

Hui Nation: Islam and Muslim Politics in Modern China

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# Abstract

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This study examines the modern history of the Hui to understand how China, a multiethnic empire-turned-nation-state, has shaped and been shaped by its many “others,” particularly its ethnic and religious minorities. The Hui, as millions of Chinese-speaking Muslims scattered throughout China are known, are unique among the People’s Republic of China’s 55 officially recognized minorities in sharing nothing in common other than a religious identity, Islam. Moreover, unlike Tibetans and Mongolians in the PRC and many minorities in other post-imperial states, the Hui inherited no system of representation from the dynastic era. This lack of political institutionalization through the Qing reign should draw attention to what remains an underexamined period in Hui history—from the fall of the Qing to the founding of the PRC in 1949—and an unexamined question—*How did the Hui become a nation?*

Focused on the large, inland province of Henan, *Hui Nation* tells this story. I show that Hui nationhood was not simply an elaboration of Communist ethnic policy but rather the consequence of a bottom-up social movement. Incorporating cultural and organizational change into social history, I further argue that this movement hinged on changes in Huis’ understanding of Islam and in the institutions that connected them to one another in the first half of the twentieth century.

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## Introduction

“The first problem encountered in the history of the Hui nationality,” wrote the historian and ethnologist Bai Shouyi (1909-2000), “is the relationship between the Hui nationality and Islam.”<sup>1</sup> Exactly what the problem is, and why it merits attention, is a matter of perspective. For Bai, a scholar, the problem was in the first place historical: How have the Hui, as millions of Chinese-speaking Muslims scattered throughout China are known, interpreted Islam? Few have contributed as much as Bai to our understanding of this tradition. For over half a century he led a monumental effort to write the Hui into Chinese history. His original research and massive source compilations not merely cleared a path but built a road for subsequent studies, including the present one.

Considering the political context in which Bai wrote, the problem was also ideological: How could the Hui, a group defined by their historic connection to Islam, be a legitimate political identity under socialism? The passage quoted above opened an essay first published in the *People's Daily* in February 1960, little more than a decade after the founding of the People's Republic of China. In the intervening years, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) had introduced a complex of ethnic policies at every level of government for newly recognized “minority nationalities,” including the Hui. Through these policies the CCP differentiated itself from its predecessor and contender, the Nationalist Party (GMD), which previously refused to recognize the Hui as an independent nationality separate from the Han. One of Bai's principal tasks as an intellectual under the new regime was to demonstrate how Hui culture was shaped by but not

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<sup>1</sup> Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, “Guanyu huizu lishi de ji ge wenti” 关于回族史的几个问题 (Some Questions Concerning the History of the Hui Nationality), 164.

limited to Islam, and how their nationality status had been denied by China's dynasties and the Nationalist Party until liberation by the CCP.

The grand narrative of Hui national formation and development over a millennium of oppression has diverted attention from the recent past and the profound change Islam in China and Hui society underwent the first half of the twentieth century. It is true that in the decade of rivalry and conflict leading up to 1949, one of the many points around which the CCP and GMD polarized was the “Hui question” (*huihui wenti*)—whether Huis constituted a distinct nationality or were simply Hans who believed in Islam. Both sides' views have been examined in previous studies.<sup>2</sup> What remains virtually unaddressed is the fact that by the late 1940s, the Nationalists had already conceded that the Hui were culturally distinct from the Han and entitled to designated representation in the National Assembly, even if they continued to insist rhetorically on a monist conception of the Chinese nation.<sup>3</sup>

This concession marked a reversal of Nationalist policy and was a direct response to the organized efforts by Hui throughout the country. The point is not that the Nationalists had all along been more receptive to designated Hui representation than PRC historiography claims, but that such representation was fought for and won over the decades preceding 1949. If we set aside the classificatory question of whether the Hui are a nationality or a religious community, it is

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<sup>2</sup> Benite, “From ‘Literati’ to ‘Ulama’”; Cieciura, “Ethnicity or Religion? Republican-Era Chinese Debates on Islam and Muslims”; Gladney, *Muslim Chinese*; Eroglu Sager, “A Place under the Sun”; Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*; Hua Tao 华涛 and Di Guixie 翟桂叶, “Minguo shiqi de ‘huizu jie shuo’ yu zhongguo gongchandang ‘huihui minzu wenti’ de lilun yiyi” 民国时期的“回族界说”与中国共产党《回回民族问题》的理论意义 (Theories of “Defining the Hui Nationality” and the Theoretical Significance of Chinese Communist Party’s “The Muslim Minority Question” during the Republican Period); Matsumoto 松本, *Chūgoku minzoku seisaku no kenkyū: Shinmatsu kara 1945-nen made no “minzokuron” o chūshin ni* 中国民族政策の研究: 清末から 1945 年までの‘民族論’を中心に (A Study of China’s Nationalities Policy: Focusing on the “Nationalities Theory” from the End of the Qing to 1945).

<sup>3</sup> Recent work by Hale Eroglu Sager discusses the development, focusing on discourse in Hui periodicals. By contrast, as I explain below and in Chapter Four, my account emphasizes the institutional conditions and political mobilization that pressured the Nationalist government to make this concession. Eroglu Sager, “A Place under the Sun.”



evident that they had attained a significant degree of internal organization and political strength before the CCP came to power.

The variability of internal organization points to the need to distinguish between *nationality* and *nation*. In the PRC, nationality is the basic unit of internal (within the PRC), politically recognized ethnic difference. Since the 1950s, the government has recognized 56 nationalities, 55 of which qualify as *minority* nationalities and are accordingly entitled to certain privileges and, in some cases, subject to special scrutiny and repression. 10 of these minorities are officially recognized as Muslim; the largest of these are the Hui, followed by the Uyghur and then eight more groups mostly concentrated in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Every citizen of the PRC belongs to a nationality, which is indicated on her identity card.

A nation, following Benedict Anderson's definition, is an "imagined community" of people whose relationships to one another are impersonally mediated (that is, not face-to-face) and who believe themselves to belong as equal and interchangeable individuals to a culturally defined group.<sup>4</sup> Common language and territory can foster national consciousness, since newspapers, radio, and other media that constitute (or *mediate*) such relationships among strangers are often linguistically and geographically constrained. But they are not strict conditions for nationhood, which obtains wherever people believe in and perpetuate a distinct national identity. The Hui became a nation in the first half of the twentieth century because a critical mass of people who thought of themselves as Hui—which since roughly the Ming period (1368-1644) designated Chinese-speaking Muslims throughout the empire<sup>5</sup>—came to understand

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<sup>4</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

<sup>5</sup> There are several terms used in English-language scholarship to designate the people I am calling "Hui": Chinese Muslims, Sino-Muslims, Sinophone Muslims, Chinese-speaking Muslims, Hui Muslims, Muslim Chinese, and probably more. As Jonathan Lipman, who uses "Sino-Muslim," points out, the problem with "Hui" is that it is quite close to "Huizu," a neologism combining "Hui" or "Huihui" and "minzu" and the demonym for one of the ten officially recognized Muslim nationalities in the PRC. The issue is further complicated by the fact that in the Republican era, "Huizu" was also used to refer to Turkic Muslim peoples of Xinjiang. While I acknowledge the risk

that identity in national terms. What is significant is not simply that they developed a national consciousness, but also that they were able to institutionalize a national identity and make it a social and, ultimately, political reality. They did so by investing in what we can think of as, on one hand, the soft institution of a national public mediated through a Hui periodical press and, on the other hand, the hard institution of a national Hui association that organized and coordinated resources and political activism across the country.

The underlying organization required for institution-building at this scale cannot be taken for granted. Unlike the Tibetans, Mongolians, and Turkistanis within China and cultural minorities in several other post-imperial states, the Hui inherited no institutions of designated representation, administration, or justice from the dynastic era: no lamas, princes, or *begs* at the Qing court, no Orenburg muftiate, no Ottoman *millet*. Nor did they exhibit many of the traits that are typical of recognized minorities in many modern nation-states and that function as formal standards of nationality status in the PRC. They have no common and distinctive language, territory, or economy. As the anthropologist Dru Gladney puts it, "...it is Islam, or the memory of it, that is the only thing that all Hui have in common, and they are the sole minority in China to share only a religious identity."<sup>6</sup> This lack of political institutionalization through the Qing reign (1644-1912) should draw attention to what remains an underexamined period in Hui history—from the fall of the Qing to the founding of the PRC in 1949—and an unexamined question—*How did the Hui become a nation?*

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of anachronism, I opt for "Hui," which, together with the variants "Huìhui" and "Huimin," was used in late imperial and Republican times by Hui themselves as well as the state and other people to refer to them and remains in use in Taiwan today. On a practical level it is also the shortest of the various options listed. When translating or referring to "Huizu" as it is used in the PRC today, I will specify "Hui nationality." Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, xii–xiv.

<sup>6</sup> Gladney, *Dislocating China*, 287.

Focused on the large, inland province of Henan, *Hui Nation* tells this story. I show that Hui nationhood was not simply an elaboration of Communist ethnic policy but rather the consequence of a bottom-up social movement. Incorporating cultural and organizational change into social history, I further argue that this movement hinged on changes in Huis' understanding of Islam and in the institutions that connected them to one another in the first half of the twentieth century. My hope is that readers will gain from this study a deeper understanding of how China, a multiethnic empire-turned-nation-state, has not only shaped but been shaped by its many "others," particularly its ethnic and religious minorities.

## **Muslim Politics**

What I mean by a Hui "social movement" and its impact on China is more concrete than some might expect.<sup>7</sup> In the PRC today, there is not a single province in which the Hui do not reside, and thus there is not a single province in which the state bureaucracy is unaffected by the quotas, exemptions, and "nationalities work" associated with that group. Ethnic classification inflects governance at every level and across sectors from schools to cemeteries. Part of my argument is that the extension of these policies to the Hui is a direct result of sustained organizing and demands by the Hui themselves against the preferences of the Nationalist government before the founding of the PRC in 1949.

The clearest achievement of this social movement was the politicization of Hui representation in the National Assembly. By 1936, a network of Hui associations were already petitioning for separate delegates, but their demands were rejected by the Nationalist government

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Tilly offers a useful definition of a "social movement": "It consists of *a sustained challenge to power holders in the name of a population living under the jurisdiction of those power holders by means of repeated public displays of that population's worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment*" (italics in the original). Tilly, "From Interactions to Outcomes in Social Movements," 257.

on the grounds that the Hui were Han in all but religion. A decade later, in 1947, the China Islamic Association (*zhongguo huijiao xiehui*, est. 1937), the successor of the earlier generation of associations, pressured the government to concede. The quota itself was small; ultimately, only 17 seats out of around 3,000 were reserved for Huis under the awkward category of “citizens of China proper with special life customs.” The larger significance of this achievement lay in its perceived inadequacy. The China Islamic Association was powerful enough to organize a nationwide campaign for Hui recognition but not to secure a number of seats commensurate with the expectations of its mobilized constituents. In fact, as a result of its campaign, Huis were officially required to vote in special elections for those 17 delegates, drastically reducing the political influence of individual Hui voters. A weaker organization would not have secured any seats at all, but nor would it have provoked the machinations that confined Hui voters to Hui elections. The result was maximal Hui frustration on the eve of revolution. The question of Hui national recognition, once a wedge to challenge GMD legitimacy, was sharpened into a blade and added to the CCP’s revolutionary arsenal.

This sketch of Muslim politics in China’s recent past contrasts sharply with most impressions of China’s present. In scholarship, journalism, and popular discourse in the United States (and elsewhere), China is so tightly bound up with notions of despotism and totalitarian control that the possibility of political concessions to a social movement, to say nothing of a Muslim social movement, may be difficult to imagine. It also breaks from mainstream Chinese accounts, which emphasize the role of the CCP as liberator of peoples oppressed under Nationalist and dynastic rule.

These seeming incongruities and the potential to reconcile them are among the reasons I believe the story of *Hui Nation* is an important one. But they also speak to an important element

of the backdrop against which this story unfolds: the disintegration of political authority. Most of the half-century on which this study focuses was characterized by a debilitated central government and internal conflict, from the waning years of the Qing dynasty and chaotic warlord era to the catastrophic War of Resistance against the Empire of Japan and the Chinese Civil War. Even at the height of its power during the so-called Nanjing Decade of 1928-37, the Nationalist government ran an ideologically loud but structurally weak state.

At the local level, the state failed to guarantee security, education, and other public goods. Local elites, including Hui elites, who organized to provide them were able to entrench their status and control. Diffuse activism among Hui elites over roughly the first quarter of the twentieth century developed into larger and more complex organizations with the rise of a Hui periodical press and new political constraints during the Nanjing Decade. Merchant networks, mobility, and the rise of mass politics inculcated in these scattered elites a sense of common interest and the need to promote a shared and distinctive culture in their communities. The violence and disorder that intensified following the Japanese invasion of July 1937 lent new urgency to the cause of Hui solidarity. Learning from failed attempts in earlier years, Hui elites succeeded in building a truly nationwide organization to represent themselves and manage the affairs of their constituents: the China Islamic Association for National Salvation, renamed the China Islamic Association in 1943. Most accounts of religious institutions in this period of Chinese history tend to emphasize the government's efforts, however rigorous or haphazard, to control and coopt them. One of the conclusions of this study is that the main story of the institutional history of Chinese Islam in the first half of the twentieth century is not its regulation by a strong state but its response to a weak one.

This is not to say that the Hui had a predominantly antagonistic relationship with the government, or that they lacked politically influential leaders. The “Ma clique” of Hui warlords dominated the northwest from the late Qing through the Republican era. In north China, the Hebei-born Hui general Ma Liang (1875-1947) attained high office in Shandong in the 1920s and became governor of the province under the Japanese occupation. Far to the south, the Hui general Bai Chongxi (1893-1966) dominated Guangxi province with his ally Li Zongren (1890-1969) and became defense minister and one of the most powerful members of the Nationalist Party in the 1940s. To these military men we may add the considerable number of Hui civilian officials, including bureaucrats and legislators, who served in national government in the Republican era. As recent work by John Chen shows, these prominent Hui officials and GMD members positioned themselves as dual intermediaries for the Nationalist party-state as its leaders sought to develop ties with the Islamic world and strengthen their control over the more heavily Muslim northwest and Inner Asian frontier.<sup>8</sup>

These prominent figures were instrumental in leading what became a countrywide movement to gain national recognition for the Hui and institutionalize Hui political identity. But as the initial failure of this movement in the 1930s demonstrates, powerful representatives in the capital and friends in high places were necessary but insufficient for this endeavor. Also crucial was the participation and sustained commitment of Huis at the local level and in the underexamined interior.

## **The Hui of Henan**

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<sup>8</sup> Chen, “Islamic Modernism in China.”

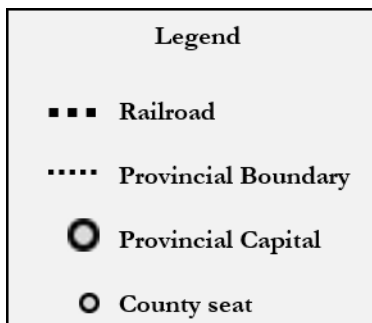
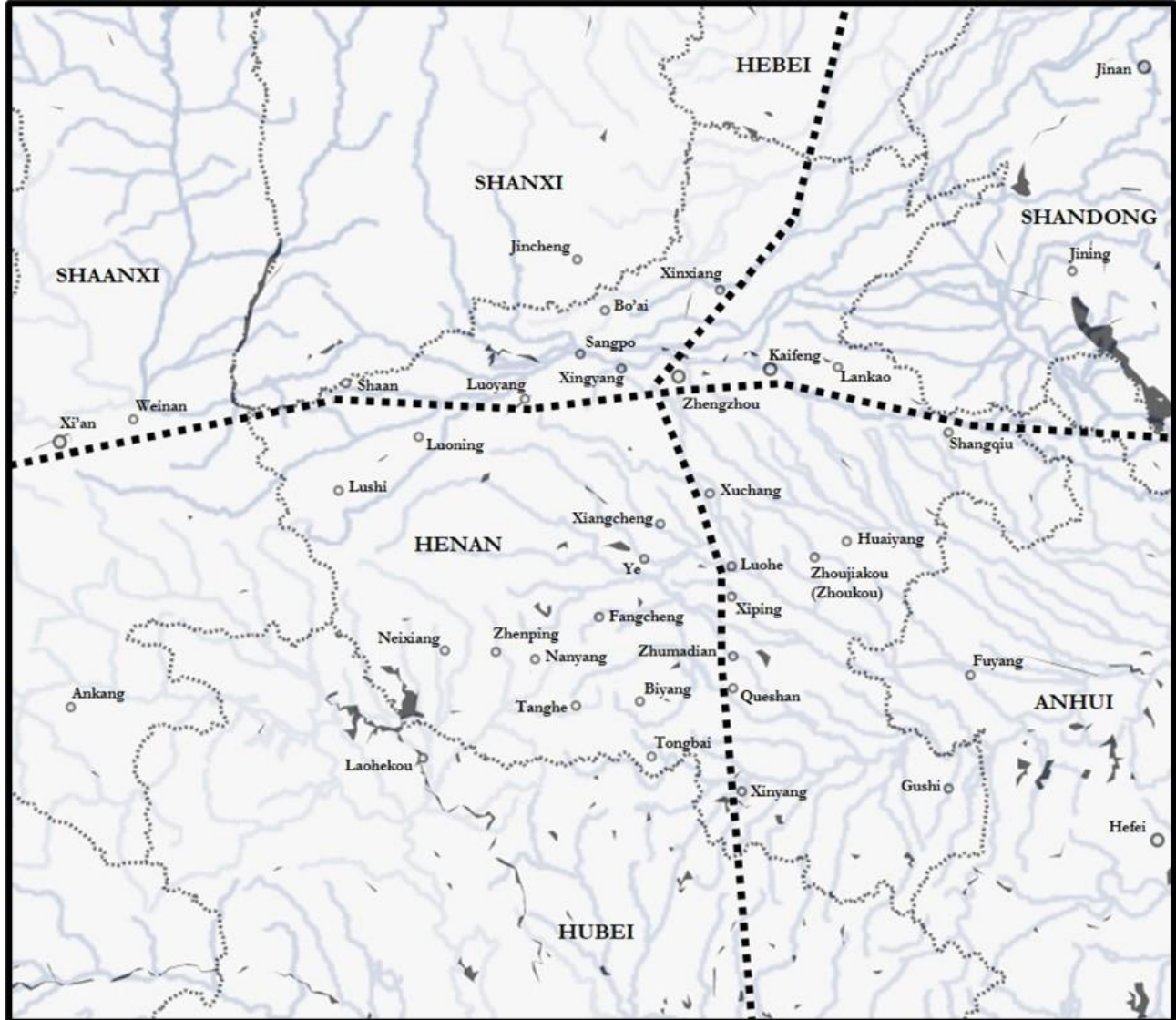
Why study Islam and Muslim politics in Henan, remote as it is from the coastal and northwestern borders, the traditional focus of scholarship on the Hui? On one level, Henan merits our attention simply because it has received so little of it in the past, despite the fact that many of the leading Hui intellectuals (including Bai Shouyi), *ahongs*, and merchants of the twentieth century hailed from or spent significant time in the province.<sup>9</sup> Encompassing the crosshairs of Republican China's largest railroads, Henan became a major front in the war of resistance against Japan and fertile ground for Communist organizing. Different regions within the province experienced dramatic economic change during the late Qing and Republican periods: railroad towns like Zhumaidan, Xuchang, and Zhengzhou burgeoned into large cities and marginalized older hubs like Zhoukou and Zhuxianzhen tied to the river transport system.<sup>10</sup> Hui merchants, particularly those in the hide trade, maneuvered these changes to build new commercial networks within the province and beyond. Together with Hui professionals, officers, *ahongs*, and local officials, they built hundreds of Islamic institutions, including schools, preaching halls, and social associations, and in the late 1930s-40s established more branches of the China Islamic Association than coreligionists in any other province.

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<sup>9</sup> For an exception to this neglect, see the pioneering anthropological work (in French) on the Hui of Henan by Elisabeth Allès: Allès, *Musulmans de Chine* (Muslims of China: An Anthropology of the Hui of Henan).

<sup>10</sup> Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses*; Wou, "Development, Underdevelopment and Degeneration: The Introduction of Rail Transport into Honan."

Figure i.1: Republican Henan: Major Places in This Study<sup>11</sup>



<sup>11</sup> Map by author using Google Earth Pro and Snazzymaps.com. River geodata from the University of Michigan China Data Center via Columbia University Libraries. Railroad paths adapted from Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 16.



War, famine, migration, bureaucratic incapacity, changing definitions, politically motivated exaggeration—these are just some of the factors that confound estimates of Henan’s Hui population in the decades before 1949. Somewhere between 300 and 400 thousand, a little less than 1% of the total provincial population, is a reasonable approximation. Located throughout the province, they typify what Chinese ethnologists call the “great dispersal, small concentrations” (*da fensan, xiao juju*) and ethnic “comingling” (*zaju*) patterns of residence characteristic of Hui throughout China. According to a 1910 survey published by Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there were 432 mosques in Henan.<sup>12</sup> An incomplete survey by the China Islamic Association for National Salvation in the early 1940s counted 382 mosques.<sup>13</sup> According to a 2014 survey published on the website of the China Islamic Association, there are 929 mosques in the province.<sup>14</sup>

A focus on Henan is also methodologically significant in two ways. First, we can learn a great deal about the role of religion in motivating Hui institution-building and mobilization by examining these processes in what was perhaps their politically and financially least favorable environment. In this respect the present study breaks new ground by turning to methodological advantage the province’s disorder and political fragmentation. I conceptualize Henan as an *inner boundary*. Descriptively, this term refers to Henan’s distance, on one hand, from the centers of Hui cultural production along China’s eastern coast and the bastions of Hui military power in the northwest; and, on the other hand, from the central Nationalist government and its state-building

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<sup>12</sup> Nakakuki Shinshō 中久喜信周, *Kyōsa: kanan no kaikyōto* 調査 河南ノ回教徒 (Survey: Muslims of Henan), 外務省政務局第一課:66.

