

The History of the Kaifeng Community Jan 05, 2004

[http://www.jewsofchina.org/JewsOfChina/communities/chronology_item.asp?cid=1055&iid=1106]

[I have reformatted this for easier reading. The author is not identified. - JA 9/15/07]

Prof. Xu Xin, in his book, *The Jews of Kaifeng, China*, writes "It is more than likely that Jews arrived in Kaifeng in the early Song. Gao Wangzhi, a Chinese scholar dates the likely time as "by the end of the tenth or the beginning of the eleventh century". Dr. Donald Leslie also believes that the Jews came to Kaifeng "during the early part of the dynasty between 960 and 1126."

The Sung Dynasty had begun in 960 when a military leader, Chao K'uang-yin, seized power and proclaimed the Sung Dynasty. Within a few years he and his officials had restored peace. The Sung were wiser than the other dynasties because they knew how the other dynasties had fallen when the governors became too powerful. Instead they did not split up the land into sections. China was under the emperors. They re-established Confucianism as the master philosophy and reunified most of China proper.

We fast forward to June 1605 (*Chinese Jews*, by Bishop William Charles White, p. 10). A 60 year old Chinese Mandarin, Ai T'ien from Kaifeng, Honan (Hunan) province visited Pere Matteo Ricci at the Jesuit Mission in Beijing. This visit is vividly described by Bishop White:

He said he had called to pay his respects to the Westerners since he had heard that they worshipped one God, and yet were not Mohammedans. He announced himself as one of the same religion as Ricci, and the latter was impressed by the differences in facial characteristics of his visitor, as compared with ordinary Chinese. It was in the Octave of St. John the Baptist, and over the altar in the chapel had been placed an image of the Virgin Mary with the infant Jesus on one side and St. John the Baptist on the other.

Seeing these figures the visitor thought they represented Rebecca with her two sons Jacob and Esau, so he bowed and did reverence to them as Ricci did, though he stated he was not accustomed to worship images, but wanted to show respect to the memory of the holy men of his faith. Besides the altar were pictures of the four Evangelists. He inquired if these were not of the twelve, to which question Ricci answered in the affirmative, supposing him to be referring to the twelve apostles.

Upon their return to the guest hall, during their conversation, to Ricci's amazement he found his visitor to be a Chinese Jew, who had been talking in terms of the Old Testament entirely. Not only had the images on the altar been misunderstood, but the twelve to whom the visitor referred to were found to be the twelve sons of Jacob. Ai T'ien informed Ricci that the Jewish community of Kaifeng included many families who observed Jewish religious practices which centered in a Synagogue.

Reports by Matteo Ricci and others sparked interest in this community and a number of

visits were paid by Jesuits and other scholars.

Matteo Ricci was considered to be the right man at the right time to "discover" the Kaifeng community. To understand this remarkable man we quote an article by J J O'Connor and E F Robertson:

After being educated at home by his parents, Matteo Ricci entered the Jesuit School in Macerata in 1561. He went to Rome in 1568 to study law but he was attracted to the Jesuit religious order which he joined in 1571. He then continued his studies in Rome, studying mathematics and astronomy under Clavius.

Ricci set out on his sea voyages in 1577. He arrived first in Portugal where he studied at the University of Coimbra for a while. Then, in 1578, he sailed to the Portuguese city of Goa on the west coast of India. In Goa Ricci studied for the priesthood, and he was ordained in 1580. Two years later he sailed to China.

Ricci arrived at Macau on the east coast of China in 1582. He settled in Chao-ch'ing, Kwangtung Province and began his study of Chinese. He also worked at acquiring understanding of Chinese culture. While there Ricci produced the first edition of his map of the world Great Map of Ten Thousand Countries which is a remarkable achievement showing China's geographical position in the world. In 1589 Ricci moved to Shao-chou and began to teach Chinese scholars the mathematical ideas that he had learnt from his teacher Clavius. This is perhaps the first time that European mathematics and Chinese mathematics had interacted and it must be seen as an important event. Ricci attempted to visit Peking in 1595 but found the city closed to foreigners. He went instead to Nanking where he lived from 1599, working on mathematics, astronomy and geography.

