

ANCIENT JEWISH COLONY OF CHINA

Cut Off in the First Century They Have Kept Their Identity.

EARLY FACTS ABOUT THEM.

They Were Discovered in Modern Times by a Jesuit Father—Some of Their Peculiarities.

Although it has been known for a considerable time that Jews in large numbers have existed in China from a very remote period and for centuries lived and worshipped after the fashion of their people in other parts of the world without even guessing the existence of Jews other than themselves, no very complete account of them appeared until very recently, says the New York Sun.

Edward Isaac Ezra publishes in the last number of the East of Asia magazine a detailed history of the ancient Jewish colony at Kai-fengfu, capital of Honan, based upon the writings of ancient and modern historians and on his own investigations. The greater part of his account of them is new to all save the few who have closely followed the discoveries which have been made in recent years about these remarkable people, and those who are interesting themselves in the work of restoring the impoverished colony.

The early facts about the Jews in China are meager. Inscriptions on a stone tablet found in the synagogue at Kai-fengfu indicate that Jews first entered China during the Han dynasty, from B. C. 200 to A. D. 226. From let-

ters of the Jesuits it is gathered that they came during the reign of Mingti, A. D. 58 to 75, from "the western regions," which is taken to mean Persia.

Mr. Ezra says that Persian words in the language and literature of the Chinese Jews indicate that this is true, but says there is no tangible evidence to warrant the belief of some writers that these Jews descended from the 12 lost tribes. The earliest record regarding them in Chinese annals is found in a work of the Sung dynasty, called "Tung King Ka," in which mention is made of a "heaven spirit monastery" in Kai-fengfu. This work was written in the third or fourth century.

In a work by Wei Shuh there is a reference to a "foreign heaven chapel" in the city of Changnan, in Shensi. A work of the Sung dynasty, commenting on this chapel, refers to an officer of the service there as "Sapaou." This word, says Mr. Ezra, is not Chinese, but is a strong reminder of the Hebrew "Saphtai" or "Saphtai," a scribe.

From 875 on there is an abundance of material about the Chinese Jews. An Arabian writer of that period mentions them as one of the sects that perished in a general massacre at Khatif, but in 954 and 955 there are records of the district officials of Kai-fengfu conferring honors on Jews, and in 1163 the erection of a synagogue was begun in that town. Chinese records of 1232-54 show, too, that Jews were invited to Peking to join the imperial army.

In 1465 Kai-fengfu, the headquarters of the Chinese Jews, was a great city of about 1,000,000 people and of great wealth. There are records to show that in the fifteenth century there were many communities of Jews in China, reference being found to establishments in Nippo, Hangchow and Peking.

The best information about the Chinese Jews came from the Jesuits, who obtained a residence in Peking at the close of the sixteenth century. Before the observations of the Jesuits reached the outside world European Jews were completely ignorant of the existence of a colony of their co-religionists in China, and the Chinese Jews were equally unaware of their European brethren.

Father Ricci, one of the first of the Jesuit missionaries, gives an interesting account of how he discovered Jews in China. Mr. Ezra narrates it as follows: Early in the seventeenth century, one summer's day in Peking, a visitor, prompted by rumors of the arrival of certain foreigners who worshipped a single God and yet were not Mohammedans, called on Father Ricci. The

missionary, noticing the difference of features from the ordinary Chinese, led him to the oratory and knelt on his knees before a picture of the Virgin with the infant Jesus and St. John the Baptist. Near by was another picture representing four of the Apostles.

The visitor knelt also, remarking, "We in China do reverence our ancestors. This Rebecca, with her sons Jacob and Esau, had us to the other picture, why make obeisance to only four sons of Jacob, were there not 12?"

Returning to the former apartment, mutual explanations followed and an unforeseen solution ensued. The stranger was a Hebrew, Ngai by name, who had come to Peking from Kai-fengfu to procure literary honors. He stated that in his city there were some 12 families of Israelites with a fair synagogue, in which they preserved a roll of the law over 400 years old, and in Hangchow, the capital of Chekiang, there were many more families, also with a synagogue.

Scattered over the length and breadth of China there were others of his sect, but these were gradually being lost from having no meeting place. When shown a Bible in Hebrew he confessed his inability to read it, though he recognized the characters. He said that his preference for Gentile literature subjected him to many reproaches from the chief of the synagogue. Father Ricci was able to test the truth of these statements and dispatched some Chinese Christian messengers to Kai-fengfu for purposes of investigation, and soon received visits from other native Jews.

About the end of the Ming dynasty the decline of the Jewish colony was rapid. Letters sent there in 1777 and 1779 were unanswered, and letters from London Jews sent in 1815, although undoubtedly received, were without result.