<sup>13</sup> Wang Zhengru 王正儒 and Lei Xiaojing 雷晓静, “Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui gongzuo baogao” 中国回教救国协会工作报告 (自二十八年八月起止三十一年二月止) (Work Report of the China Islamic Association for National Salvation (August 1939-February 1942), 168–69.

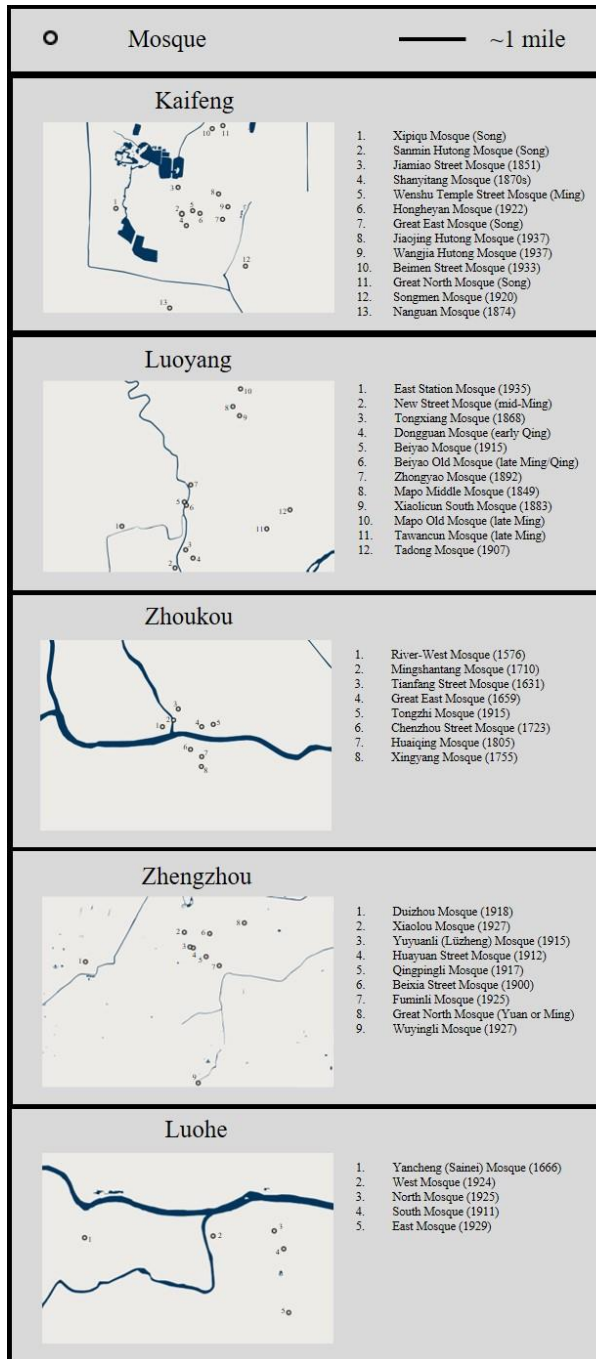
<sup>14</sup> Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Xiehui 中国伊斯兰教协会, “2015 zuixin zhongguo qingzhensi shuliang ji fenbu” 2015 最新中国清真寺数量及分布 (Most Recent (2015) Total Number and Distribution of Mosques in China).

projects. Analytically, *inner boundary* captures Henanese Hui's status as an 'edge' case of political mobilization. Precisely because these communities could not rely on warlord power (as in the northwest) or closely follow foreign Islamic movements (as in the east), and because they lived with the chronic challenges of banditry, natural disaster, and a generally ineffectual local government, their ultimate success in building and institutionalizing supralocal solidarity highlights the consequences of local religious change.

Second, Henan includes numerous manifestations of a key phenomenon: mosque multiplicity, by which I mean the existence of multiple mosques and mosque-based congregations in a single place. As with the "wide dispersals, small concentrations" pattern of residence introduced above, mosque multiplicity in Henan is exemplary but not unique. It typically occurs in market towns and cities, where, in part as a function of their "wide dispersals," Hui merchants and communities from different places converge. Economic and cultural ties with the native place and shared sentiment among migrants help maintain boundaries between neighboring Hui communities. Some mosques are even known by the name of the founding community's place of origin: for example, the Xingyang Mosque and Huaqing Mosque in Zhoukou. In this respect mosques resemble the "native place associations" (*tongxianghui*) established throughout China in the late imperial period.<sup>15</sup> Also like those institutions, mosques embedded congregants within a system of imperfectly overlapping identities. The symbols of lineage, occupation, scholarship, and native place so pronounced in the wider society also inflected Hui communal life. Whether contributing funds to build a new mosque, hiring a cleric, or conducting a funeral, expressions of Islamic identity were conjugated according to the grammar of Chinese culture.

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<sup>15</sup> Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation*.



**Figure i.2: Mosque Multiplicity in Henan Cities<sup>16</sup>**

<sup>16</sup> Maps created using Snazymaps.com. Blue lines indicate major waterways. Mosque location data and founding dates based on: Yang Shaohua 杨少华, “Zhoujiakou yisilanjiao shihua” 周家口伊斯兰教史话 (History of Islam in Zhoujiakou); Ma Wenzhang 马文章 and Ma Baoguang 马宝光, “Luohe wu fang qingzhensi diaojiu ziliao huibian” 漯河五坊清真寺调研资料汇编 (Compiled Survey Materials on Five Mosques in Luohe); Liu Baoqi 刘宝琦 and Jin Yaozeng 金耀曾, *Luoyang qingzhensi* 洛阳清真寺 (Luoyang Mosques); Liu Baoqi 刘宝琦, *Zhengzhou qingzhensi* 郑州清真寺 (Zhengzhou Mosques); Ma Shixin 买世馨, *Zhengzhou qingzhensi* 郑州清真寺 (Zhengzhou Mosques).

The maintenance of these boundaries among coreligionists reflects the fact that Islam was one of many identities Hui built upon in social life. Furthermore, Hui deployed and gave meaning to the symbolic resources of Islam to reinforce, set off, or otherwise qualify those other types of relationships. Thus stated, these facts are obvious and generic, but they implicate a larger and underappreciated point about the cultural challenge of Hui nationhood. The obstacles to the development of a unified Hui national identity are usually understood negatively: they lack a common and distinct language, territory, and so forth, but they *at least* share—to return to Gladney’s formulation—“Islam, or the memory of it.” In many ways this is of course true. Islam, however, is not only a set of beliefs, spaces, rituals, and traditions Hui have in common. It is also a vocabulary of distinction that can sacralize boundaries between Hui, because every shared symbol is also a potential point of divergent interpretation.

The project of defining and propagating a shared “Islamic culture” (*huijiao wenhua*) for the Hui nation thus involved not simply fortifying religious identity to compensate for a lack of other commonalities but also transcending the socially useful and deliberately maintained boundaries between mosque congregations. Not surprisingly, its champions viewed institutionalized divisions between Hui as pathological to the proper and natural state of national unity. In his 1947 essay “The Hui of the Central Plains” (the region including much of Henan and an epithet of the province), the renowned Henanese *ahong* Pang Shiqian lamented this divisive tendency in his hometown of Sangpo:

In the religion of the Central Plains (actually, it is even a universal phenomenon), there is a tragic phenomenon: the forest of mosques, divided by boundaries. It even happens that people of a given surname will establish their own mosque. Thus they not only fail to help each other [for the benefit of] religion but also split religion. Take Sangpo for example. It used to have seven mosques.

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Mosques); Hu Yunsheng 胡云生, “Kaifeng shi yisilanjiao qingzhensi” 开封市伊斯兰教清真寺 (Islamic Mosques of Kaifeng City).

Currently, although only some 200-odd households remain, they are still unable to join together and cooperate, while those 600-odd households that moved to Pingliang due to the war have now built another five mosques there.<sup>17</sup>

The long history of ritual disputes between mosque congregations in Henan is a testament to this divisive potential. More generally, the phenomenon of mosque multiplicity reflects the enduring function of Islam as an *articulated identity* that can sustain relationships more complex and graduated than a simple in-group/out-group binary. The tensions between the social utility of congregational distinction and the political aspiration of cultural uniformity have profoundly shaped Islam in modern China and are a major theme in this study.

### **Ritual, Islamic Knowledge, Shari‘a**

The language above may have already hinted that my approach to religion has something to do with ritual, and that my approach to ritual has something to do with symbols. These are pragmatic choices that follow from the questions I am asking about one religion, Islam, as it is understood, invoked, and argued about in Henan. What kinds of relationships has Islamic identity been expected to sustain—between family members, between neighbors, between business partners, between teachers and students, between strangers reading copies of the same book or newspaper? How have these expectations changed in relation to the political, economic, and cultural upheavals of the late imperial and Republican periods? What roles and relationships have evolving understandings of Islam sanctioned, frustrated, or altered? Adopting what anthropologist Adam Chau calls a “relational approach,”<sup>18</sup> I examine what people do with Islam in social life. This does not mean that I ignore religious ideas. In the following chapters I look in

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<sup>17</sup> Pang Shiqian 庞士谦, “Zhongyuan huihui” 中原回回 (Huihui of the Central Plains), 146–47.

<sup>18</sup> Chau, *Religion in China*, 1–4.

detail at consequential shifts in seemingly arcane arguments on, for example, the proper conduct of funerals. But my aim is ultimately to understand how these shifts reflect and inform what people do and the people with whom they do it. The actions of interest here include not just what is argued about but the argument itself.

Ritual is one way that people articulate relationships. People who come together to worship, break the fast, or attend a funeral mark themselves as part of a community. Such acts can carry a negative or divisive significance too; because they are a minority group, Hui who participate in these collective acts set themselves apart from the hegemonic culture and, because of diversity among congregations described above, from other Hui as well. Talal Asad offers a useful preliminary definition of ritual as action “directed at the apt performance of what is prescribed.”<sup>19</sup> This can be adapted to my relational approach by focusing on ritual that is *interpersonal*, i.e. involving two or more people deliberately engaged in ritual together. In the pages below, unless otherwise stated, “ritual” refers to interpersonal ritual.

Ritual is also a way that people “comment on the social order.”<sup>20</sup> The comment can be affirmative or reinforcing; congregational worship where men and women gather separately may be an especially pronounced manifestation of more general norms of gender segregation. The comment can also challenge or present a tension with ordinary life; congregational worship where men come together as equals may suspend hierarchies that define relationships outside the mosque. Such dynamics still have a tendency to creep into the mosque, since certain positions in ritual may carry more or less prestige. It is no coincidence that the question of whether people

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<sup>19</sup> Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 62.

<sup>20</sup> I take the phrase from Handelman’s discussion of play. Victor Turner elaborates the notion of ritual as a liminal state apart from ordinary relationships as an occasion for expression and “scrutinization” of the social order: “...if liminality is regarded as a time and place of withdrawal from normal modes of social action, it can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs.” Handelman, “A Note on Play”; Turner, *The Ritual Process*, 167.

can stand alongside the imam during worship rather than behind him is a longstanding point of controversy among Hui in Henan. Lavish meals for weddings and funerals similarly fuse the ritual and social orders, while criticism of such events seeks to separate, though not necessarily transform them.

Ritual is also never fully insulated from wider cultural norms, even when participants understand it to belong to a distinct tradition. Is an Islamic funeral aptly performed if attendees wear coarse white mourning robes, as was prescribed by late-imperial Confucianism? The answer to this question depends on the meanings people give to mourning robes, and by extension any other element of ritual. Of course, there is no guarantee of consensus, and to the extent that people's interpretations vary, rituals are polyvalent.<sup>21</sup> Wearing mourning robes may be understood as a local corruption of some notion of an authentic Islam. It may also be understood as a particular form of expressing and signaling grief, and therefore sanctioned by Islam. And it may be understood simply as what is proper and be done uncritically, until someone with a different opinion criticizes it. Ritual can be read as a comment on the social order even when it is not intended as one.

This inherent polyvalence makes it necessary to talk about rituals as *symbols*. This language may initially strike anthropologists and other readers familiar with the anthropology of religion as dated or naïve. Talal Asad, whose definition of ritual I adapted, made one of the most influential interventions in modern anthropology with his critique of the discipline's construction of "ritual" as a universal category of "signifying behavior" that expresses people's beliefs and that can therefore be "read" by culturally informed experts. Asad showed, among other things,

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<sup>21</sup> Hefner explains the need to examine what he calls the "distributional aspect" of cultural knowledge and stresses that the problem is not simply that rituals are "plurivocal," but that the different meanings they hold are tied to social organization. In other words, divergent interpretations of the same symbols are socially maintained and not just the result of distinct subjective experiences. Hefner, *Hindu Javanese*, 13–22; 267–68.

that the assumption that ritual conveys interpretable meaning obscures the fact that in different places and periods rituals have been understood not as expressions of inner states but as embodied processes for acquiring proper dispositions, what Marcell Mauss called “techniques of the body.”<sup>22</sup> (Consider the difference between prostration during worship understood as an expression of submission to the one true God and the same act understood as a means of cultivating humility or fostering self-reflection.) This is an incisive critique, but it can only take us so far. If we imagine a spectrum with “ritual as embodied practice” and “ritual as expression of belief” (what Asad calls “symbolic”) on the either end, we can plot a third point, on a different spectrum altogether, “ritual as marker.”

Rituals mark relationships. This occurs independently of and prior to however people signify them. As my parenthetical example above indicates, prostration during worship can be expressive or practical, or both, depending on the context. Asad would not deny this; indeed, one of the recurring themes of his work is the importance of scrutinizing the contexts and power relations that determine how certain meanings become institutionalized and hegemonic. But his analysis ignores the fact that symbols are not only what they mean. To put it another way, symbols exist (they are externalized through action, speech, writing, and so on) before they are given meaning. If two people prostrate during worship, they may do so to express a belief, or to express different beliefs, or to cultivate certain dispositions. But they share and are related to one another through act itself and the context in which they perform it. Here the phrase “techniques of the body” is telling; in focusing on how a subject uses “techniques of the body,” an *individual body*, to cultivate a moral self, Asad neglects the relational aspect of rituals. To borrow his example of monastic discipline: while a monk may inflict pain on himself through certain

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<sup>22</sup> Asad, *Genealogies of Religion*, 55–79.



practices in order to acquire what he understands to be a moral disposition, he does so in a specific setting (a monastery) and in relation to other people (monks) who recognize his activity as a ritual and with whom he constitutes a ritually marked community. The speech, signs, and gestures that can accomplish this group marking are what I mean by “symbol,” of which ritual is one variety.

Analysis of these issues is further complicated by the extraordinary importance of the concept of *li* in philosophy, statecraft, and elite culture in late imperial China. Often translated as “rites,” “propriety,” or “etiquette,” *li* overlaps with much of the behavior I have been calling “ritual.” To the extent that ritual is an element of human social life, analysis of ritual in any context will have to grapple with how the concept is locally understood. But late imperial China is exceptional, if not unique, in the prominence something roughly equivalent to “ritual” (*li*) held as an object of explicit discourse and theory. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, critical analysis of the classical texts from which ritual norms were derived precipitated a broader shift among late-Ming and Qing scholars toward “evidential scholarship,” a development of profound importance for the indigenous development of skepticism and scientific inquiry.<sup>23</sup> It was also through the study, discussion, and scrutiny of ritual prescriptions that these scholars attempted to assert their authority amid the upheaval wrought by the Manchu conquest, expanding literacy, and perceived moral decay.<sup>24</sup> And for those who sought it out, the Confucian tradition offered what Patricia Ebrey has called a “theory of rites based on secular principles” in the work of the third century (BCE) philosopher Xunzi (who, admittedly, had been eclipsed by Zhu Xi (1130-1200 CE) and others in the late imperial canon).<sup>25</sup> The anathematization of *li* by cultural radicals

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<sup>23</sup> Elman, *From Philosophy to Philology*.

<sup>24</sup> Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China*.

<sup>25</sup> Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*, 28–29.

in the late 1910s and its attempted restoration by the Nationalist government in the 1930s both testify to the enduring centrality of the concept in modern Chinese political life. There is a long history of social anthropologists studying and writing about the psycho-social function of ritual as if participants are ignorant of it. The far longer history of Chinese theorization about the relationship between ritual, moral cultivation, and social stability exposes the problems with this assumption. Ritual does not simply happen to people; people *do* it.

What was the impact of mainstream Confucian scholarship on local understandings of Islam? More generally, what was the significance and value of Islamic learning in a context in which Islam was never the hegemonic tradition? The conditions of the late imperial period set the stage for the transformations at the center of this study. As I elaborate in the following chapters, Islamic learning in late imperial China was doubly marginalized. In the first place, scholarly advancement and social mobility depended on Confucian education, success in the civil service examinations, and participation in the broader literati culture. Some scholars trained in this system learned Arabic and Persian and studied Islamic texts as part of a larger project of acquiring knowledge about the natural world.<sup>26</sup> In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, translation and exposition of Islamic learning in Chinese developed into a tradition in its own right, the major texts of which later became known as the “Han Kitab.” As Zvi Ben-Dor Benite has shown, the scholars engaged in this study and textual production constituted a network linking mosque-based schools and private libraries from Xining in the far northwest to Jinan and Beijing in north China and Jiangnan to the south.<sup>27</sup>

One of the main legacies of this scholarship in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the network itself: the circulation of scholars and disciples throughout large swaths of the

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<sup>26</sup> Weil, “The Vicissitudes.”

<sup>27</sup> Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*.

Qing empire, including Henan. This mobility ties in to the second way in which Islamic learning was marginalized in the late imperial period. *Ahongs*, the scholars who specialized in Islamic texts, and their *hailifans*, students training to become *ahongs*, were often outsiders in a community. As Hu Yunsheng and others have demonstrated, by the eighteenth century, *ahong* circulation had been institutionalized in a dual itinerant/local (Hu's terms are *zhuwei*, "emic," and *kewei*, "etic") division of mosque authority.<sup>28</sup> Local elders (*xianglao*) and headmen (*shetou*, *sheshou*) of the congregation managed mosque finances, property, and the hiring and dismissal of the cleric (*jiaozhang*, "religious head"). Certain liturgical and other duties such as leading worship (as imam) and animal slaughtering (according to Islamic restrictions) would also be handled by local personnel and in some cases were hereditary offices. An *ahong* (scholar) would be hired as cleric and would be in charge of officiating weddings, funerals, and other rituals; mosque learning; and in some cases dispute mediation and other communal functions. *Hailifans* (*ahongs* in training) would seek out and follow a particular *ahong* and assist with his duties in addition to studying under him.<sup>29</sup> Throughout the Central Plains and north China, it was not uncommon for the *ahong*'s wife to lead worship for women, and by the late nineteenth century separate women's mosques afforded a space for "woman *ahongs*" (*nü ahong*) to provide religious instruction to local women.<sup>30</sup> A cleric's exact portfolio of work varied from place to place, but the division of itinerant and local offices, and the potential tension between them, was widespread and constant in Henan from the eighteenth century on.

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<sup>28</sup> Hu Yunsheng 胡云生, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu* 传承与认同 河南回族历史变迁研究 (Heritage and Identity: Studies on the Historical Transformation of the Hui Nationality in Henan).

<sup>29</sup> Lu Zhenming, a Hui native of Kaifeng, outlined the basic organization of mosque administration in his 1937 article on Islam in his hometown. Lu Zhenming 卢振明, "Kaifeng huijiao tan" 开封回教谈 (A Discussion of Kaifeng Islam).

<sup>30</sup> Jaschok, *The History of Women's Mosques in Chinese Islam*; Shui Jingjun 水镜君 and [Maria Jaschok] 玛利亚·雅绍克, *Zhongguo qingzhen nüsi shi* 中国清真女寺史 (A History of Women's Mosques in China).

An *ahong* might enjoy some prestige (though this was by no means the rule), but his employment as cleric was subject to the leadership of the local congregation, and there was no necessary relationship between the content of his scholarship and the duties for which he was compensated. This should not be surprising, since the linguistic competencies and itinerant lifestyle required to engage in this scholarship were unavailable and probably unappealing to the majority of the community. Islamic learning in late imperial China constituted an extensive network of scholarly circulation, but its nodes were largely sequestered and set apart from the rest of the local community.

This double marginalization of Islamic learning at the local level connects to another feature of my approach: attention to the shifting “social distribution” of Islamic knowledge.<sup>31</sup> In a given mosque-based congregation, Islamic knowledge was not evenly distributed, and there was not necessarily an expectation that it should be. Distribution can be understood spatially, as outlined above, and it can also be examined thematically, with greater detail to the different branches of learning encompassed by “Islamic knowledge.” In other words, the “who knew what” question varied both in terms of the “who”—the *ahong*, his students, the broader community—and in terms of the “what,” or *which* texts, traditions, and disciplines within Islamic knowledge were emphasized. Islamic scholarship in late imperial China was hardly confined to what we might think of as, in a narrow sense, religious; it included metaphysics, medicine, astronomy, grammar and other aspects of linguistics, among other fields.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*; Hefner, *Hindu Javanese*.

