Islam in Translation: Muslim Reform and Transnational Networks in Modern China, 1908-1957

Citation

Permanent link

Terms of Use

Share Your Story

Accessibility

Islam in Translation: Muslim Reform and Transnational Networks in Modern China, 1908–1957

A dissertation presented

by

Zeyneb Hale Eroglu Sager

to

The Committee on Inner Asian and Altaic Studies

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the subject of

Inner Asian and Altaic Studies

Harvard University

Cambridge, Massachusetts

April 2016

Dissertation Advisor: Professor Mark C. Elliott   Zeyneb Hale Eroglu Sager

Islam in Translation: Muslim Reform and Transnational

Networks in Modern China, 1908–1957

Abstract

This dissertation investigates Chinese Muslim (Hui) intellectual currents from the late Qing dynasty to the early years of the Communist Republic, 1908–1957. By analyzing a vast number of Muslim reformist journals, Chinese translations of Islamic sources, and diaries/memoirs of intellectuals who were connected to other zones of the Islamic world, I examine the process by which reformists sought to redefine Chinese Muslim identity and revive "true principles of Islam"—both in negotiation with the Chinese state and in conversation with local and transnational intellectual currents. In particular, this dissertation considers the ways in which intellectuals struggled to "awaken" Chinese Muslims so as to transform their past identity as Muslim subjects of the Qing Empire into "politically conscious and active" citizens of the Chinese Republic. Chinese Muslims were defined either as a religious community or an ethnic group (*minzu*), and this debate occupied the minds of reformist intellectuals in this period, the topic of the first two chapters. How it was settled would determine the political, social, and religious status of the Muslim community in China, where definitions of nation and ethnicity/race were constantly reassigned. Debates concerning Muslim integration into China hinged on their connection to the global Muslim community (*umma*). Newly

introduced technologies of travel and communication, such as the steamship and print,

facilitated Chinese Muslims' participation within transnational and cross-confessional

networks. I argue that it was through the selection, appropriation, and adaptation of ideas

from the prominent centers of the Islamic world that these intellectuals navigated a path

of integration in the Chinese context that did not put their distinct Muslim identity at risk.

From these diverse sources, they were determined to find solutions to the challenges they

faced in China—whether posed by the hegemonic discourse of the Nationalist Party or

the iconoclastic New Culture Movement. In successive chapters, I focus on the

intellectual connection of Chinese Muslims to the Kemalist secularism of Turkey, the

Ahmadi movement of India, and Egyptian reformist currents. Thus, I demonstrate how a

seemingly "peripheral" Muslim community in the Far East participated in complex

transnational networks at a critical moment of transformation.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to those who made my journey as a PhD candidate a great experience, both intellectually and personally. First, I would like to thank Mark Elliott, who has always been an intellectual inspiration, even when I was writing my master's thesis and did not know him personally. I feel particularly lucky in having Professor Elliott as an advisor; he offered constant support throughout my PhD years, especially at critical moments of my personal life. I also want to thank Ali Asani, who has been a great inspiration for my future career as an academic. In working as a teaching fellow for his courses on Islam, I learned firsthand how to make teaching an experiential process for students. His contribution to the formation of my ideas in this dissertation is also significant. I am likewise grateful to Jonathan Lipman: he was the key person who made me believe in the potential and importance of my field. I would also like to thank Selcuk Esenbel at Bogazici University, for she is the person who encouraged me to learn Chinese and form an academic and intellectual interest in China. At Harvard, I have greatly enjoyed being part of a community of young scholars— Gulnora Aminova, He Bian, David Brophy, Javier Cha, Devon Dear, Aslihan Gurbuzel, Jia Jianfei, Linnea Katrin, Macabe Keliher, Loretta Kim, Max and Jenny Oidtmann, Ren Yuan-li, Eric Schluessel, Victor Seow, Aleksandar Shopov, Qiaomei Tang, Noriko Yamazaki, Yu Wen, and others.

My gratitude also goes out to our invaluable program administrators: Rose Cortese, who alleviated the most stressful days of dissertation completion with her kindness and helpfulness, and Margaret Lindsey, who made my integration into Harvard

Last but not least, I would like to thank my family members. I am very grateful to my mom and dad, Veysel and Hatice Eroglu, whose support was lifesaving at certain times. I would also like to thank my mother in-law, Ayse Sager, and my sister, Aysenur Eroglu, who took care of my son in Cambridge while I worked to finalize this dissertation. Additional thanks go to my sister, Merve, and my brother, Mehmed. I also thank Yasemin Cakmakci, without whom I would not have had the peace of mind to leave a one-year-old at home as I pursued dissertation research.

Most significant of all, I would like to thank my husband, Yildiray, who always encouraged me through the trials and tribulations of my PhD journey. The joy of my life, Ozan Emre, grew up as this dissertation took shape, and he deserves even more than his mum to walk on the stage to receive the diploma.

Page intentionally left blank.

Introduction

"Let Hindus not be frightened by pan-Islamists. . . . It is not—it need not be—anti-Indian or anti-Hindu,"[1] stated Gandhi in support of the Indian Muslims' Khilafet Movement. Gandhi was one of the first who believed that "all good nationalisms have a transnational vision."[2] While the trajectory of Indian nation-building perhaps did not confirm Gandhi in this respect, the intellectual history of the pan-Islamist nationalists of Republican China (1911–49) did. This dissertation tells the story of Chinese Muslim intellectuals who sought to transform Muslim subjects of the Qing Empire into conscious citizens of China by increasing, paradoxically enough, their transnational connections to the Muslim world. As members of the *umma*, they had profound interest in different ways of being Muslim experienced by other members of the Muslim community.

Chinese Muslim intellectuals had never been completely detached from the Muslim world. They were kept connected to Muslims outside of China by a variety of factors: pilgrims and the wandering Sufis on the one hand, the imperial recruitment of Muslim scientists and territorial expansion of the empire to Muslim Inner Asia on the other. Their interactions with other Muslim communities, however, accelerated and intensified "in the age of steam and print."[3] It opened new horizons to curious intellectuals all over the globe. The ease of travel with cheap tickets and overseas steam

---

[1] Sugata Bose and Kris Manjapra, eds., *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones: South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 102.

[2] Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 13.

[3] James L. Gelvin and Nile Green, "Introduction," in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, ed. James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014).

ships not only facilitated the reach of European orientalists, missionaries, travelers, adventurers and settlers to non-European countries, but also it made Europe and different parts of the Muslim world accessible to Muslims in unprecedented ways. As the editors of *Global Muslims*—a recent volume on different cases of transnational Muslim interactions around the world—emphasize, "these technologies were prime movers that set in motion further cycles of human interaction . . . whether through quickening the production and distribution of commodities, facilitating mass migrations and private pilgrimages, or disseminating learned tracts and proletarian newspapers worldwide."[4] Muslims also employed these technologies of the newly globalized world to create new interpretations of Islam and definitions of Islamic identity. These technologies led Muslims into "an age of discovery and differentiation, creativity and crises."[5] Muslims discovered both other Muslim and non-Muslim societies, in the process redefining their position not only vis-à-vis other Muslims but also in relation to non-Muslims. At the same time, they reimagined the meaning of their religion within the intricate networks of the newly formed transnational intellectual landscape.

In this dissertation, I take a transnational approach—following in the footsteps of Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih in their edited volume titled *Minor Transnationalism*—which helps us deconstruct conventional dichotomies of minority and majority, East and West, center and periphery, local and global in order to call attention

---

[4] James L. Gelvin and Nile Green, "Introduction," in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, 1.

[5] Ibid., 2.

to connections formed across the globe.[6] It more specifically enables us to examine networks of "minoritized cultures," at once local and transnational, which are "produced and performed without necessary mediation by the center."[7] Through a transnational lens, we can observe how hybridization unfolds within and across national boundaries, and this approach also challenges any narration that positions the minority in a hierarchical relationship, either in assimilation with or opposition to the majority.[8] In this study, I will trace one of those areas of hybridization by demonstrating how a minority Muslim community in China connected intellectually to other zones of Islam as it simultaneously worked to redefine its identity within a non-Muslim dominated country, in negotiation with the majority ethnic group, other Muslim communities, and the hegemonic discourse of the Nationalist government.[9]

---

[6] I prefer to use the term "transnational" over "global," following Lionnet and Shih, who argued that the logic of globalization "assumes a universal core or norm, which spreads out across the world. . . . It produces a hierarchy of subjects between the so-called universal and particular, with its attendant problems of Eurocentric universalism. . . . The transnational, on the contrary, can be conceived as a space of exchange and participation wherever processes of hybridization occur." See Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, "Introduction: Thinking through the Minor, Transnationally," in *Minor Transnationalism*, ed. Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 5.

[7] Ibid., 5.

[8] Ibid., 7.

[9] Rebecca Karl's *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (2002), which pays attention to the international flow of ideas and situates the emergence of Chinese national identity in a larger global space, has inspired my thinking process. She reevaluates the production of nationalist discourse in China during the late Qing period, from China's defeat in the Sino-Japanese war in 1895 until the Republican Revolution in 1911, and shows how Chinese nationalism was shaped not only by China's position vis-à-vis the Euro-American world but also by its identification with the non-Western world threatened by Euro-American imperialism. Karl discusses how Chinese conceptions of nationalism were affected by the "discovery" of Hawai'i as a center of the Pacific, the Philippine revolution against the United States, the Boer War in South Africa, and the constitutional reforms of the Ottoman Empire.

My dissertation thus mainly investigates the thought of Chinese Muslim intellectuals who either visited or studied in other Muslim countries or had a keen interest in transmitting the knowledge produced about Islam and Muslims by reformist circles around the world. Their transnational interests focused mainly, but not exclusively, on Egyptian, Turkish, and Indian reformulations of nation and Islam. These transnational Chinese Muslims played a pivotal role in Chinese Muslim intellectual and organizational activism, dedicated to "awaken"[10] from their state of lethargy the Chinese Muslims whom they considered to be uneducated "blind followers" and whom they considered to be what I call "reluctant citizens." In order to devise the best interpretation of Islam, one that would fit the modern conditions of China, these intellectuals selected, adopted, and appropriated ideas and materials from different sources of Islam and various perspectives of the reformists, in conversation with the Han intellectuals and policymakers. In so doing, they sought to transform Muslims into agents of change in China as the carriers of universal Islamic principles. Needless to say, like many other reformists, they did not think of themselves as generators of a modern version of Islam, but rather held that they were in search of the authentic Islam whose principles transcend time and space.[11] They firmly believed that "awakened" Muslims would know their rights and obligations as

---

[10] Any survey of the writings of the period would show that "awakening" was one of the most common expressions used by Chinese intellectuals in the fields of art and literature, the ethics and education, the history and archeology, ethnography and politics of the day. It is, therefore, not a coincidence that one of the first published journals of Chinese Muslims, *Xing Hui pian* (The essays on the awakening of the Hui), has a title invoking the same expression. See John Fitzgerald, *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 3–4.

[11] For an evaluation of Islamic reform see Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009).

citizens and, by putting Muslim spirit and ideals into practice, would benefit China in its struggle for equal status in the international world.

Following in the footsteps of Natalie Zemon Davis, who argued that printed books were not "merely source[s] for ideas and images, but a carrier of relationships,"[12] I focus on printed material, especially translated texts, to disentangle the intellectual relationships constructed by Chinese Muslims. Indeed, Chinese Muslim reformists began to perceive "journalism" as a transformative and educative instrument. These intellectuals saw journals as the best medium for reaching the masses. They were easy to publish and cheap enough to reach a great number of people. Journals and newspapers flourished, making possible wide-scale conversation between intellectuals and the people during the Republican period.[13] The ideas, concepts and fashions that were available to them from other parts of the world found their places in journals and were quickly transferred to their readers. The journals created a more accessible space compared to highly theological works of earlier Chinese Muslim scholars, comprehensible only to the highly literate classes in both the Islamic and Confucian traditions. They offered a medium of expression to members of the educated class eager to change the course of Chinese Muslim life. New arguments and ideas, on-going debates on some crucial matters, and

---

[12] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 192. Cited in Marwa ElShakry, *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 22.

[13] For a similar discussion on the issue of power of the press among scholars of Chinese history, see Barbara Mittler, *A Newspaper for China?: Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News Media, 1872–1912* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004); Christopher A. Reed, *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004).

the relation of the ideas to those voiced in China by Han Chinese intellectuals and

Muslims in other parts of the world found their expressions in these journals.[14]

Book publication was not neglected, however. Increasing numbers of books were

translated, especially from Arabic and English. The original sources were not exclusively

from Muslims. Many sources from non-Muslims were also published to deal with the

growing discourse on Islam developed by orientalists and missionaries, who were also

active among Chinese Muslim populations. Chinese Muslims were therefore participants

not only in an emerging transnational Islam but also in "cross-confessional" reading

networks.[15]

---

[14] There has been an intense debate on the transformative power of press in European scholarship. Some argued that printing press has been the originator of reforms and revolutions, playing a crucial role in Reformation and Renaissance and the formation of modern nations (Eisenstein 1979 and Anderson 1983). Others, on the contrary, attributed much less power to press, arguing that "it more often follows rather than leads, it reinforces more than it challenges conventional wisdom" (Schudson 1995, p. 6, and Mittler 2004, p. 415). Press, thus, is an observer rather than an initiator. Eminent scholars of "the history of books," Febvre and Martin (Febvre and Martin 1997), following the middle path, are careful not to ascribe to the book too much revolutionary agency because propagandists cannot be considered to be the main cause of such breakthrough change. However, they also argue that the printed book is crucial as it is "at least tangible evidence of convictions held because it embodies and symbolizes them; it furnishes arguments to those who are already converts, lets them develop and refine their faith, offers them points which will help them to triumph in debate, and encourages the hesitant" (Febvre and Martin 1997, p. 288). I follow the path of Febvre and Martin and argue that the periodical press, the most valuable sources of this dissertation, has thus the potential to exhibit the convictions held, arguments made, ideas introduced and exchanged, debates conducted about the questions the historian is curious about. See Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*, trans. David Gerard (New York: Verso, 1997); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); and Mittler, *Newspaper for China*.

[15] For other examples of "cross-confessional networks" see ElShakry, *Reading Darwin in Arabic*, and Oliver Scharbrodt, *Islam and the Baha'i Faith: A Comparative Study of Muhammad 'Abduh and 'Abdul-Baha 'Abbas* (London: Routledge, 2008).

This dissertation builds on a few articles published on Chinese Muslims' connections with al-Azhar University in Egypt, which laid the foundations of Republican era Chinese Muslims' connections with the outside Muslims.[16] All these articles were concerned with Chinese Muslims' relations with Egypt, often assuming that Chinese students at al-Azhar referred to Arabic sources without critical judgment and considered Egyptian Islam as the most truthful and authentic version. None of these articles, therefore, fully challenges Ben-Dor Benite's "Arabization thesis" that the Chinese Azharites reintegrated China with the Arabic world as they sought to "return" Chinese Islam to its original state before being "exiled" in China.[17] The methodology used and arguments made in this dissertation, however, question his thesis on several grounds. First, I show that the Arabic model represented only one possible alternative for Chinese Muslims, who also looked to Turkish and Indian Muslims as other sources of inspiration. Moreover, these sources often overlapped, as we will see in the writings of Chinese Azharites, legitimizing the Kemalist reforms from an Islamic perspective. Second, even in the Arabic lands, there were different versions of Islam ranging from traditional/conservative to Salafi/liberal interpretations. So Chinese Muslim intellectuals were exposed to different forms of Islam and selectively appropriated ideas from different Islamic sources to fit their own conditions. Third, Chinese Muslim intellectuals

---

[16] Mao Yufeng, "A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation: Chinese Pilgrimage Missions to Mecca during World War II," *Journal of Asian Studies* 70, no. 2 (May 2011): 373–395. John T. Chen, "Re-orientation: The Chinese Azharites between Umma and Third World, 1938–55," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34, no. 1 (2014): 24–51. Zvi Ben-Dor Benite. "Taking 'Abduh to China: Chinese-Egyptian Intellectual Contact in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Global Muslims*.

[17] Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, "'Nine Years in Egypt': Al-Azhar University and the Arabization of Chinese Islam," *HAGAR: Studies in Culture, Polity and Identities* 8, no. 1 (July 2008): 1–21.

themselves never considered China as a land of exile, but as their homeland. My belief, then, is that applying Jewish notions of "diaspora" to the study of the situation of Chinese Muslims will not help our understanding of the complexity of Chinese Muslim identity.

Precisely because of this diversity of reference points, it is impossible to give an accurate picture of Chinese Muslim reform movements by focusing narrowly on a single journal, as has been the case with previous articles written on the subject. To successfully trace the ideas and relationships of transnational Chinese Muslims, it is essential to review the widest possible array of journals. In doing this, I have consistently aimed to think not just about journal content, but also to understand the reasons for the choices editors made in selecting material to translate and publish. Despite the diversity of views expressed in Chinese Muslim journals, my analysis reveals that there were several recurrent themes in the pages of these journals, especially among the translated sources. Even though differences in interpretation occasionally arose, writings repeatedly emphasized peace in Islam, rational thinking in Islam, and the all-encompassing universal nature of Islam. As the choice of these themes show, Chinese Muslim reformists were in a constant struggle to persuade Chinese that they were neither a threat nor a burden for China. They hoped to elevate the status of Islam by eliminating the notion that *Huijiao* 回教 was the "strange" custom of a minority;on the contrary, they argued, it was a universal religion, though different from Christianity, with a well-established history in China.

The Muslim intellectuals and prominent ahongs were therefore in direct or indirect dialogical relationship with both the state and non-Muslim intellectual circles in redefining the space Islam would occupy in modern China. They coopearated, negotiated, and contested with the state as it constantly redefined the criteria that would distinguish

organized religion from superstition, orthodoxy from heterodoxy, and loyal religious communities from potentially treacherous ones.

Chinese Muslim reformists were also speaking in the midst of the New Culture Movement. Although they occasionaly praised the movement for its anti-imperialism, youthful energy, and egalitarianism, they were nevertheless distressed by New Culture intellectuals' modernist teleology which envisaged no place for religion in the future of humanity. As New Culture intellectuals were convinced that science was destined to replace religion eventually, Chinese Muslim reformists were constantly forced to think in response to them. The Chinese Muslims' transnational intellectual dynamism therefore sought out an empowering discourse that would equip Chinese Muslims with effective tools and ideas in their struggle with anti-religion movements in China. By giving voice to Chinese Muslim intellectuals in their relation to both the state and Chinese intellectual discourse, this dissertation contributes to the growing scholarship discussing the role of religions in the making of modern China;[18] however, it supplements that scholarship by offering a transnational perspective on the question of religion in China.

---

[18] There is a growing literature in Chinese studies that refuses to see the relation between religion and state as dichotomous and conflictual. More scholars have recovered the voice of the clerics, who played some role in defining the place religion occupied in China, in negotiation with the state and hegemonic discursive practices of the state. For instance, see Yoshiko Ashiva and David L. Wank, eds., *Making Religion, Making the State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009). Also see Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, ed., *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); and Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

9

Structure of the Dissertation

Repositioning Islam also entailed repositioning Muslims within China. In this, Chinese Muslims faced a dilemma. On the one hand, they asserted the universal nature of their religion, but on the other hand, they aspired to the rights and privileges the state occasionally promised to ethnic minorities. This dilemma shaped the debates over the definition of the Hui—the appellation used in China to refer to Muslims—which subsequently produced the emergence of Hui identity as an ethnic label encompassing Chinese-speaking Muslims today.

This debate over the definition of the *Hui* forms the backbone of the first chapter of this dissertation, without which it would be impossible to understand how Chinese Muslim intellectuals defined Islam and positioned Muslims—both vis-à-vis other Muslim and non-Muslim communities in China, and vis-à-vis the Chinese state and its nationalist discourse. In the first chapter, I undertake a discourse analysis of the writings of some important Chinese Muslim scholars on the definition of *Hui*. Some argued that Chinese-speaking Muslims could only be considered Han Muslims and any reference to the *Hui* instead targeted the Turkic-speaking Muslims who make up the vast majority in Xinjiang. Others, on the contrary, believed that *Hui* should be an all-encompassing appellation denoting all Muslims of China, as they invoked the notion of *umma* and embedded the modern discourse on nation into it—akin to how Jinnah imagined an all-encompassing identity for Muslims as distinct from the Hindus of India during the same period. In this chapter, I demonstrate that Chinese Muslim intellectuals repeatedly repositioned their

stance on the definition of the *Hui*, strategizing through the "hyphenated"[19] nature of their identity in response to China's changing circumstances with the intention to secure Muslim communities and guarantee a smooth integration by acquiring optimal rights and benefits in the unsteady context of modernizing China.

The second chapter takes the story from the end of the war with Japan, when the views of Chinese Muslim intellectuals began to crystalize as the wartime pressure was lifted from their shoulders. It focuses on the Chinese Muslim activism that took place as a new constitution was being drafted in China after 1945. My research shows that even many important wartime advocates of the idea of Chinese-speaking Muslims as Han Muslims converted to the cause of the ethnicizers (intellectuals who advocated the ethnicization of Muslim identity). Chinese Muslim delegates in the Nationalist parliament worked hard to get quotas for representation for Muslims, ending up with an unusual settlement: the Chinese state refused to recognize Muslims as an ethnic group (*minzu* 民族)[20] but agreed to grant a quota to Chinese speaking Muslims on the ground that they were a community of inner China with "special lifestyle and customs." My conclusion in

---

[19] I borrowed the concept from Jonathan Lipman, "Hyphenated Chinese: Sino-Muslim Identity in Modern China," in *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain*, ed. G. Hershatter et al. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995).

[20] The translation of the Chinese term *minzu* often raises difficulty because it could either mean "ethnicity" or "nation" depending on the context it is used: For instance, the term in *Huihui minzu* denotes ethnicity, whereas the same term in *Zhonghua minzu* 中華民族 denotes nation. Many Chinese scholars have been struggling to clarify the terminology. Recently, for instance, with the purpose of highlighting the distinction, Ma Rong, a sociology professor at Beijing University, introduced the term *zuqun* 族群 to refer to ethnic distinctions between members of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*). Because of the difficulty of defining what *minzu* meant at certain cases, I occasionally did not prefer to translate the term. See Mark C. Elliott, "The Case of the Missing Indigene: Debate over a Second-Generation Ethnic Policy," *China Journal* 73 (2016): 187–213.

this chapter complicates the argument found in the prominent English-language literature

that Hui as an ethnic category is an invented identity, imposed from the top down.[21]

While it is correct that the Communists officially created ethnic groups (*minzu*) out of

various Chinese Muslim communities dispersed all over China by homogenizing, fixating

and essentalizing the Hui identity,[22] this view, however, does not take into account the

---

[21] Thomas Mullaney, for instance, in his study of the ethnic classification project (*minzu shibie* 民族識別) undertaken in Yunnan in 1954 by the Communist government, argues that the state-created taxanomies, which were reductionist and fragile, eventually produced socially effective results and became true even in the eyes of those who had to assume these ethnic labels. Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

[22] English-language studies of Chinese Muslim identity have emphasized the role of the state in the making of the "Hui ethnic group" (*Hui minzu*) into a homogenous entity out of diverse Chinese-speaking Muslim communities in China. Two leading scholars of Chinese Islam, Jonathan Lipman (Lipman 1997) and Dru Gladney (Gladney 1991), deny the notion that *minzu* categories "existed as self-consciously unified solidarities long before the technological and social intrusions and capacities of the modern nation-state made that possible" (Lipman 1997, p. 216). This view challenges the widely espoused thesis in China that Chinese Muslims became a self-conscious *minzu* during the late Yuan and early Ming periods. Lipman and Gladney question the state's *minzu* paradigm, which institutionalized ethnic groups by ascribing to them primordial and eternal qualities fixed in time and space, ignoring the processual nature of their identity development. They find the *minzu* status problematic not only because there is diversity within the larger Muslim community—which contains Chinese, Mongolian, Tibetan and Turkic-speaking Muslims, who are dispersed spatially and culturally—but because there is also diversity within each of these Muslim communities. As Gladney demonstrated in his *Muslim Chinese*, Chinese-speaking Muslims of eastern China should be distinguished from Chinese-speaking Muslims of northwest China with respect to the dialect they speak, the social customs they have adopted, and the form of Islam they practice. Treating the Hui as a homogenous ethnic group also overlooks on a macro-level the fact that Chinese-speaking Muslim culture shares many elements with non-Muslim Chinese culture. One important exception within the English-language literature is the thesis of David Atwill, who aligns with the prevalent Chinese scholarship on the historical nature of Hui ethnic identity. He examines the period of rebellion and state building led by Sino-Muslim leader Du Wenxiu (1823–1872) and contends that Hui ethnic identity formation preceded the social engineering of the modern Chinese state. He establishes a clear distinction between one's ethnic and religious identity, as it appears to have existed in Yunnan as early as the mid-nineteenth century (Atwill 2005). Muslim Yunnanese distinguished themselves as Hui in a way separate and distinct from their religious identity as Muslims. Atwill argues that

vibrant debates that took place among Chinese Muslim intellectuals about the nature of their identity within the framework of identity categories available to them in China back then. This chapter, however, demonstrates the process of negotiations that took place between Chinese Muslim delegates and the state, which formed the foundations of how and why Communists granted ethnic (*minzu*) status to Chinese Muslims. The first two chapters, in that sense, question any view that grant excessive agency to the state, and align instead with other works on other non-Han groups in modern Chinese state, specifically the Tibetans, Mongols and the Uyghurs,[23] which recognized their own role in ethnic identity formation.

---

while *Mumin* 穆民 was employed when Muslims spoke of other Muslims, Hui, *Huimin* 回民 (Hui People) and *Huijiao* 回教 (Hui teaching) were invoked to designate the Hui as an ethnic group. This debate is also connected to the larger debate on the question of whether ethnicity is itself by definition a "modern" construct. Scholarly debate on this question crystallized between Crossley, who reserves "ethnic" to designate identities only in the context of modern nation states (Crossley 1990), and Mark Elliott, who finds it relevant to describe pre-modern forms of "identity consciousness" (Elliott 2001, p. 19). Elliott in turn aligns with Prasensit Duara, who argues that modern identity "is a product of negotiation with historical identities" within the framework of a modern nation-state system (Duara 1993, p. 11). The case of Hui ethnic identity formation in the context of China supports Duara's argument in the sense that Hui selected, adapted, renarrated the historical identities in response to and in negotiation with the political system and nationalist discourse. Jonathan N. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996); David G. Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856–1873* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005); Pamela Kyle Crossley, "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China," *Late Imperial China* 11, vol.2 (June 1990): 1–36; Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001); Prasenjit Duara, "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation," *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 30 (1993): 1–26.

[23] David Brophy, *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016); Rian Thum, *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014); Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan*

The third chapter looks into the role the Turkish model played in China in positioning Chinese Muslims vis-à-vis the state and the nation as it was defined by the state. The success of the Turks in liberating themselves from imperialist oppression was not only an inspiration for many Han Chinese but also for Chinese Muslims, who argued that the victory of the Muslims of Turkey manifested the spiritual vigor of Muslims. The developmental speed of Turkish modernization, similarly, was taken by Chinese Muslims as a proof of Muslims' ability to catch up with the West. The Turkish model helped Chinese Muslims restore their self-esteem and made them believe in their capacity as Muslims. Yet, many leading Chinese Muslim intellectuals felt it necessary to legitimize secular Kemalist reforms from an Islamic perspective in order to persuade the disappointed Muslim masses. The chapter also shows how in the 1930s, the GMD elite utilized the Kemalist model of single-party developmental nationalism in order to legitimize their assimilationist policies and secure the absolute obedience of Chinese Muslims. This chapter once again adds a layer to the secondary English-language literature, which puts too much emphasis on the uncritical "loyalty" of Chinese Muslims to the state.[24] I do not disagree with their conclusion, inasmuch as many Chinese Muslim intellectuals repeatedly invoked the Quranic verse on "obedience to those in authority"

Buddhists in the Making of Modern China (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005); Uradyn E. Bulag, *Collaborative Nationalism: The Politics of Friendship on China's Mongolian Frontier* (Lanham, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010).

[24] Ma Haiyun, "Patriotic and Pious Muslim Intellectuals in Modern China: The Case of Ma Jian," *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23, no. 3 (July 2006): 54–70. Some earlier articles on Republican Muslims and their loyalty to the nation-state are Françoise Aubin, "Islam on the Wings of Nationalism: The Case of Muslim Intellectuals in Republican China," and Matsumoto Masumi, "Rationalizing Patriotism among Muslim Chinese: The Impact of the Middle East on the *Yuehua* Journal," both in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication*, ed. Stéphane S. Dudoignon, Komatsu Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi (New York: Routledge, 2006).

especially during the anti-Japanese war. However, in this chapter I complicate the

argument by manifesting the limits of "obedience," bringing examples from Chinese

Muslim criticism of radical statist discourse of GMD in 1930s and '40s.

Many Chinese Muslim intellectuals who admired the path taken by Turkey were

also following the Ahmadi literature, especially the English-language publications of the

Lahore branch of the Ahmadiyya in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This transnational

network, which connected China to London via India, is an interesting case because of

the allegedly "heterodox" nature of the Ahmadi version of Islam. Even the reformist-

modernist intellectuals of the Middle East, including reformists like Rashid Rida,

declared Ahmadis to be nonbelievers, mainly on the grounds that their claims fell outside

the Sunni interpretation of Islam. Al-Azhar banned the sale of Muhammad Ali's

translation of the Quran in Egypt. Chinese Muslims, however, were outside the realm of

these discussions; when they encountered the ideas of Ahmadiyya through print media,

they welcomed them without too much questioning. Ahmadis were the most active

Muslim group dedicated to spreading their message by translating their material into local

languages. They established branches in East and Southeast Asia, including Hong Kong.

It was the Ahmadiyya that also made English one of the "linguistic currency"[25] of

Muslims. The English-language Ahmadi reformist sources opened a new channel for

Chinese intellectuals who were proficient in English but not in Arabic. It was through

these English-language Islamic sources that several prominent Chinese Muslim

intellectuals were introduced to reformist discourse and set the agenda in best-selling

journals of the era, including the early issues of *Yuehua* 月華. The Ahmadi ideas

---

[25] I borrowed the concept from James L. Gelvin and Nile Green, "Introduction," in
Global Muslims, 11.

appealed to Chinese Muslims as they offered a reading of Islam by which they could respond not only to the anti-Muslim discourse of missionaries but also to the secular teleology of New Culture intellectuals.

A few leading Chinese Muslim intellectuals soon "awakened" to the fact that the Ahmadiyya was considered outside the realm of mainstream Islam by majority of Muslims. In my fifth chapter, I show how the educational missions sent to al-Azhar University—the most prestigious institution of religious learning in the Muslim world—can be read as an attempt to return to the safe territory of "mainstream Islam." However, the Chinese students who went to Cairo for higher learning brought along the loaded baggage of reformist discourse. My analysis of one of the most influential Azharites, Ma Jian, who continued to play a pivotal role during the Communist years, illustrates that the reformist discourse he was exposed to while he was a student in China had a huge role in forming his concerns, interests, and selections while he studied in Cairo, an Islamic center with multiple visions of Islam offered simultaneously. Most of the time, what Ma Jian preferred to transfer to China were texts that provided legitimacy to his already established ideas. This chapter dissects the writings and translations of Chinese Azharites—specifically Pang Shiqian and Ma Jian—and offers a complicated picture by carefully considering their scholary preferences as expressions of their transnational localities.

Sources

My research is based on an analysis of materials published in journals, memoirs, biographies, and correspondence in the Chinese, English, Turkish, Arabic, and Uyghur

languages. Journals and newspapers published by Chinese Muslim intellectuals, which

have not been adequately explored by either Chinese[26] or Euro-American[27] scholars,

occupy the center of this research project. Without excavating the vast number of journals

published by Chinese Muslims, it would be impossible to capture the diversity of views,

and often contradicting opinions, prevalent among Chinese Muslim intellectuals during

the Republican period, when Chinese Muslims were exposed to many different sources of

Islam at once.

Chinese Muslim journals published during the late Qing and Republican periods

amount to more than fifty titles.[28] Having scanned the titles published in most of these

journals, which are mostly digitized or kept in the National Library in Beijing or local

---

[26] In Chinese-language scholarship, there is an increasing interest in the Republican-era Chinese Muslim journals. Young scholars began to take the journals into consideration. Many articles have been written, but deep excavations have yet to be done. See; Liu Li, "Jin 20 nian lai Huizu baokan yanjiu shuping" [The last 20 years of research on Huizu newspapers], *Huizu yanjiu* 78, no. 2 (2010); and Bai Gui and Jin Qiang, "Zhongguo jinxiandai Huizu baokan bodong xianxiang qianzhe" [A brief study on the fluctuations of Hui journals of modern era], *Huizu Yanjiu* 72, no. 4 (2008). There are also increasing numbers of articles published that analyze individual journals. Ma Guangde, "Guanyu Xing Hui pian zhong Huizu ziwo renshi de sikao" [Reflections on the self-recognition of the Huizu in the awakening of the Hui], *Huizu yu Yisilan yanjiu* 40, no. 4 (2000); Bai Gui and Liu Hongliu, "Minguo shiqi Huizu baokan shehui duihua huodong de jiben moshi—yi 'Yuehua' wei lie" [The basic modes of social dialogues launched through the Hui newspapers and periodicals in the Republic of China: As in the case of the periodical Yuehua], *Zhongguo Musilin* 2 (2010); Ma Jing, "Minguo Musilin xueshu tuanti Zhuiqiu Xuehui yanjiu" [A study of 'Pursuit Society' — A Muslim academic body in the Republic of China], *Beifang Minzu daxue xuebao* 6, no. 96 (2010).

[27] The only English-language article covering a study of a Chinese Muslim journal is by Matsumoto Masumi, a Japanese scholar. In her article, "Rationalizing Patriotism among Muslim Chinese: The Impact of the Middle East on the *Yuehua* Journal," Matsumoto analyzes one of the prominent journals, *Yuehua* (月華 / Crescent China), and examines how Islamic revivalism and Islamic reformism in the Middle East influenced Chinese Muslims.

[28] Lei Xiaojing, ed., *Huizu jinxiandai baokan mulu tiyao* (Ningxia: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshi, 2006).

libraries in Gansu and Ningxia, I had a chance to trace the interests of each journal, which also demonstrated their distinct transnational connections. The following is an account of the journals, which are the main pillars of this dissertation.

The notable *Yuehua* 月華 (Moonlight), which began publishing in 1929 and lasted until 1948 intermittently in Beijing,[29] had the biggest circulation. This journal circulated all around the world and established initial transnational connections with different countries, including Indonesia and Egypt. The journal published by the China Muslim Literary Society (Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui 中國回教學會) in Shanghai, the China Muslim[30] (*Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 中國回教學會月刊) was published for a very short period of time (intermittently between 1926 and 1929), but it played a quintessential role in setting the framework of reformist discourse in China. The founders of the China Muslim Literary Society also established one of the most prominent Chinese Muslim reformist schools, the Shanghai Islamic Normal School (Shanghai Yisilan shifan xuexiao 上海伊斯蘭師範學校), and initiated the first Quran translation project, which could not, however, be completed. They were also the first to translate directly from Ahmadi sources, including the *Islamic Review* of the Ahmadi Woking Mission in London. The Pursuit Society (Zhuiqiu Xuehui 追求學會) of Beijing published *Zhengdao* 正道 (The Justice)[31] in Beijing. This journal followed in the footsteps of *The China Muslim* and in its initial years revealed a high degree of Ahmadi influence. The journal

---

[29] They moved to Guilin and then Chonqing during the Sino-Japanese war and returned to Beijing after the War.

[30] The English title of the journal is the choice of the editors.

[31] The English title of the journal is the choice of the editors.

was of interest to me because the editor of the journal was Ma Hongdao, who was one of the earliest Chinese Muslim students who pursued a higher education in Turkey. In addition to *Zhengdao*, there were other journals that showed a high degree of interest in Turkish modernization. These included *Chenxi* 晨熹 (Bright morning), 1935–1937, and *Tujue* 突崛 (Sudden Rise), published intermittently between 1934 and 1945.

The *Tianfang xueli yuekan* 天方學理月刊 (The monthly journal of Arabic theology), began to be published in Guangzhou in 1928 by Ma Ruitu, is another source I use extensively, as the trajectory of the journal demonstrates a very interesting aspect of reformist discourse in China in the late 1920s and 1930s.[32] The early issues of the journal show a direct interest in Ghulam Ahmad and the Ahmadi movement. This might also be a consequence of the proximity of Guangzhou to Hong Kong, where a member of the Lahore Ahmadi movement, U. L. A. Mohideen, was actively promoting the Ahmadi cause, especially by sending English-language books to Chinese Muslim intellectuals in mainland China. However, in the following years, the editors of *Tianfang xueli yuekan* realized the "heterodox" nature of Ahmadiyya and translated articles from Azhari sources from Egypt in an attempt to return the reformist discourse to its "orthodox sources." The *Tianfang xueli yuekan* is also of interest because the journal was split into two due to conflicting opinions on some religious issues. The editor of the journal sought the advice of Rashid Rida of the Egyptian journal *al-Manar*, which was one of the Arabic-language sources that I used to trace the connections of Chinese Muslim reformists with Egyptian reformism. The case of *Tianfang xueli yuekan* was interesting as it showed the complicated nature of Chinese Muslim reformist thought.

---

[32] I examined the volumes published between 1928 and 1935.

The *Yiguang* 伊光 (The light of Islam), edited by Wang Jingzhai between 1927 and 1942, the prominent *ahong* (religious scholar, imam), is another important source, especially as it published many writings that showed a deep interest in Islamic theology and jurisprudence. It was very difficult to get a copy of the issues. However, I used the journal as much as I could as this journal played an important role in setting the "Islamic limits," especially in cases when there seemed to be any clash between Chinese and Muslim concerns.

I also examined the journals of Chengda Normal School[33]: *Chengda wenhui* 成達文薈 (Chengda luxuriant culture, 1929–1932), *Chengda xueshenghui yuekan* (成達學生會月刊 / Monthly journal of Chengda Student Organization, 1932), and *Chengda xiaokan* (成師校刊 / School magazine of Chengda teachers, 1934–42). These were important documents as they revealed an important aspect of Chinese Muslim reformism: education. Chinese Muslim reformists believed wholeheartedly in the "transformative" power of education. Chengda also functioned as an Islamic center, which published books, journals such as *Yuehua*, and organized conferences. They also attributed a greater role to Chengda students than one usually would attribute to high school students. As these students were among the few fortunate Muslims who got a "proper" religious education, their thoughts as they were reflected in their writings were given much attention by the older generation. Many successful Chengda students wrote on many

---

[33] Chenda Normal School was established in 1925 under the leadership of prominent ahongs Ma Songting and Tang Hesan initially in Jinan, Shandong. In 1929, they moved the school to Beijing. The school had to move subsequently to Guilin, fleeing from Japanese armies. Chengda was perhaps the most prominent religious school of the Republican period. In an attempt to raise religious scholars who would have the capacity to make Islam intelligible in China, the founders also introduced Chinese and humanities courses to the curriculum. Science was also made part of the curriculum.

central issues, including major topics like the notions of Muslim identity or other religious questions, such as the permissibility of interest or the governmental model in Islam. In this dissertation, I occasionally refer to the writings of Chengda students to illustrate how reformist discourse found its expression in the writings of the students of schools established by the reformists.

The diaries of Chinese Muslims who travelled extensively supplement what I have found in journals. The diaries I relied on the most included Pang Shiqian's *Aiji jiunian* 埃及九年 (Nine years in Egypt) , Zhao Zhenwu's *Xixing riji* 西行日記 (Diary of Journey to the West), and Isa Yusuf Alptekin's *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in Mücadele Hatıraları* (The memoirs of Isa Yusuf Alptekin's struggle). The first two were important sources showing how Chinese Muslims established a transnational Muslim network at the ports the steamship in which they were travelling stopped. The third was an important source to show how Chinese Muslims' visualization of Hui as an ethnic identity encompassing all Muslim communities of China resonated among Turkish-speaking intellectuals of Xinjiang. The Chinese- and Uygur-language journals published in mainland China, *Tianshan* 天山 (1934–35, 1946–48) with its Uyghur supplement, *Chīnī Turkistān Awāzi* (The voice of Chinese Turkestan), published in Nanjing and *A-er-tai* 阿爾泰 (1944–45), published in Chongqing were also interesting sources to see the intricate relationship between Turkish-speaking and Chinese-speaking intellectuals in mainland China.

Chinese translations of English- and Arabic-language books on Islam—the Ahmadi English sources and Egyptian Arabic sources—occupy a central place in this dissertation. The selections of Chinese Muslim intellectuals among vast numbers of

Arabic, English, and Turkish reformist writings in themselves tell us what direction

Chinese Muslim reformism took. My dissertation, on the other hand, builds on the

secondary scholarship on the so-called Han Kitab literature, in which scholars tried to

understand how Chinese Muslim translators of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries

not only translated the Persian and Arabic sources into Chinese but also made them

meaningful in the Confucian worldview. Using a similar method, I compared the original

and target sources of the Republican period[34], taking the content and the word choice into

consideration in order to understand how these sources not only were translated into

Chinese but also were made, this time, meaningful in the context of modernizing China.

As I compared the originals with the translated versions, I realized that some critical

translations could not be considered translations from the perspective of any translation

theory today. They could mostly be considered "adaptations inspired by the source book"

rather than "translations" as the translators claimed them to be. I paid attention to the

variance between the original and translated sources, which provides us with a map of

reformist discourse, in which one could puzzle out how the transnational found its

expression in the local.

---

[34] Two important sources that paid particular attention to the variance between the original and translated versions were the following: Muhammad Ali's Islam: The Religion of Humanity. See Maulvi Muhammad Ali, *Islam: The Religion of Humanity* (Woking: Unwin Brothers, 193-?). This was translated under the title *Heping de zongjiao* [The peaceful religion], trans. Zhuiqiu Shehui (Beijing: Qingzhen shubao, 1930). Also see Husayn al-Jisr, *Al-risala al-Hamidiya fi haqiqat al-diyana al-Islamiya wa-haqiqat al-shariʿa al-Muhammadiya* (Cairo: Matbaatu'l-Hamidiyye, 1904). This was translated under the title *Huijiao zhenxiang*, trans. Ma Jian (Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1938).

Chapter 1

Rectifying the Name: The Controversy about the Identity of the Hui

In a 1930 letter he sent from Turkey to his Muslim compatriots in China, Ma

Hongdao (1899–1968) expressed concern over the arbitrariness of terms used to identify

the Muslim peoples of China.[1] Being a member of a Chinese-speaking community, he did

not hesitate to invoke Confucius to reveal the undesirable consequences of not

"rectifying" (*zhengming* 正名) the names denoting the Muslim peoples of China. Deeply

concerned about the discrepancies between names and reality and between language and

action, which disrupted social order and harmony,[2] Ma Hongdao called on Muslim

intellectuals to find the proper name for Muslims of China that would be in accord with

the truth of things. Only then, he argued, would Muslims know their proper place in

Chinese society and, thus, be aware of their rights and duties. Rectifying their name

would also awaken Chinese Muslims to the essential principle of Islam: the unity of

Muslims. He stated, "If names are different, opinions will also vary."[3] Therefore, in order

to protect the Muslim community from internal rifts or externally imposed divisions and

---

[1] Ma Hongdao, "Tuerqi Ma Hongdao lai han" [A letter from Ma Hongdao in Turkey], *Yunnan qingzhen duobao* 13 (1930), as reprinted in Ma Jianzhao, ed., *Zhongguo nanfang Huizu shehui tuanti ziliao xuanpian* (Chengdu: Sichuan Minzu Chubanshe, 2003), 216–17.

[2] For Confucius' statements about "rectification of names," see Confucius, *Analects*, in James Legge, trans., *Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean: Chinese text; Translations with Exegetical Notes and Dictionary of All Chinese* (Minneola, NY: Dover, 1971), 263–64. This version also includes the original Chinese text.

[3] Ma, "Tuerqi Ma Hongdao lai han," 216.

exploitation, and moreover to raise the dignity, consciousness, and welfare of Muslims, Ma Hongdao argued that various usages should be discarded in favor of a single name.[4]

Ma Hongdao was right in pointing out that different people preferred different names for Islam and Muslims. *Huijiao* 回教, the teaching of the Hui, was the traditional and generally preferred term for denoting Islam. The origin of the word *Hui* 回, which basically means "to return" in Chinese and has no obvious connection with a religion or school of thought, has for centuries been something of a mystery. Many leading intellectuals attempted to solve the puzzle of why this word was used to refer to Islam in China.[5] Others argued against using a local name for a universal religion and suggested

---

[4] Ma, "Tuerqi Ma Hongdao lai han," 216–17.

[5] Chinese-speaking Muslims began to question the origin of the word *hui* as early as the eighteenth century. They responed to the doubts of some Muslims concerning the heretical nature of the term. Liu Zhi (1660–1739), a prominent scholar of Islam, in his *The Explanation of Hui Hui* (*Hui Hui shuo* 回回說), argued that the word originated from *Huihe* 回紇, the name found in early texts for the Uyghur peoples of Inner Asia who emerged as a regional power in the eighth century, because at a later point in their history the Uyghurs practiced Islam and the Chinese consequently began to call any Muslim *Huihe*, which later morphed into *Huihui*. Liu Zhi attributed many beautiful meanings to the character by referring to Islamic, Confucian, and Buddhist sources. He concluded, "Looking from the perspective of these several sayings, if we take the shape of the word *hui* then it is [like] uniting heaven that includes the earth, and if we take its meaning then it is returning to the origins. The unification of body and mind, and envelopment of idea and image, are all contained in a single *hui* character. The meaning of *hui* is great and this is why previous worthies did not avoid the name *Hui* but rather doubled it (as *Huihui*). Through this, we know that *Mumin* 穆民 (here Liu Zhi is referring to the Arab word *mu'min*, which means "believer") and *Mushi* 穆士 are the original names of our people, and *Huihui* is the name of our people who are living in China. It is possible to use either of these names. But the name must be correct, for only then will one's speech be fluent. Our people should know their original names (the Arabic names), but they should not consider the Chinese names as unpleasant and so they should not avoid using them. The scholars of China should also not get stuck in an (incorrect) interpretation and so should not take this name as ignoble and look down upon it." See Liu Jielian, *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* [The records of the ultimate sage of Arabia] (Beijing: Zhongguo yisilan jiaoxie hui,1984), 370–71.

instead the use of *Yi-si-lan* 伊斯蘭, a phonetic transliteration of Islam, or *Mu jiao* 穆教, "the teaching of Muhammad," following example of *Ji-du jiao*, "the teaching of Jesus," used for Protestant Christianity. Traditional autonyms used to refer to Muslims were *Huihui* 回回, *Huimin* 回民 (Hui civilian-subjects), and *Huizi* 回子. Much later, in the early twentieth century, new words were added to the repertoire: *Huizu* 回族 (Hui ethnic group/nationality), *Huijiao minzu* 回教民族 (Muslim ethnic group/nationality), *Huijiao tu* 回教徒 (disciples of the teaching of the Hui/Islam), and *Yisilan minzu* 伊斯蘭民族 (Islamic ethnic group/nationality). Each reflected different ideological tendencies.

Although there have been controversies all over the world about the borders of Islam and how to define Muslims vis-à-vis other people, discussions about naming the religion and its followers are unique to China. Why did the issue of naming become a controversy in China? In what context did such a debate arise? What implications did it have for the Muslim peoples of China and the wider Chinese society? How did different groups develop their arguments and to what purpose? These are the questions that this chapter will attempt to answer.

Today, many in the People's Republic take for granted the idea that the Hui are a separate *minzu* 民族 (nationality/ethnic group) among fifty-five minority nationalities of China. They are not the only Muslim community categorized as a separate *minzu* in China: there are ten *minzu*s mainly composed of Muslims.[6] The officially endorsed

---

[6] In addition to the Hui, there are the Uyghur, Kazak, Kirgiz, Uzbek, Salar and Tatar ethnic groups, which speak Turkic languages, and the Dongxiang and Bonan ethnic groups, which speak Mongolian-based languages. The Hui are the largest Muslim ethnic group in China, and the Uyghurs are the second-largest Muslim ethnic group in China, both having a population of about 10 to 10.5 million according to the census in 2010.

history of the Hui in China today views the Hui as the descendants of Persians, Arabs,

and Central Asians who came and settled in China as early as the Tang dynasty (618–

907). The number of Muslims increased in the thirteenth century when the invading

Mongolian army brought Muslims from the Middle East and Central Asia to assume

official positions in Mongol-governed China. They intermixed with other Muslim

peoples settled earlier in China: Uyghurs, Mongols, and the local Han population.

China's multi-racial Muslim population, the official history argues, gained an ethnic

consciousness by the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) and became a homogenous ethnic group

on the basis of the Stalinist criteria, which are "a common language, a common territory,

a common economic life, and common psychological make-up manifested in common

specific features of national culture."[7]

In contrast, English-language literature draws attention to the invented nature of

Hui identity as a *minzu*[8], highlighting the role of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in

its construction.[9] The Communist Party recognized the Hui as a *minzu* in 1942, many

years before they took control of the government, in a booklet published by the National

---

While the Kazak have the third-largest population, around 1.5 million people, all other
ethnic minorities are very small, some having a population less than 100,000.

[7] For the CCP-promoted history of Hui minzu, see *Huizu Jianshi* [A brief history of the
Huizu] (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1978). For histories of the Hui written
during the PRC, see Bai Shouyi, *Huizu, Huijiao, Huimin lunji* [Collected essays on the
Hui ethnic group, Hui teaching, and the Hui people] (Kowloon, 1974)

[8] Here I don't translate the word *minzu* because Jonathan Lipman made a very clear
distinction between ethnicity and *minzu* paradigm of the Chinese state.

[9] See Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*, 2nd
ed. (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996);
Jonathan N. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*
(Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

Question Research Office (*Minzu wenti yanjiu shi* 民族問題研究室).[10] But how and why the Communists decided to create a *minzu* out of Chinese Muslims as early as 1941, even though they hardly fit Stalinist criteria, is not a question that the English-language literature has dealt with.[11]

I argue, on the other hand, that the pre-Communist period discussions over Hui identity and arguments promoted by Chinese-speaking Muslim intellectuals were very crucial in having the CCP promote *minzu* status for the Hui. These intellectuals of the Republican period created a political awareness of the importance of establishing an ethnic identity for Chinese-speaking Muslims distinct from the dominant Han Chinese. In so doing, they influenced the Chinese-speaking Muslim community's willingness to be defined as an ethnic group, even though their understanding of the term differed from how the Communists subsequently defined the Hui. This chapter examines the complexity of discussions on the issue of how to define and position the Hui vis-à-vis the Han, other Muslim communities of China that do not speak Chinese as their mother language, and the Chinese state.

---

[10] Li Weihan, *Huihui minzu wenti* [The question of Huihui Minzu], ed. Minzu wenti yanjiu hui (1941; repr., Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 1980).

[11] First and foremost, the Hui do not have their own separate language but rather speak the Chinese dialect of their own region. Nor do they have a specific territory, as they are dispersed all over the country. Ningxia was created as an autonomous region for the Hui only after it was separated from the Gansu province in 1958. This was four years after the Ethnic Classification Project took place and the Hui were officially granted *minzu* status. This Stalinist criterion seems to have been retrospectively applied to the case of the Hui.

The Late Qing Debates: How to Imagine the Chinese?

The intellectual discourse of the late Qing and the Republic is replete with discussions about notions of race (*zhongzu* 種族) and ethnicity/nationality (*minzu*), which also influenced how Chinese Muslims identified themselves. As James Leibold argues, "[The] [p]olitical crisis [of the late Qing] was accompanied by an epistemological shift in how difference was conceptualized in China."[12] Racial exclusivism and territorial inclusivism were the two poles around which rival conceptions of the new modern Chinese nation were arrayed. The debates about the nature of the Chinese nation did not come to an end when the revolutionaries succeeded in toppling the dynasty and establishing the Republic. Faced with the urgency of preserving territorial unity, the revolutionaries had to "stretch the short, tight skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire."[13] The ideal of constructing a homogenous Han-centered Chinese nation had to be reconciled with the reality of an inherited imperial territory. Non-Han peoples of China—Manchus, Mongols, Tibetans, and Muslims—had the potential to claim two-thirds of this territory.[14] Throughout the Republican period, state elites vacillated between two contradictory visions of China to preserve territorial integrity: a multi-ethnic pluralist

[12] James Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: Reconfiguring how the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 29.

[13] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991), 86.

[14] The minorities who occupied such a vast territory in China, however, accounted for only about 2.5 percent of the total population according to the census of 1953. The imbalance between the percentage of the territory and the percentage of the population was a factor that shaped the ethnic policies of Chinese policymakers. See Colin Mackerras, *China's Minorities: Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century* (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1994), 238.

China, where minorities would have special rights and privileges, and a mono-racial state, where Han would become the overarching ethnic label to define everyone in China.

The destiny of Chinese-speaking Muslims of China proper was inextricably connected to how the Chinese nation would ultimately be imagined. It was with this sense of urgency that Chinese Muslim intellectuals addressed the changing attitudes regarding the ideas of nation, race, and ethnicity. There were two major arguments among Chinese Muslim scholarly circles. Some claimed that Chinese-speaking Muslims of China (*Neidi Huijiao tu* 內地回教徒) are Muslim members of the Han. Proponents of this definition argued that any mention of the Hui as an ethnic group (*minzu*) by the Republican officials pointed at Turkic-speaking Muslims of Xinjiang. This argument did not go unchallenged: others argued that the Hui as an ethnic group (*minzu*) included not only the Muslims of Xinjiang but all the Chinese-speaking Muslims of China proper. They held that Chinese-speaking Muslims were neither the descendants of the Han people nor in any way assimilated to Han culture. The distinction between Turkic- and Chinese-speaking Muslims remained vague in the discourse of Chinese-speaking proponents of an ethnic identity for the Hui. However, a distinction between these two Muslim communities as two separate ethnic groups began to crystalize by the closing years of the Republican era and was finally made official by the Communist regime.

The idea that the Hui are ethnically Han followers of Islam first appeared in a journal published by eleven Chinese-speaking Muslim students studying in Japan. The journal was called *Xing Hui pian* 醒回篇 (*Awakening the Hui*) and was published in 1908 by the Tokyo Foreign Students Islamic Educational Association (Liu Dong qingzhen jiaoyu hui 留東清真教育會), an organization established by thirty-six Chinese Muslim

students in Tokyo. Although very short-lived, the journal had a tremendous effect on Chinese Muslim thinking. It was one of the earliest calls for a Muslim awakening in China and initiated some of the most widely discussed problems, concepts, and issues among Chinese Muslims of the Republican period. The authors' call for a "Hui awakening" resonated with revolutionary intellectuals' call for a national awakening.

The editor of the journal, Huang Zhenpan (1873–1942), was also a member of the Revolutionary Alliance (*Tongmeng hui* 同盟會), an organization established in 1905 by Sun Yat-sen, the first president of the prospective Chinese Republic. The Revolutionary Alliance became the nucleus of the Guomindang/Nationalist Party (GMD). It is therefore essential to locate Huang Zhenpan's understanding of the Hui within the context of modern Chinese nationalism as it was fashioned by the revolutionaries of the era.

The anti-Manchu discourse of the Revolutionary Alliance was a crucial factor leading to the success of the revolution and the establishment of the Republic in 1911. A race-centered ideology based on social Darwinism dominated the minds of revolutionary intellectuals. They began to "see the world as divided into immutable, biologically based racial groups who were locked in a fierce struggle for physical survival as they competed for limited resources."[15] To have a say in this global struggle for survival, the Chinese first had to get rid of their alien rulers and restore Han rule in China. The ability of the Chinese to overthrow their alien rulers would also teach a lesson to the imperialist powers, who had the prejudiced view that China was the "sick man of the East," not fit

---

[15] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 29–30.

enough to survive in the evolutionary struggle. An anti-Manchu revolution would thus be the first step that would rescue China from its double slavery.[16]

As Manchu identity gained new meanings in the last years of the Qing, revolutionaries also attempted to clarify the borders of Han identity. Even though "the notion of *Han ren* (Han person) has existed for many centuries to designate those descendants of the Han dynasty which had its beginnings in the Wei River Valley, [it was during this period that] the notion of a unified Han nationality that occupies 94 percent of China's population gained its greatest popularity under Dr. Sun Yat-sen."[17] While the borders between the Manchu and the Han hardened, revolutionaries were ambivalent about the fate of Manchus and other non-Han peoples in the prospective Chinese Republic. The language of radical revolutionaries, like Zhang Binglin and Zou Rong, was suffused with a vengeful tone.[18] Sun Yat-sen was at the moderate end of the anti-Manchu spectrum. He occasionally mentioned that they had no intention of discriminating against Manchus because the revolution was not aimed at the Manchus *in toto* but against Manchu rulers, who usurped Han sovereignty.[19] The fate of the frontier peoples of China—Uyghurs, Mongols, and Tibetans—remained similarly unsettled in revolutionary discourse. The moderate revolutionaries were caught between the desire to maintain the

---

[16] Sun Yat-sen, "A Joint Discussion of the Question of China's Preservation or its Partition" (1903), in *Prescriptions for Saving China: Selected Writings of Sun Yat-sen*, trans. and ed. Julie Lee Wei et al. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1994), 21-29.

[17] Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, 82–83.

[18] Zhang Binglin in 1903 wrote that every Manchu individual was liable for the violence perpetrated by Manchu soldiers. For an analysis of Zhang's revenge rhetoric, see Edward J. M. Rhoads, *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000), 15.

[19] Sun, "Autobiography."

integrity of the Qing territory and the desire to establish a mono-racial Chinese state. In some of his writings, Sun Yat-sen did not conceal his belief in the strength of a state made up of a single race.[20] He considered the Han to be the fittest race of China, the embodiment of cultural superiority; assimilation could therefore be considered as an opportunity for Chinese minorities, who were otherwise destined to extinction in the evolutionary struggle. Considering assimilation to be the rational and natural path, the state was also burdened to expedite the assimilatory process to construct a vibrant and strong society wherein each person would have a chance for upward social mobility. Radicals like Zhang Binglin, Yang Du, and Zou Rong were less hesitant in advocating for a racially homogenous Han republic. Although they were ambivalent about the disintegration of Qing territory into smaller national units, "their rhetoric suggested to many that Qing territory should be divided up into a series of small race-states with the core provinces of the Ming dynasty reserved for the Han."[21]

The cry for a racial revolution did not go unchallenged. Manchu reformers and constitutionalist Han intellectuals emphasized the fundamental unity of all peoples of the empire and the necessity of establishing a modern multi-racial empire. For the reformers, the racial groups of China were members of a "single family" who would be united on the principle of equal citizenship.[22] For leading reformists Kang Youwei and Liang

---

[20] Sun's ideas were reflections of Wang Jingwei's racist theories. Prasenjit Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1995), 141. Also see James Reeve Pusey, *China and Charles Darwin* (Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983), 332.

[21] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 34.

[22] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 31.

Qichao (in his earlier years), the ultimate ideal of humanity should not be limited to a

political struggle for the construction of a nation state. It was rather "the universalistic

ideal of spreading Confucian moral-spiritual teachings" and realizing *datong* 大同 (the

Great Unity) where all barriers separating human beings, such as nation, race, and family,

would disappear.[23] The constitutionalists' use of the concept *zhong* (種), which was often

used by revolutionaries to refer to race, was more fluid. The term was frequently

deployed in such extraordinary ways that it occasionally referred "to China's perceived

connections to those peoples anywhere in the world who were struggling against various

kinds of oppressions."[24]

---

[23] Kang Youwei, *Datong shu* [The book of great unity] (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshi, 2005); Hao Chang, *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning, 1890–1911* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987); Rebecca E. Karl, *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002).

[24] Rebecca E. Karl, "Creating Asia: China in the World at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," *American Historical Review* 103, no. 4 (October 1998): 1101. Liang Qichao came closer to social Darwinist discourse after the Sino-Japanese war in 1895. However, in contrast to revolutionaries, Liang favored a "broad nationalism," believing that anti-Manchuism was sheer propaganda in order to mobilize the masses. He reproached revolutionaries for their "narrow nationalism" and believed that, by burdening the Manchus with all the ills of China, they escaped from the fact that the problem was a 3,000-year-old tradition and state culture. In Liang's thought, "nation" is defined not in its relation to ethnicity but in its relation to state. What interested him was China's immediate strengthening to resist Western colonialism because he had a firm belief in the Darwinian theory of the "survival of the fittest." He insisted that colonialism could be visible or invisible and that only the conscious nations could resist invisible colonialism, which was conducted by commerce, by having advisors within the government, by building roads, and by training the country's soldiers. He continued to establish commonality between the non-Western oppressed and threatened people of the world. The shared threat of economic subordination and political annihilation brought Liang to frequently shift the boundaries of races: the Filipinos and Vietnamese, who were generally classified as a "brown" race, turned out to be real "yellows" during their struggle against the imperialists. The Vietnamese "would fight the French devils . . . until not one single 'hirsute, ash-eyed white man' remained in their country," and the Filipinos "were portrayed as the 'spearhead of the yellow race's fight against the white race'

The Discourse of Anti-Manchu Muslim Students in Japan

The leading Hui intellectuals of the era were also closely following the discussions on the nature of the Chinese nation. Huang Zhenpan, in an article he wrote while he was studying in Japan, "Discussing the Hui People" (*Lun Huimin* 論回民),[25] published in *Xing Hui pian*, analyzed the nature of Hui identity within the framework of these ongoing discussions. His article was the first to state clearly that the Hui are not a separate ethnic group but, rather, Han believers of Islam. He thus opened an avenue for conceptualizing the Hui, and many others followed him, either accepting or refuting his ideas. Huang Zhenpan's short article employed the vocabulary of the anti-Manchu revolutionaries. His discourse, however, was ambivalent. A surface reading of his text might give the impression that he advocated a modern Chinese nation where political boundaries are conterminous with racial boundaries. However, I argue that Huang adopted a skillful strategy to refute race-centered conceptualizations of the nation and in fact came closer to the broad territorial nationalism of the reformists. His example is one of the frequent cases where individual thinkers often vacillated between inclusivist and exclusivist notions of nationalism.

A primary theme of Huang's article was the origin of the Han race. He refuted the common origin thesis developed by Zhang Binglin, who merged the Qing discourse of "distinguishing lineages" with the social evolutionist metaphor of blood to contend that

during their struggle against the United States in 1898." For an analysis of Liang Qichao's discursive transformation, see Karl, *Staging the World*. For the quotes, see Frank Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 84–85.

[25] Huang Zhenpan, "Lun Huimin" [Discussing the Hui people], *Xing Hui pian* (1908): 48–50.

the Chinese subjects of the Qing empire, whom he called the *Hanzu* 漢族 (Han race),

shared a common biological lineage tracing all the way back to a common ancestor, the

Yellow Emperor. Huang, on the contrary, argued that the Han people had multiple

origins. These included all peoples of China proper, except Tibetans, Miao, and Mongols,

who have their own territories. Huang invoked the widespread origin myth of the Hui,

which held they first came to China during the Tang dynasty and were the "descendants

of 3,000 soldiers who were invited to China by the Tang emperor to safeguard him."[26]

---

[26] Huang, "Lun Huimin," 49. A widespread account of the legend reads as follows: "In the evening of the 18th of the third month, in the second year of the Zhenguan reign of the Tang dynasty, the emperor dreamed that a turbaned man came running into the palace grounds, chasing after a demon. He woke up and was puzzled by the dream, for he knew not what it foretold. On the following day he assembled all the officials of the court to discuss the matter. The diviner of dreams reported, 'The turbaned man is a Huihui from the Western Region, out beyond the Jiayu Pass. The kingdom of Arabia is ruled by a Muslim king of great knowledge and virtue. His land is rich and powerful. The demon entering the palace grounds surely means that there is evil lurking, which you will only be able to dispel with the help of a Huihui.' The general reported, 'The Huihui are impeccably honest in their dealings. If you meet with them peacefully, they will serve you loyally and with no care for reward. You may send an emissary to the Western Region to see the Muslim king, and request the services of an enlightened one (zhenren) to keep the portended evil at bay.' The Emperor did as was advised, and sent the senior official Shi Mingtang on a mission to present a letter to the Muslim king. The Muslim king was delighted upon receiving the letter, and sent the senior disciples Qays, Uways and Husayn to China to offer their services. Husayn and Uways could not adapt to the new water and climate, and died en route. The sole survivor, Qays, crossed mountains and rivers, suffering great hardship, to eventually arrive in China. The Emperor received him with full honours, and asked what were the ritual and scriptural differences between his land and China. The turbaned man replied that the revealed scripture of the Western Region was called the Quran, which could be likened to the Five Classics of China. He then expounded the difference between Eastern and Western ritual and teachings. The Emperor was delighted, and so selected 3,000 Tang soldiers to move to the Western Region, in exchange for 3,000 Muslim soldiers to accompany the turbaned elder in China. These 3,000 Muslims had countless descendants, and are the ancestors of the followers of Islam in China today." See Zhang Xinglang, ed., *Zhong Xi jiaotong shiliao huibian* [Historical documents on East-West relations] (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2003), 741–42. The translation is from Anthony Garnaut, "Hui Legends of The Companions of The Prophet," *China Heritage Newsletter*, no. 5 (March 2006).

Although historians have not corroborated the veracity of this account, Huang presented the myth as a historical fact, not only to legitimize the connection and loyalty of the Hui to China and to its ruling circle but also to argue that the Hui originated in foreign lands and were not connected to the lineage of the Yellow Emperor.

How then could a people of foreign origin claim Han identity? First, for Huang, the peoples of China were called Han not because of shared blood or culture. He argued that Han was the name used by foreigners to denote residents of China when China was strongest, shocking the world by the military power it exerted over the four barbarian tribes on the frontier. It was a common appellation for all kinds of peoples of China. Here Huang must be referring to the Han dynasty (202 BC–AD 220), when the Chinese dominated neighboring non-Chinese territories and engaged in diplomatic relations with several countries in Asia and Europe. His analysis of the origins of the Han, thus, keeps him distant from the racist common origin thesis of anti-Manchu revolutionaries and comes close to the territorial conceptualizations of the nation that would later be formulated by Chinese nationalists as *Zhonghua minzu* (中華民族).[27] Second, he raised the idea of assimilation (同化), which turned all residents of China proper to Han. Yet the way he defined assimilation was not as cultural sinicization but was limited to the idea of "intermarriage." He argued that the peoples of China proper were all assimilated except the Manchus; parochial Manchu rulers preserved their racial distinctiveness through the racial policies of the Qing court keeping Manchus separate from other segments of the society.[28] He expressed his hope for the imminent assimilation of Manchus into the Han

[27] Huang, "Lun Huimin," 49.

[28] Ibid.

due to the abrogation of the ban on intermarriage between the Han and the Manchus. It is not clear how Huang envisioned the future of unassimilated frontier minorities in the prospective Chinese nation. Yet, since he praised the assimilative policies of Alexander the Great, specifically Alexander's ambitions to erase racial boundaries in his realm through intermarriage, Huang's discourse seems to encourage marriages between people of China proper and racial groups of the borderlands.[29] For Huang, this was also how monotheistic religions imagine the world; they recognize no racial boundaries and aim to spread all over the world by using the language of "universal love" and "charity."[30] Such was precisely the purpose of the Muslims who first came to and settled in China, and therefore Chinese Muslims, he argued, never strived for a separate country, but instead strived for their religious ideals and lifestyle. Thus, for Huang, the Hui people should continue to be defined as a religious community but not as a "racial group," and this would enable them to realize their religious objectives in China and preserve their religio-cultural autonomy.

Huang's analysis of the Hui's situation exemplifies his understanding of national belonging. The Hui were partially of foreign descent. These foreign Muslims married with the local Chinese population and became consanguineous to them. He, however, diverged from the main thrust of his argument and claimed that the percentage of Han Chinese who converted to Islam is very high, as the surnames of the Hui people

---

[29] A famous historian and ethnographer of the Republican period, Gu Jiegang, also encouraged marriages between the Han and the minority peoples, which would thereby endow the nation with new blood and give the nation a vital energy. Gu Jiegang, "Zhonghua minzu shi yihe" [Zhonghua minzu is one], in *Gu Jiegang quanji* (2010; repr., Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2010), 4:94–106.

[30] Huang, "Lun Huimin," 50.

demonstrate; among the many surname groups, only five surnames (Ha, Ma, Da, Sha, and Ding) show the foreign descent of the Hui in China. The rest are ancient Han surnames, proof that many members of the Hui are indeed Han who converted to Islam.[31]

Huang's emphasis on the high percentage of Han blood among the Hui might seem to bring him closer to the revolutionary Zhang Binglin, who built his racist discourse on the traditional notions of kinship and ancestry. Zhang's theory identified the role surnames play in Chinese society as the most significant markers of Chinese lineages; a common surname suggested to people—even with no known relationship— that they originated from the same ancestor. Zhang gave a new twist to this traditional identity formation. He traced the genealogies of each of these surname groups to a single ancestor, the Yellow Emperor. The Yellow Emperor myth was rewritten in such a way that he became the originator of the Han race through his twenty-five sons.[32]

Huang's ambivalent discourse is very puzzling for any reader. I argue that this is a consequence of his political and strategic thinking. First and foremost, envisioning the Hui as a separate ethnic/racial group in China was a very dangerous path. He stated that those who propagate such an idea are the enemies of China because this kind of divisive policy would bring enmity within society; the members of the same race (*tongzhong* 同種

---

[31] Ibid., 49. Later scholars contested this theory. They pointed at the first Ming emperor's ban on the usage of foreign surnames in 1368. They argued that this ban proves that many non-Han people had no choice but to adopt Han surnames during the Ming Dynasty. For example, see Jin Jitang, "Huijiao minzu shuo" [The theory of Muslim *minzu*], *Yugong* 5, no. 11 (1936): 35–36.

[32] Peter Zarrow, *China in War and Revolution, 1895–1949* (London: Routledge, 2005), 68–69.

) would devour each other. That would only benefit the imperialists.[33] Huang's

conception of race and racial unity was, thus, joined with a "simultaneous growth of

nationalism and a global historical logic"[34] that dominated the minds of almost all

Chinese intellectuals of the era. Western-introduced concepts like "race" and "nation"

were often given different meanings by different intellectuals, but the prime objective of

all was the same: to empower China in its struggle against the imperialists. This anti-

imperialist discourse dominated the minds of Chinese-speaking Muslims for decades,

regardless of what meaning they attributed to the idea of "Hui." Second, Huang was

attempting to keep Muslims safe from the racist language of the anti-Manchu

revolutionaries, whose retributive attitude had the potential to target any non-Han

minority group in China. By including the Hui within the borders of a broadly defined

Han race, he, on the other hand, sought to enable the Muslims of China to have a say in

the affairs of the prospective Han nation. As the following pages of this chapter will

show, Chinese Muslim intellectuals whether they agreed with Huang on his definition of

the Hui as Han Muslims or not, had the same ultimate purpose: to elevate the status of the

Muslims of China and to enable them to have a say in Chinese politics by enjoying

religious and cultural freedom.

