

# SOCIETY FORMED IN SHANGHAI TO RESCUE REMNANT OF JEWISH COLONY IN CHINA

More About That Strange "Rock Split From the Side of Zion."

SHANGHAI, April 24.—Preparations are nearly completed at Shanghai for a mission to the Chinese Jews, the first ever undertaken. It will be quite unlike other religious missions in that its purpose will not be to convert, but to restore. Reason of misfortune for which they were not in any way accountable the Chinese Jews who colonized Kalfengfu, capital of the interior province of Honan, 2,000 years ago, became impoverished and destitute. The sect has been for many years without a synagogue; its records have been destroyed or have drifted away; it has forgotten the ritual of its faith; from a rich and powerful clan it has degenerated into a handful of people wretched in material possessions, but in all that time it has worshipped only the God of Abraham and it has held itself scrupulously apart in a religious sense from the multitudes that occupy that part of China.

The project now in hand is undertaken by the Society for the Rescue of the Chinese Jews, an organization local to Shanghai, which has worked so far almost unaided. It was formed about three years ago, when it addressed notes to Kalfengfu, distant three weeks' travel from here, for the purpose of inducing some of the colony to visit Shanghai for a conference at which might be laid the foundations for practical re-establishment. The first message fell into the hands of Bowers and never reached its intended destination, but a second message was properly delivered. It led to a visit about two years ago by a member of the colony and his son. Since about one year ago members of the colony have been here continuously. The personnel has shifted by reason of occasion for individuals to return home. Eight members of the colony are now here at Shanghai, maintained by the Rescue society, engaged in the study of Hebrew and in fitting themselves otherwise to revive and sustain the worship of their ancestors on the historic site. Two or three of them will return to Kalfengfu shortly to introduce to their people there Kohon Silas, a Hebrew scholar who is coming from Hongkong; A. May, a Jewish resident of Tientsin, and General William Mosby, editor of Chinese Miscellaneous, who will bring an interpreter. These visitors will station at Kalfengfu a Jewish mission whose office shall be not merely to reorganize the congregation and direct worship into the former channels, but also to make arrangements for the reconstruction of the temple and to become the agency on the ground for such operations there as may become feasible through the means to be furnished by the Rescue society.

Funds in considerable amount will be needed to carry through this undertaking. The Jewish congregation in Shanghai is small in numbers and it can hardly accomplish alone all that is planned. It issued last year a general appeal to the Jew of the world asking for \$5,000 with which to prosecute the work deemed necessary. The appeal does not seem to have been well directed, for returns in nine months have amounted to less than \$100. That circumstance has not deterred the Rescue society from its purpose, however, with which it proceeds in full confidence that with actual occasion to use a large sum of money the work will not halt on that account.

Although this appeal was issued by authority, it is little to be wondered that it passed almost unheeded, because for years publications which have now and then appeared in regard to Chinese Jews have unfortunately had little foundation, except in the essential fact that such persons existed. The topic has proved an alluring one to those who see China by stopping over on the way or a night at a port and straightway proceed to put in print what they hear or read, embellished with what they imagine. Such writers have conversed with them at the ports where the ocean liners call and have assumed the reading world with accounts of "Jews with pigstails."

There are traditions, but nothing more, that in earlier centuries Jewish settlements flourished at Hangchow, reached from here by a trip of 150 miles to the southern terminus of the Grand canal. They may have settled also at Ningpo, a port thriving enough but always reserved for coastal trade, and in the days of any possible Jewish settlement that trade must have been carried on in junk. Supposition that they have settled at these two places rests merely on vague native report, which never carried them into the south, where they have been the subject of modern interview. Neither at Hangchow nor at Ningpo, indeed, has there been found a tablet or other record to uphold argument that promises of trade may ever have lured them to either place in sufficient numbers to found a colony or exercise their religion. The only evidences at all appealing concerning them come from Kalfengfu, and these the only tangible tokens at present, apart from the traditions of an ignorant, squallid company of people, is a single stone post or tablet, standing on land so long since given over to waste that a good part of it has become pelted.