<sup>32</sup> Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*; Weil, “The Vicissitudes”; Nakanishi 中西, *Chūka to taiwa suru isurāmu: 17-19 seiki chūgoku musurimu no shisōteki ei* 中華と対話するイスラーム—17-19世紀中国ムスリムの思想的営為 (Islam in Dialogue with Chinese Civilization: Intellectual Activities of Chinese Muslims during the 17th-19th Centuries).

The study of the shari‘a, the sacred law, was one among many pursuits in which an *ahong* might be engaged. It was, moreover, an *esoteric* subject, insofar as it was only the specialists, the *ahongs*, who were expected to study it and possessed the requisite skills and interest to do so. This point offers an instructive contrast with contemporary China, where, as Matthew Erie and others have shown, the shari‘a has become an important part of Hui identity.<sup>33</sup> Participants in the Islamic scholarly network of late imperial period studied Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and elaborated an indigenous tradition of shari‘a interpretation. And their understanding of the shari‘a was shaped by the distinct social and cultural conditions of their time.

One striking feature of this local understanding was the centrality of ritual and those “acts of worship” (*‘ibādāt*) understood elsewhere and in the modern academic study of Islam as the duties owed to God, as opposed to the “transactions” (*mu‘amalāt*), duties owed to other people. The focus on ritual over other domains, such as criminal and property law, has been interpreted as a Hui adaptation to Ming and Qing rulers, who would not tolerate Islamic law beyond matters of ritual.<sup>34</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the late imperial state would have opposed implementation of an alternative legal system, at least in interior provinces like Henan. But is it reasonable to assume that such a system was even desired by Hui? When we consider that the shari‘a was an esoteric subject, it becomes clear that there is little reason to search for, let alone assume, frustrated popular desire for ‘more shari‘a’. Moreover, when we remember the centrality of *li* to late imperial governance and culture, it becomes clear that we must rethink the notions that focusing on “mere” ritual was simply a means of adapting Islam to local political conditions, and that the scholars who did so saw their local tradition as deficient.

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<sup>33</sup> Erie, *China and Islam: The Prophet, the Party, and Law*.

<sup>34</sup> Li Lin 李林, “Jiaofa heyi sui guofa? cong guofa yu jiaofa guanxi kan yiislanjiao de zhongguohua” 教法何以随国法? ——从国法与教法关系看伊斯兰教的中国化 (Why Does Religious Law Follow State Law? The China-Fication of Islam as Seen from the Perspective of the Relationship between State Law and Religious Law).

## Outline

My account of the formation of the Hui nation begins with a transformation in this local understanding of the shari‘a. This is the first study to discern and link changes within mosque-based learning to Hui political mobilization. The critical development, elaborated below, was the rise of the *shari‘a-minded ethic*: a set of values concerning the importance of intentions and reasoning that motivated *ahongs*, the principal carriers of religious learning, to popularize knowledge of Islam’s sacred law and play a more active role in public life. The popularization of the formerly esoteric subject of the shari‘a supplied the symbolic resources for the creation of a national Hui culture, which *ahongs* and lay elites throughout Henan and beyond jointly propagated through the periodical press as well as local and national institutions. But these institutions and the national community they constituted did not simply reproduce this new, popular interpretation of the shari‘a. They also transformed the local conditions and systems of meaning that shaped that interpretation in the first place. In this way the relationship between religious and social change is not linear, but dialectical: a new interpretation of religion transformed social relations, which in turn led to new religious ideas.

This process frames the organization of the chapters below, which are distributed into three parts. Part I, “Popularization,” traces the alignment of a network of shari‘a-minded *ahongs* (Chapter One) and local lay leaders (Chapter Two) in Henan. It demonstrates that after the Nationalist revolution of 1927, these groups cooperated to popularize shari‘a knowledge and practice as the basis of a national culture. It further follows their collaboration with coreligionists in other parts of China to form a social movement, the Islamic Culture Movement (*huijiao wenhua yundong*), and demand representation in the National Assembly. Part II,

“Nationalization,” examines how this initially diffuse movement built a national Hui political constituency, in conversation with itself via the periodical press (Chapter Three) and institutionalized as a national organization, the China Islamic Association (Chapter Four). Part III, “Localization,” is an ethnographic history of “sect” (Chapter Five) and “custom” (Chapter Six), two key concepts in terms of which Hui today classify their internal differences and local particularities. It reveals how the reconstitution of Hui as a nation in the recent past inspired some of the religious disputes and ideas that are seen today as central and centuries-old elements of Chinese Islam.

To return to where this introduction began, to the relationship posited by Bai Shouyi between the Hui and Islam: it is thus, in a third sense, a problem concerning the connection between ideas and institutions, between systems of meaning and the social order. It prompts us to ask: How have notions of what Islam is and what it requires of believers been shaped by Chinese society and governance? How have Chinese society and governance been shaped by these notions? And how have changes in the content of Islamic knowledge and its social distribution conspired to shape modern China?

## Part One:

### Localization

Few have contributed more to the theoretical justification of Hui nationhood than the Hui historian Jin Jitang (1908-1978). In a series of writings in the mid-1930s, Jin articulated what would become the key argument against the Nationalist government line that religion alone could not be the basis of a national identity: that Islam, in fact, was not just a religion but a social system comprising laws and norms governing all aspects of life.<sup>35</sup> In Jin's view, later promoted by the Empire of Japan, it followed from this fact that Muslims worldwide constituted a single "Islamic nation" (*huijiao minzu*); but others, including some Communist cadres, modified the argument such that it was the combination of generic Islamic practice together with the specific historical circumstances of China that produced the Hui—that is, *Chinese Muslim*—nation.<sup>36</sup> Moreover, while the Nationalists resisted recognizing the Hui as a distinct nation, as we will see in Chapter Four, they ultimately granted them designated representation in the National Assembly on the grounds that their "life customs" distinguished them culturally, and not "merely" religiously, from Hans.

Common to all these positions was the belief in widespread, consistent, and uniform practice of Islam among the Hui over centuries. And implicit in that belief was the assumption of widespread, consistent, and uniform understanding of the laws and norms that defined Islamic practice. Hui political identity is premised on a common and distinctive Hui popular culture. To

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<sup>35</sup> Jin Jitang 金吉堂, *Zhongguo huijiao shi yanjiu* 中国回教史研究 (Studies in the History of Chinese Islam), 1971; Jin Jitang 金吉堂, "Huijiao minzu shuo" 回教民族说 (On the Islamic Nation), 1936.

<sup>36</sup> Benite, "From 'Literati' to 'Ulama'"; Cieciura, "Ethnicity or Religion? Republican-Era Chinese Debates on Islam and Muslims"; Glasserman, Aaron Nathan, "On the Huihui Question: Islam and Ideology in Twentieth-Century China" (forthcoming).



the extent that this culture is defined as Islamic, that identity also depends on the popularization of Islamic knowledge, and specifically knowledge of normative practice and law, or shari‘a. Hui politics and political identity are therefore first and foremost a question of the social distribution of a particular type of knowledge.<sup>37</sup> For much of the late imperial period, the shari‘a was an esoteric subject in mosque-based Islamic learning, which itself was a cloistered tradition. Its principal transmitters, the itinerant *ahongs*, by and large did not attempt to popularize what they studied, nor did the local elites of the communities they served expect them to do so. The possibility of Hui nationhood as a popular political identity required a basic shift in how *ahongs* as well as local lay leaders understood the purpose of Islamic learning. Both groups, or at least significant segments of them, had to commit to and invest in the popularization of what had previously been an esoteric field of study.

The two chapters of Part One examine changing understandings of shari‘a knowledge and its relationship to popular Hui identity among *ahongs* and lay leaders, respectively. Together, the chapters show how from roughly the last quarter of the nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth, segments of both groups developed the motives and deployed the intellectual and material resources necessary for the popularization of shari‘a knowledge. Their consensus that this knowledge was a message to guide people’s behavior and shape their identity—in other words, propaganda—emerged in the context of the great social and political developments of the era, from the Qing reconstruction after the nineteenth-century rebellions and the introduction of the railroads to the Nationalist Revolution and the rise of mass politics. As we will see in Part Two, it also defined the terms and shaped the institutions through which Huis would organize themselves into a nation.

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<sup>37</sup> Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality*.

## Chapter 1:

### The Shari‘a-Minded Ethic

In a 1937 essay reflecting on the evolution of Islamic learning in China, the renowned Henanese *ahong* Pang Shiqian remarked that the previous fifty years had witnessed a “transformation from the study of theology to the study of religious law.”<sup>38</sup> It was a passing claim in a preliminary study in what remains a neglected problem in the history of Chinese Islam: the shifting context and content of mosque education since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is widely believed that the key development in this domain was, as in so many portrayals of Islam—and China—on the eve of modernity, the introduction of secular subjects, professional pedagogy, and vernacular language. Self-styled reformists challenged Tradition until Tradition begrudgingly made room for them. By fits and starts in the first decade of the twentieth century and at full throttle by the late 1930s, the story goes, Hui teachers were equipping Hui students with the knowledge and discipline they needed to be pious and patriotic citizens of modern China.

But here Pang gestures toward a different change, not the rupturing advent of modern schooling but a more modest, yet possibly more consequential adjustment within the tradition of Islamic learning in China. He hints at a transformation of this tradition on its own terms, reflected in the shift in the focus of traditional education from one branch of learning, theology, to another, “religious law” (*jiaofa*), then and now the conventional Chinese gloss for the Arabic *shari‘a*. Pang’s formulation suggests that this “transformation” was a matter of curriculum revision. In fact, what took place was less an organized switching of subjects and swapping of

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<sup>38</sup> Pang Shiqian 庞士谦, “Zhongguo huijiao siyuan jiaoyu zhi yange ji keben” 中国回教寺院教育之沿革及课本 (The Development and Curriculum of Mosque Hall Education in Chinese Islam), 100.

books than a general resignification of shari‘a knowledge and formation of new relationships around its transmission. After all, it was not as though these *ahongs*, the carriers of religious knowledge, had no concept of the shari‘a beforehand. Our richest sources on the shari‘a in late imperial China indicate its importance as a set of divine rules in defining communal identity and guiding personal cultivation. Nor did they abandon theology as a scholarly pursuit.

Rather, for reasons discussed below, a network of *ahongs* stretching west to Xining and east to Kaifeng were increasingly prompted to reflect on what their tradition had to say about particular practices, and especially rituals, that were commonplace in late imperial China. They regarded judgment on such questions as a criterion for religious authority and a means of reputational distinction. Indeed, it was not simply judgment but also its performance that they valued: the art of citing a text, of summoning the original language, of swiftly refuting an interlocutor’s position on the grounds that certain texts outranked others. But as is inevitable in any legalistic discourse that classifies particular acts into general categories, the door to redefining terms, recontextualizing quotations, and citing yet another text was never fully shut, and thus there was always the potential for counterargument and counter-counterargument. Amid ever-widening inquiry and ever-escalating one-upmanship, these *ahongs* unfolded the shari‘a from a code of ritual conduct to a “repertoire of reasons”<sup>39</sup> for legalistic argument about orthopraxy.

In this chapter I follow Pang’s comment as a preliminary cue in my investigation of the central process in Part One of this dissertation: the popularization of shari‘a knowledge. I trace the emergence among a network of *ahongs* of a new understanding of the shari‘a as a system of reasoning and argument. I situate this new understanding in the shifting context of mosque

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<sup>39</sup> I borrow the term from John Bowen’s work on Islam and public reason in Indonesia. Bowen, *Islam, Law, and Equality in Indonesia*, 5–7.

learning in late nineteenth-century China, focusing on the impact of the Qing dynasty's (1644-1911) reconstruction measures following the mid-century unrest and rebellions across the empire as well as the circulation of previously unknown Islamic texts. I argue that the values and concerns associated with this understanding constituted a distinct *shari'a-minded ethic* that motivated *ahongs* to popularize knowledge of the shari'a and play a more active role in public life. Earlier studies—including Pang's—have linked the introduction of new texts by returning pilgrims with the split of the so-called “New Sect” from the “Old Sect” within Chinese Islam. As I show, however, partisans on both sides of the debates had much more in common than is generally believed.

More broadly, in this chapter I seek to understand the conditions under which the legalistic elements of a religious tradition become socially and ethically salient. Mosque learning in China has been a multidisciplinary project for centuries, encompassing grammar and morphology, metaphysics, logic, mysticism, and other bodies of knowledge contained in texts. Islamic jurisprudence has never monopolized the mosque, and it has been central to the tradition only in particular contexts. In a 1699 debate over metaphysics (*xing li*) at the Niujie Mosque in Beijing, the scholar She Yunshan reportedly countered an opponent's point by insinuating the inadequacy of the study of the shari'a alone: “Although the books my brother has studied are many, they discuss only fasting, worship, almsgiving, and recitation, prohibitions on eating and drinking, and the theories of heaven and hell—that is, nothing more than religious law.”<sup>40</sup> For She, shari'a was clearly not the whole story, or even the main story, of Islamic knowledge.

More recently, it has been argued that the shari'a is unduly privileged as *the* source of Muslim normativity in today's academic study of Islam. If this is the case, then overcoming

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<sup>40</sup> Beijing Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Yanjiu Weiyuanhui 北京市政协文史资料研究委员会, *Beijing niujie zhishu--gang zhi* 北京牛街志书——〈冈志〉 (Local History of Beijing's Niujie: Gang Gazetteer), 48.

“legal-supremacism”<sup>41</sup> surely requires analysis not just of alternative aspects of the Islamic tradition but also of how the shari‘a becomes central to local understandings of Islamic normativity—that is, the historicization of legalistic normativity in particular Muslim societies.

The present examination of the rise of shari‘a-mindedness in Henan serves this purpose. The shift in understanding of the shari‘a from a set of rules to a repertoire of reasons can be apprehended in terms of the rationalization of religious normativity. This refers to the process by which religious argumentation, or the articulation and evaluation of reasons for religious claims, itself becomes a if not *the* central ethical concern and criterion of adherents. The rise of shari‘a-mindedness is one variety of the rationalization of religious normativity, in which it is the concepts and methods of the study of the shari‘a that set the terms for argumentation. It is also a historical example of “legalism,” a self-conscious discourse involving “appeal to rules that are distinct from practice, the explicit use of generalizing concepts, and a disposition to address in such terms the conduct of human life.”<sup>42</sup>

Classic works in the social-scientific study of religion point to social crisis as a factor for religious rationalization in general.<sup>43</sup> In line with these studies, I will argue below that the rise of shari‘a-mindedness was a response to the perceived precarity of Hui society following the Qing dynasty’s repression of the great “Muslim rebellions” in the second half of the nineteenth century. At the same time, the fact that rationalization unfolded primarily in the domain of the shari‘a, which, in the context of late imperial China, centered on ritual, reflects the particular importance the Qing dynasty and, in different but no less consequential ways, its successors attached to ritual in governance, post-rebellion reconstruction, and the definition of elite culture.

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<sup>41</sup> Ahmed, *What Is Islam?*, 120–29.

<sup>42</sup> Dresch, “Legalism, Anthropology, and History: A View from the Part of Anthropology,” 1.

<sup>43</sup> Bellah, *Tokugawa Religion: The Values of Pre-Industrial Japan*; Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution*; Geertz, Clifford, “‘Internal Conversion’ in Contemporary Bali.”

While this period's debates over ritual among Hui are typically framed as a delineation of the boundary between Islamic and Chinese practices, their subject matter was informed by contemporary Chinese culture and society. If the debates were ever about countering Chinese influence on Islamic practice, they were a very Chinese way of doing so. Thus, my narrow focus on *legalistic* rationalization also elucidates how the dominant and legacy culture shapes religious change after social crisis.

### 1.1 Islamic Learning in Late Imperial China

What did Islamic learning in China look like before the late nineteenth century? Since the Ming period (1368-1644), Pang Shiqian wrote in a later article, mosque education “has not only not used the national language (Chinese) but excessively emphasized the intensive study of Arabic and Persian writing, grammar, and literary style, while study of texts of doctrinal texts has been extremely rare.” And where such study has happened, Pang added, it has been “helplessly conservative, obsessed with arcane writings and stressing trifling details, ignorant of how to meet the needs of the changing times and produce and select new laws on the basis of the Quran and hadith.”<sup>44</sup>

This description of mosque learning in Ming and Qing China resembles those of other twentieth-century informants on the condition of Islamic education in other parts of the modern world (and of Confucian education in China as well). That was the era, we are told, of rote learning, rigid traditionalism, and an abandonment of the authentic, progressive spirit of Islam. Pang and many of his likeminded colleagues were well-versed in the modernist discourses of their day and drew on them as a way of linking their communities to progressive circles both at

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<sup>44</sup> Pang Shiqian 庞士谦, “Quanguo qingzhensi hailifan jiaoyu gailiang chuyi” 全国清真寺海里法教育改良刍议 (A Humble Proposal Concerning the Improvement of Hailifan Education in Mosques Throughout the Country).

home in China and abroad throughout the Islamic world. Pang's sharpest criticism of the tradition in which he was educated came during and after his sojourn in Cairo, where he studied at Al-Azhar University, in the midst of its own modernization program. In their lamentations on the backward past, Hui scholars like Pang joined a global chorus of Islamic modernism.<sup>45</sup>

The diagnosis of the dysfunction of mosque education in early modern China was rooted in the expectation of compulsory, universal education and the related notion that knowledge of Islam and Arabic, alongside Chinese and other modern school subjects, should be inculcated in every Hui student. As early as 1906 and accelerating in the late 1920s, Hui elites in Beijing and Shanghai and in the interior too established schools for delivering this kind of education and for training *ahongs* with the requisite skills to do so.<sup>46</sup> These new expectations for religious instruction were retroactively applied to earlier periods; the neologism *jingtang jiaoyu* ("scripture hall education" or "madrasa education"), with its connotations of modern education (*jiaoyu*), and now widely understood to refer to the early modern tradition of mosque learning, was coined in the early twentieth century.

### *The Double Marginalization of Islamic Learning*

Mosque education for much of the Ming and Qing period, however, was adapted to support an entirely different, uneven distribution of Islamic knowledge. And within that system, the study of the shari'a was an esoteric pursuit.

The organized study of Arabic and Persian Islamic texts across China emerged around the middle of the sixteenth century and continues to this day. Much of our understanding of the

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<sup>45</sup> Aubin, "Islam on the Wings of Nationalism"; Benite, "Taking 'Abduh to China: Chinese-Egyptian Intellectual Contact in the Early Twentieth Century"; Benite, "Nine Years in Egypt"; Chen, "Islamic Modernism in China"; Mao, "Selective Learning from the Middle East: The Case of Sino-Muslim Students at al-Azhar University"; Matsumoto, Masumi, "Rationalizing Patriotism."

<sup>46</sup> Mao, "Muslim Educational Reform in 20th-Century China: The Case of the Chengda Teachers Academy."

scholarly network engaged in the transmission and reproduction of this tradition is based on mosque inscriptions as well as two intellectual genealogies. The first of these is Zhao Can's *Jingxue Xi Chuan Pu* (Genealogy of Classical Learning), composed in the late seventeenth century with prefaces dating between 1697 and 1714.<sup>47</sup> The second genealogy, far more recent and far less utilized, is Huang Dengwu's *Zhongguo Jingtang Jiaoyu yu Shanxue Ahong* (Madrasa Education in China and the *Ahongs* of the Shaanxi School). Huang's work, which has been revised and expanded nine times (it is as of 2017 in its tenth edition), represents an extension of Zhao Can's genealogy down to the present day.<sup>48</sup> When we study mosque learning in China, we are studying a tradition whose participants possess a strong sense of continuity reaching back nearly half a millennium.

Our understanding of this tradition is generally not based on original expositions by its participants. We know of a handful of original Persian and Arabic prefaces and full works, and beginning in the mid-seventeenth century some scholars in the network began to translate and elaborate Arabic and Persian texts in Chinese. This Chinese corpus, subsequently titled the “Han Kitab,” consists primarily of works attempting to reconcile and integrate Confucian and Islamic (“Arabo-Persian”<sup>49</sup>) learning, from grammar to cosmology.<sup>50</sup> The scholars who participated in

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<sup>47</sup> An edited version of the *Genealogy* was published in 1989 and has been the most common reference for related work in Chinese- and English-language scholarship. Unfortunately, there are numerous errors in the transcription, and Arabic and Persian titles are omitted. Na Jufeng has meticulously corrected the transcription in an appendix to his 2013 dissertation. Hereafter I will refer exclusively to Na's edited version, citing the appropriate pages in his dissertation. For more on the *Genealogy*, see Benite's 2005 study. Zhao Can 赵灿, *Jingxue xichuanpu* 经学系传谱 (Genealogy of Classical Learning); Na Jufeng 纳巨峰, “Ming wanli zhi qing kangxi zhongguo huihui jingxue jiaoyu kao: yi jingxue chuanxipu wei zhongxin” 明万历至清康熙中国回回经学教育考: 以《经学系传谱》为中心 (An Examination of Classical Learning Education of the Huihui of China from the Wanli Era in the Ming to the Kangxi Era in the Qing: Centered on the Genealogy of Classical Learning); Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 21–71.