Ricci was well received in Nanking and this encouraged him to try again to visit Peking which he did in 1601. This time he was allowed to live in the city and he made this his home from that time until his death nine years later.

There was at that time a problem with the European's understanding of whether the country which Marco Polo had visited by an overland route, and called Cathay, was the same country as China which had been visited by sea. Marco Polo, also an Italian, had travelled from Europe through Asia beginning his journey in 1271 and living in Cathay for 17 years before returning to Italy. Ricci was convinced that these countries were the same but, until another overland journey was made, this could not be confirmed. Ricci's hypothesis was proved by another Jesuit by the name of De Goes, who set out from India in 1602, and although he died in 1607 before reaching Peking, he had by that time made contact by letter with Ricci and proved that Marco Polo's Cathay was China. By the time he was living in Peking, Ricci's skill at Chinese was sufficient to allow him to publish several books in Chinese. He wrote *The Secure Treatise on God* (1603), *The Twenty-five Words* (1605), *The First Six Books of Euclid* (1607), and *The Ten Paradoxes* (1608). *The*

First Six Books of Euclid was based on Clavius's Latin version of Euclid's *Elements* which Ricci had studied under Clavius's guidance while in Rome. The Chinese reaction to Ricci's book, which showed them the logical construction in Euclid's *Elements* for the first time, is discussed in [10]. Certainly the style of Euclid was far from the style of Chinese mathematics and this mixing of mathematical cultures must have been a cultural shock to both sides.

Ricci of course had to dress in the style of a Chinese scholar and be known under a Chinese name, he used 'Li Matou', to become accepted by the Chinese. However he became famous in China for more than his mathematical skills, becoming known for his extraordinary memory and for his knowledge of astronomy. He even became known as a painter and a painting of a landscape around Peking has recently been attributed to him.

We fast forward again to the year 1843 when James Finn, then the British Consul to Jerusalem, published book *The Jews of China* in 1843. Later, based upon Finn's correspondence with Mr. T.H. Layton (later to be the British consul to Amoy), Reverend W.A. P. Martin (an American missionary), and a letter written to the Jewish Community in Kaifeng (in Hebrew), James Finn published his book *The Orphan Colony of Jews in China* in London in 1872. The book *Jews in China* is well summarized in the *Jewish Intelligence*, reprinted in *The Occident and American Advocate*, of Tamuz 5603 (July 1843).

Before quoting the *Jewish Intelligence*, a letter from Layton to Finn sets the background to his later work *The Orphan Colony of Jews in China*.

Letter from Consul T.H. Layton, Amoy to Consul J. Finn of Jerusalem (William White, Chinese Jews, p. 79):

My Dear Sir:

After five years of fruitless inquiries relative to the Jews at Kaifeng Fu, I have at last met with a Chinese Mohammedan soldier, of the rank of sergeant, who is a native of Kaifeng and who has given me as concise and full information concerning this interesting branch of the Jewish family as I could expect to obtain

This man whose name is Tieh Ting-an who fought by the side of the imperial general, is now on the staff of the Admiral of Amoy: and at my request, and in answer to my questions, made the following statement. I took note of what he said, whilst he was speaking, and your little work, *The Jews in China*, was lying before me.

Tieh Ting-an said:

I am a native of Kaifeng and a Mohammedan. I lived for many years within a half mile of the Synagogue of the Jews there. My mother used to walk and amuse herself near the

synagogue of my youth. I am well acquainted with the Jews there. There in all eight families (chi hsing pa chia), amounting probably to one thousand persons. Two families remain perfect. These are the Kao (High) and Shih (Stone). The head of the Shih family, although he has forsaken the Jewish rites, has rebuilt the Synagogue (perhaps repaired it). One of the family of Chin (Gold) has been promoted by the Emperor to a high military rank. Six families have intermarried with the Chinese. Two families intermarry with Chinese Mohammedans only. The Jews give their daughters to the Mohammedans; the Mohammedans do not give their daughters to the Jews.