Authentic reports of travelers, from the ninth century, show that the sect was then flourishing and the writings of Jesuits as recently as the eighteenth century testify to its importance at that time. In that century the great overflow of the Yellow river known as China's sorrow carried away the tabernacle and synagogue all except the foundations and destroyed many of the holy books and records. A few memorials of this kind, however, were afterward collected and preserved in different places. These memorials, the writings of travelers, the existing tablet on the spot and the recognition by the Chinese authorities of the title of the colony to the property, by the issue of a confirmatory deed to replace the one lost in the flood, make out the present case. If evidence relied on living witnesses it would be of the flimsiest, for the sect has been in decay for 200 years and only strong help now can save it from extinction. There are no Chinese excepting those who belong to Kalfengfu for whom the Rescue society puts forth claim of Jewish origin, and these resident at that place number only about 140 adults.

Inscriptions on one of the tablets observed by the early travelers lead to the belief that Jews first entered China in the Han dynasty, which extended from B. C. 206 to A. D. 220. The Jesuits fix their advent in the reign of Ming, from A. D. 1368 to A. D. 1644, and they concluded, from the ritual which was employed, that they must have come from Persia by way of Khorasan and Samarcand. There were Persian words in their language and literature, and their hymns bore resemblance to those found in old Persian manuscript prayerbooks. A Chinese work written in the Sung dynasty, in the third or fourth century of the present era, reports a "heavenly spirit monastery" in the city of Kalfengfu. A later work in the same dynasty alludes to a "foreign heaven chapel" built in the year 621 in Changgan, province of Shensi, in which there was an officer called "sapaou," a word not Chinese, but suggestive of the Hebrew saupher or sopher, a scribe. Jews are mentioned in 815 as having been included in a general massacre at Kalfengfu and in 855 among the recipients of district honors in Kalfengfu. In that city about 1163 the erection of a synagogue was begun, and one of the inscriptions found by the Jesuits records

that the synagogue was enlarged in 1279. Marco Polo observes that the Jews had acquired political influence in China and Tartary at about this time. Chinese records indicate that in 1259 and in 1354 Jews were invited to Peking to join the imperial army. They were then styled Shuhwuh or Jehudi. An Arabian envoy in 1346 referred to the leading Jew among the Jews as "exceedingly wealthy." In the fifteenth century Kalfengfu is said to have been a great commercial center, with more than 1,000,000 inhabitants. It is believed to have been the headquarters of the Chinese Jews, inscriptions show that an overflow of the Yellow river in 1481 seriously damaged the synagogue, and a stone erected in 1489 records the enlargement and renovation of that structure.

Jesuit inquiries regarding the Jews were pushed with much energy in the seventeenth century. An account sent to the vatican by Father Ricci, one of the earliest missionaries, relates his meeting in Peking a Jew who had gone to that capital from Kalfengfu to try for literary honors. From this man he learned that there were various Jewish communities in China, and that they had never heard of co-religionists in any other part of the world. Jesuits made visits to Kalfengfu over a long series of years. They also found Jews in other places in that region. According to their reports, a Yellow river flood in 1644 destroyed many Jewish manuscripts. In 1704 a letter from Kalfengfu describes in detail buildings on the Jewish property and customs of the people. The sect was then known as the Tachin Kiao, meaning that sect which "plucks out the sinews." One writer whom the people made welcome was permitted to inspect the buildings and to copy numerous inscriptions in Hebrew and Chinese. The buildings covered a space 400 feet long and 150 feet broad. They contained four separate courts, upon which opened places for residence, worship and work. Marble tablets with Chinese inscriptions ornamented the walls. Contiguous to one of the walls was a recess in which the sinews were extracted from animals slaughtered for food. Pork was a forbidden meat. In a hall of ancestors the heroes of Biblical history received veneration at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. The hall contained censers in honor of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the 12 sons of Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joshua and Ezra.

