. The great sage Hillel, contemporary of King Herod, was said to represent the ideal Jew, one who combined kindliness with scholarship and simple piety with profound thought. When asked by someone making fun of Jewish life to explain Judaism while the latter stood on one leg,

Hillel smilingly replied that this request could be complied with easily. All of Judaism, Hillel said, was contained in the brief verse of the Bible (Leviticus 19.18), which reads, 'Thou shalt love thy fellow as thyself,' and that all the other laws and regulations of Judaism were merely extensions of this one. Deeply impressed, the heathen became serious, and, according to the story, actually became a Jew.52
The Jews who entered China from Persia and Yemen took with them a Talmudic educational tradition, the goals, ideals and structure of which fit perfectly their new Confucian environment.

CHAPTER IV
CHINESE EDUCATIONAL VALUES

China's long history of cultural continuity has been due in large part to its well-organized system of education, which has unified the Chinese people and culture despite foreign invasions and internal divisions. The social philosophy which has guided this cultural continuity, influencing Chinese life, thought and education most throughout its history until the advent of Communism, was Confucianism. Its importance in Chinese life and thought cannot be overestimated. Indeed, the official curriculum for Chinese scholarship which proved to have a profound impact on all formal schooling in China until the present century, was based on the teachings of Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.), which were themselves based upon earlier, ancient Chinese classics.

Education in China Before Confucius

Formal education most likely existed in China as early as the Shang dynasty (1751-1121 B.C.E.), although schooling was then probably available only to those of aristocratic background. It was only with the rise of Confucius' meritocratic ideals that formal education became available to commoners as well.

Written literature and educational institutions appeared in China early on, as records were kept of the
names of rulers and major events in government and social life. The Classics which existed in China before Confucius were comprised of historical documents, descriptions of divination, poems and songs, and texts on ethics and government. Confucius admittedly concerned himself only with formulating and transmitting what earlier sages and monarchs had practiced.

The seven sages whose accumulated achievements are the foundation of Chinese culture, upon which Confucius built his ideas of learning, were: Yao, Shun, Yu, Tang, King Wen, King Wu, and the Duke Zhou Gong, all considered exemplary monarchs. As legend has it, Yao was a ruler of the third millennium B.C.E. and Shun was his benevolent successor. The Sage-King Yu was also highly regarded as having "practiced humanity, righteousness, laws, and correct principles." He is credited at the same time with having stopped a disastrous flood. King Tang (r. 1751-1739 B.C.E.) founded the Shang dynasty. Kings Wen (r. 1171-1122 B.C.E.) and Wu (r. 1121-1116 B.C.E.) were also considered sages, with the latter founding the Zhou dynasty. Duke Zhou (c. 1094) is known for having helped consolidate the Zhou dynastic empire and establishing the foundations of Chinese culture.

Ancient Chinese learned from bamboo books and obtained moral training and practice in rituals by word of mouth and

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example. Rigid rote learning, which typified later Chinese education was frowned upon, and education was regarded as the process of individual development from within.

Confucianism

Confucius was born to a family of the petty nobility said to have been descended from an ancient king. He became the Minister of Justice in his native state of Lu, located in modern Shandong Province, but quit politics rather than compromise his principles, thereafter devoting his life to teaching a small group of disciples. He is considered the author of the Spring and Autumn Annals, one of the Classics, and the editor of others, most notably the Book of Odes and the Book of History.

A political reformer more than a religious leader, Confucius nevertheless called the single principle underlying the universe, Heaven. Confucius' philosophy stressed the development of moral character to enable man to fulfill his role in society, in particular in employment by the State.

Confucius' ideas were directly applicable to government, and in line with traditional social order. Confucianism became the dominant school of thought in China, never challenging feudal society, but only wishing to stabilize it.

Chinese formal education in ancient times thus became distinguished by the particularly secular and moral character of its educational purpose. Its chief aim was to
develop a sense of moral sensitivity and duty toward people and the state. Even in the early civilizational stage, harmonious human relations, rituals, and music formed the curriculum.

Confucianism emphasized the historical experience of the Chinese people and attempted to solve the problems of the time by looking towards the past. "This great ethical institution, which in a sense occupied in China much of the place filled by both law and religion in the West, produced strong social cohesion and extraordinary equilibrium."2

When the Chinese empire was unified for the first time during the Qin dynasty (221-206 B.C.E.) in 221 B.C.E., Confucianism was at its lowest point. Books were burned and an estimated 400 Confucian scholars were buried alive, as a result of the despotic ideas of Qin Shi Huangdi, its ruler. Since ancient records were destroyed during the Qin, scholars had to work for the restoration of the ancient literature. Ancient records were then gradually excavated from their hidden places.

During the Han dynasty Confucianism was highly favored, however. Emperor Han Wu Đì 漢武帝 (140-86 B.C.E.) made the Confucian school into a kind of state religion. The teachings of Confucius were regarded as infallible, and other schools of thought were suppressed. The most important contributions of this period were the restoration

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of the ancient literature and commentaries written on the texts.

While the position of the Confucians was bettered during the Han, it was not until 136 B.C.E., during the reign of Emperor Wu (140-87 B.C.E.), that they finally enjoyed imperial patronage, with the founding of an Imperial Academy. "Its graduates, appointed to official positions directly from the common people, aided the Emperor Wu and later rulers in curbing the nobility. This was the beginning of the most remarkable and long-lived system of education ever developed in any land."\(^3\)

Although Confucianism was not a religion, by the middle of the first century C.E., over 500 years after his death, sacrifices were offered to him. A cult developed until, in the 7th and 8th centuries, it became the religion of the state civil service and the scholar class. Temples were built and fixed times of observance and rituals of sacrifice were decreed by the government. Ancient and modern Confucian disciples were also worshipped, and inclusion in the Confucian temples became the greatest honor for a deceased public servant.

During the Eastern, or Later, Han (25-220 A.D.), great commentaries on the Confucian Classics were produced. However, Buddhism arrived in mid-Han, and Daoism took shape

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as an institutionalized religion as the Han dynasty disintegrated.

During the following period of the Six Dynasties, from the fall of the Han to the rise of the Sui (220-589), a reaction against everything Confucian, including morality, ensued. Buddhism and Daoism now flourished, and Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism were regarded as the three great faiths, equally capable of reaching the same goal. This situation continued, to some extent, under the Tang (618-906). Most Tang rulers patronized Daoism and maintained that they were descended from its founder, but Buddhism flourished for a time and Confucianism progressed as the religious aspect of the state civil service.

Other Classical Philosophers

Confucius and his disciples were humanistic in their outlook, concerned with individual life and conduct and the welfare of society.

It scrupulously avoided supernatural and other-worldly problems. When Confucius was asked how to serve the gods and the spirits, he replied, 'We have not yet learned to serve men. How can we serve the gods and the spirits?' Asked 'What is death?' he answered, 'We have not yet learned to know life. How can we know death?' Preoccupation with man and his life in this world is a characteristic which differentiates Chinese thought, at least ancient thought, from that of India, Persia, and Israel.  

Mencius 韓子 (fl. 324-314 B.C.E.) and Xun Zu 欣子 (ca. 298-238 or 340-245 B.C.E.) were also Confucians. In

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4 Hu Shih, (1946), "Chinese Thought," in MacNair, China, p. 222.
his boyhood, Mencius was said to be under the good influence of his wise mother, whose method of teaching has been ever since regarded by the Chinese as a model. In his later years he and his disciples wrote The Works of Mencius, to which China owes her democratic idea of the state and its basic view of education:

The foundation of the state is benevolence and righteousness. Benevolence starts from the instinct of commiseration, and righteousness starts from the inner knowledge of shame and dislike. By the development of the instinct of commiseration and the inner knowledge of shame and dislike we have what is called benevolence and righteousness. According to the principles of benevolence, the sovereign must love his people; according to the principles of righteousness, the government must be based upon justice.  