The Jews do not know from whence they came, or the period of their coming to China. The Jews are quite Chinese in appearance. Their women exactly resemble the Kaifeng women. They have all straight features like the people in the centre of China

In the Ming Dynasty the Jews were rich and their customs were as of old. One of the family of Kao keeps a large spice and perfumery warehouse; and Shih (Stone) has a large silk shop. His name is Brown Jade Stone (Shih Tsung-yu). Stone is the family name.

The synagogue has eight corners. I do not know the name of the Emperor who gave the Jews the synagogue. Strangers and carriers of pork cannot pass near the synagogue. On the right hand of the synagogue is an inscribed stone stele. There are two very large trees in front of the synagogue. All persons enter the synagogue by the two side doors. The large door is opened only on the last day of the old Chinese year; it is then thrown open from New Year's Eve until the evening of (Chinese) New Year's Day. There is one large room in the synagogue no one dares to enter. There is a high stone tablet with the names of all the leaders; another tablet up two hundred and fifty years since, with the names of all the leaders, and the name of the reigning Emperor.

The synagogue is walled round. There is no 'Hall of Ancestors'. The inscription over the synagogue is Ching Chen Ssu (Purity and Truth Temple). No one can enter the large doors. From the end of the street to the end of the Jews (enclosure) is 125 feet; from the lane to the synagogue is 80 feet. Two figures of lions are placed in the court, which is 80 feet long. In the synagogue is a yellow bundle, tied up in satin, which contains all the books of the Jews. The length of these rolls is the length of this table (2 feet)

I have not seen what you describe to me, the Jews dwelling, or affecting to dwell, under the bowers of trees and flowers at an annual festival. I have not seen any of their ceremonies. There are no priests; there is not any form of worship. One rich man only takes charge of the synagogue. Not one Jew can read or write Hebrew at Kaifeng. The Jews would never allow a book to be taken away.

Some of the Jews say they ought to worship with both hands raised even with their ears. Some say with their hands extended before them, and pointing to the earth. Others with their hands joined in front of their breasts. If new books and writings were given to the

Jews they would be gladly received. Not one Jew can read or write Hebrew. I recognize that (a Hebrew inscription shown) to be their writing. Some of the Jews say the sixth, and some the eighth day is their Sabbath (Li-pai-jih)

Layton felt the narrative was truthful and 'implicitly' believed him.

Chinese Correspondence - from the Kaifeng Jews - 1850

Translation of Chinese Letter from the Jews in Kaifeng Fu addressed to Mr. Consul Layton of Amoy (William White, *Chinese Jews*, p. 85 (we have chosen to publish this letter because it would appear that the community was disintegrating and would remain so till the present era).

(On the envelope:) The enclosed letter to be delivered to His Worship Mr. Layton, H.B.M Consul at Amoy, in the province of Fukien, for transmission to the chief teacher of the Jewish religion.

Keng -hsu year, seventh month, thirteenth day. Sent from the street Hsiao-chieh

(The letter:)

On the 23rd of this month of the Keng-hsu year (1850) we received your valued letter, and acquainted ourselves with its content. In reply to the inquiries which you therein make, we have to state, that during the past forty or fifty years, our religion has been imperfectly transmitted, and although the canonical writings are still extant, there is no one who understands so much as one word of them. It happens only that there yet survives an aged female of more than seventy years, who retains in her recollection 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 Tieh from a country of the West (Hsi Yang), but this to our regret we never got sight of. However, the receipt of your present letter assures us that the holy religion (sheng chiao) 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 community, but likewise the holy men of Tien-chu (Judah or India?) will rejoice exceedingly. It will be needful, meanwhile, that the proceedings with a view to this end will be conducted prudently and with caution.

