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ZHOU Xun was born in Sichuan province, China and received her PhD from the University of London in 1998. In the past 20 years, she has lived in London, Jerusalem, Beijing, and Hong Kong. Between January 2001 and December 2007, she was a research fellow at the Department of History at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. From December 2007 to December 2012, she was Research Assistant Professor at the School of Humanities, University of Hong Kong. Dr. Zhou has also a long track record of media activities. Her most recent media appearances include the new French documentary film *Mao's Great Famine* (2012) and BBC Radio 4 program *As History is My Witness* (October 2012). She also writes a regular op-ed column for *South China Morning Post*.

Introduction

JAMES R. ROSS
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The relationship between China and the Jews has been explored in several studies in recent years. The works range from Xiao Xian's textual analysis of Chinese newspaper reports about Jews before 1949 to M. Avrum Ehrlich's edited volume exploring the influence of Jewish thought on Chinese culture. Irene Eber also has written on this topic in Hebrew and English. Yet few scholars have examined the relationship from the contemporary perspective of ordinary Chinese citizens and the images they share about Jews and Judaism. This volume explores those images with innovative studies by both Chinese and Western scholars.

Zhou Xun, who has written widely about Chinese perceptions of Jews, frames this volume by reviewing the history of Chinese stereotypes of the Jews and offering her analysis of contemporary images. As the Chinese economy surges under economic reforms, Jews represent money, power, and success, goals to which most Chinese aspire. She also examines the growth of the expatriate Jewish community in Beijing and how communal functions, like a state-of-the-art mikvah, and businesses, including kosher restaurants and a bagel shop, have thrived. The definition of Jews and Judaism, she concludes, is complex and ever evolving.

James Ross examines the images of Jews in popular culture, including best-selling books, blogs, and films. He finds that popular authors such as He Xiongfei perpetuate stereotypes and misunderstandings about Jews. Many best sellers focus on how Jews make money and raise their children. But Ross suggests these stereotypes are evidence of philo-Semitism rather than anti-Semitism.

Fu Youde has written previously on Jewish distinctiveness. He expands on his earlier work by showing that despite the wide admiration of Jews in Chinese society, Jewish ways of thinking (including advocating for freedom and equality) are sharply different from the traditional Chinese emphasis on uniformity. He finds Jewish distinctiveness in Jewish law, holidays, and customs.

But there is no Jewish distinctiveness to be found among what remains of the ancient Jewish community of Kaifeng, at least in the official view of the Chinese government. One of the foremost scholars on Kaifeng, Xu Xin, provides new evidence of how Chinese government policies toward that community evolved in the 1950s. The government set requirements for what constituted an ethnic group: a common language; area of inhabitation; a unique set of customs, attitudes, and beliefs; and traditional means of livelihood. The government's investigation found that the Kaifeng Jews had completely mingled with the Han population and had no distinctive traits. They did not qualify for government recognition as an ethnic group. This report, Xu Xin discovered, was approved at the highest levels of the Chinese leadership.

Moshe Bernstein examines the Kaifeng community from a different perspective. He visited the contemporary Jewish community during Sukkot, a holiday which coincides with the Chinese mid-Autumn festival. Bernstein reports that 11 Kaifeng Jews have formally converted and made aliyah with the help of Shavei Israel, an organization based in Israel that reaches out to lost Jewish descendants. There are 50 families that continue to remain involved in communal activities, Bernstein writes, but they are a fragmented and confused community. It remains to be seen how their Jewish identity will evolve.

There is no translation of the Hebrew Bible in China—all current translations of the entire Bible have been produced by Christians. But in his innovative study of how ordinary Chinese people understand the Bible, Jeremiah Meng looks at the responses of Chinese viewers to a television series on the Bible produced by pious American Christians. The viewers expressed their opinions about the shows on a “bullet curtain,” rolling responses from audience members that is shown on the

top of the television screen as the viewers comment and interact with each other. Previous studies, Meng notes, are usually limited to intellectuals with backgrounds in religion.

People's Daily is the official newspaper of the Chinese government and is also representative of mainstream Chinese media. Gangzheng She examines Chinese images of Israel in *People's Daily* from 1948 to 1991. The changing image of Israel in China, he notes, shows the shifting development of Sino-Israeli relations as well as Israel's position in China's foreign policy. He notes that the coverage changed based on domestic fluctuations in China. As China focused on economic reform in the late 1980s, for example, the coverage was predominantly about scientific developments in Israel.

