

# LONG LOST JEWS MAY BE SOUGHT

## China Colonies Have Been Isolated for More Than a Thousand Years.

New York.—If a movement now on foot among wealthy Jews in Shanghai, China, backed by influential support in the United States, is successful, Jewish colonies in China that have been virtually cut off from the Western world for more than a thousand years, will again be brought in touch with the main body of their race.

The efforts now being made are the latest of several extending over a period of more than three-quarters of a century. The present hope of success rests on an increased knowledge of the history and traditions of the Chinese Jews, better organization and more adequate financial backing. Facts which have been gradually coming to light reveal an amazing story of small communities of these exiles clinging to their ancient rites and practices through generations in the very heart of Chinese civilization.

The present revival is due in large part to Adolph S. Oko, librarian of the Hebrew Union college of Cincinnati, who recently brought from Europe a collection of 59 manuscripts containing hymns, prayers and rituals showing conclusively the connection between the Jews of ancient and medieval China and those of the Western world.

These manuscripts, written on paper folded into the form of fans, are partly in Chinese and partly in an ancient Jewish-Persian dialect, indicating that they were originally composed by emigrants from the long-established Hebrew settlements in Persia. According to a writer in the American Hebrew they "constitute all the manuscripts known to have been written by Jews living in China." They were collected during the middle of the last century by missionaries sent to China by an English society, which hoped to convert their owners to Christianity.

**Origin of Settlements in Doubt.**

The origin of the Jewish settlements in China, as well as their probable date, is a matter of doubt among scholars. One theory advanced is that a part of the Jewish people who were carried into captivity in Babylon in the Seventh century, B. C. gradually made their way eastward instead of returning to Jerusalem when the city was restored to them by Cyrus, king of Persia, in the Sixth century B. C. There is little or no direct evidence to back this up, although in the writings of Isidore there is a reference to the "land of Sinita," which is thought by some Old Testament commentators to mean China. If this supposition were correct, it would indicate that the Jews as far back as the Eighth century B. C. knew about the Chinese.

Another theory is that the Jews made their way in considerable numbers to China after the destruction of Jerusalem by the Emperor Titus in 70 A. D. It is known that very early in the Christian era Jews were living not only in Persia but in India.

The best testimony on the subject, however, is that of the emigrants themselves. They believed, according to their medieval writings and inscriptions, that they settled in China about the Third century of the present era. This accords with other evidence which historians consider trustworthy.

The weight of this evidence seems to show that the Jews worked their way eastward, sometimes under pressure of religious and racial persecutions, such as took place in Persia as early as the First century, and sometimes in the role of traders seeking new markets. The Romans called the Chinese by a name meaning "silk men," and the Jews of Persia, and perhaps also of the Roman empire, were silk merchants at a very early date. It is thought probable that they followed the caravan routes through Central Asia, or went by sea to India, and thence made their way into the silk-producing regions of China.

**Marco Polo Found Them.**

For a time these wanderers probably kept in touch with members of their race in the Western world. Then, as the Occidental Jews became scattered and the ancient trade routes fell into partial disuse, they were cut off and forgotten. They were not again brought to the attention of the Occident, so far as is known, until Marco Polo found and mentioned them in his famous travels toward the end of the Thirteenth century. Polo said that the Tartar emperor, Kubla Khan—a model of religious tolerance—honored the religious festivals not only of the Mohammedans and Buddhists but also of the Christians and the Jews, making no distinction among them. This is held to show that the Jews must have been fairly numerous and highly esteemed.

A Chinese inscription of the year 1489 bears out this conclusion. "They excel in agriculture, in merchandise, in magistracies and in warfare and are highly esteemed for integrity, fidelity, and a strict observance of their religion."

**Hammond Has Device to End Radio Interference**

New York.—A device to eliminate "listening in" or interference in radio transmission was described by John Hays Hammond, Jr., who has just returned from Italy, where he had passed two months in radio work.

Complete isolation of sender and receiver is afforded by a method of sending out rays which have curves and dips in them, similar to the rise and fall of the pulse on a nurse's chart, according to Mr. Hammond. Only the receiver familiar with the wave type can read the message.

The new method of transmission will also make it possible to flash complete pages of print across the Atlantic ocean by radio, Mr. Hammond predicts.

"In a private audience with the pope," Mr. Hammond said, "I was interested to learn of his enthusiasm over radio matters, and he discussed with me the application of my work to the needs of his observatory."