Our synagogue (ssu) in this place has long been without ministers; the four walls of the

great hall are greatly dilapidated, and the compartments of the hall of the holy men are in ruins. The ablution chamber and the repository (for the scriptures) are in ruins likewise. Through the whole day have tears been in our eyes, and grief at our hearts, at the sight of such things. It has been our desire to repair the synagogue, and again to procure ministers to serve in it; but poverty prevented us, and our desire was in vain. Daily with tears we have called on the Holy Name. If we could again procure ministers, and could put in order our synagogue, our religion would again have a firm support for the future, and its sacred documents would find a secure repository. This it needs no divination to be assured of.

In our community the family of Chao has produced men who have been most distinguished, who have held offices in the government, been eminent in the arts, and enjoyed the imperial confidence. One of its members in former times, Chao Ying-ko, was an intendant in the Province of Yunan, and another, Chao Ying-cheng, was a General in the Province of Chekiang.

Further communication is subjoined.

The festival days and days of worship in the synagogue are the following:

Second moon, fourteenth day - Feast of dry wheat, or unleavened bread. Cakes called oil fragrance (yu-hsien) are distributed to friends.

Sixth moon, tenth day - Fires are not lit. This is called the fast of the Judges' gate

Eight moon, twenty fourth day - The scriptures are preached in the synagogue; the doors being closed, the scroll is opened out, and the scriptures read, money coloured and red, is distributed

Eight moon, first day - Festival of the greater patriarchs or prophets.

Ninth moon, second day - Festival of the minor patriarchs and prophets

Sixth moon, first day - Festival of escape (or deliverance) from the sword

The holy personages of our religion are:

A-tan (Adam)

Nu-wo (Noah)

Awu-lo-han (Abraham)

Yi-ssu-ho ke (Isaac)

Ya-ho-chuen-wu (Jacob)

The Twelve Patriarchs

Mo-she (Moses)

A-ha-lien (Aaron)
 Yueh-shu-wo (Joshua)
 A-tzu-la (Ezra)

Our scriptures (T'ien Ching) have fifty three division, the letters of the sacred alphabet are twenty seven in number.

FROM THE *JEWISH INTELLIGENCE* ,Volume 1 No. 4, dated Tamuz 5603 (July 1843)

The Jews in China.

Proceeding upon the good maxim of "et ab hoste discere fas est," (it is right to learn even of an enemy,) we extract a part of the article in the work of Mr. James Finn, called "The Jews in China—their Synagogue, their Scriptures, their History, &c., London, 1843," (which we have not yet received,) from the London organ of the Society for Converting the Jews. It is curious that several articles lately printed in the *Intelligence* prove, more than any arguments Jews can furnish, that our people need no amelioration such as the London Society, headed by the primate of all England, and the New York one, supported by many men of eminence, and equally many ladies of benevolence, can offer. But it is useless speculating; men will act unwisely, and at the same time wonder that their motives are not appreciated; and thus must we not be astonished that men will endeavour to break down Judaism, though it has preserved itself unharmed in the midst of heathen nations, where Christianity fell and left no wreck behind. But we must proceed with our extracts without more preface, especially as we shall have, much against our will, to recur to this painful subject more than once, owing to the efforts of societies and individuals to rob us of our faith. Ed. Oc.

China has hitherto been almost inaccessible to Christians and to Christian missionaries, and the opportunities which once presented themselves have been but sparingly improved. In the meantime, that which might have been known concerning the history, customs, and character of the "Jews in China," has, for the most part, been strangely neglected and overlooked.

Though, like their brethren, still in unbelief (!) still unacquainted with the import of the promises contained in those oracles of which they are the depositaries, they nevertheless fulfill the high vocation and stewardship to which their nation has been appointed. Amid surrounding darkness and idolatry, they have preserved that law which is given of God to be a schoolmaster to bring them and the heathens around them to Him, who is the end of the law, for righteousness. We have long been accustomed to talk about the existence of Jews in China, but the most profound ignorance has, generally speaking, prevailed, especially in this country, concerning their real state and condition.