Transformation of the Nationalist Discourse and the Hui Identity

In 1911, the Qing dynasty was finally toppled and the Republic was established.

Sun Yat-sen became its first president. Soon after the proclamation of the Republic,

---

[33] Huang, "Lun Huimin," 50.

[34] Karl, *Staging the World*, 8.

revolutionaries who took official positions had to abandon their racist discourse lest they

incite non-Han peoples to declare their independence. Unlike many other post-imperial

states, China inherited imperial territory *en bloc*. Non-Han peoples, such as Tibetans and

Mongols, had already initiated secessionist movements by claiming that they were part of

the Qing Empire, not the Chinese Republic. Western powers were also threatening to

annex the minority regions if "Chinese claims on these territories were actively

pursued."[35] The threats of imperialism and secessionism led to a change in the rhetoric of

the Chinese nationalists from a Han-centered assimilationist discourse to one

emphasizing the equality of all ethnic groups/races (*minzu*). Revolutionaries now

declared that "China was the Republic of five *minzu*s,"[36] namely the Han, Manchus,

Mongols, Tibetans, and Hui, inheriting the notion of the five identity groups that the

Qianlong emperor had granted institutional and political status.[37] The 1912 provisional

constitution guaranteed equality to all citizens regardless of racial, religious, or class

distinctions.

What the Republican state meant by the Hui had always remained ambiguous. In

a famous speech Sun made to Chinese Muslims at the inaugural meeting of the China

Association for Promoting Islam (Zhongguo Huijiao cujin hui 中國回教促進會), Sun

[35] Duara, *Rescuing History*, 142.

[36] Here I do not translate the word *minzu* because Nationalist Party's definition of *minzu* changed constantly over time.

[37] See Pamela K. Crossley, *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 354. The "Hui" that the Qianlong emperor recognized as a distinct ethnic group were the Turkic-speaking Muslims. Mark Elliott also discussed how the banner system preserved ethnic distinctions between the Han and the Manchus. See Mark C. Elliott, *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001).

Yat-sen offered a dual definition of *Huizu*. On the one hand, he defined it as any follower

of Islam; on the other hand, he defined it as a specific *minzu* in China. He stated:

> Today China is a republic. This is not the achievement of one man's efforts but
> the efforts of the compatriots of five big *minzu*s. The governmental system
> already improved the situation as it guaranteed not only the equality of 5 *minzu*s
> but also the equality of the religions of these *minzu*s. Religion is not something
> that can be ignored. Your religion was originally the strongest religion of the
> world. The countries that follow your religion are many. The loss of [Muslim]
> countries in Asia and Africa is because the power of your religion began to
> deteriorate. Yet, the burden rests not on religion but on bad government. Today,
> our country has become a republic.[38]

In the same speech, he also stated in a diplomatic and populist tone:

> The establishment of the Republic relies on the Huizu of northern China. . . . The
> *Huizu* of the world, not only in Asia, but also in Europe [and] Africa within this
> thousand years . . . had occupied a dominant position, such as in Persia, Turkey,
> Beirut, Afghanistan, Arabia, and Morocco. All believe in Islam. . . . Today, the
> dictatorship changed into a republic. This is the greatest and loftiest political
> [system] of the world. Islam is the greatest (*zui weida* 最偉大), is the loftiest
> religion.[39]

In his *Three Principles of the People*, which became the fundamental doctrine of

the Nationalist Party (Guomindang/GMD), established in 1912 under his direction, Sun,

however, defined the Hui as the Turkic Muslims of the frontier. In his explanation of the

principle of nationalism, where he laid down the criteria forming a *minzu,* he clearly

noted that it was only the Turkic Muslims, Manchus, Tibetans, and Mongolians that

qualify for racial/ethnic identity. He said:

---

[38] *Shenbao*, September 22, 1912, 2.

[39] *Dazi you bao*, September 16, 1912. *Shenbao, Dazi you bao* and *Zhengzong aiguo bao*
all reported the speech. However, parts reported by each are different. It is not possible to
corroborate if these newspapers reported the exact wording of Sun Yat-sen. However,
many influential Chinese Muslims, including the prominent scholar Fu Tongxian,
believed that Huizu according to Sun had double meaning. It referred either to Muslims
of China or Muslims of the world. See Fu Tongxian, *Zhongguo Huijiao shi* [The history
of Islam in China] (2000; repr., Ningxia renmin chubanshi, 2000), 112-3

In round figures, the minzus of China comprise 400 million people. Among these are only a few million Mongolians, over a million Manchus, a few million Tibetans, and a million and some hundred thousand Mohammedan Turks [the Muslim *Tujue* 回教之突厥人]. The total aliens [*wailai de* 外来的] number merely ten millions. Thus, considering the great majority we can say that the 400,000,000 Chinese [*Zhongguo ren*] are exclusively Chinese [*Han ren*], having the same blood, the same spoken and written language, the same religion, the same habits and customs, and forming a complete and independent race (*minzu*).[40]

However, in his definition of *minzu*, Sun listed religion as one of the five criteria, which, nevertheless, left the status of Chinese-speaking Muslims in ambiguity. Chinese Muslims, as we will see in the following pages, utilized this ambiguity in order to promote their cause.

Despite the introduction of the idea of a *five-minzu republic*, this conception of a mono-racial nation remained an ideal in the minds of many leading Han nationalists throughout the Republican period. Even during the early years of the Republic, Sun Yat-sen was not so enthusiastic about the concept of the "republic of five *minzu*s." Sun invoked this concept only when he spoke to the minorities,[41] and it did not take long for him to revise his theory of nation and readopt an assimilationist attitude toward them. The first signs of this appeared when the Nationalist Party (GMD), which was established in 1912 under the direction of Sun Yat-sen, declared in its manifesto that the party pledged "to enforce racial integration so that various cultures within the Republic can be

---

[40] Sun Yat-sen, *San min zhuyi* (1924; repr., Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu gongying she, 1969 and 1989), 6. The translation is adopted with some minor changes from *Triple Demism of Sun Yat-sen*, 70.

[41] Duara, *Rescuing History*, 143.

developed to become one enjoyed by all."[42] GMD leaders also established an association

to promote the Han settlement of the frontier areas.[43]

Sun stated that the republican revolution had achieved the negative half of the

goal of nationalism by overthrowing Manchu rule, but it could not achieve the positive

half of the goal. What he meant was to construct a Chinese nation in the American style.

He claimed that the idea of a "republic of five *minzu*s" prevented China from converting

its *minzu*s[44] into a single nation.[45] What he had in mind was not a nation where all *minzu*

groups preserved their distinctiveness; instead, he imagined a new nation in which all

peoples of China united around a single cultural and political center, just as the different

ethnic/racial groups in the United States came together around the "American style of life

and culture" that converted all of them into Americans. He believed that the United States

had achieved this kind of nationalism because the people of America were yoked by

common aspirations, which constituted "the loftiest and most civilized nationalism."[46]

---

[42] See the manifesto in Milton J. T. Shieh, ed., *The Kuomintang: Selected Historical Documents, 1894–1969* (Jamaica, NY: St. John's University, 1970), 38.

[43] Duara, *Rescuing History*, 143. James Leibold also argues that despite the GMD's political determination to create a unified and homogenous Chinese nation, the political realities of the frontier forced the party to adopt flexible and pragmatic policies, which were to a great extent rooted in the model of Qing frontier policies. Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 13.

[44] Here I prefer not to translate Sun Yat-sen's use of *minzu* because he has a specific definition of *minzu*, which is a group formed by common blood, common language, common religion, common lifestyle, and common habits and customs. See his definition of *minzu* in Sun Yat-sen, *San min zhuyi*, 1–90.

[45] Sun Yat-sen, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary: A Programme of National Reconstruction for China* (London: Hutchinson, 1918), 228–29.

[46] This is from a speech he made in 1919 on his Three Principles of the People Sun, "The Three Principles of the People," *Prescriptions for Saving China*, 224.

What he offered as a method was to make China a melting pot, where all peoples of

China would become *Zhonghua Ren* 中華人 (the Zhonghua people).[47] Sun urged that all

*minzu*s of China should forget their names in order to form a single nation, culturally and

politically, within *Zhonghua*. This would not be a difficult task because, according to the

Nationalists, minorities occupied only 2.5 percent of the total population of China. The

rest was "exclusively Han, having the same blood, the same spoken and written language,

the same religion, the same habits and customs, and forming a complete and independent

race (*minzu*)."[48] Sun Yat-sen occasionally praised the great assimilative power of the

Han, which would help China to become a single nation.[49] Obviously, Han culture was

the unit into which all other racial groups were expected to melt in order to form the

Zhonghua nation.

While Sun never intended during his lifetime to deny the existence of the

racial/ethnic minorities, his successor, Chiang Kai-shek, did just that. In a dramatic move,

he responded to Japanese attempts to incite ethnic tension in China during the Second

World War by denying the existence of various races in China entirely. In the first

instance, the Japanese government presented itself as the liberator of oppressed peoples

in Asia under Chinese rule. Moreover, in an effort to encourage unrest and possible

secession, Japanese agents emphasized ethnic differences among the peoples living in the

Chinese state. Shortly after the establishment of the colonial state of Manchukuo in

---

[47] Sun, *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary*, 229.

[48] See Sun Zhongshan, *San min zhuyi* (1924; repr., Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu gongying she, 1969 and 1989), 6–7. The translation is in Sun Yat-sen, *The Triple Demism of Sun Yatsen*, trans. P. Delia (Wuchang, 1931), 70.

[49] Sun, "Three Prinicples of the People," in *Prescriptions for Saving China*, 225.

Japanese-occupied northeast China (Manchuria) in 1931, Japan founded Muslim

associations that employed local Muslim leaders who were willing to cooperate in

carrying out Japanese policies. Japan, also, had the brother of the puppet emperor of

Manchukuo convert to Islam in a ceremony in Tokyo in front of an international

audience.[50] In the early 1930s, the Japanese army also began dropping propaganda

leaflets from airplanes announcing the government's support for the creation of an

independent Muslim state throughout Xinjiang and the Gansu corridor. This new Muslim

country would be called *Huihui guo* 回回國, or "a Muslim state."[51]

The Nationalist government responded by recruiting scholars to promote the myth

of a single Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*). Anyone who now dared to suggest that

minorities were a distinct race was likely to be called unpatriotic or, even worse, a traitor.

The GMD policy was elaborated in *China's Destiny*, penned by Chiang Kai-shek in

1943. In this writing, the notions of nation, ethnicity, and race all collapsed into one. He

wrote:

> As to the so-called Huizu in present-day China, most of them are actually the
> disciples of Huijiao (*Huijiao tu*), who are members of the Hanzu, who believe in
> Islam. Therefore, the difference between the Han and the Hui is only in religious
> belief and different habits of life. In short, our various clans (宗族) actually
> belong to the same *minzu* and to the same *zhongzu* 种族 (racial stock).

---

[50] Yang Jingzhi, *Riben zhi Huijiao zhengce* [The policy of Japan on Islam] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1943), 38. Also see Ando Junichiro. "Nihon senryouka no kahoku ni okeru chuugoku kaikyou sourengoukai no setsuritsu to kokuminshakai: Nicchuu sensou-ki chuugoku no 'minzoku mondai' ni kansuru jirei kenkyuu e mukete," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, no:87 (2014): 21-81.

[51] For Japanese policies in China, which aimed to establish a Muslim state in northwest China in cooperation with several Turkic Muslims from Xinjiang, a few Turkish pan-Asianists, and Chinese Muslims, see Selcuk Esenbel, "Japan's Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam, 1900–1945," *American Historical Review* 109, no. 4 (October 2004): 1159–63.

Therefore, there is an inner element closely linking the historical destiny of common existence and loss and common honor and disgrace of the whole Chinese *minzu*. That there are five social groups (*zu*) designated in China is not due to differences in race (*renzhong* 人種) or blood, but to religion and geographical environment. . . . This must be thoroughly understood by all fellow citizens of the Republic of China.[52]

From the early 1930s onward, Chiang Kai-shek was resolute in defining Muslims solely as a religious community. Chinese Muslims responded in different ways. Again, the choice of words to define the Chinese Muslim community and the titles adopted by organizations reflected how Chinese Muslims positioned themselves regarding the ethnic policy of the state. The case of the Beijing Muslim Students Association (Beijing Yisilan xueyou hui 北平伊斯蘭學友會), established in 1929 by high school and college students in Beijing, shows how title preferences reflected ideological positions. One of the founders of the organization, Ma Rulin, wrote about the debates:

> Members of the organization were divided into two factions: some had a stronger religious consciousness (*Huijiao* faction) and others had a stronger ethnic (*minzu)* consciousness (*Huizu* faction). . . . The difference of opinion between the *Huijiao* faction and *Huizu* faction became more obvious in time. Finally, the *Huizu* faction dominated the organization. After long-lasting brainstorming, the name of the organization changed to the China Huizu Youth Association (Zhongguo Huizu qingnian hui 中國回族青年會) in 1932. The association also published a journal titled *Huizu Youth* (*Huizu qingnian* 回族青年).[53]

As the Japanese threat became more of a reality, the administrative organs of the GMD began to coerce Hui organizations into changing any title that included the titles *Huizu* or *Huimin*, refusing to register and file the names of these organizations. As early as 1928, the Ministry of the Interior refused to register the China Huimin Public

---

[52] Jiang Zhongzheng, *Zhongguo zhi mingyun* [China's destiny] (Nanjing: Zhengzhong shuju, 1943–1946), 9.

[53] Ma Rulin, "Ji wang you Xue Wenbo" [Remembering my deceased friend, Xue Wenbo], *Zhongguo Musilin* 1 (1986): 37.

Association (Zhongguo Huimin gonghui 中國回民公會), established by Ma Yunting and Ha Shafu in Nanjing. The organization received approval and was registered to file only after they retitled the organization as the China Huijiao Public Association (Zhongguo Huijiao gonghui 中國回教公會).[54] Some Chinese Muslim intellectuals also began to question the legitimacy of titles using *Huizu*. Sun Shengwu, who became a deputy in the parliament in 1937, brought the attention of Chinese Muslims to the sensitivity of the issue as Japanese-sponsored Muslim organizations changed their titles and replaced *Yisilan* with *Huijiao minzu* or *Huizu*, reflecting the Japanese schemes to create a Muslim state in northwest China.[55]

Most Chinese Muslim organizations responded accordingly as they not only eliminated *Huizu* but also *Huimin* from their titles and replaced them with *Huijiao*. For instance, the China Huimin Association to Save the Country (Zhongguo Huimin jiuguo xiehui 中國回民救國協會) established by prominent *ahong* Wang Jingzhai and directed by the powerful warlord of Guangxi, Bai Chongxi, to promote the anti-Japanese cause among Chinese Muslims in 1937, changed its name to the China Huijiao (Islamic) Association to Save the Country (Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui 中國回教救國協會), replacing *Huimin* with *Huijiao* in its title. The fate of the China Huizu Youth Association

---

[54] Sun Shengwu, *Huijiao luncong* [The collection of opinions on Islam] (Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, 1963), 142.

[55] For instance, he stated that the Manzhou Islamic Society (*Manzhou Yisilan jiao xiehui*) underwent a name change and adopted the new title of the Manzhou Huijiao Minzu Society in 1936. He also mentioned that the subsidiary organs of the organization established in Beijing by Japanese sponsorship, titled China Huijiao General Federation (*Zhonghua Huijiao zonglianhehui*), also began to use the name China Huizu General Federation (*Zhonghua Huizu zonglianhehui*). Sun Shengwu, *Huimin yanlun* 1, no. 7 (1939): 10.

was no different. It had to shut down due to Japanese attacks in 1937, to be reactivated in Chongqing in 1938; this time the name of the organization became the Islamic Youth Organization (Yisilan Qingnian hui 伊斯蘭青年會), replacing Huizu with the legitimate term *Yisilan* that indicated the global nature of the religion. It also changed the name of its journal to *Muslim/Islamic Youth* (*Yisilan Qingnian* 伊斯蘭青年).

Chinese Muslim intellectuals, nevertheless, continued to use terms like *Huizu*, *Huimin*, and *Huijiao minzu* interchangeably until the Japanese began to openly propagate the idea of Muslim independence.[56] For example, Ma Songting (1895–1992), who is considered one of the four great *ahongs* of China, wrote an article in 1936 in *Yugong* to introduce the situation of Muslims in China. He used *Huimin* thirty-three times, *Huizu* twelve times, and *Huijiao minzu* two times. In his article, Ma Songting acknowledged his support for the case of those who promoted ethnic status for the Hui. He referred to the notable speech Sun Yat-sen made at the meeting of the Association to Promote Islam in China in 1912 to promote his idea that Muslims constituted an ethnic group in China.

Chinese Muslims stopped giving explicit or implicit support to the idea of ethnic status when full-scale war with Japan erupted in 1937. The use of the ethnonym Huizu almost disappeared from the scene due to political pressure and Japanese manipulation of the term even before the GMD made the *de facto* ban on the term an official one in 1940.[57] Even the politically active ethnicizers had to drop the term, reluctantly, due to

---

[56] Ma Songting, "Zhongguo Huijiao yu Chengda shifan xuexiao" [Islam in China and Chengda Normal School], *Yugong* 5, no. 11 (1936): 1–14.

[57] "Xingzhengyuan ni tongling: Quanguo gaizheng Huiren chengwei zhineneg chengwei Huijiaotu buneng chengwei Huizu" [A general order of Executive Yuan: Muslims may only be referred to as *Huijiao tu* and not as *Huizu*], *Dagong bao*, September 16, 1940.

ever-increasing need to band together for the sake of the country. In 1941, Ma Songting

co-authored an article with Xue Wenbo, the notable promoter of the cause of ethnic status

for the Hui, on the Muslim question of China.[58] They made a list of autonyms used by

Chinese Muslims, and this list, to no one's surprise, did not include *Huizu*. Despite their

silence about the use of *Huizu*, they attempted to establish *Huimin* as a legitimate choice

in response to the news circulating about a ban on the word *Huimin*.[59] Chinese Muslims

referred to a report published in the *Saodang* Newspaper in 1941, which claimed that the

Executive Yuan banned the use of *Huimin* along with *Huizu* on the ground that it

alienated non-Muslims from Muslims, and urged people to use *Huijiao tu* (the disciples

of the Hui teaching) instead. The Hui were ethnically Han, and therefore, the newspaper

reported, the use of the word was considered inappropriate. Because news of a ban

became a nuisance among Chinese Muslims, Ma Songting and Xue Wenbo strove to

clarify the issue. They pointed to the eccentricity of the word *Huijiao tu* and

communicated Muslims' unwillingness to use it. Drawing examples from classic

dictionaries, the authors also contended that the character *tu* had many negative

meanings. They explained why *Huimin* would be a more appropriate choice, claiming

that *min* is a generic word of *ren* 人 (people) and refers to any resident of the country.

The authors implied that the use of *Huimin* did not have any ethnic implication and,

therefore, was in conformity with party ideology.

---

[58] Ma Songting and Xue Wenbo, "Dangqian Zhongguo Huijiao wenti zhi shangque" [Discussion on the contemporary problem of Islam in China], *Guomin gonglun* 4, no. 12 (1941): 429–33.

[59] As mentioned before, the administrative offices were sensitive about the use of "Huimin" in organizational titles. However, there was no official ban on the use of the word.

In response, the China Islamic Organization requested that the Executive Yuan investigate reports about a ban on *Huimin* and clarify the situation. The Executive Yuan indicated that the report in the newspaper did not totally reflect the content of the order. The order was sent in response to the requests of Chinese Muslim organizations to ban derogatory exonyms, such as *panhui* 叛回 (rebellious Hui), *Huizei* 回匪 (Hui bandit), or *Huimin*, in cases where the character *Hui* was written by appending a dog radical to the character. They also indicated that *tu* would indicate the religious nature of the identity and, in that sense, it followed the example of the denominations used for other religious communities. It was not proposed as a general term that would replace all other denominations used for the Hui people.[60]

Yet, rumors about a ban on *Huimin* along with Huizu continued to circulate, and state officials continued to coerce Hui organizations into avoiding using *Humin* in their titles despite the clarification from the center. Many continued to believe that there was an official ban.[61] Ma Rulin, a leading member of the China Islamic Youth Organization (Zhongguo Yisilan qingnian hui 中國伊斯蘭青年會), described the political repression they faced in 1945 when they once again decided to change the name of the organization, this time to the China Huimin Youth Association (*Zhongguo Huimin qingnian hui* 中國 回民青年會). For many, as the war with Japan came to an end, the time was ripe to reassert their ethnic claims, and therefore they changed their organizational title.

---

[60] Ibid., 432.

[61] Sun Shengwu, the Chinese Muslim deputy in the parliament, claimed that the Executive Yuan banned the use of Huimin in 1931. Sun Shengwu, *Huimin Luncong*, 142.

Probably in order to be on the safer side, they preferred to use *Huimin* rather than *Huizu*

in the title of the organization. Ma Rulin wrote:

> We, the members of the former Zhongguo Huizu Youth Association and the Hui people of all walks of life, gathered in Chongqing. We all felt the need to take action against the GMD, which did not recognize the Huizu's existence, and Chiang Kai-shek, who did not allow the use of the word *Huimin* in an attempt to suppress the ethnic rights and demands of the Huizu. In order to strive for the rights and status of the Huizu, we reorganized the China Islamic Youth Association (Zhongguo Yisilan qingnian hui 中國伊斯蘭青年會) as the China Huimin Youth Association (Zhongguo Huimin qingnian hui 中國回民青年會). Xue Wenbo and I wrote an appropriate draft. . . . We proposed and explained that the Huihui constitute an ethnic group, and we refuted the theory of Chiang Kai-shek, which stated that the Huihui are only a religious group. Major news services sent their reporters to our press conference, but only the *Xinhua Daily*[62] published the news. After the China Huimin Youth Association was established, we published *Huimin Youth* (*Huimin qingnian* 回民青年). The GMD refused to file and register it. Yet, branches of the association were promptly established. They arrested the people in charge in some of the branches, such as the ones in Pingliang, Tianshui, and Shannan. Xue Wenbo organized the Beijing branch relying on his status and identity. He published the journal *Gu-er-bang* 古爾邦 (*Qurban*)[63] and promoted our ideas about the ethnic status of the Hui, which was banned by the GMD.[64]

GMD state officials and party-affiliated scholars were not the only ones who

promoted the idea that Chinese Muslims were ethnically Han. A group of Chinese-

speaking Muslim scholars also worked to lay the theoretical foundations of the idea that

the Chinese-speaking Muslims could not be considered a separate ethnic group in

---

[62] *Xinhua Daily* is the Communist newspaper established in 1938.

[63] Gu-er-ban is the transliteration of the word *qurban*, which literally means, "to sacrifice." It also refers to the *'id al-adha* (Festival of the Sacrifice). In this journal, Xue Wenbo called on Chinese Muslims to sacrifice themselves in order to acquire their deserved status in China. See Xue Wenbo, "Zhu 'Guerbang' wei Huimin zhengqu ziyou pingdeng de xianfeng huiming" [Celebrating "Qurban" as the bright vanguard of the fight of Huimin to acquire freedom and equality], *Gu-er-bang* 1, no. 2 (1947): 6–7.

[64] Ma Rulin, "Ji wang you Xue Wenbo," 38.

China.[65] A prominent Muslim scholar, Yin Boqing, the secretary of the China Islamic Association, wrote an article as early as 1926 elaborating why Chinese-speaking Muslims were members of the Han people and should be considered only as a religious community. This short article is still among the most circulated and quoted texts on the issue in contemporary China.[66]

Yin Boqing began his article by questioning the existence of races groups on an ontological ground. For Yin, the idea of Muslims being part of the Han race (*Hanzu*) is completely in accordance with the single-origin theory of Islam. After all, humans are members of a single family, all being the descendants of Adam. Therefore, the unity of peoples should be the ultimate principle of Muslims. The racial distinctions within the society, which are no more than physical differences, all appeared adventitiously as a result of the influence of distinct geographic environmental factors on people.[67] Yet, he lamented, many Muslim intellectuals in China confused race (種族) with religion,[68] which was detrimental to the country because the Japanese distorted the truth on the basis of similar arguments. For him, those people who believe that the Hui are a separate race were confused by Japanese propaganda. Like Huang Zhenpan, Yin also feared that

[65] Yin Boqing, "Huijiao yu Huizu bian" [The distinction between Huijiao and Huizu], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 5 (1926): 55–58; Sun Shengwu, "Zhongguo minzu yu Huijiao" [Chinese nation and Islam], *Huimin yanlun* 1, no. 7 (1939): 7–10; Bai Chongxi, "Zhongguo Huijiao yu shijie Huijiao" [Islam in China and Islam in the world], *Yuehua* 14, no. 11–12 (1942): 3–6.

[66] Yin, "Huijiao yu Huizu bian," 55–58.

[67] Ibid., 55.

[68] Su Beihai, a Han scholar mainly focusing on Xinjiang, also wrote an article criticizing Chinese Muslim ethnicizers for confusing religion with racial identity. See Su Beihai, "Weiwuer Huihui bianzheng" [Investigating Uyghur and Huihui], *Huizu wenhua* 1, no. 2 (1948): 7–10.

thinking of Muslims as a separate race had the potential to turn them into tools of imperialism.

Yin Boqing reiterated that race and religion often do not overlap. While many religious communities are comprised of multiple races, a single race might contain followers of different religions. Although he did not deny the foreign origins of the Muslims of China, he pointed at the old familiar arguments about the assimilative power of the Han to explicate how Muslim peoples of different races became Han:[69] the races that intermingled with the Han were all assimilated. This included even the Manchus. Yin's argument was in line with the new revolutionary stance. The rhetoric concerning Manchus changed drastically after the Republic was announced as the Nationalists, who had argued that Manchus were not sinicized and therefore had no right to govern China as an alien race, began instead to promote the sinicization thesis, which stated that Manchus were assimilated as they adopted Confucian morality and Chinese culture during the Qing era.[70] Yin wondered how Muslims could resist the assimilative power of the Han even when the ruling Manchus melted into the Han race.[71]

Yin repeated many of the arguments developed by Huang Zhenpan. Departing from Huang, who saw assimilation as the mixing of blood through intermarriage, Yin argued that Chinese Muslims were also culturally assimilated. He sharply delineated religious rituals from customs. Pilgrimage, fasting, prayer, funerals, wedding ceremonies, and even hats used by Muslims were all related to religious rituals. Therefore, it was

---

[69] Interestingly, Yin employed the term "Han" interchangeably with the term *Zhonghua minzu.*

[70] Sun, *San min zhuyi*, 76. Also see Sun, Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary, 81.

[71] Yin, "Huijiao yu Huizu bian," 56–57.

erroneous to point to such rituals to claim that Chinese Muslims had different customs.

Yin argued that the confusion concerning the identity of Chinese Muslims was caused by

the appellations used for Islam and Muslims in Chinese. He argued that Islam itself is a

universal religion, that all over the world the religion is called Islam, and that its

followers are called Muslim or *Mu'min*; Muslims of China, on the other hand, called

Islam the teaching of the Hui (*Huijiao*) because of the *Huihe*. Therefore, Yin reiterated

the argument that Huizu in China refers to the Muslim people of Xinjiang, who are of

Turkic origin.[72]

The universality of Islam occupied an important place in the arguments of Yin.

He enunciated the Quranic view that Islam is not a new religion but the final culmination

and fulfillment of the same truth that prophets before Muhammad revealed to the peoples

of the world.[73] Because people indulged in material desires and deviated from the truthful

path, God sent many prophets to call them back to the true religion. Following the idea

that Allah perfected religion by his revelation to Muhammad, the seal of all prophets, Yin

stated that the religion of God was Islam, which was also the religion of Adam.

Muhammad completed and perfected what God already revealed to Adam. It originated

in Arabia and spread all over the world. For Yin, the mission of Islam is not complete in

China and will not be completed if the Hui began thinking of their identity in racial

terms. He stated:

> Nowadays, every religious community is in competition to promote its own ideas.
> The communities do their best to expand their power. . . . My religion [in China]
> is not as good and energetic in terms of progress. It has an imperceptible

---

[72] Yin, "Huijiao yu Huizu bian," 56–57.

[73] Quran 3:19 states, "The Religion before Allah is Islam." Hereafter I will use the Quran translation of Yusuf Ali.

influence. There are many who want to convert to Islam. But *if we say that we are Huizu, even if there are people who liked the way [Islam], they will necessarily resent [the idea of] converting to a foreign race [zu], and therefore they won't be willing to convert [to Islam]*.[74]

Yin also drew attention to the anti-superstition campaigns of the state and the threat they posed to Islam.[75] The provisional constitution of the Republic of China guaranteed the freedom of religious beliefs officially recognized by the state. The state recognized "religions" as "doctrinal, spiritual, and ethical systems with a social organization, [listing Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism as religions that] were to be protected by the constitutional clause on religious freedom."[76] All these official religions were also expected to contribute to social progress and get rid of superstitious practices and beliefs. In this period, the state discourse also assumed a great divide between acceptable religion and unacceptable superstition. Although it was only from 1928 onward that the central government began to orchestrate a systematic anti-superstition campaign, anti-superstition rhetoric and occasional attacks on "superstitious practices" can be traced back to the early years of the Republic. Leading members of the first Republican government launched anti-superstition campaigns in 1912 when they established a Society for Social Reform to fight against superstitious practices. These and subsequent anti-superstition campaigns targeted whatever was not "grounded in and strictly limited to the spiritual and moral self-perfection delineated by the theological scriptures of a world religion."[77] Within this context, Yin worried that if Islam fell short

---

[74] Yin, "Huijiao yu Huizu bian," 58.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 58.

of the given criteria for a world religion and was reduced to the narrow confines of ethnicity/race, it could easily become the target of anti-superstition campaigns.

Yet, from the standpoint of the ethnicizers, Yin's fears were groundless. This was because, despite its increasingly assimilationist tone, the GMD government never totally abandoned its multi-ethnic policy, especially in the overly sensitive frontier areas. In the words of James Leibold, whose scholarship changed our understanding of Republican frontier policies, the "GMD adopted a pragmatic yet inherently conservative frontier policy that was rooted in the language and administrative precedents of the Qing court."[78] In its approach to the frontiers, "the party consistently advocated political and cultural autonomy as it lacked the political resolve to impose its will over the objections of the frontiersmen."[79] The state therefore dealt with minority religions within the framework of ethnic policy, mostly determined by broader geopolitical factors out of state control.[80] Minority religions were often defined as one of the core elements of ethnic customs and had to be treated differently from Han customs and spiritual traditions. On the other hand, state officials often repudiated calls for autonomous cultural and educational rights of the Chinese Muslims on the ground that China was a secular state and that the state therefore would not grant extra rights or autonomy to religious groups. Therefore, many Chinese Muslim intellectuals felt the need to wrap Chinese Muslim identity within the ethnicity package. This also explains why Islamic reformism was most often introduced as a

---

[77] Goossaert and Palmer, *Religious Question*, 51.

[78] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 13.

[79] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 13–14.

[80] Goossaert and Palmer, *Religious Question*, 48.

cultural movement (*wenhua yundong* 文化運動) in China. It was, after all, very much for

the same purpose—protecting Islam from Han domination and absolute state control—

that many strived for ethnic rights for Muslims of China.

Ethnicization of Muslim Identity during the Republican Period

The efforts of ethnicizers to constitute Chinese Muslims as a minority ethnic

group must be seen within the framework of their wish to participate in politics as

Muslims representing Muslims. They thought that only when they were defined as a

separate ethnic group could Muslims have special rights, privileges, and allocated seats in

the parliament. Two leading intellectuals, Xue Wenbo and Jin Jitang, laid the theoretical

foundations of the Hui as an ethnicity. Xue Wenbo was among the organizers of the

China Huizu Youth Association, founded in 1932, and an important contributor to *Huizu*

Qingnian. Jin Jitang, on the other hand, wrote an article called "The Theory of Muslims

as an Ethnicity" (*Huijiao minzu shuo* 回教民族說)[81] in *Yugong* in 1936, summarizing the

criteria that make all Muslims of China—including Turkic- and Mongolian-speaking

Muslims—members of a single ethnic group. This article became the reference source of

ethnicizers. Like many other ethnicizers Jin aimed to demonstrate an impermeable

boundary between the Han and the Hui by highlighting difference rather than similarity.

He promoted the case for ethnicity with reference both to Islamic sources and Sun Yat-

---

[81] Jin Jitang, "Huijiao minzu shuo" [The theory of Muslims as ethnicity], *Yugong* 5, no. 11 (1936): 29–39.

sen's "rigidly formalistic definition of *minzu*."[82] This approach was necessary in order to persuade both their fellow Muslims and Han policymakers.

Jin Jitang began his analysis by pointing at verses from the Quran where Muslims are praised an *umma*, a single family (Quran 49:10). The ideological tendency of Jin Jitang becomes obvious in his choice of the word to translate *umma*, a Quranic term with multiple meanings.[83] For Jin, the Chinese concept of *minzu* was a perfect match for this supra-identity marker. This preference also delineated the borders of Huizu as encompassing all Muslims regardless of racial origin. Jin did not engage with the vibrant discussions taking place in the Middle East concerning the idea of the nation, in which terms were reassigned to meet new identity claims in an age where empires dissolved into nation-states. He must, however, have been aware of the fact that the idea of *millet*, which signified religious communities—Muslim, Christian, and Jewish—in the Ottoman Empire, was redefined to denote "nation" in the early twentieth century.[84] Since *millet* as a term lost its connection to religious identity, Jin must have preferred to use the word *umma* as this word came to signify the supranational Muslim identity.

---

[82] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 131.

[83] "*Umma*" has multiple meanings in the Quran. It at times refers to any religious community and at other times to the "potential unity of mankind." However, in time, in the Muslim world, the word came to signify the global Muslim community. At certain times, the plural form of the term, "*umam*," is invoked to refer to the idea of "nations," as in the case of *al-umam al-muttahida*, "the United Nations." For the Quranic origins of the word, and its historical use, see F. M. Denny, "Umma," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Online*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman et al. (Brill, 2012).

[84] The Young Turks, for instance, promoted the notion of Ottoman *millet*, which would encompass all peoples of the Ottoman Empire, regardless of their racial or religious identity. When it became certain that the supra-ethnic Ottoman *millet* was doomed to failure, a group of prominent intellectuals, including figures like Ziya Gökalp, redefined the idea of *millet* to overlap with ethno-national Turkish identity, with no obvious connection to religious identity.

The idea of a universal community of Muslims gained political meaning in the Chinese context as Jin moved from Islamic to Chinese sources for legitimization. He strove to fit his definition of Muslims as an ethnic group in China to Sun Yat-sen's definition of *minzu*, elaborating on all of Sun Yat-sen's criteria: common blood, livelihood, religion, language, and customs.

Common Blood:

The kernel of debates concerning the blood of the Hui people in China revolved around the percentage of Han converts. Although there was no way to provide scientific proof, each intellectual promoted his position by making an assertion about the dose of Han blood circulating through the veins of Chinese Muslims. Contrary to Huang and Yin, Jin claimed that the number of Han converts within the Muslim community in China was negligible and the common Han surnames found among Muslims was due to the policy of Ming Emperor, who banned the use of foreign surnames.[85] Although Jin emphasized the insignificance of Han blood in the making of Huizu so as to keep a distance from the Han, the way he imagined the Hui as an ethnicity was unrelated to pure hereditary blood. Historians had already refuted the long-established view that the Hui of China were descendants of the *Huihe* (Uyghurs) by the time Jin Jitang wrote his article. It was by then widely recognized that the Hui of China were descendants of foreign peoples of different racial origins, even including non-Muslims. According to Jin, these included not only Arabs, Turks of Anatolia, Persians, Central Asians, and Mongols but also Jurchens, the Han, and the Jews.[86] Jin argued that the proof of the insignificant amount of Han

---

[85] Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 31–32.

[86] Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 29.

blood in the making of the Huizu lay in the observable phenotypical differences of the

Hui. He, in reference to his friend Xue Wenbo's *Huizu Movement in China*, wrote:

> The Huizu of the northwest [of China] mostly have tall bodies, high-bridged noses, deep-set eyes, and neat beards. [Phenotypical distinctions of] the Huizu of Inner China seem to be less pronounced; but compared to Hanzu, their bodies are slightly bigger, the bridges of their noses are slightly higher, their eyes are slightly deeper-set, and their beards are slightly thicker. They are not similar to the Han. According to my personal experience, when a Hui person and a Han person walk on the street, I can distinguish who is Hui and who is Han.[87]

The multi-racial origins of the Hui might seem to contradict Sun's first criterion:

common blood. It took, however, only a twist for Jin to fit his notions of ethnicity to

Sun's principle of "common blood." He invented the idea of "shared Muslim blood" by

invoking the marriage laws of Islam, pointing to the idea that a Muslim could only marry

a Muslim.[88] Since Han people were not Muslims, marriage with them was not possible

unless they converted to Islam. Therefore in China, only Muslims married with Muslims,

which meant that only "Muslim blood" circulates through the body of Chinese Muslims.

The commonly held idea that the Hui were originally the descendants of foreign Muslims

married to Han women had no significance according to Jin because Han women—who

had to convert to Islam for marriage purposes—were after all of Muslim blood.

Not everyone burdened themselves with the task of demonstrating "shared blood

of the Hui." Xue Wenbo, for instance, refuted the scientific validity of race (*zhongzu* 種

---

[87] Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 32.

[88] In fact, according to the interfaith marriage laws of Islam, Muslim men can marry women of the People of the Book, namely Christians and Jews. Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 31–32.

族) as an analytical category. He distinguished race (*zhongzu*) from ethnicity (*minzu*),[89]

listing religion, custom, and lifestyle as the main constituents of an ethnic group. Xue

stated that blood was important in the making of a clan (*jiazu* 家族) and a race (*zhongzu*)

but not an ethnicity/nationality (*minzu*). Xue followed a group of ethnologists like Gu

Jiegang and Fei Xiaotong, who began to question Sun Yat-sen's definition of *minzu* in

the 1930s. They argued Sun Yat-sen put a lot of emphasis on the idea of shared blood and

therefore failed to distinguish *minzu* from *zhongzu*.[90] They believed that race was not a

meaningful category since humans had been mixing since the very early days of human

existence and that therefore there were no more "pure races."[91] *Minzu* referred to

acquired differences of language, religious beliefs, and customs and related to changes in

environment and culture. A *minzu* was thus founded on consciousness, making it a

subjective and psychic phenomenon.[92] For Xue, conversion automatically made one a

member of the Huizu*,* as the convert manifested his willingness to participate in the

Muslim religio-cultural zone.[93]

    Xue Wenbo's unwillingness to countenance the idea of a "shared Muslim blood"

went to a great extent unnoticed among Chinese Muslim intellectuals. When Muslims

increasingly pondered the "marriage problem" of the Hui youth in the 1930s, the idea of

---

[89] Dawude [Xue Wenbo], "Guanyu 'Huizu' yu 'Hanren Xinyang Huijiao' wenti" [The question of "Huizu" and "Han people who believe in Islam"], *Huizu Qingnian* 1, no. 2 (1933): 9–14.

[90] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 133.

[91] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 131–35.

[92] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 131–35.

[93] Dawude, "Guanyu 'Huizu,'" 11.

"pure Muslim blood" was frequently employed. The increasing rate of marriage between the Han and the Hui alarmed many Chinese Muslim intellectuals. They talked about the importance of marrying Hui women to Hui men to preserve not only religious principles but also the "pure Muslim blood."[94] In many articles, intellectuals maintained the significance of the preservation of Islamic marriage laws as a barrier against the assimilation of the Hui into Han-dominated Chinese society.[95] Even the famous fragrant concubine, the epic figure of Uyghur nationalists, who committed suicide in an act of resistance against the Chinese emperor, was invoked by Chinese Muslims, this time as the heroic Muslim woman who refused to become the consort of a non-Muslim man.[96]

Thus, racist notions of common blood were reinterpreted within a framework of religious principles. This was a strategic move in a setting where policymakers' formulations of *minzu* rested on the idea of "common blood." None of these intellectuals were ethnographers following the principles of modern methodology. They were activist-intellectuals who aimed for specific political, religious, and educational rights. Therefore, they viewed scholarly debates plumbing the depths of ethnography as a waste of time. It was more rational and effective to acquire legitimacy by relying on Sun Yat-sen, whose

[94] Ma Quanren, "You Hui Han tonghun xiangdao Huijiao nüzi jiaoyu" [Thinking about Muslim women's education from the standpoint of Hui and Han intermarriages], *Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huikan* 2, no. 2 (1940): 14; Jin Sixing, "Hui Han tonghun wenti" [The intermarriage issue of Hui and Han], *Yuehua zhoukan*, no. 7 (1947); Hai Yang, "Du Jin Sixing xiansheng 'Han Hui tonghun wenti'" [After reading Jin Sixing's "Intermarriage issue of Hui and Han"], *Yuehua zhoukan*, no. 12 (1947).

[95] The China Islamic Organization to Save the Country devoted one issue of its journal to *Hui Youth*'s marriage question. The authors offered solutions to alleviate the conditions that Hui people faced in finding suitable marriage partners within the Hui community. See *Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo huikan* 3, no. 3–4 (1941).

[96] Fang Naixiu, "Han Hui tonghun wenti de jiantao" [The discussion on the intermarriage problem of Han and Hui], *Yisilan qingnian* 2, no. 8 (1936): 10–12.

ideas—though shelved for the time being—were never refuted by GMD policymakers. And the idea of "common blood" was a strategic one.

Common Customs:

The intertwined nature of religious rituals and daily customs served these intellectuals' purpose of fitting the case of the Hui to Sun's criterion. The ethnicizers, including Jin, listed as the specific customs of the Huizu both religious rituals common to all Muslim communities—such as praying, fasting, pilgrimage, circumcision, and funeral and wedding ceremonies—and daily practices often based on *sunna* (the practice of Prophet Muhammad) or Quran, such as special Muslim garments, pork abstention, and hygiene rules. The shared customs of the Hui and Han, highlighted by Yin Boqing, were plunged into obscurity in the writings of ethnicizers.[97]

Language:

Chinese Muslims primarily speak Chinese dialects. However, their language is also infused with many words and phrases from Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and other Central Asian languages. Labeled as *Huihui hua* 回回話 (the Hui speech), the ethnicizers pointed at this peculiar speech as a linguistic marker of the Huizu. The Mongolic language spoken by Dongxiang Muslims and the Turkic languages spoken by Salar and Uyghur Muslims were also listed as distinct languages of the Hui *minzu* of China.[98]

---

[97] Jin, "Huizu minzu shuo," 32–33.

[98] Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 33. Also see Zhao Zhenwu. "Huijiao minzu sige zi de jieyi" [The explanation of four characters of Huijioa minzu], *Yuehua*, no. 1 (1929).

Territory:

Two different solutions were offered for the issue of locating a specific territory

for the Huizu. While some did not hesitate to point to Xinjiang, called the Hui Region

(*Huibu* 回部), as the hereditary territory of all Muslims in China,[99] Jin Jitang suggested

that the Hui had always built their separate quarters even in Han-dominated areas. For

Jin, these Hui enclaves were territorial markers of their ethnic identity. These enclaves

enabled the Hui to minimize their contact with the Han, which in turn prevented the

assimilation of the Hui. The Hui, Jin asserted, also chose occupations that kept their

distance from the Han. They often preferred to become merchants and not officials, for

instance, because merchandise granted the Hui some autonomy. They could thus observe

the dietary restrictions and ban on interest, and they could avoid entertaining, geomancy,

and divination. The special lifestyle that the Hui had to observe enabled them to have a

distinct livelihood.[100]

The orthodox view that Islam was essentially superior to all other religions and

cultures found expression in many of the articles written by Chinese Muslims of the era,

whether they supported the idea of *minzu* status for the Hui or not. They all asserted that

the crux of this primordial truth was monotheism and that this belief system provided

Muslims with unique and special attributes. Yet although they acted in concert on the

idea of the superiority of Islam, they did not agree on the function of Islam in defining the

Hui. As mentioned before, supporters of the idea of the Hui being "Muslim Han" saw

---

[99] Li Qian, *Huibu gongdu* [Official documents on the Hui region] (Shanghai: Zhonghua Yinshua Chang, 1924), 2–4.

[100] Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 32.

monotheism as an attribute that elevated Islam above any kind of ethnic or national

boundaries. They stressed the missionary role of early Muslims and demanded that this

primordial supra-national ideal of Muslims not be lost to the cause of ethnicizers' narrow

definitions of Muslim identity. In short, they claimed that what elevated Islam above any

non-religious identification was reduced to an ethnic marker in the hands of ethnicizers.

Jin Jitang, on the other side, summarized the ethnicizer's view of Islam and its

role in creating an ethnic (*minzu*) identity in the following passage:

> Buddhists kneel three times and kowtow nine times before the memorial tablet of
> Confucius, the respectful teacher of great achievements. Confucian scholars, who
> wholeheartedly believe in Confucius and Mencius, already . . . burn incense
> before the Stove God. The Christians, who believe in the Trinity, bow three times
> before the portrait of Sun Yat-sen in meeting places. There are all kinds of these
> things. Only Muslims, who believe in one God, don't dare to do like this.
> Muslims pray only to God by facing emptiness. Unity of belief and sameness of
> its manifestation created ethnic consciousness, united them, and generated ethnic
> feeling. Thereupon, it gave birth to ethnic characteristics. This is unique to
> Muslims. Other religions do not have this characteristic. Therefore, only Muslims
> can form an ethnic group.[101]

In this short statement, Jin Jitang responded to the frequently raised question as to

why only Muslims but not members of other religions constitute an ethnic group. For Jin,

the markers were distinct and not distorted as they were in the cases of Christianity,

Buddhism, and Confucianism. This was a consequence of sharply defined boundaries of

Islam that affected every aspect of Muslim life. Islam was about not only religious

principles or metaphysics but also a social system. The prophet led a social revolution

and introduced a social system that governed all aspects of the lives of all Muslims. This

was, Jin claimed, unique to Islam. These social attributes of Islam preserved the Muslims

---

[101] Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 30.

of China from assimilation, and, therefore, only they could form a distinct ethnic group within Chinese society.[102]

Jin Jitang often used stereotypes as a discursive strategy to accentuate the differences between the Han and the Hui and to define the boundaries of the Hui. He described the positive attributes of his own community and the negative attributes of the Han to imply the superiority of the Hui. This type of thinking helped him "to create order in an otherwise excruciatingly complicated social universe [as it made it] possible to divide the social world into kinds of people [and] provide simple criteria for such a classification."[103] For example, Jin asserted that the Han people are spiritless and weak, whereas the Hui are strong and courageous. For Jin, this is a consequence of the Hui being devout Muslims: the Hui refrained from opium smoking because preserving one's physical health is *sunna* (the practice of the Prophet).[104] Jin also viewed negative environmental factors as contributing to the positive attributes of the Hui. He argued that the Hui, as a minority group, has always faced social pressure. Common fear among Muslims turned them into courageous, chivalrous fighters. Thus, the belief that Muslims are "war-like" (*haodou* 好鬥), which is a negative stereotype still used by the Han in contemporary China, became a positive attribute in the hands of Jin Jitang. Jin claimed that the Hui were so aware of the Han's negative characteristics that they often called a

---

[102] Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 30.

[103] Thomas H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism:Anthropological Perspectives* (1994; repr., New York: Pluto Press, 2010),30.

[104] Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 32–33. Liang Shuming, the prominent Han scholar who viewed religion as an important factor in community formation, also referred to the virtues of the Hui as people who refrained from the use of opium due to the restrictions of their religion. See Thierry Meynard, *The Religious Philosophy of Liang Shuming: The Hidden Buddhist* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 54.

Hui who was being "crafty" a "Han person" (*Hanerren*) to humiliate that person. They

also often vowed by the saying, "If I do such a thing, I would become a Han person."[105]

Xue Wenbo, who was in agreement with Jin, reminded the Hui how they were

stigmatized in China as Qing officials frequently used insults such as "Hui thief" or "Hui

bandit," especially when faced with criminal cases where a Hui person was involved.

Xue expressed his concern that such insults continued to date by pointing to an article

published in *South China: Literature and Art* (*Nanhua Wenyi* 南華文藝) in 1932, where

Muslims were depicted as the descendants of Zhu Bajie, a character in *Journey to the*

West (*Xixing riji* 西行日記), part human and part pig, a greedy, lazy, and lecherous

figure. Muslim intellectuals, among whom Xue Wenbo was a leading figure, organized

large-scale demonstrations. The demonstrations forced the government to shut down the

publishing house. For Xue Wenbo, these cases revealed the urgent need to establish the

Hui as an ethnic group. He asked:

> If Muslims of China proper are Han, then how will they resist these insults? How
> will they organize demonstrations or refute these claims? After all, are they not
> the descendants of the Yellow Emperor [according to the supporters of the idea of
> the Hui as "Han Muslims"]? What are they to do with those insults? But this was
> not the case. Look at the sympathy felt by all Muslims all around China towards
> the demonstrations and actions taken against the journal.[106]

Ethnic status was thus crucial if Muslims were to have political and organizational

power and exert positive political influence in China. Xue Wenbo, without hesitation,

demanded self-determination and self-rule (*zizhi zijue* 自治自覺) for Muslims of China.

He stated that this was also in accordance with Sun Yat-sen's principles. Sun Yat-sen,

---

[105] Jin, "Huijiao minzu shuo," 33.

[106] Dawude [Xue Wenbo], "Guanyu 'Huizu' yu 'Hanren xinyang Huijiao' wenti," 11.

who occasionally disclosed his preference for the assimilation of all peoples of China into Hanzu, led a reorganization of his party in the early 1920s under the guidance of Soviet advisors in an effort to empower the party, which had lost power to the autonomous warlords of Chinese provinces after the death of Yuan Shikai. He also revised his *minzu* discourse and promised self-determination and self-rule to the minorities in accordance with Bolshevik principles. The Manifesto of the First National Congress of the GMD stated:

> The government of China after 1911 being still in the hands of the militarists, the different races within the country began to entertain doubts regarding the sincerity of the Kuomintang [GMD] policies. From now on we must try to secure the sympathy of these races [*minzu*] and explain their common interest in the success of the national revolutionary movement. When the Kuomintang is trying to promote the acceptance of its principles and to gather all support, we should gradually have more organized contacts with different racial groups and attempt at work out a concrete policy with regard to nationality problems. The Kuomintang solemnly declares that it recognizes the right of self-determination of all races within the country and that a free, united Republic of China based upon the principles of free alliance of the different peoples will be established after the downfall of imperialism and militarism.[107]

Sun propagated the idea of "self-determination" only as a political maneuver. His purpose was to alleviate the minority question because the country was under warlord rule and imperialist threat. Minorities could be appeased by a promise of "self-determination," at least until China achieved unity and regained its power. Territorial integrity and national unity, for Sun, were ultimate principles. As such, self-determination, according to Sun, did not mean the right to political secession in any way. The manifesto called for a free, united Republic of China based upon the free alliance of

---

[107] Sun Yat-sen. "Zhongguo Guomindang diyi ci quanguo daibiao dahui xuanyan," [The manifesto of the GMD's first National Party Congress] *Sun Zhongshan quanju*, vol.9, (Beijing:Zhongghua shuju, 1981-86),118-9. See the translation of the whole text in *The Kuomintang: Selected Historical Documents, 1894–1969*, 80.

the different peoples. Nationalists under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek, on the other hand, discarded the idea totally when Sun Yat-sen died only a year later.

Chinese Muslim intellectuals were adept at selectively interpreting the ambiguous and unsteady discourse of the Nationalists. Xue Wenbo thus sifted through Sun's different views on the idea of *minzu* and appropriated his short-term approval of the idea of self-rule and self-determination for his own purpose. When Xue Wenbo demanded self-determination and self-rule, he was also not thinking of the right to secede. Xue fervently opposed the Japanese and in no way supported Japanese schemes. What he demanded was a type of autonomy for Muslims in China. Indeed, none of the Chinese-speaking Muslim intellectuals writing in the Republican-era journals questioned the territorial integrity of China. All supported the idea of a Chinese nation, *Zhonghua minzu*, as a supra-identity that encompassed all peoples of China. Rather, what they debated were the criteria constituting this supra-identity and the possibility of multiple ethnic groups with special rights and privileges within this overarching Chinese nation.

The Turkic Response: The Crystallization of Distinct Muslim Identities

Ethnicizers knew well that encompassing all Muslim peoples of China in the category of Huizu would definitely make their calls for autonomy stronger as Huizu would then include the populous Turkic-speaking Muslims and their territory. However, discussions among Turkic-speaking intellectuals of the era on the issue of the ethnic status of Muslim peoples revolved around a totally different axis. Intellectual cooperation and exchange between Turkic- and Chinese-speaking Muslims was limited. Turkic-

speaking Muslims of Xinjiang rarely were involved in the organizations established by Chinese Muslims, and they rarely contributed to their journals.

The purpose of this chapter is not to analyze ethnic identity formation among Turkic-speaking Muslims of China, who live mostly in Xinjiang. However, a brief discussion is relevant insofar as it helps us understand how Chinese Muslim debates on the ethnic question resonated among Turkic-speaking Muslims. Although the vast majority of Turkic-speaking Muslims of Xinjiang refuted the Chinese Muslim ethnicizers' formulations of an overarching Hui *minzu*, they were not of one opinion concerning the identity of the peoples of Xinjiang. The crux of the discussion among these intellectuals rested on the ethnic boundaries of the Turkic-speaking peoples of Xinjiang.

The idea of "Uyghur" as an ethnic identity marker gained popularity in the first decade of the twentieth century. As David Brophy demonstrated, students from Xinjiang who studied in Soviet Russia and Central Asia were the first activists to create the idea of a separate Uyghur ethnic group by reviving the name Uyghur, denoting the descendants of the people of the Uyghur Kingdom (744–940). However, "the political use of the identity preceded any sort of any consensus on the nature of that identity."[108] The internal and external boundaries of this identity had to be clarified. When the Altishahr-Jungarian Union became the Uyghur Revolutionary Union in 1921, there was a broad spectrum of views on the criteria that constituted the Uyghurs. In 1925, the Commission for the Study of the Tribal Composition of the Population of Russia made an inquiry about the émigré community of Xinjiang in Russia. They stated that although many people continued to

---

[108] David John Brophy, "Tending to Unite?: The Origins of Uyghur Nationalism" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2011), 275.

70

identify themselves with their local place names (*yerlik*), some Kashgaris, Taranchis, and, to our surprise, Dungans (Chinese-speaking Muslims as they were called in Xinjiang) had begun to identify themselves as Uyghurs. Moreover, several Dungan intellectuals readily joined the Uyghur Revolutionary Union. It is impossible from the sources to say much on the Dungan participants' perspective on their relation to any form of Uyghur identity, but in those years, in the eyes of some, there was still the possibility of imagining Dungans and Turkic-speaking Muslims of Xinjiang as ethnically related. For instance, Sabirjan Shakirjanov presented several accounts and in 1922 claimed that "despite appearances to the contrary, in essence they [Dungans] were still the ethnic brethren of the Taranchis and Kashgaris. . . . [T]here is no doubt that they are Mongolized, Sinicized, Turk sons."[109] This view did not go unchallenged, however. Zerif Beshir, in his reply to Shakirjanov, claimed that "Dungans were 'purely Chinese'" and it would be "to fool people with historical science" to argue otherwise.[110]

In the following years, the ethnonym Uyghur began to have a much clearer scope. Following the Soviet example, the Uyghur "ethnicizers" divided the Turkic-speaking peoples of Xinjiang into distinct ethnic groups, such as Uzbek, Kazak, Kirgiz, and Tatar, and they attributed a distinct culture and language to each. The idea of a distinct Uyghur culture and a Uyghur language had yet to be constructed, and Uyghur ethnicizers put special effort into creating this autonomous space for Uyghur culture and language.[111] In

[109] The Dungan leader Masanchi also served on the Krai Bureau of Uyghur Communists until at least 1924. See Brophy, "Tending to Unite," 280.

[110] Brophy, "Tending to Unite," 280.

[111] The Muslim peoples of the oasis cities of Turkestan had a common written language despite dialectical distinctions in spoken language. Early in the twentieth century, intellectuals emphasized the importance of preserving this common written language, and

the 1930s, when Sheng Shicai established his authority in Xinjiang, making it a satellite

of Soviet Russia, the Uyghur ethnicizers' attempts to create distinct ethnic groups out of

all Turkic-speaking peoples of Xinjiang gained official backing. Sheng recognized the

ethnic identity of the Uyghurs along with thirteen other ethnic groups in Xinjiang. He

followed the Soviet-style taxonomies and applied them to the people of Xinjiang as far as

possible.

In the meantime, Uyghur communists, who relished the prospect of ruling an

independent communist Uyghuristan, had to come to terms with Sheng's regime. As they

began to play an instrumental role in the regime, the question of identity became a much

more polarizing issue. In those years, the Russian consul in Kashgar reported, "in

Xinjiang the word 'Uyghur' is almost identical with the word Bolshevik, which is not

without basis. The beginning of the modern Uyghur movement was laid with the

founding in Soviet Central Asia of an Uyghur Communist Party."[112]

The pan-Turkic nationalists of Xinjiang were alarmed by the communist Uyghur

nationalists' visions of a distinct Uyghur identity. They preferred full-fledged autonomy

in Xinjiang as part of China to a Soviet-satellite Uyghur regime. Thus, they were willing

to compromise with the GMD on the ground that their collaboration with the center

against the rule of Sheng in Xinjiang would strengthen their hand in post-Sheng Xinjiang.

---

several periodicals were published using this common language. Until the Uyghur
ethnicizers began to promote the idea of a distinct Uyghur language, the idea that settled
Muslim peoples of Turkestan had a distinct language was not something that people
agreed on. The ethnicizers' attempts to construct a Uyghur language included the creation
of a new orthography and the purification of the Uyghur language by eliminating the
"borrowed" words from other Turkic languages, especially from Uzbek. Brophy,
"Tending to Unite," 291–307.

[112] Brophy, "Tending to Unite," 371.

They demanded that the party recognize the essential unity of Turkic people and grant the Turks full autonomy in Xinjiang—a full-fledged autonomy that would leave the region to the Turks except in matters of foreign policy and national defense.[113]

They clarified their position in a declaration titled "Opinions of Xinjiang Compatriots Association on the Draft Constitution" (*Xinjiang tongxiang hui dui xianfa caoan zhi yijian* 新疆同鄉會對憲法草案之意見), which was published in the Chinese-language journal *Altay* (*A-er-tai*), which was a venue for both the Chinese- and Turkic-speaking Muslims.[114] Three notable pan-Turkist activists, who negotiated with the GMD in opposition to Communist influence in Xinjiang after the First East Turkestan Republic, in which they took an active role, failed—Muhammad Amin Bughra (1901–65), Isa Yusuf (1901–95), and Masud Sabri (1886–1952)—led the association.[115] They stated the

---

[113] They were against the stationing of Chinese soldiers in the region. They also demanded that the troops in Xinjiang be constituted of Turks.

[114] "Xinjiang tongxiang Hui dui xianfa caoan zhi yijian" [The opinion of Xinjiang compatriots on the draft constitution], *Aertai* 1–2 (1945): 6–8.

[115] All these three pan-Turkists played very influential roles in the politics of Xinjiang during the Republican period. Muhammad Amin Bughra was a Muslim scholar, and he was connected to separatist secret societies in southern Xinjiang. He led the Khotan uprising (1932–34) and became the Khotan Amir in the First East Turkestan Republic (ETR). After the Republic came to an end, he fled to Afghanistan, where he stayed until he was invited back to China by Chiang Kai-shek in 1943 and was appointed as a delegate in the National Assembly. Masud Sabri, on the other hand, was a medical doctor who was trained in Istanbul. He also fled from China after the ETR came to an end. He came back to China in 1934 and had close relations with the CC clique of the GMD. He became one of the two Muslim members of the People's Political Council between 1938 and 1940. After the GMD and Soviet Russia signed a Treaty of Friendship, these three pan-Turkists also served in the coalition government organized by the GMD in 1946 to put an end to Second East Turkistan Republic, which was established under Soviet protection. All three served in influential positions in the coalition government (1946–47), Masud Sabri as the chairman, Isa Yusuf as the secretary general, and Muhammad Amin as the commissioner of reconstruction. For a detailed account of the politics of Xinjiang, see Andrew D. W. Forbes, *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia: A*

following: The region should not be called Xinjiang, but Turkestan (*Tujuesitan* 突厥斯坦). Turkic-speaking peoples of Turkestan[116] are all ethnically Turkic (*Tujue zu* 突厥族). Seven different ethnic categories recognized by Sheng's government—Uyghurs, Uzbek, Kazak, Kirghiz, Tajik, Tatar, and Taranchi—are tribal communities and do not meet the *minzu* criteria of Sun Yat-sen, these activists argued, pointing at *Three Principles of the People* where Sun used the term *Hui* to refer to the Tujue of Xinjiang. They argued that these Turkic tribes were all descendants of Xiongnu, they all spoke dialects of the same language, the religion was the same, and the customs were similar. The Turkic people of Xinjiang constituted a *minzu* as defined by Sun; therefore, they should be granted the right to self-determination and self-rule in accordance with Sun Yat-sen's principles outlined in the *Fundamentals of National Construction* in 1924. The language of the declaration was radical in the sense that they refused any umbrella category that would unite all ethnic groups of China under one label. They declared their refusal not only of *Zhonghua minzu*, which was an umbrella term for all residents of China, but also of *Zhonghua guozu* 中華國族, which was employed in the draft constitution of 1936.[117]

What they imagined was almost a confederation, which would keep East Turkestan

---

Political History of Republican Sinkiang, 1911–1949 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

[116] They proposed that the name of the region should be changed to "Tujuesitan" (突厥斯坦). The name of "Tuerqisitan" (土耳其斯坦) was also considered inappropriate. This might be due to their intent to highlight the Tujue—the Gokturks (552–744)—who established a state in Inner Asia, as the ancestors of the Turkic-speaking peoples. But *Tuerqisitan* was however in use among pan-Turkists as well.

[117] The juxtaposition of the characters, state/country (*guo*) and ethnicity/nation (*zu*), was a rare incidence in nationalist China and had much stronger connotations than *Zhonghua minzu*. The term *Zhonghua guozu*, used in the draft constitution, manifested the statist tendency of the party to conflate state and nation.

nominally within the borders of China, united against a common enemy. The Communist

as well as the Japanese threat forced the GMD to negotiate with the pan-Turkists, who

found a platform in the Nationalist capital to express their views. The position of pan-

Turkists thus differed from that of Chinese Muslim intellectuals, who did not question the

legitimacy of an umbrella category—such as *Zhonghua minzu*—that would define the

supra-Chinese identity as long as the state recognized the existence of multiple ethnic

groups in it. Pan-Turkist intellectuals did not accede to any supra-identity marker, even if

the state promised to recognize a Turkic *minzu* as a constituent element of this supra-

identity. They proposed that the constitution should rather state: "Each *minzu* living

within the borders of Chinese Republic are constituting elements of Chinese Republic"

(*Zhonghua minguo jiangyu nei ge minzu jun wei Zhonghua minguo zhi goucheng fenzi* 中

華民國疆域內各民族均為中華民國之構成分子).[118]

---

[118] "Xinjiang Tongxiang Hui dui Xianfa Caoan zhi yijian," 6. GMD policymakers and affiliated scholars were not willing to recognize Turks as a distinct *minzu* group, encompassing all Turkic-speaking peoples of China, as it paved the way for an independent East Turkestan. Yet, although Xinjiang was part of China on paper, the GMD had no power to interfere in the affairs of Sheng's government and therefore had to accept the status quo. The position of the GMD was no different from what Li Dongfang, a French-trained historian, wrote on the issue in his exchange of articles with Muhammad Amin Bughra, a founding member of the association. He refused the legitimacy of the demands made by the association. He first refuted the idea that Turks constituted a single *minzu*. He based his analysis on several points: "Turk" could best be defined as a language category. He argued that there were several distinct Turkic-speaking communities, who differed in terms of physical appearance, culture, and self-identification. All these seven peoples mentioned in the declaration were *buzu* 部族 (tribes), who did not qualify for *minzu* status for the time being. In response to the demand made by the members of the association with respect to the naming of the region, Li stated that a Persian suffix, "-stan," would not be an appropriate choice. He further argued that *xin* 新 (new) was also not a correct prefix because it ignored the fact that the region had been part of China since the Han dynasty. He proposed *Xijiang* 西疆 (Western Frontier), *Gujiang* 古疆 (Ancient Frontier), and *Tianshan* 天山 (the name of the famous mountain range that passes through Xinjiang) as three possible alternatives. See Li

As the discussion above shows, both Uyghur Communists and pan-Turkist Nationalists dropped the idea of any possible category that could include Dungans as part of their ethnic community. This is despite the fact that pan-Turkists attributed an important place to Islam—a superstructure that was deemed to disappear in communist teleology—in the formation of Turkic identity. Lack of Islam meant the loss of Turkic identity. Therefore, while Muhammad Amin Bughra contended that Solon[119] tribe's ties to Turkic identity were weakened because of their refusal to convert to Islam, Isa Yusuf went a step further and preferred to categorize them as Shaman Manchus. Nevertheless, what left Solons out of the national/racial circle was not considered to be powerful enough to include Chinese-speaking Muslims in it. Dungans could only claim minority status in the region, along with the Hans, Manchus, and Mongols.[120]

The pan-Turkists' classification had its historical foundation in the long-existing divide between Chinese- and Turkic-speaking peoples in Xinjiang. Chinese Muslim ethnicizers' belief in the unity of Muslims in pre-Republican Xinjiang overlooked the region's historical and sociological context. The Chinese and Chinese Muslims are late arrivers to Xinjiang. Most migrated to Xinjiang by the end of the eighteenth century,

---

Dongfang, "Xinjiang sheng tongbao shi Tujue zu ma?" [Are Xinjiang compatriots Tujue zu?], *A-er-tai* 1, no. 2 (1945): 8–11; Li Dongfang, "Zai lun Xinjiang tongbao bu yingcheng wei Tujue minzu, Xinjiang sheng bu ying chengwei Tujuesitan" [Discussing again the issue that Xinjiang compatriots cannot be considered Turkic race; Xinjiang province cannot be called Turkistan], *A-er-tai* 1, no. 2 (1945): 15–18; Muhanmode Yinmin, "Xinjiang sheng tongbao shi Tujue zu" [The compatriots of Xinjiang are of Turkic race], *A-er-tai* 1, no. 2 (1945): 11–15; Muhanmode Yinmin, "Zai lun Xinjiang tongbao shi Tujue zu" [Again arguing that Xinjiang compatriots are of Turkic race], *A-er-tai* 1, no. 2 (1945): 18–22.

[119] The Solon tribes have lived in Heilongjiang.

[120] İsa Yusuf Alptekin, *Doğu Türkistan dâvâsı* [The case of East Turkestan] (Istanbul: Otağ, 1975), 50–54.

following the annexation of the region by the Qianlong emperor. While some migrated to settle the newly opened lands, a considerable number of Chinese Muslims fled to Xinjiang to avoid Qing retaliation for Muslim rebellions in northwest China.[121] Indigenous peoples of the region distinguished these new settlers on the basis of religion: Chinese Muslims were called Dungan, and non-Muslim Chinese were called Khitay.

The Qianlong emperor was keen to categorize people and place them under the appropriate legal system in his realm. Often he was determined to clarify the cultural and ethno-racial differences. He often expressed his frustration when local officials came up with taxonomies that did not really fit how he categorized people. He was, for instance, particularly troubled when local officials informed him of a rebellious people, who were *fanhui* 番回 (Tibetan Muslims)—the Salars. The Qianlong emperor was puzzled with this category because these people could either be Fan or Hui, but not both at the same time. The "correct" categorization was crucial because it would also determine the administrative system under which they would be placed.[122] The Qianlong emperor, likewise, did not overlook the "cultural" and "racial" differences between Chinese Muslims and indigenous Muslims of the oasis cities of Xinjiang. The Chinese-speaking Muslims after all migrated from inner China where they were commoners like the Han as their legal affairs came under the jurisdiction of the regular civil officials, not the Tusi

---

[121] Most of these Chinese-speaking Muslims were from Gansu, Shaanxi, Shanxi, and Qinghai provinces. James A. Millward and Laura J. Newby, "The Qing and Islam on the Western Frontier," in *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, ed. Pamela Kyle Crossley, Helen F. Siu, and Donald S. Sutton (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 123–24.

[122] Ma Haiyun, "New Teachings and New Territories: Religion, Regulations, and Regions in Qing Gansu, 1700–1800" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2007).

system or the *lifanyuan* (理藩院). Qing materials, therefore, often did not distinguish

Chinese-speaking Muslims from ordinary Han in Xinjiang. Like Han, they were often

called *shangmin* 商民 (merchant civilians), *neidi shangmin* 內地商民 (inner-land

merchant civilians), or *jumin* 居民 (residents). In cases where their religious affiliation

was stressed, they were referred to as *Hanhui* 漢回, which reflected their dual identity, or

neidi Huimin 內地回民 (inner-land Muslim civilians). Turkic-speaking Muslims, on the

other hand, were called *chantou Hui* 纏頭回 (turbaned Hui), *Huimin* (回民), or *Huizi* (回

子).[123] Qing rulers insisted on preserving the boundary between these two groups in

Xinjiang because they believed that Chinese-speaking Muslims of Xinjiang nevertheless

occupied a place in the realm of Chinese culture, though rather on the periphery. Because

the Qing rulers assumed that conflict and social disorder were inevitable if different

peoples lived in proximity, they often did not tolerate the transgression of identity borders

if that would also disrupt the administrative and legal order. Segregation and surveillance

were frequently applied as "antidotes to intergroup enmity."[124] The Qing rulers of

Xinjiang therefore employed several measures to keep these communities from

intermingling. Until Xinjiang became a province in 1884, a dual administrative and legal

system provided the basic tools for segregation. Chinese-speaking Muslims' legal status

did not change in the context of Xinjiang, and therefore they did not fall under the

administrative control of the Muslim Turkic begs but rather of the civil officials. Islamic

---

[123] James A. Millward, *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759–1864* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), 154.