The synagogue measured 60x40 feet. In the center stood the throne of Moses, upon which it was customary to place

the Book of Law when it was read. An inscription in Hebrew hung suspended from a dome over the throne. There were various tablets commemorative of acts of kindness to the Jews by sovereigns of the Ming dynasty. A compartment called Tien Tang (house of heaven, or Bethel) occupied one extremity of the chamber. Here, on separate tablets, lay the 12 rolls of the Law, each in velvet or silk curtains. On one wall were inscribed the Ten Commandments. In addition to the silk curtains rolls of law were various books, as follows: "The Ta King," 53 books, in each of which was written one section of the law for Sabbath observance; "The Tsin Sou," or supplementary books called Hapfoolia (Haph-tara), containing portions of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, the Prophets, the historical books of Esther, Nehemiah, Ezra, Chronicles and the Maccabees; "The Keang Chang," or the expositors, and the "Lo Pai," ritual or ceremonial books, about 50 in number. Father Gonnani, one of the Jesuit visitors wrote: "All the books are preserved in greater care than gold or silver." Another Jesuit compared with a rabbi the names and ages of the patriarchs in the genealogies from Adam to Noah, and found complete agreement with the Old Testament records. The Hebrew scrolls had no vowel points, but the minor books employed vowel points, and accents.

An inscription on a stone bearing date 1489 recited that the patriarchs forbade the making of images and the worship of spirits; that Abraham was founder of the religion; that Moses, who was alive in the 634th year of the Teichou dynasty, abode for 40 days on the summit of Mount Sinai, refraining from meat and drink and communing with God and that the 43 portions of the law had their origin with him; that four days in every month should be devoted to purification and to stimulating to charitable acts, and that every seventh day should be devoted to rest, a fresh period of good deeds then commencing; that in the fourth season of the year the Jew places himself under severe restraint for seven days, abstaining altogether from food for one entire day, which he devotes to prayer and repentance. The stone recited that the religion came from Tchenchah, a distant India, but accepted as meaning Syria), and that 70 families brought it to China, and that the emperor said: "You have come to China. Keep and follow the customs of your forefathers and tell at Pionlang Kalfengfu." Emperor Tai Teou, who founded the

Ming dynasty, is credited on the stone with having, in 1390, granted to all who submitted to his authority land on which they might dwell peacefully and profess their religion without molestation.

A stone inscribed in 1512 contained the following passage: "After the creation the doctrine was transmitted by Adam to Noah; then, unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and afterward through the twelve patriarchs to Moses, Aaron and Joshua. Ezra promulgated the law, and through him the letters of the Yueshe (Yehudi, Jewish) nation were made plain. An inscription in 1668 agreed that there is nothing in the sacred law of the Jews inconsistent with the six canonical books of the Chinese.

The Jesuits observed that worshippers removed their shoes on entering the house of prayer and wore a blue head-dress while there. When reading the law the minister covered his face with a transparent veil, following the example of Moses, who conveyed the law to the Israelites with his face covered. Prayers were chanted, but without the accompaniment of musical instruments. The people adhered to the law of circumcision and kept various festivals, notably those of the tabernacles, the Passover and the Day of Atonement. They were forbidden to intermarry with heathen (a prohibition clearly disregarded in later years) or to seek converts. They never pronounced the name of God, but said Adonal instead. Beyond holding to the unity of God, they had no clear articles of belief; but they gave credence to vague notions of heaven, hell, purgatory, the resurrection and the day of judgment. In prayer they turned westward toward Jerusalem. They observed the Sabbath with great severity, food being prepared the day before. Their calendar was identical with that in use by Jews elsewhere.

Jesuit accounts of the colony were the last of importance until 1850, when Bishop Smith of Hongkong sent two Chinese deputies to Kalfengfu to investigate conditions. They found a few small dwellings on the temple site and copied several tablet inscriptions in Hebrew and Chinese, the former distinctly Jewish, referring to one God, and the latter following the moral precepts of Confucius. In the next year the same messengers made another visit and returned with several rolls of the law. Each of the rolls contained a complete copy of the Book of Moses, written on sheepskin sewed in strips of from 20 to 30 yards long. They ob-

tained also manuscript on thick yellowish paper giving directions for service for the Day of Atonement. Two members of the colony came with the messengers to Shanghai, where they were to study Hebrew and return to Kalfengfu to teach it to others. There is no record of what became of them. The Yellow river inundation of 1849 had sorely afflicted the colony, leaving surviving only about 200 adults, whom the messengers found so abject and destitute that they had sold religious and other effects from their buildings to provide themselves with food.