<sup>48</sup> Huang Dengwu 黄登武 and Ma Xiaoping 马小平, *Zhongguo jingtang jiaoyu yu shaanxue ahong* 中国经堂教育与陕学阿訇 (China's Scripture Hall Education and the Ahongs of the Shaanxi School).

<sup>49</sup> Weil, “The Vicissitudes”, *passim*.

<sup>50</sup> Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*; Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name*; Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light*; Wang, *The First Islamic Classic in Chinese*; Petersen, *Interpreting Islam in China*; Tontini, *Muslim Sanzijing*; Weil, “The Vicissitudes.”



this tradition worked to uncover, preserve, and organize obscure knowledge about the natural world; they were intellectuals, not ideologues. As Dror Weil has recently argued, “The motivation of many of the scholars, as is suggested in available sources, did not come from their religiosity, but rather from intellectual curiosity, and an interest in gaining new perspectives on the issues that prevailed in China’s larger non-Muslim learned communities.”<sup>51</sup> To the extent that this intellectualism reduced interest in religious activism, Pang’s indictment of the failure of his predecessors to adapt Islam “to the needs of the times” was not unfounded.

Pang’s complaint about the unreasonable focus on the technical aspects of Arabic and Persian texts is also telling. What Pang saw as tedious and arcane (and difficult—in his memoirs, Pang recalls his particular frustration with Arabic pedagogy in his early mosque education<sup>52</sup>) from another perspective reflected a commitment to philology as means of discovering truth. Within this tradition, texts were studied to discern knowledge about the world and reconcile it with what was already known or believed.<sup>53</sup> The purpose was not to elaborate principles of normative conduct or adjudicate disputes.

This situation resulted from two general characteristics of the Islamic tradition in late imperial China. First, even in the periods of greatest imperial tolerance of cultural variety, the pursuit of Islamic learning was never a path to significant social advancement. For anyone pursuing a career as an official, Islamic scholarship was an extracurricular activity. Notably, several of the most renowned Hui literati of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries devoted themselves to studying and writing about Islam only after their Confucian education.<sup>54</sup> The

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<sup>51</sup> Weil, “The Vicissitudes,” 3.

<sup>52</sup> Pang Shiqian 庞士谦, *Aiji jiu nian* 埃及九年 (Nine Years in Egypt), 67–69.

<sup>53</sup> Weil, “The Vicissitudes.”

<sup>54</sup> Examples include Hu Dengzhou, the celebrated founder of Chinese madrasa education; Wu Zunqi, Ma Zhu, Liu Zhi, and Mi Wanji. She Yunshan, another expounder of Islam in Chinese, was a convert to Islam and likewise received a Confucian education prior to studying Islamic texts. Wang Daiyu is an important exception to this pattern; according to Bai Shouyi, Wang began his study of Chinese at the relatively late age of 20 *sui* (19 years old).

consequences of this cultural subordination are obvious but important: Islamic learning was not valuable cultural capital outside of its own system of reproduction. *Tianfang Dian Li* (Norms and Rites of Islam), by the Nanjing-based Hui literatus Liu Zhi (1660-1730), was likely the Islamic text that received the highest form of official recognition: it was included in the *Si Ku Quan Shu* (Complete Collection of the Four Treasuries), a massive canonization of Chinese literature completed under the aegis of the Qianlong Emperor in the late eighteenth century.<sup>55</sup> Yet the compilation editors maintained that even that imperially sanctioned text, albeit elegantly composed, contained material that was “fundamentally far-fetched and absurd.”<sup>56</sup> Of course, people do not necessarily seek education for status alone, or even at all, and within Hui communities, Islamic scholarship was a means of social distinction. But whatever resources and prestige schools were granted for their role in legitimating imperial hegemony were not extended to Islamic institutions.

Cultural subordination was a condition of Islamic learning and other minority traditions in other early modern empires. What sets Islam in late imperial China apart from most other cases is the combination of cultural subordination with detachment from the institutions of imperial administration. A comparison with Islam under the Russian Empire is instructive. There, as in China, Islam was one of multiple cultures subordinated to a hegemonic imperial culture and subject to both official persecution and patronage. But under the tsars, unlike under the Ming and Qing emperors, religious authority, including Islamic legal authority, was formally institutionalized. Islamic learning was by no means limited to those official institutions and

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Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad* passim; Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, *Huizu renwu zhi* 回族人物志 (Biographical Dictionary of the Hui Nationality), 3:925–44.

<sup>55</sup> Guy, *The Emperor's Four Treasuries*.

<sup>56</sup> Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name*, 53; Weil, “The Vicissitudes,” 9–10.

personnel, but it was sustained in part by official recognition.<sup>57</sup> The small size of the Ming and Qing states and consequent reliance on local, extra-bureaucratic institutions for mediating disputes did leave room for communal leaders of various types to enjoy a degree of informal authority, though we should not assume that even within Hui communities, communal norms equaled shari‘a. In short, some religious scholars unschooled in the dominant (Russian Orthodox or Confucian) tradition were officials in the Russian empire, but none among the Hui were under the Ming or Qing.

Another important aspect of Islamic learning in late imperial China was the outsider status of the tradition’s principal carriers, the *ahongs*. The mosque was not only a place of communal gathering and cohesion. It was also a site of contestation between local elders and staff on one hand and the itinerant *ahong* (hired as cleric, *jiaozhang*) and *hailifan* students on the other. Focusing on Henan, the historian Hu Yunsheng has demonstrated that over the course of the Ming and Qing periods, an older system of local, hereditary control of mosque affairs was largely replaced by a system of divided authority between local and itinerant (in Hu’s terms, “emic” and “etic”) personnel. Administration of mosque finances, the responsibility for hiring and dismissing *ahongs*, and certain liturgical and religious functions fell to the local staff (whose offices were in some cases still hereditary), while religious instruction and ritual officiation (including weddings and funerals) fell to the cleric.<sup>58</sup> This was a general pattern, not a hard rule. There was great variety both in clerical tenure at given mosque and in the relative authority of

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<sup>57</sup> Crews, *For Prophet and Tsar*; Ross and Sartori, Paolo, “The Reach and Limits of Sharī‘a in the Russian Empire, c.1552-1917”; Ross, “Islamic Education for All: Technological Change, Popular Literacy and the Transformation of the Volga-Ural Madrasa, 1650s-1910s.”

<sup>58</sup> Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 135–62.

different parties.<sup>59</sup> But the itinerancy of the *ahong* profession was embedded within a larger system commercial, familial, and cultural connections across scattered Hui congregations.

Local congregation leaders also had their own understanding of tradition that did not necessarily accord with that of the *ahong*. Tensions between these parties are recorded in Zhao Can's *Genealogy*, which relates an anecdote in which Feng Shaochuan, an itinerant scholar, is dismissed by "some little devils" among the Kaifeng Hui establishment owing to their judgment of his ignorance.<sup>60</sup> Pettier matters and the desire to be exploit an *ahong*'s scholarly reputation for personal prestige could also create tensions between the local and itinerant staff. In one of the prefaces to the *Genealogy*, Zhao Can explains how in Kaocheng (today's Lankao) to the east of Kaifeng, the local elders constantly disrupted the scholar's teaching with idle talk and visits. He then describes what he sees as the exemplary solution the community found for this problem: they established a compact according to which those who disrupted the scholar's teaching would be castigated and fined. The community also established a separate hall for the elders to congregate away from the school such that "the two would not interfere with one another."<sup>61</sup> These tendentious accounts represent the perspective of the itinerant scholar (Zhao Can, the author, was one himself); but they still indicate the tension that existed between the itinerant, outsider carriers of religious knowledge and the local community leadership.

Islamic learning in late imperial China was thus doubly marginalized: in the broader imperial context, it was Confucian education that was the surest path to social advancement as a scholar, and at the level of the congregation, the cleric was typically an outsider and thus not a

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<sup>59</sup> Hu Yunsheng, 150–57.

<sup>60</sup> Na Jufeng, "Ming wanli zhi qing kangxi zhongguo huihui jingxue jiaoyu kao: yi jingxue chuanxipu wei zhongxin," 239; Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 150.

<sup>61</sup> Na Jufeng, "Ming wanli zhi qing kangxi zhongguo huihui jingxue jiaoyu kao: yi jingxue chuanxipu wei zhongxin," 229–30; Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 150.

bona fide member of the local elite. Being an outsider could also have some advantages; it might confer impartiality or an elevated status as a representative of a ‘higher’ tradition, which could enhance a cleric’s authority as an arbiter and religious leader. But these benefits had little to do with actual scholarship. The divergence between scholastic and social uses of religious learning was epitomized in the widespread practice of hiring *ahongs* to recite the Quran to commemorate the birthdays and death anniversaries. Was the Quran a source of knowledge or a legitimizing symbol? The Chinese character *shi* (師), which can designate a ritual specialist as well as a teacher or scholar in Islamic and other contexts, captures this ambiguity. There was no intrinsic connection between local functions the *ahong* was hired to fulfill and the content of the learning to which he dedicated his life. Indeed, there was not infrequently a tension between them.

### *The Place of the Shari‘a*

The itinerancy that structured the *ahong*’s relationship to local society also shaped the general course of Islamic learning. Recent studies, relying in part on Pang’s 1937 article, have reconstructed the thirteen (in some accounts, fourteen) classics that reportedly predominated in mosque learning.<sup>62</sup> It is important to note, however, that *hailifan* students did not necessarily study each and every text in this list; moreover, if one did so, it was almost certainly not in a single place. Particular teachers were known for specializing in different subjects and associated texts.<sup>63</sup> The *hailifan*’s experience studying a specific text was intimately bound up with a specific teacher, place, and time.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Wang Huaide 王怀德 and Ma Xiping 马希平, *Jingtang jiaoyu: yisilanjiao jiaoyu de minzuhua* 经堂教育: 伊斯兰教教育的民族化 (Scripture Hall Education: The Nationalization of Islamic Education); Zhou Chuanbin 周传斌, *Xin huo xiang chuan de huizu jiaoyu* 薪火相传的回族教育 (Passing on the Flame: Education of the Hui Nation); Zhou Chuanbin 周传斌, *Huizu jiaoyu shihua* 回族教育史话 (The History of Education of the Hui Nation).

<sup>63</sup> Entries in Huang’s biographical dictionary typically indicate the specific texts individual *ahongs* were known for teaching. Huang Dengwu and Ma Xiaoping, *Zhongguo jingtang jiaoyu yu shaanxue ahong* passim.

<sup>64</sup> This pattern continued through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Wang Jingzhai records studying different texts under different teachers in north and east China in a 1937 autobiographical account. Pang records a

Within this network of dispersed and idiosyncratic scholarship, the study of shari‘a was an esoteric pursuit. The double marginalization of Islamic learning in China left little opportunity or incentive for ordinary Hui to study the shari‘a. At the same time, the primacy of philology in *ahong* scholastic culture lent no special importance to the study of the shari‘a. Accordingly, of dozen or so texts that collectively made up the core of mosque learning in late imperial China, only one was a work of substantive law, the *Sharḥ al-Wiqāya*, while, in Pang’s categorization, four were works of grammar and morphology (Arabic and Persian).<sup>65</sup>

This is not to say that the shari‘a was never studied or elaborated in late imperial China. In keeping with the philological study of Islamic texts as a means of acquiring and organizing knowledge of the natural world, some scholars cast the shari‘a as an aspect of cosmology. This approach was epitomized by Liu Zhi, the Nanjing-based literatus mentioned earlier. In his *Tianfang Dian Li* (Norms and Rites of Islam), Liu Zhi offers one of the only definitions of the shari‘a in Ming- and Qing-era literature. In the first chapter, Liu introduces the concept of *fa*, translatable as “law” in the sense of the order of the cosmos rather than a legal system or normative code. Liu explains: “*Fa* is conveyed in three vehicles:” first is the vehicle of ritual, second the vehicle of the way, and third the vehicle of principle. “The ritual vehicle is called shari‘a (*sheli’er*) in our language. It encompasses the way of heaven and the way of man, the conditions and rules for every affairs and duty.” A person who progresses through all three vehicles reaches the “vehicle of transcendence,” an ineffable state of complete oneness with

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similar pattern somewhat later and within Henan in his 1951 memoir. Subsequent biographies of both *ahongs* detail their itinerant studies. Wang Jingzhai 王静斋, “Wushi nian qiuxue zishu” 五十年求学自述 (Autobiography of Fifty Years in Pursuit of Learning); Ma Quanren 马全仁, “Wang jingzhai ahong nianpu” 王静斋阿訇年谱 (Chronicle of Ahong Wang Jingzhai); Pang Shiqian, *Aiji jiu nian*, 83–84; Li Huaying 李华英 and Pang Baoguang 庞宝光, “Zhuming musilin xuezhe pang shiqian nianpu” 著名穆斯林学者庞士谦年谱 (Chronicle of the Famous Muslim Scholar Pang Shiqian), 1333–35.

<sup>65</sup> Pang categorizes one text as a work of literature, one as a work of theology (*kalām*), three as Quranic commentary (*tafsīr*), two as hadith studies, and two as philosophy. Pang Shiqian, “Zhongguo huijiao siyuan jiaoyu zhi yange ji keben,” 101–3.

God.<sup>66</sup> As evidenced in Liu's larger corpus of writings, the shari'a was one of several fields into which knowledge of the natural world was organized, alongside metaphysics and historical events.<sup>67</sup> The shari'a was not undertheorized in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Chinese Islamic learning; it was simply theorized in cosmological rather than legalistic terms.

## 1.2 Late Nineteenth-Century Transformations

The text-bearing pilgrim returning from Arabia to reform religion is an archetype in Hui collective memory, and the texts he brings back to China with him enjoy a correspondingly legendary status in conventional explanations of change within Chinese Islam. This is so even when the traveler's texts are unnamed, his itinerary unknown, and in some cases the very fact of his pilgrimage uncertain. In his 1937 article, Pang looked back fifty years to find the origins of the transformation from theology to shari'a in mosque learning. He ties the shift to the travels of a pilgrim, Ma Wanfu (1849-1934), also known as Hajji Guoyuan, who studied in Mecca in the late 1880s. Upon his return to China, Pang explains, Hajji Guoyuan observed that Muslims in China mixed various local customs together with their religion and violated the shari'a. Hajji Guoyuan therefore resolved to "reform custom" and established a new group, known today as the New Sect (or "Yihewani"), after which the old program of mosque learning was gradually expanded to include new texts.<sup>68</sup> Subsequent scholarship has provided various lists and numbers

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<sup>66</sup> Translation Tontini's with some modification. Liu Zhi 刘智, "Tianfang dianli zeyao jie" 天方典礼择要解 [Explanation of Selected Essentials from the Rites and Norms of Islam], in *Bai shouyi wenxuan* 白寿彝文集, ed. 白寿彝, vol. 3 (2) (Kaifeng: Henan Daxue Chubanshe, 2008), 455; Tontini, *Muslim Sanzijing*, 38–40; Frankel, *Rectifying God's Name*, 74–77; Liu Zhi 刘智, *Tianfang dianli yizhu* 天方典礼译注 [Annotated Explanation of the Rites and Norms of Islam], ed. Na Wenbo 纳文波 (Kunming: Yunnan Minzu Chubanshe, 1990), 24–25.

<sup>67</sup> Weil, "The Vicissitudes," 107–8.

<sup>68</sup> Pang Shiqian, "Zhongguo huijiao siyuan jiaoyu zhi yange ji keben"; Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 200–208; Hai Mo 海默, *Guoyuan hazhi yu yihewani yanjiu lunji* 果园哈智与伊赫瓦尼研究论集 (Collected Studies on Hajji Guoyuan and the Yihewani).

of these new texts brought back to China by Hajji Guoyuan,<sup>69</sup> but all include at least the five that Pang identified.<sup>70</sup> Today, partisans of the New Sect and the Old Sect agree that texts newly available in China thanks to Hajji Guoyuan led to conflicting interpretations of orthopraxy, even as they disagree over the correctness of Hajji Guoyuan's particular reforms.

### *Studying the Shami*

Of the five texts he named, the one Pang deemed the “greatest in the shari‘a” was the *Shami*, an abbreviated title, popular in China as well as South Asia, for Ibn ‘Ābidīn (1784-1836) “the Levantine’s” (*al-shāmī*, hence the title) *Hāshiya Radd al-Muhtār ‘alā al-Durr al-Mukhtār* (Gloss of the Guide for the Baffled to the Exquisite Pearl).<sup>71</sup> The *Shami* was studied in several parts of China beginning in the late nineteenth century.<sup>72</sup> In Chinese as well as non-Chinese

<sup>69</sup> For various lists of the texts brought back by Hajji Guoyuan, see, among other sources, Ma Guozhen 马国珍, “Gansu yisilan jiao ‘xinjiaopai’ de chansheng -- chuangshiren ma guoyuan de huodong jingguo” 甘肃伊斯兰教“新教派”的产生--创始人马果园的活动经过 (The Creation of the “New Teaching Sect” in Gansu Islam: The Course of Activity of the Founder Ma Guoyuan); Ma Tong 马通, *Zhongguo yisilan jiaopai yu menhuan zhidu shilue* 中国伊斯兰教派与门宦制度史略 (A Historical Overview of the Sects and Menhuan System of Chinese Islam), 94–106; Qi Mingde 祁明德, *Long ahong* 聋阿訇 (The Deaf Ahong); Xining Dongguan Qingzhen Dasi Zhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 西宁东关清真大寺志编纂委员会, *Xining Dongguan Qingzhen Dasi* 西宁东关清真大寺志 (Xining Dongguan Great Mosque Gazetteer), 210–11; Hai Mo 海默, “Yihewani zongjiao gaige zhuzhang shulue” 伊赫瓦尼宗教革新主张述略 (Overview of the Yihewani View on Religious Renewal).

<sup>70</sup> The five are: Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (d. 1816), *Hāshiyat al-Ṭaḥṭāwī ‘alā Marāqī al-Falāḥ*; Muḥammad Amīn Efendī (????-????), *Majālis Irshādīya*; Aḥmad Sirhindī (1563-1624), *Maktūbāt-i Imām-i Rabbānī*; Bīrgivī Mehmet Efendī (d. 1573), *Al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya wa’l-Sīra al-Aḥmadiyya*; Muḥammad Amīn ibn ‘Ābidīn (d. 1836), *Hāshiya Radd al-Muhtār ‘alā al-Durr al-Mukhtār*. Pang Shiqian, “Zhongguo huijiao siyuan jiaoyu zhi yange ji keben,” 99–100.

<sup>71</sup> On the *Shami* and Ibn ‘Abidin, see Burak, *The Second Formation of Islamic Law*, 157–59; Calder, “The ‘Uqūd Rasm al-Muftī’ of Ibn ‘Ābidīn”; Hallaq, Wael B., “A Prelude to Ottoman Reform: Ibn ‘Abidin on Custom and Legal Change”; Weismann, “Law and Sufism on the Eve of Reform: The Views of Ibn ‘Abidin”; Gerber, *Islamic Law and Culture, 1600-1840*; Ghazzal, *The Grammars of Adjudication: The Economics of Judicial Decision Making in Fin-de-Siècle Ottoman Beirut and Damascus*.

<sup>72</sup> Hu Songshan, one of the most influential *ahongs* in northwest China in the early twentieth century, studied the *Shami* in Hezhou (Linxia) under Wang Naibi, one of Hajji Guoyuan's early disciples, corroborating the conventional association of the text with latter's return to China. One Lanzhou-based missionary with the China Inland Mission in the early 1920s singled out the *Shami* as one of the books “brought back from Arabia which were eagerly studied by the Ahungs (*ahongs*).” In the Central Plains region to the east (including Henan), study of the *Shami* is usually associated the growing influence of Hajji Guoyuan's disciples. According to Ma Chao, Ma Guangqing, one of Hajji Guoyuan's Henanese disciples, taught the *Shami* to Fan Haogu in 1929. This took place in Wuhan, but Ma Guangqing was active throughout Henan Province in the late 1910s and early 1920s. However, rivals of this intellectual lineage also studied and cited the text. For example, Hong Baoquan, who debated Ma Guangqing in 1919 in Kaifeng, cited the text throughout the Arabic text of his 1919 *Munir Al-Din*, published together with its



historiography, it is generally believed that texts such as the *Shami* that were brought back to China around the turn of the nineteenth century contained previously unknown or lost information concerning substantive Islamic law. In 1924, one missionary explained that the *Shami* was so enthusiastically received because it “was found to contain instructions as to ceremonials and beliefs that differed from those generally followed” in China.<sup>73</sup> Similar views are commonplace in current Chinese scholarship, Hui and non-Hui, as well.