[124] Jonathan N. Lipman, "'A Fierce and Brutal People': On Islam and Muslims in Qing Law," in Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 84.

law, on the other hand, governed the affairs of Turkic-speaking Muslims of Kashgar and Altishar. A very important symbol of the Chinese-ness of the Chinese-speaking Muslims was the queue, which Turkic people were not forced and allowed to wear. Anti-miscegenation rules were also applied to keep these Muslim communities separate. Neither the Han nor the Dungans were allowed to marry local women. Qing officials were also careful not to let any Dungan pass himself off as a Turkic Muslim. Such cases were not rare, yet those who were discovered marrying Turkic women or behaving like Turkic Muslims were punished severely.[125]

The use of the term "*musulmanlik*" among the sedentary Turkic-speaking populations of Xinjiang also shows that Dungans were occasionally left outside of the "Muslim realm," as reflective of Qianlong emperor's categorization. The term did not always have a universal meaning to include any Muslim in it. *Yerlik* (local identity) and *musulman* were often used synonymously; during the nineteenth century in Xinjiang, Dungans were occasionally distinguished from *Musulmans* of Xinjiang. For example, the *Ghazāt dar mulk-i Chīn* (Holy War in China) written by Mulla Bilal in the late nineteenth century, in which sometimes the bloody conflicts between the Turkic- and Chinese-speaking Muslims were also narrated, the term *musulmānča* was used in reference to the local Turkic dialect.[126] These examples show that there was already a border, though still fluid, that separated Turkic- and Chinese-speaking Muslims, which to an extent maintained by the policies of Qianlong emperor.

---

[125] Millward and Newby, "Qing and Islam," 127.

[126] Brophy, "Tending to Unite," 31.

Pan-Turkist nationalists strategically employed this historical divide between Chinese- and Turkic-speaking Muslims in their narratives. They often referred to the popular psychology created by the massacres of Dungan troops during the suppression of rebellions in Xinjiang. Isa Yusuf, who represented Xinjiang in the Nationalist Constitutive Parliament (zhixian guomin dahui 制憲國民大會) in 1936, wrote:

> The relations of East Turkestanis with Chinese Muslims were not good. There is a saying in East Turkestan: "Chinese Muslims are even more Chinese than the Chinese."

> In the past, in China, women would bind their feet. This was considered noble. Chinese Muslim women also bound their feet. If we give an example, in Pakistan, people who converted to Islam consider themselves a separate nation [*millet*]. They do not take Hindu names [unlike Chinese Muslims]. They only take Muslim names. They avoid looking like Hindus as far as possible. They treat them as enemies and they behave like a separate nation. Chinese Muslims are not like this. They consider themselves separate with respect to religion but they are together with the Chinese with respect to national issues.

> The Chinese do not treat Chinese Muslims well. Chinese Muslims in inner [land] are very poor. . . . Literate men are very few. They don't eat from the same plate with the Chinese. They do not consume pork. There are those who consume [it], but they are very rare. They do not marry with Chinese. There are some who marry with Chinese, but the cases are very rare. There are no differences other than these. You cannot distinguish a Chinese Muslim from a Chinese. Assimilation and expansion power of the Chinese is great.

> Although Chinese Muslims are loyal to national customs and consider national problems as theirs, the Chinese government attempts to assimilate them by forcing them to eat pork. They say, "If only they began to consume pork, there would be no difference." The situation is similar in the military. If you are a Muslim, you won't get a promotion. Therefore, they [Chinese Muslim soldiers] have to conceal their Muslim identity. In higher ranks, there are no Chinese Muslims. . . . Chinese live in separate quarters in East Turkestan although they came here many years ago. They do not pray in our mosques. They build separate mosques in their own neighborhoods. Their cuisine is Chinese cuisine. They rarely intermingle with us. Muslim Turks do not marry their girls to them; and we do not get Chinese Muslim girls as brides. When there is a rebellion in East Turkestan, they rebel with us against the Chinese. They intervene on the pretext of offering help to us. They are brave, but when a place is held by us, they want to dominate that place. This means that we rescue ourselves from Chinese but then we end up being dominated by Chinese who are Muslim. In practice, there is no difference.

Chinese use Chinese Muslims as officials in East Turkestan. There are those who are governors and county governors. There are many Chinese Muslim battalion commanders. The Chinese Muslim officials oppress us more than the Chinese. The Chinese [oppress us] because they are Chinese; Chinese Muslims [oppress us] in order to curry favor with the Chinese. Our people always opt for a Chinese governor rather than a Chinese Muslim governor.[127]

The account by Isa Yusuf is ambivalent. Although he pointed to the

discrimination Chinese Muslims faced in China proper, emphasizing their social,

economic, and political exclusion, he nevertheless did not hesitate to reduce their identity

to a subcategory of Han Chinese. This ambivalence was indeed a consequence of the dual

identity of Chinese Muslims. Identities are situational and the boundaries are reassigned

in different contexts and conditions. Therefore, the highly visible borders between Han

and Chinese Muslims in China proper became obscured in the setting of Xinjiang. Since

Isa Yusuf frequently switched his focus from Chinese Muslims in China proper to

Chinese Muslims in Xinjiang, the borders were also repeatedly reassigned. The dual

nature of Chinese Muslim identity helped them to take on an intermediary role in

Xinjiang but also triggered suspicion, as they became police, messengers, interpreters,

border customs agents, spies, and even governors. The cultural, political, and ethnic

dynamics of Xinjiang thus enabled Isa Yusuf to reduce the distinction between Han and

Chinese Muslims exclusively to religious difference. Nevertheless, religion was also not

a strong identity marker in the case of Chinese Muslims, because, for Isa Yusuf, Chinese

Muslims were not good Muslims either. He wrote: "Islamic education among Chinese

Muslims is very weak. Most of them do not know about their religion. . . . In their

schools, scholars who can teach Islam properly are very few. What they usually know is

---

[127] İsa Yusuf Alptekin, *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in mücadele hatıraları* [The memoirs of Isa Yusuf Alptekin and his cause], ed. Ömer Kul, vol. 1 (Ankara: Berikan, 2010), 306–7.

not more than this: Chinese Muslims should not eat pork. They should not marry with non-Muslim Chinese."[128] To underscore the differences between the two communities, Chinese Muslims and Turkic Muslims, Isa Yusuf also recounted his experience in Egypt of meeting King Faruq, as a member of a Hajj delegation sent to Muslim countries by Chiang Kai-shek to promote the case of China in its war against Japan in 1939:

> When I met King Faruq, there were two Chinese Muslims who could also speak Arabic. They introduced me as one of the leaders of Chinese Muslims and a deputy in the parliament representing Chinese Muslims. But King Faruq was a clever person. He looked at my face, and then their face. He doubted. I said: "Please tell him that I am also a notable person of East Turkestani Muslims." Then, they translated reluctantly. Although they were reluctant to translate, I continued: "There are Chinese Muslims. My brothers are among them. There are also East Turkestani Muslims. They are Turkic in origin. I am one of them. I am here to represent [East Turkestani Muslims]."[129]

Although pan-Turkists did not conceal their mistrust of Chinese Muslims,[130] many nevertheless believed in the necessity of eliminating the enmity between these two communities by constructing good relationship. To this end, for instance, Isa Yusuf tried to establish collaboration with influential Chinese Muslims, especially with the active delegates in Nanjing, figures like Wang Zengshan, who studied in Turkey and had historical interest in Xinjiang. For Isa Yusuf, this was a necessary and strategic move to win Chinese Muslim support for pan-Turkists' demands for autonomy in Xinjiang. He

---

[128] Alptekin, *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in mücadele hatıraları*, 214.

[129] Ibid., 364.

[130] Sabit Damolla, who led the Khotan rebellion and became the prime minister of the short-lived Republic of Eastern Turkestan (November 1933–May 1934), declared upon its establishment that the task would not be complete until the Dungans were expelled from East Turkestan. He believed that the Dungans were as foreign as the Han and that, even more than the Han, they were the enemy of the people. See Zhang Dajun, *Xinjiang fengbao shiqi nian* [Xinjiang in tumult for seventy years] (Taipei: Lanxi Chubanshi, 1980), 3393–94.

believed that Chinese Muslims were not supportive of the East Turkestani cause due to Chinese propaganda against the Turks of Xinjiang, and he proposed two ways to cultivate a harmonious relationship with Chinese Muslims.

First, he observed that Chinese Muslims valued scholars, especially those trained abroad. Recalling the role played by *khojas* from East Turkestan in the spread of *tariqas* in northwest China, Isa Yusuf proposed sending East Turkestani scholars, especially those trained abroad, to educate Chinese Muslims. Second, he proposed that leading Turkic intellectuals and politicians should work hard to establish good rapport with leading Chinese Muslims; this would convince them of the legitimacy of Turkist demands.

For his own part, Isa Yusuf built connections with Chinese Muslim leaders in Nanjing when he represented Xinjiang as a deputy in the parliament, the convening of which was suspended until after the war. He established an organization and published a journal in collaboration with both Chinese and Chinese Muslim intellectuals. He also went a step further and sought the backing of Ma Bufang, the powerful warlord of Qinghai, and Bai Chongxi, a general of the National Revolutionary Army who ruled Guangxi in the 1930s as a regional warlord.[131] Isa Yusuf's communication with Ma Bufang offers intriguing insight into his political interest in establishing strategic political alliances with powerful Chinese Muslims. Building a relationship with Ma Bufang was a rational choice for Isa Yusuf because Ma Bufang, along with other Ma family warlords, kept his formal loyalty to Nanjing in exchange for the central government's non-interference in his rule of the region. When Ma warlords fought the western route army of

---

[131] Bai Chongxi became the Minister of National Defense between 1946 and 1948.

the Communist Party and expelled Communists from the region, the GMD had no choice but to recognize the status quo in northwest China. Ma warlords thus blocked the extension of GMD influence into the area in the form of anti-Communist campaigns.[132] Although the GMD turned a blind eye to the autonomous Ma regimes in northwest China for strategic reasons, its ultimate aim was certainly the elimination of these warlord regimes and the extension of central authority to northwest China. Isa Yusuf was aware of this fragile accord between Ma warlords and the GMD. He also envisioned the region as a buffer zone between the Communists and Xinjiang. If Ma Bufang stayed in power in Qinghai, it would thwart Communist plans of entering Xinjiang to ensure Russian military and economic support through the border and to establish Xinjiang as a military base that could dominate all China. Isa Yusuf thus advised Ma Bufang as to how he could consolidate his power among Chinese Muslims and eliminate enmity between Chinese Muslims and Turkic Muslims.

In December 1937, Isa Yusuf met Ma Bufang and received a warm welcome, in a room of a school established by Ma Bufang's son.[133] After giving a brief about his understanding of the ethnic issue in Xinjiang, Isa Yusuf explained how a Soviet-style ethnic policy aimed to divide the Turks of the region into small communities, thus making the region vulnerable to Soviet domination. He advised Ma to establish himself as the leader of all Chinese Muslims in China. He relayed the complaints of Chinese Muslims about Ma Bufang's bad treatment of Muslims and his unwillingness to give adequate support to them despite having the means to do so. He stated that Ma Bufang

---

[132] Xiaoyuan Liu, *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921–1945* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 112–13.

[133] Alptekin, *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in mücadele hatıraları*, 327–32.

would be empowered if he protected the rights of Chinese Muslims; financially supported religious, cultural, and social activities; and opened Islamic schools. He told Ma that if all Chinese Muslims considered him the leader of the Chinese Muslim community, it would discourage Chiang Kai-shek from attempting to topple the rule of the Ma family in northwest China, as he was looking to do. Isa Yusuf also proposed to Ma Bufang that the soldiers of his army should receive further military training by sending students to military schools in China. When Ma expressed his doubts, believing that Chinese Muslim students were brainwashed and turned into statists in Chinese schools, Isa Yusuf proposed that he send his soldiers to advanced military schools in Turkey. Ma agreed to sponsor students for a military education in Turkey privately, in order to avoid casting doubt on his loyalty to Nanjing.[134]

Isa Yusuf also encouraged Ma Bufang to eliminate enmity between Turkic residents of Qinghai and Chinese Muslims, which had intensified due to Ma Zhongying's massacre of Turks in Xinjiang. He asked Ma to treat Turks with respect and equality, organize a battalion of Turkestanis in Qinghai commanded by a Turkestani, and establish a school that would educate Turkestanis in the Turkic language. Believing that the language barrier was the main cause of discord between these two Muslim communities, he also asked Ma to encourage Chinese Muslim students to study the Turkic language. Ma Bufang promised to meet the requests of Isa Yusuf and asked him to send an army

---

[134] There is no evidence that Ma Bufang realized his promise to financially support students to study in Turkey. However, a decade later, the GMD government sent a few Chinese Muslims students to military schools in Turkey. See Mehmet Temel, "Atatürk Devrımlerinin Çin Aydınlarınca Algılanışı ve XX: Yüzyılın ilk yarısındaki Türkiye-Çin İlişkilerine Yansıması" [Perception of Atatürk's reforms by Chinese intellectuals: Its reflection on Turkish-Chinese relations during the first half of the twentieth century], *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 21 (2007): 105–23.

officer and a teacher to Qinghai.[135] We do not know if Ma Bufang followed through on

his promises, but we do know that Isa Yusuf maintained his trust in Ma Bufang's

potential as a leader of all Muslims of China. In 1949, when the People's Liberation

Army advanced to Gansu, gaining successive victories over Ma warlords, Isa Yusuf

travelled to Qinghai to meet once again with Ma Bufang as a last measure.[136] Ma was

appointed as the supreme commander-in-chief of the entire northwestern China by the

GMD. This time, Isa Yusuf proposed that Ma Bufang lead all "subjugated peoples of

China," Turks, Tibetans, Mongols and Chinese Muslims, to establish a federal state under

Ma Bufang's leadership.[137] He also encouraged Ma Bufang by pointing to the miserable

condition of Chiang Kai-shek, who was about to withdraw to Taiwan. For Isa, if these

autonomous units promised to keep their loyalty to GMD rule in Taiwan, there was no

reason for the GMD not to recognize the demands for full-fledged autonomy in Xinjiang,

Tibet, and Mongolia. He strongly believed that Chiang Kai-shek would prefer

autonomous but loyal regions to Communist rule over all China. Ma Bufang, due to his

military weakness, was in no way willing to act alone. When Ma visited the GMD center,

he communicated Isa Yusuf's ideas to Chiang Kai-shek. However, he told Isa Yusuf that

the center was in no way willing to grant any kind of autonomy. These were the last

endeavors of both anti-Communist Turkic activists and Chinese Muslim warlords. Just

before the communist takeover, many, including Isa Yusuf and Ma Bufang, went into

self-exile in other Muslim countries to avoid Communist retaliation.

---

[135] Alptekin, *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in mücadele hatıraları*, 331.

[136] Alptekin, *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in mücadele hatıraları*, 415–18.

[137] Alptekin, *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in mücadele hatıraları,* 545.

Isa Yusuf also played an active role in publishing journals in the Chinese language to promote his cause in collaboration with both the Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese while he was in Nanjing and later in Chongqing. Isa Yusuf's position with respect to the Turks' connection to Chinese Muslims was also clear in the Turkic-language articles he wrote in the bilingual journals he published in Nanjing. He was pertinacious in making the pan-Turkist choice of ethnonyms legal in China. Isa Yusuf established the East Turkestani Citizens Association and began to publish a journal in 1935. The naming of the journal caused serious conflict between Isa Yusuf and his Chinese friends who sponsored the journal. He wanted to name the journal *The Voice of Chinese Turkestan* (*Chīnī Turkistān Awāzi*) both in Turkic[138] and Chinese. Gao Zhangzhu, a high-ranking officer in the Chinese army who was assigned to multiple investigative missions the GMD undertook in Tibet and Mongolia, became the chief editor of the Chinese version. Gao contended that the government would not register a journal named *The Voice of Chinese Turkestan*. Gao, thereupon, registered the journal as *Bianduo* 邊鐸 (*The Ancient Bell of the Frontier*) in 1934 without the prior consent of Isa Yusuf. Isa Yusuf was infuriated because the name of the journal, he believed, disregarded the cultural sensitivities of Muslim people, in whose consciousness bells were often associated with Christianity.[139] Isa Yusuf eventually agreed to publish the Chinese version as *Bianduo* and the Turkic version as *Chīnī Turkistān Awāzi*. The Turkic name *Chīnī Turkistān Awāzi* appeared on the cover page of the Chinese version in Arabic

---

[138] Here I use the term "Turkic" rather than "Uyghur" in order to reflect the ideological position of Isa Yusuf.

[139] This argument is debatable because a prominent journal published by Muslims of Yunnan was called *Qingzhen duobao* 清真鐸報 (The pure and real ancient bell).

letters. Yet, shortly afterwards, the Chinese contributors, led by Gao Zhangzhu, complained to the government that Isa insisted on publishing the journal as *The Voice of East Turkestan* in Turkic. The vice president, Wang Jingwei, called Isa Yusuf and proposed renaming the journal as *Tianshan* 天山 (Tängri Tagh) both in Chinese and Turkic. Isa accepted the proposal in order to preempt possible closure of the journal,[140] but the name change did not prevent the journal from being shut down only a year later, in 1935. Chinese suspicions were raised by an article series in the Uyghur language by Isa Yusuf entitled "How Did the Turkestan Revolution End Up?"[141] In the article, he explained the failure of the Qumul rebellion that ended with the establishment of the First East Turkestan Republic. The articles were translated into Chinese by ten different people who concluded that Isa Yusuf had not only dared to define the rebellion as a revolution, promoting the idea of independence, but also insulted the Chinese people and the Chinese government in the region. When a student of Turkic background, 'Abdul'aziz, who studied in Nanjing with the support of Isa Yusuf, wrote a petition accusing him of being an agent working for the pro-independence circles, the government shut down the journal.[142]

The language of the journal, both in Chinese and Turkic, gives us interesting insights into the usage of ethnonyms in these years regarding the Muslim peoples of

---

[140] Alptekin, *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in mücadele hatıraları*, 262–24 and 270–72. Isa Yusuf stated that the journal was well received in Xinjiang. Its circulation was between 3,000 and 5,000 copies. The price of the journal increased in the meantime because drivers from China to Xinjiang sold these to local people at higher prices.

[141] Isa Yusuf Beg [Alptekin], "Turkistān Inqilābi Qaydagh Natīja Bärdi?" [How did the Turkestan Revolution end up?], *Tianshan*, no. 8 (1934), 1–6; no. 9 (1934), 1–9; no. 10 (1–8). In the Chinese edition, vol. 1, no. 3 and 4.

[142] Alptekin, *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in mücadele hatıraları*, 260–70.

China. Except for a few articles, the Chinese and Turkic versions of this journal were not identical. Writers included people from very different backgrounds and ethnic origins, including Chinese-speaking Muslims, Manchus, and Mongols. Therefore, there was a plethora of opinions presented in the journal, which also produced ambivalence in the use of ethnonyms. The Chinese articles avoided employing the word "Turkestan," except in one instance, where Isa Yusuf translated an article into Chinese as "The Prospects of East Turkestan" (Dong Tuerqisitan zhi qiantu 東土耳其斯坦之前途). The Turkic version is a completely different case. In it, Xinjiang as a place name was totally nonexistent. Instead, authors unanimously employed the words "Chinese Turkestan" or "East Turkestan." They also used the ethnonym "Turk" for the Turkic-speaking population of the region.[143] Whereas Turkic versions made an emphatic distinction between Turks (*Sharqī Turkistān Türkläri*) and Chinese Muslims (*Khitay Musulmanlari*/*Dungan*) of Xinjiang, the authors writing in Chinese did not distinguish between Chinese and Turkic Muslims. They preferred to label them all as *Xinjiang Huizu* and *Xinjiang Huimin*.[144] An article by Isa Yusuf, which was originally written in Chinese and was later translated to Uyghur, the

---

[143] The ethnonyms "Uyghur" (*Weiwuer* 維吾爾) and "Huihe," on the other hand, were used in articles in reference to the historical origins of the people of Xinjiang. An article by Wilhelm Radloff, a famous Turkologist of the nineteenth century, was translated with the title "Huihe wenti zhi yanjiu" [A research on the question of Uyghurs], *Tianshan* 1, no. 4–5 (1935). Wang Riwei, who was notorious for his research on the origins of the Uyghurs, also published an article in the journal, "Weiwuer minzu gudai shi" [The ancient history of the Uyghurs], *Tianshan* 1, no. 6 (1935). The rare appearance of the word "Uyghur" manifests the pan-Turkic nationalists' reluctance to accept "Uyghur" as an ethnic marker.

[144] The only Chinese article in which Turkic Muslims were called "Chan Hui" ("the turbaned Muslims"), the traditional appellation used during the Qing, was the following article: Liu Wenhai, "Chanhui zhi jia" [The household of Turbaned Hui], *Bianduo* 2, no. 2 (1934).

term Xinjiang *Huimin* was translated as *Sharqī Turkistān Türkläri* (Turks of East Turkestan).

Chinese Muslim ethnicizers were ill at ease with any type of classification that separated Muslims into distinct ethnic groups, but controversy between Chinese Muslim ethnicizers and pan-Turkists did not turn into an open debate. A rare but interesting case is Bai Jiezhong's article,[145] which was written in direct response to GMD-affiliated Masud Sabri's article titled "Introducing the Ethnic Groups of Xinjiang." In this article, Bai Jiezhong gave full support to Masud Sabri's refusal of the creation of fourteen different ethnic groups from peoples of Xinjiang. Masud Sabri listed the criteria that make up an ethnic group (*minzu*) as "language, common territory, customs, common determination, common religion, and common race."[146] Following the pan-Turkists' claim, he stated that Uyghurs, Kazaks, Kirgiz, Uzbek, Tatar, and Tajik were all Turks (*Tuerqizu* 土耳其族) and could be considered no more than tribal identities. The discord between Bai and Masud Sabri, however, appeared over Masud Sabri's consideration of Chinese-speaking Muslims as Han because of the language they spoke, the clothes they wore, and the cuisine they adopted. Bai criticized Masud Sabri for overstating these similarities. He compared Hui identity with that of overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia, who in general adopted the indigenous languages as *lingua franca*, and with that of Chinese people who adopted Western clothing for the sake of convenience. Bai

---

[145] Bai Jiezhong, "Du Maisiwude xiansheng jieshao Xinjiang de minzu" [Introducing Mr. Masud's introduction to the Xinjiang *minzu*], *Tujue* 67 (1944): 16. Also see Mai-si-wu-de "Jieshao Xinjiang de minzu" [Introducing minzus of Xinjiang] *A-er-tai* 1, no. 1 (1944).

[146] Tajik people speak a dialect of Persian, but in pan-Turkist historiography they are racially considered Turks.

contended that the shared elements that brought all Muslim communities together were much weightier than the shallow criteria Masud Sabri raised: Muslims of China proper and Muslims of Xinjiang have an inseparable relation and constitute a whole body because of shared religion and customs. He also pointed to the consanguinity of all Muslims of China as he promoted the commonly held view that Muslims did not marry with outsiders (*wairen* 外人) and that therefore common blood was flowing through the veins of all Muslims. The manifestation of common attributes led to the emergence of a common determination (*yizhi* 意志) among all Muslims, which he summarized as the promotion of Islamic identity in all aspects of life—politics, economy, military, culture, and religion. Bai brought forward the pan-Islamist symbols and concluded that Muslims should put forth special efforts to make all Muslims of the world unite their forces for common survival under the green flag of star and crescent (爾使全世界的穆士林能夠得到緊緊的團結共同生存在星月的綠旗下).

On similar ground, Yisima Yemu, probably a Turkic-speaking contributor to *Hui Youth*,[147] strongly denounced consideration of Turkic and Chinese Muslims as two separate ethnic groups (*minzu*). His position among Turkic-speaking intellectuals was rare. Empathizing with Turkic Muslims, Yisema Yemu revealed the circumstantial factors behind Turkic-speaking Muslim intellectuals' refusal to be included in the same *minzu* category as Chinese Muslims. For Yisema Yemu, it was no more than a temporary strategy. Laying the blame on the shoulders of Chinese Muslims, he argued that Muslims of Xinjiang had to take a different route because Chinese Muslims were the "yes-men" of

---

[147] Yisima Yemu, "Lun Huibao zai xianfa zhong de diwei" [Discussing the status of Hui compatriots in the constitution], *Huimin qingnian* 3 (1947): 3–4. The same article was also published in *Yili yuekan* 10 (1947).

the state, busily protecting their minor positions in the state. But Yisima Yemu kept his

hope alive, as he believed that this duality would disappear with the rise of historical

consciousness among Chinese Muslims. For Yisima, Muslims of China were bound to

unite because they were people of the same racial stock. Unlike Chinese Muslim

intellectuals, who recognized the multiple racial origins of Muslims of China, Yisema

traced the origins of both Turkic- and Chinese-speaking Muslims to a common ancestor:

the Huihe. The idea that Muslims of Xinjiang were the ancestors of Muslims of China

was not new. Huihe—imagined as the ancestors of all Muslims of China—was a

commonly held thesis during the Qing period, first articulated by Gu Yanwu (1613–82),

though it was not without its opponents.[148] This thesis was still voiced in some circles

during the Republican period. In other words, the opinion of Yisima Yemu was rare but

had its advocates.

Conclusion

Chinese Muslim intellectuals' resistance to any categorization of Muslims of

China into distinct ethnic groups cannot be reduced to their absolute faith in the unity of

umma. We must not fail to notice strategic thinking behind their argument. Chinese

Muslim intellectuals were firm believers in China's territorial integrity, and they

considered illegitimate any claim to an independent East Turkestan. Creation of a

---

[148] Gu Yanwu, the eminent Chinese philologist of the seventeenth century, made the idea of *Huihe* being the ancestors of all Muslims in China widespread. It is important to note here that when scholars used the word Huihe to refer to the ancestors of the Huihui, they didn't have in mind the descendants of the Uyghur kingdom. After Uyghurs converted to Islam, Huihe and Huihui were used quite interchangeably. Huihe also began to have a much wider scope and included the Muslims of the Middle East. See Gu Yanwu, *Rizhi lu* [Daily accumulation of knowledge], vol. 29, "Tufan huihe" (Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983).

separate Turkic *minzu* had the potential to crack open the door to independence. Even though categorization of Turkic-speaking Muslims into distinct *minzu* groups—as practiced by Sheng Shicai—had the potential to alleviate this threat, such categorization would damage the identity claims of Chinese Muslim ethnicizers, who wanted to create an ethnic category to encompass all Muslims of China, which would empower them numerically and spatially.

Although Chiang Kai-shek was a firm believer in a unified China composed of a single *minzu* and acted to realize this ideal, in theory the GMD party-state never denounced Sun Yat-sen's criteria for *minzu* formation, stated in the Three Principles of the People. The Hui were one of the five racial/ethnic groups (*minzu*) of China recognized by the state, and distinct Muslim communities laid claim to this *minzu* category. As mentioned before, Sun Yat-sen used the term ambivalently, pointing to different communities at different times—Muslims of the world, Muslims of China, and Turks of China. Intellectuals employed Sun's arguments selectively. Chinese-speaking Muslim ethnicizers knew the risks involved if Turkic-speaking Muslims legitimized their position that the Hui mentioned by Sun Yat-sen solely referred to the Turkic-speaking Muslims. This had the potential to exclude Chinese Muslims from the game, leaving them with no alternative beyond being defined merely as a religious community within the Han. For Chinese Muslims, ethnic status was crucial to guarantee an autonomous space in China, especially with respect to religious and educational matters. They also demanded a quota for Muslims in the parliament. A unified populous Muslim community had a better chance to acquire these rights and privileges. Therefore, exclusion of other Muslims from any definition of Hui would not be a reasonable strategy. Yet, in the later

years of the 1940s, a new alternative began to coalesce as a measure of the last resort. This was the possibility of creating an ethnic group out of only Chinese-speaking Muslim communities, scattered all around the country. This new strategy, which is the topic of the next chapter, was a settlement that would reconcile the Chinese state and Chinese Muslim ethnicizers.

Chapter 2

A Place in the Sun: Chinese Muslims and the Constitutional Movement

Constitutions adopted during the Republican era "had little significant impact on the actual political practice of the times."[1] Drafts were formulated, but ratification was suspended due to political exigency. There had been multiple unsuccessful attempts to restore the constitution on the basis of the Provisional Constitution of 1912 and the Draft Constitution of 1913. When in 1928 the GMD succeeded in its Northern Expedition to unify much of China, they announced the beginning of political tutelage, which was the second phase according to Sun Yat-sen's three-stage transition to a constitutional state.[2] The GMD estimated that this phase would last for six years. During this period, the party would oversee all political and constitutional matters for the entire country.[3] Eight years later, in May 1936, a constitutional draft was produced. The draft was not satisfactory to liberals because the Executive Yuan was allowed unchecked powers and the GMD directly appointed the delegates to the National Assembly. With the sharp escalation of the Sino-Japanese war in summer 1937, the convening of the National Assembly and the

---

[1] Xiaohong Xiao-Planes, "Of Constitutions and Constitutionalism: Trying to Build a New Political Order in China, 1908–1949," in *Building Constitutionalism in China*, ed. Stéphanie Balme and Michael W. Dowdle (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 37.

[2] In Sun's view, the Chinese people were not ready for full-fledged democracy because they lacked education and political experience. Therefore, a three-phase transition to the constitutional state was necessary. These stages were an autocratic military government that would achieve unification, a period of limited self-government on the local level, and, finally, a constitutional democracy. Xiao-Planes, "Constitutions and Constitutionalism," 49.

[3] Xiao-Planes, "Constitutions and Constitutionalism," 50.

vote for a new constitution were postponed.[4] When war with Japan began to subside in

the early 1940s, the movement for constitutionalism escalated anew.[5] Under public

pressure, the government once again announced its intention to convene the Constituent

Assembly in November 1945; in January 1946, a "conference for political dialogue" was

convened in Chongqing. Representatives from different political circles, including

members of the CCP, the Chinese Democratic League, and the Youth Party, attended the

conference and produced a constitution based on the initial draft written by a famous

liberal, Carsun Chang. All circles, moderate or radical, found the new constitution

satisfactory.[6] But when the nationalist government finally convened the National

Assembly on November 15, 1946, the CCP and Chinese Democratic League boycotted

the assembly. In those days, the conflict between the CCP and GMD had intensified to

the brink of civil war. Nevertheless, the assembly ratified the constitution, with some

minor modifications to it, on January 1, 1947. The new constitution of the Republic of

China went into effect on December 25, 1947. After a tumultuous election of new

delegates in November 1947, the first constitutional assembly was elected.

Chinese Muslim intellectuals also were actively involved in the political debates

about constitutional reform, demanding specific articles in the constitution that would

preserve the rights and privileges of Muslims of China and grant them freedom and

---

[4] The People's Political Council, a quasi-parliamentary institution, served as the representative for people's sovereignty until the end of the war.

[5] Xiao-Planes, "Constitutions and Constitutionalism," 54.

[6] While endorsing Sun's Three Principles of the People, favored by the nationalists, the proposal added a fourth principle asserting that the constitutional rights of the people could not be overruled by law. This modification also increased the Legislative Yuan's power. Xiao-Planes, "Constitutions and Constitutionalism," 55.

equality in the fields of politics, economics, and education. Even the conflicting opinions about the ethnic status of Chinese Muslims among the Chinese Muslim intellectuals disappeared by the end of the war as even many ardent opponents of ethnicizers converted to their cause, and Chinese Muslims almost unanimously began to call for specific articles in the constitution guaranteeing autonomous rights to Muslims as a distinct community. They compared their status to that of the Tibetans and Mongols, and they demanded a specific quota in the parliament for Muslims as well.

The first calls began to be clearly articulated in the early 1940s as the gradual diminution of wartime political pressure encouraged leading Chinese Muslim intellectuals to raise their voices openly. In 1940, Ma Songting made a speech about constitutional reform and articulated his thoughts on the May 5th Draft Constitution.[7] In this speech, Ma emphasized the religious and educational rights of Hui people. He criticized Article 15 of the draft constitution, which granted religious freedom to all citizens, but with the reservation that it could be restricted by law. Ma Songting referred to Sun Yat-sen, who recognized absolute (*juedui* 絕對) freedom of religion with no reservation in 1923, which was also endorsed by the political program of the GMD. For Ma, the use of words like "absolute" and "total" (*wanquan* 完全) was not accidental and therefore the absolute freedom of religion should be preserved by the new constitution. Ma Songting believed that absolute religious freedom would not be realized without specific educational rights. He thus praised Article 132 of the draft constitution, which promised equal educational opportunity to all citizens. However, he demanded that the

[7] Ma Songting, "Duiyu wuwu caoan gongxian yidian yijian" [Opinions on the draft constitution of May 5th], *Yuehua* 12/13-18 (1940): 6.

constitution also guarantee some autonomy to the non–Han Chinese in the field of

education, which would allow them to use their own languages and promote their own

cultures. Ma, once again, referred to Sun Yat-sen, who promised support to weak and

small ethnic groups[8] of China in the *Fundamentals of National Reconstruction*. Ma

contended that absolute freedom of religion and educational rights would prevent ethnic

assimilation of the Hui (*tonghua fei wo zulei* 同化非我族類).

Mu Letian—the president of an Islamic primary school in Beijing, established by

Chinese Muslims to promote Islamic education—expounded his understanding of

educational rights.[9] His proposals were modeled on the Soviet, Swiss, and German

constitutions, wherein the rights of religious education were clearly articulated. Mu

Letian argued for the right of the Hui people to establish Islamic schools, with the

condition that they abide by the state law: these schools should have the right to allocate

Muslim teachers qualified to teach Islam and lead religious rituals at school.[10] He

---

[8] Chinese Muslim intellectuals often mentioned the fragile, weak, and backward
conditions of the Hui. The Hui were seen as unable to compete without state support.
However, they were careful not to attribute this weakness to essential qualities of the Hui.
They frequently gave examples of prominent Hui scholars, scientists, rulers, and military
men who had significant influence in Chinese history. They claimed in concert that the
Hui lost their status under Manchu oppression. They suggested that Han rulers should not
follow Manchu heritage but should look at past examples when Han emperors treated the
Hui with respect and equality.

[9] Mu Letian, "Huimin dui xianfa de xiwang" [The hopes of Huimin regarding the
constitution], *Tujue* 6, no. 7–8 (1940): 7–10.

[10] He referred to Articles 146 and 149 of the German constitution which stated:
"Nevertheless, within the municipalities, upon the request of those persons having the
right to education, elementary schools of their own religious belief or of their
Weltanschauung shall be established," and, "religious instruction shall be part of the
regular school curriculum with the exception of non-sectarian (secular) schools. Such
instruction shall be regulated by school laws. Religious instruction shall be given in
harmony with the fundamental principles of the religious association concerned without

demanded that the holder of paternal or tutelary authority should determine the religious

education of the children. Mu Letian also mentioned the weak educational capacities of

the Hui people and asked the state to support these religious schools financially. Chinese

Muslims almost unanimously shared Mu Letian's calls for educational autonomy for

Muslims. They wanted to reform already-existing mosque schools and universalize

modernized Islamic education in China. They were, however, aware of the financial

strains on the Chinese Muslim community. Therefore, they called on the state to

subsidize these schools. They often invoked the example of Mongolian-Tibetan schools,

which were founded by the Ministry of Education in the late 1930s to promote modern

education in the borderlands, and asked the state to found schools for the Hui where

modern citizens could be educated without forsaking Islamic education.

The Chinese Muslims' request for ethnic rights on the model of the Tibetan and

Mongolian cases was often repudiated by Chinese intellectuals and officials on the basis

that what Chinese Muslims were promoting was religious and not cultural education. For

instance, a debate that took place in *Yugong*, a journal started by Gu Jiegang,

demonstrates how Chinese Muslims had to frame their request in cultural terms and not

religious terms to have their case accepted by state authorities.[11] Wang Wenxuan, who

---

prejudice to the right of supervision by the state. Teachers shall give religious instruction
and conduct church ceremonies only upon a declaration of their willingness to do so;
participation in religious instruction and in church celebrations and acts shall depend
upon a declaration of willingness by those who control the religious education of the
child." See Howard Lee McBain and Lindsey Rogers, *The New Constitutions of Europe*
(New York: Doubleday Page, 1922), 205.

[11] Wang Wenxuan, "Du Gu Jiegang de 'Huijiao de wenhua yundong'" [Having read Gu
Jiegang's "Muslim cultural movement"], *Yugong* 7, no. 4 (1937): 189–190; Wang
Zengshan, "Guanyu Huijiao wenhua yundong" [About the Muslim cultural movement],
Yugong 7, no. 4 (1937): 192–93.

wrote an article repudiating Muslim claims for educational autonomy, stated that the

government was already supporting individual Muslim students but that the Ministry of

Education could not found or subsidize religious schools, because this would be against

the secular foundations of the Republic. Wang Zengshan, who was a member of the

Legislative Yuan in Nanjing, on the other hand, pointed at the Mongolian-Tibetan

schools and questioned why the GMD recognized and supported the rights of Tibetans

and Mongolians to have their own schools, which also promoted Buddhism. He

contended that the situation of the Hui was not different from that of the Tibetans and

Mongols because the Hui not only had a separate religion but also a distinct culture. If the

government viewed Hui schools as religious schools, then it should have viewed the

Tibetan-Mongolian schools as Buddhist schools. He reiterated the Hui demand and

requested that the government recognize the cultural rights of the Hui. Indeed, what

appeared as religious rights in the discourse of Wang Wenxuan transformed, once again,

into cultural rights in the discourse of Wang Zengshan.

Chinese Muslim intellectuals' calls for a specific quota for Muslims in the

parliament, on the other hand, began shortly after the establishment of the Republic. Li

Qian, a Chinese-speaking Muslim who served as the bodyguard for Yuan Shikai, the

second president of China, spearheaded the campaign. Pang Shiqian (1902–58) depicted

this campaign as the first phase of the Hui People's Movement (*Huimin yundong* 回民運

動).[12] He sent a number of petitions to the government by assuming the title

"Plenipotentiary Representative of the Muslim Territory" (*Huibu quanquan daibiao* 回部

---

[12] Pang Shiqian, "Aiji Jiunian" [Nine years in Egypt], in *Qingzhen dadian* (Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1951/2005), 20:61.

全權代表). He claimed this title after he was appointed by Shah Maqsud, the Turkic-speaking Muslim king of Hami, as his representative in the capital, which is also one of the instances when Chinese- and Turkic-speaking Muslims cooperated for a common cause.[13]

Li Qian sent his first petition in 1916, and his efforts continued over the following decade. His campaign aimed to guarantee special rights and an electoral quota for the Hui as an ethnic group (*Huizu*), which included all Muslim peoples of China. He requested a quota for the Hui by arguing that the Tibetan and Mongolian cases established a precedent.[14] He wondered why Tibetans and Mongolians would have allocated seats in the parliament, but not the Hui, who were one of the five ethnic groups of the Republic. The Chinese Muslim calls for a Hui quota increased just before the elections, held in 1936–37. Leading intellectuals complained about the passiveness of the Hui and contributed to the campaign as they called the Hui to be more politically engaged.[15] In

---

[13] Shah Maqsud was on the throne of Hami at the time of the revolution. The warlord of Xinjiang, Yang Zengxin, who came to power in 1912, had let Hami retain its semi-autonomy. Only when Shah died in 1930 did the region lose its autonomy and come under county administration like other parts of Xinjiang.

[14] The constitution of the Republic created a bicameral legislature consisting of a Senate and a House of Representatives. The Senate would include ten delegates from each province, and twenty-seven from Mongolia, ten from Tibet, three from Qinghai, and six from the Chinese diaspora. In the House, the number of seats was allotted according to the population of the province, plus the same number of delegates for Mongolia, Tibet, Qinghai, and the Chinese diaspora.

[15] Ma Songting wrote in 1937 about Chinese Muslim intellectuals' endeavors to get a quota in the parliament. He, however, complained, "Chinese Muslims knew about religious struggle but not political struggle." He was very disappointed because Chinese Muslims did not participate actively in this political campaign. Ma Songting, "Zhonghua minzu de Huijiao wenti" [The Muslim question of the Chinese nation], *Tujue* 4, no. 2 (1937): 29.

1936, the National Electoral Office (guoxuan zong shiwusuo 國選總事務所) refused Hui demands for a specific quota. They informed the Hui intellectuals that Mongols and Tibetans were not granted quotas on the basis of ethnicity. The office made it clear that Tibet and Mongolia were not provinces and had their own regional systems. Therefore, special elections (*tebie xuanju* 特別選舉) were held in these regions for convenience. They also argued that since Tibet and Mongolia were ethnically homogeneous regions, seats representing these particular territorial units gave the impression that they had ethnic quotas. The office also stated that the Hui culture was no different from the Han culture, and they could participate in the elections freely as members of the Han community without being limited by a quota.[16] Chinese Muslims were, however, requesting communal rights and not individual rights.

The calls for a quota did not go unchallenged. A powerful Chinese Muslim warlord of the northwest China, Ma Qi (1869–1931), followed the definition of the GMD and criticized Li Qian for confusing religion and ethnicity. Ma Qi sent a letter to Li contending that it was not possible to establish quotas for Muslims because they were all scattered throughout the country. It would also prevent the Hui from competing with the Han freely because Hui representation would be restricted to a certain number of seats. This would potentially have a negative impact on education because quotas would dishearten Muslims with political prospects, and they would therefore invest less in educational efforts.[17] Some Turkic-speaking Muslim elites from Xinjiang also sent

---

[16] *Zhongyang zhoukan*, no. 430 (1936): 11.

[17] Fang Sumei, "Cong *Huibu Gongdu* kan minguo qianqi Huizu de zhengzhi canyu huodong" [Looking at the activities of the Huizu with respect to political participation

telegrams to Beijing disapproving of Li's activities to guarantee quotas for all Muslims in China. They demanded that their territory be called turban-wearing Muslim territory (*Chanbu* 纏部),[18] but not Muslim territory (*Huibu*), highlighting their difference from Chinese Muslims.

In the 1940s, Chinese Muslim intellectuals' calls for a specific quota for Muslims in the parliament were voiced anew, this time with much more intellectual fervor and much weaker opposition from Chinese Muslims. Leading Chinese Muslim intellectuals articulated the urgent need to establish Muslim organizations that would formulate the constitutional demands of Chinese Muslims and transmit them to the government in an organized way. Some even inquired about the possibility and feasibility of establishing a Hui political party.[19] They also stated the need to educate Chinese Muslims with respect to self-rule and the four rights, which were suffrage, right to recall, initiative and popular sovereignty, and publishing and giving lectures about the constitutional government. They asked each branch of the Union of Hui Organizations (Huixie zonghui 回協總會) to raise politically experienced, trustworthy people, well-versed in Islamic principles, as candidates for the national elections.[20]

---

from the standpoint of *Huibu gongdu* (the public documents of the Hui territory)], *Minzu yanjiu*, no. 1 (2010): 90.

[18] David Brophy, "Five Races, One Parliament?: Xinhai in Xinjiang and the Problem of Minority Representation in the Chinese Republic," *Inner Asia* 14, no. 2 (2012): 357.

[19] "Huimin kefou zuzhi zhengdang" [Can the Hui organize a political party?], *Yuehua zhoubao* 18 (1947).

[20] Mu Letian, "Chengli Yisilan xianfa zheng zuo tanhui" [Establishing an Islamic association to discuss constitutional government], *Tujue* 6, no. 5–6 (1940): 14; Ma Yingquan, "Xianzheng yundong yu Huimin" [The constitutional movement and Huimin], *Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huikan* 2, no. 2/5 (1940).

The Chinese Muslim delegates of the Constitutive Parliament of 1937 actively engaged in this political struggle. They requested the addition of a statement about the Hui to Article 27 of the Constitution, which regulated the number of delegates from Mongolia, Tibet, and overseas Chinese. When the war came to an end, the Constitution was adopted in 1946 with major revisions, which was a result of the criticisms aimed at the Draft of 1936. In the revised version, new electoral groups were introduced: the ethnic groups (*minzu*) of the frontier regions, occupational groups, and women (Article 26 in the Constitution ratified in 1947). This made Chinese Muslims feel that they were left out because they did not fit any of the categories mentioned in the Constitution. While Muslims of Xinjiang would have a chance to be represented under the category of "ethnic groups of the frontier regions," Chinese Muslims, who were scattered all over the country, would have no special quota. This was a great dismay to majority of the Chinese Muslim delegates and leading intellectuals. There were indeed thirty-three Muslim representatives in the parliament, seventeen of whom were from China proper. However, as the notable ethnicizer Jin Jitang stated earlier, Muslim delegates were chosen to serve in the parliament on the basis of region and therefore were required to serve the interests of their region and not the Hui as a distinct community.[21]

Chinese Muslim delegates in the parliament, including several Muslim representatives from Xinjiang, established the Fellowship of Muslim Delegates in the

---

[21] Jin Jitang, "Guanyu guomin daibiao dahui" [About the National Assembly], *Yuehua* 8, no. 16 (1936): 1.

National Assembly (Guoda Huijiao daibiao lianyi hui 國大回教代表聯誼會).[22] They

decided to meet two times a week in order to discuss the issue of increasing Hui delegates

in the parliament and improving constitutional government. Zhao Mingyuan, a delegate

from Shandong, and Sun Shengwu, a delegate from Beijing, prepared proposals airing the

grievances of Chinese Muslims. In their separate proposals, which were co-signed by

more then sixty people, many of whom were Muslim representatives in the parliament,

including several representatives from Xinjiang and Mongolia, Zhao Mingyuan and Sun

Shengwu requested the addition of a subsection to Article 26 granting a quota for the Hui

as a community.

The formulation of the Hui in these proposals was crucial as it for the first time

laid the groundwork for the creation of Chinese-speaking Muslims as a community

distinct from other Muslim peoples of China. Many, however, often refrained from

invoking the term *minzu*. After the war with Japan came to an end, the GMD-affiliated

Chinese Muslim intellectuals' formulation of Chinese Muslims as a religious community

within the Han almost disappeared from the scene. The case of Sun Shengwu is

illustrative because he was an articulate opponent of the ethnicizers, as his 1939 article

demonstrates. Sun, however, converted to the cause of the ethnicizers after the war and

began to highlight the foreign origins of the Hui, their distinct culture, and their potential

to resist assimilation.[23] Despite this new inclination, most Chinese-speaking Muslim

---

[22] "Guoda Huijiao daibiao zai Jing huodong zhengqu Hui bao zhengzhi diwei" [The struggle of Muslim representatives in the National Assembly to acquire political status for Hui compatriots], *Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huibao* 7, no. 1 (1946): 10.

[23] For Sun Shengwu's proposal see "Huimin huodong: Guoda Huijiao daibiao tian yuanwen" [The original text of the proposal made by Muslim representatives in the National Assembly], *Huimin qingnian* 2 (1947): 18.

intellectuals continued to refrain from using the ethnonym Huizu due to the nationalist sensitivities of the GMD. Some were critical of this evasive strategy. Yisima Yemu wrote:

> When the government ordered that *Huijiao tu* [followers of Hui teaching] was the legally allowed designation, one official hurriedly wrote an article claiming that the Hui constituted a religious entity and not a *minzu*. Many Hui sent telegrams from different regions and opposed this designation. He retreated into silence and went into hiding. When several Hui were elected to the national assembly, none dared to use the word *Huizu* in front of their superiors. This was to avoid difficulty. When they were talking with the Hui people, they could not use the word *Huijiao tu*, so they settled on *Huimin*. Many delegates hemmed and hawed; they, nevertheless, wanted to struggle for the rights of the Hui.[24]

Zhao Mingyuan's proposal exemplifies how the ethnic status for the Hui was defended without uttering the word *Huizu* itself.[25] Zhao knew that any claim to ethnic status was condemned to fail, so they had to find a way to persuade the GMD ruling circles without antagonizing them. Sun Shengwu, who also worked with Zhao to come up with a formulation, recounted that he was so psychologically stressed that he stopped eating and sleeping.[26] Ultimately, Chinese Muslim deputies came up with a formulation. The proposal penned by Zhao Mingyuan requested special seats in the parliament for the Hui on the basis of their special lifestyle and customs (*shenghuo xiguan teshu zhi Huimin* 生活習慣特殊之回民). Sun Shengwu, however, believed that the GMD would not yield even to this statement because GMD elites approached the notion of *Huimin* with suspicion as well. He thus softened the tone of the proposal penned by Zhao Mingyuan

---

[24] Yisima Yemu, "Lun Hui bao zai xianfa zhong de diwei," 3–4.

[25] "Huimin huodong: Guoda Huijiao daibiao tian yuanwen," 17.

[26] Sun Shengwu, *Huijiao luncong* [Collection of debates on Huijiao] (Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua yanjiu suo, 1963), 141.

and presented a new formulation. He asked for the inclusion of an article in the constitution that would grant special seats to "*citizens* with special lifestyle and customs of China proper" (*neidi shenghuo xiguan teshu zhi guomin* 內地生活習慣特殊之國民).

The GMD ruling circle finally consented to Sun Shengwu's vaguely worded statement. In March 1947, a new article was added to the constitution. In Article 135, it was stated, "the number of Delegates to the National Assembly to be elected by *people in interior areas with special ways of living and habits* and the manner of their election shall be prescribed by law."[27] The number of deputies for these special people of China proper was set at ten. This was an enigmatic statement as it was not clear who would be included in this category. GMD administrative organs, however, made it clear that what they meant by "citizens of China proper with special ways of living and habits" were Chinese-speaking Muslims of China proper. Article 52 of the National Assembly Election and Recall Law Enforcement Regulations clearly stated, "what is indicated by citizens of inner China with special ways of living and habits are Huimin who reside in any place" (*suocheng neidi shenghuo xiguan teshu zhi guomin xi zhi juzhu gedi zhi Huimin* 所稱內地生活習慣特殊之國民，係指居住各地之回民).[28]

Some ethnicizers criticized the article for its enigmatic and vague phrasing. Yisima Yemu voiced their point of view in *Hui Youth* in 1947. He was infuriated because the constitution not only refrained from uttering the name of the ethnic group but also

---

[27] The translation is adapted from "Taiwan's Constitution of 1947 with Amendments through 2005," trans. Max Planck Institute, Oxford University Press / Constitute Project, 25 (https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Taiwan_2005.pdf?lang=en). Italics are mine.

[28] Sun, *Huijiao Luncong*, 141.

separated the Huizu of China proper from the Huizu of the borderlands, namely Xinjiang. From the radical standpoint of Yisema Yemu, it was not possible to talk about ethnic equality under these conditions. However, for moderates like Sun and Zhao, it was reconciliation because if they obtained a quota for the Hui people in the parliament, this would also be a *de facto* acceptance of the Hui people's distinct ethnic identity. On the other hand, the Constitution had already granted quotas to the Muslims of Xinjiang within the category of "ethnic groups of the frontier regions." Muslims of inner China were left out, and this was the only alternative for including them in the parliament as a distinct community. In a way, this practical solution formalized the border between Chinese-speaking and Turkic-speaking Muslims.

Although many leading Chinese Muslim intellectuals appreciated the addition of Article 135 to the Constitution, they were dissatisfied with the number of allocated seats. They argued that the quota fell short of reality because Chinese Muslims already had seventeen representatives in the parliament, and this was disproportionate to the population of Chinese Muslims. Chinese Muslims had long believed that their population was around 50 million. Almost every article about the Hui began with some such estimation of population. Chinese Muslims claimed that one hundred allocated seats for the Hui would be a reasonable number. Nevertheless, they had to find a middle point. The Constitutional Government Association of the Hui (*Huimin xianfa zhenghui* 回民憲政會) issued a declaration in March 1947.[29] Twelve leading Chinese Muslims, including Tang Hesan, a prominent educator; Da Pusheng, a prominent religious scholar, who joined the

---

[29] "Guoda daibiao ming'e guoshao, quanguo Huibao shenbiao fenkai" [The quota granted in the National Assembly is insufficient, all Hui compatriots in this country expressed their resentment], *Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huibao* 7, no. 5 (1947): 3.

parliament in 1937 under the category of "worthy person" (*shehui xianda* 社会贤达); and

Sun Shengwu, the Beijing delegate, expressed their dissatisfaction. They pointed out that

the quota of women delegates had been doubled from 84 people to 168. They, thus,

requested thirty-four allocated seats, which would double their current number in the

parliament.[30] The declaration had some impact. The government decided to increase the

number of allocated seats from ten to seventeen.[31]

The allocation of a quota was a relative success for many. The GMD government

repeatedly denounced the claims of Chinese-speaking Muslims on the ground that the

allocation of quotas to the Muslims would mean allocation of seats to a religious

community. It was argued that if the Hui had special privileges, then Christians and other

religious groups would have the right to demand quotas. That would alter the structure of

the parliament, turning it into a general assembly of religious communities. Such a

change would contradict the secular nature of the state and have destructive effects in

society, as it had in India.[32] Nevertheless, Chinese Muslims managed to overcome the

resistance of the GMD and obtain a quota for Muslims of China proper.

I argue that the GMD government ultimately yielded to Chinese Muslims'

demands despite its reservations due to GMD elites' perception of Chinese Muslim

---

[30] Comparing their quota with women, they also demanded twelve seats in the Legislative Yuan and six seats in the Procuratorate.

[31] "Huimin Guoda daibiao zeng wei shiqi ming, nei ying you funü daibiao yi ming" [The Hui people's deputies in the National Assembly increased to seventeen, there should be one woman delegate], special issue, *Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huibao* (special issue*)*, no. 1 (1947).

[32] For a Chinese Muslim refutation of this view of the Nationalists see "Zhu 'guerban' wei Huimin zhengqu ziyou pingdeng de xianfeng" [Celebrating "Qurban" as the vanguard of the Hui people's fight for freedom and equality], *Gu-er-bang* 1, no. 2 (1947): 6.

power. Chinese Muslim intellectuals demanded these rights and privileges on several

grounds. First, they believed that they were too populous to be denied. In the Republican

period, there was much speculation concerning the population of Muslims in China,

ranging from 3 million to 80 million. Most Chinese Muslims believed that they were

around 50 million. Their case was supported by several sources. For instance, they relied

on the Japanese statistics, which claimed that the population of Chinese Muslims was

around 50 million. Hu Fangquan, in an article on the population problem of the Hui,

claimed that the Ministry of Civil Affairs gave an estimate of 34,500,000 in 1912.[33]

There was no legitimate estimate that the government could rely on; therefore, Chinese

Muslims' self-perception of their power and place in Chinese society as a people of 50

million, constituting one-ninth of the total Chinese population, had some impact on the

GMD's perception of the power of Chinese Muslims. Although there were some who

were skeptical that the Muslims of China numbered about 50 million,[34] many state

officials nonetheless continued to mention the same statistic. For instance, the Chinese

envoy in Cairo, in the preface he wrote for Pang Shiqian's Arabic introduction to *Islam in

China*,[35] repeated that there were 50 million Chinese Muslims.

---

[33] Hu Fangquan, "Huijiao Tongji" [The statistics of Huijiao], *Yuehua* 5, no. 16 (1933): 7–9.

[34] Marshall Broomhall, the Christian missionary who worked extensively in China, estimated as early as 1911 that the total population of Muslims could be between 5 and 10 million. Marshall Broomhall, "The Mohammedan Population of China," *Moslem World* 1, no. 1 (1911): 32–53. Broomhall's estimation to a certain extent confirmed the view of the skeptics.

[35] See the envoy's preface in Pang Shiqian [Tawadu], *al-sin wa-l-islam* [*Zhongguo yu huijiao / Islam and China*] (Cairo: Muslim Brotherhood Islamic Printing and Publishing House, the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic World Outreach Division, 1945).

Chinese Muslim intellectuals also kept the lingering image of Hui rebellions alive. They were frustrated by Han historians' insistence on not including late-Qing Hui rebellions in the category of "revolutionary upheavals" along with the other late-Qing rebellions.[36] They frequently referred to Sun Yat-sen, who was among the first to appreciate the revolutionary nature of Hui identity. In the late 1940s, the Chinese Muslim intellectuals began to imply the possibility of a "righteous rebellion." They pointed out that they never hesitated to rise up against any type of oppressive government by pointing at those large-scale, late-Qing Hui rebellions. Many intellectuals began to use implicitly threatening language after the war with Japan came to an end. They kept emphasizing that Chinese Muslims were not provoked by Japanese schemes and would not be provoked if their demands were met.[37] Wang Jingzhai (1871–1949), known as one of the four great religious scholars of China and a founding member of the patriotic China Islamic Association to Save the Country, which was established to mobilize Muslims for an anti-Japanese cause, wrote an article in 1947 in which his accommodating language of the war years gave way to frustration. He urgently called for the *Huijiao minzu* of the five provinces of northwest China—Gansu, Ningxia, Qinghai, Shaanxi, and Xinjiang—to unite for survival. He wrote:

> The Hui people of China have always obeyed the government and the laws. . . .
> They even participated in the political struggle in order to uphold the right and
> eliminate the evil. They have always endorsed justice. They very rarely followed
> the confused folks and joined the rebels. They participated in political power
> because they cherish the people and they would like to build the country. Some

[36] Mu Youzhen, "Hui luan yu? Geming yu?" [Is it Hui riots? Or revolution?], *Yisilan qingnian,* no. 8 (1936). Also see Zhang Mu, "Hui luan ji shi geming" [The Hui riots are revolutions], *Yisilan qingnian* 3, no. 6–7 (1936).

[37] Mu Letian, "Huimin duiyu xianfa de xiwang" [The hopes of Huimin regarding the constitution], *Tujue*, 6/7-8, (1940): 8.

people consider that the Hui are rebellious. This is because unusual action (*yidong* 異動)[38] takes place, especially in northwest China, every forty to fifty years. . . . Therefore, people think like this. They even hate and fear [the Hui]. Why don't they check for the reasons behind these unusual events? If it were not for the enmity of the local government and their policies, which ruined the people, why would the Hui rebel? If you are oppressed, you resist. This is the righteous guiding principle of Islam. Today the victory of China is also a consequence of the oppressive policies of the enemy. Only if people are like cold-blooded animals will they not resist the humiliation of the enemy. The senior officials [of the Qing] destroyed Islam and mistreated the Hui. The officials they employed did not know anything about just management. Therefore, problems got more and more severe. . . . The court sent edicts to reprimand [the Hui] severely. They did not understand the ethnic (*minzu*) sentiments of the people. They were not qualified to be the upper ruling agency. People had no other alternative due to the iron-hoof autocracy.[39]

Wang Jingzhai reminded the government of the contributions of Huizu to the war against Japan. He appreciated how the Hui were not enticed by the Japanese. He believed, however, that they as Huizu gained nothing out of their contribution to the country. He followed up:

However, what did we gain after the victory? I can say that [nothing other than] survival in poverty and ignorance. Now the civil war [began]. We, the Hui people, are very aggrieved. Many people were not killed by enemy guns but will be killed by the guns of our people in this post war environment. Our 50 million Hui are scattered to all regions. We do not know how many will be sacrificed in this civil war. The Hui people are also among the ones who will definitely be sacrificed. We do not have any price to pay for this meaningless sacrificial act and we do not have any guarantee. Therefore, the Hui people should make their calculations and clearly know their purpose, which is to uphold righteousness. We consider those who harm our people as our enemies. We jointly denounce them. We support those who love and take care of us. I observe that only we [can take care of ourselves]. Therefore, I hope we promptly rally our forces to rescue ourselves. Only then will we have the opportunity to live. If we do not unite to rescue ourselves, I am afraid that in the future Islam [in China] will be lost to history.[40]

---

[38] It is interesting that he defines the Hui "rebellions" as "unusual action."

[39] Wang Jingzhai, "Chanming Zhongguo Huijiao lichang, xiwang jiaobao gansu tuanjie" [Explanations on the status of Islam in China: Expecting [Muslim] compatriots to rally their forces urgently], *Yuehua zhoubao* 8 (1947).

[40] Ibid.

The power of Chinese Muslim warlords of northwest and southwest China had always posed a threat to the GMD. The possibility of Chinese Muslims' unification under the banner of a powerful Chinese Muslim warlord, in alliance with foreign powers, was not a specter that GMD elites could ignore. I argue that the perceived political potential of Chinese Muslims, augmented by Chinese Muslim intellectuals' persistent efforts to reinvigorate the memory of Muslim rebellions, were the main reasons behind GMD elites' reconciliatory policies.

As these developments were unfolding, Communists were also trying to extend their influence in heavily populated Muslim regions. They soon felt the urgency of formulating their ethnic policy regarding the Muslims of China. While Chinese Muslim intellectuals were busy getting *de facto* rights for the Hui people in GMD-governed China, Communists were ready to grant ethnic status to Chinese-speaking Muslims.[41] The political expediency caused by the Communist readiness to grant ethnic rights to the Hui was another factor that led the GMD ruling circle to meet partially the demands of the Hui.

---

[41] Notable ethnicizer Xue Wenbo was looking for Communist support for Hui ethnic rights. In January 1946 the association secretly sent a declaration to the Communist-run *Xinhua ribao*, titled "The Requests of the Muslim Youth Association," demanding respect for the interests of minority ethnic groups." The association announced that it represented all Muslims in China and expressed the desire to participate in the Political Consultation Conference. *Xinhua ribao*, January 9, 1946.

The Chinese Communist Party and the Emergence of Chinese-Speaking Muslims as an Ethnic Group

In 1940, the Chinese Communist Party set up the Minzu Question Research Office (*Minzu wenti yanjiu shi* 民族問題研究室) to investigate systematically the ethnic question and publish a series of analytical studies on the matter. Two important policy outlines, on the questions of the Hui and the Mongols, were also presented to the Central Committee in 1940. These studies from the Yan'an period formed the ideological basis of the Communist ethnicity policy.[42] The booklet on the Hui question, *The Question of Huihui Minzu*[43] (*Huihui minzu wenti* 回回民族問題), written by Li Weihan, also laid the foundations of the ethnic policy of the CCP regarding the Muslim peoples of China after the Communist Revolution. The booklet established Chinese-speaking Muslims as a separate *minzu*, distinguishing them not only from the Han but also from other Muslim communities.

This chapter has not aimed to show how and on what theoretical basis the Communists created Chinese Muslims as a distinct *minzu* or to question the plausibility of such a decision, but rather has sought to show in what context they felt the need to do so. The ethnic policy of the Communists should be seen as a strategic decision that aimed to kill two birds with one stone. It countered not only the assimilationist discourse of the nationalists but also all types of attempts to include all Muslims of China in the same

---

[42] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 100.

[43] Li Weihan, *Huihui minzu wenti* [The question of Huihui Minzu], Minzu Wenti Yanjiu Hui Ed. Minzu Chubanshe. (1941), 1980.

ethnic category, including the Japanese schemes to construct an all-encompassing Muslim state in China.

Since the establishment of the Communist Party, the Chinese Communists propagated the principle of self-determination for the weak and small *minzu*s (ethnic groups and nations) of the world. Yet, how they defined self-determination changed over the course of time. In the early 1920s, they encouraged the self-determination of small and weak *minzu*s, believing that it would contribute to their final aim—the construction of a communist world without national, ethnic, or class boundaries. The Chinese revolutionaries, therefore, appreciated the independence of Outer Mongolia in 1912. Meanwhile, the Chinese Communists' ethnic policy began to transform when Stalin broke with the idea of a proletarian internationalism in 1929. As Chinese Communists began to have the impression that the Comintern was becoming a tool of Russian interests, they turned their faces more to Sun Yat-sen. Sun Yat-sen's vision of a independent and unified China has always appealed to the Communists as well.[44]

They also indicted political and ethnic divisions created by domestic warlordism and foreign imperialism for China's backwardness. To grant political independence to ethnic minorities would undermine the "party's patriotic credentials and territorial definition of the nation."[45] Therefore, CCP leaders began to emphasize the idea of national unity as they employed, instead, the idea of a united front, developed by Lenin. The new policy necessitated "winning over the minority nationalities"[46] without

---

[44] Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 88–89.

[45] Ibid., 82.

[46] Ibid., 95.

sacrificing territorial integrity. The famous declaration of August 1935 stated that all

compatriots from all walks of life comprise the *Zhongguo minzu*, for which reason they

should "put aside their differences and unite together in a broad, anti-Japanese united

front."[47] They thus wanted to raise the ethnic sentiments against the Japanese and bind

them into the all-encompassing Chinese identity. The communist principle of national

self-determination, with its precise right of political secession, on the other hand, faded

into the vague promise of the right to manage one's own affairs.

Communists, however, continued to use the phrase "self-determination" (*minzu*

zijue) sporadically in local propaganda. The pamphlet, titled the *Question of the Huihui*

Minzu, penned in the early 1940s, countered Nationalist accusations directed at the

Communists of pursuing an ethnic policy similar to that of the Japanese. They revealed

that this was a strategic move and that the CCP had no intention of granting the right of

secession to any ethnic group in China, including the Hui. The Communists maintained

that the universal application of self-determination was against their ethnic policy.

Quoting Stalin, they argued that the right to self-determination could be granted only

when it was to the benefit of the proletariat class of a *minzu*. They concluded that an

independent Hui state would not be to the advantage of the Hui but, on the contrary,

would benefit Japanese imperialists and turn the Hui into puppets of anti-communism and

enemies of the proletarian class. They argued that Mongolian independence brought

disaster upon the Mongolian people, and they had no intention of leading China to a

similar mistake. The destiny of all ethnic groups of China was interconnected, they

---

[47] Ibid., 97.

claimed, because all suffered equally from Japanese subjugation.[48] The future of the Huizu relied thus very much on their active participation in the anti-Japanese war. Quoting Mao, the pamphlet stated that "all ethnic groups—Mongols, Hui, Tibetans, Miao, Yi, and Fan—should be equal to Han. They will jointly resist against Japan. They will have the right to govern their own affairs and establish a unified state with the Han."[49]

The *Question of the Huihui Minzu* also revealed how the Communist ethnic policy regarding Muslims of China differed from Japanese attempts to create a distinct Muslim nation in China. It expressed the Communists' concern for any definition of *Huizu* as an umbrella category that encompassed all Muslim peoples of China. CCP leaders were very anxious about Japanese efforts to incite ethnic discord, and so they advocated the idea of creating multiple ethnic categories out of the Muslim peoples of China, in contradistinction to the Japanese imagination of a single Muslim nation.

The Japanese did not have the monopoly on the idea of the Huizu as an all-encompassing identity for Muslims in China, however. As this chapter has shown, some leading Chinese Muslim intellectuals—who were fervent anti-Japanese activists—also promoted the idea of empowering Muslims and obtaining rights and privileges for all Muslims of China. The Communists, however, warned Chinese Muslim ethnicizers that the way they framed Hui identity had the potential to serve Japanese imperialism and took issue with several of their key claims. First, they contested the idea that the population of Muslims of China was around 50 million. Taking the lowest number as the

---

[48] *Huihui minzu wenti*, 110–111.

[49] *Huihui minzu wenti*, 109.

most correct estimate, they claimed that the population of Chinese Muslims (*Huizu*) was slightly above 3.7 million. The Communists also contended that the idea of Muslims as an ethnic group (*Huijiao minzu*) in China was arbitrary since it ignored ethnic distinctions between different Muslim peoples of China. After all, religion was not one of the Stalinist criteria and therefore could not be considered to be a building block of an ethnic group. The idea was also dangerous as it positioned Muslims against non-Muslims on the principle of religion and had the potential to create religious antagonism within society.[50] Although CCP ideologues never denied Islam as an important cultural element in the emergence of Hui as an ethnic identity, they believed that attributing too much importance to Islam would prevent the adaptation of the Hui to a modern Chinese nation. For Communists, Islam united peoples of different foreign origins and generated the emergence of ethnic feeling, but it also prevented the development and the progress of the Hui people, causing them to lag behind other ethnic groups of China.[51]

Communists also denied any consanguineous relationship between Chinese Muslims and Uyghurs. They even questioned the widely held view that the word *Huihui* etymologically originated from *Huihe* (Uyghur). They argued that the autonym Huihui was used since the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), centuries before Uyghurs (*Huihe*) converted to Islam, to denote Muslims of different ethnic origins in China. They traced the etymology of *Huihui* to the word *Hualazimo* (華剌子模), the Khwarezm Khanate that ruled Central Asia and Iran from 1077 to 1256, a theory that was also advocated by Su

---

[50] *Huihui minzu wenti*, 105–7.

[51] Ibid., 66.

Beihai and Jin Jitang.[52] In this account, the Mongol rulers of the Yuan dynasty in China called all Muslims *Huihui* due to the similarity of customs between the Muslim residents of China and the people of Khwarezm.[53]

Conclusion

While the CCP continued to strategically employ the promise of national self-determination to gain the support of the Hui in its struggle against the Nationalists and the Japanese imperialists, it granted to Chinese Muslims an ethnic status that the GMD had always been unwilling to grant. When the CCP introduced its fifty-six ethnic categories after conducting the Ethnic Classification Project[54] (*minzu shibie* 民族識別), a state-sponsored investigation of ethnic distinctions undertaken after the Communist Revolution, the discussions on the nature of Hui identity came to an end, only to be revived recently. The Project finally made official the *de facto* situation that had emerged under the late GMD rule as a consequence of the strivings of Chinese Muslim intellectuals and delegates. In so doing, it hardened the boundaries not only between Chinese-speaking Muslims and other Muslim peoples of China but also between Chinese-speaking Muslims and the Han.

---

[52] Ibid., 3.

[53] This idea was also expressed by Su Beihai, the notable scholar of the Xinjiang. Su Beihai, "Weiwuer Huihui bianzheng" [The investigation of Weiwuer and Huihui], *Huizu wenhua* 1, no. 2 (1948): 8. Jin Jitang also made the same claim. See Jin Jitang, *Zhongguo Huijiao shi yanjiu* [The analysis of the history of Islam in China] (1935; repr., Ningxia renmin chubanshi, 2000), 4–5.

[54] Huang Guangxie, *Zhongguo de minzu shibie* [Ethnic classification in China] (Beijing: Minzu Chubanshi, 1995); Thomas Mullaney, *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

Chapter 3

The Awakened Muslim: Turkish Modernity as an Alternative Model

Zhang Chengzhi, the Chinese Muslim author of *History of the Soul* (心灵史), one

of the best-selling novels in China in the 1990s, stated that the Great Wall of China is not,

in fact, situated in northern China, but rather lies along the Mediterranean Sea. Zhang's

imagined maritime Great Wall of Asia ultimately collapsed when the Ottoman Empire

dissolved. The loss of the Ottoman country, according to Zhang, made all Asia, including

China, vulnerable to imperialist threat.[1] Zhang Chengzhi, as a man of the twenty-first

century, has no particular sympathy for Turkish modernization, which has been grappling

with international and domestic problems of its own. Yet this was not the case for

Chinese nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s. They were excited about the Turkish anti-

imperialist struggle and Turkish developmental nationalism led by Kemal Atatürk after

the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The Chinese revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen

declared in 1921 that Turkey was the western barricade of Asia, standing there against

Western imperialism. He stated:

> Japan is the first nation in Asia to completely master the military civilization of
> Europe. Japan's military and naval forces are her own creation, independent of
> European aid or assistance. Therefore, Japan is the only completely independent
> country in East Asia. There is another country in Asia who joined with the Central
> Powers during the European War and was partitioned after her final defeat. After
> the war, however, she was not only able to regain her territory, but to expel all
> Europeans from that territory. Thus she attained her status of complete
> independence. This is Turkey. At present, Asia has only two independent
> countries, Japan in the East and Turkey in the West. In other words, *Japan and*

---

[1] Zhang Chengzhi, "Dizhong hai bianjie" [The Mediterranean sea [as] boundary], *Dushu*,
no. 335 (2007).