Zhong Zhiqing's article on contemporary Israeli literature available in China looks at both intellectual and common readers. Interest in Israeli literature has grown dramatically since establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and China in 1992. There are currently 114 books and anthologies that have been translated from Hebrew into Chinese: 74 books of prose, 5 books of poetry, 27 books for children, and 10 anthologies. Amos Oz's visit to the Institute of Foreign Literature at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in 2007 was a key development in the literary exchange between China and Israel. Oz participated in a series of events, which drew attention to contemporary Israeli literature from Chinese publishers, intellectuals, and common readers.

Chen Yiyi ("China's Relationship with Israel") notes that there has been extensive scholarly literature on this subject but that many questions remain to be answered. None of the existing work takes into consideration the implication of China's dramatic economic growth in the past decade. China now makes substantial purchases of Israeli agro-technology, water purification, and telecommunications systems, and Israel imports a variety of mechanical, electronic, chemical, and textile goods from China. There have been regular cultural exchanges between Israel and China as well as growth in tourism for both countries in recent years. Israeli and Chinese universities, research institutes, and scientific academies cooperate in almost every field of study.

But American objections have forced China and Israel to forgo any weapons exchanges.

The essay by Glenn Timmermans is one of the first studies of how the Holocaust is perceived and studied in China. He notes that this emerging field is shaped by China's role in offering refuge to German and Austrian Jews during World War II as well as by the Japanese atrocities on Chinese soil in the 1930s and 1940s. China's tumultuous contemporary relationship with Japan had shaped perceptions of World War II atrocities as well as perceptions of the Holocaust. The Nanjing Massacre Memorial, first opened in 1985, was redesigned in 2007 based on Yad Vashem. There are no institutions in China with Holocaust studies, he writes, but study of the Shoah is included in the major Jewish Studies programs. Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau offer seminars and symposia on the Holocaust.

One of the anomalies of Jewish studies in China, Lihong Song writes, is that there is no study of Jewish liturgy. The liturgy is essential to understanding the lived Jewish experience, he argues. After reviewing the unique aspects of Jewish studies in China, he concludes with a question that is central to this volume. "Should we face inward toward satisfying academic colleagues," he asks, "or should we face outward and endeavor to leaven an undistorted, meaningful, and accessible knowledge of the Jewish people to a broader Chinese audience?"

Perceiving Jews in Modern China

ZHOU XUN
University of Essex

In modern China, the definition of “Jew” and “Jewishness” is problematic and complex. It is a symbol for money, deviousness, and meanness; it can also represent poverty, trustworthiness, and warm heartedness. It has religious as well as secular meanings. While it represents individualism, it also stands for a collective spirit. On the one hand, it is the symbol for tradition; on the other hand it can equally invoke modernity. One day the Jew is a stateless slave, another day the Jew is the dominant power in the world. The Jew is nationalist and at the same time cosmopolitan. He can be a filthy capitalist or an ardent communist, a committed revolutionary or a spineless loser. In other words, anything which is not Chinese is Jewish, at the same time anything which is Chinese is also Jewish; anything which the Chinese need is Jewish, at the same time anything which the Chinese despise is Jewish.

Although these representations seem to correspond with images of the Jews in Europe, it would be superficial to reduce them to purely Western influence. Representations of the Jews have been endowed with indigenous meaning by modernizing elites in China since the late nineteenth century. To a great extent, these images of the Jews were, and still are, generated by the *difference* of the Jewish race, which is marked by its non-Chineseness.

By establishing the Jews as a homogeneous group that acts as a constitutive outsider and embodies all the negative as well as positive qualities that were feared or desired, various social groups in China could thus identify themselves as an integrated, homogeneous in-group, the “Chinese.” They are, therefore, able to project their own anxieties

onto outsiders like the Jews. In this respect, this dynamic corresponds with a widespread fear as well as the need for an “other,” a dynamic that can be found in many cultures and societies.