Mencius held that if the sovereign is not benevolent or righteous the people have the right to overthrow him. It was for this latter belief that Mencius was particularly disliked by the Qin rulers.

The Confucians of this period debated the essential goodness, or lack thereof, of human nature. Mencius took the position that human nature was essentially good, while Xun Zi believed the opposite. Mencius believed that goodness could be cultivated through education, and was an essential part of society's obligation to its members. Xun Zi believed that since human nature was basically bad, education was necessary to modify it. "He thus shared with Mencius a profound conviction that education was essential

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for any individual's moral perfection, as well as for his advancement into the ruling class."\(^5\)

For several centuries the view of Xun Zi predominated. "This contributed to the unique development of Chinese education and the scholar class, since, if human nature is evil, the only remedy lies in education. The final decision of orthodox Confucianism—made many centuries later—was that Mencius was right. But in the closing centuries of the feudal period, Confucians for the most part engaged in academic discussions."\(^7\)

Xun Zi based his political ideas on moral systems and penal laws while Mencius based his on moral principles. (Chiang, 1925)

Other schools of thought which appeared during this period include the Naturalistic School, begun by Lao Zi 老子, an older contemporary of Confucius who was concerned with the problem of nature. In the Dao De Jing 道德經 ("The Classic of the Way and its Virtue"), a 5,250 word mini-book attributed to Lao Zi, one finds "poetry, philosophical speculation, and mystical reflection."\(^8\)

Where Confucius stressed social order and an active life, Lao Zi emphasized individual life and tranquility. Chan (1963) sums up best the major tenets of Daoism:


\(^7\) Shryock, "Confucianism," p. 249.

\(^8\) Chan, *Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, p. 137.
Whereas in other schools Tao means a system or moral truth, in this school it is the One, which is natural, eternal, spontaneous, nameless, and indescribable. It is at once the beginning of all things and the way in which all things pursue their course. When this Tao is possessed by individual things, it becomes its character or virtue (te). The ideal life for the individual, the ideal order for society, and the ideal type of government are all based on it and guided by it. As the way of life, it denotes simplicity, spontaneity, tranquility, weakness, and most important of all, non-action (wu-wei). By the latter is not meant literally 'inactivity' but rather 'taking no action that is contrary to Nature' — in other words, letting Nature take its own course.

The Daoist Zhuang Zi (ca. 399-295) believed not only in spontaneity, but in the constant state of flux and transformation which the universe continually undergoes. Whereas the Dao for Lao Zi is still something worldly, for Zhuang Zi it is transcendental. 

"... the idea of self-transformation takes on a central focus in Chuang Tzu, which presents life and reality as dynamic and ever-changing, thus making a comparison with him and Heraclitus or Hegel stimulating as well as instructive. To regard transformation as the final abode of life is certainly a new note in Chinese philosophy."\(^{10}\)

**Education for Moral Citizens in a Benevolent State**

An outstanding feature of education in China as a social process was its connection with the government. Education was seen as a great social force to be controlled.

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\(^9\) Ibid., p. 136.

\(^{10}\) Ibid., p. 178.
and directed by the government. It was in its higher processes primarily for the purpose of preparing the agents and officials of government. Governing and educating were interrelated.

The Emperor in China was always seen as playing the role of mediator between the forces of nature and the lives of the people. Indeed, the Chinese character for "king," 王, is represented by three horizontal lines, which stand for Heaven, Earth and Man. The vertical line connecting them all stands for the ruler himself. No matter which religion became the State religion, temples and rituals and the conferring of official titles upon important national deities were seen as means to strengthen the position of the ruling dynasty and the prestige of the government.

Confucianism, as an ethical institution rather than a religion, was concerned mainly with the identification of the precepts which could guide social relationships in the formation of an ideal state.

Confucius and others of his school of thought were conscious of human destiny in relation to the cosmic order. Education, therefore, had its cosmic basis. The original nature of man was conferred and determined by the decrees of Heaven. The Way of life for all men, especially for the Superior Man, who was more capable of understanding it, was also fixed by Heaven's decree, and was in harmony with the cosmic order. The emperor as the 'Son of Heaven' exercised his power under Heaven's commission. Great sages and teachers were no less commissioned by Heaven to educate and to govern the people.11

Confucianism became the stronghold of Chinese education. To the Confucian scholars, the state and school are one and inseparable. They are equally interested in education and state affairs.

The Confucian statesmen are teacher-statesmen and the Confucian teachers are statesmen-teachers. When in the service of the government, they carry out their policies, and when out of the service of the government, they spread their ideas.\textsuperscript{12}

Confucianism was always geared toward practical life and the achievement of the moral development of man and society.

Confucian philosophy is practical in the sense of being concerned with morality, social interaction, and political activity, but it is not practical in the sense of being concerned with economy and technology. If we may call practicality in the former sense moral practicality and practicality in the latter sense utilitarian practicality, we may say that Confucian philosophy in general is a philosophy of moral practicality but not of utilitarian practicality.\textsuperscript{13}

Confucius desired a harmonious and ordered society which was necessarily hierarchical, and where the award of privileges was to be on the basis of merit. (Lee, 1985)

Those awarded social privilege and honor were also presumed to be morally superior. Confucius' formula for this ideal society has been broken down into the following four interrelated ideas by Lee (1985):

1. The government should educate everyone without class or racial distinction; all men are born

\textsuperscript{12} Chiang, \textit{Chinese Principles of Education}, p. 5.

with equal potential for goodness.

2. The emphasis of education should be on ethical rectitude. It is possible to achieve moral perfection through education.

3. Morally superior people should be selected for service in the government; they are the leaders of society.

4. Chinese society should remain hierarchical, with the ruling class composed mainly of the selected few who meet the moral qualifications.14

Confucius thus stressed equality in man's natural endowment for learning, in particular the learning of good behavior. This egalitarian approach gave education a new significance, since it then became the means by which, theoretically at least, anyone could advance up the social ladder by appointment to a government post. Confucius developed a theory of government for the people which reiterated the ancient idea of the Mandate of Heaven: "Heaven sees as the people see; Heaven hears as the people hear."

... In the Hsaio [sic] Ching (Classic of Filial Piety) Confucius is reported to have said: 'If an emperor has seven outspoken ministers, he cannot lose his empire in spite of his misdeeds ... therefore, in the face of wrong or of unrighteousness, it is the duty of the son to oppose his father and the duty of the minister to oppose his sovereign.'15

A basic concept underlying the Chinese theory of government is the 'right of revolution,' whereby the ruler, considered the "Son of Heaven," enjoys divine sanction for

14 Lee, Government Education, p. 5.

15 Han Yu-shan, (1946), "Molding Forces," in MacNair, China, p. 4.
his rule through a celestial Mandate, which is conferred on him by Heaven. So long as he rules in the interests of the people he cannot legally be overthrown. However, bad government, considered displeasing to Heaven, will lead to natural disasters, which are to be viewed as warnings. If these are still not heeded,

... heavenly disapproval is further manifested in the form of popular revolts, which may culminate even in the ruler's dethronement and the founding of a new dynasty. Success in such revolts means that Heaven has withdrawn its Mandate from the evil ruler and has passed it on to a new line. This theory originated in China before the first millenium B.C. It was elaborated by later writers ... and is perpetuated in the modern term for revolution, ko ming, which literally means 'changing the Decree.' Together with the influence of the nonhereditary scholar class, it has acted as a strong check upon abuse of power by the sovereign ...16

The idea of Heaven playing an active role in human affairs is also implied in the Confucian view of education. Education, as defined in the Doctrine of the Mean, written by Confucius' grandson Zi Si, is: "What Heaven has conferred is called nature; an accordance with this nature is called tao, path or truth; and to impart tao, or truth, is called teaching, or education."