Turkey are the Eastern and Western barricades of Asia.[2]

Chinese nationalists closely watched Turkey and its trajectory, as Turkey was the first among colonized and semi-colonized nations to break the imperialist yoke and successfully establish a republican nation-state. They took Turkey as a role model, wanting to emulate its achievements and avoid its mistakes. Chinese Muslim intellectuals were also part of this intellectual world. Their concerns were somewhat different, however, because of their dual identity as Chinese and as Muslim. For them, Turkey was a case not only of revolutionary transformation but also of Islamic reformist modernity. This chapter aims to explore how Chinese and Chinese Muslim intellectuals of the Republican era perceived and interpreted Turkish modernity as they sought solutions to their own political, national, and religious problems.

The Young Turk Revolution and China

Kang Youwei, who visited Turkey during the first days of the Young Turk Revolution, established a *tonglei* 同類 (same type) relationship between Turkey and China. Although Kang also claimed that the Chinese and the Turks were of the same racial stock (*tongzhong* 同种),[3] he was more interested in their common experiences as

---

[2] This is from a speech Sun made on pan-Asianism in Kobe. See the translation in Sun Yat-sen, *China and Japan: Natural Friends-Unnatural Enemies*, ed. Tang Leang Li (Shanghai: China United Press, 1941), 148–49.

[3] Kang Youwei established a racial connection between the Turks and the Chinese. He related the Xiongnu, the "ancestors" of modern Turks, to the Shang dynasty. He wrote: "Turks [Tujue] are descendants of Xiongnu, who are the successors of Chunwei [淳維], the Yin [殷] People." According to Sima Qian, the ancient nomadic tribes, the Chunwei people, are indeed the descendants of the Xia dynasty and not the Yin (also known as the Shang dynasty). Here we are not so much interested in the historical accuracy of Kang but rather in his perception of the racial connections of modern Turks and Chinese. See

the only two countries suspended between survival and loss under imperialist threat and domestic failure to reform. His way of thinking, which involved building new connections of dispersed people and places, was a product of the newly emerging global modern consciousness among Chinese nationalists.[4] Kang, in the treatise he submitted to the Guangxu emperor in 1898, wrote that Turkey and China not only tackled similar domestic problems but also occupied a similar place in the global arena. Like China, Turkey was the other "sick man of the East"; for their survival, both required the immediate creation of a constitutional monarchy. This depiction of Turkey as the sick man of Europe and China as the sick man of Asia became a cliché in China in later years.

The constitutional movement led by the Committee of Union and Progress in the Ottoman Empire, also known as the Young Turk Revolution (1908), which forced the emperor to reinstate the constitution, convene the parliament, and relinquish his powers, drew the attention of Chinese intellectuals. It became a prime example invoked by reformists and revolutionaries alike to support their own cases. Kang Youwei, coincidentally, was in Turkey during the first days of the revolution. Kang, like many others, was primarily concerned with the nature of the event, which has been a point of contention in Turkey ever since. The Young Turk Revolution was not a republican revolution: the revolutionaries had no intention of toppling the Ottoman dynasty for the time being. Therefore, Kemalist historiography, which emphasizes the unique nature of the Kemalist Revolution as a complete break from the dynastic past, deemphasizes the

---

the Chinese text of Kang Youwei's *Jincheng Tujue xueruo jixu* [Treatise to the emperor on the demise and weakening of the Turks] in Giray Fidan, *Çin'den görünen Osmanlı: Çinli düşünür Kang You Wei'in Türk seyahatnâmesi* [The Ottomans as they were seen from China: Kang Youwei's travelogue on Turkey] (Istanbul: Yeditepe, 2013).

[4] Karl, *Staging the World*, 38–44.

role played by the Young Turks in Turkish history and emphasizes its own role as a reformist movement. Others, however, point to its revolutionary nature by focusing on the modernizing policies of the Young Turks, which, according to their understanding, initiated radical change in Ottoman society.[5] Likewise, Chinese intellectuals were preoccupied with the real nature of the 1908 revolution because they were eager to know what made the Young Turks ultimately fail and the Kemalists succeed.

Late-Qing reformists and revolutionaries derived different conclusions from their observations of the Revolution. Kang Youwei, in keeping with his reformist thinking, raised concerns about the destructiveness of the revolutionary change of 1908, which was initiated by a coup d'état. Revolutionaries, on the other hand, initially hailed the 1908 regime change for "harness[ing] the progressive elements in the military to their movement"[6] and for mobilizing the people, including the oppressed elements of the society, like women and laborers. It was, revolutionary nationalists argued, the spirit of the Turkish people and the uprightness of the military that made this change possible.

Yet after a few years, even the revolutionaries, who had extolled the Turkish Revolution for pushing Turkey ahead of China, began to cast doubt on the suitability of the Young Turk Revolution as a model for China. First, they criticized the Young Turks for not setting clear revolutionary goals; after all, they had compromised with the monarchical authority. This indeed conflicted with the ultimate objective of the Chinese Republican revolutionaries who were dedicated to toppling dynastic rule. Second, they criticized the "hesitant" modernization of the Young Turks, which entailed duality in the

---

[5] For a discussion of the debate, see Aykut Kansu, *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1–28.

[6] Karl, *Staging the World*, 183.

system as modern and traditional institutions functioned side by side. Third, the Turkish revolution was not an ethno-nationalist revolution, because the Young Turks collaborated with the non-Turkish elements of the empire. Its ethic and religious inclusiveness astonished the anti-Manchu revolutionaries, who before the revolution often emphasized the ideal of an ethnically homogenous nation. The radical racist elements among the revolutionaries, like Min Yi, even criticized taking the Turks as a role model because, for them, the position of the Han in China was more like the position of the Greeks, a civilized people who were compelled into submitting to Turkey, just as the Han were compelled into submitting to the "uncivilized" Manchus. In that sense, "the Turkish revolution could be considered an internal affair between people of the same ethnicity. It was a problem of political representation in a national state, and in that sense, it could not compare to the problem in China."[7]

Chinese Perceptions of the Nationalist Revolution of Turkey

The Turkish nationalist revolution in the early 1920s incited a new wave of excitement among the Chinese nationalists. For many Chinese intellectuals, the true basis for a cohesive modern national state was achieved by the nationalist revolution led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, which made Turkey a rising power in the global world order.

The "cause célèbre of Chinese nationalism after the First World War" was the abolishment of unequal treaties.[8] In the postwar period there was something utterly

---

[7] Min Yi, "Tuerqi geming" [Turkish revolution], *Minbao* 25 (January 1, 1910): 1–7, as cited in Karl, *Staging the World*, 186.

[8] Edmund S. K Fung, "The Chinese Nationalists and the Unequal Treaties, 1924–1931," *Modern Asian Studies* 21, no. 4 (1987): 793.

desperate and desolate about Chinese self-perception. Turkey's success in getting rid of unequal treaties at the Lausanne Conference as a result of the War of Independence showed the Chinese that the Treaty of Versailles could indeed be revised. If Turkey joined the ranks of independent modern nation-states when nobody was expecting it, why could not China achieve its aim to get rid of its status as a "hypo-colony"(*ci zhimindi* 次殖民地) ,[9] as Sun Yat-sen put it? This sentiment alleviated an "inferiority syndrome" and injected confidence into the Chinese nationalists, who were looking for models that would eliminate the circumstances created by the "abortive revolution"[10] of 1911. Yet, how did Turks achieve this revolutionary success, and what lessons could the Chinese derive from it?

In the 1920s, Chinese books and articles on Turkey generally took Turkey as a model of successful modernization and economic development. It is therefore not coincidental that the term *xiandai hua*[11] 現代化 (modernization) was first introduced by Liu Keshu, a well-known historian of Turkey.[12] In his book *New Turkey*,[13] Liu extolled

---

[9] Sun, *San min zhuyi*, 22–23.

[10] Lloyd E. Eastman, *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927–1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[11] Liu Keshu, *Xin Tuerqi* [New Turkey], (1926; repr., Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1929), 337.

[12] The word in its adjective form (*xiandai*) was already used in Chinese. However, the verb and noun form as *xiandai hua* (modernize/modernization) appeared for the first time in Liu Keshu's book *New Turkey*. After Liu introduced it, it became a common word used to define "progressive change" towards modernity. For a discussion of how different concepts were introduced during the May 4th period to make sense of alternative paths of modernization, see Zhou Wenjiu, "Dong Xi wenhua lunzheng yu Zhongguo xiandai hua daolu zhi tansuo" [The debates between Eastern and Western culture and research for the path of Chinese modernization], *Tianjin shifan daxue xuebao daxue xuebao* 3, no. 204 (2009): 44–50.

Turkey's complete break from its "traditional and Islamic past," using a language that is characteristic of the New Culture Movement. He equated modernization (*xiandai hua*) with westernization (*xifang hua* 西方化), and he praised Turkey for adopting global civilizational standards. For Liu, Islam had always been a reactionary force in Turkish history, and Kemal's secularism was meant to eradicate Islam from Turkish society.[14] As we will see in the following pages, not all were in agreement with Liu's assessment of the role of Islam in Turkey.

The demonization of the Ottoman past was, nevertheless, very common in Chinese literature on Turkey. Echoing the Kemalist self-perception, the Chinese intellectuals, who watched Turkish model closely in the 1920s,[15] believed that the nationalist revolution marked a total break from the past. They viewed the Ottomans as corrupt and abusive despots who were destined to be toppled by nationalist will. Nationalists, on the other hand, created a modern nation-state out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, rescuing the nation from the edge of extinction. These Chinese intellectuals were not oblivious to past Ottoman modernization, which began by the late eighteenth century and was accelerated by the policies of the Young Turks. Many argued that the Ottoman modernization, however, did not produce socially effective results, as it was a top-down modernization. It did not grow out of native concerns but was imposed by the imperialists for the purpose of protecting Christian minorities. It was therefore no more than a tool of imperialism. They believed that the Kemalist revolution, on the other

[13] Liu, *Xin Tuerqi*.

[14] Liu, *Xin Tuerqi*, 330–55.

[15] Liu Keshu, *Xin Tuerqi*. Also see Song Shuren, *Xin Tuerqi* [New Turkey] (Shanghai: Zhongghua shuju, 1928).

hand, was born out of the bosom of the Turkish people. Atatürk was the leader of a national awakening and acted on behalf of the highest interests of the people, who, in turn, recognized him as embodying the national will. He was the consciousness of the people, as he knew their intentions. Members of the nation trusted him because he was leading, not imposing his will. Comparing the Kemalist revolution with the Young Turk Revolution, Liu Keshu, for instance, argued that the Young Turk Revolution was an Istanbul revolution, concerted by a privileged class. The middle and lower classes had no real influence in it, and for this reason the Young Turks were ultimately unsuccessful. The nationalist party of Turkey, in contrast, knew well the central importance of the people. According to Liu, they knew that the reforms had to rely on the people's will (*minyi* 民意) to be successful. It was, therefore, a genuine Anatolian revolution, he concluded.[16]

Their trust in the wisdom of the masses was not absolute though. Liu Keshu made it clear that the task of leaders is to awaken the masses into realizing their own will. The popular will is latent, waiting to be unearthed by already-enlightened men. The mass of people of Turkey, as of China, was uneducated. In the Turkish case, it was Mustafa Kemal and his companions who activated the people's will by working unceasingly, through propaganda and organization in the earlier years of the nationalist struggle and through education after the war came to an end.[17] Song Shuren, who also wrote a book entitled *New Turkey*, underlined the importance of this preparatory stage. He made it clear that Turkish nationalists intended to declare the republic from early on but had to

---

[16] Liu, *Xin Tuerqi*, 263–65. Also see Song Shuren, *Xin Tuerqi*, 15.

[17] Liu, *Xin Tuerqi*, 353–55.

wait until the people became ready for it, because they did not want to challenge national feelings. It was therefore a revolution that shed little blood—a smooth revolutionary transformation, not a coup d'état. The Turkish revolution was imagined by a minority group of the "first awakened" (*xianjue* 先覺), but it was made possible and everlasting by the people.[18]

Chinese intellectuals' conscious choice to emphasize the importance of the popular will and democratic intent of the Kemalists had a particular political significance in the context of China in the 1920s. In the 1920s, many among the nationalist Chinese intellectuals had a tendency to side with the idea that Kemal was a tutelary democrat, much like the revolutionary leader Sun Yat-sen. Liu Keshu and Song Shuren both argued that Kemal Atatürk never abandoned his intent for a multi-party parliamentary democracy, even at times when he acted with an iron fist against oppositional circles. Liu felt the urge to rationalize some of these policies. For instance, he reiterated the Kemalist excuse offered for the closure of opposition parties in the 1920s, as he claimed that they turned out to be the breeding ground for reactionary elements in Turkey. As such, he showed that Turks were not yet ready for multi-party democracy and had to wait until the time was ripe for a full democracy.[19]

---

[18] Song, *Xin Tuerqi*, 15.

[19] Liu, *Xin Tuerqi*, 336. Even today, Kemal's understanding of democracy and the popular will is contested. Although populism was one of the foundational principles of Kemal Atatürk's work, some argue that it was a discursive strategy with no real substance. Others take his experiments with multi-party democracy in the 1920s as evidence of his democratic intent. He was a democrat at heart, they argue, and was eager to initiate multi-party parliamentary democracy when the people were made ready through education.

Above all, Kemal Atatürk was a politician. His ideas often transformed as the circumstances changed. Therefore, intellectuals often highlight his ideas from a particular period to support their own political stance. Today in Turkey, leftists, Islamists, Turkists, and even communists find evidence from Kemal Atatürk's speeches to support their own political arguments. The Chinese intellectuals were not too different. They also read the Kemalist trajectory selectively in order to provide backing to their ideological positioning. Hence, the emphasis on the idea of popular will and Kemalist tutelary democracy in China had a political purpose. The Turkish case was advanced to prove the efficacy of popular support and democratization. These Chinese writers underlined specific laws that restricted presidential authority and confirmed the supremacy of the parliament (such as restrictions on the veto power of the president and the limitation of his office to a term of four years) and constitutional rights that guaranteed individual freedoms (such as the freedom of belief and freedom of expression) as proof of the democratic orientation of Turkey.[20]

In the following years, in the 1930s, however, there was a growing emphasis throughout the world, including in China, on the efficacy of dictatorial rule, as it became common for intellectuals to praise the developmental models of Germany and Italy under a single person's leadership. In China, a growing number of intellectuals lost their trust in Western-style parliamentary democracy. In the 1930s, along the same lines, Kemal Atatürk also consolidated his authority through the machinery of a one-party system. This completely changed the story of Turkey told in China in the 1930s. Modern Turkey was

---

[20] Liu, *Xin Tuerqi*, 325–36; Song, *Xin Tuerqi*, 23–30.

no longer seen as a realization of popular will but rather as the creation of one heroic

man, Kemal Atatürk.

Turkish Secularism and China

The secular policies of the new Republic, specifically the abolition of the

caliphate, were of special interest in China because of its Muslim population. Chinese

Muslim intellectuals attempted to make the modernizing reforms of Turkey meaningful

in their own contexts. Therefore, it was crucial for Chinese Muslims to understand how

the nation was conceptualized in Turkey, what the place of Islam was in defining this

new Turkish identity, what impact the secularizing policies had in the context of a

Muslim-populated country, and if the Turkish experience had anything to offer to China

that would benefit not only its Muslims but the Chinese nation as a whole.

For Han intellectuals, the secularizing reforms were directly related to the

modernization of Turkey. Liu Keshu, as mentioned, argued that religion played a

reactionary role in Turkish history. Secularization was necessary if the Turks wanted to

become part of modern civilization. His understanding of Islam was in that sense quite

negative. Song Shuren, on the contrary, emphasized the progressive and peaceful

elements of Islam. Very much aware of the existence of the Chinese Muslim population

and its potential in China, he argued that core Islamic principles were not in conflict with

modern principles.[21] For Song, however, the secular reforms in Turkey were necessary

for the development of a democratic-pluralist society. The Young Turk Revolution, he

argued, failed because it could not keep up with the promise of "equality" among citizens

---

[21] Song, *Xin Tuerqi*, 35–37.

of the empire regardless of race and religion. The non-Muslim minorities were not recognized as equal citizens of the empire until the Ottoman reforms were initiated in the nineteenth century. Later, when foreign powers became involved and acquired special rights and privileges for Ottoman minorities and foreign residents, the balance was disrupted again, this time to the disadvantage of Muslims. The Young Turks could not attain a balance. Song argued that the abolishment of the caliphate and secular reforms were necessary to create equal citizenship under the law. This prevented foreign powers from interfering in Turkey's affairs in an effort to guarantee the welfare and security of non-Muslims. The secular constitution of Turkey succeeded in constructing a nation on the basis of citizenship (*guomin* 國民) rather than race or religion. Secularism thus not only became a tool for constructing a pluralist society but also guaranteed Turkish independence from foreign involvement.[22]

Chinese Muslim reformist intellectuals' evaluation of the secular reforms in Turkey hewed close to Song Shuren's analysis. They believed that Kemal was a sincere Muslim and that he did not intend to uproot Islam from Turkish society; his moves were intended primarily to be expedient. In almost all articles about Turkey published by Chinese Muslims, one can observe an attempt to legitimize the secular reforms of Turkey through religious reasoning. From their perspective, the secularizing reforms had contributed to the strength of Turkey in two ways. First, although the reforms eliminated religious institutions, they also, ironically, revived pristine Islamic principles—equality, solidarity, and justice. Second, the state established the Directorate of Religious Affairs, which would steer Islam in the correct direction. This would prevent the flourishing of

---

[22] Song, *Xin Tuerqi*, 23.

subversive, destructive, or reactionary interpretations of Islam. Troubled by centuries of conflicts stemming from different teachings in China with no higher authority that could settle disputes, this official institution, founded in order to control religion through a single interpretation, indubitably appealed to the Chinese Muslims. For them, a central formal institution regulating religious affairs, recognized by the state and the people, had the potential to unify China's Muslims.

The motive behind developing a religious justification for secular reforms seems first of all to have been intended to appease the Muslims of China, who were appalled by what was happening in Turkey. Second, they wanted to introduce religion into the narrative because if Islam were divorced from this success story, it would not be meaningful for Chinese Muslims. The Turkish success story, after all, would give confidence to Muslims by demonstrating the strength of Muslims in world politics. It also had the potential to raise the status of Muslims in China, as it showed the Chinese the potential of Muslims in the progress and development of a society.

Ma Mingdao (1908–91), who studied in Turkey in the 1930s with his brother Ma Hongdao,[23] described how Chinese Muslims were perturbed by the abolishment of the caliphate. He explained that Beijing Muslims were in the process of collecting jade and antiques for the purpose of contributing to Turkey when they heard that the caliphate was

---

[23] The Ma brothers were from a family of religious scholars. Ma Hongdao travelled broadly in the Islamic world, including Egypt, and settled in Turkey for higher learning. Ma Hongdao studied Islamic philosophy at Istanbul University. He graduated in 1933 and returned to China. In 1935 he became a secretary in the Chinese embassy in Turkey and stayed in Turkey until 1940. Ma Mingdao was a graduate of Chengda Normal School. He also studied Islamic law in the theology department at Ankara University. In 1936, he attended military school in Turkey, as he was concerned about the Japanese occupation of China. He came back to China in 1940.

abolished, and that they dropped their plan upon hearing the news.[24] An emotional

connection was already established between many Chinese Muslims and the Ottoman

sultan-caliph in the beginning of the twentieth century, when two Ottoman teachers

served in the school based in the Niujie mosque in Beijing, where the Friday *khutba* was

also read in the name of the Ottoman caliph.[25] In his article, Ma, in an attempt to appease

the concerned Chinese Muslims, expressed that the state's secular policies had nothing to

do with the daily religious practices of the Turks. He argued that the state did not restrict

the practice of Islam, but even contributed in many ways to its practice by, for example,

declaring the days of two religious festivals official holiday in Turkey. Ma explained that

the separation of religion and state in fact contributed to the development of Islam by

eliminating hypocrites who practiced because of their fear of state sanctions or worldly

gain. This in turn, he believed, contributed to the revival of prophetic Islamic purity and

sincerity.[26]

In a 1942 article entitled "Kemalism and Islam," Ding Zhongming, a prominent

religious figure in China who studied at al-Azhar between 1932 and 1938, discussed the

most contentious secularizing policies of the Turkish Republic—the abolishment of the

caliphate, the introduction of the Latin alphabet, and the removal from the constitution of

the article declaring Islam to be the religion of the state. Ding justified Kemalist policies

by pointing to the international and national circumstances that necessitated them. For

[24] Ma Mingdao, "Tuerqi de Huijiao" [Islam in Turkey], *Chenxi* 3, no. 4 (1937): 22–26.

[25] Abdürreşit İbrahim, *20. Asrın başlarında İslam Dünyası: Çin ve Hindistan'da İslamiyet* [Islamic world in the beginning of the twentieth century. Islam in China and India]. Vol.2, Mehmed Paksu eds., (İstanbul: Yeni Asya Yayınları, 1987), 93.

[26] Also see "Ma Hongdao zhaodai xinwen jizhe zhi tanhua" [Ma Hongdao's correspondence with a journalist], *Tianfang xueli yuekan* 5, no. 11–12 (1933): 72.

Ding, the caliphate made Turkey vulnerable to imperialists, who were acting on a crusader mentality. The potential of the power of a caliphate, even though it had not been realized for centuries, had made European powers keep a wary eye on Turkey. According to Ding, Kemal had made use of one of the ancient *Thirty-Six Stratagems*, that of inflicting injury on oneself to win the enemy's trust. The enemies of Turkey were lulled into relaxing their guard since they no longer considered it to be an immediate threat. This allowed Turkey to free itself from imperialist oppression and incursions and concentrate its power on national development. Since national survival should be the primary motive, Ding argued, it therefore became legitimate to abolish the caliphate, which, after all, had long since become a corrupt and abusive institution. Kemal, by liberating the Turkish people from the despotic rule of the sultan-caliph, thus acted in accordance with the principles of Islam.[27]

According to many other Chinese Muslim intellectuals, like Ding Zhongming, liberation from the imperialist yoke should be the primary task of individual nation-states. One of the first articles published about the Turkish revolution in the journal *Yuehua* makes this point very clear.[28] This was a translation of an article by Caleb Gates, who lived in Turkey for years, serving as the director of a prominent American college in Istanbul. Gates, although a non-Muslim, gave a different account of the revolution: in contrast to other Western observers, who hailed the Turkish revolution as an effort toward total westernization, his analysis underlined the Islamic nature of the reforms,

---

[27] Ding Zhongming, "Jimaer yu Yisilan" [Kemal and Islam], *Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huibao* 4, no. 5–8 (1942).

[28] Wang Nongcun, trans., "Tuerqi de gexin" [The regeneration of Turkey], *Yuehua* 3, no. 19 (1931).

which also explains why *Yuehua* published a translation of his article. For Gates, the reforms were secular in appearance but Islamic in intent and meaning. The abolition of the caliphate on March 3, 1924, was regarded by Gates as "the natural culmination of events long moving in that direction."[29] According to Gates, if the caliphate signified a center of authority extending to the whole Muslim world, this had never been realized in history. Never had a single man in the role of caliph governed the entire Islamic world. Instead, there had been and were a number of caliphs in different countries. Gates wrote:

> How is it possible to suppose the Muslims of Egypt, of India, and Turkey and of the Occident can be torn away from the conditions and the traditions of their surrounding to group themselves in one religious community? This is the verdict of history, and it is also the verdict of the religious law. In reality there exists no caliph from the religious point of view. You know that the Prophet himself said, "Thirty years after me there will be no caliph."[30]

The idea that the caliphate was not feasible did not appeal to the majority of Islamists, as it was an institution with a potential to establish a strong alliance—if not unity—among Muslims in an age when almost all Muslim states were under imperialist rule. In that sense, the view expressed by Ding and Gates, who legitimized the abolition from an Islamic point of view, was rare but not unique. Several prominent Muslim reformers proposed the suspension of the institution of the caliphate as politically expedient and an ideal for the future. Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938), a prominent reformist intellectual from India, who was introduced to China by Hai Weiliang,[31] was

---

[29] Caleb Gates, "The Regeneration of Turkey," *Current History* 32 (1930): 523.

[30] Gates, "Regeneration of Turkey," 522. This idea was also used by Kemalists in its early years to legitimize the abolishment of the caliphate.

[31] Hai Weiliang, "Huijiao shiren Yiqiba (Dr. Iqbal) ji Huijiao wenhua fuxing zhi jianglai" [The Muslim poet Dr. Iqbal and the future of Muslim cultural revival], *Xin Yaxiya* 6, no. 6 (1933): 79–94. Hai Weiliang also translated part of Iqbal's *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Hai Weiliang, trans., "Yindu zhuming Huijiao shiren Yiqeba

one of them. Hai also wrote articles and legitimized some of the controversial secular

policies of Turkey, including the introduction of the Latin alphabet and the practice of

Turkish *adhan* (call to prayer).[32] His intellectual engagement with the thought of Iqbal

obviously influenced his positive evaluation of the Turkish revolution.

For Iqbal, the secular policies of Turkey, including the abolishment of the

caliphate, were perfectly Islamic. He philosophically refuted any kind of binary

opposition between sacred and secular, spiritual and profane:

> The essence of *Tawhid*, as a working idea, is equality, solidarity, and freedom.
> The state, from the Islamic standpoint, is an endeavor to transform the Islamic
> ideal principles into space-time forces, an aspiration to realize them in a definite
> human organization. It is in this sense alone that the state in Islam is a theocracy,
> not in the sense that it is headed by a representative of God on earth who can
> always screen his despotic will behind his supposed infallibility. . . . The Ultimate
> Reality, according to the Quran, is spiritual, and its life consists in its temporal
> activity. The spirit finds its opportunities in the natural, the material, the secular.
> All that is secular is, therefore, sacred in its being.[33]

For Iqbal, among Muslim nations, Turkey alone shook off its "dogmatic slumber, and

attained self-consciousness."[34] Only Turkey claimed her right of intellectual freedom

while all others were repeating old values and judgments. Only the Turks achieved the

creation of new values, rediscovering the essential Islamic principles as they tore off from

Islam "the hard crust which has immobilized an essentially dynamic outlook on life."[35]

---

boshi zhi lunzheng" [The famous Indian poet Dr. Iqbal's opinions about politics], *Yuehua* 5, nos. 24–34 and 36 (1933).

[32] Hai Weiliang, "Tuguo gaiyong Tu wen Gulan ji bangke zhi pinglun" [A discussion of Turkey's Quran translation and adhan], *Yuehua* 5, no. 12 (1933): 10–11.

[33] Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, ed. M. Saeed Sheikh (1934; repr., Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989), 122–23.

[34] Ibid., 128.

[35] Ibid., 124.

Iqbal argued that Turkish nationalists exercised *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) in regard to the institution of the caliphate as well, abolishing worn-out ideas about the status of the institution. He asserted that "the republican form of government is not only thoroughly consistent with the spirit of Islam, but has also become a necessity in the view of the new forces that are set free in the world of Islam."[36] For Iqbal, in the new circumstances of the world, it was perfectly sound for an elected assembly to replace the seat of the caliph.

In Iqbal's account, the modern Turk, inspired by the realities of his time, realized that each nation should first "sink into her own deeper self, temporarily focus her vision on herself alone, until all are strong and powerful to form a living family of republics."[37] Only when each Muslim nation achieved independence might the caliphate again be established as a spiritual, unifying bond. Iqbal, however, did not imagine a global Muslim state ruled by a single man but a kind of a league of nations, each governed by a republican system. For Iqbal, artificial boundaries and racial distinctions were for the "facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members."[38] He quoted an early poem of Ziya Gökalp, a Turkish intellectual considered to be the ideologue of Turkish nationalism, regarding the necessity of establishing powerful, independent Muslim nations as a prerequisite for the caliphal ideal. Gökalp wrote:

> In order to create a really effective political unity of Islam, all Muslim countries must first become independent, and then in their totality they should arrange themselves under one caliph. Is such a thing possible at the present moment? If not today, one must wait. In the meantime, the caliph must reduce his own house

[36] Ibid., 125.

[37] Ibid., 126.

[38] Ibid., 126.

to order and lay the foundations of a workable modern state. In the international world the weak find no sympathy; power alone deserves respect.[39]

Gökalp imagined a religious organization resembling the Roman Catholic Church. It would "not intersect with the secular political institutions of the nation."[40] With its conferences and congresses, it would function only as an "ethical corporation,"[41] representing solely a spiritual authority. It is still debated whether Gökalp preserved his belief in the future possibility of reviving the caliphate in his later years. He was in any case an important influence on the Kemalist formulation of nationalism. However, although Kemal Atatürk legitimized the abolishment of the caliphate with religious reasoning initially, he never implied any desire on his side regarding the future revival of the institution. In that sense, there is no proof that Gökalp's earlier ideas had any influence on Kemal Atatürk. Nevertheless, the Chinese Muslim intellectuals never lost their belief in the potential of the institution of the caliphate. Although they never attended any of the caliphate conferences organized in Mecca and Cairo in 1926, only a few years after the abolishment of the caliphate, they participated in the discussion through correspondence. Ma Juntu, in an article in the first issue of *The China Muslim,* summarized the proposal of the China Muslim Literary Society of Shanghai and the board of directors of the Shanghai mosque on the issue, making it clear that the caliphate should be a purely religious, not a political, position. He held that the caliph should be

---

[39] The English version is a reproduction of Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought*, 126. The original poem, "The Unity of Islam," can be found in Ziya Gökalp, *Şiirler ve Halk Masalları*, ed. Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, vol. 1 of *Ziya Gökalp Külliyatı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1952), 129.

[40] Taha Parla, *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp, 1876–1924* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 40.

[41] Ibid.

dedicated to resolving conflicting issues between different sects of Islam, which were described by Chinese Muslims as old and new teachings. It was also stated that the caliph should be determined by public election.[42] Another *The China Muslim* author also proposed China as a place to organize future caliphate conferences as he depicted China as a sovereign territory where Muslims lived in safety.[43]

A few years later, when Jerusalem mufti Amin al-Husayni organized the World Islamic Congress in Jerusalem in 1931, which was also dedicated to the discussion of the question of the caliphate in the Islamic world, Chinese Muslims again took an interest in the issue. Wang Mengyang wrote a declaration in the pages of *Yuehua,* which was also published in English. They welcomed the Congress and they believed that it would be a an opportunity for Muslims to concentrate their power becasue they lost their center (*zhongxin* 中心) after the abolition of the caliphate in Turkey.[44] The organizers of the Congress also sent a letter to Beijing asking Chinese to send a delegate. Chinese Muslims could not send a delegate to the first Congress in 1931 but they sent Yin Guangyu, a member of the Society for the Propagation of Islam (Yisilan budao hui 伊斯蘭佈道會) as a participant in the second gathering. The articles, which appeared in the journals interestingly, reflected the opinions of different circles, including the opposition of

---

[42] "Yisilan jiaozhu wenti" [The problem of the caliphate], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 1 (1926).

[43] Zhao Bin, "Wo zhi Yisilan jiaozhu wenti guan" [My view on the issue of caliphate], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 3–4 (1926): 12–15.

[44] Wang Mengyang, "Xiang shijie Yisilan dahui jiang shuyu" [Saying a few words to World Islamic Congress], *Yuehua* 3, no. 12 (1931). Also see "Shijie Yisilan Dahui gonghan" [Public letter of the World Islamic Congress], *Yuehua* 3, no. 12 (1931).

Turkey to the organization of such a congress.[45] Hai Weiliang, for instance, translated an article from India, which quoted the closing remarks of Iqbal at the World Congress. Iqbal once again emphasized the importance of establishing an alliance of Muslim nations for a prospective unity.[46] Likewise, many Chinese Muslim reformists saw the Congress as the first step towards such a goal.

Ma Mingdao, for instance, echoed Ziya Gökalp in emphatically stating that the noble task of Muslims should be liberation from imperialism; each nation (*minzu*) should be liberated one by one; only then could they establish Muslim solidarity. It is very probable that Ma Mingdao read Gökalp because his brother Ma Hongdao, who studied in Turkey in the department of theology at Istanbul University, was much inspired by Gökalp's ideas. Ma Hongdao translated several articles by Gökalp, publishing them in journals such as *Chenxi*, *Zhengdao*, *Xibei wenti jikan* (西北問題季刊), and *Xibei wenti yanjiuhui huikan* (西北問題研究會月刊).

Ma Hongdao explicitly stated that nationalism was the Islamic ideology of the contemporary era. He called readers' attention to a hadith, oft-repeated in China,

---

[45] Absolute nationalists like Kemal were very much troubled by the Congress. The close association of some influential Indian Muslims, like Shawkat Ali with the deposed caliph Abdulmecid, alarmed Nationalist party in Turkey. Although Jerusalem mufti informed Turkish foreign ministry that they had no intention to revive the caliphate but were willing to discuss caliphate as a theoretical question, the Turkish side continued to see it as a threat to Turkish national ideology. Wang Zengshan, who studied in Turkey in late 1920s at Istanbul University and became a member of the Legislative Yuan in 1933, translated news reflecting the position of Turkey on the Congress. Wang Zengshan, trans., "Tuerqi duiyu Feilisiding Huijiao dahui zhaxun" [Mixed news about Turkey's position on the Islamic Congress in Palestine], *Yuehua* 4, no. 12–14 (1932).

[46] Hai Weiliang, trans., "Yindu Huimin duiyu shijie Huijiao dahui zhi pinglun" [The Indian Muslims discussions about the World Muslim Congress], *Yuehua* 4, no. 12–14 (1932).

140

especially during the anti-Japanese war: "patriotism is part of *iman* [faith]." He believed

that the strength of Turkey came from its ability to nationalize Islam: "They transformed

their nation (*minzu*) into the Turkish Muslim nation and Islam into their nation's Islam."[47]

The idea of nationalizing Islam, a central tenet of Ma Hongdao's ideology, was

absolutely a product of Gökalp's ideology. In one of his pivotal works, titled *The*

Principles of Turkism, Gökalp defined religious Turkism as one of the foundational

principles of Turkish nationalism, along with linguistic, aesthetic, ethical, legal,

economic, political, and philosophical Turkism. Ma Hongdao translated four articles

from the book—the "History of Turkism," "What is Turkism?," "Political Turkism," and

"Philosophical Turkism."[48] Ma Hongdao intended to translate the whole book into

Chinese but could not complete the task. He believed that Gökalp had much to offer to

China. In the preface to his translation of "What is Turkism?," it was written:

> The essence of the book established the fundamental theory of the Young Turks
> and the Turkish Nationalist Party. The sick man of the Near East, Turkey,
> afflicted with all ills, internal trouble, and outside aggression, came thick and fast
> after the Great War. To one's surprise, the Independence War of Asia Minor
> amazed the world with a single brilliant feat; it wiped away all the disgraces of
> the past and became a powerful country of second degree. The revolutionary work
> succeeded in ten years. Therefore, we should pay attention to the causes behind its
> rapidness. Our country is in gradual decline and is under imperialist attack. The
> [gravity of the situation] is no less than that of Turkey before the war. We have
> been struggling for more than ten years through revolutionary work; however, not
> only is success still far away but national humiliation is also aggravating day by

[47] "Ma Hongdao zhaodai xinwen jizhe zhi tanhua," 72. In 1933, Ma travelled all over China lecturing about the Turkish experience.

[48] Ziya Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (1923; repr., Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Yayınevi, 1970), 16–23. Ma Hongdao, trans., "Zhexue de Tuerqi zhuyi" [Philosophic Turkism], *Zhengdao* 4, no. 1–2 (1934); "Zhengzhi de Tuerqi zhuyi" [Political Turkism], *Zhengdao* 4, no. 8–13 (1934); "Tuerqi zhuyi de yange" [History of Turkism], *Chenxi* 1, no. 1–2 (1935); "Tuerqi zhuyi shi shenme?" [What is Turkism?], *Chenxi* 1, no. 3–4 (1935). "Political Turkism" was also published in *Xiebei wenti jikan* 1, no. 1 (1934); "Philosophic Turkism" was published in *Xibei wenti yanjiuhui huikan* 1, no. 1 (1934).

day. Reactionary forces have also become fiercer. The situation is unstable. The country is not like a country. Where does the reason lie behind this sluggishness and the failure? This is something we should pay attention to. This text, a product of the faithful pen of Ma Hongdao, introduces us to how Turkey wiped out humiliation and embarrassment and how it completed the revolutionary work in a short period of time.[49]

Ma Hongdao translated Gökalp as not only addressing the Chinese people as a nation but also Muslims as a community. The articles had much to offer to both. Ma Hongdao, like many others of his era, saw the success of Turkish revolution as a result of revived national spirit. But how did Gökalp formulate the "nation"? Gökalp made his notion clear in "What Is Turkism?," translated into Chinese by Ma Hongdao. According to Gökalp, "since there is no relationship between racial and social characteristics, there can be no relationship between race and nationality, which is the source of social characteristics."[50] He viewed the nation as "the most developed social group [and] society rests on social solidarity, and the highest form of solidarity is that based on common language and culture; and on cognitive and affective norms."[51] Thus education and upbringing take on central importance as the originator of a common language and culture community.

Ma Hongdao was a firm believer in the idea of the Chinese nation (*Zhonghua minzu*), united by a common spirit against imperialists and domestic reactionaries, and not divided along ethnic lines. Like many other Chinese Muslim intellectuals who followed Turkish modernization as a guide, he supported the idea of the Hui as a

---

[49] Ma Hongdao, trans., "Zhengzhi de Tuerqi zhuyi" [Political Turkism], *Zhengdao* 4 (1934): 8–13.

[50] Parla, *Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp*, 35.

[51] Parla, *Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp*, 36.

religious community but not an ethnic community within the Chinese nation. Therefore, following Ziya Gökalp, he believed that it was urgent for China to develop a Chinese cultural spirit that would strengthen the people's bonds as a nation. However, how Gökalp defined common culture proved somehow problematic in the Chinese context.

Gökalp defined culture as common language, religion, emotions, ideals, morality, and aesthetic feeling.[52] For Gökalp, Islam was, therefore, an inalienable part of Turkish culture. It was one of the strongest bonds that united the peoples of Turkey. Ma Hongdao highlighted Gökalp's emphasis on religion in his translations by adding the word "Islam" in parenthesis as an explanatory note to the words "Turkish spirit," used by Gökalp, making it clear to the Chinese reader that the source of the Turkish spirit was Islam.

Ma Hongdao was a member of a Muslim community in a majority non-Muslim Chinese nation. The message he presented to his readers by his emphasis on Islam as the core element of the Turkish nation is understandable when we consider his Muslim audience. Like almost all Chinese Muslim intellectuals of his era, Ma extolled Islamic spirit as the basis of Muslim solidarity in China. However, an exaggerated emphasis on cultural unity, especially one based on religious spirit, had the risk of endangering the Muslim cultural autonomy that Chinese Muslim intellectuals had been struggling so jealously to preserve. I argue that what made Ma Hongdao's espousal of Ziya Gökalp's ideas on cultural nationalism possible was his attachment to the idea of ethical Islam. Gökalp's interpretation of Islam was in line with Ma Hongdao's. Ma Hongdao was the editor of *Zhengdao*, a reformist journal that placed a strong emphasis on Islam as an ethical normative system. Like Gökalp, the Ma brothers and the contributors to *Zhengdao*

---

[52] Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, 16–23.

were interested in the social function of Islam, not in its theology. The ethical discourse of Islam also encompassed many universal ideals, like equality, justice, and freedom. So it is not surprising to see that Ma Hongdao, like many other Chinese intellectuals, believed in the shared ethical system of Confucianism and Islam. This idea was well articulated in articles titled "Using the Ancient Chinese Culture to Do [Promote] the Islamic Movement in China,"[53] by Ding Zhengxi, and "Preserving the Ancient Culture,"[54] by Ma Fuxiang. Ding Zhengxi was a member of Xidaotang (西道堂) of Gansu, a Muslim community well known for its fusion of Confucian ethics with Islam. He theorized that Islam and Confucianism both centered on the idea of the mean (*zhongyong* 中庸) as both occupied a middle position between spirituality and materialism, conforming to the reality of human beings. Ding believed that it was Han *Kitab* scholars who first expanded the potential of Islam in China by incorporating China's ancient culture into Islamic theology and metaphysics. He advised the Muslim activists of his time to adopt an ethical-religious attitude that would enable Islam and ancient Chinese Confucian culture to coalesce into one.[55]

Ma Fuxiang (1876–1932), a powerful Muslim warlord from northwest China who became an ally of Chiang Kai-shek in his later years, submitted a proposal to the government about the necessity of making ancient Chinese culture the standard of

---

[53] Ding Zhengxi, "Yong Zhongguo guyou de wenhua zuo Zhongguo Huijiao yundong" [Using the ancient Chinese culture to do [promote] the Islamic movement in China], *Tujue* 2, no. 6 (1935): 6–8.

[54] Ma Fuxiang, "Baochi wo guyou de wenhua" [Preserving our ancient culture], *Yuehua* 3, no. 15 (1931): 3.

[55] Ding, "Yong Zhongguo guyou de wenhua," 7.

government. This proposal was published in *Yuehua*, the most influential and the longest-lasting journal of Chinese Muslims, which was also sponsored by Ma Fuxiang. He also published Han *Kitab* scholarship for contemporary readers. As this proposal makes clear, his intellectual trajectory shows us that he believed deeply in the shared elements of Islam and ancient Chinese culture.

Ma Fuxiang, in his proposal, referred to Sun Yat-sen, who talked about the importance of preserving ancient ethical principles—which he listed as filial piety, benevolence, trustworthiness and righteousness, and peace (*zhongxiao* 忠孝, *renai* 仁愛, *xinyi* 信義, and *heping* 和平)—to rescue the nation. Ma criticized the iconoclastic nature of the New Culture Movement for its "unfilial" and "shameless" attitudes. He proposed that the great elements of ancient ethical teaching should be preserved while backward elements should be discarded. He also suggested that the ancient ethical teachings should be the philosophical basis of governance and the center of educational material. Unless this was realized, it would not be possible to guarantee national survival, independence, and revival.[56] His proposal was, indeed, very reminiscent of the New Life Movement of Chiang Kai-shek, which would be initiated a few years later.

The New Life Movement was highly selective regarding both the native values to be revived and contemporary modern values to be emulated by the Chinese. The New Life ideologues singled out four elements as "representatives of the traditional value system"[57]—*li* 禮 (ritual or decorum), *yi* 義 (rightness or duty), *lian* 廉 (integrity or

[56] Ma, "Baochi guyou de wenhua," 3.

[57] Arif Dirlik, "The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counterrevolution," *Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (1975): 964.

honesty), and *chi* 恥 (sense of shame)—and reinterpreted them in accordance with the

"changing times and circumstances."[58] Since these principles were ethical and behavioral

norms, they were perfectly suitable to different belief systems. This flexibility and

broadness of New Life principles led Chinese Muslim intellectuals to espouse the ideals

of the movement, and the journals of the era were full of statements illustrating the

overlap between Islamic and native Chinese values propagated by the Nationalist Party.

So for Chinese Muslim intellectuals like the Ma brothers, there was no risk to their

identity as Muslims in their calls for the revival of Chinese national spirit. Cultural and

spiritual unity was perfectly possible in China among peoples of different religious

backgrounds. For this reason, when the New Life Movement was initiated a few years

later, Muslims had no problem in reconciling the New Life principles with Islam.

Turkey as a Model of Top-Down Modernization

In the middle of the 1930s, Turkish modernization gained a new significance in

the eyes of state elites. The Turkish model offered an opportunity to the state, which was

anxious about the loyalty of Chinese Muslims, to inculcate in them obedience to the

nation-state. Turkey indeed offered an interpretation of Islam in which obedience to the

state became one of the essential tenets of Islam. He Yaozu, a prominent general under

Chiang Kai-shek who served as the ambassador of China in Ankara between 1934 and

1936, played an important role in drawing the attention of Muslims to Turkey—this time

as the model of radical statism and top-down modernization. He gave speeches on several

---

[58] Dirlik, "Ideological Foundations," 965.

occasions to Chinese Muslims, introducing Turkey from the perspective of the Chinese

state. Many of his speeches and articles were published in Chinese Muslim journals.

One central concern of He Yaozu was pan-Islamism. He was a crucial actor in

directing the attention of GMD officials to the pan-Islamist sentiments prevalent among

the Chinese Muslims. For the majority of Chinese Muslim intellectuals, pan-Islamism

was nothing more than a form of religious bonding that did not conflict with state

interests. On the contrary, it was seen as an anti-imperialist Muslim solidarity, in the

service of any country threatened by imperialism, and therefore it was seen as being in

the best interest of China to give its support to pan-Islamist solidarity.[59] The Japanese

strategy to cement pan-Islamism among Muslims as a challenge to the Chinese state,

however, alarmed the Chinese rulers. Indeed, despite the anti-Japanese calls of prominent

Chinese Muslim intellectuals, the concern of the ruling GMD elite was not totally

baseless. There were many Chinese Muslims recruited to the cause of the Japanese. One

such important figure was Tang Yichen, who led four other Chinese Muslims from

Beijing to go on a Japanese-sponsored Hajj in 1938 to recruit Muslims to the cause of

Japanese pan-Asianism.[60]

One outside observer who visited the Far East extensively was the Ahmadi

intellectual Sayed Maqbool Ahmed, who suggested that loyalty to Islam could at crucial

---

[59] The Chinese Muslims who wrote extensively on pan-Islamism often imagined it as a religious bonding of Muslims as brothers. Their communications with the organizers of caliphate conferences in Cairo and Mecca also show that they imagined the future of pan-Islamism as a religious institution that would in no way surpass state interests. In none of the writings did they show any aspiration for a unified Muslim state that would put them in open conflict with their non-Muslim rulers.

[60] Kelly Anne Hammond, "The Conundrum of Collaboration: Japanese Involvement with Muslims in North China, 1931–1945" (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2015).

moments supersede the interests of their identity as Chinese. Maqbool Ahmed first

recounted how Chinese Muslims fought against the Japanese, asserting that the Muslim

generals posed the greatest challenge to the Japanese army in Manchuria. He later related

the experience of a Japanese war captive in the hands of Chinese Muslims. This incident

demonstrated to Ahmed how fragile their relation to the Chinese state was. He wrote:

> One Japanese military officer, who had just returned from the war in Manchuria, and whom I met in Tokyo, a major in a crack regiment of Japan, saved his life from the hands of Chinese, when he was captured by bandits, by turning Muslim. He was so much impressed with the kindness shown to him by Chinese Muslims when they were assured of his conversion to Islam, in contrast to the brutalities inflicted on him by his captors, that though his conversion was not then genuine, he had decided to remain Muslim and retain his name, Hassan, so I think, if any Japanese go to Manchuria as Muslims, they will find a Chinese Muslim waiting to welcome them.[61]

He Yaozu was, thus, writing in a period when pan-Islamism could have had

devastating consequences in China. In a memo He Yaozu sent to Chiang Kai-shek, he

expressed his concern as to how the leading Chinese Muslim journal *Yuehua* and the

school established by the same circle of Chinese Muslims, the Chengda Normal School,

held a pan-Islamist discourse and how "much of the messages of their propaganda and

education violate the interest of the nation. . . . They fell into the evil plot of the Japanese

and established close contacts with Muslims in the northeast."[62] The concern grew to the

point that one of the leading sponsors of the school, Ma Hongkui, the Muslim warlord of

Ningxia, accused Chengda of acting like an embassy. He wrote:

> Currently Hongkui has important military and political responsibilities, and this does not dare to agree with such practice [of the school]. Yesterday I sent a letter

---

[61] Sayed Maqbool Ahmed, "Prospects of Islam in the Far East," *Islamic Review* 22, no. 9 (September 1934): 328–29.

[62] Mao Yufeng, "Sino-Muslims in Chinese State Building, 1906–1956," (PhD diss., George Washington University, 2007), 98.

to headmaster Tang Kesan, seriously asking him to educate students according to [the school's] original mission and with Arabic and Chinese religious texts, to stop activities outside Chengda, and to abolish all publications other than teaching-related materials. If Chengda corrects its past mistakes, Hongkui will continue to take the responsibility [of being director of the board]. . . . Otherwise, I will sever my relationship with the school.[63]

He Yaozu believed that Turkey as a purely nationalist country divorced of any supra-nationalist claim was a perfect model to lead Chinese Muslims to a new understanding of Islam in which national sentiments had priority over religious sentiments. He travelled among Muslims and gave speeches introducing Turkey. He identified Kemal as a role model and praised him for not falling into the same pan-Islamist trap as that which undid his predecessors, the Young Turks. For He, pan-Islamism provided the imperialists with the pretext of intervening in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire on behalf of its non-Muslim subjects. He also asserted that pan-Islamism was a stillborn project because it ignored the racial and sectarian elements within the Muslim community. He argued that Kemal was aware of the fact that every Muslim nation pursued its own national interests, which made an Islamic *datong* (great unity) impossible. Kemal, according to He, took these facts into consideration and united the people of Turkey under the principle of nationalism (*minzu*) as he replaced religious consciousness with national consciousness.[64]

In order not to alienate his Muslim audience, however, He Yaozu made a strategic move and argued that Kemal's nationalism did not pit him against Islam. Very similarly to the account Ma Hongdao offered, he expressed his belief that Kemal rejuvenated the

[63] Ibid.

[64] He Yaozu, "Tuerqi zhi zongjiao yu Zhongguo Huijiao qingnian" [The religion of Turkey and Chinese Muslim youth], *Huijiao qingnian yuebao* 1, no. 7–8 (1936): 7–9. The same paper was also published in *Chenxi* 2, no. 10 (1936).

Turkish people's Islamic spirit during the war for independence. Yet, according to He, Kemal knew that religion was safe only if it did not eclipse the nation. So, along lines very similar to Ma Hongdao, He Yaozu also openly called for the necessity of nationalizing Islam (*zongjiao de guozuhua* 宗教的國族化).[65] He contradicted the recurrent argument of many reformist Chinese Muslims that Islam was a religion encompassing all aspects of life, and he instead argued that a national Islam would primarily be a matter of private life, not going beyond the borders of spirituality. Islam, like all other religions, was meant to relieve the heart and pacify the world. For He, since the ultimate purpose of the state was no different from the purpose of religion—the pacification of the world—the religious and national ideals of a person could not contradict each other. Religion should thus be seen as a virtue (*meide* 美德) in the service of society and country. He idealized Chinese Muslims who sacrificed their lives for the cause of the nation: men such as Chang Yuchun, the general of Ming emperor Zhu Yuanzhang, and An Dexin, a Hui sergeant who sacrificed himself fighting against the Japanese in 1933.[66]

At first glance, He Yaozu's ideas about the nationalization of Islam seemingly replicated the thought of Ma Hongdao, who was an ardent advocate of the Turkish model. He Yaozu, however, had much more peculiar suggestions. He advised Chinese Muslims to transform Islam into a deistic spirituality, which would be in absolute conformity with Confucianism. Viewing the Prophet Muhammad as an Arab hero, he urged Chinese Muslims to replace their devotion to Muhammad with their devotion to Chinese heroes.

---

[65] He Yaozu, "Tuerqi zhi zongjiao," *Chenxi* 2, no. 1 (1936): 3.

[66] Ibid., 3–4.

He once again directed the attention of his Muslim audience to the Turkish case, but this time it was to the Kemalist ideologues who openly dedicated themselves to transforming Kemalism into a religion meant to replace Islam by generating a sacrosanct language to surround it—rather than nationalizing and subduing Islam to the state as Ziya Gökalp advocated. He Yaozu served in Turkey when increasing numbers of elites began to depict Kemalism as a religion.[67] He related a conversation he had with a school director in Turkey, who told He, "We believe in God, but this does not necessarily mean that we believe in Muhammad because Muhammad was an Arab. He was a hero who saved Arabs. He does not have any relation to the Turks. Turkey's savior is Atatürk. He is the Muhammad of the Turks."[68] He Yaozu eventually asked Chinese Muslims to follow the example of the Turks. He assigned Sun Yat-sen a sacred space, and he asked Chinese people, Muslim and non-Muslim alike, to worship (*chongbai* 崇拜) Sun and raise his doctrine, the Three Principles of the People, to the level of the Quran.[69]

---

[67] A good example of Kemalist religiosity can be seen in part of a poem by a Republican People's Party deputy, Kemalettin Kamu: "Let the Arab possess Kaaba. Cankaya is sufficient for us." The anti-Kemalist populist discourse still refers to the poem frequently to "demonstrate" that Kemalism meant to stamp Islam out of the hearts of the Turkish people. The radical Kemalists, on the other hand, dropped their claim that Kemalism could be conceptualized as a religious system, but they continue to use a "sacred" language to express their devotion to Kemalism. For instance, when the current president moved the presidential palace out of Çankaya, the Kemalists reacted severely, believing that this was an anti-republican move and was meant to eradicate Kemal's vestiges on modern Turkey. For a brief analysis of Kemalist religiosity, see M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, "The Historical Roots of Kemalism," in *Democracy, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey*, ed. Ahmet T. Kuru and Alfred Stepan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 44–45.

[68] He, "Tuerqi zhi zongjiao," 3.

[69] He, "Tuerqi zhi zongjiao," 4–5. Also see He Yaozu, "Tuerqi zhi jianshe yu Sanmin Zhuyi" [The construction of Turkey and the Three Principles of the People], *Huijiao Qingnian yuebao* 1, no. 7–8 (1936): 11–16.

He Yaozu's speech of 1936 reflected the newly emerging GMD ideology, as

Chiang Kai-shek eliminated his political rivals and ultimately adopted a one-party

presidential system in 1936. Communists and liberals alike accused the GMD regime of

assuming a fascistic character. Several leading scholars also called attention to the

Society of Practice of the Three Principles of People (sanmin zhuyi lixing she 三民主義

力行社), known in the English-language literature as the Blue Shirts—a secret society

within the GMD organized by the graduates of Whampoa Military Academy in response

to Japanese invasions—and the New Culture Movement as two conspicuous cases

showing the fascist character of the regime.[70] In fact, Chiang Kai-shek made no secret of

his appreciation for Europe's fascist regimes in Germany and Italy as successful models

of development. He also invited military advisors from Germany to guide him in the

reorganization of the party and betterment of the state machinery.[71]

However, several other scholars questioned the depiction of Chiang's regime as

fascist. They rather viewed it as a version of developmental nationalism.[72] Maria Hsia

Chang, for instance, argued that "when Chiang sought instruction from the National

Socialists, he was not concerned with information about the ideology of National

Socialism but with how Hitler had succeeded in maintaining 'strict discipline among

---

[70] Eastman, *Abortive Revolution*, chapter 2.

[71] William C. Kirby, *Germany and Republican China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984).

[72] Maria Hsia Chang, *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society: Fascism and Developmental Nationalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); A. James Gregor, *A Place in the Sun: Marxism and Fascism in China's Long Revolution* (Oxford: Westview Press, 2000).

[party] followers.'"[73] The fascist regimes were good models because they were efficient not only in organizing and disciplining society but also in accomplishing developmental projects. Chiang, by following the path of fascist regimes, was hoping to respond not only to the developmental crises of China but also to the legitimacy crises of the regime, which arose due to "the failure of party rule, the community insurgency, the challenge of the regional forces, liberal opposition, and student activism."[74] He was hoping to revive the nation under the leadership of his party. The fascist model would also help him collapse the party and the state into one. Chiang was thus solely interested in its state machinery and ignored the fact that social revolutionary forces, which mobilized the middle class and released the unrestrained energy of the masses, sowed the seeds of fascism in Europe. The New Life Movement, which is often depicted as an important marker of the fascistic character of Chiang's regime, was on the contrary a "carefully orchestrated, controlled affair."[75]

It was for this very reason Chiang Kai-shek listed the Kemalist Turkey, a model of "controlled" developmental nationalism, alongside fascist Germany and Italy as a successful model. It was even not uncommon to see Soviet Russia being praised in the pages of *Shehui xinwen* (社會新聞), the mouthpiece of the Blue Shirts Society, with the reservation that they "commended the Bolsheviks for their construction of a strong state and economy, [but] resolutely opposed the Bolshevik ideology."[76] These regimes

---

[73] Chang, *Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, 26.

[74] Edmund S. K. Fung, *In Search of Chinese Democracy: Civil Opposition in Nationalist China. 1929–1949* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 61.

[75] Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, 174–75.

[76] This is referred to in Chang, *Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, 26.

obviously were grouped together not because of their regime types but rather because of "apparent similarities of rigid government control, planned economic growth,"[77] speed of industrialization, and creation of a harmonious nation.

In the meantime, a growing number of prominent intellectuals began to advocate for a new form of dictatorial rule as a remedy for China's problems. Their voices gradually became louder as democrats, including arch-liberals like Hu Shi, softened their critical tone toward the GMD due to the escalation of war with Japan. Very much like Chiang, these pro-authoritarian Chinese intellectuals took an interest in efficient and powerful models throughout the world. An important figure among them was Jiang Tingfu, a Columbia-educated history professor at Tsinghua University. He argued, "We want to get things done. We want to build roads, control rivers, construct iron foundries, build more and better schools. We shall support a person who gets things done; we shall idolize him."[78] In a widely discussed article, Jiang analyzed the German, Italian, Turkish, and Soviet models, which he saw as good models of efficiency, discipline, organization, dynamism, and speed.[79]

Qian Duansheng, a political scientist with a PhD from Harvard University, in a renowned article entitled "Democracy? Dictatorship?," disqualified democratic regimes as inefficient because their capacity for prompt action was restrained by party competition and class conflicts. Instead, he argued for the necessity of a command economy under a dictatorial system for China, especially in an era of growing global

---

[77] Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, 153.

[78] Kirby, *Germany and Republican China,* 156.

[79] Jiang Tingfu, "Zhongguo de jindaihua wenti" [China's modernization question], *Duli pinglun*, no. 225 (1936): 9–12.

economic crises. Like Jiang Tingfu, he compared the Turkish model with three other models—Germany, Italy, and Soviet Russia—in an attempt to demonstrate that the totalitarian regimes had performed well economically and politically.[80]

Qian Duansheng appreciated the "transformative power of dictatorial regimes" as he did not have any trust in the "unwilling," "uneducated," "conservative" masses. Qian Duansheng, for example, stated that Turkey was a democracy only on paper. It was, Qian observed, a dictatorial system because only the revolutionary party of Kemal was allowed to participate in the elections. This meant that the National Assembly of Turkey was only a tool (*gongju* 工具) in the hands of Kemal. But according to Qian, Kemal deserved this power because it was Kemal who liberated Turkey, elevated Turkish culture, developed education, eliminated superstition, liberated women, and improved transportation in less then a decade. If there were no dictator, he claimed, these revolutionary tasks would either have been delayed or would not have been realized at all.[81]

Jiang likewise acknowledged his belief in the necessity of top-down reform. He argued that China, Turkey, Russia, and Japan were similar because any modernization (*jindaihua* 近代化) and creation (*chuangzao* 创造) was accomplished by a small minority[82] in all four cases. He wrote:

> The experiences of these four countries crucially have common elements. Modernization in all four was top-down. In Russia, the initiator of modernization

---

[80] Qian Duansheng, "Minzhu zhengzhi hu? Jiquan guojia hu?" [Democracy? Dictatorship?], *Dongfang zazhi* 31, no. 1 (January 1, 1934): 21. He had some reservations for Germany.

[81] Qian, "Minzhu zhengzhi hu?," 20–21.

[82] Both Qian and Jiang did not necessarily imagine a dictatorship as the rule of one man. They rather saw it as a coalition of educated elites.

was Peter the Great. In Japan, the initiator of modernization was the politicians who were of a minority elite class. In China, the initiator of modernization was the influential officials of the Tongzhi period. In Turkey, the initiator of modernization was a small group of intellectuals who studied in Western Europe. In all these countries, the masses opposed modernization. It is not that the masses of these countries are especially conservative when compared with those of others. No matter which country, the masses are conservative. Creation is the task of a minority. During the Xinhai revolution, if [the people of] the country had the opportunity to vote on issues related to the state system, 80% to 90% of the people would have voted for the emperor. If today people are asked to vote if they want the construction of motorways, they will vote against the motorways. . . . *If Kemal followed the popular will, the liberation of women would not be accomplished*.[83] We, who studied in the Western cultural zone, unconsciously received the philosophy of the popular will (*minyi zhexue* 民意哲學) of that zone. We forgot that the circumstances of our place are totally different. . . . Renewal in Turkey before the revolution was very similar to the reforms during the last years of the Qing: these reforms were half-hearted. Accomplishments were few. The cost was too big. The whole country almost vanished due to this type of reform. It was when Kemal used a strict organization to unify political power, and used this political authority to eliminate opposition (*buzhou bu qi de yundong* 步骤 不齊的 運動), Turkey began to rejuvenate truly.[84]

To achieve such renewal, Jiang Tingfu asserted, the violent use of power can be legitimate when it is for the sake of the people in spite of the people. He argued that China should also unite through the concentration of power in the hands of a minority who would have the power and capacity to apply the measures fiercely (*menglie* 猛烈) if Chinese wanted progress and development.[85]

The transformation of the perception of the Turkish revolution in China also corresponded to the new tide of self-perception prevalent in Turkey during the 1930s. The nationalist discourse highlighting "national will" during the war for independence and the early years of the Republic gradually was replaced by "hero cult." Increasing

---

[83] Emphasis is mine.

[84] Jiang, "Zhongguo de jindaihua wenti," 12–13.

[85] Ibid., 13.

numbers of Kemalist politicians expressed their doubts about the efficiency of liberal

democratic regimes, which in their view only produced a society enraged by power

struggles, egotism, and class warfare. As in China, any emphasis on the provisional

nature of the tutelary regime gradually disappeared. The nationalist elite was determined

to stay in power forever. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, a notable Kemalist Turkish

intellectual, expressed his belief in heroes as history makers:

> Did Napoleon have a single person in the grand army he led who shared his
> dream before he . . . took the fortress in front of him? Or if Muhammad, while he
> suffered the early aches of his prophethood in the Hira mountains, [had] gathered
> and told his friends who were either camel herders or poor caravanners that each
> of them would one day become the governor of a country, or the king of a state,
> would these people have listened to this message, which would have surpassed
> their dreams? This means that some personalities in history from time to time
> offer ideals to humans that are beyond human comprehension.[86]

The emergence of this "hero cult" in Turkey corresponded to new historical

debates then prevalent in Europe, especially Germany. Namely, controversy raged over

the question of whether progress is realized through the masses or through individual

personalities. The early advocates of the "great man theory"—Max Weber, Thomas

Carlyle, Gustave Le Bon, and Friedrich Nietzsche—were often revisited to provide

support for one-man regimes all over the world. In Germany, Hitler often celebrated

Kemal Atatürk as a "volcanic personality," "a world historical example," the proof that

history was made by great men and not social conditions.[87]

Nor was the advocacy of neo-dictatorial regimes unique to developing nations in

the mid-1930s, as the Great Depression led many to a search for alternative models. At

---

[86] Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Suyu Arayan Adam* (Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1971), 344.

[87] Stefan Ihrig, *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014): 148.

that time, fascism also lacked the connotations it came to have after World War II. Even in the liberal West, there were many, including politicians like Winston Churchill or Nobel Prize winners like George Bernard Shaw, who expressed appreciation of some particular characteristics of fascist regimes, for doing things efficiently.[88] In a similar vein, the novelist H. G. Wells "called upon students at Oxford to become 'liberal fascisti,' and enlightened Nazis."[89]

In an era when the appreciation of fascism was prevalent, the intellectuals both in Turkey and in China who were inspired by fascist organizational models nonetheless expressed reluctance at being the perpetual consumers of the fascist model. Instead, they hoped to create their own national models that would meet their special circumstances. Both in China and Turkey, intellectuals inspired by fascism saw fascism as an ideology that arose as a reaction to the class opposition generated by the capitalist liberal system. However, as both Sun Yat-sen and Kemal Atatürk insisted, there were no conflicting classes in their countries. The strategy therefore had to be the prevention of the emergence of classes and the constitution of a solidarist society, where different occupational groups would function in harmony.[90]

---

[88] Bernard Shaw's evaluation of "fascism" has been the topic of scholarly interest. See Gareth Griffith, *Socialism and Superior Brains: The Political Thought of Bernard Shaw* (London: Routledge, 1993), 241–77.

[89] Philip Coupland, "H. G. Wells's 'Liberal Fascism,'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 4 (October 2000): 541–58.

[90] Sun Yat-sen for instance argued that the Marxist methodology was not applicable to China because there were no classes in China, only poor people. The inequality of wealth only existed between the poor and the extremely poor, not between the rich and the poor. Marxist ideas were only appropriate to those societies where wealth was too unevenly distributed. But because in China the real problem was poverty, which was the consequence of underproduction, the solution was to develop industry on the one hand and, on the other, to apply preventive methods to check beforehand the growth of large

Turkish and Chinese intellectuals who were inspired by fascist regimes were, on the other hand, critical of the imperialist and revisionist ambitions of Germany and Italy. In 1933, an article in *Qiantu* (前途), the journal of the Blue Shirts Society, "expressed the outrage the Chinese felt at being identified as inferiors by the Germans, who persisted in their 'imperialist disposition' to calumniate the Chinese."[91] Turkish intellectuals, who were inspired by the efficient fascist and communist systems, likewise held some reservations. For instance, the intellectuals of *Kadro*,[92] a journal with the mission of providing a substantial ideological basis for Kemalism, argued that Turkish revolutionary ideology was differentiated from both communism and fascism by its anti-imperialist nationalism. Kemalism was depicted as an ideology that mobilized the whole nation, undisturbed by conflicting class interests. The ultimate purpose of Kemalist nationalism was the liberation of the nation from colonial oppression. *Kadro* writers in that sense idealized Turkish revolutionary ideology and imagined Turkish developmental nationalism as a better model that went beyond what communism and fascism could offer

---

private capital and vast inequality in society. See Sun Yat-sen, *Sun Yat-sen: His Political and Social Ideals; A Source Book*, ed. and trans. Leonard Shihlien Hsü (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1933), 436–38. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk also denied the existence of classes in Turkey and emphasized the solidarity of different occupational groups. See Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1997), 2:116.

[91] Chang, *Chinese Blue Shirt Society*, 22.

[92] In the 1930s, *Kadro* authors, very much like their Chinese counterparts, analyzed Italian, German, and Russian models. They often expressed their admiration for these systems, but they also often added the qualification that the circumstances of Turkey were different from those other systems. For example, the series of Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, "Ankara Moskova Roma" [Ankara, Moscow and Rome], *Kadro* 1, no. 6, 7,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16 (1932).

to other colonized and semi-colonized nations. A leading *Kadro* intellectual, Burhan

Asaf, once wrote:

> [Our revolution] can set a model for the nations who are in the revolutionary
> process of national liberation such as the eastern countries of China, India, Egypt,
> and Iran, the Balkans, and Central Europe. For fifteen years the Moscow
> revolution has been guiding the working class to fight for class war and for the
> class outside of Russia. . . . Fascists are similar. . . . They think that the whole
> world will become fascist in ten years. . . . We have to write one hundred books
> about [our] revolution. These should be translated into different languages. . . .
> The Chinese who are fighting in Shanghai for their freedom should hear the voice
> of Turkish revolution as a soldier's greeting. . . . The Turk should this time teach
> the path to freedom.[93]

Burhan Asaf would certainly have been surprised had he known that a

considerable number of Chinese intellectuals and politicians—including Chiang Kai-

shek[94]—were already reading books on the Turkish nationalist model in Chinese. He

even once considered going to Turkey to examine the revolution there. He did not, but

Hu Hanmin, who was the head of the Legislative Yuan, visited Turkey in 1928 and

observed how the unity of party and state in Turkey produced "efficient" results.[95]

---

[93] Burhan Asaf, "İnkilābımızın sesi" [The voice of our revolution], *Kadro* 1, no. 11 (1932): 36–37.

[94] One important reference book for Chiang Kai-shek was *Tuerqi geming shi* 土耳其革命史 [The history of Turkish revolution]. He used to read this book on his trips in the car. See Wang Qisheng, "Jiang Jieshi de yuedu shi" [The reading history of Chiang Kai-shek], *Zhongguo tushu pinglun* 4 (2011): 26. The author of the book is not mentioned. There are two books published under the same title during the Republican period in China. One is the translation of Arnold Toynbee and Kirkwood's *Turkey*. Cheng Zhongxing, trans., *Tuerqi geming shi* [History of the Turkish revolution] (Shanghai: Minzhi shuju, 1928); also see Liu Keshu, *Tueqi geming shi* [History of the Turkish revolution] (Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshu guan, 1929).

[95] In the following article, Hu Hanmin shared his observations. Hu Hanmin and Zhang Zhenzhi, "Kaocha xin Tuerqi de jingguo he ganxiang" [Investigating the course of new Turkey and reflections], *Xin Yaxiya* 1, no. 1 (1930): 29–32. Hu Hanmin was an ardent supporter of one-party rule. However, he was critical of how Chiang Kai-shek wanted to consolidate all powers in his own hands. In an effort to criticize Chiang Kai-shek's attempts to consolidate one-man rule, he pointed to Kemal Atatürk who, according to Hu,

Chinese Muslims and State Authority

Democracy, on the other hand, was not a theme that Republican-era Chinese

Muslim reformist journals covered substantially. The majority of Chinese Muslim

reformists were not so enthusiastic about engaging in debates about the merits of various

political regimes, because their concern was more for their communal rights as

Muslims—defined as either an ethnic group or a religious community—than for

individual rights, as liberal democrats were pursuing. They were ready to welcome any

type of regime that would grant the Muslim community the ethno-religious autonomy

they desired.[96]

A few articles that appeared in Chinese Muslim journals about democracy,

however, played a role in transmitting the fledgling reformist Muslim discourse on the

prospects of democracy in Muslim societies. In these articles, the Chinese Muslim

authors put forward the notion of the ontological equality of human beings before God as

the principal Quranic notion, which paved the way for a truly democratic regime in Islam.

