



The Kaifeng Stone Inscriptions: The Legacy of the Jewish Community in Ancient China

Tiberiu Weisz



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In 1489, 1512 and then again in 1663, the Jews community in China pooled their resources to inscribe the story of the Kaifeng Temple in stone. Their purpose was to remind future generations about the Israelite religion, about their prayers, what and when to pray, and to perpetuate the history and significance of the Temple. At the time of the engraving, the Israelites had lived intermittently under Chinese administration for over 1500 years, adhering to the biblical rituals and customs. Part I contains the new annotated translation and traces the original Chinese text to biblical sources. Part II examines the origin of the community, their first encounter with the Chinese, their dedication to the Temple and their life as Jews in the sea of Chinese culture. Incorporated are many Hebrew sources and original Chinese works that are translated here for the first time which highlight the cross-cultural currents that challenged the Israelites in China. It takes the reader into uncharted territory of the Jews in ancient China.



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