But there are several problems with the pervasive narrative that new texts brought new teachings. First, many of the associated debates predate the arrival in China—and in some cases, even the writing—of the texts that supposedly provoked them. Second, particular texts were actually not exclusively associated with particular sides in a debate. Writings by authors typically classified as “Old Sect” cited many of the same texts as their “New Sect” interlocutors, including those said to have been brought to China by Hajji Guoyuan. Third, it was not as though Hajji

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Chinese summary and frontmatter in 1921. It is also included in the Chinese list of reference works (as *feigehai shami*, or *fiqh al-shāmī*). The Chinese list also includes the other new texts Pang lists in his 1937 article, with the exception of Birgivi’s *Al-Ṭarīqa al-Muḥammadiyya*, though that too is cited in subsequent chapters. Indeed, the *Shami* apparently came to China along multiple paths, not just through the travels of Hajji Guoyuan. Ma Lianyuan (1840-1903) of Yunnan in southwest China studied the *Shami* in India (probably in Mumbai) in the late 1860s and may have brought a copy of it back to Yunnan. (Ma Lianyuan’s entry in the *Yuxi Region Nationalities Gazetteer* says only that he brought back Arabic texts to Yunnan; it does not specify which texts.) In addition, in the northeast, Wang Jingzhai, one of the celebrated “four great imams” of modern China, recounts in a memoir that he borrowed the *Shami* from a local *ahong* while in Tianjin in 1900 and that he studied it again around 1903 in Cangnan (in Hebei Province) with *Ahong* Hai Sifu, who had personally produced the printing plates for it. In the 1930s, Wang identified the *Shami* as one of two particularly popular shari‘a texts in China, though it apparently was not widely used in and around Hebei other than under Hai Sifu; it is not included in the lists of texts held in any of the seventeen mosques in Hebei surveyed by Iwamura Shinobu in the early 1940s. Thus study of *Shami* was not confined to Hajji Guoyuan’s disciples, but neither was it universally accepted. Di Liangchuan 狄良川, *Hu songshan sixiang yanjiu* 虎嵩山思想研究 (Study of the Thought of Hu Songshan), 46; Botham, “Modern Movements among Chinese Mohammedans,” 292; Ma Chao 马超, “Yi dai jingshi ma guangqing da ahong chuanlue” 一代经师马广庆大阿訇传略 (Biographical Sketch of the Great Ahong Ma Guangqing: Scripture Master of a Generation), 636; Hong Baoquan 洪宝泉 et al., “Ming Zhen Shi Yi” 明真释疑 (Elucidation of Truth and Resolution of Doubts), 339 passim; Bai Shouyi, *Huizu renwu zhi*, 3:1569–70; Yuxi Diqu Minzu Shiwu Weiyuanhui 玉溪地区民族事务委员会, “Ma Lianyuan” 马联元; Wang Jingzhai, “Wushi nian qixue zishu,” 107–8; Wang Jingzhai 王静斋, *Xuanyi xiangjie weigaye* 选译详解伟嘎业 (Translated Selections of the Commentary on Al-Wiqaya), 11–12; Iwamura 岩村, *Chūgoku kaikyō shakai no kōzo* 中國回教社會の構造 (The Structure of Chinese Islamic Society), 1:97–100.

<sup>73</sup> Botham, “Modern Movements among Chinese Mohammedans,” 292.

Guoyuan's texts were the first works of shari'a available in China. As Weil has shown, Arabic and Persian works of *fiqh* (jurisprudence) were relatively common prior to the late nineteenth century. The question, then, is why *this* text, the *Shami*, became so popular while many others did not. This popularity cannot be taken for granted; in the hierarchy of Hanafi jurisprudence to which many of the work's most enthusiastic students subscribed, the *Shami* ranks relatively low.

The *Shami* is a massive, encyclopedic text. As indicated by its full Arabic title, it is a "super-gloss" (a commentary of a commentary) on al-Ḥaṣkafī's (d. c. 1677) commentary on an earlier work. Six of its eight volumes were written by Ibn Abidin, and the remaining two were completed by his son. The eight volumes encompass a wide-ranging commentary on substantive Islamic law including rituals and contracts and transactions as well as criminal law. Most relevant here, however, is the lengthy "Muqaddima," or "introduction," to the work, which contains a meta-discussion of Islamic jurisprudence, the Hanafi school of law (*madhhab*), and the basic categories according to which it is organized. As Zouhair Ghazzal explains, Ibn 'Abidin's "Muqaddima" entailed a "sorting out of the discursive juristic typology within the vast *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) literature."<sup>74</sup> It is, in other words, the sort of text that would be useful to someone in search of an introduction to the taxonomy of Islamic jurisprudence and the vocabulary of the shari'a. Notably, unlike with any of the other four additional texts introduced in the late nineteenth century, Pang calls the *Shami* a "reference work" (*lei shu*).<sup>75</sup> Moreover, when the Tianjin-based *ahong* Wang Jingzhai completed his Chinese translation of another text, the *Mukhtaṣar Sharḥ al-Wiqāya*, in 1931, he added a preface that quoted from the *Shami* to

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<sup>74</sup> Ghazzal, *The Grammars of Adjudication: The Economics of Judicial Decision Making in Fin-de-Siècle Ottoman Beirut and Damascus*, 37; 37–47.

<sup>75</sup> Pang Shiqian, "Zhongguo huijiao siyuan jiaoyu zhi yange ji keben," 100.

introduce the ranks of Hanafi jurisprudence and hierarchy of doctrinal texts, further indicating the particular appeal of the “Muqaddima” within Ibn ‘Abidin’s magisterial work.<sup>76</sup>

Rather than trying to trace the influence of the *Shami* as a carrier of previously unavailable, counter-traditional substantive law, we can investigate the circumstances in which particular texts become popular and the scope of the authority ascribed to them. The *Shami* was distinguished in part by the “juristic typology” of its “Muqaddima” and Ibn ‘Abidin’s general concern for systematization. It represented an extreme version of what Skoda and Dresch call “legalism:” essentially, a schematization of the moral order in terms of explicit, abstract categories understood as independent of the actions and relationships they classify.<sup>77</sup> To probe changing understandings of shari‘a in China, we can therefore ask: In what circumstances does this sort of legalistically rationalizing text become useful? Under what conditions do the legalistic elements of a tradition become salient and meaningful?

*Islamic Learning After the Mid-Century Rebellions: The Shanyitang Mosque*

Qing reconstruction measures following the catastrophic midcentury rebellions marked a watershed in Islamic learning in China. Throughout the 1850s-1870s, the empire was engulfed in violence and disorder. These decades witnessed a combination of concerted challenges to Qing rule by the Taiping Rebellion centered in the southeast, the Panthay Muslim Rebellion in the southwest, and the revolt of Yaqub Beg in the far northwest, as well as relatively diffuse unrest throughout north and northwest China subsequently reified into the “Nian Rebellion” and “Muslim Rebellion.”<sup>78</sup> Under the Tongzhi Restoration (1860-1874), the Qing court, provincial

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<sup>76</sup> Wang Jingzhai, *Xuanyi xiangjie weigaye*, 8–9.

<sup>77</sup> Dresch, “Legalism, Anthropology, and History: A View from the Part of Anthropology,” 1.

<sup>78</sup> As Lipman points out, the diffuseness and complexity of the disorder mean that we should speak of Muslim rebellions in the plural. The unrest was not a single, coordinated event. Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*; Atwill, *The Chinese Sultanate*; Kim, *Holy War in China*; Chu Wen Djang, *The Moslem Rebellion*.

authorities, and local elites attempted to entrench their respective positions with renewed appeals to and investment in imperial Confucianism.<sup>79</sup> In Gansu to the northwest, where unrest had been cast principally as a Muslim problem, pressure to acculturate through Confucian education<sup>80</sup> and participation in the Civil Service Examinations went hand in hand with extermination and forced relocation.<sup>81</sup>

Kaifeng was spared direct violence during and after the rebellions, but the city experienced a similar conservative shift. In the early 1870s the local government expanded the provincial examination hall after decades of disrepair to accommodate the surge in candidates of the Restoration era.<sup>82</sup> Confucian community schools (*she xue*) proliferated throughout the Henan,<sup>83</sup> including within mosques,<sup>84</sup> which in the Central Plains region housed not just Islamic learning but the potentially suspect tradition of Hui martial arts as well. Displays of cultural conformity were not always imposed from above by officials.<sup>85</sup> Heightened scrutiny of cultural difference also left room for personal grievances and connections to shape events. For example, when the Jiamiao Street Mosque nearly collapsed in 1873, a powerful neighbor who was a

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<sup>79</sup> Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism; the Tung-Chih Restoration, 1862-1874*; Meyer-Fong, *What Remains*.

<sup>80</sup> During the reigns of the Tongzhi (1861-1875) and Guangxu (1875-1908) Emperors, at least 62 new charity schools were built in the northwestern province of Gansu. Fan Ying 樊莹 and 杨文炯, “Qingdai xibei ‘huimin yixue’ yanjiu” 清代西北“回民义学”研究 (Study of “Hui Charity Schools” in the Northwest during the Qing Dynasty). Not all charity schools were funded by the government; community leaders and wealthy merchants might set up an endowment to support a local school.

<sup>81</sup> Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 118–38; Chu Wen Djang, *The Moslem Rebellion*, 95–161; Theaker, “Moving Muslims.”

<sup>82</sup> Kaifengshi Dang’anju 开封市档案局, 开封市地方史志编委传经办公室, and Zhao Pei 赵佩, *Kaifeng dashiji* 开封大事记 (Record of Major Events in Kaifeng), 34; Cheng Wei 程伟, “Qingdai henan gongyuan de xiujian ji qi jingfei tanjiu” 清代河南贡院的修建及其经费探究 (Investigation of the Construction and Funding of the Examination Hall of Henan in the Qing Dynasty).

<sup>83</sup> Between 1840 and 1905, at least 801 community schools were built in Henan. Wang Rixin 王日新 and Jiang Duyun 蒋笃运, *Henan jiaoyu tongshi* 河南教育通史 (General History of Education in Henan), 2:7; 1–29, *passim*.

<sup>84</sup> Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 171–79.

<sup>85</sup> Hu Yunsheng, 281–82.

descendant of a Shaanxi official killed by Hui rebels prevented repairs until a visiting Hui official intervened on the congregation's behalf.<sup>86</sup>

Qing reconstruction measures in the late nineteenth century provoked complex and diverse responses from Muslims across the empire. As Roberta Tontini has shown, Hui elites in Yunnan and Shaanxi felt compelled to affirm the compatibility of their tradition with Confucian orthodoxy following local unrest and revised the *Tianfang San Zi Jing* (Islamic Three-Character Classic), one of Liu Zhi's expositions of Islam, accordingly.<sup>87</sup> The post-rebellion changes in Islamic learning were not only a matter of casting Islam in a more favorable light for outsiders. Eric Schluessel shows in a recent study how the Qing reconquest of Xinjiang under the leadership of General Zuo Zongtang (1812-1885) and his Xiang Army was followed by a "civilizing project." Qing officials aimed to acculturate the restive region into the imperial-Confucian fold, but their actions also engendered new local conceptions of Muslim identity and normative practice.<sup>88</sup> Hannah Theaker's study of Qing reconstruction in Gansu and Qinghai similarly emphasizes how the period between the "great" Muslim rebellions of the 1860s-70s and the smaller rebellion of 1895-96 was one of "religious experimentation and revival."<sup>89</sup>

To the north of Yunnan and to the east of the far northwest, we find in this same period an increase in the production of Chinese-language primers instructing readers in the basics of Islamic ritual practice and creed.<sup>90</sup> The unrevised reprinting of Ma Junshi's seventeenth-century *Tianfang Wei Zhen Yao Lüe* (Essentials for the Preservation of the Truth of Islam) foils Tontini's

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<sup>86</sup> Wang Huimin 王惠民, "Mantan jiamiao jie qingzhensi" 漫谈家庙街清真寺 (A Casual Discussion of the Jiamiao Street Mosque).

<sup>87</sup> Tontini, *Muslim Sanzijing*, chap. 4.

<sup>88</sup> Schluessel, *Land of Strangers*.

<sup>89</sup> Theaker, "Moving Muslims," chap. 5 passim.

<sup>90</sup> Zhao Can 马启荣, "Ren li qie yao" 认礼切要 (Essentials for Recognizing Ritual); Ma Youlin 马有林, *Zeyao zhujie zaxue* 择要注解杂学 (Selected Essentials from the Annotated Explanation of Miscellaneous Learning); Tang Yude 堂玉德, "Ren li qie yao" 礼拜箴规 (Admonitions on Worship).

example of the revision of Liu Zhi's *Islamic Three-Character Classic*. Ma Junshi's text is an unapologetic repudiation of over sixty forms of "apostasy" (*wai dao*).<sup>91</sup> What unites this diverse post-rebellion production of texts was thus not the insistence that Islam and Confucianism were compatible but the anxiety that the continuation of Islamic tradition could not be taken for granted.

The Confucian challenge to Islamic learning and its impact on a segment of the *ahong* ranks were exemplified in one of Kaifeng's new mosques established after the rebellions: the Shanyitang, the "Hall of the Good and Righteous." After the suppression of the rebellions in Shaanxi and Gansu, forced relocations and migration of Muslim communities was mostly directly westward, but a small contingent headed east. In the early 1870s, around 300 Muslim families led by a group of horse traders arrived in Kaifeng and settled southeast of the drum tower in the vicinity of two large Buddhist temples. The community sought permission to build a mosque, and, notwithstanding some initial uneasiness regarding this potentially disruptive group, the county magistrate granted their request after the merchant leaders proposed to build a Confucian charity school on the premises as well. However, due to opposition from their Buddhist neighbors, the community was forbidden from displaying the characters for "mosque" (*qingzhen si*) on the street-facing entrance.<sup>92</sup>

In his assenting edict, later inscribed on a tablet kept within the mosque, the magistrate tied his decision to the example of General Zuo Zongtang, the Qing hero in the rebellions on whose orders communities like the one petitioning him had been pacified, relocated, or massacred. Confucian acculturation was a pillar of General Zuo's post-rebellion measures, and

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<sup>91</sup> Ma Junshi 马君实, "Tianfang wei zhen yaolue" 天方卫真要略 (Summarized Essentials of the Protection of Truth in Islam).

<sup>92</sup> Ma Jiwu 马辑武, "'Ma ke huo' de dingju yu shanyitang de chuangjian" "马客伙"的定居与善义堂的创建 (The Settlement of the "Horse Visitors" and the Founding of the Shanyitang).

the merchant leaders well understood the utility of an apt display of cultural conformity. “I have heard recently,” read the magistrate’s December 1874 decree, “that Zuo Gongbao (Zongtang) led an army to pacify the western frontier, and that his reconstruction measures included establishing Hui charity schools and hiring teachers for instruction, with every student given two *jīn* of rice a day to nourish their bravery. [These] merchants desire to emulate that method and have contributed funds to purchase a compound for their people... Inside they would establish [a school for] classical learning, so that Hui students may study under a teacher and recite scriptures; outside they would establish a charity school and hire a renowned teacher. There would be no boundary [between them], so that the poor students of the Islamic and the Han religions may enter school and study and, by a gradual grind day and night, transform their character.”<sup>93</sup> Permission granted, the merchants set to work expanding what had been their simple and provisional prayer hall into a permanent compound.

Zuo Zongtang himself looked favorably on the new enterprise as a capstone to one of his numerous pacification campaigns. Construction of the Shanyitang Mosque was not completed until 1887, and the charity school was not formally established until the following year. But some time before his death in 1885, the general gifted the mosque a wooden board inscribed with four characters: *dao zhi da yuan*, “the great source of the Way.”<sup>94</sup> On one level, Zuo was following the example of his superior; in 1875, Empress Dowager Cixi had donated a board with the same inscription to a mosque in Yunnan, and it was not uncommon for similar donated inscriptions to hang in mosques.<sup>95</sup> The four characters were drawn from a statement by the

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<sup>93</sup> “Inscription of the Edict Proclaimed by the Xiangfu County Magistrate Concerning the Hall of Goodness and Righteousness” (善義堂祥符縣正堂出示曉諭碑). See Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 276.

<sup>94</sup> Ma Jiwu, “‘Ma ke huo’ de dingju yu shanyitang de chuangjian,” 442.

<sup>95</sup> In 1875, Empress Dowager Cixi donated a board reading *dao zhi da yuan* to the Dongying Mosque of Hongta in Yuxi, Yunnan. Ma Jianzhao Compiled Essentials of Literary and Historical Materials on Associations and Religious

ancient philosopher Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BCE), which read in full: “The great source of the Way emanates from Heaven. Heaven does not change; the Way also does not change.”<sup>96</sup> The line held special significance for Zuo. The character for “change” (*bian*) can also mean “rebellion,” and Zuo and other officials repeatedly used it in that latter sense with reference to the recent and earlier “Muslim rebellions” (*hui bian*). Hanging within the mosque, Zuo’s board conveyed not just his endorsement of Huis who participated in the institutions of imperial Confucianism but a not-too-subtle admonition to those who studied long enough to get the reference: rebellion is futile, the Qing order is permanent.

But the Qing order was not permanent, and by the turn of the century an increasingly influential faction of officials was convinced that the institutions through which Zuo had sought to restore imperial control were in fact bringing on the dynasty’s demise. The late Qing court’s efforts to reform education accelerated with the “Hundred Days Reforms” in 1898 after Japan’s victory in the first Sino-Japanese War and culminated in the abolition of the Civil Service Examinations in 1905. The wisdom of Dong Zhongshu displayed atop the Shanyitang’s central hall was recast and popularized by one of Zuo’s successors as an example of the debilitating rigidity of the old order.<sup>97</sup> Reforms were uneven and chaotically implemented, and Kaifeng remained a conservative center. The city hosted the final metropolitan examinations in 1903 after the traditional venue in Beijing was destroyed by Western armies during the suppression of the Boxer Uprising in 1899-1901.

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Venues of the Hui Nation in Southern China and Zhang Shuhui 张菽晖, *Zhongguo nanfang huizu tuanti yu zongjiao changsuo wenshi ziliao jiyao* 中国南方回族群团与宗教场所文史资料辑要 (Compiled Essentials of Literary and Historical Materials on Associations and Religious Venues of the Hui Nation in Southern China), 394.

<sup>96</sup> Translation Queen and Major’s. Dong, *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn*, 641.

<sup>97</sup> The late Qing official and reformer Zhang Zhidong (1837-1909) quoted the same line from Dong Zhongshu in his 1898 treatise *Quanxuepian* (Exhortation to Study). 张之洞, 张之洞劝学篇评注, 35; cf. Ayers, *Chang Chih-Tung and Educational Reform in China*, 205.



By the first decade of the twentieth century, state-sponsored educational reform had given up its former Confucian style in favor of a more self-consciously modernist one. Urban elite rejection of the old tradition intensified after the founding of the Republic of China in 1911. At the same time, a Protestant-informed notion of what a modern religion ought to look like (a church-like institution with a scriptural canon, regular holidays, and moral indoctrination) gained sway. But amid these changes, the challenge to Islamic learning was a continuation from Zuo's earlier policies, if not in content, then at least in form and effect: the growing role the state and other traditions sought to play in shaping individuals' worldviews prompted greater reflection on and objectification of Hui identity, on the practices and beliefs that made a Hui a Hui.<sup>98</sup>

At the same time, the construction of Shanyitang Mosque intensified Henan's connections to centers of Islamic learning to the west and northwest. In contrast to much of Gansu,<sup>99</sup> where after the rebellions Muslims were forced to relocate westward and out of the cities, the gates of Kaifeng opened to receive a small contingent of survivors. These newcomers adapted to the pressure of acculturation but maintained its distinctively northwestern character. This was evident to multiple observers in the 1930s, and through much of the twentieth century, the congregation exclusively hired *ahongs* that had studied and served in the northwest.<sup>100</sup>

But if the Shanyitang was alien, it was never insular. *Ahongs* trained in Xi'an, Pingliang, Jingyuan, Guyuan, Hezhou, and Xining came to Kaifeng and then circulated more frequently and more widely throughout Henan. These destinations formed an artery of Islamic learning that, now branching at the Shanyitang Mosque, fed local congregations through the capillaries of

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<sup>98</sup> This formulation owes much to Dale Eickelman's analysis of the "objectification" of Muslim consciousness in relation to the rise of mass education. Eickelman, "National Identity and Religious Discourse in Contemporary Oman"; Eickelman, "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies"; Eickelman and Piscatori, *Muslim Politics*.

<sup>99</sup> Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 22.

<sup>100</sup> Wang Jingzhai 王静斋, "Zhongguo jindai huijiao wenhua shiliao" 中国近代回教文化史料 (Historical Materials of Modern Islamic Culture in China), 81.; Lu Zhenming, "Kaifeng huijiao tan."

discipleship and *ahong* hiring. Other prominent congregations in Kaifeng and elsewhere in Henan also dispatched *hailifan* students and hired *ahongs* directly to and from the northwestern centers. In earlier generations Henan's prominent mosques hired *ahongs* from congregations in the eastern provinces of Hebei, Shandong, and Anhui, as well as from within Henan. These older circuits persisted but were gradually eclipsed by the new network of *ahongs* flowing through the Shanyitang, Kaifeng, and the mosques throughout the province where their disciples were eventually appointed.<sup>101</sup>

During the Boxer Uprising (1899-1901), Empress Dowager Cixi (1835-1908) had fled west to Xi'an, and she passed through Kaifeng on way back to the capital in November 1901. Proceeding through the center of the old city, Cixi visited the Xiangguo Temple and took note of the Shanyitang. When she learned that it was a mosque, she inquired why that was not indicated at the entrance and was told of the Xiangguo Temple's opposition. Moved by the support she had received from some of her Hui officers and the charity of the congregation, Cixi personally inscribed a tablet with the words "Shanyitang Mosque." Decades prior, its location beside one of Kaifeng's main thoroughfares and most prominent Buddhist institution had forced the Shanyitang congregation to temper displays of its Islamic identity.<sup>102</sup> Now that same location led fortuitously to a new assertion of that identity. One wonders what the Empress Dowager must have thought when she read the board of her late servant General Zuo.