The prophetic practice was also highlighted to demonstrate how humans were treated

equally during the early days of Islam—no matter their race, language, class, or gender.

Following the arguments of early Muslim liberals, they repeated the idea that, during the

transferred power to civil officials (*wenguan* 文官). He asked Chiang Kai-shek to be the Kemal of China as he argued that it was İsmet İnönü, the prime minister, who managed the affairs of Turkey. To what extent, Kemal was willing to share his power with the "civil officials" is debatable. But Hu's perception and his reference to Turkey once again manifest how Chinese elites used the Turkish example to promote their own cause in China.

[96] Here I limit my discussion to Republican-era reformist journals. There were, for instance, Chinese Muslims who joined the Communist Party early on and therefore had a strong ideological stance with respect to the governmental model.

period of the first four caliphs, the early Islamic state was a republic because the caliphs were not appointed but were elected by a council (*shura*).[97]

In these pro-democracy articles, the authors also underlined the right of the commoners to disobey an unjust ruler. In the 1930s, however, the faint emphasis on the righteous rebellion disappeared, only to be revived after the war came to an end. Mirroring the dominant ideological atmosphere in China, more and more Chinese Muslim intellectuals began to highlight the idea of "obedience to authority" by frequently referring to the Quranic verse which states, "O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger, and those charged with authority among you" (Quran 4:59). Chinese Muslims, who often expressed their dissatisfaction with GMD rule in the prewar years, also entered into a period of "voluntary silence" as the war against Japan intensified. The cooperation of some prominent Chinese Muslims with the Japanese, who were looking for the possibility of a Muslim puppet state within China, also made it difficult for Muslims to be critical of GMD policies. Many came to the opinion that during a period of national crisis, every concern other than the fate of the nation would be trivial. For example, Ma Jian, a Chinese Azharite who had expressed his dissatisfaction with GMD policies towards the Muslims of China in his Arabic book, *Islam in China*,[98] published in

---

[97] Ali Muhammad Han, "Yisilan yu minzhi zhuyi" [Islam and the idea of people's government], *Zhongguo Huijiao Xuehui Yuekan* 1, no. 5 (1926). For example in the "Short History of Arabia," the period of the first four caliphs is narrated under the title "The republican period." Xiao Yu "Alabo jianshi," *Zhongguo huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 2 (1926): 43.

[98] Muhammad Makin, *Nazrah jami'ah ila tarikh al-Islam fi al-Sin wa-ahwal al-Muslimin fiha* (Cario: Al Matba'ah al-Salafiyah, 1934), 51. He stated that the GMD rule was attempting to eliminate the light of Islam from the realm of China. He claimed that for Chinese Muslims their religion was above their homeland. They would be loyal to the state as long as what the state demanded was not in conflict with Islam.

Cairo in 1934, became a delegate in the Hajj mission sponsored by the GMD regime to counter the pro-Japanese Chinese Muslim activism during the pilgrimage season of 1938.[99] A second book published in Arabic on Chinese Islam written during the war by a Chinese Azharite, Pang Shiqian,[100] another member of the Hajj delegation, not only expressed appreciation for GMD rule but also included a portrait of Chiang Kai-shek and a foreword by the Chinese ambassador in Cairo.

At the same time, some Chinese Muslim intellectuals began to lay the theological foundations of authoritarianism in Islam, which they discovered in the Ahmadi literature.[101] Ahmadi literature not only legitimized their authoritarian views but also provided them with a strong argument that Muslims were bound to obey their non-Muslim rulers.[102] For instance, Liu Yifu, the Ahmadi-inspired intellectual, translated an article from the Qadiani-Ahmadi journal *The Review of the Religions* for *Yuehua*. According to the article, Islam envisioned a life-term presidential system (*yuanshou* 元首) accompanied by a council (*renmin daibiao guwen tuan* 人民代表顧問團).[103] The article stated that this system, the caliphate, was different from an ordinary dictatorship (*ducai*

---

[99] For an analysis of these missions, see Mao, "Muslim Vision."

[100] Pang, *al-Sin wa-l-islam*.

[101] For the Chinese translation of Muhammad Ali's *Islam: The Religion of Humanity*, see Maulvi Muhammad Ali, *Islam: The Religion of Humanity* (Woking: Unwin Brothers, 193-?), 28–29; *Heping de zongjiao*, 40–45.

[102] It was not the Ahmadis who first proposed the legitimacy of non-Muslim rulers. However, they underlined the idea and strongly deemphasized the idea of righteous rebellion. For an analysis of historical origins of the idea of "obedience to non-Muslim rule," see Sean Oliver-Dee, *Muslim Minorities and Citizenship: Authority, Communities, and Islamic Law* (London: Tauris, 2012).

[103] Liu Yifu, "Yisilan Jiaoyi yu lixiang de zhengzhi zhidu" [The doctrine of Islam and the ideal political system], *Yuehua* 2, no. 10 (1939): 1–2.

獨裁) because the authority of the caliph was restrained to a certain extent by a council of specialized scholars on topics such as science, literature, and theology. The article also claimed that the people entrusted the Muslim caliph with his position due to his moral standing, but it did not clarify how the procedure of his appointment worked.[104]

This idea of an "Islamic presidential system" became prevalent in Chinese Muslim writings in the 1930s. In an article written by a Chengda Normal School student, Jin Diangui, titled "The Political System of Islam," the Islamic model was represented as a presidential system with authoritarian undertones. The article was published in a best-selling book compiled by the prominent scholar Ma Linyi, which included Ma's speeches with an appendix including some of the outstanding student writings. In this article, the author went a step farther and argued that Islam advocated presidential dictatorship (*zongtong ducai* 總統獨裁). He took pains to incorporate the governmental model of Sun Yat-sen—the four powers of the people and five rights of the government—as the mechanism that would restrain the power of the "Muslim dictator." The dictator in this "Islamic model" was to be elected and could be recalled in case of injustice. However, as long as he was a just and a moral ruler, he had the final say, and the people were obliged to obey.[105] This model, in contrast to what Liu Yifu offered, did not envision a life-term

---

[104] Liu Yifu's reference point was the Qadiani branch of Ahmadiyya. This is interesting because the inspirational source of these Chinese Muslim intellectuals was largely the Lahoris and not the Qadianis. Qadianis espoused the ideal of the caliphate—as God-appointed successors of Ghulam Ahmad—and did not make any reference to democracy. They argued that the caliph was appointed by God, as "according to Islam, people who are entrusted with selecting the next caliph are guided by Allah during the selection process." See the Qadiani website, http://islamicfaq.org/islam/index.html.

[105] Jin Diangui, "Yisilan de zhengzhi zhidu" [The political system of Islam], in Ma Linyi, *Yisilan jiao gailun* [The outline of Islam], (Shangwu yinshuguan 1935; repr., 1947), 141–150. Jin Diangui was sent to al-Azhar university in 1933 for higher learning.

presidency. Both models, however, reflected on the one hand the characteristics of the classical theory of the caliphate, where the president functioned as the final spiritual and temporal authority, and on the other hand the central tenets of the authoritarian models, which had by then become a legitimate alternative to liberal democracy.

Sun Yat-sen had always been a source of inspiration for Chinese Muslims. Most of the Chinese Muslim journals announced that spreading the ideals of the Three Principles of the People was one of their most important editorial objectives. Furthermore, their respect for Sun was not reducible to political expediency. His early *minzu* theory appealed to Chinese Muslims because they believed it granted them autonomous rights. Sun was also one of the first to appreciate the revolutionary character of Chinese Muslims. In several venues, Chinese Muslim intellectuals expressed their concern about Chinese nationalist historiography which excluded the Muslim rebellions from the late Qing "revolutionary upheavals," which were by then viewed as the precursors of the *Xinhai* Revolution.[106]

Muslims were not the only group who sought legitimacy through Sun. Sun Yat-sen's intellectual and ideological heritage, however, was ambiguous and very much open to conflicting interpretations. For this reason, his ideas were used simultaneously to provide legitimacy to conflicting circles—including both Chiang Kai-shek and his Communist opponents. It was on account of Sun's potential as a unifier that Chiang Kai-shek made a strategic move to monopolize Sun Yat-sen for the sake of his authoritarian rule. The GMD quickly formed a cult around the personality of Sun. Sun's teachings

---

[106] Mu Youzhen, "Hui luan yu? Geming yu?" [Is it Hui riots? Or revolution?], *Yisilan qingnian 2*, no. 8 (1936): 13–15; Zhang Mu, "Huiluan ji shi geming" [Hui riots are revolutions], *Yisilan qingnian* 3, no. 6–7 (1936).

were invoked in every publication, in every organizational meeting, in every ceremony as the final legitimizing authority. "Ritual worship of Sun became a part of the weekly routine. In 1925, the GMD leaders had passed a resolution requiring each party meeting to begin with the reading of Sun's last will and testament to a standing, reverent audience."[107] During this period, in keeping with the political atmosphere, the genre of Chinese Muslim writings "revealing" the compatibility of Islam and the Three Principles of the People flourished.[108] These articles often depicted the Muslim personality as the epitome of the "new man" that the New Life Movement was meant to create. For instance, Ma Zishen, a notable *ahong*, made a speech at the China Culture Society (*Zhongguo wenhua xuehui* 中國文化學會) and listed the ideas of unity, courage, unswerving determination, obedience, hygiene, and strict adherence to the laws as the main attributes of Muslims, making them the long-awaited citizens of the state.[109]

Although the dominant discourse during the war era was very pro-government, there were still dissident voices raised in Chinese Muslim intellectual venues. For instance, the ritual worship of Sun Yat-sen, which also required bowing before Sun's portrait, alarmed many Muslims, who worried about committing *shirk* (idolatry), the

---

[107] Liping Wang, "Creating a National Symbol: The Sun Yatsen Memorial in Nanjing," *Republican China* 21, no. 2 (April 1996): 48.

[108] For a couple of examples see Heng, " Fengxing san min zhuyi yu xinyang Huijiao" [Pursuing Three Principles of the People and believing in Islam], *Tujue* 4, no. 6 (1937); Ma Zizhen, "Huijiao wenhua yu Sanmin zhuyi" [Islamic culture and Three Principles of the People], *Zhengdao* 4, no. 14–19 (1934); Ma Tianduo, "San min zhuyi yu Huijiao qingnian" [Three Principles of the People and Muslim youth], *Huijiao luntan* 2, no. 9 (1939).

[109] Ma Zizhen, "Ma Zizhen, "Huijiao wenhua yu Sanmin zhuyi" [Islamic culture and Three Principles of the People] *Zhengdao* 4, no. 14–19 (1934): 6–9. Also see Tang Wenyan, "Xin shenghuo yundong yu Huijiao jiaoyi" [New Life Movement and the principles of Islam] *Tujue* 2, no. 7 (1935).

greatest sin in Islam. Bai Chongxi—the powerful Muslim warlord of Guangxi in southwest China, who later allied with Chiang Kai-shek and served as the defense minister (1946–48) of the Republic of China—in a widely publicized article entitled "Chinese Islam and World Islam" devoted a good deal of space to persuading Muslims that ceremony in front of the memorial tablet of Sun, the national father, was nothing close to idolatry. He argued that it was a party ritual, one that should be clearly distinguished from a religious ritual. At the same time, however, he asked people to pay equal attention to both types of rituals. For Bai, religious belief should be compatible with political belief (*zhengzhi xinyang* 政治信仰). He also informed his audience that one of the leading Chinese Muslim organizations, the China Islamic Association to Save the Country, had discussed the issue and ultimately decided Muslims should conduct the ritual ceremony without any concern.[110] Unrest over the issue must have continued, though, as Chinese Muslims decided to direct the question to al-Azhar University. The answer they got from al-Azhar via Pang Shiqian, the president of the Chinese Muslim student delegation at al-Azhar, however, was not to the liking of party officials: the authorities at al-Azhar informed Chinese Muslims that bowing or kowtowing before a portrait was not acceptable in Islam.[111]

Bai, very much like He Yaozu, employed a shared sacrosanct vocabulary to define the religious and political realms. Although he often stated that religious and political beliefs were equally important, his discourse implied that it was religion that had

---

[110] Bai Chongxi, "Zhongguo Huijiao yu Shijie Huijiao" [Chinese Islam and world Islam], *Yuehua* 14, no. 12 (1942): 5–6.

[111] "Xiang Zhongshan yixiang xingli keyi ma?" [Is performing the ritual before the memorial tablet of Zhongshan permissible?], *Yuehua zhoubao*, no. 14 (1947).

to be revisited to guarantee compatibility with politics, not vice versa. In the meantime, within the party there began to be voiced a totalitarian approach, which went so far as to deny any space to traditional religious systems in China. Some GMD members believed that the Three Principles of the People encompassed and even surpassed all good aspects of religions and that therefore there was no need for other religious systems. Deification of Sun Yat-sen had also become part of this new statist discourse, eager to transform political doctrine into religious belief.[112]

This totalitarian approach was ironic in that Sun Yat-sen was himself a devoted Christian, yet this did not stop some from vocalizing their views about the futility of established religions. Several Chinese Muslims were very concerned about the threat this totalitarianism posed to Islam, and so, despite the highly oppressive political environment, they could not help but express their concerns in the journals. For instance, shortly after He Yaozu made his widely publicized speech in which he envisioned the prospects of Islam as a deistic spirituality and limited the role of the Prophet Muhammad to seventh-century Arabia, Mu Yongzhen in 1936 published an article entitled "Is the Sage Muhammad an Arab Hero?,"[113] which reasserted the Prophet's universality. Another article, entitled "Can the Three Principles of the People Replace Religious Belief?,"[114] also expressed how the radical emphasis on the all-encompassing nature of party ideology posed a great danger to the very existence of the Muslim community. The

[112] Ye Renchang, *Wusi yihou de fandui jidujiao yundong: Zhongguo zhengjiao guanxi de jiexi* (Taipei: Jiuda wenhua gufen youxian gongsi, 1992), 114–71.

[113] Mu Yongzhen, "Musheng shi Alabo de yingxiong ma?" [Is the Prophet Muhammad an Arab hero?], *Yisilan qingnian* 3, no. 6–7 (1936).

[114] "Sanmin zhuyi guo neng daiti zongjiao xinyang ma?" [Can the Three Principles of the People replace religious belief?], *Yiguang* 97 (1938).

article was published by the widely circulating *Yiguang* journal, edited by prominent *ahong* Wang Jingzhai. The author, remaining anonymous for understandable reasons, conveyed his conversation with a party member who declared the necessity of making the Three Principles of the People the new religion of the Chinese. The Chinese Muslim author also voiced his concern about the age-old anti-Buddhist arguments, resurrected to serve the new political status quo. He referred to a book—he did not provide any reference—in which the author expressed his antagonism towards religions originating outside of China. Although the author's main target was Buddhism, his enthusiasm about replacing religions of foreign origin with indigenous religious systems threatened Islam as well. The author in question expressed his belief that it was time to replace not only the imported religions but also Confucianism, which he viewed as the ancient religion of China, with the Three Principles of the People. The Chinese Muslim author knew that this was a marginal position in the party. However, he conveyed Muslim discontent at the failure of party officials to silence such views, which threatened the very existence of Islam in China. The author also did not hesitate to play the Communist card against the GMD, by stating the Communist promises for ethnic and religious autonomy. This article, published in 1938, was one of the earliest Chinese Muslim attempts to manipulate the conflict between the Nationalists and the Communists to gain more rights from the Nationalist government.

Conclusion

In the 1920s, Turkey attracted the attention of Chinese nationalists because it was the first country to free itself from the imperialist yoke and establish a modern nation-

state based on popular will. Turkey's revision of unequal treaties and elimination of extraterritorial rights provided Chinese nationalists with the hope of liberation from their "hypo-colonial status." They also perceived the Turkish model as a successful case of modernization. Mustafa Kemal assumed leadership as he discovered the true national spirit and facilitated the realization of the national will. He was in a sense the incarnation of the national spirit. Chinese intellectuals also appreciated the democratic intent and populism of the Turkish state.

In the 1930s, however, the perception of Turkey in China was totally transformed. Increasing numbers of intellectuals, even many educated in the West, were attracted to authoritarian models as a remedy for the political and economic crises of the liberal West. Turkey in the 1930s—along with Germany, Italy, and Soviet Russia—began to feature in Chinese writing as a successful and efficient model of authoritarian modernization. Thus the emphasis shifted from the national will to the determination of this one single man, Kemal, who with a handful of his devotees managed to elevate the economic and political status of Turkey globally by creating a new society from the unwilling and conservative masses.

Many among the Chinese Muslims were deeply skeptical of the ultra-secular path taken by Kemal. The reformist Chinese Muslim intellectuals, however, never hesitated in their belief that Turkish success was a consequence of the Muslim spirit awakened within the body of the Turkish nation. They therefore often wrote pieces that sought to provide Islamic legitimacy to the reforms of Kemal, which would otherwise appear to many as too secular. The reformist Chinese Muslim intellectuals felt honored by the accomplishments of the Turkish nation and often employed it as a case that revealed the

developmental potential of Muslims, not only to Chinese Muslims themselves but also to the Chinese state. The Turkish model, the reformists believed, showed Muslims how to be active participants in secular politics in China.

In the next chapter, I will investigate the influence of Ahmadi ideas in China. An important conduit that transferred Ahmadi thinking into China was *Zhengdao* ("*Justice*," as translated by its editors), the journal of the *Zhuiqiu Society* (The Pursuit Society). The editor of the journal was Ma Hongdao, who studied in Turkey in the 1930s. The attraction of those intellectuals who extolled the Turkish model to Ahmadi ideals was not coincidental. Through their selective reading of the Ahmadi sources, these Chinese Muslim intellectuals highlighted the essential Islamic spirit and deemphasized actual Islamic practices. This type of thinking indeed enabled them to appreciate Turkish modernization as Islamic in spirit.

Chapter 4

The Free Thinkers: The Ahmadi Message in China

In an article published in the very first issue of *Yuehua*, Liu Yifu, one of the founders of the Pursuit Society (*Zhuiqiu Xuehui*), wrote how he was "awakened" to the real meaning and significance of Islam after reading *New Turkey* by Song Shuren, a Han Chinese scholar. This book, he said, gave the answers he had been seeking for many years. Neither the *ahongs* nor the Han Kitab scholars satisfied his thirst, he explained, while the mysterious language of Han Kitab scholarship, which did not seem to offer an Islamic understanding meeting the current problems of Muslims of China, appalled him.[1] He was excited by how Song Shuren introduced the Prophet Muhammad as a "refined man" (*wenya* 溫雅), "thoroughly reflective" (*haochen si moxiang* 好沈思默想), "wholeheartedly pondering about the way" (*yixin sidao* 一心思道), whose "emotions were mature and upright" (*ganqing shulie* 感情熟烈). To no one's surprise, the religion the Prophet Muhammad introduced, Song wrote, exhibits the elegant and noble instinct of humans and maintains peace among them.[2] Liu Yifu published some other articles both in *Yuehua* and *Zhengdao*, in which he made references to such ideas, which are associated with the Ahmadi school of Islam. It is not surprising that Ling Ding was attracted to Ahmadi ideas, as he found a similar description of Islam and its Prophet in Ahmadi sources.

---

[1] Ling Ding, "Gongxian yidian yijian: Gei rexin yu Yisilan jiaoyu pengyou" [Contributing an opinion to friends who are enthusiastic about Islamic education], *Yuehua* 1, no. 1 (1929).

[2] Song, *Xin Tuerqi*, 37.

The Ahmadi influence became very tangible in China between 1925 and 1935 as many books and articles of Ahmadi origin were published. This intellectual interaction is one of the most curious cases of Chinese Muslim reformist discourse. What makes this interaction intriguing is the position and status of Ahmadiyya within the fold of orthodox Islam. From the early days of its inception, a majority of Sunni Muslims—to which Chinese Muslims also belong—declared them to be heretics. They faced not only intellectual suppression and systematic oppression but also political persecution. Their ideas were denounced as heterodox by leading scholars of al-Azhar University, the central religious educational institution located in Cairo. The Azhari Sheikhs ousted students who were affiliated with Ahmadi societies and burned translations of the Quran done by Ahmadi scholars. The political leaders of Pakistan ultimately denied their claim to Muslim identity: in 1974, the first elected Prime Minister of Pakistan, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, forbade Ahmadis to call themselves Muslims by introducing a constitutional amendment. Ten years later, the Ahmadis were also denied the right to call their prayer halls "mosques." Despite this systematic questioning of the legitimacy of Ahmadis, which still continues today, several prominent Chinese Muslim intellectuals adopted their ideas and transferred them to China through translations of major Ahmadi texts and publications in major Chinese Muslim journals. This chapter attempts to understand the reasons that made central Ahmadi ideas appealing to these leading Chinese Muslim intellectuals. How did Ahmadi reformist views enter China? Which Ahmadi ideas gained a foothold in China? I argue that the Chinese Muslims' effort to incorporate some of the central tenets of Ahmadi religious views was a result of their desire to preserve pluralist notions of Islam without falling into the trap of relativism and skepticism. In the Ahmadi

worldview they discovered an alternative Islamic view that legitimated the possibility of peaceful coexistence in a non-Muslim dominated context without abdicating Islamic moral and religious views or falling into spiritual silence. They were concerned with finding "room in a society for divergent values, practices, and beliefs."[3] In short, they sought ways of integrating themselves into China while preserving their distinctions. This would be possible through adapting a tolerant, respectful, and inclusive attitude toward the Other. I argue that Ahmadiyya provided them a "congeries of useful models of respect"[4] and toleration and strategies of integration in a non-Muslim society.

The Ahmadiyya and the Controversy in the Muslim World

In 1881, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835–1908), an Indian Muslim from rural Qadian in the Punjab in colonial India, presented himself as the *mujaddid* (renewer/reformer) of the age, bringing forward the hadith that stated that at the advent of every one hundred years, God will send a man who will *tajdid* (renew/renovate/reform) the religion.[5] Ghulam Ahmad, like other reform-minded scholars at that time, believed that Islam was experiencing conceptual and circumstantial crises,[6] a result of the inability

---

[3] Lenn E. Goodman, *Religious Pluralism and Values in the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 2. The ideas of Goodman on religious pluralism helped me formulate why Ahmadi thinking appealed to Chinese Muslims.

[4] Goodman, *Religious Pluralism*, 4.

[5] Ghulam Ahmad was not the first to claim this title. The title *mujaddid* was given to the Umayyad caliph 'Umar II. Al-Ghazali (1058–1111), the great theologian, was granted the title *muhyi al-din* (renovator of religion). In later times, the followers of Ahmad Sirhindi (1564–1624) also granted him the title "*mujaddid* of second millennium."

[6] Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 89.

of the ulama (religious scholars) to meet the challenges imposed by the dominant discourses centered in Europe. Muslim societies were undergoing dramatic transformation under European colonization. European intellectuals articulated a new idiom that considered earlier forms and social structures to be old, non-rational, and non-modern, and they thereby propagated newer norms of Europe as rational, progressive, and modern. Meanwhile, missionaries directly attacked Islam as being violent, totally irrational, and unable to adapt to the changing needs of contemporary society. In this context, Ghulam Ahmad's reformist project began to unfold and acquire meaning and significance. Like all reformers, Ghulam Ahmad reinterpreted Islamic ideas through his use of the methodology of *ijtihad* (independent and argumentative reasoning) to redefine Islam in the context of the contemporary world. His main purpose was to give Muslims a substantial role in the shaping of this modern world. With this purpose in mind, he became involved in public debates with missionaries as he also "extend[ed] these oral disputations to the realm of print."[7] The effective and extensive use of print media by the Ahmadis was, thus, a consequence of their being part of the "cross-confessional" setting of India where different religious communities, including the revivalist Hindu sects, engaged in polemical debates to prove the veracity of their belief system.

At first Muslim reformers welcomed Ghulam Ahmad, but the mood changed quickly when Ahmad claimed to be the messiah and a prophet who had come to save the world. His claim to prophethood in his later years was considered a theological blow against the "immutable" orthodox idea that Muhammad was the final prophet and that no

---

[7] Iqbal Singh Sevea, "The Ahmadiyya Print Jihad in South and Southeast Asia," in *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*, ed. R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009), 142.

prophet would appear in this world after him. They did not pay attention to the conceptual distinction Ghulam Ahmad made between legislative prophets and non-legislative prophets. Ahmadis accepted the Prophet Muhammad as the seal of the prophets, in the sense that he was the last legislative prophet; they, however, argued that the door for new prophets was always open as the religion was in need of renewal under the guidance of God. The Ahmadis sought legitimacy from Ibn Arabi, who introduced a similar prophetology in his *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya* by categorizing prophets as legislative and non-legislative prophets.[8] Nevertheless, the details of Ahmadi prophetology did not have any significance in the eyes of orthodox scholars of Islam, as they considered Ghulam Ahmad's assumption of the title as a vital blow against Islamic solidarity.

In 1914, a few years after Ghulam Ahmad's death, his movement split into two branches. One remained in Qadian. Belief in the prophethood of Ghulam Ahmad became the central article of faith of the Qadiani branch. The second caliph of the Qadiani community, the son of Ghulam Ahmad, made Qadianis an exclusive community. Anyone who did not profess that Ghulam Ahmad was a prophet would not be considered Muslim because belief in the prophets of God was a major criterion for defining a Muslim, they argued. The second group retreated to Lahore and emphasized Ghulam Ahmad's role as a *mujaddid* (renewer) and the Promised Messiah, and it asserted that Ghulam Ahmad never claimed prophethood. Maulana Muhammad Ali led the Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement. With his degrees in English and law, he produced a vast amount of literature in English and Urdu and strived to bring Ahmadi reformist doctrine back within the fold of

---

[8] Yohanan Friedmann, *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 71–76.

"mainstream Islam." The Lahoris were willing to cooperate with other Muslim reformist circles. This does not necessarily mean that Lahore Ahmadis refuted every claim of Ghulam Ahmad that deviated from "mainstream" understanding. Rather, they attempted to derive legitimacy from well-accepted religious scholars of orthodox Islam by selectively unearthing their marginal comments on the controversial Ahmadi interpretations. But despite the Lahore Ahmadi community's attempts to come closer to "mainstream Islam," their devotion to Ghulam Ahmad made them susceptible in the eyes of majority of Muslims. It was for this reason, when the Pakistani state renounced the Ahmadis, it did not distinguish between Lahoris and Qadianis. Thus Lahoris also had to bear the brunt of persecution.

The Lahore mission followed in the missionary footsteps of the earlier Ahmadi community[9] and spread throughout the world as they also gained a footing in England in 1912 and in other parts of Europe subsequently. The Lahoris established one of the earliest global Muslim missions. No other religious community, including the Qadiani branch of Ahmadiyya, had such a reach in the farthest corners of Asia and Africa.[10] An Indian barrister, Kamal-ud-Din (1870–1932), on the other hand, led the mission in England, centered in a Woking mosque, in Greater London. Ahmadis, specifically the Lahore branch, were the first Muslim movement to organize their mission on a model adopted from Christian missionary societies. They were eager to make their message accessible to everyone, Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Therefore, they established

---

[9] Ghulam Ahmad's followers began to preach in places as distant as Africa, Afghanistan, and the Fiji islands in the early years of the 1900s.

[10] The Qadianis also in time became a global missionary movement, with books, booklets, and websites published in many different languages, including Chinese.

centers in different parts of the world, translated their main sources into the vernacular, and distributed those sources all over the world. In particular, they were the first Muslim reformist movement to use the technologies of print very efficiently. In the religious centers established by the Lahoris, many tracts and religious texts in English were published and were made available to contemporary Muslims. In that sense, the Lahore Ahmadis not only played a critical role in creating new centers of Islamic knowledge—such as London and Berlin—but also made English one of the linguistic currencies of Islam. Thus, new interpretations of Islam had a chance to reach intellectuals who did not know Arabic but were proficient in European languages, especially English.[11] It was mostly through these English-language publications that several prominent Chinese Muslim intellectuals, who were proficient in English but not in Arabic, became connected to the Lahore Ahmadiyya movement.

Chinese Muslims and the Lahore Ahmadi Movement

In the 1920s and early 1930s, two specific journals—*The China Muslim* of the China Muslim Literary Society[12] and the *Zhengdao* (*Justice*) of the Pursuit Society—

---

[11] Abdul Hakim Khan, the first Muslim who translated the Quran into English, in 1905, was a member of the Ahmadi community. The first English-language journals, such as *The Review of Religions* (Qadiani journal), *Islamic Review* (Lahori journal published in London), *The Light* (Lahori journal published in Lahore), and *Islamic Culture* (edited by Pickthall, who was connected to the Woking Mission of the Lahori group) were published either by Ahmadis or by scholars who were connected to the Ahmadi missions in Europe.

[12] As we have seen in the previous chapter, the Chinese Muslim intellectuals occasionally translated material from the Qadiani sources as well. For example the following is a translation from Review of Religions, the Qadiani journal. Liu Yifu, "Yisilan Jiaoyi yu lixiang de zhengzhi zhidu" [The doctrine of Islam and the ideal political system], *Yuehua* 2, no. 10 (1939): 1–2.

published a vast amount of translated materials from the *Islamic Review*, a publication of

the Woking Mission of the Lahore Ahmadiyya Community located in London. They

were also connected to the Ahmadi mission in Hong Kong. Yunus Ahmad Mohideen,

who led the mission in China, also published a Chinese version of Muhammad Ali's Holy

Quran in 1926.[13] The Hong Kong mission also published some other important works of

the Lahore Ahmadi mission and distributed them for free in China.[14] In the early 1930s,

the Pursuit Society also published the translations of several influential books by Lahore

Ahmadis. These include Maulana Muhammad Ali's *Islam: The Religion of Humanity*

(*Heping de zongjiao* 和平的宗教),[15] *The Muslim Prayer Book* (*Musilin de qidao* 穆斯林

的祈禱),[16] and Muhammad Manzur Ilahi's *The Muslim Catechism* (*Da wen* 答文).[17] All

were translated by members of the Pursuit Society. However, many other journals—such

as *Yuehua*, *Tianfang xueli yuekan*, and *Huijiao luntan*—also published Chinese

translations of excerpts from Ahmadi sources.

---

[13] "The Translation of Al-Qur-an into Chinese," *Islamic Review* 14, no.10 (October 1926): 358.

[14] Zhang Bingzhen, trans., *Qingzhen zhi yanjiu* [The study of Islam] (Hongkong: Huijiao congshu, 1926). The original author is Khwaja Kamal-ud-din of the Woking Mission in London.

[15] Maulana Muhammad Ali, *Heping de zongjiao* [The religion of humanity] (Beijing: Qingzhen Shubao She, 1930).

[16] Maulana Muhammad Ali, *Musilin de qidao* [The Muslim prayer book] (Beijing: Qingzhen Shubao, 1930).

[17] Muhammad Manzur Ilahi, *Da wen* [Muslim catechism] (Zhuiqiu Shehui, 193-?).

The China Muslim **and the China Muslim Literary Society**

The China Muslim Literary Society published *The China Muslim* in Shanghai, the

"news capital" of China.[18] The journal was published intermittently between 1926 and

1929, and its editors were Sha Shanyu and Wu Tegong. The biographies of these two

young men help to illuminate the spread of Ahmadi ideas to China. Sha Shanyu (1878–

1969) and Wu Tegong (1886–1961) were born into Muslim families in eastern China,

Nanjing and Shanghai respectively. They were members of a new generation who wrote

about Islam without having any formal religious education. Sha Shanyu and Wu Tegong

were proficient in English, and were unusual in that their knowledge of Islam was a direct

product of English-language sources on Islam. They were both journalists who worked as

editors, writers and translators at *Shenbao* (申報), the first modern Chinese newspaper,

which was established by a British businessman, Ernest Major, in 1872.[19] Wu Tegong, as

a translator, played a very crucial role in introducing new ideas and news from all over

the world. He was responsible for coining Chinese transliterations of some essential

words, such as Bolshevik, Lenin, Hitler, and Nehru, as they are still used in China

today.[20]

Sha Shanyu and Wu Tegong received their elementary education in private

academies of Confucian learning. They continued their education in modern schools. Sha

---

[18] Barbara Mittler, *A Newspaper for China?: Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News Media, 1872–1912* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 361.

[19] Sha Shanyu also worked for *Minbao* 民報 and *Shenzhou Ribao* 神州日報. Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu also worked as reporters for the Reuters News Agency in China.

[20] Ma Lingguo, "Aiguo baoren Wu Tegong" [The patriotic journalist Wu Tegong], *Huizu wenxue* 1 (2007): 48–49.

Shanyu studied English in a missionary school established by missionary Gilbert Reid, for whom he also worked as an assistant. After being expelled from the school for his active role in the anti-American boycott in 1905, he entered the Zhendan Academy as an English teacher. One of the founders of Zhendan Academy was Ma Xiangpo, a Christian Chinese of Jesuit background. When Ma Xiangpo had to leave the academy due to his anti-imperialist discourse, he founded the Fudan Academy in 1905.[21] Wu Tegong would become a student of Fudan Academy in his later years.[22]

Influenced by the revolutionary and modern ideas he read in the pages of *Shenbao*, Wu Tegong initially decided to pursue his education in a new style modern school in 1901. He first attended Nanyang gongxue, the predecessor of Jiaotong University in Shanghai. There he played an instrumental role in one of the earliest student strikes that led to the emergence of patriotic academies during the last years of the Qing. This strike was set off with a seemingly minor affair known as the Ink Bottle Incident. When school administrators penalized two members of the school's fifth grade—one of them being Wu Tegong—for destroying a teacher's bottle of ink, the entire fifth grade began a boycott of all classes. Yet, the troubles at the school had much deeper roots. Many of the students of the fifth grade were upholders of reformist and even revolutionary ideas. For some time they struggled with the school administrators over what they should and should not be allowed to read and debate.

When the students of the fifth grade finally withdrew completely from Nanyang in protest, one of the teachers, the revolutionary educationist Cai Yuanpei, founded the

---

[21] The academy is the predecessor of eminent Fudan University in contemporary China.

[22] Ma Lingguo, "Aiguo baoren Wu Tegong," 45–47.

Patriotic Academy and welcomed the protesting students. Notable revolutionaries other than Cai Yuanpei were among its recruits: the revolutionary Zhang Binglin, educator Huang Yanpei, and anti-Manchu revolutionary Zou Rong were students of the Academy. The organizers of the Academy also held meetings in the Zhang Gardens, which was one of the few places in Shanghai where Chinese protesters could freely assemble, as it was located within the international settlement. Both male and female students at the Academy participated in the public meetings and nationalistic demonstrations both as audiences and speakers.[23] The revolutionary father of Chinese nationalism, Sun Yat-sen, often came to the garden to give speeches in the meetings. By the end of 1903, however, the Patriotic Academy was disbanded because its students organized a large rally to protest the closure of *Subao*, a daily newspaper openly calling for revolution.[24] After the school was closed, Wu Tegong and other patriotic students of the academy transferred to Fudan Academy,[25] founded by Ma Xiangpo. Leading progressive intellectuals and revolutionary activists joined the Fudan academy; Yan Fu, Ceng Shaoqing, Yu Youren, and Shao Lizi made the academy a center of progressive thought and revolutionary activism.

---

[23] Under Cai's supervision, students began organizing for collective action. Their efforts included a male student army, prepared for armed defense of the nation, and a student union, the Chinese Students Alliance, the first of its kind in Shanghai. See Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 37–40.

[24] The Suzhou incident was one of the most important political incidents of the last decade of the Qing. Zhang Binglin, an educator at Patriotic Academy, was also imprisoned for insulting the emperor.

[25] Fudan Academy evolved into Fudan University, one of the premier institutions of higher education in Shanghai.

Within this revolutionary atmosphere of nationalist academies, Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu became active promoters of revolutionary ideas. On the eve of revolution, they organized the Muslim Merchants Corps, a militia constituted of Muslim merchants of Shanghai that played an active role during the revolutionary insurgency.[26] The revolutionary spirit of Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu also led them to pay attention to their own Muslim community in the aftermath of the revolution. They worried that traditional Islam would not be fit to compete within the revolutionary context of modern China. They sought an alternative reading of Islamic sources, which would open a new progressive and modern channel for Muslim society in China. Thus, they became patrons of reformist ideas circulating across borders. Although they had no formal religious education, they became key figures in circulating, translating, and interpreting religious texts. They benefited from the protestantizing effect of print technologies, which enabled Muslim intellectuals to engage in lay interpretations of the religious texts. Although print technologies did not totally undermine the authority of the religious scholars, the vast amount of vernacular translations of scriptures did.[27] In the age of print and steam, intellectuals without formal religious education (such as Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu) became significant figures of religious authority inasmuch as they claimed to "possess an especially intense awareness of the sacred center of social and spiritual values and the

---

[26] Ma, "Aiguo baoren Wu Tegong," 47.

[27] Francis Robinson, "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print," *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1 (1993): 229–51.

ability to reflect and explain valued categories of knowledge,"[28] and they were able to communicate their ideas effectively in different media and contexts.

The Pursuit Society and *Zhengdao*

Around 1927, the Pursuit Society was founded by a group of young Chinese Muslim intellectuals in Beijing. Like the founders of the China Muslim Literary Society in Shanghai, most of the founders of the Society had no formal religious education but were actively concerned about the conditions of Islam both in China and in other parts of the world. They were eager to change the conditions of Muslims in China by means of revolutionary attributes of Islam.[29] The Liu brothers, Liu Boyu and Liu Yifu, who were founders of the Chinese Muslim Zhongcai Primary School, led several enthusiastic young men and established the Pursuit Society. Several members of the society—Ma Hongdao, Ma Mingdao, and Yang Tiaoxin—chose to study in Turkey in the following years: Ma Hongdao, while he was still studying in Turkey, became the chief editor of the journal *Zhengdao*, published by the society. Yang Zhaojun, on the other hand, became one of the preeminent scholars of Turkish studies in China in the People's Republic. Another noteworthy member of the society was Sun Chongyi, who was a student of Beijing Normal University and went on to become an important linguist in China. He provided

---

[28] Dale F. Eickelman, "Clash of Cultures?: Intellectuals, Their Publics, and Islam," in *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, and Communication*, ed. Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Komatsu Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi (New York: Routledge, 2006), 289. Eickelman used this definition in reference to Edward Shils, *The Intellectuals and the Powers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 3.

[29] The idea of revolutionary thinking in Islam was introduced in an article written by Liu Yifu in *Zhengdao*. See Yifu Lingding, "Zhe ye peicheng wei xinxing shili ma?" [Does this deserve to be called the new rising power?], *Zhengdao* 2, no. 2 (1932): 35–39.

assistance to the well-known linguist Li Jinxi in the compilation of a large-scale

dictionary, *Zhongguo Dacidian Bianzuan* 中国大辞典编纂.

Before the publication of the journal *Zhengdao*, the founders of the Pursuit

Society played important roles in the foundation of the journal *Yuehua*. They became key

contributors to the journal, and it is probably due to the influence of intellectuals of the

Pursuit Society, which was affiliated with the Lahore Ahmadis, that several articles from

the Ahmadi sources were published in the *Yuehua* in its early years. The journal

exchanged letters with the official organization of the Lahore Ahmadis, known as the

Lahore Ahmadiyya Movement for Propagation of Islam (Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-

Islam Lahore, or AAII).[30]

These young men, who came together for a single purpose in these years,

followed different tracks in the following years. While some (Ma Mingdao) sided with

the Nationalists and fled with them to Taiwan, others (Liu Yifu) joined the ranks of the

Communists in the 1940s. Still others—Ma Hongdao, Sun Chongyi, and Yang Zhaojun—

adapted to the changing circumstances and found a space for themselves in the

educational institutions of the newly constructed Communist China.

---

[30] "Benshe fu Yindu Ahamadiya jiaohui de yi fen xin" [The response of our society to the Ahmadiyya Religious Society in India], *Yuehua* 3, no. 26 (1931). Another organization that exchanged letters with the Ahmadis was the Islamic Students Association (probably Yisilan qingnian hui). They wrote a letter to the editors of *The Light*, published in Lahore by AAII, and asked them to send them some of the papers their society published, which discussed Islam, other parts of the Muslim world, and Muslim societies. See "Muslim Students in China," *Friends of Moslems* 4, no. 3 (July 1930): 3–4.

The Appeal of Ahmadiyya and Quran Translation in China

The members of the two societies were concerned about the lack of information about Islam among both fellow Muslims and non-Muslims in China. This dearth of trustworthy information about Islam precluded not only the development and progress of Chinese Muslims, making them lag behind their Chinese compatriots, but also the spread of Islam itself. They believed that the responsibility for correcting this problem lay on the shoulders of intellectuals. Raising the social status of Muslims without forsaking the foundational block of their identity could be made possible only by initiating reform in Islam. The editorial preface of *The China Muslim* asserted that reform entailed making the religious prescriptions and texts accessible to everyone; working against superstitions that entered into religion; demonstrating that Islam is a modern, rational, and scientific religion that encouraged progress and peaceful coexistence; eliminating the clash between the new and old teachings of Islam; and reinforcing bonds between Muslims locally and globally.[31]

The urgent task of translating the Quran into Chinese was the recurrent theme that appeared in almost every article written by progressive-minded intellectuals and religious scholars on the issue of reform.[32] They argued that only a Chinese translation of the Quran would reveal the inherent principles of Islam to the Chinese people and rescue them from the chains of *ahong*s, who were stuck in a traditional understanding of Islam

---

[31] "Benbao bianji dagang" [The editorial outline of this journal], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 1 (1926).

[32] Tian Zhen, "Zongjiao rencai yu yijing" [Religious talented persons and translating the Quran], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 2 (1926): 1–9; Da Pusheng, "Zhenxing Huijiao chuyi" [My humble opinion about the revival of Islam], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 2 (1926): 9–14.

with its excessive focus on the trivialities of the rituals. Progressive intellectuals

frequently criticized *ahong*s for not having thorough access to the primary sources of

Islam and for attributing Arabic an excessive sacredness and sublimity. According to the

*ahong*s, the words of the Quran were too mystic and archaic to be understood by ordinary

men; they considered it too difficult to convey in mundane languages the true meaning of

the sacred book revealed in a sacred language. Thus, for the fear of falling into

blasphemy, they refused to translate the Quran. This made the Quran ultimately turn into

a talisman—something that should be recited to avoid calamities, suppress evil, and

surpass death. The reformist intellectuals upheld the call for a return to the original

sources. This would be a difficult task in China because, they complained, religious

education in China prioritized Persian over Arabic. Very few *ahongs* mastered Arabic

and Chinese at the same time. Especially in isolated regions where fear of assimilation

was pronounced, the prejudice of Muslims toward the Chinese language as a tool of

knowledge made it impossible to engage in effective religious education.[33] The

information in the Quran was orally passed down from one generation to the next, and the

lack of thorough religious knowledge or competence in the primary languages led to the

transmission of error because spoken words remained superficial, they argued. In the long

run, this also made the Quran unintelligible for many.[34] Therefore, possessing good

morals and ability to explain the rules of the religious conduct were considered to be

---

[33] Shou Yu (Sha Shanyu), "Fa kan ci" [Preface], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 1 (1926): 5–8. Also see Tian Zhen (Wu Tegong), "Zhenxing Huijiao zhi guanjian" [My humble opinion on reviving Islam], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 1 (1926): 13–16.

[34] They criticized the *ahongs* for translating each word of the sentence in sequence by transposing the Chinese word without changing the Arabic grammatical structure. This made the texts unintelligible, as people could not fathom the general meaning of the text.

sufficient criteria to become an *ahong* in China. This was the reason, they believed, why people fought over fundamentally trivial issues, such as silent *dhikr* (religious chanting) and loud *dhikr*, missing the real purpose of religion: the unity of Muslims. Even worse was the deception of unwitting masses by fake *ahong*s. Many attained a respected position among ignorant people by making superficial religiosity their signboard despite their immoral conduct. They did not give charitably to poor people; they behaved badly and licentiously despite their claim to goodness and mercy. They earned their livelihood by reciting Quran in religious events then asking for charity from poor people. Once the Quran was translated, the reformist intellectuals believed, everyone would have an understanding of the principles of Islam and thus fake *ahong*s would no longer be able to deceive the people.[35] Making the Quran accessible to laymen and enabling them to interpret the primary sources without the intermediary role of *ahong*s thus became an important mission for reformist Chinese Muslims.

They also attracted people's attention to missionary tactics used to penetrate into insular Chinese Muslim communities by distributing flyers and brochures in Arabic script. They were disturbed that missionaries could exploit the scrupulous veneration of Chinese Muslims for anything written in Arabic script in order to spread the Christian message. These missionaries were spreading false notions about Islam, and the uncritical attitude toward scriptural authority made Muslims vulnerable to the manipulations of evangelizing Christians.[36] A Chinese translation of the Quran would enable Muslims to

---

[35] Yifu Ling ding, "Zhe ye peichen wei xinxing shili ma?" [Is this worthy of calling rising new power?], *Zhengdao* 2, no. 2 (1932): 35.

[36] Stefan Henning, "God's Translator: Qu'ran Translation and the Struggle over a Written National Language in 1930s China," *Modern China* 41, no. 6 (2015).

protect themselves against Christian missionaries and combat the false ideas they spread about Islam.[37]

For this purpose, the members of the China Muslim Literary Society undertook the task of translation. Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu collaborated with the well-respected religious scholar Ha Decheng (1888–1943), one of the founders of the China Muslim Literary Society, and began to translate the Quran in 1926. This was indeed the first Muslim attempt of a complete printed Quran translation during the Republican Period.[38] During these years, several non-Muslim Chinese also began to translate the Quran into Chinese. Indeed, the first Chinese translation of the whole Quran was published in 1927 in Beijing. The translator was Li Tiezheng. His version was translated not from the original Arabic but from Kamoto Kenichi's Japanese version with reference to Rodwells's English version. Later, Ji Juemi, a famous scholar of Buddhism, published his

---

[37] *The China Muslim* also reserved some space for those who opposed the idea of translating the Quran. For instance, Zhao Bin pointed to the difficulties of translating the Quran and argued that Islam spread in China despite the lack of a translation, which could be taken as proof that a Quran translation was not necessary. See Zhao Bin, "Gulan jing Han yi zhi shangque: Wo duiyu fanyi jingdian zhi yijian" [The debate on the Chinese translation of the Quran: My opinions on translating the Quran], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 6 (1926): 16–17.

[38] Before the Republican era, Chinese Muslim scholars translated selections from the Quran beginning in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Translations took two forms: first, a parallel transliteration in Chinese characters, to facilitate independent recitation, and second, a commentary on the scripture. In the middle of nineteenth century, Ma Dexin started a translation of the whole Quran. An unfinished version comprised twenty volumes, fifteen of which were later destroyed in a fire. The remaining five volumes were published as *Baoming zhenjing zhijie* [A direct translation of the precious Quran]. See Jin Yijiu, "The Qur'ān in China," *Contributions to Asian Studies* 17 (1982): 100–101. On the other hand, recently Chinese scholars discovered three handwritten copies of a Quran translation, completed in 1912 in Gansu province. The scholars believe that the Quran was translated into Chinese by Sha Zhong and Ma Fulu, two prominent religious scholars. See "Earliest Known Chinese Translation of the Quran Discovered," IslamToday, December 17, 2011, http://en.islamtoday.net/artshow-232-4290.htm.

translation in Shanghai in 1931. His version, titled *Hanyi Gulanjing* 汉譯古蘭經, was sponsored by a British Jew named Silas Hardoon, a well-known tycoon living in Shanghai. Ji Juemi collaborated with Muslim religious scholars Li Yuchen, Xue Ziming, and Fan Kangfu. Chinese Muslims questioned the authenticity of these two translations because the translators were not Muslims. Li Tiezheng's translation, on the other hand, could not capture the strictly monotheistic nature of Islam.[39]

The China Muslim Literary Society felt the need to argue for the lawfulness of translating the Quran because this was a time when debates on the translatability of the Quran were fierce. The debate was ignited by two developments: the Turkish state's attempt to translate the Quran and the opposition of reformist Egyptians to Quran translations. Many, especially those who were proficient in English, welcomed Maulana Muhammad Ali's English translation of the Quran published in 1917. Republican Turkey also formed a committee to initiate a translation project in 1926. Although translations of the Quran were seen as legitimate in the early years of Islam, in later centuries, "under the influence of theological developments, particularly, the doctrine of inimitability, or *ijaz*, of the Quran, the place of Arabic in worship became even stronger."[40] And in the early twentieth century many influential scholars of Islam, including reformist figures like Rashid Rida, argued against the permissibility of translating the Quran. Rida believed that translations could harm the religious and political unity of Muslims. Muhammad Mustafa al-Shakir, in accord with Rida, stated that the Quranic message aims at a

---

[39] Isaac Mason, "The Koran in Chinese," *Friends of Moslems* 6, no. 2 (1932): 20–21.

[40] Gerard Wiegers, "Language and Identity: Pluralism and the Use of Non-Arabic Languages in the Muslim West," in *Pluralism and Identity: Studies in Ritual Behaviour*, ed. Jan Platvoet and Karel van der Toorn (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 304.

religious and political unity, which can only be secured by linguistic unity. He argued

that the Prophet was not only sent to Arabs and His message is universal: thus it clearly

appears that all Muslims have to recite the Quran in Arabic and learn it by heart. For

Shakir, "The connection between the Arabic language and Islam is such that the *ulama*

agree that all Muslims, for the sake of the unity to which God calls them, need to master

Arabic, and that to speak another language than Arabic reprehensible."[41] Literal

translations had also the risk of causing series damage to the roots of the authority of the

ulama. For centuries, religious scholars brought the authority of the past to the learning of

the present by transmitting orthodox interpretations of the Quran. They were aware of the

risk involved in literal translations, which would enable lay people to develop their own

interpretations without having the necessary knowledge of Arabic grammar, linguistic

details, and other religious sciences that help scholars decipher the inherent meaning of

each verse. What was considered to be a risk by religious scholars, however, was a great

advantage for many Muslim intellectuals of China.

Al-Jizawi, the Shaikh of al-Azhar from 1917 until 1928, on the other hand,

invoked a tradition which stated that it was not lawful to travel with the Quran to non-

Muslim territories, "lest it might fall into the hands of the unbelievers,"[42] to argue against

the lawfulness of any translation. His was an answer to those who supported translation

projects for proselytization purposes. Muhammad Hasan al-Hajawi, the Moroccan

Minister of Education, well known for his Salafist views, stressed the importance of

Quran translations for the purpose of inter-religious dialogue and *dawa* (mission).

---

[41] Wiegers, "Language and Identity," 320.

[42] Wiegers, "Language and Identity," 317.

According to him, it was a collective duty for Muslims to translate the Quran so anyone

who mastered both Arabic and the target language could translate the Quran. This was

what the Prophet asked Muslims to do because, as the Quran and the *sunna* shows, Islam

spread not by arms struggle but by preaching and *dawa*. He stated:

> Upon my life, how does he who states that it is forbidden to translate [the Quran] imagine the existence of Islam in India, China, Turkey, among the Khazar, the Syrians, the Greek, the Berbers, Africans and other non-Arabic speaking people, who still cling to their own languages. How did Islam enter into the depth of their hearts? Did these peoples understand its meanings, principles and excellent qualities or not? We for our part do not doubt that they understood them, . . . as far as possible after translation of the Quran. Therefore, a Muslim should be convinced that the faith spread by [furnishing] proof and by persuasion and not by the sword and by violence. And the greatest proof of all is the Quran, its excellent qualities and its marvels.[43]

In the same vein, Chinese Muslim intellectuals believed that a translation of the

Quran in China was a necessity to continue the proselytizing mission (*chuandao* 傳道) of

the first Muslims of China. Wu Tegong compared the conditions of the Muslim mission

in China with that of Christians and Buddhists. The Muslim mission was the earliest, yet

the Christian sphere of influence was much deeper than that of Islam. This was a

consequence of Buddhist and Christian efforts to make their scriptures intelligible to the

Chinese.[44] Indeed, the emphasis on the idea of proselytization was a by-product of

Ahmadi influence: "More than perhaps any other modern Islamic movement the

Ahmadiyya directed its missionary efforts at non-Muslims. . . . The basic notion ruling

the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims now becoming *dawa* [peaceful

mission]."[45] The Ahmadi notion of *dawa*, interpreted to regulate the relations between

---

[43] Wiegers, "Language and Identity," 319.

[44] Tian Zhen (Wu Tegong), "Zhenxing Huijiao zhi guanjian," 13.

[45] Wiegers, "Language and Identity," 316–17.

Muslims and non-Muslims, was appealing to Chinese Muslims, who were a minority

community in constant contact with non-Muslims.

It should therefore come as no surprise that Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu relied

heavily on the Holy Quran of Maulana Muhammad Ali in their translation project. It was

indeed a bold decision that required legitimization. It is hard to know if they knew that

the professoriate of al-Azhar had issued a *fatwa* prohibiting its circulation. Religious

authorities of Egypt and Syria banned the translation, and copies were burned in Egypt in

the courtyard of the mosque of al-Azhar. Upon receiving a question from Indonesian

Muslims about Muhammad Ali's translation, Rashid Rida also published a *fatwa* against

Muhammad Ali's translation in the pages of *al-Manar*.[46] He erroneously depicted the

Lahori Muhammad Ali as a member of the Qadiani community and accused him of

distorting the meaning of the verses to legitimize the claims of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad.

Nevertheless, there were not many English translations of the Quran available for Wu

Tegong and Sha Shanyu, who did not have the capacity to translate directly from the

Arabic. English translations of the Quran done by Muslims were very few and low in

quality.[47] Muhammad Ali's translation was rejected by important centers of Islam but it

---

[46] Muhammad Rashid Rida, "Tarjamat Muhammmad Ali al-Hindi li al-Quran" [The translation of the Quran by Muhammad Ali of India], *al-Manar* 29 (1928): 268–69. A translation of the *fatwa* can also be found in Moch Nur Ichwan, "Differing Responses to an Ahmadi Translation and Exegesis: The Holy Qur'an in Egypt and Indonesia," *Archipel* 62, no. 1 (2001): 151.

[47] Before Muhammad Ali's Holy Quran, three other Quran translations by Muslims were published. These were Mohammad Abdul Hakim Khan, *The Holy Qur'an: With Short Notes Based on the Holy Qur'an, or the Authentic Traditions of the Prophet, or and New Testaments, or Scientific Truth* (Patiala, 1905); Mirza Abu'l Fadl, *The Qur'an Translated into English from the Original Arabic* (Allahabad, 1912); and Dehlawi Mirza Hairat, *The Koran: Prepared by Various Oriental Learned Scholars and Edited by Mirza Hairat* (Delhi, 1912).

continued to have a wider appeal and farther reach all over the world. For instance, a

European convert, Marmaduke Pickthall, translator of one of the most widely read Quran

translations (1930), was surprised to find that Muhammad Ali's translation had been

publicly burned in the courtyard of the mosque at al-Azhar although "two English

translations by non-Muslims [were] very prominently displayed in the window of a

European bookshop, one of them having on its paper jacket cover a picture representing

[the] Prophet and the angel Gabriel."[48] He expressed his surprise by stating that "where, I

asked myself, can be the sense in burning and banning a well-intentioned reverent work

while these irreverent translations can, under the Capitulations, enter freely?"[49]

Wu Tegong, in his explanation of the process of translation, praised Muhammad

Ali's translation for its reformist content. He was, however, eager to find external

legitimacy as well. The editors of *The China Muslim* reported—though erroneously—that

the ongoing Turkish translation project was being written with reference to Muhammad

Ali's version.[50] They also consulted with Da Pusheng and other religious scholars whose

authority was well established in China. Wu Tegong explained that these eminent

---

[48] Anne Fremantle, *Loyal Enemy* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), available online at
http://www.wokingmuslim.org/pers/pickthall/quran.htm.

[49] Ibid.

[50] This information provided in *The China Muslim* was not correct. In those years, a
famous religious scholar, Ömer Rıza Doğrul, was in the process of translating
Muhammad Ali's Quran translation, which was published in 1934. However, this was an
individual attempt and had no connection with the state enterprise. Doğrul also published
the biography of the Prophet Muhammad written by Muhammad Ali in 1926. It is very
probable that the editors of the China Muslim were aware of these translations. See
"Tuguo kai yi Jingji" [Turkey-initiated Quran translation], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui
yuekan* 1, no. 6 (1926): 10.

Chinese Muslim religious scholars came together to examine the English translation and concluded that Muhammad Ali's translation was pure, correct, and without flaw.[51]

Wu and Sha were conscious of the fact that a translation from a translation would not be acceptable, so they collaborated with Ha Decheng. They ultimately produced two different drafts; Ha Decheng, who was equally proficient in Arabic and English, examined and finalized it. In an apologetic tone, Wu stated that "although we collected materials from English translation, the edited version is purely a product of Arabic."[52] The translation and the commentary written by Wu Tegong were to be published in *The China Muslim*. However, the journal came to an end before the task was completed. Only three chapters of the Quran were published.

Although Wu Tegong mentioned many different traditional exegeses he used for reference in his own commentary, his commentary itself relied heavily on Muhammad Ali's version. After all, Wu Tegong was skeptical about the applicability of traditional commentaries to the contemporary world. He criticized the sacredness attributed to the traditional commentaries, as many considered any criticism directed toward them a blasphemy. For Wu, people neglect the human factor involved in the writing of an exegesis: each work reflects the personality, the conditions, and the historical context of the commentator.[53] Therefore, it becomes wise to refer to a modern commentary, like that of Muhammad Ali. Nevertheless, Wu Tegong was selective in adopting the opinions of

---

[51] Tian Zhen (Wu Tegong), "Yijing suibi" [Belles lettres on Quran translation], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 6 (1926): 1.

[52] Tian Zhen, "Yijing Suibi," 1.

[53] Wu Tegong, "Yijing suibi" [Belles lettres on Quran translation], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no.7 (1926): 3-4.

Muhammad Ali. He consciously left out some of the most controversial points of Lahore Ahmadiyya, such as the death of Jesus and post-prophetic revelation. Thus he tried to bring the translation and the commentary closer to traditional interpretation without forsaking the progressive and modernist interpretations inherent in Muhammad Ali's version.

Islam: The Religion of Peace

Nowadays, in the face of terrorist attacks organized by jihadist Muslims all around the world, a great number of Muslims have been voicing their protests by claiming that Islam is a religion of peace. The rendering of the translation of the name of the religion as peace has become a widely shared notion. Although in traditional dictionaries Islam occasionally appeared as *hilm* (serenity/peace), among many other definitions,[54] it was the Ahmadis who popularized the idea in the early twentieth century. It is one of the twists of history that the opinions of a community considered heterodox and heretical has come to dominate the minds of a substantial number of Muslims. One of the earliest groups who enthusiastically adapted the view of Islam as peace from Ahmadi sources were Chinese Muslims.

---

[54] The rendering of the translation of the word "Islam" comes from the idea that it shares the same master form, S-L-M, with the word "*salam*," which means "peace." Yet, the rendering of "Islam" as "peace" is not totally without precedent. In classical exegeses and dictionaries, there are a variety of definitions of "Islam." While the idea of "submission" as an act is the most dominant explanation, some others also introduced definitions such as the idea of "giving peace to the world," *hilm* (serenity), entering into *hilm* (wholeness, peace and security)." For a historical analysis of the semantic roots of Islam, see Jane I. Smith, *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*, Harvard Dissertations in Religion 1 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975).

Christian missionaries active all around the world were promoting the idea that Islam spread by military action. The statement that "Muhammad preached Islam with a sword in one hand and the Quran in the other" became their motto. It was not only the missionaries but also jihadist Muslims who also believed in the efficiency of the sword in the expansion of Islam. For instance Maududi (1903–79), who was one of the most influential revivalists of the twentieth century, affirmed the centrality of jihad as an instrument of war in the construction of an Islamic state. He indeed refused the dichotomy established by the "apologetics," and argued that jihad was neither defensive nor aggressive but a revolutionary force that could also be used forcefully to eliminate evil rule and communities who do not submit by persuasion, and establish Islamic rule.[55]

Living under British rule in an environment where missionaries were very active in their proselytization, influential segments of Indian Muslims felt the need to "rectify " the false image of Islam. Indeed, the debate was very fierce in India because the question was also related to the issue of Muslim position vis-à-vis non-Muslim rulers. Indian Muslims sought for ideological justification for the legitimacy of a non-Muslim rule; Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817–98) and his associates in the nineteenth century were at the forefront of these efforts. Ghulam Ahmad built on the heritage of Sayyid Ahmad Khan and argued for the legitimacy of non-Muslim rule as long as Muslims enjoyed total religious freedom under it. For Ghulam Ahmad, Islam was in jeopardy not due to British rule but due to fierce missionary attacks against Islam, who defamed the Prophet and

---

[55] For a discussion see S. Abul 'Ala Maudoodi, *Jihad in Islam* (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2001); Asma Afsaruddin, *Striving in the Path of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 209–11 Also see Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies* (Chicago, 1988).

claimed that Islam was not compatible with the requirements of modern society. Troubled by the number of Muslim converts to Christianity, Ghulam Ahmad believed that it was incumbent upon all Muslims to wage jihad by pen to protect the integrity of Islam. After all, the word "jihad," which is commonly translated as "war" or "fight," "etymologically signifies an effort directed towards a determined objective."[56] Ahmadi scholars relied on the semantics of the word and translated jihad as "striving hard" by means of argumentation and persuasion.

For Ahmadis, military action in Islam during the times of the Prophet Muhammad had never been aggressive. They brought examples from the Quran where God enjoined war only in case of preventing aggression and persecution. Indeed, in the Quran there are divergent and even contradictory statements with regards to the issue of war with unbelievers. They are classified into four categories: "those which enjoin pardon for offenses and encourage the invitation to Islam by peaceful persuasion; those which enjoin fighting to ward off aggression; those which enjoin the initiative in attack, provided it is not within the four sacred months; and those which enjoin the initiative in attack absolutely, at all times and in all places."[57] In the classical doctrine, the idea of abrogation (*naskh*) was introduced to resolve this contradiction. Many orthodox scholars examined the revelation chronologically and maintained that the verses recommending peaceful persuasion or allowing only defensive jihad were revealed earlier than those enjoining an unlimited war against the unbelievers; and thus the later verses abrogated the earlier ones. Ahmadis refuse to accept the classical doctrine of abrogation. Instead,

---

[56] E. Tyan, "Djihād," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam Online*, 2nd ed., ed. P. Bearman et al. (Brill, 2012).

[57] Tyan, "Djihād."

198

they argue that since Quran is perfect and universal, then there cannot be contradictory material in the Quran. For them, the doctrine of abrogation is a blow against the universality of Quran. After all, why would God send revelations for a specific people for a specific time despite His claim that the message is for all peoples and for all times? Thus, they resolved the contradiction by asserting that the previous verses, which enjoin war only in cases of attack and persecution, and the verses about religious freedom, such as the one which states there is no compulsion in religion, set the limits and preconditions of war. The later verses, which seemed to enjoin jihad (striving) in all times and places, should be interpreted with this precondition in mind. If the conditions to justify a military war do not exist, then jihad enjoined by God can only mean "striving hard" for the cause of Allah by any means except military action.[58]

The idea of peaceful Islam offered Chinese Muslim intellectuals a different alternative through which they could refute the claims of missionaries and legitimize their will to live in peace with non-Muslims and their obedience to a non-Muslim ruler. Christian missionaries were then very active in China as well. They targeted the Chinese Muslim community, believing that the monotheistic religion of Muslims was closer to Christianity than that of the pagan Chinese traditions. These characteristics of Islam, which shared many elements with Christianity, could make Chinese Muslims more susceptible to their propagation, some argued.[59] With that purpose in mind, they

---

[58] Although the idea of jihad by the pen seems to have originated with the Ahmadis, the notion that Islamic war is only defensive has its roots in history as well. Some classical commentators argued against unrestricted war. Just to give an example, for Sufyan al-Thawri (715–78), jihad is mandatory only in defense; it is recommended only when Muslims face an attack.

[59] Isaac Mason published a road map for missionaries in China in which he listed the strengths and weaknesses of Islam and hints for missionaries. Mason argued that the

concentrated their efforts in Chinese Muslim areas. They published a newsletter, *Friends of Moslems*, to spread knowledge about Islam and their proselytization activities among Muslims in China. Missionary writings attributing violent features to Islam also corroborated the image of Chinese Muslims as "*haodou*" (people who like fighting).

An English article in the London-based *Islamic Review*, written by an Ahmadi Chinese Muslim named Sulaiman Ying (Yin Guangyu),[60] whom we met earlier, a member of the Society for the Propagation of Islam (Yisilan xuanbu hui 伊斯蘭宣佈會) founded by Ma Juntu, who studied in Britain and for obvious reasons had connections to the Woking mosque, shows the gravity of the missionary problem in China. Sulaiman Ying blamed missionaries for the discord between Muslim subjects and the late-Qing state, which led to the violent Muslim rebellions of the nineteenth century. For Ying, Europeans destroyed the centuries-old peaceful relations between Muslims and the state by misguiding the Chinese mandarins, who alarmed the throne about a Muslim sedition. According to the author, the missionaries were concerned about the future conversion of China into a Muslim country. He referred to the Russian Vasiliy P. Vasilev (1818–1900), a leading Sinologist, who argued that if China were to become a Muslim state, it would be the end of peaceful activities of the Chinese nation and China would "be turned into a

---

"aggressive character of Muslims" was one of the difficulties a missionary could face. See Isaac Mason, "Hints for Friends of Moslems," *Friends of Moslems: The Quarterly Newsletter of the Society of Friends of the Moslems in China* 2, no. 2 (April 1928): 7. Also see Isaac Mason, *A Primer on Islam and the Spiritual Needs of the Mohammedans in China* (Hankow: Religious Tract Society, 1936), 36.

[60] His name is also mentioned in the missionary newspaper, *Friends of Moslems*. He sent Ahmadi writings to the editors of *Friends of Moslems*.

yoke upon the necks of the nations" in the hands of Muslim fanatics.[61] For Ying,

Vasilev's opinion—along with the shared ideas of Darby de Thiersant, the French consul

general in China, and M. J. B. du Halde, a Jesuit historian—had been highly influential in

China as the missionaries took the suppression of the spread of Islam in China as their

most urgent task.

It therefore comes as no surprise that articles concerning the idea of peace in

Islam—contrary to missionary challenges—occupied a vast amount of space in Chinese

Muslim journals. The China Muslim Literary Society and the Pursuit Society introduced

and popularized the notion in China. Wu Tegong, in his commentary to the Quran

translation, was one of the first to express the idea that Islam literally means peace. He

adopted the view of Muhammad Ali, who put forward the notion in the preface to his

Quran translation. In 1930, Xiang Fei wrote an article in *Yuehua* entitled "Views about

the Peaceful Religion, Islam," a loose translation and summary of an Ahmadi text. In the

article, the author stated that peace is not only the name of the religion but also one of the

attributes of God in the Quran. Making peace is the dominant idea in Islam, as it stands

for peace between man and God, between man and man, and among different religious

communities. The significance and centrality of the idea, he argued, is embodied in the

greetings of Muslims, which means "peace be upon you."[62]

---

[61] The article appeared in a series. See Muhammad Sulaiman Ying Kwang-yu, "Islam in China," *Islamic Review* 28, no. 69–71. For an English translation of Vasilev's work written in 1867, see Vasilij Pavlovich Vasilev, *Islam in China*, trans. Rudolf Loewenthal (Washington, DC, 1960).

[62] Xiang Fu, "Heping de zongjiao de mianmian guan" [A comprehensive survey of peaceful religion], *Yuehua* 2, no. 21–22 (1930).

This increasing focus on the idea of peace caught the attention of Isaac Mason, a prominent missionary in China. Having read an article by Liu Yifu that appeared in *Zhengdao*, Mason wrote a response to the journal. The exchange of letters between the authors of the journal and Mason presents us with an intriguing case of debates concerning the nature of Islam in China. In his article entitled "What Islam Enjoins People," Liu Yifu described his search for the essence of Islam. He complained about the lack of information about Islam among both Muslim and non-Muslim Chinese. According to Liu, non-Muslims reduced the meaning of Islam to the avoidance of pork. Meanwhile, he criticized Muslims for their excessive emphasis on rituals, summarized by the five pillars of Islam, while missing the essential quality of Islam, which is peace. He reiterated that Islam means peace etymologically and that God enjoins people to show an all-encompassing love (*guangyi de ciai* 廣義的慈愛) for human beings.[63]

Mason's letter specifically targeted this article. The journal published Liu's response but not the original letter.[64] From the response of Liu Yifu, we can understand that Mason protested the translation of Islam as peace. He argued that the Mohammedans could not reserve the name for themselves, as it is a principle shared by Jews, Christians, and Buddhists: "All seek peace and highly regard it and it did so long before Mohammedanism was known."[65] In his reply, Liu Yifu contended that it was natural for Islam to encompass the primordial message of all religions, as the prophets of these

---

[63] Ling Ding, "Yisilan shi ren zuo shenme?" [What does Islam make humans do?], *Zhengdao* 1, no. 1 (1931): 15.

[64] Ling Ding, "Fu Mei Yisheng" [Response to Mason], *Zhengdao* 1, no.4 (1931): 140–41; *Zhengdao* 1, no. 5 (1931): 170–72.

[65] Ling Ding, "Fu Mei Yisheng," 170.

religions were prophets of Islam as well. It was particularly for this reason, he contended, the name Mohammedanism, preferred mostly by missionaries, had sectarian connotations and therefore could not convey the universality of Islam.[66]

Mason also criticized the author for tacitly ignoring the military expansion of Islam. In response, Liu asserted that religion is a matter of inner feelings. Referring to Confucius,[67] he asserted that no one could change the inner feelings of another by force. He criticized Mason for ignoring the fact that wars conducted by Muslims for the sake of imperial expansion; they had no religious concern behind them. At the very end of his reply, he advised Mason to read Muhammad Ali's *Islam: The Religion of Humanity* to gain an understanding of Islam.[68]

The discourse of peace preserved its place in the following years in Chinese Muslim journals. However, as the Japanese threat came to be felt more immediately, an increasing number of articles appeared in journals concerning the idea of "just war" in Islam. An over-emphasis on the idea of peace had the risk of leading Muslims toward total pacifism. Indeed, this was one of the major criticisms directed against the Ahmadis. They were accused of legitimating blind obedience to British rule by manipulating the doctrine of jihad. Having this suspicion in mind, for instance, Zhang Mu adopted an

---

[66] Ling Ding, "Fu Mei Yisheng," 170.

[67] He referred to the following passage from Analects 9:25: "The commander of the forces of a large state may be carried off, but the will of even a common man cannot be taken from him." See the original text and the translation in Legge, *Confucian Analects*, 224.