In 1850 Dr. Smith, Bishop of Hongkong, sent two native messengers from Shanghai to obtain all possible details regarding the colony. After a journey of 25 days they reached their destination and found the ancient temple in ruins. A number of small apartments in the temple precincts were inhabited by Jews, who allowed the messengers to examine what was left of the sacred buildings. The inscriptions on tablets confirmed all that was already known of the colony.

In July, 1861, after another trip to Kai-fengfu, Bishop Smith's messengers brought back with them many rolls of the law, which it took two weeks of argument to induce the Chinese Jews to part with. Each of the rolls contained a complete copy of the Books of

Moses. They were beautifully written on white sheepskin, cut and sewed together, about 20 or 30 yards long and rolled on sticks.

In addition to these, the messengers brought back a number of smaller manuscripts, written on thick yellow paper. Among them were several containing the services of the Day of Atonement. One had at the end of it the names of the Jewish months and days of the week. All of this, says Mr. Ezra, shows pretty conclusively that the Chinese Jews of Kai-fengfu have been loyal guardians of the law.

To Dr. Martin, who visited the colony in 1886 and found it in a wretched condition of poverty, the remnants of the Chinese Jews admitted that they had torn down and sold part of their once beautiful synagogue from the pressure of necessity. In 1899, after a visit to the colony by Dr. Timothy Richard, an organization for the rescue of Chinese Jews was formed, and in response to an invitation sent by messenger, eight Chinese Jews actually undertook the journey from their ancient home at Kai-fengfu to Shanghai, arriving in the latter city in March, 1902, where they were cordially received by the Jewish colony.

Questioned as to their observance of their ancient religion, these Jews admitted that their faith was rapidly declining. At present they do not observe any of the ordinances of the Jewish religion, nor do they observe the idolatrous practices of the heathen. Many of them have been scattered, but there still remain to the seven clans about 140 adults. Their condition is so deplorable that they have no leader, no synagogue and no school for their children.

Four of the eight Jews have returned to Kai-fengfu armed with copies of the Old Testament in Chinese. Of the situation as it now stands, Mr. Ezra has this to say:

"We have seen that after a prolonged struggle the ancient colony at Kai-fengfu was at its last gasp, and at this eleventh hour not a moment should be lost in saving these pitiful remnants. It is one of the most astonishing facts of history that a small settlement of Jews have been able to survive the vicissitudes of some 2,000 years in the heart of a country of pagans."

From a Cat Scratch on the arm, to the worst sort of a burn, sore or boil, DeWitt's Witch Hazel Salve is a quick cure. In buying Witch Hazel Salve, be particular to get DeWitt's—this is the salve that heals without leaving a scar. A specific for blind, bleeding, itching and protruding piles. Sold by all druggists.

SALAMANDERS.

Boston.—The assertion made by Alexander Young, the astronomer of Laporte, Ind., that the sun is inhabited, is nothing short of ridiculous.

This was declared by William H. Pickering, the astronomer of Harvard college observatory. Prof. Young, who, Mr. Pickering alleges, is taking advantage of the similarity of names of his own and that of C. A. Young, the Princeton astronomer, in announcing from observations made by him that he is confident that the sun is inhabited.

With his instruments, Prof. Young says, he saw on the sun's surface mountain sides with great and precipitous rocks which glow with prismatic colors, mingled with greenness of a perennial vegetation, and with floral radiance more beautiful than that of earth. Beyond these mountains, he says, he saw valleys and plains where persons live. He says the solar spectrum has a division of the component parts of the electric current proceeding from the sun after it enters the confines of the earth's atmosphere, upon which is electrographed the solar spectrum of a division of color, and which spread over the vast surface of the sun.

"Alexander Young," said Mr. Pickering, "is a crank, while his wild assertions are nothing short of ridiculous. It has been proved by the observations made by Mr. Young of New Jersey and myself that the sun is too hot a body to allow of any habitation there."

"Alexander Young is also incorrect when he speaks of vegetation existing in the sun, for to any intelligent astronomer such a thing is beyond the range of possibility.

"The only solution I can give to the evident mistake made by Mr. Young of Laporte is that he must have confused the sun and the moon. The moon, as has been stated by astronomers who have made observations of it and also taken photographs of it, is thickly strewn with vegetation and quite a number of volcanoes. But this could not possibly be so in the sun, as the sun is hotter than the hottest electric furnace that was ever manufactured upon earth. To the ordinary layman the idea of the sun being inhabited is simply preposterous. The sun is a ball of fire encircled by a shell which generates the heat."—Kansas City Star.

THE FEMINE PRESS.