In fact, it was neither she nor Zuo but the leadership of the Shanyitang who would have the last word. In 1904, one of the mosque headmen printed several copies of a collection of writings including a short, rather cryptic lesson, "How to Discern Proper Belief" (*yimani* [īmān])

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<sup>101</sup> Pang Shiqian, "Zhongyuan huihui"; Ma Chao 马超, "Qingdai henan yisilan jingxue liupai chutan" 清代河南伊斯兰经学流派初探 (A Preliminary Exploration of the Spread of Schools of Islamic Classical Studies in Henan during the Qing Dynasty).

<sup>102</sup> Ma Jiwu, "'Ma ke huo' de dingju yu shanyitang de chuangjian," 442.

*guiju duan faming jiang*), attributed to Ma Shouqing (1814-1902). Ma Shouqing, commonly known as “Pu’er Ma” (he was from Pu’er, Yunnan) had participated in the Shaanxi rebellions and surrendered to Zuo in 1869.<sup>103</sup> He and his son later taught as clerics at the Shanyitang. The short text of the lesson was composed in 1895 and printed in the 1904 collection. It addresses Zuo’s donated board reading the “Great Source of the Way.”

During the oppression of old Ahong Pu’er Ma Shouqing, those men who spoke of the way of justice appeared uplifted by *iman*. Because the characters printed on Minister Zuo’s board do not elucidate the way of justice, [Pu’er Ma] said, “Once the Prophet Muhammad concealed himself with full composure and deliberateness. Those men who err in their hearts while speaking principle are the descendants of the wild fox. If a person does not believe in the thirty books of scripture (i.e. the thirty *juz*’ of the Quran), it will be apparent to a knowing opponent. To repent beforehand is easy; to repent afterwards is hard. It is easy in this world to go without repenting for what you have said; to repent in the next world for what one has said is the greatest hardship. The greatness of men does not come close to the greatness of God. In the benevolence of this world there is no distinction between the worthy and the foolish, but as for the benevolence of the next world—Muslims shall have the just judgment of God, which distinguishes the true and the false.”<sup>104</sup>

The lesson suggests a valorization of individual discernment and holding fast to certain knowledge in the face of renewed imperial domination.

We might expect that increased scrutiny of Hui practice in the shadow of Qing reconstruction and state-backed reform projects would foster quietism, a way of coming to terms with the new political climate through turning inward, renouncing worldly concerns, or withdrawing deeper into the mosque. As seen earlier, Muslim responses to the immediate post-rebellion context varied, and it stands to reason that, over the longer term, they adapted religious styles that varied as well. It is interesting to note that a later gazetteer (*zhi*) on the Hui of Kaifeng

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<sup>103</sup> Bai Shouyi, *Huizu renwu zhi*, 3:1701.

<sup>104</sup> Ma Zibao 马自宝, “Qingzhen juzheng” 清真居正 (Right Islam), 280.

mentions that in the early twentieth century, there developed a small faction of Hui distinguished by their rejection of rituals prescribed by the shari‘a and their commitment to a putatively more contemplative approach. Unfortunately, there is no record of this group, the “Wu Sect” (“Realization Sect”), after the death of its founder.<sup>105</sup> But might its classification as decidedly anti-shari‘a in popular memory and Hui scholarship be a clue to contemporary trends in how the shari‘a was understood? Might its extreme rejection of the shari‘a be a reflection of growing salience of the shari‘a in early twentieth-century Hui life?

### *Debating Scripture*

In the first half of the twentieth century, *ahongs* in different parts of Henan repeatedly gathered to argue publicly about the shari‘a. These gatherings lasted for days or even months. In scholarship as well as popular memory they are associated with emergence of the New Sect, whose partisans, according to this narrative, would challenge opponents (representatives of the Old Sect) to debate points of disagreement. As the Henanese Hui scholar Ma Chao explains, “When resolving disputes, Muslims and religious scholars in many areas chose a method recognized by both sides: scripture debate. ‘Scripture debate’ refers to when *ahongs* and Muslim masses of the New and Old Sects with different views, agreeing in advance on the time, location, and content, expound their respective positions and respond to opponents’ criticisms by citing canonical scripture before the crowd.”<sup>106</sup>

For the moment I want to set aside the points of disagreement and the question of consistency of groups or sects between cases and focus on the common practice—shared by all parties and participants—of collective, public argument. Within Henan (they were not limited to

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<sup>105</sup> Zhao Jiachen 赵家珍, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi* 开封市民族宗教志 (Kaifeng City Nationalities and Religions Gazetteer), 206–7; Bai Zongzheng 白宗正, “开封伊斯兰教派简介,” 404. Ma Chao 马超, “Yihewani zai henan de chuanbo yu fazhan” 伊赫瓦尼在河南的传播与发展 (The Spread and Development of the Yihewani in Henan), 319; Erie, *China and Islam: The Prophet, the Party, and Law*, 160–63.<sup>106</sup>

the province), these debates took place in Kaifeng, Zhengzhou, Xingyang, Luoyang, Zhoukou, Jia County, Nanyang, and Minquan between the late 1910s and the early 1940s. Guo Chengmei provides a rare, relatively detailed description of a later scripture debate, held in 1944 in Kaifeng, which at the time was under Japanese occupation. Guo's account is based on interviews with his father, Guo Qingxin, a self-identifying "New Sect" *ahong* who attended the 1944 debate:

The "scripture debate" between Kaifeng's two sects was organized by the Kaifeng branch of Japanese puppet China Islamic Federation... The location [of the debate] was the branch office on Kaifeng's North Road, in an area next to the cathedral. The time was the summer of 1944, and [the debate] extended for around three or four months. The headmen of the two sides... went back and forth and got in touch, worked out the topics of the "scripture debate," and set the date and the main speakers for both sides. Who would speak first and last was decided by drawing lots. Ample time was left for preparation.<sup>107</sup>

Debates were held within or between congregations but might bring together *ahongs* from farther afield. Local community leaders (the "headmen") would organize, observe, and in some cases participate in debates.

A scripture debate was a performance of religious authority. According to Guo, hundreds of people gathered to watch the months-long series in the heart of the old city. There was a moderator and clear rules for speaking time and order (though Guo casts some doubt on the objectivity of the moderator, Xu Yaqing):

The first time was a debate over the issue of "standing in a line to worship." Guo Qingxin spoke first, taking up the majority of the time. Afterwards *Ahong* Feng Zhenzhang spoke, complaining about the duration and sequence of the speech. For the second [debate], the Gedimu (Old Teaching) *Ahong* Ma Mingzhen spoke first, using up nearly all of the speaking time. The emcee said: "Today *Ahong* Ma has spoken, and there's not much time remaining. Why don't we debate again in the next round?" The

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<sup>107</sup> Guo Qingxin 郭清心 and Guo Chengmei 郭成美, "Kaifeng yisilan xin lao jiaopai 'jiang jing': guo qingxin ahong fangtanji" 开封伊斯兰新老教派'讲经': 郭清心阿訇访谈记 ("Scripture Debate" of the New and Old Sects of Islam in Kaifeng: An Interview with Ahong Guo Qingxin), 273.

New Sect [*ahongs*] gave no reply; then, within the little time remaining, around ten minutes, Guo Qingxin of [the New Teaching] gave his view. Finally, *Ahong* Wang Dianfu said: “*Ahong* Ma spoke for a long while, and now *Ahong* Guo has spoken some. We can call it a practice round without naming winners and losers.” Then Jiang Liansheng of the New Teaching said: “No good! Religion was debated in seriousness. It doesn’t count as practice.” But of course, Xu Yaqing, the emcee and judge, was even less inclined to declare winners and losers. He did what someone who is in the wrong does and left the matter unresolved.<sup>108</sup>

Participation in these debates involved a particular way of engaging with the textual tradition of the shari‘a. One had to be able to cite and pronounce authors, titles, and passages and spontaneously refute an opponent’s arguments. Cultivating these skills did not require but was facilitated by access to texts. At the same time, orality and textuality were bound together (*jiang jing*, “scripture debate,” could be translated literally as “speak scripture”). They jointly defined the sort of authority on display in these debates. A spoken claim without basis in scripture was a sign of ignorance or dishonesty. At the same time, scripture could not speak for itself, and even if *ahongs* agreed on the principles according to which texts were to be interpreted and contradictions reconciled, the legitimacy of a particular position, and of the *ahong* who held it, was in part a function of its reception by the audience and broader community. In this sense two distinct tensions inhered in a scripture debate: between groups holding different views about religious practice and within individual *ahongs* vacillating between pursuit of the intellectual purism of the scholar and the acclaim of the virtuoso.

A written discourse was closely associated with these live debates. After a debate with *Ahong* Ma Guangqing in 1919, *Ahong* Hong Baoquan of the Great East Mosque in Kaifeng wrote *Munīr al-Dīn* (Illumination of Religion), which included rulings on over two dozen

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<sup>108</sup> Guo Qingxin and Guo Chengmei, 273.

questions. Over the next two years, some of his students and other staff at the Great East Mosque edited and summarized *Illumination of Religion* in Chinese, which was printed in during Ramadan of 1921 with the new title *Ming Zhen Shi Yi* (Elucidation of Truth and Resolution of Doubts).<sup>109</sup> In 1936, a group of *ahongs* in Luoyang compiled over 40 rulings into the *Jiaokuan Ji Zheng* (Correct Compilation of Religious Articles) after debates there.<sup>110</sup> Written debates could also play out in writing without a physical gathering. In 1942, *Ahong* Wang Dianfu, who served at the Great East Mosque in Kaifeng after Hong Baoquan's death in the mid-1930s, issued two "Letters of Admonition" to Hui in the city, in response to which Ma Guangqing, having returned to Kaifeng after more than a decade away, published a refutation of seven of Wang's points in "A Letter in Response to Ahong Wang Dianfu."<sup>111</sup> And throughout the 1910s-40s, the Hui press served as a forum for debating and disseminating arguments about the shari'a.

Discrete, authoritative rulings were the currency of this written and spoken shari'a discourse. A ruling was called a *houkun*, from the Arabic *ḥukm*, meaning "judgment" or "rule," and in context of the shari'a referring also to five-fold classification (pl. *aḥkām*) of a particular action as "obligatory," "recommended," "neutral," "detested," or "forbidden." I will use the Chinese term *houkun* when discussing these rulings as a category these *ahongs* and communities signified and used to refer to a distinct concept.

In the strictest sense, a *houkun* is a statement of the shari'a status of an action. It entails both the classification of the action and the statement, spoken or written, of that classification. The classification could be more or less explicit and more or less precise. "Do not recite the Ṭaha while washing the corpse;" and "reciting the Ṭaha while washing the corpse is detested" are both

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<sup>109</sup> Hong Baoquan et al., "Ming Zhen Shi Yi."

<sup>110</sup> Ma Chao, "Yihewani zai henan de chuanbo yu fazhan," 320.

<sup>111</sup> Ma Chao, 319–20.

*houkuns* but lie at opposite ends of the spectrum of legalistic specificity. In the former, the reasoning is binary (do/do not), whereas in the latter, the reasoning involves the use of shari‘a categories (“detested”). A *houkun* is further defined by two elements. First, it is an assertion of certain knowledge, not speculation or opinion. This does not mean that a *houkun* is uncontestable but that, when a *houkun* is issued, the speaker or writer believes it to be certain. Second, a *houkun* decontextualizes. It disregards circumstances deemed extrinsic to the act in question. The act in question is evaluated as a type rather than as a case or instance in the world. A *houkun* would never address an individual person or place, as in, “it is permissible for you, Wang, to recite the Ṭaha over your deceased father.”

We can think of a *houkun* as a unit within a larger discursive pattern. The consistent element, the discrete ruling, could be modified in different ways. A *houkun* was always understood to be drawn from one or more texts, but the intricacy of the citation—how many texts were cited, how much of the source text was reproduced, whether page numbers were indicated, what language it was rendered in—varied. More ornate *houkuns* were wrapped in layers of quotation and attribution; plainer ones simply cited the title of the source text or omitted the citation entirely. The iteration of the pattern also varied: a *houkun* was usually one item in a list of several, each addressing a different issue, but these lists, known as *houkun maisailai* or just *maisaila* (from the Arabic *masa’la*, pl. *masā’il*, “responsa” or rulings on legal questions) ranged from several items to well over fifty. These written compilations were often organized topically, with individual chapters containing multiple related *houkuns*. On the other hand, a *houkun* could also appear in isolation and focus on one single issue. This pattern was especially evident in Hui periodicals that would include regular columns addressing a particular question with each issue.



Anecdotes related in biographies of well-known *ahongs* in the early twentieth century suggest that seeking out and then disseminating *houkuns* was an increasingly important aspect of one's reputation in the early twentieth century. It is said that on the day of his wedding, Xie Wenguang (1870-1927) had a *houkun* question posed to him by his bride and, after failing to answer it, "sought learning from renowned teachers in the northwest" for twelve years, finally returning to become an *ahong* and teach throughout Henan.<sup>112</sup> Ma Shiruo (1894-1979), son of one of the early *ahongs* at the Shanyitang and who taught there himself in the late 1930s, was celebrated for lecturing on "one or two *houkun* or *maisailai*" at every worship time.<sup>113</sup> While serving as *ahong* in Ankang in Shaanxi, Hajji Guoyuan earned the moniker "iron *houkun*" for never bending his rulings to conform to local tradition.<sup>114</sup> The new importance attached to the *houkun* was likewise reflected in criticism of *ahongs* for transmitting incorrect rulings based on selective readings or in response to social pressure.<sup>115</sup>

The *ahongs* who engaged in this *houkun* discourse were not simply likeminded; they constituted an intellectual network. Through interviews with *ahongs* and documentary research, Ma Chao has identified the participants of many of the aforementioned debates and the teachers of dozens of Henan's most well-known *ahongs*. Based on Ma Chao's extensive research<sup>116</sup> and other studies, it is possible to piece together the intellectual genealogy of the *ahongs* who took part in these debates and wrote *houkun maisailai*. Most of the participating *ahongs* identified by

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<sup>112</sup> Hai Zhenkun 海振坤, "Henan jingtang jiaoyu de lishi mailuo ji xiemen xuepai chutan" 河南经堂教育的历史脉络及谢门学派初探 (A Preliminary Exploration of the Historical System of Madrasa Education in Henan and the Xie School), 1014.

<sup>113</sup> Huang Dengwu and Ma Xiaoping, *Zhongguo jingtang jiaoyu yu shaanxue ahong*, 83.

<sup>114</sup> Wang Jingzhai 王静斋, "Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi" 中国回教改正史 (The History of the Rectification of Chinese Islam), 11216.

<sup>115</sup> Ma Guangqing 马广庆, *Da wang dianfu ahong shu* 答王殿辅阿訇书 (Letter Replying to Wang Dianfu Ahong).

<sup>116</sup> Ma Chao 马超, "Minguo henan yisilanjiao jingshi yu jingxue" 民国河南伊斯兰教经师与经学 (Islamic Scholars and Classical Learning in Republican Henan).

Ma Chao can be traced to two lines of discipleship: Hajji Guoyuan and several of first *ahongs* who served in sequence at the Shanyitang Mosque. At first glance this might appear to corroborate the conventional narrative that these debates were confrontations between Hajji Guoyuan's New Sect and the more locally established Old Sect. However, as we have seen, the Shanyitang itself was shaped by the specific cultural pressures of post-rebellion reconstruction. In most accounts the Old Sect ends up being defined in implicitly negative terms, referring to whichever *ahongs* do not count as New Sect or, in parts of China where appropriate, members of Sufi orders or other groups. What the foregoing suggests is that it was a very particular sort of *ahong* who engaged in *houkun* discourse and "scripture debates," a subset that is much smaller than the residual category of "Old Sect." Moreover, if, as suggested earlier, what distinguished this *houkun* discourse was the rationalizing legalism epitomized in the "Muqaddima" of the *Shami*, we need to take a closer look at what both sides these debates had in common and what distinguished them together from the majority of *ahongs* who did not take part.

### 1.3 The Shari'a-Minded Ethic

The New and Old Sects, supposedly divergent, in fact share the same fundamental approach to the shari'a. The *ahongs* involved in the *houkun* discourse described above shared a legalistic conception of the shari'a as not simply a set of rules to be observed but a way of reasoning about and classifying the normative status of particular actions with reference to scripture. I will call this orientation "shari'a-mindedness,"<sup>117</sup> which captures the distinctively

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<sup>117</sup> The term "shari'a-mindedness" is usually associated with the classic work of the historian Marshall Hodgson, who used the term to characterize those scholars throughout Islamic (or "Islamicate") societies who "worked out... a programme for private and public living centered on the Shari'ah law." My emphasis on classification and ethics here owes more to the work of Morgan Clarke as well as Bryan Turner and Berna Arslan, who use the term somewhat differently than Hodgson. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, 238 and passim; Clarke, "Legalism and the Care of the Self: Shari'ah Discourse in Contemporary Lebanon"; Turner and Arslan, "Shari'a and Legal Pluralism in the West."

intellectual and, we will see, ethical concerns of these *ahongs*. For them, proper reasoning according to the shari‘a was itself an aspect of observance and normative conduct.

### *Shari‘a as Reasoning*

This distinctive conception of the shari‘a is evident in two *houkun maisailai* associated with opposite sides of scripture debates in the late 1910s. The first is the *Xing Mi Yao Lu* (Registered Essentials for Awakening from Confusion), written by *Ahong* Xiao Dezhen (1884-1947) in Xi’an in 1916; the second is the *Ming Zhen Shi Yi* (Elucidation of Truth and Resolution of Doubts), first composed by *Ahong* Hong Baoquan (1860s-c.1936) in Kaifeng in 1919 in Arabic (titled *Munīr al-Dīn*, Illumination of Religion) and summarized in Chinese and published with a new preface by some local leaders at Hong’s mosque in 1921.<sup>118</sup> Xiao and Hong issued divergent rulings on several questions of ritual practice, such as whether it is permissible to use the Qur’an instead of money for *yisigati* (from the Arabic *isqāt*, “expiation”) and whether it is a *sunna* (normative practice of the Prophet Muhammad) to raise a finger at certain points of the worship cycle. They reached those rulings, however, in similar ways. Both stressed the need to properly navigate and apply the shari‘a as a layered system of categories.

The early chapters of both texts reflect a shari‘a-minded concern with laying out the methodology according to which *houkuns* in subsequent chapters will be applied. Xiao has retroactively been classified as a Salafi, but both he and Hong situate themselves within the Hanafi tradition. Although the *ahongs* emphasize different systems of ranking texts and jurists, both systems are drawn from the Hanafi *madhhab* (school of law). Xiao’s second chapter, “Explanation of the Conditions for Observing the Scriptural Canons,” cites the late Hanafi scholar ‘Abd al-Hayy al-Laknawi’s (1848-1886) *‘Umda al-Ri’aya*, a commentary on the Hanafi

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<sup>118</sup> Xiao Dezhen 萧德珍, “Xing Mi Yao Lu” 醒迷要录 (Registered Essentials for Awakening from Confusion); Hong Baoquan et al., “Ming Zhen Shi Yi.”

commentary *Sharh al-Wiqaya*, to introduce a five-fold hierarchy of legal texts within the Hanafi school. Xiao does draw attention to the limits of the Hanafi tradition, relating two quotations attributed to Abu Hanifa that say, in effect, that the Quran and *sunna* are higher sources of law than his own teachings, and that if there is a contradiction, one should observe the Quran and *sunna*. But these quotations are themselves drawn from the Hanafi Lacknawi's *'Umda* and so in a sense are still given from within the *madhhab*. Moreover, Xiao opens the chapter with a decidedly Hanafi statement: "The compositions of the former and later scholars may all be followed because they were all composed according to the Great Imam" (referring to Abu Hanifa).<sup>119</sup>

Hong includes a parallel discussion in the first chapter of *Elucidation of Truth*, titled in Chinese, "Explanation of the Three Ranks of the *Maisailie*" (*maisailai*, Ar. *mas'ala*, responsa). Hong's taxonomy is three-fold instead of five-fold and pertains to the collections of rulings on legal questions (*responsa*) and not the rank of the jurists. The three types are: 1) those that are "fundamental," i.e. of "manifest transmission" from the highest authorities of the Hanafi school through trustworthy subsequent jurists; 2) those that are "rare" or "singular" rulings attributed to the highest authorities of the school but lacking highly qualified or numerous transmissions; and 3) those that are "occurrences," judgments issued by later jurists within the school of law for issues not addressed by the more authoritative predecessors.<sup>120</sup> Like Xiao, Hong establishes his credentials as a scholar by demonstrating his knowledge of the hierarchy within the Islamic legal tradition.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Xiao Dezhen, "Xing Mi Yao Lu," 168–70.

<sup>120</sup> Hong and his translators use the following terms to transliterate and translate. "Fundamental" rulings: (Ar. *uṣūlī*, Ch. *wusulai* or *genben wenti*), i.e. of "manifest transmission" (Ar. *ẓāhir al-riwāya*, Ch. *zhuwaxile lewaye* or *xianming xiangchuan*); "rare" or "singular" rulings (Ar. *nawādir*, sing. *nādira*, Ch. *nadilai* or *qiyi*); and "occurrences:" (*nawāzil*, sing. *nāzila*, or *wāqī'āt*, sing. *wāqī'a*, Ch. *wage'atai* or *ouyu zhi shi*),

<sup>121</sup> Hong Baoquan et al., "Ming Zhen Shi Yi," 348–55.