Mr. Finn's book is divided into five chapters, which treat on the following subjects:—

- I. Discovery and Intercourse.
- II. The Synagogue.
- III. Scripture and Literature.
- IV. Inscriptions, History, &c.
- V. Reflections.

The following is the account which Mr. F. gives of the large synagogue in Kae-fung-foo:—

The whole place of worship occupies a space of between three and four hundred feet in length, by about one hundred and fifty in breadth, comprising four successive courts, advancing from the east to the synagogue itself at the extreme west.

The first court has in its centre 'a large, noble, and beautiful arch,' (Pae-fang,) bearing a golden inscription in Chinese, dedicating the locality to the Creator and Preserver of all things. There are also some trees interspersed."*

*Provably stunted to a dwarf size, by an art in which the Chinese take great delight.

The second court is entered from the first, by a large gate with two side doors, and two wickets beside them. Its walls are flanked to the north and south by dwellings for the keepers of the edifice.

The third court has the same kinds of entrance from the second as that has from the first. In its centre stands an arch like that in the first court. Upon the walls, between the trees, are marble tablets (Pae-wan), with inscriptions in Chinese. Part of this court is flanked by commemorative chapels: that on the south,* in, memory of an Israelite mandarin named Chao, the judge of a city of second degree, who formerly rebuilt the synagogue after its destruction by fire: that on the north, in memory of him who erected all the present edifice. There are also some reception rooms for guests.

*At the door of this chapel, or cell, is a figure of some animal, upon a pedestal: but what animal it was intended to represent,exceeded the ability of Domenge to tell.

The fourth court is parted in two by a row of trees. Half way along this line stands a great brazen vase for incense, at the sides of which are placed two figures of lions, upon marble pedestals; and at the westward sides of these lions are two large brazen vases, containing flowers.

Adjoining the northern wall is a recess, in which the nerves and sinews are extracted from animals slain for food.

The second division of this court is an empty space, with a 'hall of ancestors' (Tsoo-tang)

at each of its sides to the north and south. In these they venerate, at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, the worthies of the Old Testament history, after the Chinese manner, but having merely the name of the person upon each tablet, without his picture. The only furniture these contain are a great number of censers; the largest one in honour of Abraham, and the rest, of Isaac, Jacob, the twelve sons of Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Ezra, and others, both male and female. In the open space between these chapels, they erect their annual booths of boughs and flowers, at the Feast of Tabernacles.

Then occurs the synagogue itself, a building of about sixty feet by forty, covered by a fourfold and handsome roof, having a portico with a double row of four columns, and a balustrade before it.

Within this edifice the roofs (as usual in Chinese domestic architecture) are sustained by rows of pillars besides the walls. In the centre of all is 'the throne of Moses,' a magnificent and elevated chair, with an embroidered cushion, upon which they place the book of the law while it is read. Over this a dome is suspended: and near it is the Wan-suy-pae, or tablet, with the emperor's name in golden characters, enclosed within a double line of scrollwork. This, however, is surmounted by the inscription in Hebrew letters of gold:—

HEAR, O ISRAEL:
THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD.
BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE GLORY OF HIS KINGDOM FOR EVER AND
EVER.

After this, a triple arch bears the following inscription, likewise in Hebrew:

BLESSED BE THE LORD FOR EVER.
THE LORD IS GOD OF GODS, AND THE LORD:
A GREAT GOD, STRONG AND TERRIBLE.

Then a large table, upon which are placed six candelabra in one line, with a great vase for incense, having handles, and a tripod standing, half way along the line. These candelabra are in three different forms; and bear three different kinds of lights. Those nearest the vase bear torches, the next on each side have candles, and those at the extremities, ornamental lanterns. Near this table is a laver for washing hands.