[68] Ling Ding, "Fu Mei Yisheng," 141.

approach closer to the classical doctrine of jihad.[69] He advanced the interpretation of

Islam as "peace through submission" in order to justify his understanding of preventive

"righteous war." After listing many of the verses used by jihadists, he pinpointed the idea

of "revenge" as the basic principle of Islam in regulating the relations between nations. In

this, he introduced a new concept to the discourse of war in Islam.

Islam and Great Unity (*datong* 大同)

In the introduction to *Heping de zongjiao* by Muhammad Ali, Chinese Muslim

translators from the Pursuit Society noted that the great principle of Islam teaches

datong,[70] the great unity of humankind.

> The religious principle of Islam is *da tong*. It can be said that all humans are
> Muslims because all are creations of God. Anyone will be considered to be a non-
> Muslim if he goes against God. This is also the case for Muslims. Appearance
> does not make someone Muslim. . . . It is not that non-Muslims are not Muslim
> because of appearance. . . . Islam does not hinder any other religion. Although

---

[69] Zhang Mu, "Yisilan de heping, heping de wuli, wuli de heping" [The peace of Islam, the peace by military force, military force by peace], *Yisilan qingnian* 1, no. 5 (1934): 12–17. Also see Zheng Daomin, "Cong Huijiao zhi zhanzheng quanshi tandao women de shensheng kangzhan" [Talking about our sacred resistance war from the perspective of the understanding of war in Islam], *Yuehua* 11, no. 4–6 (1939); Zhang Zhaoli, "Cong Musheng gongxin zhi zhan shuodao Zhongguo liuxue kangzhan" [Talking about China's bloody resistance war, from the perspective of Sage Muhammad's war which attacks hearts], *Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huikan* 1, no. 6 (1940); Bai Chongxi, "Zunshou Musheng xunshi fankang qinlüe" [Respecting sage Muhammad's instructions on resistence war], *Huijiao dazhong* 1, no. 1 (1938).

[70] The concept of *datong* was developed in the Confucian classics. It has generally been translated as "great unity" or "great harmony." It was first introduced in the *Liji*, the Book of Rites. In the early twentieth century, the reformist thinker Kang Youwei put forward a radical and utopian interpretation of the concept in his book entitled *Datong shu* [Book on the Great Unity]. Kang Youwei, *Datong shu* (Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1935)

other religions have their errors, Allah would not consider it a sin since they do not know. Allah considers it a sin when they know but still oppose it.[71]

This is how the translators of *The Religion of Humanity* interpreted the message of Muhammad Ali. They made a distinction between islam, as the personal relationship between man and God, and Islam, as an objectified system of religious beliefs and practices. They interpreted islam "not as the name of a religious system but as the designation of a decisive personal act," submission to God.[72] A person stands outside the circle of islam only when he purposefully refuses to recognize the truth of it. Their interpretation recalls the way some liberal Muslims interpret the notion *kafir*, which is generally translated as non-Muslim/unbeliever. The word *kafir* is derived from the root K-F-R, which literally means "to cover." Thus, the word *kafir* indicates a person who hides or covers. In that sense, it does not mean "to disbelieve" but rather "to reject" actively and consciously.[73]

To what extent does this notion of inclusive islam come from the Ahmadi sources? In the books of Lahore Ahmadis one can observe vacillation between an inclusivist notion, where islam is defined as an act submission, and an exclusivist notion, where Islam is defined as an institutional religion. The reason behind this vacillation lay on the one hand in their active engagement with the Christian missionaries and, on the other hand, in their willingness to make the universal message of Islam appealing to any

---

[71] *Heping de Zongjiao*, 2.

[72] I did not use capital letter "I" when I refer to "islam" as an act of submission. For a distinction between "Islam" as a reified institutional religion and "islam" as an act of submission, see Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (1963; repr., Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 110–15.

[73] Smith, *Meaning and End of Religion*, 112.

believer of God. Therefore, in their writings one can observe a clear distinction between missionary Christians, who actively and deliberately refuse the truth of Islam, and ordinary Christians, who devoutly submit to the will of God following the guidance of their own religious tradition.[74]

Muhammad Ali in *The Religion of Humanity* reiterates one of the central tenets of Ahmadi belief. He argues that Islam is a cosmopolitan religion and that it is this distinctive characteristic of Islam that renders it superior to all other religions and forms the basis of a universal brotherhood:

> The great characteristic of Islam, then, is that it requires its followers to believe that all the great religions of the world that prevailed before it were revealed by God; and thus Islam, as I have shown its very name indicates, laid down the basis of peace and harmony among the religions of the world. According to the Holy Quran, all religions have Divine revelation as the common basis from which they start.[75]

Ahmadis also highlighted the Quranic notion that a messenger was sent to every community (Quran 35:24). They also expanded the notion of *ahl-al-kitab*, the term in the Quran referring to communities that received a revealed scripture. While the notion *ahl-al-kitab* was used to refer to the Jews, Christians, and Muslims, the Ahmadis adopted the theological accounts of some earlier Muslim scholars who included within this notion other groups such as Zoroastrians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Confucians.[76] In many of the

---

[74] Muhammad Ali asserted that although in the Quran the Christian doctrine of calling Jesus Christ a God or the Son of God is denounced as *shirk* (attributing a partner to Allah), still the Christians are treated as *ahl al-kitab* (followers of a revealed religion) and not as *mushrikin* (people who attribute a partner to Allah). Maulana Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam: A Comprehensive Discussion of the Sources, Principles and Practices of Islam* (Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, 1936), 614.

[75] Muhammad Ali, *Islam: The Religion of Humanity*, 5.

[76] Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, 614–15.

texts written by Ahmadis, the major figures of these religions are presented as prophets

who brought the same message that Islam finalized and universalized. The universal

principles, according to Muhammad Ali, were a "belief in God," belief in "divine

revelation," belief in the "life to come," "prayer to God," and giving to charity. He

argued that "these are the common principles on which all religions are based." In fact,

these essential principles of Islam are "imprinted on human nature."[77]

The leader of the Woking Mission in London, Khwaja Kamal-ad-Din, emphasized

the salvific aspect of religions other than institutionalized Islam and criticized Muslims

for denying salvation to non-Muslims:

> Similar is the pronouncement upon the unwarrantable assertion of every religious community, not excepting some present day Muslims, that as they belong to such and such a religion, all others are useless; and it is only they that have any right to spiritual life. On this point, by way of illustration, the Quran takes the cases of the Jews and the Christians and declares that these absurd claims are mere verbiage (2:111).[78] . . . Unfortunately, nowadays, the mere association with any religion is considered respectable, and, what is worse, others are looked down upon on the basis of this sense of false distinction. To eradicate such a pernicious notion the Holy Book announced that he alone is successful in the eyes of God who, besides believing in God and the Day of Judgment does good deeds no matter whatever religion he belongs to (2:62).[79] If we look the matter a bit more closely we shall find that even the purpose of believing in God and the Day of Resurrection is to produce good actions, because these two beliefs are the sources from which good actions spring and the power that keeps a man from vice.[80]

---

[77] Muhammad Ali, *Islam: The Religion of Humanity*, 8–9.

[78] Quran 2:111: "And they say: none shall enter the Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian." "Those are their (vain) desires."

[79] Quran 2:62: "Those who believe (in the Quran), and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians, - any, who believe in Allah and the Last Day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve."

[80] Al-Hajj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, *Unity of the Human Race* (Woking: Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, 193-?), 10–11. The same content was also published in *Islamic Review* 19, no. 7 (1931).

Ahmadis must have been aware that inter-religious understanding "gets little help from the notion that those who fail to share one's own beliefs and practices will roast forever in hellfire."[81] This notion of inclusive Islam, which also refutes the Islamic classical doctrine of an everlasting hell for non-Muslims, signified an important change in the relations of Muslims and non-Muslims. It is not surprising to find that Chinese Muslim intellectuals found this notion of inclusive Islam appealing as it justified the inter-religious aspects of Han *Kitab* scholarship, which confirmed the prophethood of Confucius, whose principles were believed to be in full accord with Islam. A perfect example of this kind of thinking becomes manifest in Liu Zhi's (1660–1739) writings:

> The Sage of the West, Muhammad, was born after Confucius and lived in Arabia. He was so far removed in time and space from the Chinese sages that we do not even know exactly how much. The languages they spoke were mutually unintelligible. How, is it then that their ways are in full accord? The answer is that they were of one mind. Thus, their way is the same.[82]

---

[81] Goodman, *Religious Pluralism*, 11. Ahmadis do not take the verses on hell and heaven literally. For them, the verses should be taken allegorically. While on earth a person's goodness or badness may be only partially visible, even to the person himself, the spiritual condition after death will be abundantly clear and of a purely spiritual nature. The afterlife is described in a physical way so that humans may consider it, but in reality, it contains a spiritual state that "the eye has not seen, nor has the ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man to conceive of them." The terrors of hell mirror the spiritual terrors of earthly life, a period for spiritual progress after death that is temporary for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It is redemptive. The Quran refers to infinite progress after death, with the afterlife serving as a time for further spiritual advancement. In this view, hell is not meant for punishment but rather for purification, a temporary stage in which sins are expunged and spiritual illnesses are healed. Heaven, likewise, is not meant simply for enjoyment but rather for limitless spiritual growth. For this understanding of Ahmadis, which is also translated in the Chinese version, see Muhammad Ali, *Islam: The Religion of Humanity*, 14–21.

[82] James D. Frankel, "Liu Zhi's Journey through Ritual Law to Allah's Chinese Name: Conceptual Antecedents and Theological Obstacles to the Confucian-Islamic Harmonization of the Tianfang Dianli" (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2005), 212.

Both the Chinese Muslim Han *Kitab* tradition and the modern views of Ahmadis thus provided legitimacy to Chinese Muslim intellectuals who often referred to Confucius to justify their Islamic views. Following the tradition of Han *Kitab* scholars, Wu Tegong, in his commentary on the Quran, frequently referred to Confucian literature in order to demonstrate the overlap between Islam and Confucianism and to make his message intelligible to a Chinese audience. For him, the minor differences between Islam and Confucianism were due to contextual differences. However, he was aware of the dangers of being called heterodox. He wrote:

> Liu Zhi in his books brought together (*qianhe* 牽合) Islam and Confucianism. This was a dangerous task. If he had not been cautious enough, there was the risk of being blamed as heterodox and arrested by the net of [Islamic] law. . . . Confucians are Confucians, Buddhist are Buddhist, Christians are Christians and Muslims are Muslims. . . . *But the essential meaning of these teachings are originally shared*. . . . The points that are not similar can also serve people according to the facts [of their material circumstances]. They provide alternatives to people.[83]

This inclusivist view of Islam, however, ran risks as well. It had the potential to eradicate the distinctions of Muslim identity, leading to a version of humanist theism. In the face of missionary attacks, Chinese Muslims were not willing to forsake the practical and ritualistic aspects of their identity. With this in mind, the Chinese Muslim translators of *The Religion of Humanity* inserted a sentence in their translation that does not appear in the original. They stated that the belief in all prophets sent by God does not mean that one can without restriction adopt the theories of any religion.[84] Although such a statement does not exist in the original version, Muhammad Ali was also careful to preserve the

---

[83] Tian Zhen, "Zhenxing Huijiao zhi guanjian," 12. Emphasis is mine.

[84] *Heping de zongjiao*, 5. (The paging is peculiar. The page number here refers to the page number of the main text and not the preface.)

distinctive features of Islam. He made use of traditional notions of supersession in his explanation of the place of Islam vis-à-vis other religions. For Muhammad Ali, the Quran, after all, articulates the perfect expression of these universal principles. These universal principles are inherent in all religious traditions; nonetheless, the followers of these religions distorted the original message revealed to their prophets. Their revealed scriptures were corrupted in human hands. Islam came to correct and reform what previous prophets brought. His arguments, however, became idiosyncratic when he claimed that previous prophets before Muhammad were national prophets, sent for a specific community for a specific time. The essentials were the same but the details varied to suit the needs of each age and each nation. The Prophet Muhammad, on the other hand, brought a message for all times and for all mankind. Islam, therefore, is a complete and universal religious system, providing guidance concerning all aspects of life and meeting the challenges of all ages. The universality of Islam is based on its appeal to the faculty of reason in man. As the "human brain became more and more developed," Muhammad Ali argued, God "shed complete light on the essentials of religion."[85]

Thus, according to the Ahmadis, universal brotherhood could best be achieved by persuading all human beings that Islam is the ultimate universal truth, which is, nevertheless, no different from the truth of the original form of their religion. Once every human accepts Islam as the revelation of God, the purpose of Islam, which is to eradicate all distinctions based on race, color, nation, class, language, and, without doubt, religion,

---

[85] Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, 209. Muhammad Ali elaborated on the same idea of the superiority of Islam in his *Islam: The Religion of Humanity*, 5–6.

will be realized. Thus, Quranic utopia, which is expressed by God as "mankind is but a family" will be realized.[86]

For this purpose, Ahmadi missionaries took the task of proselytization very seriously. Imitating the organizational structures of Christian missionaries and the media they used, they established many centers in Europe and other parts of the world. Although Ahmadis adopted the classical doctrine of supersession, their strong emphasis on the shared elements of different religious traditions and their continuous reference to the principles of these religions was welcomed by European urban middle-class intellectuals who were concerned about the "materialistic" tendencies of European culture. These European intellectuals at once embraced the change initiated by modernity and criticized the speed and direction of that change. They became interested in the spiritual aspects of Eastern philosophies as a remedy to European materialism. The Ahmadi version of Islam offered them an alternative to European materialism.[87] Lahore Ahmadis thus managed to convert a considerable number of prominent European intellectuals, nobleman, and businessmen to Islam, and they published their conversion stories in their papers. The European converts also played important roles in spreading the message of the Lahore Ahmadis.[88] In that sense, Lahore Ahmadis were the most successful missionary group of Muslims, and their success in proselytization also

---

[86] Muhammad Ali, *Islam: The Religion of Humanity*, 27–28.

[87] Gerdien Jonker, "A Laboratory of Modernity: The Ahmadiyya Mission in Inter-War Europe," *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 3 (2014): 1–25.

[88] In 1933, a European convert, Dr. Khalid Sheldrake (né Bertram William) was enthroned as the king of Chinese Turkestan for a brief period after a delegation from Chinese Turkestan implored him to become their monarch. Sheldrake was indeed a convert affiliated with the Woking Mission. For this bizarre story, see Max Everest-Phillips, "The Suburban King of Tartary," *Asian Affairs* 21, no. 3 (1990): 324–35.

attracted the attention of Chinese Muslims. In the Chinese Muslim papers affiliated with

the Lahore Ahmadis, news of the conversion of both Chinese and European people was

frequently published.[89] The conversions provided Chinese Muslims with a sense of

confidence, as it was seen as validating their religious *Weltanschauung*. The desire to

openly proselytize their religion was a departure from their historical experience. Chinese

Muslim communities anxious about the forces of assimilation had gradually closed

themselves off, building Muslim neighborhoods with a mosque in the center that did not

welcome non-Muslims. The practice of not allowing non-Muslims in the prayer halls of

the mosques continues in China to date and demonstrates how Chinese Muslims

considered mosques to be places of sacred space requiring protection from anything

"impure" and "profane." The way Chinese mosques functioned was, in that sense, quite

different from the mosques of Lahore Ahmadis in Europe as centers of proselytization.

Chinese Muslim reformist scholars, especially those affiliated with Ahmadi

teachings, regarded this kind of segregationist mindset as the source of discord between

Muslims and non-Muslims in China. In their search for the underlying motivations of

texts that defamed Islam in China, they blamed Muslims for not introducing the truth of

Islam to non-Muslims. The Ahmadi search for internal causes behind problems between

Hindus and Muslims offered guidance to Chinese Muslims as well. Ahmadis, in their

writings about early conflicts between Hindus and Muslims, often looked for problems

---

[89] *Zhengdao*, for instance, carried the story of Li Tianming, a Chinese history student at Beijing University who converted to Islam after reading the books translated from Ahmadi sources. "Li Tianmin jun guiyi Yisilan" [Li Tianmin converted to Islam], *Zhengdao* 1, no. 3 (1931). Also see "Yingren guiyi Huijiao zhi yue you ershi ren" [The English who convert to Islam is twenty people monthly], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui Yuekan* 1, no. 3–4 (1926); "Yingren Huijiao tu Hanmierdun jueshi" [English Muslim Sir Hamilton], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 9–10 (1926).

internal to Muslim tradition before directing their criticism at the Hindu community. In an article published about Muslim-Hindu unity,[90] the author Yakub Khan reiterated the viewpoint of Ghulam Ahmad concerning the prospects of Hindu-Muslim relations, expressed in Ghulam Ahmad's last speech, entitled "Message of Peace."[91] Yakub Khan stated that Muslims are guilty of a grave omission: although Muslims are burdened with the task of seeking what is good and noble in the traditions of non-Muslims, they have also neglected to acquaint their Hindu brothers with what Islam wants them to do unto others. It is therefore no wonder that Hindus do not know, and, not knowing, cannot appreciate Islam. Muslims are burdened to tell non-Muslims that Islam binds them to believe without distinction in the prophets of other religions as much as in Muhammad. Had they told the Hindus that the Quran requires them to defend even a Hindu temple, when in danger, with their own lives—had they told them that Islam stands for freedom of conviction, the universal fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, and the perfect equality of man—they would not have been standing today at arm's length from each other. If they had done so, reformist Hindus like the members of Brahmo Samaj, who respect and venerate all founders of religions and strive for the elimination of any distinction within the society, would spread throughout all India.[92]

In the same vein, the Chinese Muslim scholars who were affiliated with Ahmadi teachings were ardent opponents of the ethnicizers in China, who actively promoted an

---

[90] Ahmadis also supported the formation of Pakistan when the problems between Hindus and Muslims reached a climax. These opinions about Hindu-Muslim unity belong to an earlier period.

[91] For an English translation of this speech, see Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *The Message of Peace* (Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2007).

[92] Yakub Khan, "Hindu Muslim Unity," *Islamic Review* 11 (March 1923): 110–14.

ethnic identity for Muslims of China. They were looking for a common ground that would unify Han and Hui. It comes as no surprise that the article by Yi Boqing, who argued that the Hui are Han Muslims, appeared in the pages of *The China Muslim*. As I discussed in the first chapter, he criticized the idea of ethnicization for creating a sectarian Islam; the ethnicization of Hui identity would preclude the Han from being willing to convert to Islam. The famous author of the *Zhengdao*, Liu Yifu, on the other hand, went a step further and called for the elimination of the Chinese appellation "*huijiao*" (used for Islam in China because of its particularistic connotations). He expounded the idea that only a transliteration of Islam should be used in China because the name transcends all particularities and embodies the great principle of the religion, which is peace and Great Unity (*da tong*).[93]

Free Thinkers and Islamic Law

The place and status of Islamic law in Ahmadi Islam will naturally occupy the minds of anyone interested in Ahmadiyya. Where do they place the large corpus of Islamic law within their universal and rational notion of Islam as free from the bounds of time and space? How did Chinese Muslim readers of Ahmadi texts interpret their vision concerning issues related to the law?

Any reading of the Ahmadi doctrine would suggest that a follower of a religion does not fall into sin by following the laws and rituals of his own religious tradition unless he purposefully goes against the truth of Islam. As long as he does not know, he

---

[93] Ling Ding, "Yisilan shi ren zuo shenme?," 10.

will be saved. The issue, however, remains for Muslims: Are Muslims bound by the specificities of Islamic law? Are they entitled to follow it, and, if so, to what extent?

Ahmadis introduced new concepts in the sphere of religious thought. Yet, innovations were limited as far as religious practice was concerned. In many cases, they enjoined strict observance of Islamic commandments if the prescription is clear in the Quran. If there is no clear guidance in the Quran, then they promoted the idea of *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), which should be conducted by a community of righteous people by keeping in mind the necessities of the public. Therefore, the Ahmadis did not initiate any changes concerning Islamic practices such as polygamy, inheritance rules, the idea of *Qisas* in cases of murder, or civil laws regulating marriage and divorce. They sought to maintain the legitimacy of the traditional ruling, which they also upheld by arguing that they are in accordance with the human nature.

In issues that seemed to contradict "basic principles of Islam," such as the institution of slavery, they deviated from the traditional understanding. In modernist lines, they directed the attention of the Muslims not to the literal text found in the Quran but to the guidance provided by the Quran. They argued that although slavery is not totally banned in it, the Quran presents the abolition of the institution as the ultimate goal. The Quranic statements regulating relations between free men and slaves should be interpreted in light of other Quranic statements that enjoin the duty of freeing slaves and of the example of the Prophet himself. For this reason, a total abolishment of the institution of slavery becomes fully Islamic as it accords with the ultimate principle in the Quran, the equality of human beings. As will be seen in the following pages, they also made frequent use of *maslaha*, a concept in Islamic law that "consists of prohibiting or

permitting something on the basis of whether or not it serves the public's benefit or welfare."[94] Although the concept of public interest had been used in cases not regulated by the Quran or by *sunna*, or when a ruling could not be determined by *qiyas* (deductive analogy) in classical Islamic jurisprudence, Ahmadis also occasionally applied the method to cases that were clearly regulated by the Quran, such as the issue of interest.

Ahmadis were also critical of religious scholars' obsession with the minute details of a ritual at the expense of neglecting its principles. This concern was also emphasized by Chinese Muslim intellectuals affiliated with Ahmadi thinking. They thus were in agreement with Muhammad Ali, who wrote that Islam "occupies a middle position between religions which have ignored the practical side altogether and those which bind their followers to a very minute ritual."[95] Syed Maqbool Ahmed, who travelled across the Far East in the early 1930s in an effort to discern the prospects of Islam in China and Japan, concluded that Muslims could make the Japanese appreciate and understand Islam only when they first made Islam more Japanese. He appreciated the ability of Christian missionaries to naturalize Christianity for every climate and nations. He stated:

> One of the greatest stumbling blocks to the spread of Islam as a world religion is the hegemony of the mullas, not only utterly ignorant of Islam and of the spirit of the Quran, but equally incompetent to make anybody except themselves understand and appreciate Islam. They have burdened it with Arabian customs and usages and grafted a ritualism and priestcraft on the simple Islam which has left hardly any point of distinction from its older counterpart Judaism. Common sense, however, will tell us that the Islam to be presented to the Japanese must be understood by them, and that means a drastic curtailment of the superfluities to

---

[94] "Maslahah," *Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, ed. John Esposito (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[95] Ali, *Religion of Humanity*, 24.

which we have become accustomed, and which we have come wrongly to regard as the basis of faith; Islam in its pristine purity alone should be presented.[96]

The Chinese Muslim intellectuals were not uncritical followers of Ahmadi thinking. They were selective in their reading. For instance, particularities of Islamic law and details of Islamic ritual found little place in Chinese Muslim journals affiliated with Ahmadi thinking. They were interested more in the essential points of Ahmadi reformist thinking. The translation of an article written by Sayed Maqbool Ahmed for the *Islamic Review*, entitled "The Law of Crime in Islam," manifests how selective the editors of *The China Muslim* were. The article was part of a series published in the *Islamic Review*. But while the editors of *The China Muslim* translated the first article—in which Maqbool Ahmed explains Islamic notions like the primacy of intent in determining personal responsibility, and God's mercy and forgiveness in governing the relations among humans and between humans and God—they chose not to translate the second article, which dealt with the particularities of Islamic penal law concerning issues such as theft, general retribution, culpable homicide, murder, rebellion, and adultery.[97]

While Chinese Muslim intellectuals who were influenced by Ahmadi ideas kept silent concerning the details of Islamic law, Wu Tegong wrote several articles about the relationship between *yi* 儀 (rites) and *fa* 法 (law) and *li* 理 (principle). Wu Tegong, in his evaluation of the matter, referred to diverse sources. He not only took Islamic sources into consideration, analyzing them in light of modern philosophy, but also occasionally

[96] Sayed Maqbool Ahmed, "Prospects of Islam in the Far East," *Islamic Review* 22 (September 1934): 329.

[97] Syed Maqbool Ahmed, "Yisilan zhi zuie guan," trans. Ze Nong, *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 3–4 (1926). The original was published in series as "The Law of Crime in the Quran Islam," *Islamic Review* 13, no. 6 (1925): 219, and *Islamic Review* 13, no. 7 (1925): 244.

pointed at Confucian ethical principles to promote his ideas. Wu Tegong relied heavily on the universal values promoted by Ahmadiyya; however, he went a step further than the Ahmadis, who often advanced arguments similar to the large number of Sunni reformists, who kept arguing that Islamic rulings, such as polygamy, which looked unjust to untrained eyes, in fact perfectly met the requirements of human nature and the contingency of the mundane world. In the following pages, I introduce the multi-dimensional argumentation of Wu Tegong in which he contextualized Islamic law.

Wu Tegong evaluated the role of Islamic law in the modern world in light of social evolutionary processes. A student of Yan Fu, an eminent intellectual who introduced Spencer's evolutionary vision to China, Wu Tegong was a firm believer in unilinear social evolution,[98] which favored a tripartite scheme from savagery to barbarism to civilization: savages practicing animism, barbarians practicing polytheism, and civilized man practicing monotheism. Yet, in contrast to Spencer, who connected the evolution of bureaucratized monotheistic religions to political processes, Wu Tegong, being a devout Muslim, followed instead the Ahmadi notions of social evolution. Ahmadis are believers in theistic evolution. They believe that Muslim scholars discovered the workings of evolution centuries before it was written in the West. Evolution is seen as the foundation of belief in God, which demonstrates the purpose of creation and wisdom in it.[99] Ahmadis pointed at pre-modern dictionaries where one of the names used to refer to God in Islam, *rab*, was defined as "the fostering of a thing in such a way as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of

---

[98] Tian Zhen, "Zhenxing Huijiao guan," 11.

[99] Muhammad Ali, *Religion of Islam*, 134–36.

perfection."[100] Thus, the word *rab* not only carries the sense of "creation and sustenance,"

but also conveys the idea of "regulating and accomplishing completion . . . [and] highest

perfection."[101] This evolutionary perfection cannot be taken to be a result of accident or a

haphazard natural selection. For this reason, Ahmadis believed that Darwinism was on

the wane. For them, science had already proven that "the movements, growth, and

development of every element in nature are under the government of this or that

established law. Results, which were supposed to be mere freaks of nature till yesterday,

are in the light of to-day's discoveries the outcome of the operations of certain definite

and fixed laws."[102] Thus evolutionary perfection is a product of design and

intelligence.[103] They directed attention to the Quranic verses where God laid down the

"'Reign of Law' [that] exists and dominates the whole material world and even particle

of matter implicitly obeys."[104]

Where is the place of revelation in this type of theistic evolutionary thinking?

Khwaja Kamal-ad-Din asserted, "the consciousness of the human organism, which

evolved out of animated matter in animal kingdom, in the form of impulses, evolves into

natural passion in man in human organism. This is not the final growth. Human

---

[100] Al-Haj Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, *The Existence of God* (Woking: Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, n.d.), 6–12. Also see Muhammad Ali, *Religion of Islam*, 135.

[101] Kamal-ud-Din, *Existence of God*, 7.

[102] Kamal-ud-Din, *Existence of God*, 8.

[103] Kamal-ud-Din, *Existence of God*, 36–46.

[104] Ahmadi Muslims do not take the Quranic creation stories literally but rather understand the passages metaphorically. They also direct attention to Quranic verses where it is stated that God created humans in stages (Quran 71:14) to prove that evolution is the law by means of which God created the universe and human beings.

consciousness has to evolve ethics and high philosophy."[105] The sublimation of

consciousness into ethics and philosophy, nevertheless, badly needs guidance from

without. Humans do possess discretion; by instinct they can make choice between good

and bad, but they need enlightenment and guidance to discriminate between the two. The

Quran provides humans of all ages with that universal guidance.[106]

      Wu Tegong found in Ahmadi thinking a way to combine his scientific and

evolutionary notions with his belief in divine revelation. For Wu, religion today is the

most important old thing to which people keep their loyalty. Following Yan Fu, he also

stressed the importance of the complementarity of the old and new. If you do not seek the

new, there will be no evolution. If you do not follow the old, change will not be

successful.[107] For Wu, the old thing that cannot be eliminated is the wisdom of the

sages.[108]

---

[105] Kamal-ud-Din, *Existence of God*.

[106] Kamal-ud-Din, *Existence of God*, 31–32.

[107] He refers to Yan Fu's statements in his translation of *The Study of Sociology* by
Herbert Spencer with regard to the centrality of religious traditions in the life of modern
man. In the original text, Spencer, after giving examples of old religious customs that are
still practiced, stated: "These are striking instances of the pertinacity with which the
oldest part of the regulative organization maintains its original traits in the teeth of
influences that modify things around it." See Herbert Spencer, *The Study of Sociology*,
107. Yan Fu did not make a literal translation but instead complemented the text by
stating, "It seems that evolution means seeking new by taking the old with us. The old
and the new are useful to each other. Without seeking the new, the transformation will
get no progress; if we do not take the old with us, the transformation will fail. For people
the most important old thing to which they are loyal, is doing sacrifice to the ghost and
God." See Yan Fu, *Zhongguo Jiaoyu Mingjia Zuojing Du Congshu*, ed. Feng Kecheng,
vol. 1, no 4 (2005): 135. It is not surprising that Wu Tegong translated "ghost and God"
as "religion." See Wu Tegong, "Zhenxing Huijiao zhi guanjian," 11.

[108] Tian Zhen, "Zhengxing Huijiao zhi guanjian," 11. It is important to keep in mind that
he does not mention Yan Fu although he quotes a passage from Yan Fu's translation of
Spencer.

Yet a question continued to trouble Wu Tegong. How can one claim that Quranic prescriptions concerning mundane affairs are applicable to every age and context, meeting the changes brought by the evolutionary development of the humans?[109] In his response, Wu Tegong went beyond what was offered by the Ahmadis: he questioned the universality of Quranic injunctions concerning human mundane affairs and limited their efficacy to the specific context of seventh-century Arabia. As will be analyzed below, his approach to Islamic law was very liberal and unorthodox for his era. I argue that the context within which he articulated his beliefs was influential in his revolutionary reading of the Quran. After all, he was a revolutionary Chinese individual who was also interested in making Islam appealing to the larger Chinese society. In the context of a Muslim country, such as Egypt, any kind of argument on similarly unorthodox lines often drew fierce reaction from orthodox scholars. But Wu Tegong wrote in China, using a medium that had limited reach to the traditional circles of *ahong*s. His main audience was, after all, educated Muslims who had a say in the contemporary politics of China. Therefore, he was relatively free to express his liberal views about the Quran.

For Wu Tegong, there are two aspects of the scripture: literal meaning (*yiwen* 儀文) and essence/principle (*jingyi* 精义 / *li* 理). Religious scholars stick to the literal meaning of the Quran, and they do not extend their understanding to the purpose of the Quran. They forget that the preciousness of the Quran lies not in its surface meaning but in its inherent principles. For Wu, these principles are reverence to God (*jingtian* 敬天),

---

[109] The Lahore Ahmadi response to this question is inherent in their depiction of the Prophet Muhammad as the ultimate Man, the final destination in the evolutionary development of humans. After all, he is the final prophet and no other prophet will appear after him. Therefore, his message has the potential to meet the challenges humans will face until doomsday.

preserving the mental disposition and nourishing the nature (*cunxin yangxing* 存心養性),

freedom (*ziyou* 自由), equality (*pingdeng* 平等), universal love (*boai* 博愛),

republicanism (*gonghe* 共和), equal distribution of wealth (*junfu* 均富), and the Great

Unity of mankind (*datong* 大同).[110] If you understand them properly, then these

principles will open all doors. If you refuse to seek the principles and stick to the textual

meaning, it will be impossible for the Quran to address future generations. Following the

Quranic prescriptions without understanding the principles is, for Wu Tegong, like being

a sheep in a tiger's skin.[111]

Wu Tegong introduced the notion of change adaptable to the necessities of

evolution as the method that should be followed in establishing rules, rituals, and laws for

different generations. His innovative reading comes from his interesting interpretation of

the status of the Quran in relation to the previous scriptures. Following the orthodox

doctrine of supersession, which was also adopted by Ahmadis, he saw the Quran as a

---

[110] Here Wu Tegong brought together various principles from both Confucian teaching and Western philosophies. Yet, since he was a follower of Ahmadi ideas, this was not a dilemma for him. After all, these are the principles imprinted in human nature and thus are promulgated by all religions of the world. See Tian Zhen (Wu Tegong), "Ming dao da bian shuo," [A theory about the great transformation of the bright way], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 3–4 (1926): 1–12.

[111] Tian Zhen, "Zhengxing Huijiao zhi Guanjian," 11–12. Once again he referred to an ancient classical Chinese source and quoted from *Yangzi fa yan* to confirm his idea that appearance does not make one Muslim. "Someone said: Suppose there is a man who says that his surname is Kong, and his name Zhongni. If he enters Confucius' gate, ascends his hall, sits in his chair, and wears his clothes, then may he be called Confucius? Yangzi said: His outer appearance [*wen* 文], yes. His nature [*zhi* 質], no. The other said: May I dare ask about *zhi*? Yangzi said: One who has a sheep's *zhi a*nd a tiger's skin sees grass and is happy, sees a jackal and shivers. He forgets he is wearing a tiger's skin." For the original text, see "Wuzi," *Yangzi fa yan,* chapter 2. The translation is adapted from Jeffrey S. Bullock, *Yang Xiong: Philosophy of the Fa Yan; A Confucian Hermit in the Han Imperial Court* (Highlands: Mountain Mind Press, 2011), 52.

scripture, which abrogated previous scriptures revealed to previous prophets. He refers to the 106th verse of the second chapter, where it is stated, "whatever communication We abrogate or cause to be forgotten, We bring one better than it or like it. Do you not know that Allah has power over all things?" (Quran 2:106).[112] Pointing at this particular verse, Wu Tegong contended that the rise of Islam is a matter of reform and renewal. He suggested that what makes Islam universal is its adaptability to the changing conditions of an era. Wu Tegong stressed the contextually of Quranic injunctions about human affairs as they were revealed to meet the specific requirements of a particular community. Sticking to the literal meanings of the Quran would be going against the overarching intent of the Quran, which is progressive change. Muslims should thus seek out the intention of the rulings: once one understands the intent behind any ruling, it will function as a guideline that can lead any community toward progress.[113]

Wu Tegong bolstered his arguments with simultaneous reference to both classical and modern Islamic texts and Confucian literature. He gave an example from the hadith to argue that it was not correct to seek solutions for mundane affairs in the Quran. In the hadith, the Prophet Muhammad, upon seeing people tending the tops of their date palms in order to pollinate the trees, expressed his own opinion against such practice. Then people abandoned the practice believing in the absolute truth in Prophet's words.

---

[112] This verse is indeed used by orthodox scholars to prove that some of the verses in the Quran were abrogated by later verses in the Quran (*naskh*). Wu Tegong, however, followed the Ahmadi position on the issue of abrogation. Ahmadis argued that each verse in the Quran was universal and therefore cannot be abrogated. For Ahmadis, the verse quoted by Wu Tegong refers instead to the abrogation of previous scriptures—the Bible and Torah. The translation if from Muhammad Habib Shakir.

[113] Tian Zhen (Wu Tegong), "Zongjiao shunshi weixin shuo" [The theory on reforming the religion in accordance with the times], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 9–10 and 11–12 (1926).

However, the crop that resulted was impoverished. When they mentioned this to him, he said, "I am only a human being. When I command you with something regarding your religion, accept it. When I command you with something from my own opinion, then I am only a human being. You know best the affairs of your worldly life."[114] While this hadith was interpreted by liberals as invalidating the universality of *sunna* (prophetic practice) concerning worldly issues, Wu Tegong went one step further and extended it to the Quranic verses dealing with human affairs.[115]

Wu Tegong's reference to Confucian sources is particularly interesting. He refused to reduce the Confucian principle *li* (禮, also as 儀, rules of propriety/rituals) to obsolete regulations that had been indiscriminately followed from ancient times. For Wu, Confucius was not blindly following social customs but rather was questioning the appropriateness of blindly following social customs. In Wu's account, rituals are amendable to multiple adaptations. A virtuous person knows how to follow the ritual, yet he also knows how to alter its form to follow its essential intent. As in the case of Islam, the criterion of change is determined by its accord with the principle and its capacity to capture the way (*dao* 道).

For Wu Tegong, however flexible and innovative one can be in interpreting rituals and laws, one should always preserve the mean (*zhongyong* 中庸), which lies in the middle of excess and deficiency. According to his reading, imperatives do not come from some rulebook containing the master key for all locks. The ethical action in

---

[114] Tian Zhen, "Ming dao dabian shuo," 3–4. For different versions of the hadith, see http://en.islamtoday.net/node/1691.

[115] Ibid.

Confucianism is conveyed instead by situational contexts and is relative to one's

particular role within a specific situation.[116] A virtuous person follows only what is right

and appropriate at a given time and context. In a similar vein, a translation of a text

appeared in *The China Muslim*, written by Hugo Hamid Marcus, a European convert and

Kantian philosopher affiliated with the European Ahmadi mission. Marcus' ideas of

Islam seemed to confirm the idea that Islam was in line with Wu's reading of

Confucianism in its adaptability to changing circumstances. For Marcus, Islam refrains

from giving absolute rules for obedience and allegiance:

> Criteria of other religions are absolute, while those of Islam are modern—that is
> to say, relative. . . . The middle course between too much and too little. Even
> justice if made use of mechanically can turn into a destructive callousness. . . .
> Islam is the most rational religion; it expects from its followers, above all, an
> independent process of thought in which the right middle course in the conflicts
> of conscience and life in the individual, is left to the believing Muslim, to be
> decided by himself according to the situation and the circumstances of each
> several case. It is only the power of his own decision, which raises man from the
> physical stage to the moral stage.[117]

Indeed, the idea of individual decision-making is central to the thought of Wu

Tegong. Although he often emphasized the need to raise a modern class of religious

---

[116] He referred to the following anecdote in *The Works of Mencius*. Once Mencius was
questioned for being inconsistent for accepting cash from the king of a state in one
occasion and refusing when the king of another state presented it on another occasion.
Mencius contended that he acted right in both cases. The context in which the gift was
presented was different in each case: One was presented when he was about set off on a
journey. It was customary to offer gifts to travelers. On the other occasion, however,
there was no reason for presenting a gift. It was bribery, and superior men do not take
bribes. By referring to this account, Wu Tegong wanted to demonstrate how the correct
act was determined by the context. See the original Chinese text and a translation in
James Legge, ed. and trans., *The Works of Mencius*, vol. 2 of *The Chinese Classics*, rev.
ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895): 215–16.

[117] H. Marcus, "Islam and European Philosophy," *Islamic Review* 8, no. 8 (September
1925): 294–300. For the translation, see "Yisilan yu Ouzhou zhexue," *Zhongguo Huijiao
xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 2 (1926).

scholars, he also did not rule out the role of the individual in making situational decisions concerning what is right and just. Wu Tegong frequently referred to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad where the Prophet stated the importance of seeking knowledge being superior to prayer.[118] For Wu Tegong, when every individual human becomes knowledgeable enough, he will become his own judge to set the criteria to discriminate between right and wrong. Wu Tegong, like other reformist intellectuals, seemed to draw on the Mu'tazila notion of *aql* (reasoning), "which accentuated practical reasoning, to reconstitute a moral self that is more self-reflective and self-regulatory, within the boundaries defined by the Islamic tradition."[119]

The issue of interest occupied a vast amount of space in *The China Muslim*, as it provides an example of how a learned Muslim subject should deal with Quranic prescriptions in the modern world. The space devoted to the discussions on the permissibility of interest, on the other hand, was reflective of the concern that was prevalent among Chinese Muslims. This was a question directed at the religious scholars, who responded in the journals.[120] A few Chinese Muslims brought up the classical Hanafi jurisprudence, which had given permission to the transaction of interest in *dar al-harb* (the land of war).[121] This view of course also led many prominent scholars to question the

---

[118] He quoted the hadith, which appears in orthodox sources as "knowledge being superior to supererogatory prayer," as "seeking knowledge being superior to prayer."

[119] Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition*, 110.

[120] For instance, Wang Shiming, "Gulan yijie. Di er zhan di erqiwu jie zhi erbayi jie" [The translation and commentary on the second chapter 275th to 281the verses], *Yuehua* 4, no. 10–12 (1932); Li Dejun, "Jin lixi" [The ban on interest], *Zhenzong bao yuekan* 3, no. 9 (1937): 8–10.

[121] "Huijiao yu lixi" [Islam and interest], *Zhongguo huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 1 and 3–4 (1926). This is a translation of Ghulam Sarwar, "Islam, Usury, and Interest," *Islamic*

status of China. Was it *dar al-harb*, *dar al-salam* (the land of peace / Islam), or *dar al-aman* (the non-Muslim land, where the non-Muslim rulers guaranteed security to Muslims)?[122] A number of Chinese Muslims relied on the original opinion of Abu Hanifa (the founder of Hanafi School) and his disciple Imam Muhammad, who argued that interest transaction was permissible in *dar al-harb* as these Chinese Muslims were practically disadvantaged in the business world due to the Islamic ban on interest. The prominent *ahong* Ma Zishen, in an article in *Yuehua*, engaged in a detailed analysis of Islamic jurisprudence by referring to many classical sources and sided with the opinion of Imam Shafi, who argued that because the hadith, which permitted interest transaction in *dar al-harb*, was hadith *mursal* (a weak hadith, lacking a chain in its transmission) and therefore could not limit the applicability of a Quranic ban, which should otherwise have universal application.[123] Ma Zishen, in his discussion, uses the methodology of Islamic jurisprudence and comes up with a ruling that is different from the original opinion of Abu Hanifa but not necessarily out of the borders of *ahl al-Sunna*.

Review 8, no. 1 (January 1925). Another article on the issue of interest was Tian Zhen (Wu Tegong), "Liba pingyi" [Discussing the *Riba*], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 3–4 (1926).

[122] This was a question that was not discussed too openly in the sources, probably because of the political sensitivity of the issue. However, a group of influential scholars engaged in a debate by referring to Islamic sources from other centers of Islam. The answer to this question had practical consequences, as in the case of interest transaction. The common argument among Chinese Muslim religious scholars was that China was *dar al-aman*, a category introduced by medieval scholars, as they lived in peace under non-Muslim rulers of China and had no problem practicing their religion. For a discussion, see: Nakanishi Tatsuya, "Kindai chugoku musurimu no isuramu ho-kaishaku: hi-musurimu to no kyosei wo megutte" [Reinterpretation of Islamic law by Chinese Muslims during the modern period: Concerning coexistence with non-Muslims], *Toyoshi Kenkyu* 74, no. 4 (2016): 1–35.

[123] Ma Zicheng, "Lixi" [Interest], *Yuehua* 5, no. 11 (1933): 5–9; no. 12 (1933): 8–9.

Wu Tegong, on the other hand, discussed the permissibility of interest not as a religious scholar, who would refer to classical Islamic sources for legitimacy, but as a free intellectual, inspired by Confucian and Islamic principles. He engaged in independent *ijtihad* as he relied heavily on his own reasoning and contextualized the Quranic rulings. He first explained the context in which interest was banned, arguing that interest functioned like usury in pre-Islamic Arabia and became the tool to exploit the needy. Yet, in the contemporary world, there is a difference not only between interest and usury but also between simple interest and compound interest. The circumstances had changed in the contemporary world. Economic development is impossible without financial institutions, which regulate interest rates to prevent exploitation and injustice. For Wu Tegong, the principle one should follow concerning the issue of interest should be the priority of people's livelihood and welfare. He again selected examples both from Islamic and Confucian traditions to show that a certain level of livelihood is necessary for ordinary people to make morally correct choices in their lives.[124] In the same vein, he argued that if nations do not have modern financial institutions, which function in accordance with the mechanics of modern economy, they will not be able to preserve their independence. In that sense, he cited Turkey and Egypt as models, as both established independent financial institutions without ruling out the legitimacy of interest. The issue of interest was a major concern within the Chinese Muslim community. Wu stated that Chinese Muslims should loan money to revive educational institutions, do

---

[124] He quoted Sufyan al-Thawri, who viewed wealth as the shield of Muslims, making individuals independent from the State. It also makes Muslims more sincere in their belief. On another occasion he quoted Mencius who made a similar comment and argued that ordinary people will not have fixed hearts if they don't have a certain livelihood. See Wu Tegong, "Mingdao dabian shuo" [A theory about the great transformation of the bright way], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuek*an 1, no. 3–4 (1926): 9.

good work, and propagate their teaching. Therefore, Muslims should observe the mean

and choose the right conduct depending on the situation. If you are giving a loan and it

will not benefit the person who demands the loan (for instance, because it is for luxurious

consumption) then it is a crime (*gunah*) to lend to that person even if you are not asking

for interest. If it is urgent for you to borrow money (for livelihood and commercial

enterprise) and the borrower asks for interest, then there is no harm in paying that

interest. Only those who conduct business and who are striving for livelihood can give

and take interest within the limits of generally accepted rate. In that sense, everybody

should become his own judge and decide what is Islamic and proper in his own situation.

There is no fixed solution. The intention becomes essential in determining the

appropriateness of the act.[125]

What Wu Tegong proposed was quite unusual for his era. His Ahmadi sources

were also under attack all over the world. It would be naïve to think that Chinese

Muslims, who were connected to many centers of Islam simultaneously, would not

become informed about the perception of Ahmadiyya by Sunni Muslims. Soon, Chinese

Muslims began to receive letters from Muslims in other parts of the world about the

dangers of Ahmadi thinking. Several Chinese Muslim intellectuals especially criticized

the Pursuit Society for its espousal and propagation of Ahmadi ideas.

---

[125] Tian Zhen, "Liba pingyi," 7–12. Ghulam Sarwar, in his article translated in *The China Muslim*, also concluded that "All deeds are judged by intention. What is the limit these are questions to be decided by each man. . . . General rules cannot be laid down. Everything is relative." Sarwar, "Islam, Usury, and Interest," 28.

Controversial Ahmadi Ideas in Chinese Muslim Literature

The China Muslim writers Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu often praised the reformist

discourse of the Lahore Ahmadi Movement. However, they focused on the methodology

of the Ahmadis and avoided the most controversial aspects of their religious views. In

comparison, the editors of *Zhengdao* were more articulate in their adaptation of the

controversial ideas of the Ahmadis. After their publication of the summary of *The Call to*

Islam by Muhammad Ali, which summarized the activities and ideas of Lahore Ahmadis,

and after the second issue of *Zhengdao* ran a list of the objectives of AAII (Lahore

Ahmadiyya Movement), the Pursuit Society was criticized as being a branch of

Ahmadiyya in China. Although they insisted that the publication of these texts in no way

made them followers of the Ahmadis,[126] their proclamation was not considered

sufficient.[127] The appearance of fierce anti-missionary writings following Ahmadi ideas

in the pages of *Zhengdao*—in contrast to *The China Muslim*—also drew the attention of

missionaries in China, who referred to the Pursuit Society as the Ahmadiyya mission in

China.[128] In 1936, in a special edition of Gu Jiegang's magazine *Yugong* on Islam in

China, Zhao Zhengwu, who became the chief editor of *Yuehua* journal, expressed regret

that the society, established with good intentions, was turned into an associate

organization of the Lahore Ahmadis in China.[129] Zhao Zhengwu's indictment is

interesting as it shows the change in attitude toward Ahmadi ideas in China. As

---

[126] "Gao Musilin shu" and "A.A.I.I. de quzhi he gongzuo," *Zhengdao* 1, no. 2 (1931).

[127] They also published pictures of Ahmadi mosques in Europe.

[128] Isaac Mason, "Muslim Publications in Chinese," *Moslem World* 21 (1931): 408–9.

[129] Zhao Zhenwu "Sanshi nianlai zhongguo Huijiao wenhua gaikuang" [A summary of
China Muslim culture these past thirty years], *Yugong* 5, no. 11 (1936): 27.

mentioned before, in its early years, Ahmadi-affiliated Chinese Muslim intellectuals wrote for the *Yuehua* and were responsible for transmitting their ideas to China in its pages. However, as the editor of *Yuehua* directly challenged the influence of Ahmadiyya in China, Ahmadi influence in the pages of *Yuehua* gradually disappeared.

The following are some of the sensitive issues that caused much distress among "orthodox" Sunni scholars in those years. I analyze how the China Muslim Literary Society, which was praised by Zhao Zhenwu for its great impact, and the Pursuit Society dealt with these issues subsequently. My analysis demonstrates that while the China Muslim Literary Society avoided these sensitive issues, which had the potential to raise much concern among Muslims, the Pursuit Society was less selective in its adaptation of the following Ahmadi ideas. Their direct connection with the Ahmadi organization and their less selective adoption of Ahmadi ideas made them more susceptible in the eyes of Chinese Muslim reformists.

1. Continuation of Divine Revelation

One of the most controversial issues that attracted the attention of orthodox Muslims was the claim of Lahore Ahmadis that revelation in lesser forms continues to exist after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. This idea was expounded in many of the texts written by Lahore Ahmadis although they denied the status of prophethood to Ghulam Ahmad. For example, in *The Religion of Humanity*, Muhammad Ali argued how Islam, in contrast to other religions, did not limit revelation to any age or to any community. He wrote, "The Holy Quran recognizes no limit of any kind to divine revelation, neither with respect to time nor with respect to the nationality of the

231

individual. . . . It regards all people as having at one time or another received divine

revelation, and it announces the door of it to be open now and in the future."[130] In other

sources he made clear, however, that the Prophet Muhammad was the last receiver of

"authoritative revelation." He argued that although there will no more be any prophets,

Muslims will have access to lesser forms of divine revelation for the purposes of renewal

and rejuvenation.[131] Obviously, for Muhammad Ali, Ghulam Ahmad was one among

many other receivers of a lesser form of divine revelation. Muhammad Ali introduced the

concept in the very early pages of his commentary to the Holy Quran. While Wu Tegong

explicitly avoided any mention of Muhammad Ali's interpretation in his commentary, the

translators of *The Religion of Humanity* included the part on the continuation of

revelation in their translation.[132] Since the translation of the book was not exact, as the

translators added and omitted parts from the book at will, their preference demonstrates

their approval of the idea.

2. The Death of Jesus

        Another idea that sparked controversy among Muslims was the issue of the death

of Jesus. Orthodox Muslims believe that Jesus, although appearing to have been

crucified, was not killed by crucifixion or by any other means; instead, "God raised him

unto Himself," and he will descend once again at the end of time as a judge and a caller

to Islam. In advancing this claim, Ahmadis were informed by their rejection of any notion

---

[130] Muhammad Ali, *Religion of Humanity*, 12–14.

[131] Muhammad Ali, *Religion of Islam*, 201–10.

[132] *Heping de zongjiao*, 16–17.

of a miracle that is not subject to the scientific workings of the universe. They interpreted the miracle stories in the Quran by attributing allegorical meaning to them. Thus, for them, Jesus was not exempt from the physical and material limitations that God has designed for human beings. According to Ahmadis, the Quran makes it very clear that Jesus died like any other human being and cannot be alive waiting somewhere in the heavens for the second appearance in this world. He was just a prophet of God who was sent like many other prophets to serve God.[133] The eschatology referring to the second coming of Jesus was taken metaphorically as well. The person whose coming is predicted is not Jesus in the flesh but rather a person who resembles him.[134] Ahmadis believed that Christian missionaries used the eschatology of Jesus' second coming in Islam to prove their own arguments that Jesus is superior to Muhammad. This missionary argument was considered to be extremely detrimental to their defense of Islam. For the Lahore branch of Ahmadis, the belief in the second coming of Jesus also contradicted the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad.[135]

Although Wu Tegong introduced Muhammad Ali's reading of the verses concerning the death of Jesus, he refrained from personal comment on the death of Jesus in his commentary, citing Confucius that "knowledge is recognizing that you know what

---

[133] According to the Ahmadis, Jesus survived the crucifixion and managed to escape to Kashmir in India; he lived there and passed away there when he was eighty-six years old. Ahmadis also questioned the notion that Jesus was born to a virgin mother. They argued that the Quran did not just mention the father of Jesus and that was it. In reality, like all human beings, Jesus was also born to a father and a mother.

[134] Ghulam Ahmad claimed to be the Messiah.

[135] Muhammad Ali, *The Religion of Islam*, 262.

you know and recognizing that you do not know what you do not know."[136] The pages of *Zhengdao*, in contradistinction, were full of references to the Ahmadi sources concerning the death of Jesus. They published Muhammad Ali's famous book, entitled *Muhammad and Christ*[137], in which he expounded the Ahmadi ideas about the issue in the pages of *Zhengdao*. The pages of *Zhengdao* were also filled with quotations from hadith and the Quran to prove that Jesus died a natural death. The enthusiastic adoption in *Zhengdao* of Ahmadi belief concerning the death of Jesus was not accidental. Compared with *The China Muslim*, the editors and writers of *Zhengdao* actively engaged in anti-missionary polemics. The *Zhengdao* became the main media through which Chinese Muslim intellectuals disputed with Christian missionaries in China.

Anti-Ahmadiyya Writings in China

The reference of the *Zhengdao* to Ahmadi sources concerning the issue of the death of Jesus did not go unnoticed among Chinese Muslim intellectuals. Ma Ruitu, in the pages of *Tianfang xueli yuekan*, translated an article refuting the Ahmadi belief that Jesus died like an ordinary human being, written by an Indian scholar named Abdullah.[138] Indeed, *Tianfang xueli yuekan* became the main media in which anti-Ahmadi tracts appeared. Ma Ruitu, the editor of the journal, published two major translations from anti-Ahmadi sources. The first anti-Ahmadi tract published in the journal was written by

---

[136] Analects 2:17. See the original text in Legge, *Confucian Analects*, 151.

[137] Maulana Muhammad 'Ali, *Muhammad and Christ* (1921; repr., Columbus, OH: AAII, 1993).

[138] "Bo Gulamu Maliza zhi Yesu yi si bu fulai shilun" [Refuting Ghulam Mirza on the issue of Jesus died and will not come to the world], *Tianfang xueli yuekan* 22 (1930).

Maulvi Sanaullah of Amritsar.[139] The translator introduced himself as the leader of the

orthodox sect (*zhengzong pai* 正宗派), implying the translator's conviction concerning

the heterodoxy of Ahmadiyya. Sanaullah is an interesting figure within the history of

Ahmadiyya: he was the major spokesman of debates between Ahmadis and non-

Ahmadis, representing anti-Ahmadi circles. He also became the target of Ghulam

Ahmad, who conducted a *mubahala*[140] challenge with Sanaullah, praying that one of the

two, the one who was in the wrong, should die in the lifetime of the one who was in the

right. Since Sanaullah outlived Ghulam Ahmad, the consequence of this *mubahala* has

been taken by anti-Ahmadis as proof of Ghulam Ahmad's heresy.[141]

The second tract translated in *Tianfang xueli yuekan* was from an Azhari sheikh,

Muhammad al-Khidr Husayn, the editor of the monthly journal of al-Azhar, *Nur al-Islam*

(*The Light of Islam*).[142] He was known to be conservative in his upholding of Islam and

wrote texts refuting the innovative and modernist ideas of scholars, including the

secularist views of former Azhari Sheikh 'Abd-al Raziq. The original text refuting

Ahmadi ideas was published in *Nur al-Islam*. What distinguished this text from the

earlier one was that it attacked not only Qadianis but also the Lahore Ahmadi

---

[139] "Yindu Maliza Gulamu Ahamode zhi yiduan xiaoshi" [A short history of Indian Mirza Ghulam Ahmad], *Tianfang yueli yuekan* 3, no. 8 (1931).

[140] A ceremony in which two parties call God's curse down on the party who is not speaking the truth.

[141] Ahmadis, on the other hand, claimed that Maulvi Sanaullah publicly refused to become party to the challenge and that therefore the question of who died first became inconsequential.

[142] "Yindu de jiashengren 'Wulemu Aihamode' ji qi jiaopai 'gediyani'" [The fake prophet of India Ghulam Ahmad and his sect "Qadianiyya"], *Tianfang xueli yuekan* 5, no. 9–10, and 6, no. 1–2.

community, which was gaining ground in China in those days. The author found the Lahori faction of the Ahmadiyya even more dangerous than the Qadiani group. It is easy, he argued, to refute Qadiani beliefs, but the Lahori group is tactful, as they are apt at making their heterodox ideas appealing to mainstream Muslims. For instance, he accused Muhammad Ali of inserting Ahmadi beliefs in the commentary of his literal and seemingly orthodox translation of the Quran. According to Husayn, Lahore Ahmadis were not honest in their refusal of the prophethood of Mirza Ghulam because they hid their real intention behind their doctrine about the continuance of lesser forms of revelation.

Interestingly, the Ahmadi intellectual influence in China also attracted the attention of Muslims from other countries. Hai Weiliang, a graduate of Lucknow University in India, wrote an article in the Indian Ahmadi journal called *The Light* about the Ahmadi influence in China. This article attracted the attention of an Indian Muslim called 'Umar Zakariyya. His letter to Hai Weiliang was published in *Yuehua* in 1935. In it, the author of the letter accuses Ahmadis for their esoteric notions of Islam borrowed from well-known Sufi mystic Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240). His main concern was political, however. He drew the attention of Chinese Muslims to the Ahmadi ideas concerning obedience to their colonialist non-Muslim rulers, the British. The author of the letter argued that Ghulam Ahmad fashioned his beliefs so as to gain British support for his movement. His views about jihad and his call for obedience to the rulers whitewashed British imperialism. Chinese Muslims had to be careful about this handmaid of imperialists, whose missionaries acted as spies serving British interests in independent

Muslim countries like Afghanistan.[143] Hai Weiliang, who had played a crucial role in

connecting Ahmadis to China in his earlier years, became one of the most important

refuters of Ahmadiyya in China.[144] His appreciation of Muhammad Iqbal might have also

played a role in his change of attitude. Iqbal, who appreciated Ahmadi principles in his

early years, wrote a refutation of Ahmadiyya, accusing both the Lahore and Qadiani

branches of not preserving the frontiers of Islam and harming Muslim unity due to their

attempts to make the idea of the continuation of revelation the basis of a socio-cultural

movement.[145]

Conclusion

The political theory of Ahmadis for regulating the relationship between Muslim

subjects and a non-Muslim government carried ambivalent implications for Chinese

Muslims. On the one hand, the Ahmadi doctrine, which validates the legitimacy of any

government—Muslim or non-Muslim—as long as it grants religious freedom to its

subjects, had become influential with Ahmadi-affiliated Chinese Muslim intellectuals

who were eager to cultivate obedience to the rule of Chiang Kai-shek. Yet the British

were imperialists, and China was also threatened by Japanese imperialism. Ahmadi

submission to imperialist powers posed a great problem for Muslims under colonial

---

[143] Hai Weiliang, "Guanyu Ahamadiya jiaohui yige wei jianmian de yindu pengyou de lai xin" [A letter from an Indian friend, whom I have not met, about the Ahmadiyya society], *Yuehua* 7, no. 19–21 (1935).

[144] Hai Weiliang, "Jiadiyani de zhexue tan" [A discussion of the philosophy of Qadianiyya], *Yuehua* 5, no. 27 (1933), 8–10, no. 28 (1933), 6–8, no. 30 (1933): 8–10.

[145] Muhammad Iqbal, *Islam and Ahmadism* (Multan: Aalami Majlisa Tahhfuza Khafma Nubuwwat, 1935).

occupation.

As more prominent Chinese Muslim educators and intellectuals were alarmed by the gradual spread of Ahmadi ideas in China, they decided to turn once again to the Middle East, one of the centers of "orthodox Islam." The most brilliant students were selected, and they were sent to al-Azhar University to be trained in Islamic sciences. The next chapter sheds light on how the Chinese Azharites shaped the Islamic reformist discourse in China.

Chapter 5

In Search of a Pivot: Chinese Muslims and Islamic Reform in Egypt

For the people of our age, overseas transportation means the direct transfer of one person from one location to another. In less than twenty-four hours we find ourselves transplanted into a totally new environment. The "in-between" does not occupy any space in this journey unless we make a conscious choice otherwise. Yet, in the early twentieth century, before air travel became so common, people used to travel via sea; the journey itself (which sometimes lasted months) was a transforming experience, as it was during pre-modern times. The man of the age of steamships most certainly perceived the world in different ways than the man of the age of aircraft. As the steamship stopped at multiple ports for supplies and passengers, the journey itself provided contact with increasing numbers of travelers who offered new visions and opportunities for networking.

The travelogue of Zhao Zhenwu (1895–1938), published in 1933, offers an exemplary narration of travel as a networking activity.[1] Zhao set off for Cairo with the notable *ahong* Ma Songting, one of the founders of Chengda Normal School. Yet, as the pages of the travelogue show, every port they stopped in and stayed at for a few days was as essential as their days spent at their destination in Egypt. Their ports of call included Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombo, Chittagong, and Mumbai, and in these ports they formed the basis of an intellectual and institutional communication. Through these types of travellers' networks, a Jawan Muslim had a chance to learn about the journal *Yuehua*,

---

[1] Zhao Zhenwu, *Xixing riji* [Diary of travel to the West] (Beijing: Chengda Shifan Chuban Bu., 1933).

for instance, and the intellectual exchange between *Yuehua* and *Pembela Islam*, a pan-Islamist and anti-nationalist journal of Indonesia, was made possible.[2]

Zhao Zhenwu was operating within networks already initiated by Chinese Muslim scholars decades previously. His communication in Turkish with a mosque imam in Singapore makes it apparent that his identity as a Chinese Muslim conversant in Turkish was in fact a product of these early networks.[3] Zhao graduated from a school established in the complex of Niujie mosque in Beijing in 1908, where two Ottoman scholars served as teachers.[4] Imam Wang Haoran founded the school with the intention of introducing the teaching methods he had witnessed on a visit to Istanbul in 1906 to investigate modern educational institutions in the Ottoman Empire. Wang was granted an audience with the Ottoman Emperor at which he requested the Emperor's support for reforming Muslim education in China. The Ottoman Sultan, who was promoting a pan-Islamist cause, met his requests; he commissioned two teachers and sent boxes of classical Islamic works to China. Zhao Zhenwu studied Turkish along with Chinese and Arabic —though teaching

---

[2] Zhao, *Xixing riji*, 121–22.

[3] Zhao, *Xixing riji*, 36.

[4] Imam Wang was connected to the Ottoman center through his acquaintance with Muhammad Ali, who travelled in China extensively to sow the seeds of pan-Islamism among Chinese Muslims in 1902. Muhammad Ali managed to convince some Muslim families in China to send their sons to Istanbul for educational purposes. He also provided financial help to the Chinese Muslim community. For the Ottoman connections with the Chinese Muslims, see Abdürreşit İbrahim, *20. Asrın başlarında İslam Dünyası: Çin ve Hindistan'da İslamiyet*; İhsan Süreyya Sırma, *Çin Müslümanları ve Çin'e Seyahat* (Istanbul: Beyan, 2008); Ma Jing and Li Xiaotong, "The Communication between Chinese Muslims and the Ottoman Empire: A Case Study on Imam Wang Haoran's Visit to Turkey," International Congress on "China and the Muslim World: Cultural Encounters," IRCICA, Istanbul, 2014.

of Arabic was very poor[5] — in this school, known as the Hamidiyya Madrasa in the Ottoman sources. Having been trained in the first modernizing Muslim school of China, he was a perfect candidate to pursue transnational Muslim activism.

Zhao Zhenwu and Ma Songting were therefore following the trajectory set by Wang Haoran, but this time the destination was not Istanbul but Cairo. They were now looking for a new pivot around which the legitimacy of Chinese Islam would be secured. The Kemalist secular reforms and the international politics of the new Turkish state, which restricted its interests solely to preserving the nation through an explicit denunciation of any supranational identity politics, had extinguished any remnant of hope among the Chinese Muslims, who were determined to be connected to the core Islamic lands. The prominent religious figures were anxious to keep Chinese Muslim religiosity within the framework of "mainstream Islam." This was necessary to prevent "heterodox" versions of Islam—such as Qadianiyya, with which some prominent Chinese Muslims flirted for a while—from taking root in Chinese soil. They were worried that Chinese Islam would either be assimilated or go astray without the financial and intellectual-religious help provided by Muslims from the heartlands of Islam.

The Chinese Muslim search for a new religious axis coincided with Egyptian strategic moves to orient Egypt as the center of the Islamic world. The abolishment of the caliphate in Turkey offered the desired opportunity to several powerful history makers in the Middle East to fill the vacancy created by the Turks. They began to struggle openly for the position of caliphate, as evinced by the Caliphate Conferences held subsequently

---

[5] Zhao had difficulty communicating in Arabic during his travels. Abdurreşit İbrahim also observed during his travels that Arabic language teaching in the school was not good. See Abdürreşit İbrahim, *20. Asrın başlarında İslam Dünyası*, 93–94.

in Cairo and Mecca in 1926 by King Fuad of Egypt and King Abdulaziz of Hijaz.[6] King

Fuad took advantage of the prestige and centrality of al-Azhar University in the eyes of

Muslims all over the world and presented Cairo as the new center of Islam. Al-Azhar

University, in the meantime, had become a "royalist bastion" due to al-Azhar scholars'

enmity toward both the British and the parliament.[7] In the service of the king, al-Azhar

rectors committed themselves to establishing Egypt as the new center of the Muslim

world. Rector al-Zawahiri, for instance, sought to link al-Azhar with projects around the

globe, sending missions to "China, Japan, Ethiopia, South Africa and other lands."[8] His

successor, al-Maraghi, was deeply preoccupied with the idea of reviving the caliphate in

Egypt. In the words of a Chinese Azharite, the efforts of these two rectors turned al-

Azhar, which had always been an educational destination for Muslims from all over the

world, into a center of "united nations," promising the realization of global *datong* (世界

大同) and eternal peace.[9]

In the 1930s, ten percent of the al-Azhar student population was already

comprised of foreign Muslim students. According to the statistics quoted by Chinese

Azharites, there were Muslims from thirty-six different countries at al-Azhar, numbering

---

[6] For a detailed account of these two conferences, see Martin S. Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

[7] Daniel Crecelius, "Al-Azhar in the Revolution," *Middle East Journal* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1966): 32.

[8] Bayard Dodge, *Al-Azhar: A Millennium of Muslim Learning* (Washington, DC: Middle East Institute, 1961), 150.

[9] Pang Shiqian, "Aiji jiunian," *Qingzhen dadian* 20:368. (This work is reprinted in an edited volume of documents. Future references will be given only for original page numbers, as noted in the edited volume.)

around seven hundred students in 1930s.[10] The Egyptian state and al-Azhar rectors were determined to maintain the university's unique global position. For this reason, when the Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husayni, announced in 1931 that one of the missions of the Congress was to establish an international Islamic university in Jerusalem, the Egyptian authorities and the rector of al-Azhar opposed him vehemently. They feared that a new international educational center might diminish the primacy and centrality of al-Azhar and thus the political importance of Egypt in Muslim eyes. The debate over the Congress was so severe that it had repercussions all over the world, including China. Many articles from different points of views were published in Hui journals. Hai Weiliang, who welcomed the Congress as a serious transnational attempt to unify Muslims, chose to translate an article from India that blamed Western media manipulated by the Jews for presenting the debate as a severe case of conflict demonstrating desperate Muslim disunity. The article communicated the assuring message of the Mufti that the Congress did not have any intention to revive the caliphate or build a university as a substitute to al-Azhar: the university was planned rather as an alternative to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.[11]

Chinese Muslims at al-Azhar

The Egyptian claim to Islamic centrality was well recognized by the Chinese Muslim reformists by the early years of the 1930s. Although the 1930s marked the

---

[10] According to Ma Jian, there were about 9,200 students at al-Azhar, and seven hundred of them were foreigners. "Zhongguo Liuai xuesheng de baogao" [The report from Chinese students who study in Egypt], *Yuehua* 4, no. 10–12 (1932): 34–36.

[11] Hai Weiliang, trans., "Yindu Huimin duiyu shijie Huijiao dahui zhi pinglun" [Indian Muslims evaluation of World Muslim Congress], *Yuehua* 4, no. 22–24: 32–35.

beginnings of institutional communication and exchange between al-Azhar and Chinese

Muslims, there had been many individual cases where Muslims from China visited and

studied at al-Azhar. These included Ma Dexin (1794–1874), who travelled in the Middle

East extensively and studied at al-Azhar for seven years; Wang Haoran, who had the

audience with the Ottoman sultan; and Wang Jingzhai and Ma Hondao, who also visited

Cairo in the early 1920s. Imam Wang Jingzhai played a crucial role in building the initial

contacts with the Azhari *ulama*, making the presence of Muslims in China publicized in

Egypt through mass media for the first time.[12] Furthermore, when the first Chinese

student delegation arrived at al-Azhar in 1932, they found out that there were already two

Muslim students from China, each of a mature age of over fifty. One was from Xinjiang,

probably an Uyghur with no knowledge of Chinese; the other man was from Gansu and

had been studying at al-Azhar for about eight years. The Chinese students were surprised

by the fact that this man from Gansu had already forgotten 80–90% of his Chinese. These

earlier students, obviously, were at al-Azhar for individual religious development and had

no intention of pursuing any career in China. The delegations sent in the 1930s and '40s,

on the contrary, had a social mission. They were there to connect China to Egypt and to

acquire the necessary education to lead in the Chinese Muslim community.[13]

  The arrival of the Chinese Muslim student delegation became a media event as

was expected. Chinese Muslims were eager to publicize the existence of Muslims in

China. The strong conviction that Chinese Muslims held about the size of their

---

[12] Benite, "'Nine Years in Egypt," 105–28.

[13] Ma Jian and Na Zijia "Zhongguo liuai xuesheng de baogao" [The report of the students studying at al-Azhar] *Yuehua* 4, no. 10–12 (1932).

population, also confirmed by the ambassador of China in Cairo as fifty million,[14] had a

huge sentimental effect among Muslims in Egypt. As was often mentioned by Chinese

Muslim students, many Egyptians were not even aware that China had any Muslim

population at all. Leading journals and newspapers rarely reported on Chinese Muslims.

One exception was the series of articles published by *al-Manar* in 1912, mainly translated

from journals published by Muslims in Russia.[15] *Al-Manar*'s interest was not

coincidental, however, as Rashid Rida, the editor-in-chief of the magazine, was trying to

establish a "school of propaganda and guidance" in Istanbul in the same year. The society

was expected to educate Muslim missionaries who would counter Christian attacks

against Islam.[16] The school, which opened in 1912 in Cairo, was intended to recruit

students from abroad, including China. Although there is no evidence of any Chinese

students in the school, Rida's transnational mission produced the first detailed accounts

of Chinese Muslims in modern journals of Egypt. In the 1930s, the existence of Chinese

Muslims became a familiar topic in scholarly circles. In 1940, 28 out of 613 international

---

[14] See the ambassador's preface in Pang Shiqian [Tawadu], *al-Sin wa-l-Islam* [Islam and China] (Cairo: Muslim Brotherhood Islamic Printing and Publishing House, 1945).