What Heaven (Cosmos) has conferred is, in the modern sense, natural law, which is inviolable and unchangeable. Since it is inviolable, what man can do is to find out the law according to which nature is at work. This natural law discovered by man is called tao, or truth. Education is to impart truth discovered by man in accordance with nature.17


The Family as a Microcosm of the State

Confucianism conceived of the family as a microcosm of the State. In order for the state to be well-ordered the family must first be so. And for that to occur, each individual must live correctly. Self-cultivation of each individual was therefore deemed essential to a well-ordered state and society.

A well-ordered family depends upon filial piety; brotherly love, and parental kindness. From the family the Confucian school drew a parallelism for the state, where the sovereign should be served with filial piety; the elders and superiors, with brotherly love; and the people should be treated with parental kindness.

The system of education as designed by Confucius begins with the individual, then the family, the state, and finally the world. With the individual, the mind is the first thing to be considered; with family, the individual; with the state, the family; and with the world, the state. Therefore, personal culture is the most fundamental element in the whole system of education.18

Thompson (1979) points out that the ethical views of the Confucian tradition were essentially a rationalization and extension of the familial virtues. "The father is merciful, the son filial; the elder brother is good, the younger brother submissive; the husband is upright, the wife complaisant; the adult is kind, the child obedient."19

18 Ibid., p. 35.
19 Thompson, Chinese Religion, p. 18.
The ancestral cult has always been a distinguishing characteristic of the Chinese family. Family religion is hence more the norm than individual or communal religion.

Evidence of the centrality of the family cult exists as far back as the Shang dynasty, during which time oracle bones showed how the religious system of even the most ancient age was based upon ancestor worship. Ancestors were either identified with the Lord, or considered as mediators through whom requests were made. Obeisance to ancestors and reverence for them have been a hallmark of Chinese life ever since.

Related to this was the concept of li, within which the norm of human behavior in all social circumstances for Confucius was embodied.

The ideograph with which it is written is composed of two parts, a signifying indicating communication with the supernatural and an additional element that is originally a pictograph of a sacrificial vessel containing some object.  

Filial piety was seen as the greatest virtue an individual could possess.

The written symbol for hsiao (filiality) is as clear in its significance as is the ideograph for li: it consists of the graph for old, supported by the graph for son placed underneath. There could be no simpler nor yet more adequate summary of the ideal of hsiao.  

\[20\] Ibid., p. 37.

\[21\] Ibid., p. 40.
The Concept of Ren

The most fundamental concept in Chinese thought which has moulded the Chinese view of life is that of ren, alternately translated as benevolence, humanity or virtue. The ideograph for ren is composed of the radicals "man" and "two". "... the traditional explanation of its meaning is that it expresses the proper relationship between fellow human beings. ... jen is the expression of fellowship among men."  

Ren was made the keystone of the ethical and political system of Confucian thought, as Confucius believed that man is perfectible by the attainment of ren.

Confucius himself seems to have used jen both as an undifferentiated state of perfection which had been attained by none of his contemporaries, and as a loose term for the sum total of such virtues as filial piety, loyalty, courage and kindness, all of which can be cultivated by everyone.  

The sayings of Mencius, like those of Confucius, show ren as being comprised of a number of virtues, but in particular those which spring directly from the nature of man as a social being—compassion and goodwill. The feeling of commiseration was said by Mencius to be the beginning of ren.

The relationship between ren and yi must also be mentioned. While ren is considered the essence of man, yi is his path. Yi constitutes one's duty to one's fellow

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23 Ibid., p. 7.
citizens. If a man's attitude towards others is determined by ren, his behaviour towards them was considered to be determined by yi.

"Government by jen is, then, government by human relationships as opposed to government by law, government by force, or government by priestcraft."\(^{24}\)

Mencius pointed out that the Xia, Shang and Zhou dynasties gained the Empire by ren, and it was through the lack of ren that they lost it.

Benevolence and the Superior Man

The "superior man," the junzi君子, or gentleman, was for whom the body of ethical teachings were meant above the level of the code of familial relationships. These were the small group who received a literary education and were thereby destined to govern the nation and to guide its cultural development, as the government was to be, theoretically at least, one of moral example rather than coercion.

The emphasis upon character and moral excellence was Confucius' great contribution to Chinese society.

The Superior Man was to cultivate his own character and put this highly cultivated character at the service of the State whenever this was feasible. He was to seek office as adviser to an intelligent ruler and by guiding this ruler's policies make him morally prominent. Moral prominence would

\(^{24}\) Ibid., p. 10.
then attract the people of the world who would want to
become his subjects, enabling him to reunite the kingdom,
thus ending the long era of political and social disorder in
which Confucius and his contemporaries lived.

The ideal of the chun-tzu and his duty to serve the
ruler was still basic in later times. But the
situation was different. The Ju [scholars] had to
reckon with the appeal of highly developed systems
unknown to the ancient Chinese; in addition, it had
become much more difficult to maintain the moral stance
required in serving one's ruler. Now the latter was
the absolute despot over a vast empire, his court a
busy center of factional intrigue of a scale far
surpassing the minicourts of late Chou. In the
realpolitik of power struggles at the imperial court,
the Ju were more servants than moral mentors to their
lord. The man of principle found his career chancy,
dangerous, or even impossible. Needless to say, under
such conditions most scholars sacrificed principle to
expediency and attempted to further their personal
careers. The men we call Neo-Confucians were a small
minority, who usually found themselves in trouble when
they were in office and commonly retired to private
study and teaching—in this following the example of
their Master.
culture and learning which it was the ambition of the pupil to attain.

Elements of Confucian Education

The Confucian Classics

Classical Chinese education has always consisted of the study of the Confucian Classics. These were: the Book of Documents (shu jing 書經), the Book of Odes (shi jing 詩經), the Book of Changes (yi jing 易經), the Book of Rites (li ji 樂記) and the Spring and Autumn Annals (chun qiu 春秋), which were canonized during the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E.-220 C.E.). Students memorized these works and used them as guides for solving political and moral problems.

Study of the Classics remained the core of formal education right up to the twentieth century.

In time, the book of Mencius, together with the Analects (or Conversations) in which the followers of Confucius tried to distill his more important thought, became the core of a new body of classics. During the Sung period the great scholar Chu Hsi (A.D. 1130-1200) combined these two texts with the earlier essays The Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean to form the Four Books. 26

The Han dynasty was particularly keen on maintaining a system of schools supported by the government. (Lee, 1985)

During the Tang, literary studies gained prominence, but the general history of Chinese formal education points to consistent efforts to inculcate the classical values into generations of Chinese pupils.

26 Adams, Education and Modernization in Asia, p. 120.
Before government schools became widespread, powerful or wealthy families often hired classical scholars to teach their children.

In a society where the poor could not reasonably hope for even rudimentary literary training, knowledge deemed useful by the ruling class was only too naturally monopolized by the few leading erudites. Classical learning was a privilege and generally was the sole possession of the wealthy or aristocratic families. The rise of the civil service examination system made it possible for more people to dare aspire to education. Even so, classical learning in general continued to be the center of educational activities.27

The Classics were taught to a child almost immediately after he became barely literate. Students began to learn commentaries only after they were generally familiar with the Classics themselves. Certain commentaries which were made the basis of standard examination answers towards the end of the Tang, also exerted considerable influence on a student's world view and ethical convictions.

As Adams (1970) points out, there was considerable ritual surrounding education in early China.

Learning to read and write had a sacral quality, for the child was obliged to (1) petition a teacher to guide him in his lessons, (2) receive a new identity, a "book name," if admitted, and (3) give regular obeisance to the tablet of Confucius.28

It can thus be seen that the Confucian canon of Classics were the basis of all formal education, upon which the civil service exams were later based. Entrance into the scholar-bureaucrat class was almost completely limited to


28 Adams, Education and Modernization in Asia, p. 121.
those with some mastery of this body of literature, and by extension molded the Chinese state and culture.