Lastly, the Beth-el, or Teen-tang (house of heaven), square in outward shape, but rounded within. Into this none but the rabbi may enter during the time of prayer. Here, upon separate tables, stand twelve rolls of the law, corresponding to the tribes of Israel, besides one in the centre in honour, of Moses, each enclosed in a tent of silken curtains. On the extreme western wall are the tablets of the Ten Commandments, in golden letters of Hebrew. Beside each of these tablets is a closet containing manuscript books, and in front of each closet, a table, bearing a vase and two candelabra.

The congregation, when assembled for devotion, are separated from the Beth-el by balustrade, some standing in recesses along the walls. Against a column is suspended a calendar for the reading of the law.

It appears that the Jews in China have been most remarkable in their steadfast and silent opposition to the heathenish forms of religious worship which have prevailed around them.

Their alienation from idolatry is particularly striking, after so long an exposure to the superstitions of the country, graded as these are by imperial influence. They refuse to take an oath in an idol temple; and the conspicuous inscriptions upon the walls and arches proclaim their steadfastness in this matter, even upon that delicate point of the emperor's name, which in the Synagogue they have surmounted by the most significant of possible warnings against confounding any reverence whatever with that due to the 'blessed and only Potentate.'

Nor must we omit to remark their interesting practice of praying westwards, towards Jerusalem." They have also been faithful in preserving those oracles of God which have been committed to them.

As we have already seen, the synagogue of Kae-fang-foo possesses thirteen copies of the law, kept within coverings of silk. These are denominated the Ta-king, or Temple-Scripture. The rolls measure about two feet in length; and are rather more than one foot in diameter.

Besides these, there is in the Beth-el a large number of nearly square books (not rolls) of about seven inches by five, some new, others very old; but all much neglected, and lying in confusion. The people classified them tonally, as follows:—

1. Ta-king in fifty-three books, each containing one section of the law, for the Sabbath-days.
2. Tsin-soo, or supplementary books; called, also, Ha-foo-ta-la, or Haphtorah. These are portions of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, and the Prophets.
3. Historical books, viz:—Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles, (four or five of the first chapters), and the two first books of Maccabees, called Mat-tathi, the latter whole, but not in good condition.
4. Keang-chang, or the Expositors. These are much defaced, and have lost their titles. The brief leisure of the missionaries did not allow of a close examination into these books, their attention having been especially directed to the law of Moses.
5. Le-pae, the ritual or ceremonial books, about fifty in number, and slightly differing in

shape from the rest. One of these bears on its cover the title 'The Perpetual Afternoon-Service.'" (Pages 28, 29.)

An important question must naturally arise concerning the period when this colony of Hebrews first settled in China. Men greatly distinguished for their acquirements in Oriental literature have framed a theory from other sources that they derive their origin from the ten tribes of Israel. The accounts of the missionaries, however, and the popular summaries of the same, have, unreservedly, spoken of them as belonging to the tribe of Judah.

Mr. Finn adduces the following arguments in support of the latter supposition:

But that the Hebrews in Honan are Jews of the restoration from Chaldea is evident from the following considerations:—

1. The tablets speak of a tradition of the law from its origin to the time of Ezra, 'the second law-giver and reformer of the people;' a description which implies a knowledge of the re-establishment in Jerusalem.
2. They possess, besides some portion of the prophetic books written after the captivity of the ten tribes by Shalmaneser, a few verses of Daniel, and the book of Esther, (whom they venerate under the title of 'the great mother'), in which the word Jew occurs many times, although the words Israel and Israelite are not found there at all.
3. Their Haptorah (a selection dating only from the persecution by Antiochus Epiphanes, about a. c. 170) comprises portions out of prophets who lived in Jerusalem during the second temple, as Zechariah and Malachi.
4. They have adopted the Seleucidan era of chronology.
5. In the list of rabbis annexed to the section-book, Bereshith, are found the titles, 'our master, our rabbi,' &c., which give it quite a Talmudic complexion: and they have rabbinical rules for slaughtering.

The synagogue inscription over the emperor's tablet, is a verse from Scripture, frequently repeated in Jewish liturgies to the present day.