Xiao and Hong also shared a concern regarding the *aḥkām* categories in terms of which a particular *houkun* was made: whether an action was obligatory, recommended, licit, detested, or forbidden. Xiao expressed this concern most clearly in his sixth chapter, “Explanation of the Differentiation of *Sunna* and *Bid’a* in Supererogatory (*Taṭawwu*) ‘Worship.” Xiao observed that it was customary for Muslims to gather in mosques on certain nights during and after the month of Ramadan and perform certain prayers together as a congregation. He identified multiple problems with this practice. In the first place, according to Xiao, many of these prayers were actually innovations (*yiduan*); neither the Prophet Muhammad nor the “former scholars” had performed them, and only some of the “later scholars” did so. The error was compounded by the fact that people believed what they were doing to be *sunna*. Yet Xiao’s criticism cut in multiple directions; while people who performed these prayers were undoubtedly wrong, their behavior was *makrūh*, i.e. “detested” (as opposed to *ḥarām*, “forbidden), and Xiao also expressed concern over those “ignorant people who believe [what is *makrūh*] to be impermissible,” that is, forbidden. Xiao thus positioned himself as the precise reasoner between the two extremes of errant practice and overzealous condemnation.<sup>122</sup>

Hong’s emphasis on the *aḥkām* was most evident in his treatment of *bid’a*. The definition of *bid’a*, usually translated as “innovation” but also as “repugnant innovation,” “unlawful innovation,” or even “heresy,” has been a subject of Islamic legal scholarship since at least the ninth century CE.<sup>123</sup> A tradition that took the infallibility and perfection of revelation and the prophetic example as a fundamental tenet inevitably encountered the challenge of assessing acts not done in earlier times and/or about which an explicit ruling could not be found in the sources

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<sup>122</sup> Xiao Dezhen, “Xing Mi Yao Lu,” 175–81.

<sup>123</sup> Rispler, “Toward a New Understanding of the Term ‘Bid’a’”; Fierro, “The Treatises against Innovations ‘(Kutub al-Bida’).”

of law. The Hui literati who expounded Islam in classical Chinese in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries certainly believed that some practices were right and others were wrong, but they generally chose to make these judgments (in Chinese) using the generic and not specifically Islamic moralizing language of “deviant teaching” (*xiejiao*), “sinister way” (*zuodao*), “impropriety” (*fei li*), or “heterodoxy/heresy” (*yiduan*). *Yiduan* in particular was used to translate *bid‘a*, with the connotation that *bid‘a* was unambiguously bad. These late imperial literati did not entertain the idea that *yiduan/bid‘a* was in the first place a neutral category referring to anything not prescribed in revealed scripture and the prophetic example.<sup>124</sup> Hong Baoquan, however, drew on this line of thinking (citing the *Shami* among other texts) in his third chapter, in which he laid out a five-fold typology of *bid‘a* corresponding to the *aḥkām*: *bid‘a* could be forbidden or detested, but also neutral, recommended, or even obligatory. Hong thus drew a distinction between *bid‘a* as a technical category referring to actions lacking an explicit basis in scripture or *sunna* and the assessment of *bid‘a* according to the *shari‘a*.<sup>125</sup>

### *Shari‘a-Mindedness as an Ethic*

Underlying these concerns with jurisprudence and classification was an essentially ethical understanding of the *shari‘a*. Recognizing the hierarchy within the Hanafi *maddhab* and the precise moral status of action were integral parts of normative practice. Their increasing importance among these *ahongs* match Reinhart’s emphasis on the act of classification in his formulation of “Islamic law as Islamic ethics.”<sup>126</sup> It was critical, in other words, not simply to do the right thing, but to do so for the right reasons. This imperative to understand the *shari‘a*

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<sup>124</sup> Glasserman, “*Bid‘a*, Boundaries, and Evolving Conceptions of the *Shari‘a* in Chinese Islam,” article under review with the *International Journal of Islam in Asia*.

<sup>125</sup> Hong Baoquan et al., “Ming Zhen Shi Yi,” 356–58.

<sup>126</sup> Reinhart, “Islamic Law as Islamic Ethics.”

represented a local recognition of what in other contexts has been called the “central Islamic fact”<sup>127</sup> of the moral responsibility of individual humans.

The flipside of this understanding was a tendency to make claims about proper and improper intentions in shari‘a debates. Many of the topics covered in these debates had been the subject of dispute in earlier centuries; what was new was the methodology and general manner of the arguments. Notably, however, one topic that was new to debates in this period was the compensation of *ahongs* for reciting the Quran. Opposition to payment in money or food for recitation is one of the main issues in the conventional account of differences between the New and Old Sects. “If you’ve eaten, don’t recite; if you’ve recited, don’t eat” (*chi le bu nian, nian le bu chi*) was one of the slogans attributed to Hajji Guoyuan and was championed by his followers. Though not in Hajji Guoyuan’s line of discipleship, Xiao also opposed the practice and identified it as the underlying cause of errant practice. Students contravened the shari‘a because scholars deferred to local custom to avoid offending mosque headmen and thereby losing their livelihood. For example, on the question of raising a finger during worship, Xiao insisted that other *ahongs* knew full well what the *Wiqaya* said, but “when they lecture on this part of the *Wiqaya*, do not know what to say and swap words to deceive. I do not know how the students will hear the truth. As goes the teacher, so goes the student; a dog won’t father a lion. Truly, those who rely on religion to eat are of a kind with traitors.”<sup>128</sup> Hong, for his part, justified the practice of giving food or money for recitation on the condition that it was accepted as a “voluntary gift” (*al-hadīya al-nīyya*) for “unconditional” (*bi-ghayr sharṭ*) education. The permissibility of the practice thus hinged on the intentions of the parties involved.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Smith, “Islamic Law: Shari‘ah and Shar’,” 108–9.

<sup>128</sup> Xiao Dezhen, “Xing Mi Yao Lu,” 187–95.

<sup>129</sup> Hong Baoquan et al., “Ming Zhen Shi Yi,” 370–75.

There is a second ethical aspect of shari‘a-mindedness that relates to the Weberian sense of the term *ethic*: a configuration of values that together motivate a “methodological-rational organization of life.”<sup>130</sup> The distinctive understanding of the shari‘a, with its attention to individual moral discernment and intentions implied a moral obligation on the part of those who knew the system to make it known to those who did not.

The link between thinking in terms of the shari‘a and the moral imperative to teach others to do so was spelled out clearly in widely used textbook for mosque students, the *Huiwen Dubwen* (Reader in Islamic Writings). The *Reader* was composed in 1919 by three *ahongs* at the time based in Changsha in Hunan Province. It was published several times over the course of the Republican period and widely distributed throughout north and central China, including in Henan. It comprised twelve volumes mixing Arabic and Chinese; the first eight for elementary Islamic education, the last four for advanced *hailifan* students training to become *ahongs*. Book Two of the advanced program begins with a ten-page lesson on the classifications of what is commanded and forbidden. Part One of the lesson outlines the degrees of obligation and the corresponding reward or punishment: for example, neglecting to do something that is obligatory incurs punishment in the next life; neglecting to do something that is recommended incurs no such punishment. Part Two then outlines the duty to acquire and pass on this knowledge, with each rank of obligation corresponding to an educational requirement. Thus, it is obligatory for all Muslims to study and perform what is obligatory, and it is obligatory for the community as a whole to teach what is obligatory. Likewise, it is *sunna* for all Muslims to study and perform what is *sunna*, and it is a *sunna* for the community as a whole to teach what is *sunna*. The lesson systematically goes through eight categories (four types of commandments, four types of

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<sup>130</sup> Kalberg, *Max Weber's Comparative-Historical Sociology Today*, 30–35.



prohibitions), each of which entails a specific obligation for a Muslim to study, teach, practice (or avoid), and command (or prohibit) others.<sup>131</sup> The conception of the shari‘a as an ethical system of reasoning thus translated into a shari‘a-minded ethic to make the system known to all.

#### 1.4 From Legalism to Activism

Concerning Weber’s dichotomy of “traditional” and “rationalized” religions, Clifford Geertz remarked that “the process of religious rationalization seems everywhere to have been provoked by a thorough shaking of the foundations of social order.”<sup>132</sup> I stated earlier that one broader goal of this chapter was to explore the conditions under which the legalistic elements of religious traditions become more salient in social life. The foregoing analysis supports Geertz’s assertion. If the legalistic rationalization of the shari‘a traced above represents a somewhat more modest adjustment in the direction of rationalization, it too emerged in the aftermath of social crisis: the catastrophic rebellions that nearly toppled the Qing dynasty in the nineteenth century.

I would like to conclude the chapter by introducing a second broader goal, to be pursued in the following chapters: having examined the conditions under which local interpretation a religion becomes more legalistic, I now want to explore the political consequences of this variety of religious development. What happens when the shari‘a as a system of reasoning becomes central to Hui discourse and identity?

This framing is inspired in part by conversations I had with *ahongs* during my fieldwork in Henan in 2018-2019. At the time I was already interested in Pang’s claim about a shift in mosque learning from theology to shari‘a and in the possible connection between *ahong*

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<sup>131</sup> Li Renshan 李仁山, Zhang Chunsan 张春三, and Ma Lixian 马礼贤, “Huiyu Duben: Gaoji” 回语读本: 高级 (Islamic Language Reader: Advanced Level), 169–77.

<sup>132</sup> Geertz, Clifford, “‘Internal Conversion’ in Contemporary Bali,” 173.

participation in public life and the increasing use of the *ahkām* and technical shari‘a vocabulary I had observed in Hui writings beginning around the turn of the nineteenth century. I occasionally posed Pang’s claim to my interlocutors and twice received more or less the following response: that the older prominence of theology was associated with greater dialogue and engagement between Islam and other traditions, while the later attention to shari‘a was associated with intra-Islamic argument and division. The proliferation of sectarian debates over Islamic ritual beginning around the early twentieth century appears to corroborate these *ahongs*’ linking of the centrality of the shari‘a and internal discord.

It was no coincidence that this period witnessed the proliferation of debates over ritual that are today identified as the genesis of the New/Old Sect schism. But the identification of the shari‘a-minded ethic and shifting context of Islamic learning clarifies the nature of this development. These debates, widely understood as a reflection of adherence to different texts, were in fact a reflection of a shared and distinctive conception of the shari‘a. The key transformation within Chinese Islam in this period was not the branching of a new tradition out of an old one but the development of the shari‘a-minded ethic and new meaning given to debating and popularizing knowledge of the shari‘a. This case of legalistic rationalization of religion was indeed associated with greater argument, as evidenced by the scripture debates discussed above, but it also reflected a higher-order unity under the common values of the shari‘a-minded ethic and, as we will see later, lent religious legitimacy to political activism and participation in public life.

To return to the central process of Part One of this dissertation: the rise of this ethic marked one path toward fulfilling a condition for the popularization of shari‘a knowledge, namely, the motivation to do so on the part of the traditional carriers of that knowledge, the

*ahongs*. This was a necessary but not sufficient condition, because the actual popularization of that knowledge required more than committed *ahongs*. We have seen how for much of the late imperial period, the marginalization of Islamic learning was integral to the structure of local Hui life. Popularization of Islamic learning therefore required a corresponding shift in the values and motives of local Hui elites. This shift and its link to China's changing political culture in the early twentieth century are the subject of the next chapter.

## Chapter 2:

### The Islamic Culture Movement

Was it Muhammad or Mao whom a young Tie Zifang<sup>133</sup> sought to emulate when he stressed to his fellow propagandists the need “for rhetoric that makes listeners understand one’s meaning, that proceeds from simple to deep, that reaches truth, and that achieves practical results?” Perhaps both. In a May 1931 essay “A Few Words for My Brothers in Religion,” Tie invoked the prophet as a champion of steadfast and self-sacrificing propagation of religion, which he deemed critical to the struggle for his community’s welfare and the paramount duty of all learned believers.<sup>134</sup> And while an unbelieving Communist or Nationalist cadre might have dismissed Tie’s goals as misguided, he would have concurred wholeheartedly on the indispensability of effective propaganda to any political project. Over the course of the 1920s, as John Fitzgerald has shown, both the GMD and the CCP increasingly engaged in a Leninist style of “pedagogical politics,” casting themselves as the awakened vanguard of a yet-to-be-awakened people whose national consciousness depended on disciplined activism and mass mobilization.<sup>135</sup> Tie Zifang came of age amid this Leninist turn in Chinese political culture, and his early career, like those of his contemporaries, bears its unmistakable imprint.

Tie’s generation of lay leaders throughout Henan shared a set of formative experiences that instilled in them a sense of intertwined fate and common material interest. The 1910s and 1920s witnessed both the intensification of economic connections between scattered Hui

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<sup>133</sup> For Tie Zifang’s (1909-1982) biography, see Hai Junliang 海俊亮, *Minguo baokan henan huizu shiliao jilu* 民国报刊河南回族史料辑录 (Compilation of Historical Materials from Republican Newspapers on the Hui Nationality in Henan), 1:96; Zhongguo Renmin Zhengzhi Xieshang Huiyi Luohe Shi Yuanhui Qu Weiyuanhui Wenshi Ziliao Yanjiuhui 中国人民政治协商会议漯河市源汇区委员会文史资料研究会, “Tie Zifang” 铁子房.

<sup>134</sup> Tie Zifang 铁子房, “Shuo gei jiaobao ji ju hua” 说给教胞几句话 (A Few Words for My Brothers in Religion).

<sup>135</sup> Fitzgerald, *Awakening China*, 326–27.

communities and growing political fragmentation as Henan, like much of China, was consumed by violence at the hands of warlord armies and local militias and bandits. These conditions accentuated the importance of elite networks and intercommunal relationships, both for economic opportunity and for the provision of services like education and security where the fracturing state failed. Hui leaders invested in mosques, schools, and voluntary associations to institutionalize these ties and meet these needs. When the Nationalist regime finally consolidated authority in Nanjing in the late 1920s, it attempted to regulate those institutions as part of a broader assertion of social and ideological control, while it vied with the Chinese Communist Party to mobilize popular support through the language and institutions of “nation,” “culture,” “propaganda,” and “movement.”

But the bonds of survival and profit that intertwined Hui communities were not so easily undone. Hui leaders took to heart the lessons of Leninism and began to chart their pursuit of common interest by the constellation of concepts that defined the new political order. Over the early and mid-1930s, with the energetic mobilizing and coordinating by activists like Tie, the elite of Henan’s scattered Hui communities invested in the propagation of what they called “Islamic culture” (*huijiao wenhua*). Unlike in the first quarter of the twentieth century, a growing number of provincial Hui elites now aimed at popular mobilization and political consciousness-raising. This Islamic Culture Movement (*huijiao wenhua yundong*) adopted the language of culture and the institutions of propaganda to legitimate and popularize Hui identity. Local Hui elites—themselves a diverse coalition of merchants, professionals, minor officials, and military officers—invested in religious instruction, lecture halls, periodicals, propaganda teams, and cultural associations to popularize basic Arabic vocabulary, Islamic creed, and shari‘a knowledge as the core of a common and distinctive culture.

This chapter traces and explains this key shift in Hui elite activism to Islamic propaganda during the Nanjing decade (1927-1937). I first outline the expansion of Hui elite networks in Henan in the first quarter of the twentieth century. Seizing commercial opportunities and meeting the needs left unmet by the weakening state, these elites formed voluntary associations to institutionalize their relationships and provide for their communities. These Hui elites drew on their shared Islamic identity to cultivate relationships and status, but they were not concerned with propagating Islam. I then shift focus from Henan to larger shifts in political culture and ideology around the Nationalist revolution and consolidation of Guomindang power in the late 1920s through the mid-1930s. It was then that Hui intellectuals in Beijing, Nanjing, and other eastern cities organized the Islamic Culture Movement to demonstrate the compatibility of Islam with Guomindang visions of Chinese modernity while also pushing for recognition of Hui across China as a distinct constituency entitled to designated representation in the National Assembly. Finally, I return to Henan to show that the Islamic Culture Movement was not limited to eastern China and that provincial Hui elites too began to invest in institutions of Islamic cultural propagation. I further show that what they popularized as “Islamic culture” resembled the shari‘a knowledge popularized by the shari‘a-minded *ahongs* introduced in the previous chapter. A tense congruity between the activist lay elite and shari‘a-minded *ahongs* facilitated the dissemination of this knowledge and the popularization of a Hui identity based on it.

## **2.1 Hui Elite Networks in Early Twentieth-Century Henan**

Born in Queshan County in 1909, Tie Zifang came of age during a period of rapid economic change and intense migration among the Hui of Henan. The newly constructed Jing-Han Railroad running from Beijing to Hankou stopped at several stations in Queshan, which

swelled with migrants beginning around the turn of the nineteenth century. Yicheng, once a minor enclave within the county, burgeoned into the bustling railroad hub of Zhumadian, which today is the namesake and seat of government of a large administrative region. Hui from nearby counties as well as Yancheng, Zhoukou, Kaifeng and Meng to the north and Anhui Province to the east flowed into Queshan seeking economic opportunity.<sup>136</sup> Other towns and cities along the railroads in Henan welcomed a similar influx of migrants and prospered even as the province fell victim to warlord conflict, banditry, and natural disaster. By the mid-1920s, Hui merchants engaged in the hide trade and other industries could be counted among the elite of every major city in the province. As the central state's capacity to provide basic social services and security eroded, these pockets of provincial Hui influence formed networks to support their communities.

#### *The Hide Trade and the Expansion of the Provincial Hui Elite*

While the Qing dynasty faltered and collapsed, China's hide trade boomed. The foreign concessions and "unequal treaties" that scarred the empire also spurred rapid growth in the production of export goods, including pelts, furs, and other hides. Situated at the confluence of the Han and Yangze Rivers, Hankou led the hide export business, and Henan, located north of the city, supplied it. Between the early 1870s and the late 1910s, cowhide exports and prices rose steadily (see Figure 2.1). According to Liu Wanqing, a magnate in the Hankou hide trade, Anhui and Henan dominated cowhide production, and data from the late 1920s indicate that Henan far exceeded other provinces as a source.<sup>137</sup> The climate and topography of the Central Plains region were well-suited for cattle raising.<sup>138</sup> Merchants also purchased raw cow and sheep hides from

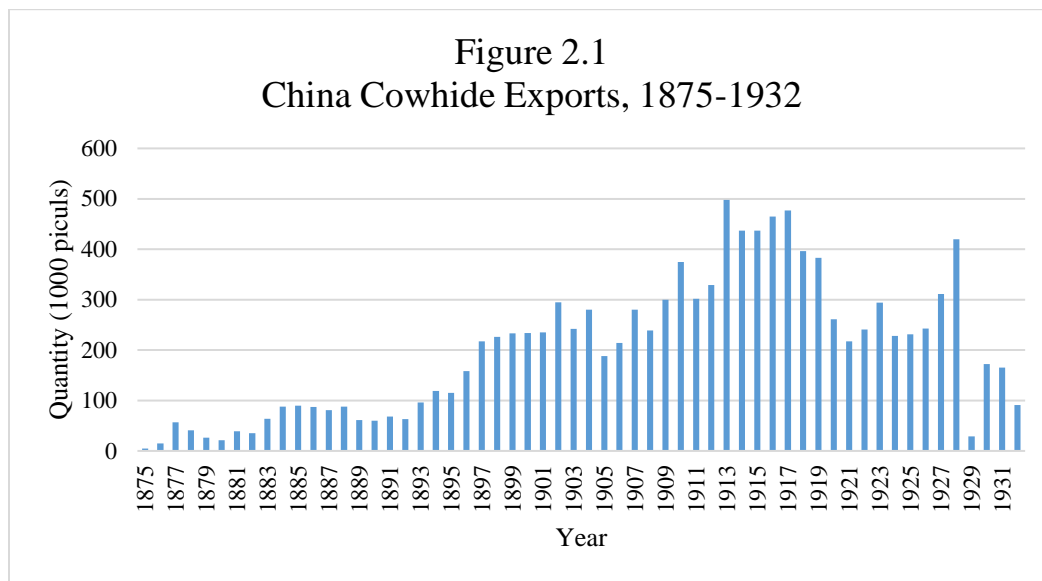
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<sup>136</sup> Yang Shaohua 杨少华, "Yisilanjiao zai queshan" 伊斯兰教在确山 (Islam in Queshan).

<sup>137</sup> One 1928 survey of the Hankou cowhide export market gives the following breakdown of sourcing from different provinces (in piculs): 86,000 from Henan; 20,000 from Sichuan; 17,000 from Anhui; 16,000 from Hunan; 14,000 from Hubei; 9,000 from Jiangxi; 7,000 from Shaanxi. "Hankou zhi niupi shichang" 汉口之牛皮市场 (The Hankou Cowhide Market).

<sup>138</sup> Liu Wanqing 刘万青, "Zhongguo piye yanjiu" 中国皮业研究 (A Study of China's Hide Industry).

the northwest, processed them in Henan, and then sent them south to Hankou or east to Shanghai or Tianjin for export.