The Great Learning

The Great Learning (Da xue 大學) was placed in the collection of the Book of Rites by Ma Rong (79-166 C.E.) in the 2nd century C.E. The Neo-Confucian scholar Zhu Xi later published it separately, along with the Doctrine of the Mean, the Analects and Mencius, as the Four Books of the Confucian canon. It mentions at the outset that its aim is "to illustrate illustrious virtue; to love the people; and to rest in the highest excellence." 29

The Great Learning sums up the Confucian moral, educational and political programs in eight steps: the investigation of things, expansion of knowledge, sincerity of the will, rectification of the mind, cultivation of the personal life, regulation of the family, national order, and world peace. (Chan, 1973) By following these eight steps one can translate humanity into actual living, "maintaining the balance and harmony of the individual on the one side and society on the other. It is because of this significance that the Great Learning has ranked as a Confucian Classic and has exerted profound influence in the last eight hundred years." 30


30 Chan, Source Book in Chinese Philosophy, p. 84.
Of particular interest to us in this study is that in The Great Learning Confucius formulated his great scheme of education. "According to his view, personal culture ... is the foundation of all education. 'From the sovereign down to the mass of the people, all must consider the cultivation of the person the root of everything.' The development of the person is the foundation for the well-ordered family and the well-governed state."31

In the seventeenth passage of The Great Learning we read:

What is meant by 'In order to govern well his state, it is necessary first to regulate his family' is this: -- It is not possible for one to teach others while he cannot teach his own family. Therefore the superior man (who governs a state), without going beyond his family, completes the lessons for his state. There is filial piety; --it has its application in the service of the ruler. There is brotherly obedience; --it has its application in the service of elders. There is kindly gentleness; --it has its application in the employment of the multitudes.32

The analogy between self-cultivation and the chiseling of jade is given in the seventh passage:

It is said in the Book of Poetry ...
'How rich the clumps of green bamboo,
   Around each cove of Khi!
They lead my thoughts to our duke Wu; --
   Of winning grace is he!
As knife and file make smooth the bone,
As jade by chisel wrought and stone,
   Is stamp upon him set.
Grave and of dignity serene;
With force of will as plainly seen;
Accomplished, elegant in mien;
   Him we can ne'er forget.'

31 Chiang, Chinese Principles of Education, p. 32.
(That expression), 'as knife and file make smooth the bone,' indicates the effect of learning. 'Like jade by chisel wrought and stone' indicates that of self-culture. 'Grave and of dignity serene' indicates the feeling of cautious reverence. 'With force of will as plainly seen' indicates an awe-inspiring deportment.\textsuperscript{33}

This idea of self-cultivation, an essential characteristic of the Superior Man, as seen earlier, requires that a person first have a well-balanced mind, with feelings harmoniously adjusted. Excess emotions are seen as only upsetting one's mental state. Thoughts should be sincere, allowing for no self-deception.

The Great Learning ... teaches how a people can be renewed in character, how they can attain the perfection of virtue, with anything short of which they should not be satisfied. It sets forth that Heaven is the source of all truth, which cannot be changed, and whose substance is found in the mind, and must not be abandoned. Careful introspection will preserve and nourish it. Self-examination will discover the principles of truth in the mind of the student, and the embodiment of them in practice will make him strong to repel every temptation from without alluring him to selfishness. Acquaintance with the attainments of ancient worthies will stimulate him to do well. He shall thus be guided to the realization of perfect goodness. Of all this, self-cultivation is the root.\textsuperscript{34}

The full implication of the unique conception of government as moral example is seen in the second passage of the Great Learning:

The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their states. Wishing to order well their states, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., pp. 413-414.

\textsuperscript{34} John Ross, (1916), \textit{The Origin of the Chinese People}, London: Oliphants Ltd., p. 65.
sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge.  

Ross (1916), remarks that the contents of The Great Learning are clustered around four catch-words: (1) Humaneness or Benevolence,

defined as gentleness, harmony, pity, mercy, and love; (2) Integrity or Righteousness, defined as judging, governing, deciding in strict accordance to rule; (3) Ceremonial or Propriety, defined as the expression of reverence and honour; (4) Knowledge or Wisdom, [sic] defined as the differentiation of right and wrong. These embrace the entire ethical nature of man, and imply his complete duty. Subsequently, when the number five became fashionable, a fifth catch-word was added—Truth or Sincerity. The book may be considered as an ethico-philosophical treatise on government. It is one of the most logically-constructed of the classics.  

Nevertheless, The Great Learning did not stress asceticism as a path for self-cultivation, as we read in the twenty-sixth passage:

... Therefore the ruler should first be careful about his (own) virtue. Possessing virtue will give him the people. Possessing the people will give him the territory. Possessing the territory will give him its wealth. Possessing the wealth, he will have resources for expenditure.

Virtue is the root; wealth is the branches. If he make the root his secondary object, and the branches his primary object, he will only quarrel with the people, and teach them rapine. Hence the accumulation of wealth is the way to scatter the people, and the distribution of his wealth is the way to collect the people. Hence (also), when his words go forth contrary to right, they will come back to him in the same way, and wealth got by improper ways will take its departure by the same.  

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37 Legge, (Trans.), The Sacred Books of China, p. 420.
The Confucian emphasis on learning is clearly manifested in The Great Learning, as it stresses the investigation of things as the starting point in moral and social life. The proper way of investigating things, however, was to become a bone of contention between Neo-Confucians at a later date.

**The Civil Service Exam**

The recruitment of talented men into governmental service actually began quite early in Chinese history, during the Warring States Period (403-222 B.C.E.), but it was not until the Han dynasty that institutions appeared specifically for selecting qualified government servants. An Imperial University was then set up, where sons of ranking officials went for formal education. The Han emperors also ordered recruitment of virtuous subjects for government service. This was called the cha ju system, which evolved into a permanent, albeit gradually ceremonial, institution. (Lee, 1985) This idea served as the basis for selecting officials through the 6th century, even though by then it had become largely an aristocratic selection system which had abandoned the meritocratic ideal.

When China was reunited under the Sui (589-617), a basic written examination system was introduced which was obviously designed to emulate the ideal which had been embodied in the cha ju system. During the Tang dynasty, questions were introduced on current national affairs and policy-making matters, which was considered more prestigious
than those which merely stressed classical knowledge by the memorization of texts. This was called the jin shi test.

By the eighth century, those who obtained their status from the exams began to compete with the aristocrats, who were already on the decline. And during the Song dynasty, the jin shi test became the norm, resulting in the reduction of tests to only this one. In the process, the importance of classical learning was reintroduced, and its strength was thereby nurtured and sustained.

During its long history, the civil service exam was given at different times varying emphases and contents, reflecting the prevailing social thought and ideological preferences of the time.

When Confucianism was in disrepute, their role in the selection of officials was reduced, but they were always an important supplement to existing educational institutions. During the T'ang period (A.D. 618-907) the examination system assisted in shattering the domination of political power by the aristocracy. And during the Sung period (A.D. 960-1127) the tradition that the examinations should test knowledge of the Four Books and Five Classics became firmly entrenched.\(^{38}\)

Preparation for the imperial examinations consisted of memorization of the San Zi Jing (Three-Character Classic), the Bai Jia Xing (One Hundred Surnames), the Qian Zi Wen (Thousand-Character Essay), the Four Books, and the Five Classics. Every day the students practiced calligraphy and the composition of essays and poems. After mastering these and passing a test given by

\(^{38}\) Adams, *Education and Modernization in Asia*, p. 122.
the country magistrate, the student took the first test, the xian, or county-level, examination.

Shut up for a night and a day in his cell, the candidate was required to compose two essays and a poem. The first of the two sessions eliminated poorly prepared students. About one per cent were selected for beauty of penmanship, grace of diction, and understanding of the classics. These twenty-odd students—'flowers of talent'—were awarded the first degree, hsiu-ts'ai (budding genius).³⁹

However, the exam system gradually turned into an institution in which scholasticism became a vocation in itself. It helped perpetuate a division in Chinese society between the privileged few and the masses. Perhaps worst of all, "scholastic antiquarian scholars rarely proved themselves to be efficient managers or effective political leaders."⁴⁰ Its increasingly limited function and rigid criteria for success in the end supported a social pattern which was antithetical to modernization. The original ideal of investigating the moral character of a candidate quickly waned in importance.