The force of all the above reasons might indeed be abated, by taking into account, that for several centuries their sacred books, and some of their teachers, have reached them from another country in the west, and concluding that thus only may have been imported the later Scriptures and Jewish peculiarities. But this conclusion is entirely gratuitous, without evidence of even the lowest degree.

That this, however, is a very ancient off shoot from the Jerusalem Jews, anterior,

probably, to the incarnation of Christ, seems plain, from their ignorance of his name Jesus,* that 'which is above every name,' until it was mentioned to them by the missionaries; perhaps, also, from their indifference towards the crucifix; from their freedom from rabbinical despotism; and, above all, from those religious usages in which they differ from all Jews known elsewhere, such as reading the law through a veil, erecting a throne for Moses, together with their diversity in the sections of the law, and in their ritual of worship. But these will not lead us to declare their descent from the ten tribes. † (Page 58-60.)

* This is no proof, because among Jews there are no records of the existence even of the founder of Christianity; and we might therefore say, that being surrounded by heathens who themselves are ignorant of his existence and doctrines, it is not very probable that they should have any remembrance of him, even if by chance their forefathers might have had cause to know something of the religion of the Nazarene.—Ed. Oc.

† The Abbé Sionnet, in 1837, published a memoir on the subject, which has been commended by eminent scholars; in which he contends for the earliest supposed migration of this people, and that from the following reasons:

1. A comparison of Jewish history with that of China, under the dynasty of Chow.
2. The Traditions to be found in Chinese works, written some centuries before the Christian era, in which allusions are made to Paradise, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, the rainbow after the deluge, Noah's sacrifice, the woman changed to a statue, the seven years' famine, the manna with a pleasant taste, the rock which gave out water when struck by a rod, the sun arrested by command of a chief, &c.
3. The Divine name in the Hebrew religion, being found in the Tao-te-King of Laou-sze, written six centuries before our era. But can the first of these be clearly established? And would not the second and third be answered by the great probability of Laou-sze having procured the Hebrew law in Assyria during the seventy years' captivity, at the same period with Pythagoras, the western philosopher?

From the above it appears that though the Jews in China, as elsewhere, have adopted some forms borrowed from their neighbours, they have in the main remained true to the laws of Israel. If it be true that they emigrated before the destruction of the second temple, their custom of purifying meat by extracting sinews and arteries, as practiced among modern Jews of the west, proves strongly that the conformity to rabbinical ordinances is based upon something more than human authority. How strangely and unwisely act they, therefore, who blindly reject all that we have received from our fathers.

We hope in a few months to receive Mr. Finn's work, and we shall then furnish to our readers all the interesting matters which we shall think sufficiently authenticated; for it must be observed, that all that has as yet been said concerning the Chinese Jews has come from missionaries, chiefly Catholic, and we do not, honestly speaking, place the utmost reliance in such testimony, unless borne out by internal evidence. We hope, however, that the new intercourse which has lately been opened with the Celestial Empire may soon enable some pious Israelite to penetrate to his brethren at Kae-fung-foo, and establish relations of friendship and brotherly love between them and their brothers in the land of the setting of the sun.

But, perhaps, no class of men felt greater concern in the event than the laborious biblical critics of that time. To them the finding of some of that nation "to whom were committed the oracles of God," yet supposed to be of too ancient a separation to be cognizant of either the Samaritan, Septuagint, or Masoretic texts of the Old Testament, yet still guarding their copies of the law of Moses, was a circumstance most pregnant with hopeful interest, and the more a matter of anxiety as these Israelites were represented as almost ceasing to subsist, and there was great possibility that with the failure of Hebrew reading, consequent on the adoption of a novel creed, the manuscripts themselves might be suffered to perish. The subject was referred to in the Prolegomena (iii. § 41) of Walton's Polyglot Bible, and in the preface to Jablonski's Hebrew Bible (§ 38), and further information as to the text of the Chinese copies of the Pentateuch was ardently desired.