[15] Inayatallah Ahmadi, "al-Muslimu al-Sin" [Muslims of China], *Al-Manar* 15 (1912): 550–52 and 692–94; "al-Muslimu al-Sin fi Manshuriya" [Muslims of China in Manchuria], *Al-Manar* 15 (1912): 233–34; Inayatallah Ahmadi, "al-Muslimun fi al-Sin jami'iyya Islamiyya fi Bakin" [Muslims of China: An Islamic society in Beijing], *Al-Manar* 15 (1912): 790–97; "Shay' min 'awai'd Muslimi Al-Sin al-diniyya" [Something from the habits of the Muslims in China], *Al-Manar* 15 (1912): 550–52; Inayatallah Ahmadi, "Ahwal Muslimin al-Sin," [Conditions of Muslims in China], *Al-Manar* 16 (1912): 63–64.

[16] Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muḥammad 'Abduh* (London: Oxford University Press, 1933), 197–98.

students were Muslims from China.[17] Consequently, articles, speeches, and books published about Chinese Muslims and their conditions flourished. These texts, often authored by Chinese Muslims, were sponsored and publicized by well-known and respected religious figures of Egypt.[18] Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib, of the *al-Fath* journal, and Hasan al-Banna, the leader of the Ikhwan movement, were both closely connected to the Chinese Muslim Azharites.

For Muslims struggling with an inferiority complex in an age of European domination, the existence of a Muslim community in China that still preserved the central tenets of Islam was a reminder of the perseverance and power of Islam in spreading to the farthest corners of the world. Chinese Muslim students were aware of the role their existence played in the Muslim psyche. They were also eager to direct the attention of Muslims in the Middle East to the other "zones"[19] of Islam, challenging maybe for the first time the peripherality of non–Middle Eastern regions. Shifting the criteria for defining the concentration of Muslims in a given region from one of percentage to one of total population, Pang Shiqian, an Azharite himself, demonstrated that the Muslims of the Far East and South Asia combined to make up two-thirds of the total Muslim population.

---

[17] Pang Shiqian, "Aiji jiunian," 11.

[18] Ma Jian's *Islam in China* was published by Salafiyya Publishing House, founded by Muhibb al-Din al-Khatib, who also published the *al-Fath* journal. Al-Khatib also authored the preface of the book. Pang Shiqian's *Islam and China,* on the other hand, was published by the Muslim Brotherhood Islamic Printing and Publishing House. The preface of Pang's *Islam and China* was authored by the leader of al-Ikhwan, Hasan al-Banna. See Muhammad Makin, *Nazrah jami'ah ila tarikh al-Islam fi al-Sin wa-ahwal al-Muslimin fiha* (Cario: Al Matba'ah al-Salafiyah, 1934), hereafter shortened as *al-Islam fi al-Sin*.

[19] Dru Gladney was the first to adopt Lila Abu-Lughod's "zones theory" as she applied it to the anthropology of the Arab world to China. See Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*, 23.

This meant that more Muslims were living outside of the "core" Muslim lands of the Middle East.[20] They also often stated how the Chinese Muslim population was much larger than that of most countries in the Middle East. In the eyes of Chinese Muslim intellectuals, if such a huge population was ignored, there was no hope for Muslims to restore the past glory of Islam.

In his *Islam in China*, published in Arabic in 1934, Ma Jian praised Chinese Muslims for keeping on the "correct path" of *ahl al-sunna* despite being in isolation for centuries, which was in his words like "living in a different planet."[21] He assured his Arabic audience that Chinese Muslims had never been influenced by teachings outside of "mainstream Islam," such as Shia, Ismailliyye, Babism, or Qadianiyya[22]. However, Ma Jian admitted that the survival of Chinese Muslims was at a critical threshold. There were several reasons behind the decline of Islam in China. First, many Chinese Muslims held superstitious beliefs originating in *isra'illiyat*—the Jewish and Christian sources. Furthermore, he argued, minor differences in the practice of Islam had the potential to stir up severe conflicts between different Muslim communities.[23] Ma believed that the condition of Muslims was further worsened by the attitude of the Chinese government in Nanjing, determined to "extinguish the light of Islam in China" in order to complete the assimilation process of the Hui within the Han. He noted that if Muslims of the Islamic heartlands continued to ignore Chinese Muslims, Islam in China, the source of glory for

[20] Pang, "Aiji jiunian," 54.

[21] Ma, *Al-Islam fi al-Sin*, 27–28.

[22] I think he wanted to make a distinction between Qadianiyya and Lahore Ahmadiyya and he on purpose specifically used the term Qadianiyya and not Ahmadiyya.

[23] Ma, *Al-Islam fi al-Sin*, 38.

umma, would be extinguished. He complained that the Muslim intellectuals paid even more attention to Europe and the Americas, as evidenced by the number of their visits to these continents.[24] His mission was thus to direct the attention of Muslims to the East, to other "zones of Islam."

For Ma Jian, like almost all other Chinese Muslim intellectuals concerned about the fate of Islam, education was the only path that would rescue Muslims from going astray. Muslim reformists have often vacillated between revivalism centered on education and reform realized through political activism. But top-down reform involving the transformation of the state, as sometimes prioritized by the Salafist movement, could never have been an option in the case of China. Therefore, Chinese Muslim intellectuals were determined to revive Islam through the educational transformation of the individual. However, the financial backwardness of Chinese Muslim communities had initiated a vicious circle, as the establishment of new educational institutions required substantial funding and intellectual support. Lacking the resources themselves, they once again looked for external help. Chinese Muslim reformists turned this time to King, who was interested in mobilizing non-Egyptian Muslims for his cause. They requested financial support for education, petitioned al-Azhar to increase the number of Chinese Muslim students accepted to the university. They requested teachers and Islamic classics to be sent to China. They also asked the king to provide the students with stipends so that they had no livelihood problems. The king responded positively, sending two scholars to China who became teachers at Chengda Normal School. He also donated 441 books,

---

[24] Ma, *Al-Islam fi al-Sin*, 43–44 and 51.

which made the foundation of the King Fuad Library in China in Beijing. A printing machine sent from Egypt also hastened the publication of Arabic material in China.

When Chinese Muslims turned toward Egypt for support, they were indeed imagining a future of Chinese Islam as a center in itself and not as a perpetual imitator of Egyptian Islam.[25] When, for instance, Zhao Zhenwu compared the scale of the library in Cairo with the libraries founded by Muslims in China, he was expressing not his admiration for Egyptian Muslims but his disappointment with Chinese Muslims, as he commented that fifty million Chinese Muslims had none of the large libraries that Egypt of ten million Muslims had.[26] For Ma Jian, on the other hand, the reason to send students to al-Azhar was to educate their own *mujtahids*, who would have their own "independent understanding of the Quran and Sunna"[27] so that they could derive legitimate Islamic rulings suitable to the conditions of China. Ma Jian criticized Chinese Muslims for being imitators (*muqallidun*) in their religious thinking and expressed the necessity of going beyond the imitative mindset.[28]

Chinese Muslim Azharites, however, approached Egyptian modernity critically and selectively. In none of their writings about Egypt could one find the level of admiration expressed by Chinese Muslims toward Turkey. They also continued to follow from within Egypt the alternative paths Muslims took in other Muslim lands. Azharites often wrote about Turkish modernity and legitimized Kemalist reforms from an Islamic

---

[25] Ma, *Al-Islam fi al-Sin*, 33.

[26] Zhao, *Xixing riji*, 156.

[27] Ma, *Al-Islam fi al-Sin*, 86.

[28] Ma, *al-Islam fi al-Sin*, 33.

perspective.[29] Chinese Azharites' choice at a time when so many Egyptian religious

scholars considered the Kemalist reforms heretical clearly demonstrates that Chinese

Muslims were selective in their choice of what Egypt offered, as multiple versions of

religious understanding and conflicting political stances were available there. Al-Azhar

University was the primary arena for and target of these severe religious and political

debates.

When the Chinese Muslims were studying at al-Azhar from 1932 to 1949, al-

Azhar was still in the process of a "tedious and hard fought"[30] reform process, which

began as early as the 1870s. The reformists were persistent in transforming the madrasa,

which was "by most accounts an administrative mess,"[31] into a modern university by

including modern courses in the curriculum and reorganizing the system by introducing

diplomas and faculty ranks. This structural reorganization took place as a result of

prolonged negotiations between the reformists and the conservative scholars of al-Azhar,

who were worried about any change that could potentially undermine their positions as

religious authorities.[32] Many laws were issued between 1936 and 1959, but the

substantial changes could not be put into practice. The changes effected tended to be of

---

[29] Hai Weiliang, "Aiji ren yanzhong de xin Tuerqi" [New Turkey in the eyes of Egyptians], *Yuehua* 4, no. 13 (1932); Hai Weiliang, "Tuguo gaiyong Tuwen Gulan zhi bangke zhi pinglun" [A discussion of the use of Quran in Turkish and the recitation of Adhan in Turkish], *Yuehua* 5, no. 22 (1933). Also see Ding Zhongming, "Qimaer yu Yisilan," *Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huibao* 5, no. 6 (1942): 8–9.

[30] Crecelius, "Al-Azhar in the Revolution," 34.

[31] Indira Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 2.

[32] For an analysis of the negotiations between the reformists and the conservatives, see Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism*.

little importance or consequence.[33] Even the reform-minded rectors of the 1930s, al-Zawahiri and his successor, al-Maraghi, who was regarded as an heir of Muhammad 'Abduh, fell short of introducing any substantial change.

It was al-Zawahiri who passed the first comprehensive al-Azhar reform law since 1908. The law divided al-Azhar into two sections: "a general section, which was open to everyone [and followed the traditional patterns of learning of al-Azhar], and a higher section for specialized training, which was to encompass three faculties (law/*sharia*, theology/*usul al-din*, and language), access to which was restricted."[34] This newly established higher section was to follow the modern standards of higher education. However, even "with the new structure, the training of the 'ulama' did not change, for the old textbooks were not replaced, nor were the teaching methods thoroughly modified—it was, as it were, a case of old wine in new bottles."[35] The reformists were not contented as they realized that the new al-Azhar law did not mention the concept of *ijtihad*, the pillar of Islamic reform. The reformists were eager to educate a new type of religious scholar who had the qualifications to directly refer to and interpret the original sources of Islam. This obviously entailed deemphasizing the "accumulated commentaries, super commentaries and glosses that had come to block the direct access to the theological sources."[36]

---

[33] Dodge, *Al-Azhar*, 152–53.

[34] Rainer Brunner, "Education, Politics, and the Struggle for Intellectual Leadership: Al-Azhar between 1927 and 1945," in *Guardians of Faith in Modern Times: 'Ulama' in the Middle East*, ed. Meir Hatina (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 122.

[35] Brunner, "Education, Politics, and Struggle," 123.

[36] Brunner, "Education, Politics, and Struggle," 113.

Reformist opposition to al-Zawahiri's rectorate increased on account of his close connections to the political authorities, which grew unpopular after the dictatorial ambitions of the new Prime Minister, Ismail Sidqi (appointed by King Fuad), became clear. Al-Zawahiri silenced the opposition by ousting seventy reformist scholars and teachers from al-Azhar.[37] When al-Maraghi eventually assumed the office in 1935, the reformists were delighted. Indeed, al-Maraghi had close relations both with the *al-Manar* circle, led by Rashid Rida, a disciple of Muhammad 'Abduh, and the Muslim Brotherhood, led by Hasan al-Banna. However, even during al-Maraghi's rectorate, the reforms remained "cosmetic."[38] Substantial reform at al-Azhar would be introduced only during the rectorate of a liberal-minded scholar, Mahmud Shaltut, who assumed the office in 1958.

Chinese Muslims often lauded al-Azhar University in their writings for being the first institution of higher education in Muslim territories, and they acknowledged Cairo as the center of Islam.[39] Yet, a close investigation of the articles written by the Chinese Azharites on al-Azhar reveals that they neither held excessively extolling views of the university nor were willing to wade into the conflict concerning its reform. They avoided any critical language and offered only dry descriptions of the structure of al-Azhar, in which they often highlighted the duality of its system. The only exception was Pang Shiqian's account of al-Azhar entitled "Al-Azhar needs reform," in which he briefly explained how the reformist rector al-Maraghi's reform attempts were prevented by the

---

[37] Brunner, "Education, Politics, and Struggle," 124.

[38] Brunner, "Education, Politics, and Struggle," 134.

[39] Pang Shiqian, "Aiji jiunian," 15; Tian Pu, trans., "Aiji shi Huijiao shijie de zhongxin" [Egypt is the center of the Islamic world] *Yuehua* 12, no. 28–30 (1940).

conservative faction.[40] Interestingly, the only open criticism of al-Azhar by Chinese

Azharites is found in the Christian missionary newsletter, *Friends of Moslems*, according

to the account of a missionary based in Cairo. The tone of the missionary is rather

hyperbolic. It, however, reflects the dissatisfaction of some of the Azharites:

> As to the Chinese young men, they are deeply disappointed and discouraged. You can realize exactly why. They thought they were coming to something modern, vital, progressive and forward looking. You know what they have found, even with the superficial reformation processes of the Azhar, which does not change its ultra-conservative character at all. They are unable to make any move whatever, since the Ulema and the King, and Wakfs Administration have placed them in such great obligation and are supporting them entirely. They would flee out of Egypt, or abandon the Azhar if there were any provision for them elsewhere but there is not. Their leader who brought letters of introduction from China for us is a very fine young fellow, and it is distressing to see how completely he and they have been deceived and misled.[41]

By and large, however, Chinese Azharites avoided any mention of the contentious

reform of al-Azhar because it would be against the *maslaha* (public interest). They were

promoting unity, and it would do no good to bring the ongoing conflicts over Islam back

to China to subvert that ultimate purpose. As Ma Jian emphatically stated, their mission

was to resolve the conflicts that disintegrated the Chinese Muslim community. Any

negative evaluation of al-Azhar could also endanger the status and authority their

diplomas would eventually grant them in China.

As Azharites often highlighted with much concern, the Muslim community in

China was divided along quasi-sectarian lines since the beginning of the eighteenth

century. The arrival of new scripturalist-salafist teachings with a strong anti-Sufi attitude

---

[40] Pang, "Aiji jiunian," 65.

[41] A Missionary in Cairo, "The Chinese Students at Al Azhar," *Friends of Moslems: The Quarterly Newsletter of the Society of Friends of the Moslems in China* 8, no. 1 (January 1934): 9.

targeted well-established traditional and Sufi communities in northwest China. When these new teachings arriving from the Middle East challenged the socio-religious and economic status quo, the ensuing conflicts among different Muslim groups often culminated violently. Often the last straw instigating armed clashes was a controversy over a minor matter, such as the format of performing *dhikr*—one community advocating for silent *dhikr* and the other for loud *dhikr*. These conflicts between religious groups in turn often morphed into large-scale rebellions against the Qing state, which put an end to rebellion through violent measures.[42] In time, as Ma Jian complained to his Arabic audience, the number of "trivial issues" increased and continued to divide the Chinese Muslim community to the extent that members of different religious teachings built their own mosques and even refused to intermarry.[43] The Azharites were willing to put an end to these conflicts by saying the last word with the authority they would gain from al-Azhar.

Some leading scholars in China also established contact with Egyptian reformist circles and requested *fatwa* directly to resolve some of the religious controversies. One important journal, which often sought legitimacy from Egypt, was *Tianfang xueli yuekan*. *Tianfang xueli yuekan* was a leading journal of Chinese Muslims published in Guangdong, in southeast China, by a prominent reformist scholar, Ma Ruitu. The journal was dedicated to publishing translations from many different contemporary sources of Islam: these included the *al-Manar* of Rashid Rida; *Nur al-Islam*, the official journal of

---

[42] For an account of the history of Chinese Muslim rebellions, see Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*.

[43] Ma, *Al-Islam fi Al-Sin*, 27. In contemporary Northwest China, different religious circles continue to build their own mosques.

al-Azhar University; and various Ahmadi journals, before they realized that Ahmadiyya was considered heterodox by Egyptian scholars. The journal, however, fell into conflict on debates, which were serious issues in northwest China, such as the legitimacy of *mawlud* (celebrations of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad or a saint) and paying money to the *ahong* who recites Quran on behalf of others. The debate resulted in the termination of the journal. A group of journalists led by an Indian Muslim, Ismail, began to publish the *Mumin* in early 1931 after they left *Tianfang xueli yuekan*. The other group resumed the publication of the *Tianfang xueli yuekan* after nine months. The controversy, which led to division in the journal, had repercussions all over China. It was a big disappointment for the Chinese Muslim reformists, who observed how even the revivalist intellectual-scholars could fall into severe conflict due to the "trivial matters of religion."[44]

Ma Ruitu, the editor-in-chief of *Tianfang xueli yuekan*, sent letters to *al-Manar*, a journal edited by Rashid Rida, which already carried transnational influence as it circulated all over the Islamic world.[45] In his first letter, he introduced the condition of Islam in China and asked to buy a copy of the journal. His letter lamented that Muslims of China were beset by weakness and passiveness because they were either not practicing

---

[44] Zhao Zhenwu, "Tianfang xueli yuekan fasheng jiufen de ganxiang" [My feelings about the dispute that arose in *Tianfang xueli yuekan*], *Yuehua* 2, no. 34 (1930): 4; "Tianfang xueli yuekan fasheng neihong hou benbao suo jiede de yilun" [The discussion this journal engaged in after the insider dispute that arose in *Tianfang xueli yuekan*], *Yiguan*g no. 39 (1931).

[45] For the transnational influence of *al-Manar*, see Stéphane A. Dudoignon, Komatsu Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi, eds., *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, and Communication* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

Muslims or were ignorant imitators who did not have any understanding of the Quran and the hadith. He also asked to buy the journal. He wrote:

> Oh, my master, the religion of Islam in China is entering a period of weakness and passiveness, and this weakness is to be noticed strongly from day to day. There is neither might nor power except with Allah. The reasons for this are that the Muslims of China, most of them, are not religious, and they are ignorant of the science of Islam, Quran, hadith. Also, they neglect the prayer and ordinances of Islam (*fara'ds*). Furthermore, the majority of people do not know the reality of faith (*iman*), and they are simply imitators. . . . They are only busy with reading Quran depending on other people; however, they ignore the Islamic sciences, do not read the Islamic sources carefully, and do not preach Islamic law.
>
> I (the poor man) lament that religion has become estranged in China. I (besides other brothers) established an Islamic journal, which is translated into the Chinese language. We kindly ask for your help that you sell us monthly copies of your journal; our intention is that we translate it into the Chinese language. . . . The journal *al-Manar* is like a sun.[46]

In the following months, Ma Ruitu sent another letter, this time asking for *fatwa* on the contentious issues that not only divided the Muslim community in China but had also led to the conflict within his journal.[47] His first question was concerning the status of China in Islamic jurisprudence. He wanted to know if China could be considered *dar al-Islam* because Muslims were born there. The answer to this question was critical with respect to the applicability of Islamic law in non-Muslim regions, as I have shown in the previous chapter on the debate about interest transactions. In another question, he inquired about some Indian Muslim communities, who claimed that they did not stick to any of the four schools of jurisprudence because these four schools conflicted with each

[46] "Risala Muhima min al-Sin fi hal man fiha min al-Muslimin" [An important letter from China on the situation of Muslims there] *Al-Manar* 31, no. 1 (May 1930): 75–76. As many of the other Chinese Muslims, Ma Ruitu here seems to complain about the way Chinese Muslims treated the Quran. They were accused of using the Quran as if it were a talisman.

[47] "As'ila min Qawandan al-Sin li'ahad al-'ulama' wa ashab al-suhuf" [Questions from Guangdong in China from a religious scholar who owns a journal], *Al-Manar* 31, no. 4 (October 1931): 270–78.

other and even contradicted some hadith. This question of Ma Ruitu was obviously an attempt to determine the legitimacy of religious communities like Ahmadiyya. Ma Ruitu was worried not only about the infiltration of "heterodox" ideas into China but also about the speed of transformation that was taking place in Chinese Muslim community. Muslim women, who imitated the manners of non-Muslims and went shopping without headscarves, was another question that troubled him. He wanted to know if this was a big sin or a small sin according to the ruling of the Hanafi School. As these questions show, he was trying to draw the "legitimate" borders of Islam by getting the opinion of an eminent scholar of Islam, who had transnational reputation.

Ma Ruitu also raised three questions that were more about the particularities of religious practice. He inquired about the permissibility of paying money to the imam who reads Quran on behalf of others and about the dispute over the method that determines the start of Ramadan.[48] When Ma Ruitu requested *fatwa* from *al-Manar*, *al-Manar* scholars were in conflict with the leading *ulama* of al-Azhar over very similar issues that troubled Chinese Muslims for so long, especially the ones concerning Sufi practices. Al-Azhar rector al-Zawahiri, who had Sufi connections himself, legitimized the Sufi cult of graves, the Sufi belief in intercession (*tawassul*), and the *mawlud* celebrations.[49] Rashid Rida's famous debate with Yusuf al-Dijwi, a high-ranking al-Azhar scholar, over "the existence of angels or jinn, prophetic magic and the compatibility of religious concepts

---

[48] He also asked about the permissibility of installing gold teeth.

[49] Dirk Boberg, *Ägypten, Naǧd und der Ḥiǧāz: Eine Untersuchung zum religiös-politischen Verhältnis zwischen Ägypten und den Wahhabiten, 1923–1936, anhand von in Kairo veröffentlichten pro- und antiwahhabitischen Streitschriften und Presseberichten* [Egypt, Najd, and Hejaz: An inquiry into the religiopolitical relationship between Egypt and the Wahhabis, 1923–1936, based on pro- and anti-Wahhabi pamphlets and press reports published in Cairo] (Bern: P. Lang, 1991), 158–64.

with the modern view of the world,"[50] also evinces how theological squabbles divided the religious community of Egypt. Rida accused al-Azhar of perpetuating Sufi innovations in Islam and superstitious beliefs that were against the rationalist basis of Islam. It is difficult to know if Ma Ruitu was informed about these debates before he asked for *fatwa* from *al-Manar*. But as is shown by the selection of source articles in the Chinese Muslim journals—including *Tianfang xueli yuekan*—he would be unwilling to reflect the intensity of the debate in China. The choice of articles both from *al-Manar* and the al-Azhar journal *Nur al-Islam* in reformist Chinese Muslim journals shows that they were not that concerned about the conflict between these two journals, but rather were more interested in selecting articles that would provide further legitimacy to their already-formed opinions.[51]

Chinese Muslims and the Muslim Brotherhood

The gap between the *al-Manar* circle and the al-Azhar community gradually diminished as Rashid Rida stylized Muhammad 'Abduh "as a beacon of Sunni orthodoxy"—the Hanbalite version, yet still with Salafist touches to it.[52] Many, including large numbers of Azhari *ulama*, gradually endorsed 'Abduh's *Risalat al-Tawhid* (Treatise on Divine Unity), which they had initially excoriated for containing a number of serious

---

[50] Brunner, "Education, Politics, and Struggle," 128.

[51] Pang Shiqian, for instance, translated al-Dijwi's English publication named *Message of Peace*. Youssef El-Digwy, *Messages of Peace: A Treatise on Islam* (Cairo: Government Press, 1936).

[52] Oliver Scharbrodt, *Islam and the Baha'i Faith: A Comparative Study of Muhammad 'Abduh and 'Abdul-Baha 'Abbas* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 156. Also see Adams, *Islam and Modernism*, 186–87.

heretical claims in its extreme emphasis on rationality.[53] In the meantime, the calls for

ijtihad had become widespread, and the proponents of *taqlid* (a legal method that requires

the religious scholars to emulate the established rulings of earlier *mujtahids)*, who

believed in its necessity to prevent chaos within Islamic jurisprudence, lost influential

positions to the reformists, including the rectorate of al-Azhar. Although al-Maraghi, the

reformist rector, eventually could not initiate substantial change, his rectorate marked a

period of rapprochement between al-Azhar, the *al-Manar* circle, and the Muslim

Brotherhood. Yet, this rapprochement was made possible only after the radical

component of 'Abduh's thinking, especially his understanding of *ijtihad*, had also been

toned down in the hands of Rashid Rida and the Muslim Brotherhood.

The second Chinese student delegation arrived at al-Azhar during the rectorate of

al-Maraghi. The connections of Pang Shiqian, the president of the Chinese delegation at

al-Azhar in the 1940s, demonstrate how these students were connected to all of these

different Egyptian religious circles simultaneously. In his memoirs, Pang expressed his

admiration for the ideological stance and organizational capacities of Hasan al-Banna, the

leader of Muslim Brotherhood, who established 1,200 branches and recruited four million

members in fifteen years. He wrote:

> His [Hasan al-Banna's] ideological focus is connecting the world Muslims and
> Arabic countries. He penned the preface of my book *China and Islam*. . . . This
> society is anti-imperialist. Therefore, he refused to take the donation made by the
> British to his society. It is a pure Islamism (*huijiao zhuyi* 回教主義) and promotes
> pan-Islamism (*fan huijiao yundong* 汎回教運動). His slogan is "Allah is our goal
> (*mudi* 目的), Quran is our constitution, Muhammad is our leader (*lingxiu* 領袖).

---

[53] For instance, the publisher al-Manar censured some of the controversial arguments of
'Abduh until 1925. Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism*, 170.

Fighting for the essential way is the command of the God (*wei zhudao er fendou, shi zhuming* 為主導而奮鬥, 是主命)."[54]

Pang was at ease with al-Banna's pan-Arabic ideals because Hasan al-Banna—as he also discussed in his preface to Pang's *Islam and China*—offered a pan-Islamist vision not in conflict with national identities. For al-Banna, ethno-national and territorial identity formations were building blocks not only of a pan-Islamist unity but also universal brotherhood, which he depicted as the ultimate ideal of Islam.[55] Although al-Banna's understanding of universal brotherhood was not pluralistic but rather his dream of a world in which every human being submitted voluntarily to Islam, his formulation— where supranational ideals did not initially conflict with national identities—appealed to Pang. This type of gradualist approach toward unity had its basis in China as well: Sun Yat-sen, whose nationalism was in no way divorced from the Confucian ideal of *datong* (Great Unity), had long appealed to Chinese Muslims.[56]

Although Pang appreciated the pan-Islamist ideals of the Brotherhood, he nevertheless did not welcome the expansion of the Brotherhood to China. Al-Banna's organizational success was a source of inspiration for Pang, particularly given its much-lamented lack among Chinese Muslims, yet he was not willing to let the Brotherhood expand its influence directly to China. When Hasan al-Banna inquired of the ways to

---

[54] Pang, "Aiji jiunian," 68–69.

[55] These pan-Islamists, very much similar to Iqbal's nationalism, saw national unity not as an end itself, as did pure nationalists like Kemal, but as a step toward transnational unity.

[56] Pang translated into Arabic Sun Yat-sen's *Three Principles of People*, which would later become an inspirational source for Libyan Nationalist President Qaddafi. See Audrey Wells, *The Political Thought of Sun Yat-sen: Development and Impact* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 188–98.

open branches in China, Pang kindly refused and stated his plans to establish a Muslim

Fellowship Society of the Far East (*Yuandong Huijiao lianyi hui* 遠東回教聯誼會).[57]

Pang recounted in his memoirs that he worked for this cause while he was at al-Azhar in

collaboration with the Azharites from other Muslim countries of the Far East (Pang

included South and Southeast Asia in his notion of the Far East). He believed that they, as

the Muslims of the Far East, could form an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood.

During his return, Pang communicated with people especially in Singapore, which by

then had already become a microcosm of Asia. There he met with leading figures from

India, Indonesia, and Malaya. They held a meeting with the All-Malaya Muslim

Missionary Society, publishers of *Genuine Islam*, an anti-Ahmadi journal from which

Chinese Muslims also translated articles into Chinese. Also attending the meeting was

Ibrahim Omer, a very influential figure both in Malaya and Singapore, who attracted the

attention of British colonizers of Malaya due to his pan-Islamist activities. In his

meetings with different circles, Pang proposed establishing the Muslim Fellowship

Society of the Far East, with a branch in each Far Eastern country.[58] It is hard to guess if

he could have managed to establish such a non-governmental Muslim organization if

China had followed a liberal track. However, with the establishment of Communist rule

in China, Pang's ideals of forming a supranational Muslim organization morphed into the

third worldist discourse promoted by the Communists.[59]

---

[57] Pang, "Aiji jiunian," 69.

[58] Pang, "Aiji jiunian," 48–54.

[59] John T. Chen, "Re-Orientation," 42–51.

Pang Shiqian on *Ijtihad*

Pang fulfilled one of the major duties expected of students sent to al-Azhar when

he returned from Egypt. In the pages of *Aiji jiunian*, which he wrote en route to China

and published in the very early years of the Communist Republic, he dispensed his

opinions about some of the religious conflicts that led to social division within the

Muslim community. The method he adopted in his attempt to resolve these matters

illuminate how he practiced what he advocated as an Azharite.

Like most of the other Chinese Azharites, Pang was an ardent proponent of

ijtihad. He firmly criticized those who argued that the gates of *ijtihad* were closed by the

four Sunni jurists in the tenth century and pronounced the necessity of reviving it to meet

the challenges of the modern world. He even extended the necessity of using a rational

method to the science of hadith, prioritizing reason over *isnad* (the chain of authorities

attesting to the authenticity of a particular hadith). He criticized over-reliance on the

hadith literature in coming up with legal rulings, and he claimed that Imam Hanifa, who

was the founder of the Hanafi School, used only seventeen hadiths to come up with his

jurisprudential opinions.[60] His extension of the use of reason to all hadith literature

without differentiating between hadith types was in fact a very radical position; even the

beacon of anti-*taqlid* scholars, Muhammad 'Abduh, excluded hadith *mutawatir* (the

hadith transmitted by several chains of narrators) from the category of hadith that had to

be revisited and only proposed the critical reappraisal of hadith *ahad* (hadith transmitted

through a single chain).[61] Pang, however, sought to conceal the fact that he was on an

---

[60] Pang, "Aiji jiunian," 63–64.

[61] Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 37.

extreme fringe of the debate and referred to an al-Azhar scholar, whom he claimed advocated for the use of reason rather than *isnad* to determine the authenticity of hadith.[62] For Pang, it was time to revive the methodology of the four great Sunni imams and stop imitating their rulings. Unless Islamic jurisprudence was revisited through the use of *ijtihad*, the Islamic law would become defunct. Pang was troubled by the Muslim countries that adopted legal codes from the West. It was for him one of the most urgent matters to be resolved before all Muslim communities followed the secular model.[63]

Similar to the Muslim Brotherhood, Pang was agitated by the secularist trends in Muslim countries, which preferred to get rid of Islamic law altogether and replace it with adaptations from Western law. The path that had to be taken by Muslims was to transform Islamic law through introducing *ijtihad*, which would provide new answers to new problems that would enable state officials to incorporate Islamic law into the national legal systems of Muslim countries. Pang was disappointed with the law faculty of al-Azhar, which he viewed as unable to transform traditional Islamic law into a modern legal system. He was looking forward to the law school that the recently formed League of Arab States planned to establish in the following years.[64]

Although Pang endorsed *ijtihad* theoretically, when it came to his practice he approximated at most a "limited *ijtihad*," as he adjudicated by consulting any of the four Sunni legal schools without restricting himself to a single school of jurisprudence. He

---

[62] Pang, "Aiji jiunian," 64.

[63] See his introduction to his translation of Muhammad Al-Khudari, *Huijiao faxue shi* [History of Islamic legislation], trans. Pang Shiqian (Beijing: Yuehua wenhua fuwu she, 1950). Also see Pang, "Aiji jiunian," 68.

[64] Pang, "Aiji jiunian," 68.

sometimes challenged the established views of Chinese Muslims, but he still legitimated

his opinions with reference to those held by classical jurists functioning within these four

legal schools. At other times, he only explained what different schools advocated and left

the discussion without offering his own view. He also avoided dealing with more serious

issues, such as the permissibility of charging interest in business transactions, which has

been one of the biggest controversies within Islamic jurisprudence, including in China,

ever since. I argue that the reason behind his cautious attitude was his willingness to keep

Chinese Islam within the borders of "mainstream Islam" defined by the Sunni school. His

approach to the religious issues in his book suggests that he reserved the task of

independent *ijtihad* for high-ranking jurists.

In that sense, Pang's preference of topics and his methodology were very different

from those of Wu Tegong, the Ahmadi-inspired journalist-intellectual whom I analyzed

in the fourth chapter. Wu Tegong indeed had no concern for remaining within the Sunni

school, and he practiced what one might call "lay individual reasoning" as a free thinker.

Wu Tegong was not educated in religion, and, as such, his engagement with religious

issues would have antagonized even the pro-*ijtihad* scholars of *al-Manar*. As the *al-Manar* circle and the Muslim Brotherhood "naturally gravitated towards the exclusivism

and rigidity of the Hanbalite outlook,"[65] they not only "insist[ed] on being bound by the

classical legists on the important question of change through innovation"[66] but also

monopolized the right of *ijtihad* on novel issues. For this reason, Hasan al-Banna

---

[65] H. A. R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), 34, as quoted in Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 325.

[66] Mitchell, *Muslim Brothers*, 325.

"reserved some of his strongest words for the 'free-thinkers'"[67] like Wu Tegong, who attempted to interpret the faith individually by relying on non-traditional sources.

The Scientific Muslim: The Case of Ma Jian

Chinese Muslim Azharites, as graduates of reformed modern-style schools established by leading Chinese Muslims, brought with them to Egypt preconceived notions concerning reform in Islam. The reformist thinking to which they were exposed in China had enabled them to make educated choices from within what Egypt offered. The Chinese Azharites took on the concerns of reformist thought in China, dealt with similar topics, and translated books that offered answers to the existing debates.

The case of Ma Jian in Egypt demonstrates how Ma's background in China shaped the path he took in Egypt. Ma Jian was a graduate of Shanghai Islamic Normal School, founded by Ha Decheng. Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu, the founders of the Chinese Literary Society in Shanghai, which as we have already seen published a magazine holding one of the most radical expressions of reformist Islam inspired by Ahmadi sources, also played important role in the foundation of the school. Wu and Sha served as teachers: Wu taught Chinese, and Sha taught English. Ma Jian in his *Islam in China* praises the China Literary Society, especially in terms of its reviving the Islamic sciences, spreading the merits of Islam, activating Islamic education, and strengthening Muslims.[68] Ma Jian's connection to Wu Tegong continued after Ma's return from Egypt.

---

[67] Mitchell, *Muslim Brothers*, 326.

[68] In *Al-Islam fi al-Sin,* Ma Jian expressed his concern about the Qadianniyya, but his choice of wording clearly suggests that he distinguished the Lahore branch from the the Qadiani branch. His appreciation of the China Literary Society, on the other hand, shows that he had no concerns about the adoption of Ahmadi ideas in this journal. As I

Wu Tegong asked Ma Jian to offer his religious knowledge and proficiency in Arabic to complete the Quran translation project he initiated in 1926 with Ha Decheng. As I discussed in the fourth chapter, the Lahore Ahmadi leader Muhammad Ali's Holy Quran inspired this translation. Wu Tegong was very interested in introducing a translation that would not only conform to human reason and universal values but would also be widely endorsed by reformist Muslims. Ma Jian, a well-educated and open-minded graduate of al-Azhar, could have provided the type of legitimacy to which Wu Tegong aspired. Their collaboration failed, however, due to their inability to come to an agreement on the linguistic style of the translated text—Wu Tegong insisted that the target language be literary Chinese, which would also reflect the poetic style of the Quran.[69] Ma Jian, however, completed his translation project on his own in colloquial Chinese and eventually produced the most widely read Quran translation in China.[70]

Although Wu and Ma failed to produce a collaborative translation, their attempt in itself manifests their continuing intellectual affinity. Ma Jian must have found the same type of catholicity he was exposed to while he was a student in China in the thought of Muhammad 'Abduh. Universalistic modernism promoted by the China Muslim Literary Society was closest to Muhammad 'Abduh's religious thinking. Ma Jian arrived in Egypt when debates on Muslim modernity were heated; he was surprised by the severity of

mentioned in the previous chapter, one reason for this was because the China Literary Society never openly announced Ahmadiyya as an inspiration. This was in stark contrast to the editorial policy of *Zhengdao*. Ma, *Al-Islam fi al-Sin*, 27.

[69] Sha Hongquan, "Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui fanyi gulanjing de jingguo genggai" [A synopsis of the process of the China Muslim Literary Societies Quran translation], *Zhongguo musilin* 1 (1983): 33–35.

[70] Ma Jian, *Gulan jing* [Quran] (Shanghai:Shangwu yinshuguan, 1952).

conflict between what he called the "old" and the "new." He openly declared his advocacy for the "harmonizers" in a letter he wrote to Ma Fuxiang, the powerful warlord in northwest China we met earlier, who also sponsored Muslim modernist activities in eastern China.[71] Obviously, it was Muhammad 'Abduh who was on his mind when he mentioned the "harmonizers." Ma Jian in that sense made an educated choice among different intellectual currents that existed in Cairo and transferred the ideas of 'Abduh to China by translating his works: *Theology of Unity* (*Risalat al-Tawhid*)[72] and *Islam and Christianity in Relation to Science and Culture* (*Islam wa al-Nasraniyya ma'a al-'ilm wa 'l-madaniyya*).[73] Both of these works of 'Abduh were mainly concerned with rational thinking in Islam. Almost all the translations by Ma Jian, including works of orientalists who held a positive view of Islamic science and philosophy, show how he pursued this interest throughout the years.[74] He included in his repertoire important works of Western orientalists, who wrote about the golden era of Islamic history when science and philosophy flourished. His translations concerning these issues include T. J. de Boer's *Geschichte der Philosophie im Islam* (*Huijiao zhexue shi* 回教哲學史), Khalil Totah's

---

[71] "Zhongguo liu Ai xuesheng de baogao," *Yuehua* 4, no. 10–12 (1923): 34–36.

[72] Muhammad 'Abduh, *Huijiao zhexue*, trans. Ma Jian (Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1934). You can find an analysis of this translation in Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, "Taking 'Abduh to China: Chinese-Egyptian Intellectual Contact in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*, ed. James L. Gelvin and Nile Green (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), 249–68.

[73] Muhammad 'Abduh, *Huijiao jidujiao yu xueshu wenhua*, trans. Ma Jian (Zhongguo Huijiao Shuju, 1936).

[74] When we compare Ma Jian with Pang Shiqian, we see that their interests were different. While Pang Shiqian's interests concentrated on Islamic law and history (as the works he translated demonstrate), Ma Jian tackled questions on rational and scientific thinking in Islam.

Contribution of the Arabs to Education (*Huijiao jiaoyushi* 回教教育史), and Philip

Hitti's *History of the Arabs* (*Alabo tongshi* 阿拉伯通史).[75] Through these translations,

some of which were published by non-Muslim publishing houses, Ma Jian sought to

topple the orientalist view that had been popularized by the missionaries in China.[76]

The advocates of rational thinking in Islam had to struggle hard before their ideas

were endorsed by increasing numbers of people. When Muhammad 'Abduh first

vocalized his thoughts, he was harshly criticized for reviving the "heretical" Mu'tazila

school (from the eighth to the tenth century), which was known for its overemphasis of

reason. Calls for including scientific courses in institutions of Islamic learning were also

met with severe opposition. The traditional religious scholars were deeply worried about

including science classes with religious education, as they observed that increasing

---

[75] Ma Jian continued to publish on similar topics after the Communist takeover in 1949. He published a book titled *Outline of the Islamic calendar* in 1955, in which he discussed the contributions of Muslim scientists in China. Ma Jian, *Huili gangyao* [Outline of Islamic calendar] (Zhonghua shuju, 1955).

[76] Isaac Mason, in an article he wrote for *Friends of Moslems*, carefully delineated the guidelines with which missionaries could approach and persuade Muslims. Among others, one section of the article on the defects of Islam that had to be revealed to the Muslims was called "Discouragement of Intellectual Growth." Mason wrote, "Islam has made but little contribution to the advance of knowledge, modern science, art or invention. The fundamental tenets of the faith of the Moslems discourage independent thought. God has revealed all wisdom and knowledge to man through the Koran, so there is no need to learn from other sources. Wherever modern education has advanced among Moslems, it has been against the inertia, and even open opposition, of leaders of that religion. Islam has been called 'the religion of ignorance,' because of its failure to keep up with the general progress of knowledge." The quotation is from Isaac Mason, "Hints for Friends of Moslems," *Friends of Moslems: The Quarterly Newsletter of the Society of Friends of the Moslems in China* 2, no. 2 (April 1928): 7. Also see Isaac Mason, *A Primer on Islam and the Spiritual Needs of the Mohammedans in China* (Hankow: Religious Tract Society, 1936).

numbers of Muslims turned against religion after they were trained in science in the West. One of the well-known *fatwa*s of Ilish, a proponent of *taqlid*, indeed demonstrates the attitude of the conservative *ulama* toward scientific learning in late nineteenth century:

> It is decreed in the shari'a of Islam that travel to the land of the enemy for commerce is a discredit to the Testament of Faith, and improper conduct, to say nothing of settling down in it or seeking knowledge in it. And it is decreed in the shari'a of the Muslims that the branches of knowledge that are to be sought are those having to do with shari'a and their tools, which are subjects related to Arabic language. More than that should not be sought, but rather should be avoided. It is known that the Christians learn nothing at all of the shari'a subjects or their tools, and that most of their sciences derive from weaving, weighing, and cupping, and these are among the lowest trades among the Muslims.[77]

When Ma Jian was a student at al-Azhar, this type of absolute rejectionism had already disappeared in Egypt. But in the 1930s, almost every Muslim felt the urgent need to catch up with the West: Muslims had to build their own weapons and develop their own technology to meet the challenges the West posed. On the other hand, increasing numbers of Muslims began to feel the need to bring forward scientific proofs to reveal the truth of Islam in order to meet the challenge of naturalist-materialists. However, despite the change in intellectual attitudes toward scientific thinking, the majority of Muslims continued to be cautious regarding the new directions scientific thinking might lead Muslims. This led to the emergence of a defensive and apologetic discourse among Muslims on questions concerning science and Islam.

The traditional scholars of al-Azhar, on the other hand, continued to oppose the introduction of scientific courses into the curriculum of al-Azhar. The reason behind this stance was their desire to preserve al-Azhar as a bastion of religious learning. Scientific

---

[77] Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism*, 97.

learning, they argued, could be conducted at other institutions. The introduction of science courses had the potential to weaken religious education at al-Azhar and thus interfere with its mission of educating preachers, jurists, and imams. As a consequence, science courses were not fully introduced at al-Azhar until the 1960s, and even then they remained peripheral in the curriculum.

Muhammad 'Abduh and his followers contended against this pedagogical philosophy, arguing that al-Azhar scholars were paradoxically promoting a secularist mindset in divorcing religious thought from other critical aspects of life.[78] For the reformist thinkers, knowledge could not be subjected to artificial divisions; science had to be integral to Islamic learning. For 'Abduh, for instance, rational thinking was the marker of Islam that differentiated it from earlier religious systems: the final stage in the evolutionary formation of religions. 'Abduh, very much on the same page with Ahmadis' evolutionary reading of the history of religions, argued that men were like infants when God first revealed religion to the early prophets. Therefore, "religions in that sort of context could not intelligibly relate themselves to men on subtle aspects of consciousness or extend them with rational proofs."[79] God, therefore, revealed Himself through the miracles performed by His prophets and "gave them straight commands and firm restraints."[80] However, as humanity arrived at maturity, God presented himself by calling

---

[78] For the debate over the categorization of knowledge at al-Azhar, see Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism*, 119–21.

[79] Muhammad 'Abduh, *The Theology of Unity* [Risalat al-Tawhid], trans. Ishaq Musa'ad and Kenneth Cragg (Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2004), 167.

[80] Ibid.

on the human mind and intelligence.[81] Therefore, ignoring science and reason would be turning a blind eye to the signs of God revealed through the workings of the universe. Properly understood, comprehending reality through scientific inquiry is itself a religious experience.

The Muslim intellectuals of China, on the other hand, were very much concerned about the "challenge" posed to Muslim thinking by positivist scientific thought. Many were alarmed by the increasing numbers of Chinese Muslim students who distanced themselves from religion as a consequence of the scientific education they received in Chinese schools. Chinese Muslim intellectuals felt the urgent need to meet the intellectual challenge posed by the New Culture Movement of the era, which appealed to the Chinese youth. The New Culture intellectuals did not directly target Islam (which they viewed as a minority religion) in the way they attacked the ancient teachings of China, which they viewed as the biggest impediment before China's modernization and Christianity, which they considered to be the tool of the imperialists. Nevertheless, the anti-religious discourse, which denied any space for religion in the modern world, posed an immediate threat to Chinese Muslim identity. For this reason, articles in Chinese Muslim journals concerning science were mostly written to refute the arguments of the materialist-naturalists. They criticized materialists for promoting a new dogma by attributing omnipotence to science, which paradoxically made them the followers of a religion of scientism. For them, religion surpassed science, as it explained what could not

---

[81] Pang Shiqian also espoused this evolutionary reading of the history of religions. He explained how the ignorant people of Mecca requested the Prophet Muhammad to perform miracles, but God instead sent verses urging the Prophet to emphasize his humanity and appeal to their minds. See Pang Shiqian, "Aiji jiunian," 96.

be explained or what has not yet been discovered by science.[82] They often sought

legitimacy from the writings of the great thinkers of Europe, like Herbert Spencer,

Francis Bacon, and Emil du Bois-Reymond, who, despite their promotion of scientific

thinking, questioned the potential of science in explaining some of the enigmas of the

world. Shan Guoqing, an influential religious scholar, in a speech he delivered at Beijing

Radio Station to introduce Muslim learning to a non-Muslim audience, highlighted the

statements of Thomas Henry Huxley and Francis Bacon, who declared that an in-depth

knowledge of science would make one a faithful believer.[83] Huxley,[84] ironically, devoted

most of his life to combating the notion of organized institutional religion. Yet Shan was

not troubled by this twisted complexity in the thinking of Huxley, a very influential

figure shaping the thought of New Culture intellectuals. Chinese Muslims felt

comfortable extracting Western scientist-philosophers' views about the limits of science

to provide evidence supporting their belief that science and Islam could coexist, even

though many of these scientists were critical of institutional religions. Their willingness

---

[82] Several Chengda students penned articles about the limits of science. For instance, see Yan Ziqing, "Kexue yu Yisilan" [Science and Islam] *Yuehua* 6, no. 17 (1934). Also see Wang Deben, "Kexue yu Huijiao" [Science and Islam] *Chengshi xiaokan* 3, no. 20 (1936): 91.

[83] Shan Guoqing, "Yisilan jiangzuo. Huijiao de xueshu zai Beiping guangbao diantai fangsong" [Lectures on Islam: Islamic learning is on Beijing Radio], *Zhenzong bao* 3, no. 5 (1937): 6–8. Shan quoted Francis Bacon, who said, "It is true that a little philosophy inclineth man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy bringeth men's minds about to religion," in an essay "On Atheism." See Francis Bacon, *Bacon, His Writings and His Philosophy*, ed. George L. Craik (London: Griffin Bohn, 1862), 48.

[84] Shan quoted the following passage from Huxley: "True science and true religion are twin sisters, and the separation of either from the other is sure to prove the death of both. Science prospers exactly in proportion as it is religious; and religion flourishes in exact proportion to the scientific depth and firmness of its basis." See Shan, "Yisilan jiangzuo," 8. The original quote is in Herbert Spencer, *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical* (Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1880), 45.

272

to refer to Western figures rather than Chinese scholars like Liang Shuming, one of the most prominent intellectuals who sought to harmonize religion and science, arose from their intention to find evidence against the New Culture thinkers from the very sources they relied on to promote their cause.

In the meantime, Chinese Muslim intellectuals enthusiastically joined the new discourse on the history of Islamic science. They highlighted what is known as the "golden Islamic age" (from the eighth to the thirteenth century) to reveal how Islam encouraged scientific inquiry that led to cultural and economic prosperity. One central figure Ma Jian introduced to China was the famous scientist-philosopher John William Draper.[85] Draper was also a primary source of inspiration for Muhammad 'Abduh. Draper's best-selling book, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*,[86] in fact promoted the idea that science and faith were in conflict and "evolution was their final battleground."[87] Draper, who became the arch-advocate of the "conflict thesis" in the Christian context, however, held a very positive account of the Muslim liberal attitude toward science in its early centuries. His book became very popular among Muslims and was translated into many local languages. Draper's argument helped Muslims to turn upside down the prevalent orientalist view that Islam was an irrational religion.

---

[85] Ma Jian, trans., "Huijiao xianxian de xueshu yundong" [The Muslim former sages' science movement], *Tujue* 2, no. 1 (1935): 22–24. This is a translation of an article by Farid Wajdi, who introduced and translated Draper's thoughts about Islam.

[86] John William Draper, *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science* (New York: Appleton, 1874).

[87] For the influence of Draper on 'Abduh, see Marwa ElShakry, *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860–1950* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 190–93.

Muhammad 'Abduh made Draper's conflict thesis a building block of his book discussing the positions of Islam and Christianity on science and civilization,[88] which was also translated into Chinese by Ma Jian. In his book, 'Abduh argued that Christianity, not Islam, had opposed rational thinking, as the persecutions of scientists in the tribunals of the Inquisition demonstrate.[89] Islam had preserved science and philosophic inquiry through the Middle Ages and thereby inaugurated the European Renaissance and Enlightenment. "Contrary to Christianity, imbued as it is with mysteries and antirational doctrines," 'Abduh argued, "Islam is a religion that honors reason and research and thus promotes science and civilization."[90] For 'Abduh, Europeans broke out of the Dark Ages when they emancipated themselves from irrational Christianity; on the contrary, Muslim emancipation could not be realized unless Muslims embraced Islam.

Chinese Muslims knew well that the history of Islam in China has always been an essential part of the history of Islamic science. Many notable Chinese families descended from Muslim scientists, who came to serve the Chinese court during the "golden ages." When the compatibility of Islam and science became a matter of global debate, Chinese Muslims relied on their historical advantageous position and brought forward the scientific contributions of Muslims in China as a new topic of interest in China. Ma Yiyu, a descendent of famous Muslim astronomer Ma'iz (Ma Yize), who served at the Royal Astronomy Observatory during the Northern Song Dynasty (960–1127), penned an

---

[88] Muhammad 'Abduh, *al-Islam wa-'l-nasraniyya ma'a al-'ilm wa 'l-madaniyya* [Islam and Christianity in relation to science and civilization] (Cairo: *Al-Manar*, 1902).

[89] Jacques Waardenburg, "The Modern Period, 1500–1950," in *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: A Historical Survey*, ed. Jacques Waardenburg (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 78.

[90] Ibid.

article titled "The Thriving of Islamic Learning" in the famous journal *Dongfang zazhi*, which favorably depicted the role Islamic science played not only in Europe but also in China.[91] Through these writings, Islam—the teaching of the Hui—which was by then mostly seen as the religion of an ethnic group in China, acquired a global meaning as the node of a transnational cultural and scientific network.

These writings on the role of Islamic science in China also challenged the dominant view of the orientalists who viewed the Muslim world as a barrier between Europe and the Far East. This flurry of articles in the 1930s argued that Islam, on the contrary, facilitated interaction between civilizations. The Chinese translation of Henri Bernard's article titled "The Legacy of Islam in China," which analyzed how Muslims made Greek science available to the Chinese, also contributed to the growing body of literature on this subject. Bernard wrote:

> To-day, we realize that the Mussulman world was not exclusively a watertight partition preventing direct exchanges between two civilizations, but that in many spheres, and especially in that of the intellect, it served partially as a link; it was through Islam that China became acquainted with Greek science, at the very time of the Mongol offensive which, in the 13th century, momentarily re-established the unity of Eurasia, and it was also through Islam, that Western Europe could obtain access to the source of the knowledge which the Greeks of the Orient were jealously monopolizing.[92]

Although Eurocentric historiography had often looked at the flow of civilizational knowledge from Europe to the other parts of the world, the Chinese Muslims were

---

[91] Ma Yiyu, "Huijiao xueshu zhi changming" [The thriving of Islamic learning], *Dongfang zazhi* 42, no. 2 (1946): 31–35.

[92] "Huijiao de yichen: Shiwu shiji mo nian Ouzhou he Zhongguo suo cun Huijiaotu xueshu yichan de niaokan" [The heritage of Islam: A broad overview of Muslim learning in Europe and China at the end of fifteenth century], *Xibei chen* 8 (1935). The original is in Henri Bernard, *Matteo Ricci's Scientific Contribution to China*, trans. Edward Chalmers Werner (Beijing: H. Vetch, 1935), 8.

interested in looking specifically at its flow from the East to the West. Su Dexuan, a

Chinese Muslim reformist, for instance, highlighted the role Muslims played as the

carriers of oriental knowledge to Europe. Challenging the commonly held view that

Greek translations in the hands of Arabs was the impetus behind the Renaissance, Su

argued that it was rather the oriental wisdom and technology of the Persians, Indians, and

Chinese, which were transmitted to Europe through the Arabs, that set the Renaissance

into motion.[93]

　　This was the tone of the scientific discourse among Chinese Muslims. However, a

highly romanticized view of Islamic history facilitated the emergence of an apologetic

and sometimes controversial literature that impeded Muslim intellectuals from

developing a modern scientific perspective.[94] They were more concerned about the past

than the future. Muslim intellectuals all over the world, including China, seemed satisfied

with preconceived rhetorical ideas about the compatibility of Islam and science. They did

not, as a result, develop strategies for addressing cases of conflict between established

Muslim beliefs and new scientific theoretical findings. One such case was the theory of

evolution. The depiction of Darwin's theory as one of the most serious challenges to

belief was a recurrent theme in Chinese Muslim journals. The anxiety of many Muslim

intellectuals also attracted the attention of the missionaries. For instance *Friends of*

---

[93] Su Dexuan, "Ouzhou wenming tanyuan" [Exploring the roots of European civilization], *Tujue* 3, no. 12 (1936): 5–6.

[94] Here I am inspired by Fazlur Rahman, who offered a critical account of the "apologetic-controversial" literature and viewed it as "a barrier against further modernist development." Fazlur Rahman, "The Impact of Modernity on Islam," in *Religious Pluralism and World Community: Interfaith and Intercultural Communication*, ed. Edward Jabra Jurji (Leiden: Brill, 1969), 252.

Moslems reflected the general sentiment among Chinese Muslim reformists in a

translation of an article from a Chinese Muslim journal:

> Since the opening of the different treaty ports, Chinese have been much
> influenced by western civilization, and begin to give up their original belief.
> Those who are influenced by the Darwinian theory cry at the top of their voice:
> "Down with religion," but forget that religion holds a very important position in
> civilization. Mere knowledge does not affect civilization much unless it is
> combined with emotional instincts, which owe a great deal to religious influences.
> Now, by what reason can we say that religion is less important than science,
> morality, or arts? It will prove to be useless to oppose religion, which is greatly
> needed by society. What we, educated youths, have to do at present is to place the
> orthodox religion or truth in lieu of heterodox religions. Prof. B. Russell said, "In
> the future we want a new religion." By "new religion" it is meant the orthodox
> religion of truth- Islam, of course. It is absolute nonsense to say that religion is
> mechanical and relatively useful.[95]

Although many were alarmed by the increasing numbers of Muslim youth

abandoning belief as a result of a presumed conflict between their belief and scientific

findings, none—except Ma Jian—took the issue seriously enough to go beyond mere

rejectionism. Ma Jian did not think that the theory of evolution contradicted what Islam

offered with respect to the emergence of intelligent life. He even envisioned a possible

compromise between the theory of evolution and Islam.

Ma Jian's translation of Hussayn al-Jisr's (1845-1909) *Al-Risala al-Hamidiya fi*

Haqiqat al-diyana al-Islamiya wa-haqiqat al-shariʿa al-Muhammadiya (A Hamidian

treatise on the truth of Islam and the shariʿa of Muhammad)[96] should be seen in light of

his intellectual curiosity concerning the question of evolution and Islam. The *Risala* of al-

---

[95] Hu Hsiu-yuan, trans., "Youth and Religion," *Friends of Moslems* 4, no. 3 (July 1930):
4–6. For other examples of Chinese Muslim writings demonstrating concern on the
theory of Darwin, see Su Dexuan "Ke ge ke song zhi 'Huijiao' ji 'Huijiao guo'" [A praise
to "Islam" and "Muslim state"], *Yuehua* 5, no. 1, 2, and 3; and Shi Ru, "Huijiao qingnian
zhi kexue guan" [Scientific notions of Muslim youth], *Tujue* 3, no. 4–5 (1936).

[96] Husayn al-Jisr, *Al-risala al-Hamidiya fi haqiqat al-diyana al-Islamiya wa-haqiqat al-*
shariʿa al-Muhammadiya (Cairo: Matbaatu'l-Hamidiyye, 1904).

Jisr attracted the attention of Muslims from all over the world as it was published in many different languages. Ma Jian's translation was first published in 1938 by the Commercial Press in Beijing,[97] which shows that he targeted both a Muslim and non-Muslim audience. The fact that by 1951 a sixth edition of the translation of al-Jisr's *Risala* was in print demonstrates that it had become one of the most widely read books about Islam in China.

Ma Jian was first drawn to the *Risala* of al-Jisr while he was a student at al-Azhar. Al-Jisr's *Risala* was an early version of the new discourse becoming prevalent among the reformists. If his conclusions were novel, he was also very cautious in his approach. He also held very conservative views concerning matters like slavery, polygamy, and jihad, which seem to have clashed with Ma Jian's already-established ideas. Nevertheless, Ma Jian must have chosen to translate al-Jisr's *Risala* a few years after he translated Muhammad 'Abduh (who had a more radical position with respect to the rationality of Islam) because of al-Jisr's more in-depth knowledge of the natural sciences. Al-Jisr's theological manuscript was distinctive in its coverage of evidence from all kinds of scientific disciplines, including biology, archeology, zoology, paleontology, and botany. His contemporaries hailed him as the reviver of *ilm al-kalam* (Islamic scholastic theology) as he dedicated himself to eliminating doubts arising among Muslims due to the challenges posed by naturalist philosophers. He provided detailed answers to each question raised by the materialists, often using the technique of earlier scholastic philosophers, who engaged in imaginary conversations with their adversaries.

---

[97] *Huijiao zhenxiang* [The truth of Islam], trans. Ma Jian (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1938).

Another important reason why Ma Jian chose to translate al-Jisr's *Risala*—as Ma Jian stated in his preface to the translation—was because al-Jisr was among the first Sunni scholars who directly dealt with the theory of evolution. He provided Sunni Muslims with a road map showing the direction Muslims should take in facing the challenges brought by the evolutionists. Al-Jisr was in fact not an evolutionist. His *Risala* was primarily a refutation of atheistic evolutionary naturalism, which had begun to spread among Muslim communities. However, what distinguished al-Jisr was that, contrary to what would be expected from a Sunni-Sufi Muslim (who often held ultra-conservative opinions on certain issues), he did not completely cast aside the possibility of an evolutionary scheme in Islam. Al-Jisr invoked the foundational understanding of God in Islam and argued that anything is possible within the system created by God—including evolutionary creation—because God is omnipotent.

Although al-Jisr pronounced his belief that humans could not have evolved out of other species because that was what the Quran declared, his advice to Muslims that they should accept the truthfulness of any scientific finding if sound evidence was presented was a paradigm shift for many Muslims. He proposed to Muslims that they attribute allegorical meaning to a Quranic verse if its literal meaning evidently contradicted a scientific finding. The short introduction Ma Jian wrote for his translation of the *Risala* clearly reveals that he was very much excited by this aspect of al-Jisr's work.

The *al-Manar* circle followed in the steps of al-Jisr in questions regarding science and Islam and took a much more positive stance toward the theory of evolution. Muhammad 'Abduh even praised Darwin as the "celebrated natural scientist." Yet, knowing that they walked on thin ice, they always used cautious language. 'Abduh, for

instance, was not totally convinced by evolutionary accounts, as he stated that Darwin's theories were "merely hypothetical."[98] Al-Azhar scholars, on the other hand, were not moderate in their dissidence to Darwin's theory. The possibility of reinterpreting the Quran in light of evolutionary thinking was still a taboo, even after 'Abduh's disciples took influential positions at al-Azhar as the anti-evolutionary *fatwa* written in the late 1950s by al-Azhar rector Mahmud Shaltut, a follower of 'Abduh's thought, attests. His *fatwa* eliminated any future possibility of compromise between Islam and evolution such as al-Jisr had advocated.[99] The subsequent conservative twist in the thinking of this renowned follower of 'Abduh shows how, in time, 'Abduh's ideas were tamed to fit the framework of Sunni orthodoxy and his positive evaluation of the theory of evolution also left in oblivion.

Ma Jian thus brought al-Jisr to China with a specific focus on his views about evolution at a time when evolution was not considered compatible with the creationist views of the Quran. Despite the dominant anti-evolutionist atmosphere in Egypt in the 1930s, the choice of Ma Jian to highlight the matter was a result of the intellectual context he had been part of while he was a student in Shanghai. As I mentioned in the fourth chapter, in 1930s China, evolution theory had already begun to occupy a place, albeit a very limited one, in the Chinese Muslim journals. The founders of the China Muslim Literary Society, Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu (the founders of and teachers at

---

[98] "Abuna Adam wa-madhhab Darwin: Min bab al-intiqad ʿala Al-Manar" [Our father Adam and Darwin's doctrine: Criticisms of Al-Manar], *Al-Manar* 8 (1906): 920, quoted in ElShakry, *Reading Darwin in Arabic*, 176.

[99] Mohammed Ghaly, "Evolution and Muslim Responses to It," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam*, ed. Ibrahim Kalin (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

the Muslim reformist school Ma Jian attended), were not totally dismissive of evolutionary thinking. Wu Tegong, as explained before, was an advocate of social evolutionary thinking. *Zhengdao* occasionally came close to evolutionary thinking in Muslim thought.[100] Ma Jian, nevertheless, was the first Muslim scholar who openly announced the possible marriage of evolutionary theory with Islam. In presenting this idea, he did not neglect to provide it with legitimacy from a well-known and respected Arabic source, the *Risala* of al-Jisr.

What reformist discourse in Egypt offered, however, in terms of opening the margins of scientific inquiry, was still limited. Al-Jisr and 'Abduh made it clear to Muslims that, until science proved otherwise, Muslims were bound by the literal meaning of the Quranic verses. As a consequence, any questioning of the literal meaning of the Quran would be subject to condemnation. Indeed, this attitude ran the risk of killing intellectual curiosity. On the other hand, the increasingly popular belief that the Quran encompassed or was consistent with all kinds of truth prevented the emergence of already-lacking "organized skepticism" and "disinterested scientific inquiry" among Muslims.[101] For this reason, in the Muslim world, including China, Muslims intellectuals preferred to stay on the defensive rather than opening up new fields of scientific inquiry that had the potential to raise doubts among Muslims. They were more interested in

---

[100] See the translation of a writing of Şekip Tunç, "Zai dongwu xitong zhong ren de diwei" [The status of humans within the system of animal world], *Zhengdao* 2, no. 2 (1932). Şekip Tunç was a philosopher from Turkey who promoted the ideas of Henri Bergson on "creative evolution" in Turkey. Although the translation was planned to be published in a series, it was not followed up. A possible reason could be the highly sensitive aspect of the topic. See Şekip Tunç, *Ruhiyat:Felsefe dersleri* (İstanbul:Yeni matbaa,1926).

[101] See Toby E. Huff, *The Rise of Early Modern Science: Islam, China and the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 238.

developing engineering skills as Muslims were in crises of urgency and had no time to

catch up with the degree of Western development. They therefore promoted the

development of technical skills. Ma Jian must have realized the shortcomings of this type

of defensive thinking, as his choice of Khalil Totah's *Contribution of the Arabs to*

Education (1926) suggests.[102] Ma Jian particularly noted Khalil Totah's balanced view of

Islamic/Arab philosophy. A Christian Arab who had a PhD from Columbia University,

Totah narrated the rise and decline of liberal and rational thinking among Arabs by

appraising the achievements of Arab/Muslim philosophers and trying to discern the

intellectual, socio-economic, and political reasons behind its decline. Totah also analyzed

the limits of Muslim rational thinking. He wrote:

> Full educational growth was impossible when learning revolved around the
> defense of an already established dogma, for that was the main object of
> European, as well as Arab, scholasticism. "Ilm al-Kalām," (the science of words)
> *i.e.,* scholastics, had such a purpose. Surely it was the opposite of the Greek idea
> to follow the argument wherever it leads. Thus, it seems that Arabic schools failed
> to discover new truths because they were so engrossed in the defense of old ones.
> Innovation or originality (al-ibtidā') was looked upon with suspicion, with the
> result that the birth of fresh ideas was controlled and limited.[103]

The preface[104] Ma Jian wrote for *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education* shows how

Ma was concerned about the limited scope of non-religious education, including science

classes, even in the reformed Muslim schools of China. The reformed Muslim schools

were built on the traditional mosque education in China, and they also aimed at training

---

[102] Khalil A. Totah, *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926); Ma Jian, trans., *Huijiao jiaoyu shi* (Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1941).

[103] Totah, *Contribution of the Arabs*, 93. See the translation in Ma Jian, trans., *Huijiao Jiaoyu shi*, 137–138.

[104] Ma Jian, trans., *Huijiao jiaoyu shi*, 1–9.

Muslim scholars. Chinese Muslim intellectuals often criticized traditional mosque education for its narrow scope. However, they generally appreciated mosque education as the central pillar of Chinese Muslim identity, and they never questioned the necessity of autonomous educational institutions for the Muslims.[105] Therefore, they were enthusiastic about reforming the mosque schools and spreading them over China through expansion of the existing structure. One central concern of Chinese Muslim reformists about the traditional mosque education was the total neglect of Chinese language and non-religious courses in this system. They therefore added courses on Chinese and English language, science, and the humanities to the curriculum. The constitutive element of reformed education, however, was still Islamic education. Non-religious courses were offered more or less as peripheral subjects in order to keep Muslims connected to the changing conditions of China and the world. The reformists offered an alternative to many Muslims concerned about the inadequacy of mosque education on the one hand and the corruptive nature of ordinary Chinese schools (*putong xuexiao* 普通學校) on the other hand.

Ma Jian deviated from the prevalent view among reformist intellectuals in expressing doubts about the universalization of mosque education in China. He recognized how blurred in China were the borders between "religious education"—"the process of shaping character within the Islamic worldview" by exposing the children "to

---

[105] For instance see Yang Yinsheng, "Huijiao jiaoyu zhi woguan" [My opinions on Islamic education], *Zhenzong bao yuekan* 3, no. 11 (1937); Pang Shiqian "Zhongguo Huijiao siyuan jiaoyu zhi yange yu keben" [Evolution of Islamic mosque education and textbooks] *Yugong* 7, no. 1–3 and no. 4 (1937); Sun Shengwu, "Fazhan Huijiao jiaoyu yu yantao Huijiao wenhua" [Develop Islamic education and discuss Islamic culture], *Huijiao luntan* 5, no. 1 (1941); Su Dexuan, "Wo duiyu Huijiao jiaoyu qiantu de yidian guanjian" [A few opinions about the prospects of Islamic education], *Tujue* 3, no. 4–5 (1936).

all knowledge as a means of understanding the parameters set in the Quran"—and

"Islamic education"—a course of study that "transformed Quranic principles into

formalized legal and moral codes and rituals."[106] Ma Jian stated that the demand for

religious scholars/teachers (*ahongs*) was obviously limited; therefore, offering a thorough

training in religious studies would be a waste of time for many. A basic level of Arabic,

with which Muslim students could recite their prayers, and training in the ritual and

moral conduct of Islam would be more adequate to the requirements of the age. He

criticized reformist schools for their persistence in conducting religious education in

Arabic by using Arabic textbooks.[107] He knew first hand that mastering Arabic required

many years of intensive study, so high-level training in Arabic and Persian could only be

the concern of those willing to pursue a career in religious studies.[108] He argued that

Islamic education had to be offered in Chinese for the sake of intelligibility and

efficiency. Ma brought forward examples from non-Arabic speaking countries, Turkey

---

[106] I relied on the classification of Barazangi. See Nimat Hafez Barazangi, ed., *Religion and Education: The Equilibrium; Issues of Islamic Education in the United States* 25, nos. 1–2 (Winter 1998), as cited in Nimat Hafez Barazangi, "Education: Religious Education," in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0212.

[107] Ma Jian, *Huijiao jiaoyu shi*, "Preface," 5–6. Persian language occupied a central place in the traditional mosque education, as Persian Islamic classics played an important role in the formation of Islamic culture in China. Although there were some who disputed the necessity of continuing Persian education, the Chinese reformist Muslim schools occasionally included Persian in the curriculum to preserve continuity with past Muslim identity. Wang Jingzhai, "Fayang Yisilan wenhua zhi biyao" [The necessity of developing Islamic culture], *Huimin yanlun* 1, no. 1 (1939).

[108] We know from the memoirs of Azharites that, despite years spent at Chengda, many could not master Arabic in China. Therefore they had to take private lessons in Arabic when they arrived in Cairo. Conversely, Zhao Zhenwu, despite being a graduate of the first modern school in Beijing, could not communicate in Arabic during his travels.

and India, where religious education for children was offered in local languages. Ma observed how the all-encompassing nature of reformist education was doomed to fail as the curriculum and school time was divided into many different components.[109] Students who graduated from reformed mosque schools, he believed, could thus neither become thoroughly educated religious scholars nor be ready to pursue a scientific or vocational education in a higher educational institution.

Ma Jian reiterated a major concern of the reformists—the scarcity of financial resources with which to promote Islamic education. As many lost hope of self-sufficiency, they began to call on the state to subsidize Muslim reformist education. They were, however, willing to preserve the autonomous structure of Muslim education and would not welcome much state interference. Although the state rarely subsidized a few Muslim reformist schools for their accomplishments,[110] "autonomous" Muslim education in principle was against the Nationalist ideological commitment to the creation of a homogenous nation through the unification of education. The *de facto* situation in China, where different types of educational systems existed side by side, was indeed a consequence of weak state control in the 1930s. Ma Jian must have recognized that the state would not allow much autonomy to Muslim schools, which had to rely on state funding; therefore, he claimed that, given the resources at hand, universalization of Muslim schooling would not be feasible. He thus advised Muslims to send their students

---

[109] Ma Jian, *Huijiao jiaoyu shi*, "Preface," 5–7.