The assumption that knowledge of the classics was equal to the potential to do good now received universal acceptance. The result was for the system to become increasingly a machine that could only test candidates' classical knowledge. The Chinese government quickly lost sight of the ancient ideal of recommending morally superior people for service. Worse than this was the stress on the prevention of corruption in the examination halls, under the pressure for impartiality. The exaggerated concern for the avoidance of corruption became so overwhelming that the basic purpose of the examination system became blurred. Ultimately, the

³⁹ MacNair, China, p. 11.

⁴⁰ Adams, Education and Modernization in Asia, p. 123.
examination system grew into a stupefying institution which was to haunt generations of Chinese students. 41

Neo-Confucianism and Zhu Xi

Under the Song was formulated the second of the two great Confucian schools of interpretation, using the Confucian canon to attack Buddhist idealism. The great patriot-scholar Zhu Xi (1130-1200) and other Confucians now emphasized certain parts of the Confucian canon. The Analects, the Book of Mencius, the Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean were chosen by Zhu Xi as the Four Books. Commentaries were written on them, re-interpretations were made of them, and they were made the basis of his social and ethical philosophy. From 1313 until 1905 the Four Books were used as the basis of the civil service exams. (Chan, 1973) The question of the nature of man was now finally settled for orthodox Confucians in favor of Mencius, who was given greater honor than ever.

Zhu Xi represented the School of Li, or Principle (alternately translated as Reason or Natural Law). He viewed man and the world as being what they seem to be, as distinct and separate entities.

Man's mind as subject attempted to understand the world as object. 'To study the nature of things' therefore meant to study the myriad phenomena of the world by means of the mind and through this process eventually to arrive at true understanding. The School of Hsin (Mind), formulated definitively by the Ming sage, Wang Yang-ming (1473-1529), was, in Western terms, a school of philosophical idealism. In this view there was no distinction between subject and object; the phenomena

41 Lee, Government Education, p. 22.
of the world, which appear to be 'out there,' are actually within the mind. 'To study the nature of things' therefore meant to grasp the truths that are innate within the mind.\footnote{42}

The motivation of these schools was to understand the Dao:

that is, to be able to act as moral agents in a universe that operated on moral principles--as laid down in Chung Yung. The Li School sought those moral principles in the world outside, while the Hsin School believed that moral principle was ultimately One and must be found within one's own mind.\footnote{43}

Zhu Xi was much concerned with establishing schools for higher learning. While his political career lasted forty-seven years, he never significantly influenced national affairs during his lifetime. Rather, he was persecuted for his teachings. Five years before his death in 1200, Zhu Xi was officially condemned as a heretic and propagator of false teachings. He was rehabilitated in the 1230s by the Song court, but his teachings were never prescribed for the civil service exams, so were never allowed to affect the state orthodoxy, which in turn determined the school curriculum.

\textbf{Education During the Song}

One consequence of the Neo-Confucian influence on Chinese education was the concern for popular education.

Chu Hsi proposed and established community schools which quickly replaced government schools and took up the actual instruction at local level; their importance in propagating Neo-Confucian thought was no less than


\footnote{43} Ibid., p. 116.
that of the academies... which were also the brain-
children of Chu Hsi.44

The most important influence Neo-Confucians exerted on
Chinese education was the ideal and practice of the
academies (shu yuan 書院). The academies appeared as
early as the eighth century, and by the late Tang, advanced
private schools were quite the norm in China, particularly
in isolated mountain areas. (Lee, 1985) These were for the
most part places where students prepared for the civil
service exams. Such academies continued into the Song, and
soon became government sponsored rather than private and
"lacking permanence and institutional strength." (Lee, 1985)

After the twelfth century, official local education
declined, at which point Zhu Xi proposed the idea of
reviving the tradition of private education, since
officially sponsored education now failed to conform to the
general Confucian ideal. As a result of Zhu Xi's efforts,
the academy became a permanent feature of Chinese education,
with the major responsibility of local education. By the
end of the Southern Song, academies possessed a highly
structured curriculum, moreso than local government schools,
and eventually became the center of formal education in
imperial China.

Neo-Confucianists stressed the importance of library
collections, resulting in the fact that almost every academy
had a small book collection. Many also established printing

presses. The academies were able to propagate Neo-Confucian thinking by using Neo-Confucian texts and theories of teaching.

The invention of printing during the Song dynasty contributed greatly to the educational progress of commoners. Wooden blocks used for printing made it economically feasible to distribute books by printing in large quantities. This created an unprecedented opportunity for Chinese people to have access to books, which in turn resulted in an increase in the number of students who could take part in the civil service exams. The rise in importance of the civil service exams was in great measure due to the general increase in the opportunities for education. The use of printing raised the literacy rate during the Song as well. Lee (1985) elaborates on the effects of the increase in literacy as reflected in the following developments:

First of all, Sung society saw the emergence of storytelling as a profession, which was responsible for the appearance of early novels. The rise of this profession, however, was doubtlessly a result of both a wealthy society which created a leisured class and an increasingly literate society which provided both story-tellers and an audience. Secondly, there was a rapid increase in all kinds of publications, including literary collections, encyclopedias, and most notably, the 'moral books' (shan-shu). The last category of books was aimed at the populace at large. ... Thirdly, though the increase in literacy was by no means sudden or extraordinarily spectacular, it did pose problems for ideological control.45

45 Ibid., p. 29.
Summary of Chinese Educational Values

Formal education in China has a long and venerable history, possibly dating back as far as the Shang dynasty. Education for the Chinese was always based upon the Classics, which were comprised of historical documents, divination, poetry and songs, and ethical and political texts, all of which looked towards the great sage-emperors of the earliest dynasties, when China was still a nation of clans rather than a feudal state which it became with the beginning of the Zhou dynasty. These early years saw education limited primarily to wealthy or prominent families, however, with no thought of public or mass education for its own sake. It was then regarded as a process of individual internal development.

The pre-eminent philosopher of China's classical age, Confucius, aimed to convince the government to employ those whose moral character was well developed for state employment, rather than rely on aristocrats and their family members. Confucius' belief in a government run by ethical men who had devoted themselves to self-cultivation and emulation of the great sages was to rid it of any possibility for corruption. Confucius emphasized the moral nature of man and the need for self-cultivation. Education was to develop one's moral nature in relation to his family and state. A well-governed state was dependent upon a well-ordered family, which was further dependent upon a well-cultured individual. The family was seen as a microcosm of
the state, with the well-being and harmony of one deemed essential for the other. Filial piety and the five relationships were regarded as cornerstones of the Chinese way of life, with the concepts of li and ren fundamental to self-cultivation and peaceful co-existence with one's neighbor. Ethics and compassion were to rule everyday life, with the junzi, or superior man, embodying these concepts in all his actions, both personal and as a government official.

Chinese ancient formal education was distinguished by its particularly secular and moral character of purpose. Confucius had desired a harmonious and ordered society which was necessarily hierarchical, and where the award of privileges was to be based on merit.

Education was soon based upon memorization of the Five Classics and later, of commentaries written on them, which contained the fundamental ideas for attaining "the supreme good," with the idea that contemporary problems could be solved by studying the past. Thus, the historical experience of the Chinese people has always been emphasized in Chinese education.

The ethical philosophy of Confucianism went through many stages during its long history in China, and its followers were alternately subject to either government censure or support. During the Qin dynasty Confucian scholars were buried alive and books were burned, while in the next dynasty, the Han, it became the state religion, with the ancient literature restored and commentaries
written on the texts. The first imperial academy was built during this dynasty, in 136 B.C.E.