A fuller account was afterwards received from Father Gozani, dated Kae-fung-foo, November, 1704, and published in 1707.* During this interval of more than sixty years' residence in the same city, with the only known Synagogue in China, no intercourse had taken place between the missionaries and them, beyond one visit from Rodriguez de Figueredo, and another from Christian Enriquez, but who had shown no curiosity to inspect the Hebrew books, and had made no report on the subject to their superiors; the fact that they had made any visit was only learned by Gozani from the people of the Synagogue. It is true that the Jesuits had found abundant occupation in their direct duties, in political intrigues, and in disputes with their rivals of the monkish orders, but for these latter employments the wise and the learned in Europe had but little cause to thank them.

* In "Lettres edificantes et curieuses."—Recueil vii.

From the communication of Gozani, it appears that in 1702 he had intended to visit the Taou-kin-keaou, i. e., "the sect who cut out the sinew," as the Israelites were expressly designated, but was deterred by some imaginary obstacles, and by the real difficulty in his ignorance of the Hebrew language, but had resumed the task two years afterwards in obedience to instructions sent from Rome. He commenced by advancing certain civilities; in return they visited him; and then he proceeded to their Synagogue (Le-pae-sze), the distance being only that of a few streets, where he found them assembled. They showed him their religious books, and even led him to the most sacred part of the edifice, to which only the rabbi (Chang-keaou) has right of access. With great politeness they gave him all the explanations he requested as to their Scriptures, their

history, and their religious ceremonies. On the walls he perceived inscriptions both in Chinese and Hebrew: these they permitted him to copy, and he despatched the copies with his letter to Rome. The whole reception testified that the unfriendliness of the last half century between the neighbours was not attributable to the Israelite community.

The curiosity of Europeans being only the more excited from this narrative, as there still remained much to learn, at the instance of Souciet, who was compiling a large work upon the Bible, the missionaries Gozani, Domenge, and Gaubil, were successively directed to procure additional particulars on this subject, which they did. Domenge sketched a plan of the Synagogue, and Gaubil copied afresh the inscriptions upon its walls. Shortly after the last of these visits, in 1723, the missionaries were expelled from that province by the Emperor Yong-ching.

An effort was afterwards made by the celebrated Kennicott, of Oxford, to obtain a collation of their Scriptures with our copies, when Sir F. Pigou, being on his way to Canton, carried out for him a printed Hebrew Bible of Amsterdam edition; but the only result has been a letter received in 1769, from a friend there, promising to exert himself for the purpose, and stating that the titular bishop of the province was willing to render his assistance.

The learned Tychsen, upon two later occasions, in 1777 and 1779, forwarded letters to friends in Batavia, addressed to the Synagogue of Kae-fung-foo, but no information has been returned as to their having even reached China. In 1815, the year previous to the last embassy from England to the Celestial Empire, some Jews of London had dispatched a letter in Hebrew to Canton for this Synagogue. It was conveyed thence by a traveling bookseller of the Ho-nan province. He delivered it at Kae-fung-foo, to a person whom he found to understand the letter perfectly, and who promised to answer it in a few days, but the bearer taking alarm at a rumour of civil war, left the place without waiting for the reply.*

* Journal of the Embassy to China. By Henry Ellis. 1817.

The recent missionaries from England have learned nothing concerning this colony, only in 1816 Dr. Morrison heard of them from a Mohammedan near Peking,* as subsisting in Kae-fung-foo under their old name of "the religion of cutting out the sinew," an appellation so appropriately Jewish, that no other people than descendants of Jacob could even assign a reason for its origin, if they were to assume the name for any purpose.

* Davis's Chinese, vol. i. p. 15.

Proceeding, then, from the information given by the Jesuits already mentioned, the account in the following chapters of the Synagogue, Scriptures, inscriptions, &c., must be understood only of Kae-fung-foo, and upon the statements there detailed must be based the after-inquiry, as to whether the people are Jews or Israelites, that is, whether emigrants from the Assyrian captivity or the Roman dispersion.