[110] Guo Linlin, "Minguo shiqi xinshi Huijiao jiaoyu jingfei laiyuan yanjiu: yi Xibei diqu wei zhongxin" [A study of the sources of new Chinese Muslim educational funds during the period of the Republic of China: A study centering on northwest of China] (master's thesis, Lanzhou Daxue, 2013), 31.

to ordinary Chinese schools,[111] where they could receive standard or vocational education. Those who were interested could gain the credentials to pursue higher education in the much-needed fields of law, engineering, and medicine. He believed the Muslim need for professionals was as critical as their need for well-educated religious scholars.[112] However, Ma Jian was well aware of the reasons why Chinese Muslim families were not willing to send their children to ordinary Chinese schools, as he was himself concerned about the corruption of Muslim students in ordinary schools.[113] He nevertheless believed that if Muslims used their scarce financial resources to initiate summer religious schools in the mosques where Muslim children would be trained in ritual and moral conduct and exposed to the Islamic worldview, they would be immune to the corruptive forces of the Chinese schools.[114] Nine years spent in Egypt, where a dual educational system was introduced,[115] and his exposure to many different streams of reformist thinking obviously led Ma Jian to think outside the box. If not Ma Jian, a

---

[111] Nonetheless, he also hoped to see the Chinese state recognize the specificities of Muslims as it did in the case of frontier minorities and stated the necessity of introducing compulsory religious classes in public schools for Muslims in the Hui regions.

[112] Ma Jian, *Huijiao jiaoyu shi*, "Preface," 5 and 3–4.

[113] Ma, *Al-Islam fi al-Sin*, 41, and Ma Jian, *Huijiao jiaoyu shi*, "Preface."

[114] Ma Jian, *Huijiao jiaoyu shi*, "Preface," 6. This is very much like the model in contemporary Turkey. Many families send their children, who attend secular public schools, to mosque schools during the summer.

[115] The reformists in Egypt initially worked hard to reform al-Azhar by turning it into an institution where secular subjects were also taught. However, when it became apparent that a thorough transformation of the institution into a modern university was not possible in the foreseeable future, the reformists adopted a different strategy and founded secular universities as alternatives for Muslim students interested in pursuing professional careers. For Ma, the Egyptian model was reasonable because it allowed specialization in either religious or non-religious fields. See Ma Jian, *Huijiao jiaoyu shi*, "Preface," 9.

dedicated scholar concerned primarily with rational thinking and scientific development in Islam, who else could offer a model that challenged the prevalent notions about Islamic education in China?

A Peculiar Translation: The Case of *Huijiao Zhenxiang*

Even as they drew on various Arabic and English sources for inspiration, Chinese Muslims often adapted those sources in unconventional ways. The Chinese Muslim "translations" of foreign-language works often cannot be viewed as translations from the perspective of any translation theory. Some translators even deviated from the original text, omitting whole sections and including their own content as if it were part of the source. I have already mentioned the case of the translation of Muhammad Ali's *Islam: The Religion of Humanity*. Likewise, Ma Jian's "translation" of al-Jisr's *Risala* also features such peculiarities. Ma Jian purposefully deviated from the original text in order to smuggle in his ideas, which, according to him, better met the requirements of his age.

Ma Jian translated al-Jisr's *Risala* as a source providing legitimacy to his ideas about Islam, science, and, specifically, evolution. Yet, the *Risala* also included many sections on socio-political issues, including controversial issues such as jihad, polygamy, slavery, and women's rights. Ma Jian was also very concerned about these socio-political issues; his views, however, contradicted al-Jisr's to a large extent. Al-Jisr was an arch-proponent of traditional rulings. He even appreciated the view of the Hanafis—as he put it—with respect to the closure of the gates of *ijtihad* and was against reviving it for the purpose of making Islamic law fit in the requirements of the age.[116] Al-Jisr, nevertheless,

---

[116] Al-Jisr, *Al-Risala*, 328–35.

felt the need to "rationalize" traditional Islamic rulings that appeared oppressive to Western eyes. He put forward the benefits that traditional Islamic rulings could offer the man of the contemporary age. Ma Jian either intentionally omitted or revised sections that contradicted his pre-established ideas. One interesting case where Ma Jian totally abandoned the original argument was al-Jisr's discussion of jihad.

The idea of jihad occupies an important place in al-Jisr's *Risala*.[117] Al-Jisr espoused the expansionist notion of jihad and explained when it was necessary and how God regulated its practice within the limits of justice. For al-Jisr, however, jihad was ordained by Allah only as the last resort if non-Muslims persistently refused to submit, intentionally turning a blind eye to the clear evidence revealed to them concerning the truthfulness of Islam. Jihad, al-Jisr contended, was therefore legitimate and indispensable to eliminating the rapacious and deranged communities that would otherwise pose a constant threat to Islam. Nevertheless, as a religious duty for every Muslim, jihad must be conducted justly, as women and children had to be spared. Classifying the enemy as the People of the Book and polytheists in accordance with the traditional understanding, he argued that polytheists were to be immediately killed whereas People of the Book would be spared if they submitted to the rule of Islam. They would thus be granted protection.

According to al-Jisr, the principle that governs the relationship between human beings, such as Muslims and non-Muslims, men and women, free men and slaves, is always justice rather than equality. Western liberal principles are not something that al-Jisr tackled. He was more interested in the way people were treated than in the principles advocated in the West. The discrepancies between the Western liberal principles and

---

[117] Al-Jisr, *Al-Risala*, 15, 187, and 301–2.

practice helped al-Jisr to argue that people were treated more justly in Islam than in the West. His defense of slavery in Islam exemplifies how he used a comparative approach to legitimize Muslim practices.[118] This type of approach, where practice rather than principles were compared, had become prevalent among Muslims, and al-Jisr was one of the leading figures who initiated it.

Although Ma Jian in his "translation" often used this comparative approach, he made frequent references to the principles of equality and freedom.[119] For example, Ma Jian deviated from the original text about matters concerning the treatment of women in Islam.[120] Although he did not challenge the traditional rulings wherein women and men were not held as equal—such as in the matters of polygamy, right to testimony, and distribution of inheritance—he included new sections in which he spoke about the ontological equality of men and women. While al-Jisr did not trouble himself with the rights of women,[121] Ma Jian included a whole section introducing how the status of women was both socially and economically improved by Islam.

Ma Jian, however, was particularly hands-on in his "translation" where al-Jisr introduced his position about jihad. Ma Jian came from a context where intellectuals took the dissemination of the idea of a "peaceful" Islam as their major responsibility, and he was an heir to that Chinese Muslim intellectual tradition. Therefore, he once again departed totally from the source text and included his own ideas as those of al-Jisr.

---

[118] Al-Jisr, *Al-Risala*, 310–11.

[119] Ma Jian, trans., *Huijiao Zhenxiang*, 311.

[120] Ma Jian, trans., *Huijiao Zhenxiang*, 77–80.

[121] Al-Jisr, *Al-Risala*, 84–90.

Reiterating the already well-established view in China, he pronounced that in Islam there is no religious war but only self-defense in case of persecution. He also compiled all verses of the Quran dealing with freedom of conscience to prove that Islam rejects forcing people into submission through military force.[122]

Ma Jian's peculiar "translation" of the *Risala* shows that in his early years at al-Azhar he already had well-established views. He came to Egypt with a religious understanding he gained while studying in Shanghai. His ingrained religious understanding helped him make an educated choice among many other different interpretations of Islam. He promoted 'Abduh's reformist Islam, which in many ways appealed to him as many ideas similar to that of 'Abduh's were already expressed in the pages of the prominent journals of China.

Ma Jian did not see any ethical obligation to adhere to the source text. His project was a "purposeful activity":[123] he did not view himself as a "translator" but as an "educator" who provided further authority to his views by relying on prominent religious scholars from the acclaimed Islamic centers. Moreover, was not it 'Abduh who in his *Theology of Unity* had already expressed ideas similar to what Ma Jian included in his

---

[122] Ma Jian, trans., *Huijiao Zhenxiang*, 74–76.

[123] The idea of translation as a purposeful activity (*Skopostheorie*) was introduced by Vermeer. In this translation theory, the "target addressees in target circumstances" determine the purpose of the translation. However, Ma Jian's "translation" cannot be considered an adequate translation (not even from the perspective of *Skopostheorie*), as Christiana Nord, a specialist of *Skopostheorie*, informed me on a personal exchange of ideas, because (in Vermeer's terms) it lacks "intertextual coherence." It also falls short of "loyalty" on the part of the translator. According to Nord, Ma's production can be called "free text production inspired by the source text." Also see Christiana Nord, *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained* (Manchester: St. Jerome Publications, 2007).

"translation" of the *Risala*? Ma Jian published his translation of 'Abduh a few years earlier in 1935 and saw more harm in contradicting the view of 'Abduh, which was more adequate to the circumstances of China, just for the sake of being truthful to the original text. After all, Chinese Muslims were in Egypt to resolve conflicts, not to raise new ones. 'Abduh's reformist thinking, which had by then been stripped of its polemics, was a very good choice for Chinese Muslims who were willing to replace religious literature coming from English-language Ahmadi sources with Arabic-language Sunni sources of Islam.

In that sense, in contrast to journalist-intellectuals like Wu Tegong and Sha Shanyu, who—as free thinkers—highlighted the unchanging spirit of Islam by attributing contextuality to the Islamic law, the Azharites saw themselves more as reformist *ahongs*, with one foot standing squarely on the Sunni tradition. Therefore, they took Islamic law and rulings seriously and dedicated themselves to the resolution of conflicts over religious practices. Thus, the Azharites on the one hand built on the already-existing reformist thinking in China and on the other pulled that discourse back to a more legitimate and acceptable ground by grasping its sharpest aspects. Pang Shiqian's translation of al-Dijwi's *Message of Peace* is an excellent case showing the role performed by Chinese Azharites. Al-Dijwi, an Azharite scholar, wrote this English-language apologia upon request from American Muslims who were troubled by constant questions about Islam in the United States. The choice Pang made in translating this work shows how Chinese Muslim interest in the idea of peaceful Islam continued and how he looked for a source coming from legitimate authorities that could replace the Ahmadi sources. Interestingly, while al-Dijwi highlighted the idea of defensive war in Islam by emphasizing the peaceful missions in Muslim history, a careful reading between the

book's lines exposes how he had the traditional notion of jihad sneak into the text by arguing for the necessity of the propagation of Islam through military means.[124] The translation of the *Message of Peace* in that sense manifests how the absolute Ahmadi refusal of jihad as a means for propagating Islam was compromised by the traditional understanding of jihad.

The excessive emphasis on unity was another reason why Azharites were more cautious in introducing radical ideas challenging orthodox rulings in comparison with the Chinese Muslim "free thinkers." They did not want to be the instigators of new points of contention. They imagined themselves as leaders who would guarantee this unity. In an article written in *Yuehua*, the author indeed mentioned that although blind imitation of the *ahongs* by the people had caused stagnation and corruption in the Chinese Muslim community, it also preserved the integrity of the community. *Ahongs* were the pillars of Chinese Muslim identity, and the problem was not the imitation *per se* but rather the blind imitation of uneducated and sometimes corrupt *ahongs*. Thus, the task before the Chinese Muslim community was to educate enlightened *ahongs* whom the community would follow consciously.[125] Azharites were seen as the first representatives of these educated and enlightened *ahongs*.

---

[124] El-Digwy, *Messages of Peace*, 8; Pang Shiqian, trans., *Heping zhi shiming* [The message of Islam] (Beijing: Yuehua baoshe, 1948), republished in 2007.

[125] "Aheng quefa zhi zongyao" [The seriousness of lacking Ahong] *Yuehua* 12, no. 28–30 (1940): 1–2.

Conclusion

Continuity or Break?

In the very early years of the People's Republic of China, in 1951, Lu Hongji

wrote an article in *Guangming ribao* 光明日報[1] in which he conjured the oft-repeated

image of Muhammad holding a sword in one hand and the Quran in the other. This time,

perhaps with the intention of inflaming Communist sensitivities, he depicted Muhammad

as having a third hand with which he usurped the money of the people. The repercussions

of this incident were all too familiar. Chinese Muslims reacted in much the same way as

they did in the 1930s when writings considered insulting to Islam appeared in Chinese

media. At that time, when Chinese Muslim demonstrators ransacked the offending

publishing house, prominent Chinese Muslims mediated between the government and the

protestors and requested that the government shut it down. The government conformed to

this petition in order to appease the Chinese Muslims, whose allegiance was critical

during Japanese occupation.[2] Many, including liberals like Hu Shi, argued that the

closure was an excessive measure, in that the government had failed to ensure a balance

between respect for one's culture and free speech.[3]

Two decades later, the Communist government responded to a similar situation

without acquiescing totally to Chinese Muslim demonstrators. It announced that

---

[1] Lu Hongji, "Muhanmode de baojian" [The Sword of Muhammad], *Guangming ribao*, October 1, 1951.

[2] Wang Fuxiang, "1932 nian Beixin Nanhua wuru Huijiao an yanjiu" [The case of defamation of Islam by Beixin Nanhua in 1932], *Luxun yanjiu yuekan* 1 (2010): 62–68.

[3] Hu Shi, "Wuru Huijiao shijian ji chufen" [The case of the defamation of Islam and disciplinary action], *Duli pinglun*, no. 27 (1932): 5–9.

demonstrators would be considered enemies of the regime if they destroyed the people's newspaper. Nevertheless, it also acknowledged that the error was a consequence of the editor's lack of knowledge. In order to appease the Chinese Muslims, the government asked Ma Jian, the Chinese Azharite, to write an article informing the people of China about Islam and its prophet. Ma Jian, who became a member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference after 1949, wrote an article entitled "The Sword of Muhammad,"[4] which was published in *Renmin ribao* 人民日報 (People's Daily). As the title of the article suggests, Ma Jian, very much in accord with the revolutionary spirit of the Communists, highlighted the "revolutionary struggle" the Prophet of Islam initiated against the oppressors of the poor and enslaved people of the Arabian Peninsula. The contents of the article, however, in fact closely matched what Ma Jian had argued during the Republican period.

The way this incident unfolded demonstrates that Chinese Muslim intellectuals who stayed in China after the revolution tackled questions and pursued strategies similar to those employed during the Republican period to make Muslims participants of the new reality in China. Although a primary concern of this dissertation was to demonstrate the diversity of thought in Chinese Muslim reformism by examining different sources of Muslim reformist thought ranging from Ahmadiyya to Turkish modernism, it is also possible to observe a common thread running through these reformist formulations. Their concern and their purpose was, after all, the same: to awaken Muslims by reviving the "real" principles of Islam and make them fit and conscious participants of the Chinese

---

[4] Ma Jian, "Muhanmode de baojian" [Muhammad's sword], *Renmin ribao* [The People's Daily], January 20, 1952; also in *Guangming ribao* [Guangming Daily], January 19, 1951.

political and social domain. Chinese Muslim reformists, therefore, were not particularly interested in individual politics and the pursuit of democracy, as my third chapter demonstrates. Instead, they were more concerned about the fate of Muslims as a community in China. For this reason they were willing to cooperate with any regime that recognized their distinct identity and offered them long-sought after autonomous rights in the fields of education and religion. In that sense, the findings of this research help us understand why many Chinese Muslim intellectuals cooperated with the new Communist regime without falling into any existential crises. First, they wanted to occupy positions that would enable them to negotiate with the new ruling elites. Second, they could draw on plenty of reformist sources from the Republican period, which helped them to formulate an interpretation of Islam that did not conflict with socialist principles.

Chinese Muslims were aware of their own negotiating power. They were politically confident. This was mostly due to their belief in the "heavy Muslim presence," allegedly making up one-ninth of the total Chinese population. The military potential of Muslim warlords in northwest and southwest China, who funded and supported Chinese Muslim reformist circles in eastern China, also politically empowered Chinese Muslims. The GMD, having no power to eliminate these warlords, preferred to secure their loyalty to the center by giving concessions and forming alliances. Except during times of heightened crisis, as in the case of war against Japan, Chinese Muslims never refrained from asserting their rights, occasionally playing the "Communist card" against the Nationalists. Their trust in their own power, which led them to engage in negotiations with the ruling circles (as my first two chapters show), continued to play a role in the early years of the Communist Republic. The Chinese Muslim dissent in northwest China

continued in the early years of the fledgling Communist Republic. Open Muslim

rebellions were not rare in those years. On account of the necessity of handling Chinese

Muslims cautiously, the Chinese Communist rulers adopted a relatively tolerant policy

towards Muslims, granting them more freedom than other religious communities. For

instance, while the rural land possessed by "ancestral shrines, temples, monasteries,

churches, schools and organizations" was to be requisitioned, the land owned by mosques

was to a large extent exempted.[5] Very much like the GMD, the CCP was also aware of

the transnational identity of Chinese Muslims and their potential of Muslims as

"diplomatic bridges to other [Muslim] postcolonial third-world states."[6] It established the

China Islamic Association in 1953. This organization played a substantial role in

connecting China diplomatically to Muslim countries in the Middle East, and also

demonstrated to Muslims around the world the CCP's favorable policy towards Muslims.

Chinese Muslim intellectuals, therefore, once again became active participants of Chinese

politics and mediated not only between the state and the Chinese Muslim community but

also between the Chinese state and other post-colonial Muslim nations.

Ideological mediation was also necessary. Indeed, the thinking of Chinese Muslim

intellectuals in the early years of the People's Republic of China is a topic that demands

extensive research. However, in these concluding remarks, I would like to share my

preliminary observations once again by looking at the case of Ma Jian, in order to show

how the Islamic knowledge in the early days of Communism was built on the heritage of

---

[5] Yang Yifan, *Islam in China* (Hong Kong: Union Press, 1957), 37–38.

[6] Palmer and Goossaert, *Religious Question*, 140. This book also gives a succinct analysis regarding the diverse policies of the CCP in handling different religious communities.

Republican era debates. His book entitled *The Sword of Muhammad*,[7] in which he collected his writings on Islam published in Chinese media, including the aforementioned famous article with the same title, demonstrates how Ma Jian's reformist discourse was molded slightly to fit the setting of Communist China.

In *The Sword of Muhammad*, Ma Jian discussed the very same topics he covered in the pages of Republican era journals. He again responded to the most disputed questions concerning Islam: the peaceful nature of Islam, the rights of women in Islam, and the compatibility of Islam and science. The latter he addressed with supplementary texts accounting the scientific contributions of Muslims in China. What mainly differentiates Ma Jian's Communist-era discussion from his earlier writings is that he felt the need to point out the common purpose of Chinese Communists and Muslims. Ma Jian praised the Communist revolution for its introduction of social justice, equality and fraternity. He appreciated the new government for granting ethnic rights to Chinese Muslims and for treating them with respect and justice. However, he was careful not to merge Communism and Islam into one.[8] In keeping with the concerns of Republican-era Muslims, Ma Jian sought to preserve the distinctiveness of Islam. He attempted to establish an affinity between Muslims and Chinese Communists rather than between Communism and Islam. He did not talk about Marxism as an ideology. Instead, he

---

[7] Ma Jian, *Muhanmode de baojian* (Tianjin: Tianjin Jinbu Ribao, 1952).

[8] One can observe the same approach in Pang Shiqian's *Aiji jiunian*, which was written before the revolution but was published after the Communist revolution. He did not include anything related to communist system or Communist rule in China in the main body of the text. However, in the introduction, he very much like Ma Jian mentioned the common purpose of China and Muslim countries, which is nothing other than anti-imperialism, as it had been during the Republican era. See Pang Shiqian, *Aiji Jiunian*, preface.

brought anti-Americanism to the forefront; in presenting the United States as the common enemy of Muslims and Communists, he established an ideological alliance with the Communist party.

As this dissertation demonstrates, anti-imperialism had always been a central concern for Chinese Muslim reformists. Anti-imperialism helped them foster their identity as Chinese, who are obliged to protect their homeland (*watan*). This was also the task of a good Muslim, as the hadith, frequently cited in Chinese Muslim writings, stated: "the love of one's homeland is part of faith." Ma Jian had no difficulty transforming the anti-imperialist discourse directed against Japanese and European nations during the Republican period into anti-Americanism. He cried, "Rise against American Imperialism. Protect your religion. Protect your homeland. Protect world peace."[9] When Ma Jian declared America to be the number one enemy of Islam, he was not from a Muslim perspective actually arguing something strange. Anti-American attitudes had been growing among Muslims since the end of the World War II, as a reaction to the partition of Palestine and creation of the Israeli state on the one hand and the support of despotic regimes for the sake of establishing anti-Communist alliances on the other.[10] The issue of Palestine was already a central concern among Chinese Muslims in the late Republican period. Ma Jian's criticism of "wild" American capitalism, its racist discrimination, and

---

[9] Ma Jian, *Muhanmode de baojian*, 13.

[10] Lisa Blaydes and Drew A. Linzer, "Losing Muslim Hearts and Minds: Religiosity, Elite Competition, and Anti-Americanism in the Islamic World," annual meeting of the International Studies Association, "Theory vs. Policy?: Connecting Scholars and Practitioners," New Orleans, LA, February 17, 2010.

"immoral" and "corruptive" American culture also corresponded to the concerns of a growing number of Muslims all over the world.[11]

Yusuf Hajji Chang, who settled in Taiwan with GMD members, expressed his belief that his friends who remained in China were careful to preserve their distinctive Muslim identity. He believed that his friends in China, who were ardent Muslims, were "willing to be utilized" in order to receive better treatment as Muslims.[12] In reference to Nym Waled, he commented that "These believers in Allah were still loyal even after inoculation with the virus of Marxism," and again that "They were prepared to march under the Red Star and the Crescent, but had not yet embroidered the name of 'Karl Marx' on their prayer rugs."[13]

Writing in the wake of the Cultural Revolution, Yusuf Chang was convinced that the CCP was not sincere in its tolerant policies towards Islam; nor did he see any way to reconcile the materialist and atheist thinking of Mao Zedong with Islam. Nevertheless, Yusuf Chang did not completely throw aside the idea of ideological affinity between Communism and Islam. Paradoxically enough, he seemed more articulate in his espousal of the idea of a "socialist Islam" than Ma Jian, who wrote in Communist China for a Communist audience.[14] Yusuf Chang's belief in the socialist aspect of Islam once again had its roots in the Republican era Muslim reformism. He referred to the booklet titled *Islam and Socialism,* written by a prominent Ahmadi scholar and the head of the Woking

---

[11] Ma Jian, *Muhanmode de baojian*, 14–20.

[12] Hajji Yusuf Chang, "Islam and Communism," *Islamic Literature* 13 (1967): 12.

[13] Ibid., 8.

[14] Ibid., 11–12.

mission in London, Khwaja Nazir Ahmed.[15] This booklet was translated by *The China Muslim*,[16] the Ahmadi inspired journal published in Shanghai in 1926.

Islam and Socialism was originally a sermon delivered at the Woking Mosque in London in 1922, long before socialist ideas became popular in the Islamic world in the 1940s. Khwaja Nazir expressed his belief that Islam was socialist, with the reservation that Islamic socialism was superior to Western socialism. Islam, Khwaja contended, propagated socialist principles—"equality, liberty, fraternity and individualism merging into state control"—centuries before socialist ideas appeared in the West.[17] For Khwaja Nazir, Islam supersedes socialist materialism and does not indulge in the excesses of communist regimes, which abolish private property. He argued that Western socialism also put brainworkers in a disadvantaged position by placing excessive emphasis on physical labor. The top-down statist reforms do not take the individual and its role in shaping the destiny of societies into consideration. These aspects of socialism deter individual genius and skill.[18] Islam offers a way beyond excessively individualistic liberal models and socialism. He depicted *zakat* (an obligatory tax, one of the five pillars of Islam, paid to the needy) as a socialist tax and highlighted its role in assuring social justice in Islamic economy, where private property is not denied but regulated through

---

[15] This is originally a speech Khwaja Nazir Ahmad gave at the Woking Mosque. Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, *Islam and Socialism* (Woking: Basheer Muslim Library, 1922). For Yusuf Chang's reference to Nazir Ahmed, see Hajji Yusuf Chang, "Islam and Communism," 14. Yusuf Chang also mentioned Nasserism and its socialistic aspects.

[16] *Zhongguo Huijiao Xuehui Yuekan* 1, no. 2 (1926).

[17] Khwaja Nazir Ahmad, 9.

[18] Ibid., 6.

means which would prevent the hoarding of wealth in the hands of a few capitalist.[19] This

idea of socialist Islam and of *zakat* as a guarantee of social justice was a topic covered

extensively in the Republican era Chinese Muslim journals, and was thus familiar to

Chinese Muslims writing after the revolution.[20]

Although Ma Jian and many others searched for a common purpose that would

align Chinese Muslims with the CCP without theorizing much about socialism, there

were others who followed the footsteps of socialist Muslims like Khwaja Nazir Ahmad

and endeavored to theorize the foundations of a socialist Islam. Chen Keli, who would

later be executed during the Cultural Revolution for his insistence of Islam being a

superior socialist model, produced a vast amount of literature highlighting the socialist

aspects of Islam. He started his publication trajectory by translating a chapter entitled

"The Economic Basis of Islam" from Bandali al-Jawzi's *The History Intellectual*

Movements in Islam.[21] Al-Jawzi was a Palestinian socialist who was a professor on the

faculty of Baku University in Azerbaijan. Al-Jawzi wrote one of the "first full scale

Marxist analysis of the nature and development of Islamic thought."[22] In his writing, al-

Jawzi presented Islam as a movement fundamentally concerned with social solidarity,

---

[19] Ibid., 9.

[20] Such as, "Tianke —Yisilan da zhuyi zhi yi" [*Zakat* —A great Islamic ideology], *Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan* 1, no. 11–12 (1926). Zi Jia "Yisilan de minsheng zhidu —kefu de yanjiu" [The system of people's livelihood —an analysis of *zakat* in Islam], *Yunnan qingzhen duobao* 2, no. 3 (1929).

[21] A translation of Bandali al-Jawzi's work can be found in Tamara Sonn, *Interpreting Islam: Bandali Jawzi's Islamic Intellectual History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). For Chen Keli's translation see Chen Keli, *Huijiao yu Shehui* [Islam and society] (Beijing: Dongsi Qingzhensi, 1951).

[22] Sonn, *Interpreting Islam*, 16.

economic justice, and the elimination of oppression. In this sense, al-Jawzi argued, "The exigencies of power politics under the dynastic caliphates . . . vitiated and actually distorted that message, until it was virtually unrecognizable in any practical form."[23] Nevertheless, al-Jawzi was careful not to detach the Prophet from his context, as several Muslim socialists had done, by arguing that he initiated a socialist system.[24] For al-Jawzi, the Prophet articulated a set of eternal social principles—freedom, justice, and equality—rather than inaugurating any specific system of governance or economic distribution. Hence, al-Jawzi maintained, reforms must be suited to their times. For this reason the Prophet Muhammad did not abolish slavery but instead revealed the principles, which would lead humans to its eventual abolishment.[25] Al-Jawzi believed that in the context of the twentieth century world, it was socialist economic structure that revealed Islamic principles at its best.[26]

To what extent Chen Keli followed the hermeneutics of al-Jawzi is a question yet to be examined by scholars. But the way al-Jawzi contextualized early Islamic community and the practices of the Prophet was very similar to how Wu Tegong understood Islam and attempted to make it meaningful and workable at every age and every context. As explained in Chapter four, Wu, much like al-Jawzi, argued that it was the principles and not the literal text that was to guide Muslims in the modern world.

---

[23] Ibid., 39.

[24] Ibid., 45–46.

[25] Ibid., 46–47.

[26] Ibid., 54.

Chen Keli therefore through his translation of al-Jawzi built on the already existing Republican era Chinese Muslim reformist thinking.

In all likelihood, these Chinese Muslim reformists who believed in the compatibility of socialism and Islam knew full well that Ma Zedong envisioned no place for any religion in the future of communist China. Mao Zedong, after all, made it no secret that religions were expected to disappear gradually as a result of ideological reform, as Marxist teleology assumed. But this did not seem to pose a problem for Chinese Muslims as long as the CCP granted religious freedom and let them dispute freely with atheists. They believed in the superiority of Islam and firmly believed that no ideology had the power to exterminate Islam from China. If Communists had their teleology, Muslims had one too. Yusuf Chang, for instance, at the end of his article declared that Islam would survive Communist rule if Communists continued to nominally recognize its existence:

> As a Chinese Muslim, I know that Chinese Muslims are strong in religious belief and racial unity. They are tough and internationally minded. They have had much experience in how to live through persecutions. And I believe that as long as Islam as a religion remains as a decoration in the "Hall of the Chinese Communist Constitution" in Peking, it seems that the Chinese Muslims will not forget to say "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet" as long as they live.[27]

Yusuf Chang was right. Chinese Muslims even survived one of the most severe anti-religion and anti-tradition campaigns of the century. When the Cultural Revolution came to an end, Chinese Muslims recovered quickly, rebuilt their orders and mosques and re-established their connections with the Muslim world. Now, a growing number of Chinese Muslims are studying not only in Muslim countries like Malaysia, Egypt, Pakistan, and Turkey but also in the West. The growing Chinese Muslim connection to

---

[27] Hajji Yusuf Chang, 13.

the world and its intellectual repercussions should be a topic of interest for researchers in the future.

Chinese Muslims also began to publish enormously. The Republican era debates once again resurrected in China, as can be observed in Chinese Muslim journals. The identity of Chinese Muslims emerged as one of the most urgent questions with regards to the issue of defining the criteria for composing the Chinese nation. Obviously, the Communist classification of Chinese speaking Muslims as a *minzu,* reducing their religious identity to ethnicity, has not proved decisive. It continues to be an amorphous identification. Chinese Muslims were grateful when they were ultimately recognized as an ethnic group, entitled to ethnic autonomous rights. However, they were cautious about any state policy determined to eradicate the universal aspect of their identity as Muslims. Today in China, therefore, the word "Hui" continues to have a double meaning. For instance, I have seen Chinese Muslim scholars discuss whether Li Zhi, a Buddhist philosopher of the Ming dynasty, should be considered a member of Hui *minzu* due to his genealogical connection to Arabs; on the other hand, they do not see any conflict in calling a Turkish citizen who travels in China a Huizu on account of being a Muslim.

In recent years, a group of scholars led by Professor Ma Rong of Peking University, who is himself a Hui, began to question the prospects of the *minzu* distinctions created by Chinese Communist Party.[28] In so doing, they revived the Republican era discussions on the nature of *Zhonghua minzu*, initiated by prominent scholars like Fei Xiaotong and Gu Jiegang. These scholars warn that the lack of an

---

[28] For an evaluation of the recent debates on the nature *minzu* classification in China, see Mark C. Elliott, "The Case of the Missing Indigene: Debate over a Second-Generation Ethnic Policy," *China Journal* 73 (2016): 187–213.

inclusive, shared national consciousness has the potential to disintegrate China along the same lines as the USSR and Yugoslavia. They all suggest that the systematic segregation of ethnic groups and institutions in China has rendered the idea of a unified Chinese nation an empty concept. Instead, they propose that China should follow the American model, often referred to as a "melting pot," in strengthening the self-initiated ethnic fusion of its people. The ongoing debate on the *minzu* paradigm of the state will inevitably affect the way Chinese scholars think about Hui identity both locally and transnationally.

Bibliography

Primary Sources – Journals

A-er-tai 阿爾泰
Bianduo 邊鐸 / *Chīnī Turkistān Awāzi-Tianshan* 天山 (Chinese and Uyghur editions)
Chengda xuesheng hui yuekan 成达學生會月刊
Chengda wenyi 成达文藝
Chengshi xiaokan 成師校刊
Chenxi 晨熹
Dongfang zazhi 東方雜誌
Duli pinglun 獨立評論
Gu-er-bang 古爾邦
Guangming ribao 光明日報
Guomin gonglun 國民公論
Huijiao qingnian yuebao 回教青年月報
Huimin qingnian 回民青年
Huimin yanlun 回民言論 / *Huijiao luntan* 回民論壇
Huizu wenhua 回族文化
Shenbao 申報
Tianfang xueli yuekan 天方學理月刊
Tujue 突崛
Xibei wenti yanjiuhui huikan 西北問題研究會會刊
Xing Hui pian 醒回篇
Xin Yaxiya 新亞細亞
Yiguang 伊光
Yisilan qingnian 伊斯蘭青年
Yuehua 月華
Yuehua zhoubao 月華周報
Yugong 禹貢
Yunnan qingzhen duobao 雲南清真鐸報
Zhengdao 正道
Zhenzong bao yuekan 震宗報月刊
Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huikan 中國回教救國協會會刊 /
　　　Zhongguo Huijiao jiuguo xiehui huibao 中國回教救國協會會報
Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui yuekan 中國回教學會月刊

Islamic Review
Kadro
Al-Manar
Moslem World
Nur al-Islam

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Society of Friends of the Moslems in China
The Review of Religions

Primary Sources – Special Collections

Rev. Claude L. Pickens Jr. (1900–1985) Collection on Muslims in China, 1858–1984. Harvard-Yenching Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Day Missions Collection. Divinity Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT.

Primary Sources – Published

'Abduh, Muhammad. *Huijiao jidujiao yu xueshu wenhua*. Translated by Ma Jian. Zhongguo Huijiao Shuju, 1936.

———. *Huijiao zhexue* [Philolosophy of Islam]. Translated by Ma Jian. Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1934.

———. *al-Islam wa-'l-nasraniyya ma'a al-'ilm wa 'l-madaniyya* [Islam and Christianity in relation to science and civilization]. Cairo: Al-Manar, 1902.

———. *The Theology of Unity* [*Risalat al-Tawhid*]. Translated by Ishaq Musa'ad and Kenneth Cragg. Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, 2004.

Abdürreşit İbrahim. *20. Asrın başlarında İslam Dünyası: Çin ve Hindistan'da İslamiyet* [The Islamic world at the beginning of the twentieth century: Islam in China and India]. Vol. 2. Edited by Mehmed Paksu. Istanbul: Yeni Asya Yayınları, 1987.

Ahmad, Khwaja Nazir. *Islam and Socialism*. Woking: Basheer Muslim Library, 1922.

Alptekin, İsa Yusuf. *Doğu Türkistan dâvâsı* [The case of East Turkestan]. Istanbul: Otağ, 1975.

———. *İsa Yusuf Alptekin'in mücadele hatıraları* [The memoirs of Isa Yusuf Alptekin and his cause]. Vol.1. Edited by Ömer Kul. Ankara: Berikan, 2010.

———. "Turkistān Inqilābi Qaydagh Natīja Bärdi?" [How did the Turkestan Revolution end up?]. *Tianshan*, no. 8, 9,10 (1934): 1–6, 1–9,1–8. In Chinese edition, vol:1, no:3,4.

Atatürk, Mustafa Kemal. *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri* [Speeches and declarations of Atatürk]. vols. 1–3. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, 1997.

———. *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri IV*. Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1991.

Aydemir, Şevket Süreyya. *Suyu Arayan Adam* [Man in search of water].Istanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1971.

Bacon, Francis. "On Atheism." In *Bacon: His Writings and His Philosophy*, edited by George L. Craik. London: Griffin Bohn, 1862.

Bai Shouyi. *Huizu, Huijiao, Huimin lunji* [Collected essays on the Hui ethnic group, Hui teaching, and the Hui people]. Kowloon, 1974.

Bernard, Henri. *Matteo Ricci's Scientific Contribution to China*. Translated by Edward Chalmers Werner. Beijing: H. Vetch, 1935.

Broomhall, Marshall. *Islam in China: A Neglected Problem*. London: Morgan and Scott, 1910.

———. "The Mohammedan Population of China." *Moslem World* 1, no. 1 (1911): 32–53.

Chang, Hajji Yusuf. "Islam and Communism." *Islamic Literature* 13 (1967): 12.

Chen Keli, trans. *Huijiao yu shehui* [Islam and society]. Beijing: Dongsi Qingzhensi, 1951.

Chiang Kai-shek (Jiang Zhongzheng). *Zhongguo zhi mingyun* [China's destiny]. Nanjing: Zhengzhong shuju, 1943–1946.

Confucius. *Lunyu*. In *Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean: Chinese text; Translations with Exegetical Notes and Dictionary of All Chinese*, translated by James Legge. Minneola, NY: Dover, 1971.

De Boer, T. J. *Geschichte der Philosophie im Islam* [History of philosophy in Islam]. Stuttgart: Frommanns, 1901.

Dehlawi Mirza Hairat, trans. *The Koran: Prepared by Various Oriental Learned Scholars and Edited by Mirza Hairat*. Delhi, 1912.

Doğrul, Ömer Rıza, trans. *Kur'anı Kerim*. Istanbul, Halit, 1934.

Draper, John William. *History of the Conflict between Religion and Science*. New York: Appleton, 1874.

El-Digwy, Youssef. *Heping zhi shiming* [The message of Islam]. Translated by Pang Shiqian. Beijing: Yuehua baoshe, 1948. Reprint, 2007.

———. *Messages of Peace: A Treatise on Islam*. Cairo: Government Press, 1936.

Fei Xiaotong. *Zhonghua minzu duoyuan yiti geju* [The plurality and unity of the Zhonghua nation]. Beijing: Zhongyang renmin xueyuan chubanshe, 1989.

Fidan, Giray. *Çin'den görünen Osmanlı: Çinli düşünür Kang You Wei'in Türk seyahatnâmesi* [The Ottomans as they were seen from China: Kang Youwei's travelogue on Turkey]. Istanbul: Yeditepe, 2013.

Fremantle, Anne. *Loyal Enemy*. London: Hutchinson, 1938.

Gates, Caleb. "The Regeneration of Turkey." *Current History* 32 (1930).

Ghulam Ahmad. *The Message of Peace*. Tilford: Islam International Publications, 2007.

Gökalp, Ziya. *Şiirler ve Halk Masalları*. Vol. 1 of *Ziya Gökalp Külliyatı*. Edited by Fevziye Abdullah Tansel. Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1952.

———. *Türkçülüğün Esasları*. 1923. Reprint, Istanbul: Milli Eğitim Yayınevi, 1970.

Gu Jiegang. "Zhonghua minzu shi yihe" [Zhonghua nation is one]. In *Gu Jiegang quanji*. Reprint, Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2010.

Gu Yanwu. "Tufan huihe." *Rizhi lu* [Daily accumulation of knowledge], vol. 29. Taipei: Taiwan shangwu yinshuguan, 1983.

Ha Decheng. "Huijiao qianshuo" [A primer on Islam]. In *Huizu diancang quanshu*, vol. 48. 1946. Reprint, Gansu: Gansu wenhua chubanshe, 2006.

Hitti, Philip. *History of the Arabs*. London: Macmillan, 1937.

Huizu jianshi [A brief history of the Huizu]. Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1978.

Iqbal, Muhammad. *Islam and Ahmadism*. Multan: Aalami Majlisa Tahhfuza Khafma Nubuwwat, 1935.

———. *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. Edited by M. Saeed Sheikh. 1934. Reprint, Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1989.

Al-Jawzi, Bandali. *The History of Intellectual Movements in Islam*. In *Interpreting Islam: Bandali Jawzi's Islamic Intellectual History*, edited and translated by Tamara Sonn. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Jin Jitang. *Zhongguo Huijiao shi yanjiu* [The analysis of the history of Islam in China]. 1935. Reprint, Ningxia Renmin Chubanshi, 2000.

Al-Jisr, Husayn. *Huijiao zhenxiang* [The truth of Islam]. Translated by Ma Jian. Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1938.

———. *Al-risala al-Hamidiya fi haqiqat al-diyana al-Islamiya wa-haqiqat al-shariʿa al-Muhammadiya* [Hamidian tract about the truth of the religion of Islam and the sharia of Muhammad]. Cairo: Matbaatu'l-Hamidiyye, 1904.

Kamal-ud-Din. *The Existence of God*. Woking: Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, n.d.

———. *Qingzhenjiao zhi yanjiu* [The study of Islam]. Translated by Zhang Bingzhen. Hong Kong: Huijiao congshu, 1926.

———. *Unity of the Human Race.* Woking: Woking Muslim Mission and Literary Trust, 193-?.

Kang Youwei. *Datong shu* [Book on the Great Unity]. Shanghai: Zhonghua shuju, 1935.

———. "Jincheng Tujue xueruo jixu" [Treatise to the emperor on the demise and weakening of the Turks]. In Giray Fidan, *Çin'den görünen Osmanlı*.

———. *Tujue youji* [Travel notes on Turkey]. In Giray Fidan, *Çin'den görünen Osmanlı*.

Al-Khudari, Muhammad. *Huijiao faxue shi* [History of Islamic law]. Translated by Pang Shiqian. Beijing: Yuehua wenhua fuwu she, 1950.

Li Qian. *Huibu gongdu* [Official documents on the Hui region]. Shanghai: Zhonghua Yinshua Chang, 1924.

Li Weihan. *Huihui minzu wenti* [The question of Huihui minzu]. 1941. Reprint, Beijing: Minzu Chubanshe, 1980.

Liu Jielian. *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* [The records of the ultimate sage of Arabia]. Beijing: Zhongguo yisilan jiaoxie hui, 1984.

Liu Keshu. *Tueqi geming shi* [History of the Turkish revolution]. Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshu guan, 1929.

———. *Xin Tuerqi* [New Turkey]. 1926. Reprint, Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1929.

Ma Jian. *Gulan jian jie* [A brief introduction to the Quran]. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1951.

———. *Gulan jing* [Quran]. Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1952.

———. *Huili gangyao* [Outline of the Islamic calendar]. Zhonghua shuju, 1955.

———. *Muhanmode de baojian* [The sword of Muhammad]. Tianjin: Tianjin Jinbu Ribao, 1952.

——— (Muhammad Makin). *Nazrah jamiʿah ila tarikh al-Islam fi al-Sin wa-ahwal al-Muslimin fiha* [A comprehensive view about the history of Islam in China and conditions of Muslims there]. Cario: Al Matbaʿah al-Salafiyah, 1934.

———. *Huijiao jiaoyu shi* [History of education in Islam]. Translated by Ma Jian. Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1941.

———, trans. *Huijiao zhenxiang* [The truth of Islam]. Shanghai: Shangwu chubanshe, 1938.

———, trans. *Huijiao Zhexue* [The philosophy of Islam]. Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1934.

Ma Linyi. *Yisilan jiao gailun* [The outline of Islam]. Shangwu yinshuguan, 1935. Reprint, 1947.

Mansur, Hasan. *Yisilan jiao* [Islam]. Translated by Na Zhong. Beijing: Chenda chubanshe, 1934.

Manzur Ilahi. *Da wen* [Muslim catechism]. Zhuiqiu Shehui, 193-?.

Mason, Isaac. *A Primer on Islam and the Spiritual Needs of the Mohammedans in China*. Hankow: Religious Tract Society, 1936.

Maudoodi S. Abul ʿAla. *Jihad in Islam*. Lahore: Islamic Publications, 2001.

McBain, Howard Lee, and Lindsey Rogers. *The New Constitutions of Europe*. New York: Doubleday Page, 1922.

Mencius (Mengzi). *The Works of Mencius*. Vol. 2 of *The Chinese Classics*. Edited and translated by James Legge. Rev. ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895.

Mirza Abu'l Fadl, trans. *The Qur'an Translated into English from the Original Arabic*. Allahabad, 1912.

Mohammad Abdul Hakim Khan, trans. *The Holy Qur'an: With Short Notes Based on the Holy Qur'an, or the Authentic Traditions of the Prophet, or and New Testaments, or Scientific Truth*. Patiala, 1905.

Muhammad Ali. *Heping de zongjiao* [The religion of humanity]. Beijing: Qingzhen Shubao She, 1930.

———. *Holy Quran, containing the Arabic text with English translation and commentary by Maulvi Muhammad Ali*. Woking: Islamic Review Office, 1917.

———. *Islam: The Religion of Humanity*. Woking: Unwin Brothers, 193-?.

———. *Muhammad and Christ*. 1921. Reprint, Columbus, OH: AAII, 1993.

———. *Musilin de qidao* [The Muslim prayer book]. Beijing: Qingzhen Shubao, 1930.

———. *The Religion of Islam: A Comprehensive Discussion of the Sources, Principles and Practices of Islam*. Lahore: Ahmadiyya Anjuman Isha'at Islam, 1936.

Pang Shiqian. "Aiji jiunian" [Nine years in Egypt]. In *Qingzhen dadian.* Hefei: Huangshan shushe, 1951/2005.

——— (Tawadu). *Al-Sin wa-l-Islam* [Zhongguo yu huijiao / Islam and China]. Cairo: Muslim Brotherhood Islamic Printing and Publishing House, the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamic World Outreach Division, 1945).

———, trans. *Huijiao faxue shi* [History of Islamic law]. Beijing: Yuehua wenhua fuwu she, 1950.

Qingzhen dadian: Zhongguo zongjiao lishi wenxian jicheng bianzuan wei yuan hui bian zuan. [Collection of classical writings on Islam]. 20 vols. Hefei: Huangshan Shushi, 2005.

Rashid Rida. *Muhanmode de moshi* [Muhammad's revelation]. Translated by Ma Ruitu. Zhonghua shuju, 1946.

Shieh, Milton J. T., ed. *The Kuomintang: Selected Historical Documents, 1894–1969*. Jamaica, NY: St. John's University, 1970.

Song Shuren. *Xin Tuerqi* [New Turkey]. Shanghai: Zhongghua shuju, 1928.

Spencer, Herbert. *Education: Intellectual, Moral and Physical*. Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1880.

———. *The Study of Sociology*. London: King, 1873.

Sun Shengwu. *Huijiao luncong* [The collection of opinions on Islam]. Taipei: Zhongguo wenhua yanjiusuo, 1963.

Sun Yat-sen. "An Autobiography" (1896). In *Prescriptions for Saving China: Selected Writings of Sun Yat-sen*, edited and translated by Julie Lee Wei et al., 18–21. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1994.

———. *China and Japan: Natural Friends, Unnatural Enemies*. Edited by Tang Leang Li. Shanghai: China United Press, 1941.

———. *Fundamentals of National Reconstruction*. 1924. Reprint, n.p.: China Cultural Service, 1953.

———. *Memoirs of a Chinese Revolutionary: A Programme of National Reconstruction for China*. London: Hutchinson, 1918.

———. *Prescriptions for Saving China: Selected Writings of Sun Yat-sen*. Edited and translated by Julie Lee Wei et al. Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1994.

——— (Sun Zhongshan). *San min zhuyi*. 1924. Reprint, Taipei: Zhongyang wenwu gongying she, 1969 and 1989.

——— (Sun Zhongshan). "Zhongguo Guomindang diyi ci quanguo daibiao dahui xuanyan," [The manifesto of the GMD's first National Party Congress]. In *Sun Zhongshan quanji*, vol. 9. Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981-86.

———. *Sun Yat-sen: His Political and Social Ideals; A Source Book*. Edited and translated by Leonard Shihlien Hsü. Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1933.

———. *The Triple Demism of Sun Yatsen*. Translated by P. Delia. Wuchang, 1931.

"Taiwan's Constitution of 1947 with Amendments through 2005." Translated by the Max Planck Institute. Oxford: Oxford University Press / Constitute Project.

Totah, Khalil. *The Contribution of the Arabs to Education*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1926.

———. *Huijiao jiaoyu shi*. Translated by Ma Jian. Changsha: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1941.

Toynbee, Arnold, and Kenneth P. Kirkwood. *Tuerqi geming shi* [History of the Turkish revolution]. Translated by Cheng Zhongxing. Shanghai: Minzhi shuju, 1928.

Tunç, Şekip. *Ruhiyat: Felsefe dersleri*. Istanbul: Yeni matbaa, 1926.

Vasilev, Vasilij Pavlovich. *Islam in China*. Translated by Rudolf Loewenthal. Washington, DC, 1960.

Xinhua ribao. January 9, 1946.

Yan Fu. "Jiaoyu wenlun xuandu" [Selected readings on theries about education]. In *Zhongguo jiaoyu mingjia zuojing du congshu*. Edited by Feng Kecheng. Vol. 1, no. 4. 2005.

Yang Jingzhi. *Riben zhi Huijiao zhengce* [The policy of Japan on Islam]. Shanghai: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1943.Zhang Xinglang, ed. *Zhong Xi jiaotong shiliao huibian* [Historical documents on East-West relations]. Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 2003.

Zhao Zhenwu. *Xixing riji* [Diary of travel to the West]. Beijing: Chengda Shifan Chuban Bu., 1933.

Zhongguo huijiao jindong fangwentuan riji [Diary of the Chinese Muslim delegation to the Near East]. Chongqing: Zhongguo Wenhua Fuwushe, 1943.

Zhongyang zhoukan. No. 430, 1936.

Secondary Sources

Abu-Lughod, Lila. "Zones of Theory in the Anthropology of the Arab World." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 18 (1989): 267–306.

Adams, Charles C. *Islam and Modernism in Egypt: A Study of the Modern Reform Movement Inaugurated by Muḥammad 'Abduh*. London: Oxford University Press, 1933.

Afsaruddin, Asma. *Striving in the Path of God: Jihad and Martyrdom in Islamic Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.

Ando Junichiro. "Nihon senryouka no kahoku ni okeru chuugoku kaikyou sourengoukai no setsuritsu to kokuminshakai: Nicchuu sensou-ki chuugoku no 'minzoku mondai' ni kansuru jirei kenkyuu e mukete," *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, no. 87 (2014): 21–81.

Ashiva, Yoshiko, and David L. Wank, eds. *Making Religion, Making the State*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Atwill, David G. *The Chinese Sultanate: Islam, Ethnicity, and the Panthay Rebellion in Southwest China, 1856–1873*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005.

Aubin, Françoise. "Islam on the Wings of Nationalism: The Case of Muslim Intellectuals in Republican China." In Dudoignon, Hisao, and Yasushi, *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World*, 241–72.

Bai Gui and Jin Qiang. "Zhongguo jinxiandai Huizu baokan bodong xianxiang qianzhe" [A brief study on the fluctuations of Hui journals of modern era]. *Huizu Yanjiu* 72, no. 4 (2008).

Bai Gui and Liu Hongliu. "Minguo shiqi Huizu baokan shehui duihua huodong de jiben moshi—yi 'Yuehua' wei lie" [The basic modes of social dialogues launched through the Hui newspapers and periodicals in the Republic of China: As in the case of the periodical *Yuehua*]. *Zhongguo Musilin* 2 (2010).

Barazangi, Nimat Hafez. "Education: Religious Education." *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, edited by John L. Esposito. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

———, ed. "The Equilibrium: Issues of Islamic Education in the United States." Special issue, *Religion and Education* 25, nos. 1–2 (Winter 1998).

Ben-Dor Benite, Zvi. *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslims in Late Imperial China*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2005.

———. "'Nine Years in Egypt': Al-Azhar University and the Arabization of Chinese Islam." *HAGAR: Studies in Culture, Polity and Identities* 8, no. 1 (July 2008): 1–21.

———. "Taking 'Abduh to China: Chinese-Egyptian Intellectual Contact in the Early Twentieth Century." In Gelvin and Green, *Global Muslims*, 249–68.

Binder, Leonard. *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Blaydes, Lisa, and Drew A. Linzer. "Losing Muslim Hearts and Minds: Religiosity, Elite Competition, and Anti-Americanism in the Islamic World." Annual meeting of the International Studies Association, "Theory vs. Policy?: Connecting Scholars and Practitioners," New Orleans, LA, February 17, 2010.

Boberg, Dirk. *Ägypten, Naǧd und der Ḥiǧāz: Eine Untersuchung zum religiös-politischen Verhältnis zwischen Ägypten und den Wahhabiten, 1923–1936, anhand von in Kairo veröffentlichten pro- und antiwahhabitischen Streitschriften und Presseberichten* [Egypt, Najd, and Hejaz: An inquiry into the religiopolitical relationship between Egypt and the Wahhabis, 1923–1936, based on pro- and anti-Wahhabi pamphlets and press reports published in Cairo]. Bern: P. Lang, 1991.

Bose, Sugata, and Kris Manjapra, eds. *Cosmopolitan Thought Zones: South Asia and the Global Circulation of Ideas*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Brophy, David. "Five Races, One Parliament?: Xinhai in Xinjiang and the Problem of Minority Representation in the Chinese Republic." *Inner Asia* 14, no. 2 (2012): 343–64.

———. "Tending to Unite?: The Origins of Uyghur Nationalism." PhD diss., Harvard University, 2011.

———. *Uyghur Nation: Reform and Revolution on the Russia-China Frontier*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Brown, Daniel W. *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Brunner, Rainer. "Education, Politics, and the Struggle for Intellectual Leadership: Al-Azhar between 1927 and 1945." In *Guardians of Faith in Modern Times: 'Ulama' in the Middle East*, edited by Meir Hatina, 109–140. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Bulag, Uradyn E. *Collaborative Nationalism: The Politics of Friendship on China's Mongolian Frontier*. Lanham, UK: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010.

Chang Hao. *Chinese Intellectuals in Crisis: Search for Order and Meaning, 1890–1911*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.

Chang, Maria Hsia. *The Chinese Blue Shirt Society: Fascism and Developmental Nationalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985.

Chen, John T. "Re-Orientation: The Chinese Azharites between Umma and Third World, 1938–55." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 34, no. 1 (2014): 24–51.

Coupland, Philip. "H. G. Wells's 'Liberal Fascism.'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 35, no. 4 (October 2000): 541–58.

Crecelius, Daniel. "Al-Azhar in the Revolution." *Middle East Journal* 20, no. 1 (Winter 1966): 31–49.

Crossley, Pamela K. "Thinking about Ethnicity in Early Modern China." *Late Imperial China* 11, no. 1 (June 1990): 1–36.

———. *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

Davis, Natalie Zemon. *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975.

Denny, F. M. "Umma." *Encyclopaedia of Islam Online*, edited by P. Bearman et al. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Dikötter, Frank. *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992.

Dirlik, Arif. "The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement: A Study in Counterrevolution." *Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (1975): 945–80.

Dodge, Bayard. *Al-Azhar: A Millennium of Muslim Learning*. Washington, DC: Middle East Institute, 1961.

Duara, Prasenjit. "De-Constructing the Chinese Nation." *Australian Journal of Chinese Affairs* 30 (1993): 1–26.

———. *Rescuing History from the Nation: Questioning Narratives of Modern China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Dudoignon, Stéphane S., Komatsu Hisao, and Kosugi Yasushi, eds. *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World: Transmission, Transformation, Communication*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Eastman, Lloyd E. *The Abortive Revolution: China under Nationalist Rule, 1927–1937*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974.

Eickelman, Dale F. "Clash of Cultures?: Intellectuals, Their Publics, and Islam." In Dudoignon, Hisao, and Yasushi, *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World*, 289–304.

Eisenstein, Elizabeth. *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Elliott, Mark C. "The Case of the Missing Indigene: Debate over a Second-Generation Ethnic Policy." *China Journal* 73 (2016): 187–213.

———. *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001.

ElShakry, Marwa. *Reading Darwin in Arabic, 1860–1950*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013.

Eriksen, Thomas H. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. 1994. Reprint, New York: Pluto Press, 2010.

Esenbel, Selcuk. "Japan's Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam, 1900–1945." *American Historical Review* 109, no. 4 (October 2004): 1140–70.

Everest-Phillips, Max. "The Suburban King of Tartary." *Asian Affairs* 21, no. 3 (1990): 324–35.

Fang Sumei. "Cong Huibu Gongdu kan minguo qianqi Huizu de zhengzhi canyu huodong" [Looking at the activities of the Huizu with respect to political participation from the standpoint of Huibu gongdu (the public documents of the Hui territory)]. *Minzu yanjiu*, no. 1 (2010).

Febvre, Lucien, and Henri-Jean Martin. *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*. Translated by David Gerard. New York: Verso, 1997.

Fitzgerald, John. *Awakening China: Politics, Culture, and Class in the Nationalist Revolution*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996.

Forbes, Andrew D. W. *Warlords and Muslims in Chinese Central Asia: A Political History of Republican Sinkiang, 1911–1949*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Frankel, James D. "Liu Zhi's Journey through Ritual Law to Allah's Chinese Name: Conceptual Antecedents and Theological Obstacles to the Confucian-Islamic Harmonization of the Tianfang Dianli." PhD diss., Columbia University, 2005.

———. *Rectifying God's Name: Liu Zhi's Confucian Translation of Monotheism and Islamic Law*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011.

Friedmann, Yohanan. *Prophecy Continuous: Aspects of Ahmadi Religious Thought and Its Medieval Background*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

Fung, Edmund S. K. "The Chinese Nationalists and the Unequal Treaties, 1924–1931." *Modern Asian Studies* 21, no. 4 (1987): 793–819.

———. *In Search of Chinese Democracy: Civil Opposition in Nationalist China. 1929–1949*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Fu Tongxian. *Zhongguo Huijiao shi* [History of Islam in China]. 1940. Reprint, Ningxia: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 2000.

Garnaut, Anthony. "Hui Legends of The Companions of The Prophet." *China Heritage Newsletter*, no. 5 (March 2006).

Gelvin, James L., and Nile Green, "Introduction." In Gelvin and Green, *Global Muslims*, 1–24.

———, eds. *Global Muslims in the Age of Steam and Print*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014.

Gesink, Indira Falk. *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Ghaly, Mohammed. "Evolution and Muslim Responses to It." *Oxford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Science, and Technology in Islam*, edited by Ibrahim Kalin. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Gibb, H. A. R. *Modern Trends in Islam*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.

Gladney, Dru C. *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People's Republic*. 2nd ed. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1996.

Goodman, Lenn E. *Religious Pluralism and Values in the Public Sphere*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Goossaert, Vincent, and David A. Palmer. *The Religious Question in Modern China*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007.

Gregor, A. James. *A Place in the Sun: Marxism and Fascism in China's Long Revolution*. Oxford: Westview Press, 2000.

Griffith, Gareth. *Socialism and Superior Brains: The Political Thought of Bernard Shaw*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Guo Linlin. "Minguo shiqi xinshi Huijiao jiaoyu jingfei laiyuan yanjiu: yi Xibei diqu wei zhongxin" [A study of the sources of new Chinese Muslim educational funds during the period of the Republic of China: A study centering on northwest of China]. Master's thesis, Lanzhou Daxue, 2013.Haj, Samira. *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009.

Hammond, Kelly Anne. "The Conundrum of Collaboration: Japanese Involvement with Muslims in North China, 1931–1945." PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2015.

Hanioğlu, M. Şükrü. "The Historical Roots of Kemalism." In *Democracy, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey*, edited by Ahmet T. Kuru and Alfred Stepan, 32–60. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Henning, Stefan. "God's Translator: Qu'ran Translation and the Struggle over a Written National Language in 1930s China." *Modern China* 41, no. 6 (2015): 631–55.

Huang Guangxie. *Zhongguo de minzu shibie* [Ethnic classification in China]. Beijing: Minzu Chubanshi, 1995.

Hua Tao. "1930 niandai chu Beijing musilin yu jidujiao chuanjiaoshi guanyu yisilan jiao he pingben zhi de zhenglun" [In the early years of 1930s, the debates of Beijing Muslims with Christian missionaries about the idea of peace in Islam]. *Shijie zongjiao yanjiu* 5 (2011): 35–47.

Huff, Toby E. *The Rise of Early Modern Science: Islam, China and the West*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Ichwan, Moch Nur. "Differing Responses to an Ahmadi Translation and Exegesis: The Holy Qur'an in Egypt and Indonesia." *Archipel* 62, no. 1 (2001): 143–62.

Ihrig, Stefan. *Atatürk in the Nazi Imagination*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014.Jin Yijiu. "The Qur'ān in China." *Contributions to Asian Studies* 17 (1982): 95–101.

Jonker, Gerdien. "A Laboratory of Modernity: The Ahmadiyya Mission in Inter-War Europe." *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 3 (2014): 1–25.

Kang Youwei. *Datong shu* [The book of great unity]. Shanghai: Shanghai Guji Chubanshi, 2005.

Kansu, Aykut. *The Revolution of 1908 in Turkey*. Leiden: Brill, 1997.

Karl, Rebecca E. "Creating Asia: China in the World at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century." *American Historical Review* 103, no. 4 (October 1998): 1096–1118.

———. *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.

Kirby, William C. *Germany and Republican China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1984.

Kramer, Martin S. *Islam Assembled: The Advent of the Muslim Congresses*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1986.

Lavan, Spencer. *The Ahmadiyah Movement: A History and Perspective*. Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1974.

Lei Xiaojing, ed. *Huizu jinxiandai baokan mulu tiyao*. Ningxia: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshi, 2006.

Leibold, James. *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism: Reconfiguring how the Qing Frontier and Its Indigenes Became Chinese*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Lionnet, Françoise, and Shu-mei Shih. "Introduction: Thinking through the Minor, Transnationally." In *Minor Transnationalism*, edited by Françoise Lionnet and Shu-mei Shih, 1–26. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005.

Lipman, Jonathan N. *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997.

———. "'A Fierce and Brutal People': On Islam and Muslims in Qing Law." In Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 83–110.

———. "Hyphenated Chinese: Sino-Muslim Identity in Modern China." In *Remapping China: Fissures in Historical Terrain*, edited by Gail Hershatter et al., 97–112. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Liu Li. "Jin 20 nian lai Huizu baokan yanjiu shuping" [The last 20 years of research on Huizu newspapers]. *Huizu yanjiu* 78, no. 2 (2010)

Liu, Xiaoyuan. *Frontier Passages: Ethnopolitics and the Rise of Chinese Communism, 1921–1945*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004.

Ma Guangde. "Guanyu Xing Hui pian zhong Huizu ziwo renshi de sikao" [Reflections on the self-recognition of the Huizu in the awakening of the Hui]. *Huizu yu Yisilan yanjiu* 40, no. 4 (2000).

Ma Haiyun. "New Teachings and New Territories: Religion, Regulations, and Regions in Qing Gansu, 1700–1800." PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2007.

Ma Haiyun. "Patriotic and Pious Muslim Intellectuals in Modern China: The Case of Ma Jian." *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23, no. 3 (July 2006): 54–70.

Ma Jianzhao, ed. *Zhongguo nanfang Huizu shehui tuanti ziliao xuanpian*. Chengdu: Sichuan Minzu Chubanshe, 2003.

Ma Jing. "Minguo Musilin xueshu tuanti Zhuiqiu xuehui yanjiu" [A study of the Pursuit Society: A Muslim academic body in the Republic of China]. *Beifang Minzu daxue xuebao* 6, no. 96 (2010).

Ma Jing and Li Xiaotong. "The Communication between Chinese Muslims and the Ottoman Empire: A Case Study on Imam Wang Haoran's Visit to Turkey." International Congress on "China and the Muslim World: Cultural Encounters," IRCICA, Istanbul, 2014.

Ma Lingguo. "Aiguo baoren Wu Tegong" [The patriotic journalist Wu Tegong]. *Huizu Wenxue* 1 (2007).

Ma Rulin. "Ji wang you Xue Wenbo" [Remembering my deceased friend, Xue Wenbo]. *Zhongguo Musilin* 1 (1986): 37.

Mackerras, Colin. *China's Minorities: Integration and Modernization in the Twentieth Century*. Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Mao Yufeng. "A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation: Chinese Pilgrimage Missions to Mecca during World War II." *Journal of Asian Studies* 70, no. 2 (May 2011): 373–395.

———. "Sino-Muslims in Chinese State Building, 1906–1956." PhD diss., George Washington University, 2007.

"Maslahah." *Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, edited by John Esposito. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.

Mason, Isaac. "Muslim Publications in Chinese." *Moslem World* 21 (1931): 408–9.

Matsumoto Masumi. "Rationalizing Patriotism among Muslim Chinese: The Impact of the Middle East on the *Yuehua* Journal." In Dudoignon, Hisao, and Yasushi, *Intellectuals in the Modern Islamic World*, 137–63.

Meynard, Thierry. *The Religious Philosophy of Liang Shuming: The Hidden Buddhist*. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

Millward, James A. *Beyond the Pass: Economy, Ethnicity, and Empire in Qing Central Asia, 1759–1864*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998.

———. *Eurasian Crossroads: A History of Xinjiang*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.

Millward, James A., and Laura J. Newby. "The Qing and Islam on the Western Frontier." In Crossley, Siu, and Sutton, *Empire at the Margins*, 113–34.

Mitchell, Richard P. *The Society of the Muslim Brothers*. London: Oxford University Press, 1969.

Mittler, Barbara. *A Newspaper for China?: Power, Identity, and Change in Shanghai's News Media, 1872–1912*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004.

Mullaney, Thomas. *Coming to Terms with the Nation: Ethnic Classification in Modern China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Nakanishi, Tatsuya. "Kindai chugoku musurimu no isuramu ho-kaishaku: hi-musurimu to no kyosei wo megutte" [Reinterpretation of Islamic law by Chinese Muslims during the modern period: Concerning coexistence with non-Muslims]. *Toyoshi Kenkyu* 74, no. 4 (2016): 1–35.

Nord, Christiana. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publications, 2007.

Oliver-Dee, Sean. *Muslim Minorities and Citizenship: Authority, Communities, and Islamic Law*. London: Tauris, 2012.

Parla, Taha. *The Social and Political Thought of Ziya Gökalp, 1876–1924*. Leiden: Brill, 1985.

Pusey, James Reeve. *China and Charles Darwin*. Cambridge, MA: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1983.

Rahman, Fazlur. "The Impact of Modernity on Islam." In *Religious Pluralism and World Community: Interfaith and Intercultural Communication*, edited by Edward Jabra Jurji, 248–62. Leiden: Brill, 1969.

Rebecca, Karl. *Staging the World: Chinese Nationalism at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.

Reed, Christopher A. *Gutenberg in Shanghai: Chinese Print Capitalism, 1876–1937*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.

Rhoads, Edward J. M. *Manchus and Han: Ethnic Relations and Political Power in Late Qing and Early Republican China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2000.

Robinson, Francis. "Technology and Religious Change: Islam and the Impact of Print." *Modern Asian Studies* 27, no. 1 (1993): 229–51.

Ryad, Umar. *Islamic Reformism and Christianity: A Critical Reading of the Works of Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā and His Associates (1898–1935)*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Saguchi, Toru. "Chugoku Islam no kindai shugi" [Modernism of Chinese Islam]. *Kanazawa daigaku houbungakubu ronshu* 16 (1969): 19–44.

Scharbrodt, Oliver. *Islam and the Baha'i Faith: A Comparative Study of Muhammad 'Abduh and 'Abdul-Baha 'Abbas*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Schudson, Michael. *The Power of News*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Sevea, Iqbal Singh. "The Ahmadiyya Print Jihad in South and Southeast Asia." In *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia*, edited by R. Michael Feener and Terenjit Sevea, 133–48. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009.

Sha Hongquan. "Zhongguo Huijiao xuehui fanyi gulanjing de jingguo genggai" [A synopsis of the process of the China Muslim Literary Societies Quran translation]. *Zhongguo Musilin* 1 (1983): 33–35.

Shils, Edward. *The Intellectuals and the Powers*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973.

Sırma, İhsan Süreyya. *Çin Müslümanları ve Çin'e Seyahat*. Istanbul: Beyan, 2008.

Smith, Jane I. *An Historical and Semantic Study of the Term "Islam" as Seen in a Sequence of Qur'an Commentaries*. Harvard Dissertations in Religion 1. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975.

Smith, Wilfred Cantwell. *The Meaning and End of Religion*. 1963. Reprint, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991.

Sonn, Tamara, ed. and trans. *Interpreting Islam: Bandali Jawzi's Islamic Intellectual History*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.Temel, Mehmet. "Atatürk Devrimlerinin Çin Aydınlarınca Algılanışı ve XX: Yüzyılın ilk yarısındaki Türkiye-Çin İlişkilerine Yansıması" [Perception of Atatürk's reforms by Chinese intellectuals: Its reflection on Turkish-Chinese relations during the first half of the twentieth century]. *Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 21 (2007): 105–23.

Thum, Rian. *The Sacred Routes of Uyghur History*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Tuttle, Gray. *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Tyan, E. "Djihād." *Encyclopaedia of Islam Online*, edited by P. Bearman et al. 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Valentine, Simon Ross. *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at: History, Belief, Practice*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.

Waardenburg, Jacques. "The Modern Period, 1500–1950." In *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: A Historical Survey*, edited by Jacques Waardenburg, 70–84. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Wang Fuxiang. "1932 nian Beixin Nanhua wuru Huijiao an yanjiu" [The case of defamation of Islam by Beixin Nanhua in 1932]. *Luxun yanjiu yuekan* 1 (2010): 62–68.

Wang, Liping. "Creating a National Symbol: The Sun Yatsen Memorial in Nanjing." *Republican China* 21, no. 2 (April 1996): 23–63.

Wang Qisheng. "Jiang Jieshi de yuedu shi," [The reading history of Chiang Kai-shek]. *Zhongguo tushu pinglun* 4 (2011).

Wasserstrom, Jeffrey N. *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View from Shanghai*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991.

Wells, Audrey. *The Political Thought of Sun Yat-sen: Development and Impact*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Wiegers, Gerard. "Language and Identity: Pluralism and the Use of Non-Arabic Languages in the Muslim West." In *Pluralism and Identity: Studies in Ritual Behaviour*, edited by Jan Platvoet and Karel van der Toorn, 303–326. Leiden: Brill, 1995.

Wood, Simon A. *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashīd Riḍā's Modernist Defence of Islam*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2012.

Xiao-Planes, Xiaohong. "Of Constitutions and Constitutionalism: Trying to Build a New Political Order in China, 1908–1949." In *Building Constitutionalism in China*, edited by Stéphanie Balme and Michael W. Dowdle, 37–58. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Yang, Mayfair Mei-hui, ed. *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.

Yang Yifan. *Islam in China*. Hong Kong: Union Press, 1957.

Yao Dali. "'Huihui zuguo' yu Huizu rentong de lishi bianqian" [The "Hui ancestral country' and the historical changes concerning the Huizu identification]. *Zhongguo xueshu* 5, no. 1 (2004): 90–135.

Ye Renchang. *Wusi yihou de fandui jidujiao yundong* [The anti-Christian movement after May 4th movement] Taipei: Jiuda wenhua gufen youxian gongsi, 1992.

Yu Zhengui and Yang Huaizhong. *Zhongguo Yisilan wenxian zhuyi tiyao*. Ningxia: Ningxia renmin chubanshi, 1993.

Zarrow, Peter. *China in War and Revolution, 1895–1949*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Zhang Chengzhi. "Dizhong hai bianjie" [The Mediterranean sea [as] boundary]. *Dushu*, no. 335 (2007).

Zhang Dajun. *Xinjiang fengbao shiqi nian* [Xinjiang in tumult for seventy years]. Taipei: Lanxi Chubanshi, 1980.

Zhou Wenjiu. "Dong Xi wenhua lunzheng yu Zhongguo xiandai hua daolu zhi tansuo" [The debates between Eastern and Western culture and research for the path of Chinese modernization]. *Tianjin shifan daxue xuebao daxue xuebao* 3, no. 204 (2009): 44–50.