Other notable Confucian scholars contributed to the development of Confucius' idea of human nature as either essentially good or evil, notably, Mencius and Xun Zi. Whether they took the stand that it was basically good and could be cultivated through education, or it was basically evil and needed education to be modified, both agreed that education was essential for any individual's moral perfection and advancement into the ruling class of society. Eventually the views of Mencius prevailed. Education and the governance of the state continued to be seen as inseparable.

The final aim of Chinese education was to attain the supreme good. According to The Great Learning, one of the Four Confucian Classics, this is defined in accordance with the duties of the social relation of the individual and is fulfilled by carrying out the five relationships. The Great Learning, along with the Analects, Mencius and the Doctrine of the Mean, was made into the Four Books of the Confucian canon by the Song philosopher Zhu Xi.

The Great Learning summed up the Confucian moral, educational and political programs in an attempt to translate humanity into actual living, while maintaining a balance with harmony between the individual and society. Self-cultivation was stressed in the Great Learning as the foundation of all education. It could then be transferred
into a well-ordered family and, by extension, a well-governed state. Self-cultivation and a well-balanced mind full of only sincere thoughts would develop able rulers. Benevolence, righteousness, propriety and wisdom were to be one's guides in conducting daily affairs. Practicality and an emphasis on correct living pervades this work.

The civil service exam, which served as the basis for meritocratic recruitment of government officials, was based upon a deep understanding of the Confucian Classics. Although during their long history they were given different emphases and content, depending upon the social thought and ideological preferences of the time, the exams were nevertheless devised with the aim of recruiting only capable and moral government officials. Later on, however, these exams were to become exercises in intellectual stultification, based solely on memorization and regurgitation of the Classics, or upon bribery of officials, rather than on the training of creative minds to solve political or local problems of the day.

In the 12th century, the philosopher Zhu Xi revived the original spirit of Confucianism in what was to be termed "Neo-Confucianism," emphasizing once again the inherent goodness of man and his ability to respond to self-cultivation. Community schools were established due to his great influence, and academies appeared in increasing numbers, eventually becoming the center of formal education in imperial China. Libraries and great book collections
became more the norm as a result, greatly facilitated by the advent of printing. This latter invention created an unprecedented opportunity for Chinese people to gain access to books, further increasing the number of people preparing for the civil service exams.

It was in this burgeoning intellectual environment that the Jews suddenly found themselves when they first settled in Kaifeng and built their synagogue, during the Song dynasty.
Chapter V
CONCLUSION

The gradual assimilation of the Jews who settled in Kaifeng since the 12th century, during the Song dynasty, can be traced in letters and articles written by first-hand observers either in Kaifeng or in China, beginning with the Jesuit Matteo Ricci in the year 1605. Earlier reports by Arab or European travellers also made mention of Jews in Chinese territory, although little information could be gleaned from them regarding the daily life and religious practices of the Jews. That they existed in relatively great numbers in other Chinese cities outside of Kaifeng is a known fact, due to these early reports and the information supplied by the Jews themselves on the steles erected in the courtyard of their synagogue, but those Jewish communities ceased to exist by the 17th century, leaving only the Kaifeng community and its synagogue to tell their story.

From the available native Chinese sources of information it is learned that the Jews were at times prohibited from certain religious practices along with the Muslims, but were never discriminated against for being Jewish—a situation unique in the annals of the Jewish diaspora experience. What is striking about the Chinese records, however, is rather the dearth of information regarding the Jews at all, with only six references to the
Jews as a group ever being mentioned in official native Chinese sources, all during the Yuan dynasty.

Later Chinese sources of information included local gazetteers, which attest to the disproportionate number of Jews who took and passed the civil service exams, making their way up the social ladder while bringing glory and prestige to their families and clans. Jews were never identified as such in these sources, but their identities have been verified by the work of recent scholars, notably Fang Chaoying and Donald Daniel Leslie.

The gazetteers also revealed some other very important information: that names of individual Jews who passed the civil service exams began appearing in the 15th and 16th centuries. And many of these showed that the Jews were not merchants, but rather held positions as soldiers, pharmacists and physicians, or were members of other professions. The appearance of their names in the gazetteers coincided with the time contact with Western travellers and traders was for the most part cut off by the Chinese government.

Native Jewish sources of information, including writings by the Chinese Jews and the stone inscriptions, reveal a knowledge of their history and traditions which was passed down among the Jews in Kaifeng for many generations. Their possession of Hebrew manuscripts, prayer books and scrolls of the Law through the mid-19th century point to the
possibility that they could still, at least theoretically, observe the laws of Judaism until that time.

Jesuit missionaries of the 17th and 18th centuries recorded observing a full religious life held by the Jews, very similar to that of their European counterparts, although the architectural style of the synagogue and other aspects of their religious life took on a decidedly Chinese flavor. Devastating floods destroyed the synagogue and many members of the community several times between the 15th and the 18th centuries, a circumstance which was also reflected in the gradual loss of knowledge of Hebrew and of religious leaders, as observed and recorded by Western visitors during those centuries.

Efforts by foreigners to purchase any religious books or articles through the first half of the 19th century were in vain, attesting to the tremendous degree to which the Jews still clung to their identity. Their hopes for revival of knowledge of the religion among them, and for religious leaders were expressed in a letter written by Zhao Nianzi as late as the 19th century. Letters written to the Jews by Jewish and non-Jewish Westerners showed a great desire to communicate with the Chinese Jews and help them survive as Jews, but all such attempts to reach them were thwarted either by dangerous political conditions of the day or by difficulty in communicating with them in the first place.

The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews succeeded in bringing two Chinese Jews to Shanghai to
learn more about Judaism and Hebrew, but to no lasting avail. They also managed to purchase copies of the Torah scrolls and other religious books, while reporting that certain religious rituals and ceremonies were still being observed and performed by the Chinese Jews as late as 1850. Their synagogue, while still standing, was in ruins, though.

By the time the next Western visitor appeared in Kaifeng a little over a decade later, the synagogue itself was no more. Other reports by 19th century visitors also attested to the tremendous degree of assimilation which had by then taken place, with many Chinese Jews even converting to Islam, which approximated their own religious practices and beliefs.

Efforts by the Shanghai Jewish community at the opening of the 20th century to attend to the needs of the Kaifeng Jews were overshadowed and finally cut short by the growing and urgent needs of the Russian Jewish community. They did, however, manage to make personal contact with a dozen or so Kaifeng Jews, reaching out with whatever help they could afford to give at the time.

The handful of Western visitors to Kaifeng during the first decade of the 20th century reported poverty, intermarriage and conversions among the Chinese Jews, with assimilation occurring at a greater rate than ever before, although the seven Jewish clans could still be identified in Kaifeng, and many continued to call themselves Jews.
Apart from Bishop William Charles White, who managed to live among the Chinese Jews for a quarter of a decade in the early 20th century, few foreign visitors have ever managed to stay in Kaifeng longer than a few days or a few weeks, since the 17th century. The writings of even the most recent visitors to Kaifeng since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, through 1985, not surprisingly shed little light on the day-to-day existence of the Chinese Jews, due to the relatively short duration of their stay and the ubiquitous official government presence which hinders open conversation, when they do.

Their observations, however, do attest to one thing. That is, that although total assimilation can now be said to have taken place among the Chinese Jews, a kernel of Jewish identity somehow remains among the Jewish descendants and their children, who even in the 1980s identify their nationality as "youtai" (Jewish) rather than "Han" (ethnic Chinese) on their Certificates of Registry. The older generation of Chinese Jews now in Kaifeng is the last to be able to claim to have personally witnessed Jewish rituals or holiday celebrations, or of hearing first-hand stories of such by their parents. Succeeding generations of Chinese Jews (or rather, Jewish descendants) will never again be able to do so, bringing to a close this last chapter of any semblance of an active Jewish life in Kaifeng.

Such unofficial observations as mentioned above are the only records we have with which we can assess the degree of
assimilation among the Jews at any given period in their long residence in Kaifeng, and how their assimilation affected their daily life and affairs as Jews.