The Emergence/Construction of the Image of the Jews

For the Chinese modernizing elites of the early twentieth century, the Jew was an integral part of the new racial taxonomies they had invented in order to represent the world as a collection of unequally endowed biological groups. Described as a “historical race,” the “Jewish race” stood in symbolic contradistinction to the historical “yellow race,” as the reformers now refer to the Chinese. As early as 1903, Jiang Guanyun, a modernizing journalist, depicted the “Jewish race” as a “historical Caucasian race” which had descended from the Semites. The physical appearance of the “Jewish race” was imagined by Jiang to be characterized by an oval face, big eyes, thin lips and a convex nose. In the following years, similar descriptions prevailed in representations of the Jew in China. In 1910, for instance, when Zhang Xiangwen, a historian and geographer, visited Kaifeng in central China, he perpetuated these stereotypes by claiming that the Jewish descendants there had big noses and deep-set eyes and that one could still distinguish them from genuine Chinese by their Caucasian physical features.¹

Although representations of the “Jewish race” in China were actively constructed by Chinese intellectuals themselves, the language of anti-Semitism was appropriated from Western sources to reconfigure and legitimize indigenous racial discourse. It was the Christian missionaries who first introduced the image of the Jew as the “seed of Abraham.”²

From the middle of the nineteenth century onward, travel to the West also provided opportunities for Chinese intellectuals to encounter and appropriate the arguments of anti-Semitic discourse. However, in contrast to the European anti-Semites, Chinese intellectuals’ attitudes

1 Zhang Xiangwen, “Daliang fangbeiji” [A Report on the Visit to the Stone Tablets in Kaifeng], *Nanyuan conggao*, in *Contemporary Chinese Historical Documents* series 30, Wenhai chubanshe, vol. 1, n.d., 282.

2 For further readings see Zhou Xun (2001), *Chinese Perceptions of the Jews and Judaism: A History of the Youtai*, chapter 2.

toward Jews were often mixed with curiosity and envy. Why should the Jewish, not the Chinese, be the dominant culture of the world? Why should Judaism, not Confucianism, have been widely accepted as the guiding moral principle of human society? Why should a Jew, not a Chinese, be the richest man? While they asked these questions, many modernizing elites in China also attempted to prove that Chinese culture was superior to the Jewish one. For instance, Wang Tao, one of the very first Chinese scholars who travelled to Europe in the nineteenth century, the father of the modern newspaper in China, as well as James Legge's collaborator (Legge introduced Confucian classics to a Western audience), found it was most thrilling that an Eastern culture—the Jewish culture or Judaism—should survive within Western culture. He used it to show the conservatives that they need not fear Western culture, because Judaism, which had survived and had an important role to play in the Christian West, had not managed very well at all in China. The sinification of the Jewish community in China was for him powerful proof that Chinese culture was far superior to Jewish culture; therefore, it was still more superior to Western culture. Hence, according to Wang Tao, opening the door to the West would not destroy the superior Chinese culture.³

The Jew and Money

In order to construct the Jews as a “race with biologically specific features,” Jiang Guanyun even traced the Western anti-Semitic image of the “Jew as financier” back to its Semitic ancestry. However, representations of the “Jew as a financier” were not always perceived to be entirely negative. Xue Fucheng (1838–1894), a famous diplomat who regarded the development of commercial industry to be essential for China, saw rich “Jewish financiers” as a positive illustration for his theory. According to Xue, if Chinese were as rich as Jews, then China would be the most powerful nation in the world.⁴

3 Wang Tao, *Manyou suilu* [Travel Diaries], (Hunan: Yuelu shushe, 1985), 82.

4 Xue Fucheng, *Chushi Ying Fa Yi Bi siguo Rinji* [Diaries of Diplomatic Missions to England, France, Italy, and Belgium, 1890–1894], (republished by Hunan renminchubanshe, 1985), 792–793.

The translation of Charles Lamb's *Tales of Shakespeare* in 1904 was used to further consolidate the image of the Jew as a money grabber. Shylock, the money lender, soon became a household caricature of the Jew amongst the reading public in China. Furthermore, a number of historians even identified as Jews some commercial groups who had been engaged in money lending in the past in the western regions of China. And the eagle-nose became the quintessential symbol for the "money-loving Jews."