**Bell Weighs 52 Tons**

Feking.—The world's masterpiece in bronze is a bell that hangs in an obscure temple called Ta Chung-sun, outside of Feking.

It is like an inverted chalice, 14 feet high, 34 feet around the rim and 9 inches thick at the lip. It weighs 52 tons. It is engraved inside and out with 84,000 characters, each 1/4-inch square.

It was cast 500 years ago by order of Emperor Yung Lo.

# DEFECTIVE EYES MEAN HUGE LOSS

## Poor Vision of School Pupils Costs Taxpayers Annually \$130,000,000.

New York.—Defective eyesight in public schools is costing the taxpayers of the nation at least \$130,000,000 annually, it is asserted by the Eyesight Conservation Council of America, which, in a statement sent to directors of summer schools throughout the country, urges organized conservation of vision as a social and economic need.

Warning that poor eyesight is a prolific source of retardation, the council makes public the results of investigations showing that a large proportion of backward children have visual defects.

Accompanying the statement is a report revealing that heavy moral and financial losses arise from this evil. Approximately 25 per cent of all school children in the United States, the council finds, are retarded in their studies and fully one-third of this retardation is conservatively estimated as due to defective vision.

If this is a correct estimate there are at least 2,000,000 school children in the United States one or more years behind in their studies because of defective vision, says the council's report, continuing:

"According to the United States bureau of education the cost of public elementary and secondary education for the entire United States averaged in 1920 \$64.16 per pupil per year. If each one of the 2,000,000 retarded children in the United States, as estimated, was forced to drop back only one year the cost would be \$390,000,000.

"The public school system spends this amount each year in order that these children may have one or more years longer to complete their education. At least one-third of this amount, or \$130,000,000, is lost annually because the eyesight of the children is neglected.

"This estimated cost is low, for the average backward pupil is retarded more than one year. Studies made in two cities of 5,815 retarded pupils show a total of 12,970 school years lost, making an average much in excess of two years for each retarded pupil.

"Furthermore, the estimate does not represent the total loss to the child and to the state when consideration is given to the future inefficiency, lowered earning power and less competent service of the individual as an economic unit of society."

**Leads to Other Troubles.**

John J. Tigert, United States commissioner of education and a member of the board of councilors of the eyesight council, is quoted as asserting, after a careful review of the situation, that "one of the greatest disturbing factors in measuring the effects of defective vision upon retardation is the fact that faulty eyesight invariably leads to other troubles, and the effect of these is not attributed to defective vision."

The council's statement to summer-school directors, signed by Guy A. Henry of New York, general director, says that "a large percentage of the pupils attending summer schools are obliged to do so merely because they have not kept up with their classes."

In the report disclosing waste and the relation between sound vision and school progress is indicated. "Defective vision is responsible for much of the retardation in school progress which exists in the educational institutions of the country," says the report.

"Investigations of 28,067 public school children with defective vision show that of this group an average of 67 per cent were retarded in their studies one or more years. This is almost three times as high as the retardation of groups when not classified according to eyesight. In another group of 32,050 pupils of which retardation investigations were made without segregating or giving consideration to condition of eyes, the proportion of those retarded in their studies averaged 24 per cent."

**Large Number Backward.**

Of 7,319 school children found with defective vision in the public school eye clinic of one of our large cities 72 per cent were backward in their studies. An examination of 2,185 rural school children in a midwestern state disclosed that of those retarded nearly 60 per cent had visual defects, according to the council.

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"The correction of visual defects results in a marked improvement in school progress," the report continues. "The records of 20,000 cases sent to a public school eye clinic for correction of refractive errors show that from 20 to 70 per cent of the children were classified as backward, mentally deficient, stupid or habitually left back. The careful follow-up system proved that after their defective vision had been corrected 70 to 80 per cent of these children progressed and took their place in the class with the normal average child. The reason the remaining 20 to 30 per cent did not progress was because their retardation was due to causes other than defective vision.

"The proportion of retardation in another group, all with visual defects, was found to be 85.4 per cent. One year later, after the defective eyes had been corrected by glasses, only 17 per cent of these corrected continued to be backward in their studies."

**Dogs in Bed Too Much**

Los Angeles, Cal.—Too many pet dogs, which she kept in her home against her husband's wishes, cost Mrs. Estelle S. Faussette her husband. James G. Faussette, a Los Angeles merchant, in a petition for divorce, alleges his wife insisted on taking at least three of her pet dogs to bed with her and that the remainder of her dozen or more dogs she kept in the house.

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