Rescue attempts in the United States were frustrated by the outbreak of the civil war. At about that time a visit was made by Herr J. L. Libermann. He saw rolls and records which he estimated to be several centuries old. The tablet containing the Ten Commandments and one bearing a Confession of Faith were then there. He wrote to Germany on the subject, but nothing came of it. A movement started in England in 1864 failed because of the death of the missionary, who was to come out. In 1866 Rev. Dr. W. A. P. Martin, the well known Protestant missionary, visited Kalfengfu. He found members of the colony who confessed that they had demolished buildings and sold tablets and records from pressure of their necessities. One of the most ornate of the tablets had been moved over to the mosque; some of the colony had turned Mohammedan; one had become a Buddhist priest. They had yet several copies of the law, but no one could read them, and it had been proposed to exhibit them in the market place. In the hope that some traveling Jew might see them and assist to restore the language and religion, Dr. Martin went again in 1869, and wrote a letter to the Jewish Messenger in New York proposing a mission. Nothing came of the project, except discussion. In 1901 a visitor reported that the present stone tablet was the only mark to identify the site, on which also were a few common dwellings occupied by members of the colony. In December, 1899, several Hebrew manuscripts reached Shanghai, which the Jesuits had long since collected at Kalfengfu. This led to the organization of the Rescue society.

Much of the historical matter herein contained was collated from various sources by Edward Isaac Ezra, an active member of the society. He and his associates have in preparation a pamphlet on the subject for general distribution in behalf of the movement. In an article he has prepared, referring to the survival of a settlement of Jews

for nearly 2,000 years in the heart of a country of pagans, Ezra quotes Dr. Martin as likening the colony to "a great rock rent from the side of Mount Zion and projected into the central

plain of China, which has stood there while the centuries rolled by, sublime in its antiquity and solitude."—Frederick W. Eddy, in San Francisco Chronicle.



"UNCLE JOSH" TERRY.

Above are depicted the strong and rugged features of "Uncle Josh" Terry, the oldest mountaineer of this region—a man who was with Bridger before the coming of the Pioneers to Utah; a man who underwent innumerable hardships and who both fought against and for the red men of this section; a man who married a Shoshone woman and whose son became a chieftain of this tribe. Something of his career and romantic experiences can be found on page 25 of this issue of the Deseret News.

## THE PUBLIC ENDORSES MADSEN'S.

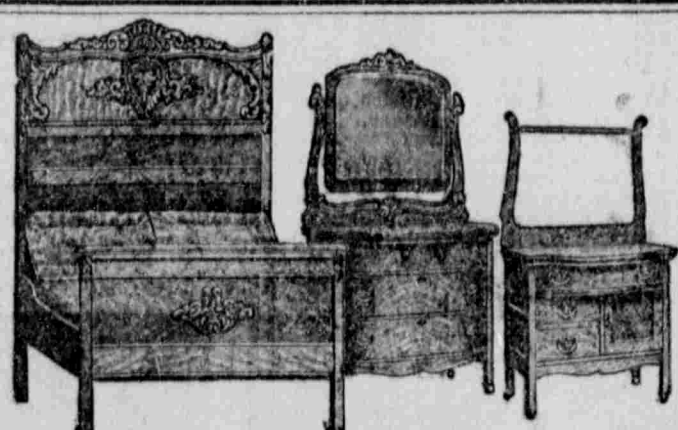
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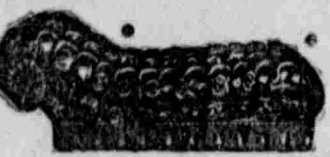
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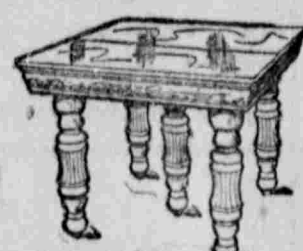


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