While isolation, intermarriage, and favorable treatment by the Chinese government have been proposed as the main factors affecting their assimilation, another reason was posited by Song Nai Rhee (1973)—namely, that Jewish success in the civil service exam brought with it the relocation of the successful candidate upon government employment, outside of the Kaifeng community, resulting in a greater number of intermarriages, the Confucianization of Jewish intellectuals and their influence upon the Jewish community itself.

Rhee's belief is that the impetus behind the Jewish desire to take the civil service exams in the first place was due to a desire to rid themselves of their merchant class label. This dissertation has suggested, however, that the strong desire to avail themselves of China's educational system more likely came from their own deep educational values developed over the course of their own long history, way before their entrance into China. These values were remarkably similar to those held by the Chinese, being guided primarily by an ethical system geared toward harmonious relationships with one's fellow man, and the belief that a nation ruled by ethical values would benefit from heavenly protection.

Just as the Jews entered Kaifeng to make it their home during the Song dynasty, a Neo-Confucian influence was being
felt in the nation. The erection of the first synagogue in Kaifeng in 1163 occurred during the prime years of the life of Zhu Xi, who made The Great Learning, with its stress on educational directives, part of the Four Books of the Confucian canon--later required reading for any aspiring civil servant. Until the 1911 revolution, the Classics and the Four Books remained the basic curriculum for study and research in China. Considered timeless works with messages applicable to every situation in life, they resemble the Torah and the Talmud for the Jews.

National exams for the jin shi degrees were held in the capital. The Jews, who first settled in Kaifeng during the Song, when it was the nation's capital, could not avoid being impressed with the solemnity of this rite of passage, and must have been immediately confronted with the importance of the exams in Chinese society. Living from the outset of their experience in the capital city, they could not hope to escape its presence.

Local schools gained prominence and importance during the Song dynasty, also just as Jews were settling in Kaifeng. This must surely have opened up greater avenues for education from the first days of their settlement.

Chinese education during the first years of Jewish settlement in Kaifeng was related to the Song government civil service exam, and was therefore open to an increasingly larger number of non-aristocratic elite children. The Jews were thus presented with a wonderful
opportunity to receive a Chinese education from the outset. The Song was probably the first dynasty to staff its civil bureaucracy with so many officials recruited through the civil service exams.

The outlook on life held by Song Neo-Confucianists was very similar to that held by the Jews, namely the fact that an emphasis was placed upon life's practical matters and one's relationship with one's fellow man.

When the Jews found themselves cut off and isolated from the rest of their co-religionists after settling in Kaifeng, their rate of assimilation increased. It was during the Ming dynasty that their names began to appear in local gazetteers as having taken the civil service exam. There is thus a positive correlation between the time the Jews found themselves cut off from the rest of the Jewish world and the time they started entering the civil service system and appearing in the local gazetteers. At that time they still knew Judaism and were still religious.

The many similarities between Chinese and Jewish educational values should here be noted.

The Chinese were unified by their written language, and hence held a great regard for the written word and for those who were literate. The Jews, too, were unified by the written word--the Torah--and exhibited great respect and encouragement for those whose lives were devoted to its study. Education and the interpretation and analyzing of
scriptures were longstanding Jewish values, tailored-made for participation in the civil service exam.

Both the Chinese and the Jews had their own special body of ethical educational literature—for the Jews it was the Torah, and for the Chinese it was the Classics—each of which contained a particular treatise which could be taken as an educational guide. For the Jews this was contained in the Book of Proverbs and for the Chinese it appeared in The Great Learning, one of the Four Books of the Confucian canon. From both the Torah and the Confucian classics were later produced a body of commentaries, which were also to be studied and memorized by generations of serious students as a means of grasping the true meaning behind their education.

The Confucian philosopher Mencius said that the first three Chinese dynasties gained the empire by benevolence (ren), and it was through their lack of benevolence that they lost the empire. This compares favorably to the Jewish notion that ethical living and following God's commandments are the only ways to keep God's blessings and protection, and hence, of the safe existence of the Jewish nation. Similarly, the Chinese idea of government by ren as opposed to a government ruled primarily by law or force, compares favorably to the Talmud's stress on ethics over the letter of the law when making legal decisions. Both peoples, therefore, had a strong belief in the relationship between ethics, benevolence and a safe and peaceful national
existence. The strong Confucian moral code must have immediately appealed to the same Jewish sensibility.

When Confucius' thoughts arose it was in response to the political situation of his time. When Jewish educational ideas were being formed (such as the use of the synagogue as an educational setting at the outset of the diaspora experience), they, too, were in response to the needs of the Jewish nation at the time—a reaction to the political situation within which they found themselves. Both peoples, therefore, related the need for a moral basis in education to their national survival.

Both Judaism and Confucianism embrace more than the religious life of the group and the individual. For the group, there is no clear line between religious and civil law. Both ways of life pervade the details of one's daily routine.

Certain basic ethical tenets are shared by Judaism and Confucianism. Filial piety is certainly common to both, and tradition wields tremendous influence for both people. The long history of each group is seen as a beneficial guide for contemporary problems, and traditional sources of information are consistently drawn upon for answers to any current problems.

Both the Chinese and the Jews place great emphasis on recording their histories.

Like the Torah of Judaism ... [the Confucian canon] on the one hand represent[s] the compilers' understanding of the ways of the ancients, and on the other have
served as the living law for all subsequent generations.¹

The Chinese view of the sages Yao, Shun, and Yu, may be compared to the Jewish attitude towards the patriarchs. Confucianism and Judaism are both based upon the historical experience of their respective people, imbued with the belief that present-day problems can be solved by reflecting upon the lessons of past experience.

Hebrew wisdom literature, as exemplified in the Book of Proverbs, clearly shows an openness to wisdom of other lands. This may have been carried over into the Jewish willingness to accept other valid ideas from the different cultures of the many lands in which they found themselves in the diaspora, not least of which was their situation in China, where Confucianism must have held particular attraction for them, with its tolerance and similar stress on ethical values.

The Book of Proverbs and the Great Learning have both served as educational guides for the Jewish people and the Chinese. Each one pinpointed the main ideas and aims of education. Both works also place great emphasis on manners and human relationships. Many of the proverbs are infused with a religious spirit, although seemingly secular.

Both the Chinese and the Jews have traditionally shown great respect for both teaching and learning, each of which were considered almost a sacred duty. The role of the

¹ Thompson, Chinese Religion, p. 38.
parents and the family as primary teachers is common to both. Respect for one's parents also ranks among the highest of virtues expected of each group, with filial piety extolled in the fifth commandment for the Hebrews, and as a cardinal Confucian virtue for the Chinese. Home was seen as a microcosm of peaceful society for both groups.

Memorization was heavily employed by both the Jews and the Chinese. Talmudic scholars and the Confucian literati were both renowned for their abilities to memorize great quantities of texts. Since education began with both peoples memorizing the classics of their respective ethical beliefs—for the Jews, the Torah and later commentaries on it, and for the Chinese, the Five Classics and commentaries upon those—each held similar attitudes about methods of learning and teaching, and the efficacy of memorizing great texts before complete comprehension could take place.

The idea of a state of internal tranquility and equilibrium as a prerequisite for a teacher, was common to both groups. "Calmness and tranquility which forbid all exercise of temper, a patience, resigning itself entirely to the child so as to cause the teacher to place himself in the child's manner of thinking, these must form the principal qualifications of the instructor. Wherefore, Hillel laid down the maxim: "The passionate or hasty man cannot be a teacher."²

Sacrifices and celebration of festivals were all means to an end for the Jews—the learning of moral conduct. They were not seen as ends in and of themselves, with rituals performed for their own sake. Rather, ideas about sacrifices and rituals for the Hebrews were merely means of showing their devotion to God and to the ideals they promised to uphold.