The Jew in the Racial Struggle

The dichotomy of Europeans into Aryan and Semitic "races" also inspired some Chinese abroad to manipulate the Jews as a useful weapon in their "racial war" against the "whites." When Hong Jun, also a diplomat to Europe, was insulted by some white people of a Western church, he fought back by arguing that Jesus was a Jew with black hair and eyes like himself, therefore the white Europeans had no right to insult an Asian fellow-man of Jesus. Shan Shili, one of the earliest Chinese female intellectuals who went to Europe, in her travel diary of 1910, passionately compared the anguish of the Jewish people under the white domination in Europe with their freedom under the rule of the "yellows" in Kaifeng. The division between Aryan and Semitic races was thus projected onto a more fundamental opposition between the "white" and "yellow" races. Shan even warned the Chinese that if they did not learn from the lesson of the "Jewish race" they would not be able to win the racial war against the "whites."⁵

The Jew as a "New People"

The myth of "Jewish power" in the West was of great attraction for Liang Qichao. Liang was one of the first reformers in the 1890s to propose a racialized world view. During his tour of the New World, he pondered over the survival of the Chinese people. He saw the "powerful and wealthy Jews" as an anti-image of the backwardness of the Chinese. The Jews became a perfect example for his call for a

5 Shan Sili, *Guijianji* [Dairy of Italy], (Hunan renminchubanshe, 1981).

“new people” (*xinmin*), or a collective nationalistic spirit, which he believed to be essential to the progress and social well-being of China. In his famous *Travel Diary to the New World*, Liang was convinced that if the Chinese race was going to survive, the Chinese must learn from the Jews, and eventually to become like the Jews to control the world economy and global politics. Hence, the future of China was projected onto the myth of “Jewish power.”⁶

The Stateless Jew

With the rise of nationalism in China in the early twentieth century, some of China’s revolutionary thinkers represented the stateless Jew as the imaginary prospect awaiting China. Articles on the pogroms in Russia began to appear in Chinese newspapers and journals after the Russo-Japanese War extended to the northeast of China in 1903. The Jewish problem, which was once unknown and uninteresting, now became of great relevance to the Chinese nationalists. The lamentation of the stateless Jew became a warning to the Chinese. The “Jewish race” was portrayed as an “ugly race” because they did not have a country. They were thought to have deserved their inhuman treatment. While stirring up the fear of becoming stateless like the Jews, many of the Chinese nationalists reasoned, “We are not like the Jews!” According to them, the superior Chinese still had a country of their own. The argument went further with a very strong anti-Jewish tone: the Jews deserved the awful situation they were in because they had neither a nationalistic spirit nor any collective responsibility. The Jews were portrayed as victims of materialism and individualism. It was suggested that their love for money and personal happiness finally drove the Jews into this terrible state. Schiff’s huge loan to the Japanese in 1904 was seen by some Chinese as a bribe the Jews used to save themselves from the yoke of the Russians. The author of an article entitled “The Stateless Jews” thus commented, “Stateless, though [they] have money, money cannot save them [the Jews].” His solution for the Chinese was to avoid emulating the Jews: not to love money more than one’s country,

6 Liang Qichao, “Xindalu youji” [Travel Dairy of the United States], (first published in *Xinmin congbao*’s special supplement, 1903), section 12, 51.

otherwise the Chinese would end up stateless like the Jews. In order to avoid being like the Jews and to preserve the “Chinese race,” China had to promote nationalism first.⁷

The Jews as a Nation

With the fall of the Qing dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China in 1911, racial nationalism was further promoted by Sun Yatsen, the father of Chinese nation. Nationalism, in the eyes of Sun and his followers, was the sole generator of the rise and fall of any race. Sun perceived Zionism as the nationalistic movement of the Jewish people, and he believed that it was the Jewish nationalistic spirit, or Zionism, which held the Jewish race together. As the Jewish nationalistic spirit became an inspiration for these Chinese nationalists, the image of “ugly” and “stateless” Jews shifted to that of the “wonderful and historical nation.” In the same way in which they portrayed the so-called “Han Chinese” as a pure biological entity, Sun and many of his contemporaries perceived the Jewish nation/race as a homogeneous racial group characterized by common blood, language, and culture. Since the Jews were perceived as a nation, with a common ancestor and a territory, Palestine was accepted by many Chinese nationalists as “the national home of the Jewish people.”⁸

The Jews as Imperialists

Together with nationalism, the newly founded Republic of China also provided the ground for an increasingly growing anti-imperialism. The Jews were sometimes portrayed as imperialists. As in Europe, Chinese nationalists needed a scapegoat. Many of the articles on Jewish imperialism were drawn from Japanese or Western sources. They followed the age-old anti-Semitic pattern by listing Jewish dominance in the world of finance, politics, and the media. In some cases, they conflated Freemasonry with Zionism, the Jewish plot to control the world. The Jews were often portrayed as the epitome of imperialism and the driving

7 “Eren luesha youtianren” [The Slaughtering of Jews by the Russians], *Jiangsu* 4 (1903).