The interesting thing about the Chicago project to establish a newspaper to be controlled, edited and published by women is that the invasion of jour-



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"I long ago learned the first great rule of health—keep the bowels regular—so I am never without Ayer's Pills." J. C. AYER & CO., Lowell, Mass.

nalism by the sex has become so general as to make this venture possible, with more than a likelihood of success. The ranks of pressmen and stereotypers have not yet been opened to women, but in all other departments of newspaper making they are now represented in numbers. As editors, editorial writers, reporters, business managers, cashiers, auditors, circulators, they now possess a full and intimate acquaintance with a realm which in the last generation except for a few Jenny Stanes, Kate Fields and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was exclusively man's. It is now feasible to fill all the responsible posts in a daily newspaper of-

rice of any but the first-class with women of proved competence. The emancipation of the sex has gone far in making it thus possible to recruit a full staff from women newspaper workers. No other nation can point to anything comparable with this in feminine progress. The restrictive conditions which the German Kaiser summarized in his recommended restriction of women to church, children and kitchen are too powerful on the continent to be broken by the most persistent propagandists of women leaders. The restriction remains intact in Germany, while here it is a rope of sand. —New York Evening World.

GREAT MAY SALE OF SUITS.

If our Cloak Room isn't crowded Monday and week, 'twill not be for lack of Irresistible Prices. We're determined to effect a speedy and decisive clearance of 300 TAILOR-MADE SUITS all in this season's latest styles at Immense Reductions. This is one of those sales you want to attend without delay. Buy and you'll be glad you did! Delay and you'll regret it. Note these Prices.

- At \$30.00. Splendid line of Tailor-made Suits, in Navy Blue, Red, Grey Black, value \$18.00, for **\$9.00**
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- At \$24.75. Very Swell Suits in Black, Navy and Mixtures, assorted styles, value \$35.00 to \$37.50, for... **\$24.75**

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A Large and Elegant assortment of Child's Silk Coats in latest styles from— **\$3.50, \$4.50, \$5.50 to \$8.50**
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All Children's Reefers at special price. **\$1.25, \$1.75, \$2.95**
Value \$2.00 to \$5.00.
- Children's Dresses.**
Large and Handsome assortment of Children's Dresses at **50c, 75c, \$1, 1.25, 1.50, 1.75, \$2, \$3, \$4, \$5 to \$10** in White and Colors.

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- Ladies' drawers of fine Nainsook, trimmed with wide flounce of embroidery, also double lace ruffles, value \$2.00, for... **\$1.25**
- Ladies' extra fine \$3.50 quality Nainsook gowns front and sleeves elaborately trimmed with fine val lace and ribbon beading, also embroidery trimmed, for... **\$2.45**
- MUSLIN GOWNS, Embroidery or lace trimmed, value \$1.00 for... **65c**
- INFANTS' SHORT DRESS of fine Lawn or Nainsook, trimmed in Embroidery or Lace, value \$2.25, for... **\$1.45**



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Two special values like cut. Ladies' Style Collar, front, bottom trimmed with white stitching, value \$4.00, for **\$2.95**

Ladies' Walking Skirt in grey, black or navy, fine fitting, value \$5.50, for **\$3.85**

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Our stocks comprise a grand variety of the Best Makes, all marked at Popular Prices.

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- Child's fast Black Hose, high spliced heel and toe, (per pair) **25c**
- Boys' Bicycle Hose, heavy ribbed seamless double knee, for... **20c**
- Ladies' Swiss Ribbed Vests, extra fine quality, pink, blue, white, Special **23c**
- Ladies' Knit Drawers, Swiss ribbed, lace trimmed, special... **32c**

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Petticoat made of an extra fine quality mercerized Satene, specially wide flare flounce with 5 rows of piping, finished with two small gathered ruffles; full under ruffle, finished with dust ruffle, all seams strapped; new perfect fitting, shaped top, value \$3.00, special for **\$2.15**

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Extra good line of Wrappers, in assorted styles and colors, value **\$1.25 and \$1.50**
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LADIES' DRESS SKIRTS

Extra Good Values quoted for this weeks selling! Black Cloth Dress Skirts, Cord and Satin trimmed, value \$3.50 for **\$2.65**

- Black or Navy Cloth Skirts, narrow Satin Band trimmed on bottom of skirt, value \$5.00 for... **\$3.65**
- Ladies' fine Dress Skirts in Black and assorted, Blues in Broadcloth, Serge, Etamines, value \$5.50, for... **\$6.45**
- Fine selection of Dress Skirts in latest styles, Black and Blue, value \$10.00 to \$12.00 for... **\$8.95**

A Grand assortment of very fine Dress Skirts in Broadcloth and Chevots, handsomely made and trimmed, value \$17.50 to \$18.50, for... **11.95**

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- Special Good Values in Ladies' Silk Coats: Nobby Short Silk Coat, Box Style Collar, front, bottom trimmed with white stitching, value \$7.50, for... **\$5.00**
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