The Chinese concept of li served a similar purpose. Rituals were to be performed in order to bring harmony into the world. Ritual was seen as a way of cultivating the qualities embodied in the idea of jen. Similarly, the Jews offered sacrifices only as a way of showing respect for God, rather than being considered important in and of themselves.

While Confucian and Jewish educational values show many uncanny similarities, they nevertheless also possess certain basic differences as well, which should here be noted.

Confucianism posits no belief in a supernatural being, while the impetus for Jewish education remains fear of God.

Chinese education proved to be unique among other cultures and influenced neighboring cultures as well. The Israelites, however, were themselves greatly influenced by others, especially by the Egyptians, evident even in their writing.

While the Jews were united in their education by universal use of their daily prayer books, few Chinese had the opportunity to study the Classics at all, let alone on a regular basis, as only a small minority ever had the leisure
time or money required to hire a tutor to study the Classics.

The role of the rabbi for the Jews was that of a teacher, not necessarily a political leader. Any quorum of ten adult men could conduct a religious service and any one of them could be the leader. It was both egalitarian and open to all. Anything like a clerical hierarchy was completely absent in Jewish life. Knowledge and piety alone were considered the paths to leadership.

The Chinese and the Jews are the two oldest continuing civilizations in the world. Their many cultural similarities are great, belying the fact that they represent both the most populous and one of the smallest groups of people on earth. Both experienced a renaissance in their national life in the 1940s—the Chinese, with the end of their long dynastic tradition in 1911 and the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, and the Jews with the creation of the state of Israel only a year earlier, in 1948, the first time they were able to regain their ancestral homeland since their wanderings began in 70 C.E. The very longevity and cultural survival of the two peoples is cause for wonder. The educational values of both groups has served to unite their respective peoples throughout the ages.

That the Jews succeeded in Chinese society through the civil service exams, and were thereby lost to the Kaifeng
community is, in light of the above summation, not at all surprising. This phenomenon was in response not primarily to a desire to better their position in society, but rather to their own strong cultural and historical background which molded the ethical views and educational traditions by which they lived. Their desire to continue the strong Jewish educational tradition which had been passed down through the generations throughout their diaspora experience, resulted instead in their absorption into the equally stimulating and ethical Chinese educational and political system during their centuries of peaceful existence in Kaifeng.
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Universal Jewish Encyclopedia.


## APPENDIX A

### Comparative Table of Pinyin and Wade-Giles Romanization

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APPENDIX B

Chronology of Chinese Dynasties

Xia 2183 - 1752 B.C.E.?
Shang 1751 - 1112 B.C.E.
Zhou 1111 - 249 B.C.E.
   Spring and Autumn 722 - 481
   Warring States 403 - 222
Qin B.C.E. 221 - 206 C.E.
Han 206 - 220 C.E.
   Former Han B.C.E.206 - 8 C.E.
   Xin 9 - 23
   Later Han 25 - 220
Wei 220 - 265
   (Three Kingdoms)
      Wei 220 - 265
      Shu 221 - 263
      Wu 222 - 280
Jin 265 - 420
   Western Jin 265 - 317
   Eastern Jin 317 - 420

Southern and Northern Dynasties 420 - 589

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<td>Liu Song</td>
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<td>S. Qi</td>
<td>420 - 479</td>
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<td>Liang</td>
<td>479 - 502</td>
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<td>Chen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sui</td>
<td>581 - 618</td>
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<td>Tang</td>
<td>618 - 906</td>
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<td>Five Dynasties 907 - 960</td>
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Later Liang 907 - 923
Later Tang 923 - 936
Later Jin 936 - 947
Later Han 947 - 950
Later Zhou 951 - 960
Liao 947 - 1125

Song 960 - 1279
   Northern Song 960 - 1126
   Southern Song 1127 - 1279

Xi Xia 990-1227
Jin 1115-1234

Yuan (Mongol) 1271 - 1368
Ming 1368 - 1644
Qing 1644 - 1911
ROC 1911 - 1949 (Republic of China)
PRC 1949 - Present (People's Republic of China)
APPENDIX C

Chronological List of Visitors to China
Who Reported on the Chinese Jews of Kaifeng*

Arab Accounts

Abu Zaid
  Sulaiman
  Ibn-Wahab
  Ibn-Khurdadhbih
  Ibn-al-Faqih
  Al-Mas'udi
    Buzurg Ibn-Shahriyar of Ramhuruz
    Ibn al-Athir
    Abu'l-Fida
    Ibn Battutah               ca. 916 C.E.
                             Pre-851 C.E.
                             Late 9th Century
                             Late 9th Century
                             9th-10th Century
                             ca. 943 C.E.
                             10th Century
                             1160-1234
                             Died 1331
                             1346

Early European Travellers

Marco Polo                     Late 1200s
John of Monte Corvino         Late 1200s
Andrew of Perugia              1326
John of Marignolli             1342
Francis Xavier                 1546 and 1552
Galeote Pereira                1565
Jerome Xavier                  ca. 1595
Benedict Goes                 ca. 1595

Jesuit Contacts (17th Century)

Matteo Ricci                   1605
  Nicolo Longobardi             1609
  Giulio Aleni                  1612/13
  Jean Fernandez                1619/20
  Francois Sambiasi             1628
  Rodriguez de Figueiredo       1631
  Francois Ferreira             1642
  Christian Enriquez            1670s
  Joseph Provana                1699 and 1701-24

Jesuit Contacts (18th Century)

Gianpaolo Gozani              1704 and 1712
Jean Domenge                   1721
Antoine Gaubil                 1723

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Gottfried Laimbeckhoven 1739

The London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among the Jews (1850-1851)

Bishop George Smith 1850
Reverend W. H. Medhurst 1850
Qiu Tiensheng 1850-51
Jiang Rongji 1850-51
Joseph Edkins 1850 & 1888?

Protestant and Jewish Contacts (1850-1899)

I. J. Benjamin II 1855
"J.C." 1859
Unidentified British Traveller 1860
Henri Cordier 1860
Aaron Halevi Fink 1864
W. A. P. Martin 1866
J. L. Liebermann 1867
Samuel Isaac Schereschewsky 1867
J. J. Liebermann 1868
Unidentified per J.C. 1868
T. Dunlon 1876
T. Scarella 1880
Unidentified Christian 1888
Unidentified per E. T. Williams 1889
Reverend Dennis J. Mills 1890
A. S. Annaud 1893
Monsignor Volonteri 1899
Colonel Lehmann: 1899

20th Century Contacts

The Shanghai Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews 1900
Robert Powell 1900
Abbott Lloyd 1902-14
James A. Thomas 1903
W. B. Pettus 1904
Berthold Laufer 1905
Edward Jenks 1906
Phillippe Berthelot 1908
Oliver Bainbridge 1909-33
Bishop William Charles White 1910
Zhang Xiangwen 1919
Rev. J. H. Blackstone 1919
Shi Jingxun 1919
Harry A. Franck 1923
David Levy (Wong) 1924
Arthur Sopher 1924
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<th>Visitors</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
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<td>E.M. Berthel</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Klimoff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Noach Mishkowsky</td>
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<td>David A. Brown</td>
<td>1932</td>
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<td>Findlay Andrew</td>
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<td>Xu Zongzi</td>
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<td>Harrison Forman</td>
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<td>Pierre Gilbert</td>
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<td>Shizuo Sogabe</td>
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<td>Teicho Mikami</td>
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<td>Giorgi Borea</td>
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<td>Antonio Cattaneo</td>
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<td>Timoteus Pokora</td>
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<td>Renee Goldman</td>
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<td>Eric Gordon</td>
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<td>Albert Dien</td>
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<td>Aline Mosby</td>
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<td>Christopher Wren</td>
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<td>Wendy Abraham</td>
<td>1985</td>
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<td>David Aikman</td>
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* First Column = Visitors who wrote of their observations
  
Second Column = Those who claimed to have visited Taifeng but did not personally write of their observations