8 For further readings, see Zhou (2000) chapter 6.

force of evil in the capitalist world. In one article entitled “The Jewish Empire”, the author declared, “If one does not know the truth about the Jews, how could one say that he understands the truth about the Western imperialism?”

The Jews as a Superior Race

As mentioned earlier, having classified the “Jewish race” as a branch of the “white race,” some Chinese intellectuals also regarded it as a biologically “superior race” alongside the “yellow race,” in contrast with the inferior “red, black, and brown races.” The image of the Jews as a “wonderful and historical nation” was further defined as a “superior race.” It was claimed that such superiority was manifested in the intellectual ability of the Jews. Hu Shi, a celebrated scholar and philosopher of modern China, stereotyped the Jews as an “intellectual race” with impressive academic ability and adventurous spirit. The need to create such a representation was obviously rooted in the anxiety over the backwardness of China and the belief, shared by many Chinese intellectuals of the New Cultural Movement, that the intellectuals bore the responsibility for the reconstruction of their chaotic country. The New Cultural Movement first emerged in 1915 as a result of the demand for a new urban culture by the growing urban population in China.

According to You Xiong, an outstanding writer of the Movement, the reason the Jews were able to control world politics, world finance, and the world in general was that the “Jewish race” had intellectual gifts of quick understanding, rational thinking, good judgment, good organization, and fast action, and that it produced more superior lawyers, philosophers, thinkers, politicians, doctors, scientists, musicians, and even chess players than any other race in the world.⁹ It may be argued that in the same way that Liang Qichao had used the Jews as an example in his call for a “new people,” many intellectuals of the New Cultural movement also found in the Jews a model for the restoration of the “Chinese race.” The present backwardness of the “Chinese race,” or more correctly the anxiety within these intellectuals

9 You Xiong, “Youtaiminzu zhi xiagzhuang jiqi qianli” [The Present Situation of the Jewish Race and Its Potential], *Dongfang zazhi*, (18:12 1921), 23.

themselves, was often explained as the result of a lack of talent in China. This did not, however, indicate that the “Chinese race” was less superior to the “Jewish race” since China also had produced world-class geniuses in the past. Furthermore, Qian Zhixiu was able to prove that although the “Jewish race” and the “Chinese race” had very different characteristics, the latter shared all the advantages of the former, including intellectual ability. In conclusion, Qian proclaimed, “the Chinese will be the Jews of the future” and “China is the giant yet to be awakened.”¹⁰

The Jews as a Product of Racial Discrimination

It would, however, be an oversimplification to presume that all intellectuals in modern China articulated racial discourse in the same way. While many Chinese intellectuals viewed the Jews as one homogenous race, a few divergent voices, such as He Ziheng and Wu Qinyou, challenged such a view. In an article entitled “The So-called Jewish People,” He Ziheng used scientific methods to undermine the idea of a “Jewish race.” By using various statistics, he showed that a large percentage of Jews in different countries did not have the so-called “Semitic nose,” shape of head, deep dark eyes, or black hair, and “no one can tell a Jew from an American or a European unless the Jews write the word ‘Jew’ on their forehead.” He also dismissed the idea that all Jews shared “common blood,” pointing out instead that intermarriage between Jews and other races was commonly practiced throughout history. He concluded that the Jews were not a race but merely a product and victim of racial discrimination.¹¹

For many left-wing intellectuals of the 1930s, this representation of the Jews as an oppressed people had a much more profound and symbolic implication in their own struggle against the immediate enemy—the Japanese—and their own imagined enemy, the “white” imperialists of the West. As Wu Qinyou put it, “The significance of the

10 Qian Zhixiu, “Youtairen yu Zhongguoren” [The Jews and the Chinese], *Dongfang zazhi*, (8:12, 1912), 40–46.

11 He Ziheng, “Shijieshang you chuncui de minzhu ma?” [Is There Any Pure Race in the World?], *Xueshuji* (Academic Circle, 1:2, 1943), 12–16.

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