*Source: Hsiao, China's Foreign Trade Statistics, 1864-1949, 77-79.*

This long-distanced trade accelerated with the construction of the Jing-Han Railroad in 1906 and the Long-Hai Railroad (extending piecemeal east and west, first from Kaifeng to Luoyang in 1910 and reaching Haizhou by the coast and Tianshui in the northwestern province of Gansu by 1945) and enhanced Henan's position as an economic thoroughfare. Located at the juncture of these two railroads, the small market town of Zheng (Zhengzhou) exploded into a major transport hub and industrial center (it would replace neighboring Kaifeng as the provincial capital in 1954). As with other goods, the outbreak of World War One left a gap in the global hide market for Chinese exports to fill.<sup>139</sup> Absolute demand climbed too with the growing need for military supplies. The hides of cattle skinned in Gansu or Qinghai would be tanned and

<sup>139</sup> Bergère, *The Golden Age of the Chinese Bourgeoisie, 1911-1937*, 64–83.



transported through Henan before being shipped from Hankou or Shanghai to factories in New York.<sup>140</sup>

Within China, this booming trade drove waves of migration toward the treaty ports and transport hubs nurtured generations of entrepreneurs. At its helm were the Hui merchants who hauled hides of every kind but swine along the rivers and railways of the Central Plains. There were two main patterns of movement. Communities engaged in hide processing would tan and treat the raw materials in the warmth of the spring and early summer and go on the road to sell their products and purchase more raw hides before winter.<sup>141</sup> Some communities would also establish permanent enclaves in commercial hubs. These migrants typically established new mosques that would both serve as a center of communal life in their new home while also institutionalizing ties with their hometown.

Hui communities engaged in urban commerce and tied to a common hometown used mosques much like the larger population used the native place associations (*tongxianghui*) that proliferated in cities throughout imperial China.<sup>142</sup> Construction and maintenance of these mosques were often supported by the community of origin. A new mosque also often hired *ahongs* from and occasionally even took the name of the hometown. For example, in the eighteenth century in the river hub of Zhoujiakou (Zhoukou) merchants from Huaiqing (today's Qinyang in northwest Henan) established the Huaiqing Mosque, and merchants from Xingyang established the Xingyang Mosque.<sup>143</sup> Likewise, the Dongxiang Mosque in Luoyang and the Jiamiao Street Mosque in Kaifeng were both established in the mid-nineteenth century by

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<sup>140</sup> "All China's Wool Is Imported by U.S."

<sup>141</sup> Mai Shunxiang 买顺祥, *Sangpo zhi* 桑坡志 (Sangpo Gazetteer), 33–35.

<sup>142</sup> Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation*.

<sup>143</sup> Yang Shaohua, "Zhoujiakou yisilanjiao shihua," 1132–34.

migrants from the village of Sangpo, a center of Henan's wool and fur production.<sup>144</sup> In the early twentieth century, this pattern extended out of Henan to other hubs and followed the railroads that concentrated the province's economic activity around the T-shaped lines and led to the degeneration of the older river-based hubs in the far east and southwest.<sup>145</sup> Zhoukou and Kaifeng, formerly destinations of merchant migrants, became sources of outmigration to new railroad hubs in Zhengzhou, Luohe, Zhumadian, and Shaan County.

By the mid-1920s, wealthy and influential Hui merchants could be found in important trading hubs throughout Henan and beyond. The hide trade was a pillar of their rising status. Several Hui families belonging to the Ding lineage in Sangpo ran two large hide processing operations (each employing as many as 200 laborers at peak) with stores and trading firms in Luoyang and to the west in Pingliang as well as in Shanghai and Hankou.<sup>146</sup> In Kaifeng, the leathermaking (as well as the butchery) guild was based in the Great East Mosque complex.<sup>147</sup> Southward down the Jing-Han Railroad to Xuchang, the Hui merchant Zhang Ganqing (c. 1883-?) and owner of the Yu Sheng Hide Company headed the county chamber of commerce.<sup>148</sup> At the line's southern terminus in Hankou (in Hubei Province), Ma Hansan, a Hui from Nanyang (in

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<sup>144</sup> Mai Shunxiang, *Sangpo zhi*, 320, 328; Liu Baoqi and Jin Yaozeng, *Luoyang qingzhensi*, 133–39; Wang Huimin, “Mantan jiamiaojie qingzhensi.”

<sup>145</sup> Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 14–17; Wou, “Development, Underdevelopment and Degeneration: The Introduction of Rail Transport into Honan.”

<sup>146</sup> Mai Shunxiang, *Sangpo zhi*, 33–37.

<sup>147</sup> Li Yuchun 李玉春, “Tongye gonghui” 同业公会 (Trade Associations), 54.

<sup>148</sup> Zhang apparently held the position for most of the Republican period or on multiple occasions during that period. He was chairman of the Xuchang County Chamber of Commerce around 1911–1912. In 1916 he was listed as one of two “special managers” (*tebie huidong*) of the chamber. In 1934, Zhang was a member of the county Agricultural Cooperative Promotion Committee. In 1947, Tie Zifang reported that Zhang was chairman of the county chamber of commerce. “Xuchang xian shanghui zhiyuan biao” 许昌县商会职员表 (Xuchang County Chamber of Commerce Staff Chart); Yao Defu 姚德甫, “Xuchang chengnei huimin qingzhensi” 许昌城内回民清真寺 (The Xuchang Inner-Wall Hui Mosque); Ai Rongquan 艾荣泉, “Wo de muxiao ‘xuchang huixiao’” 我的母校“许昌回小” (My Alma Mater “Xuchang Hui Elementary”); Tie Zifang 铁子房, “Xuchang texie” 许昌特写 (Xuchang Close-Up); Lü Yinian 吕宜年, “Xian ji hezuo jigou” 县级合作机构 (County-Level Cooperative Agency).

southwestern Henan), partnered with Ding Rongchang to sell Sangpo furs in 1917<sup>149</sup> and by the 1930s operated the two largest fur companies in the city.<sup>150</sup> At the same time, the Kaifeng native and retired military officer Tie Zilu was a major player in Wuhan's cowhide trade and in the early 1920s served as Henan's representative to the All-China Chamber of Commerce Federation.<sup>151</sup> And to the east in Shanghai, Ma Jinqing of Xinyang (in southeastern Henan) sat atop a trading empire that sold hides on the international market and along the major railroads near the coast, across the central plains, and as far southwest as Kunming.<sup>152</sup> During this period, Hui merchants outside the hide trade also rose to prominence in Henan, in particular from the provincial capital of Kaifeng: Wei Ziqing, owner of the province's largest electrical lighting company (based in Kaifeng with branches in Zhengzhou, Luoyang, and Xinyang) and several other enterprises in the city<sup>153</sup>; Du Xiusheng, a business partner of Wei's and a leader in the local foodstuff industry<sup>154</sup>; and Ma Yunwu, also in the foodstuff industry with close ties to the Hui merchant community in Shanghai.<sup>155</sup> In the late 1910s and 1920s, all three of these men held positions of leadership in the Henan provincial chamber of commerce.

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<sup>149</sup> Mai Shunxiang, *Sangpo zhi*, 34; Zhengxie nanyang xian wenshi ziliao yanjiu weiyuanhui 李西鹤, "Ma hansan chuanlue" 马汉三传略 (Biographical Sketch of Ma Hansan); Wuhan Pige Gongye Zhi Bianxiezhu 武汉皮革工业志编写组, "Jianguo qian pihuoye" 建国前皮货业 (The Fur Trade Before the Founding of the Country).

<sup>150</sup> These were the Heng Chang Company and the Hong Chang Company. According to one 1936 survey, each had a capital base of 4,000 *yuan* (the highest all companies listed), and hired 12 (the most of any company listed) and 11 employees, respectively. Hankou shi shanghui shangye yuekanshe diaochabu 汉口市商会商业月刊社调查部, "Gong shang diaocha: pihuoye" 工商调查: 皮货业 (Industry and Commerce Survey: The Fur Trade).

<sup>151</sup> Zhao Shunqin 赵舜琴, "Wuhan yantu dawang zhao dianzhi" 武汉烟土大王赵典之 (Wuhan Raw Opium Magnate Zhao Dianzhi), 621; "Hankou shanglianhui bimu qingxing" 汉口商聯會閉幕情形 (Hankou Merchant Federation Meeting Concludes).

<sup>152</sup> Ma Jinqing was elected as a manager for the "Nanjing clique" in the national Hide Guild in 1921 together with Jin Ziyun and Ma Yitang, two other prominent Hui merchants in the capital. "皮業公會選舉職員之結果." For Ma's biography and commercial activities, see 郭成美, "民国回商马晋卿生平史略"; 袁纆卫, "苏南回族商帮," 57–58.

<sup>153</sup> Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 105–6; Chen Tingliang 陈廷良, "Wei Ziqing" 魏子青; Ma Zhiyuan 马致远, "Henan zaoqi shiyejia wei ziqing" 河南早期实业家魏子青 (The Early Henan Industrialist Wei Ziqing).

<sup>154</sup> Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 106–7; Wu Kai 吴凯, "Du Xiusheng" 杜秀升; Chen Tingliang 陈廷良, "Du Xiusheng" 杜秀升.

<sup>155</sup> Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 107–8.

### *Hui Elite Activism as a Response to the Weak State*

How did Hui elites in Henan use and preserve their status? Over roughly the first quarter of the twentieth century, Hui schools and voluntary associations mushroomed throughout the province, and the construction of new mosques followed Hui migration. The elites who founded and funded these institutions evidently maintained attachments to their communities and invested in their Hui identity. It is also clear, however, that they did not (yet) engage in the cultural activism and propaganda that Tie Zifang would later advocate. There was little if anything that was overtly Islamic in this early generation of Hui elite activism; Hui, like their neighbors, needed access to education and other services, and Hui elites, like their counterparts, took up the task of providing them.

This pattern of Hui elite activism was a response to the political conditions of the late Qing and early Republican period. The emergence of these provincial pockets of Hui wealth linked by commerce coincided with a fragmentation of political power and decline in state capacity. These trends were rooted in the late imperial state's responses in the nineteenth century to massive population growth, widespread unrest, and foreign aggression. They accelerated rapidly after the 1911 Xinhai Revolution. Moreover, due to its central location and the strategic value of its railroads, Henan witnessed especially catastrophic violence as warlord armies vied for power, abused the common people, and provided a steady stream of guns to arm bandits and militias staking out local fiefdoms.<sup>156</sup> In what was essentially a much larger and bloodier scale of what Prasenjit Duara has called "state involution," the tax burden on the people soared to meet the province's military needs without a corresponding reinvestment in social services, while simultaneously fomenting greater disorder and militarization.<sup>157</sup> Local elites stepped in to

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<sup>156</sup> Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses*; Billingsley, *Bandits in Republican China*.

<sup>157</sup> Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State*, 74–77.

address the impact of the state's shortcomings on their communities, and Hui elites were no exception.

Islam was one among multiple identities to which local Hui elites could appeal as they built relationships. These elites were members of Hui communities but in the course of their education, profession, and socioeconomic ascent established connections with diverse circles. For example, the powerful Hui merchant Wei Ziqing of Kaifeng was one of the headmen of the Great Eastern Mosque, but he also participated in local revolutionary activism against the Qing and supported patriotic boycotts and “consumer nationalism” in the late 1910s and 1920s.<sup>158</sup> The symbolic resources of lineage and native place were also available to Hui to legitimate and extend corporate affiliations.

The flipside of the pragmatic plasticity of these identities was a lack of interest in popularizing any one of them as essential or primary. Philanthropy by Hui elites targeting Hui communities did not necessarily involve anything that was overtly Islamic in content. Education was the main sector in which the state's inability to provide a basic social service pushed communities into greater reliance on local elite philanthropy and organization. Hui merchants, professionals, and educationists took charge of organizing and funding “new-style” elementary schools for their communities. These elementary schools were typically private (*si li*) institutions located in or around a mosque. The curriculum did not necessarily include religious instruction. Location and registration type (private vs. public) were principally matters of financial constraints. As established centers of communal activity, mosques provided a convenient space for education without requiring additional spending on real estate and construction, at least as long as a school remained small. By establishing a modern school, mosque leaders also mitigated

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<sup>158</sup> Chen Tingliang, “Wei Ziqing”; Ma Zhiyuan, “Henan zaoqi shiyejia wei ziqing.”

some of the risk of expropriation by the local government, which increasingly sought to raise revenues and modernize education by “turning temples into schools.”<sup>159</sup> Mosque-based schools were not exclusively Hui in terms of students or faculty and staff. As we will see later in the chapter, it was only in the late 1920s and 1930s that local Hui elites made a concerted effort to use elementary schools as a vehicle for popular Islamic education. In that period, activists like Tie Zifang criticized Hui schools that lacked religious education, attesting to the fact that a school’s attachment to a mosque did not determine its curriculum.

Indeed, in earlier Republican period, there is little indication that local elites were committed in incorporating religious instruction into modern schools. The old division between Arabo-Persian Islamic learning and Chinese Confucian and later modern subjects—both of which might be taught in or around a mosque—was maintained. As described in Chapter One, this institutional separation followed from the distinct social functions of these bodies of knowledge. Chinese instruction, whether Confucian or modern, was the key to upward mobility in the larger Chinese society. By contrast, pursuit of Islamic learning was an intellectually costly and professionally limiting enterprise. An individual congregation relied on a small number of specialists to transmit its distinctive tradition and perform services such as ritual slaughtering of animals, officiating ceremonies, and leading worship that required specialized Islamic knowledge. Local lay elites could enhance their reputation through patronage of Islamic learning, but there was no underlying social need for *popular* religious instruction.

Hui education in Xuchang County exemplifies the separation of Islamic and Chinese instruction. In early 1911, six years after the abolition of the civil service examinations, a group of Hui elites including the aforementioned Zhang Ganqing, who was chairman of the county

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<sup>159</sup> Goossaert, “1898”; Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.

chamber of commerce, and two imperial military officers established Xuchang Islamic Elementary. The school was located on the grounds of the Xuchang Inner-Wall Mosque (i.e. within the walls of the county town). It remained a private school until 1948. For nearly four decades, a mixed Hui and non-Hui faculty and staff served Hui as well as non-Hui students. By 1929, it comprised six classes with a total of over 200 students. The school was funded primarily by donations from members of the local hide trade. The curriculum did not include religious instruction. In fact, according to one alumnus, the school was decidedly not a religious institution. A small number of *hailifan* students training to become *ahongs* studied next door, in the mosque hall, where several of the province's most prominent *ahongs* successively taught in the Republican period.<sup>160</sup>

A similar division between specialized Islamic instruction and popular Chinese education was supported Hui elites in other cities in Henan. In Zhoukou, modern schools were established at four of the eight mosques in the city center between 1909 and 1912. These included the aforementioned Huaqing Mosque, where Zhi Yuan Elementary was established in 1910 by Ding Zhipu (Ding Dianbang), a pioneer in Henan's mechanized oil press industry and a leader in the city's merchant community.<sup>161</sup> Although Zhoukou was a historic center of Islamic learning in Henan, none of these four mosque-based schools included religious instruction in the early twentieth century. To the south in Zhumadian, Hui leadership at the South Mosque established the private Yu Ying Elementary in 1916 near the mosque grounds. The school initially included six classes of 30-40 students each, including Hui as well as non-Hui. Funding relied primarily on

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<sup>160</sup> Ai Rongquan, "Wo de muxiao 'xuchang huixiao'"; Yao Defu, "Xuchang chengnei huimin qingzhensi."

<sup>161</sup> Yang Shaohua, "Zhoujiakou yisilanjiao shihua"; Henan sheng difang shizhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 河南省地方志编纂委员会, "Henan zhoujiakou qi xin jiqi zhayou youxian gongsi jigu zhancheng" 河南周家口启新机器榨油有限公司集股章程 (Equity Offering Charter of the Qi Xin Mechanized Oil Press Limited Company of Zhoujiakou, Henan).

local Hui merchants in the hide trade and transportation guilds. Strong performance earned the school additional funding from the county government, and it was eventually able to add an upper school.<sup>162</sup> Tie Zifang reported on the school in 1931 and praised its accomplishments but lamented that, aside from one teacher who taught there for just two years, the school had not paid much attention to religious education.<sup>163</sup> Hui elites supported these schools as gateways to social and economic advancement, not as mechanisms of Islamic cultural reproduction—a function which in the early Republican period remained the office of the cleric.

The social consequences of elite activism unfolded in two dimensions: *within* communities, elites entrenched their status, and *between* communities, elites linked up for mutual benefit. Expanding one's network beyond one's immediate community, even a relatively large one, multiplied opportunities and potential sources of support. Common philanthropic purpose also strengthened existing commercial and social relationships. In Kaifeng, the board of directors of Yang Zheng Elementary united some of the city's most prominent Hui merchants. It also included Zhang Ganqing from Xuchang, the hide merchant and chairman of his county's chamber of commerce. Du Jinzhang, one of the headmen of Kaifeng's Great East Mosque,<sup>164</sup> served as principal of Zhoukou's Ning Yuan Elementary;<sup>165</sup> Bai Runqing, co-founder of nearby Ding Yuan Elementary,<sup>166</sup> was also the founding principal of Yu Ying Elementary in Zhumadian;<sup>167</sup> and Han Chaofan, teacher at Zhi Yuan Elementary at the Huaiqing Mosque in

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<sup>162</sup> Yang Shaohua 杨少华, "Zhumadian sili yuying xuexiao chuangjian shimo" 驻马店私立育英学校创建始末 (The Founding of the Zhumadian Private Yuying School from Beginning to End).

<sup>163</sup> Tie Zifang 铁子房, "Zhumadian huimin gaikuang" 驻马店回民概况 (General Circumstances of Hui in Zhumadian).

<sup>164</sup> Du Jinzhang is listed as one of the headmen (*sheshou*) of the Great East Mosque in 1935 in "Kaifeng dongsi chuangshe xuanchuansuo" 开封东寺创设宣传所 (Kaifeng East Mosque Establishes Propaganda Venue).

<sup>165</sup> Yang Shaohua, "Zhoujiakou yisilanjiao shihua," 1136.

<sup>166</sup> Yang Shaohua, "Zhumadian sili yuying xuexiao chuangjian shimo."

<sup>167</sup> Bai Zixiang 白子祥, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange" 开封养正小学校的沿革 (Evolution of the Yangzheng Elementary School of Kaifeng); Bai Zixiang 白子祥, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu yi)" 开封养正小学校的沿革 (续一) (Evolution of the Yangzheng Elementary School of Kaifeng (Continued)); Bai



Zhoukou, also served as principal at Yang Zheng Elementary in around 1928.<sup>168</sup> Hui elites not only invested in their home communities but moved around and served each other's.

Political fragmentation and disorder in the early twentieth century increased the benefits of extended personal networks. Access to outside resources—money as well as clout—was crucial for compensating for the shortcomings of local government. It was in this context that Hui elites in Henan first affiliated with national-level Islamic associations based outside of the province. The first of these was the China Islamic Progress Association (CIPA), established in Beijing in 1912 with the purpose of establishing branches, promoting Hui education and welfare, and reforming Islamic practice throughout China. Its founder, Wang Haoran (1848-1919),<sup>169</sup> was a progressive *ahong* and would have earned Tie Zifang's praise had the latter been old enough to know who he was. In fact, Wang served as cleric at Kaifeng's Great East Mosque around 1912 and even established several preaching halls where his students could propagandize. These early efforts were short-lived, and Hui intellectuals in the east would later lament that the CIPA achieved little outside of Beijing and two provinces, Yunnan and Sichuan.<sup>170</sup>

This assessment by Beijing, however, tells us little about how things looked from Henan. A collection of correspondences between CIPA headquarters and branch associations in 1912-1914 reveals that there were over 40 branch associations in Henan by the end of that period.<sup>171</sup>

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Zixiang 白子祥, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu san)" 开封养正小学校的沿革 (续三) (Evolution of the Yangzheng Elementary School of Kaifeng (Continued Pt. 3)); Bai Zixiang 白子祥, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu er)" 开封养正小学校的沿革 (续二) (Evolution of the Yangzheng Elementary School of Kaifeng (Continued Pt. 2)).

<sup>168</sup> Yang Shaohua, "Zhoujiakou yisilanjiao shihua," 1133; Bai Zixiang, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu yi)."

<sup>169</sup> Yi Boqing 尹伯清, "Wang haoran ahong chuanlue" 王浩然阿訇传略 (Biographical Sketch of Ahong Wang Haoran); Chen, "Islamic Modernism in China," 55–74.

<sup>170</sup> Mu Yigang 穆以刚, "Wu nian yi lai zhi zhongguo huimin zuzhi" 五年以来之中国回民组织 (Chinese Muslim Organizations Over the Past Five Years), 28.

<sup>171</sup> Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui 中国回教俱进会, *Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui benbu tonggao* 中国回教俱进会本部通告 (General Bulletin of the Headquarters of the China Islamic Progress Association).

Fewer than 20 of those actually corresponded with the central office (based on the 1914 compilation), so many of these branches may have only existed on paper. But the actual correspondences are revealing. The predominant concern of local branches in Henan was apparently securing legitimacy: branches requested the official seal of the organization and asked the central association to write to local government attesting to their affiliation. The central association included powerful Hui officials in the capital,<sup>172</sup> and elites in Henan, where local government was relatively weak and unreliable, naturally saw affiliation as path to more resources and support. In some cases, superior intervention was required simply to appropriate and use local resources. For example, the Gushi County branch of the CIPA attempted to fund local Hui education by organizing a surtax on cattle slaughtering (a Hui-dominated trade) and requested that the central office send the association's official seal and also write to the local government to help arrange the measure.<sup>173</sup> Affiliation with national-level associations was thus a strategy for local elites to advance local projects.

Repeated looting and destruction of mosques also motivated local Hui elites to affiliate “up” and seek support from administratively superior organizations. In Gushi County, soldiers under the magistrate's control demolished the West Mosque in 1922.<sup>174</sup> According to subsequent reports and petitions concerning the matter, a local Han had alleged that the mosque was a haven for bandits and asked the magistrate to order its demolition. Representatives from the local CIPA branch brought a suit against the order to the provincial governor, but the governor believed that

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<sup>172</sup> Zhang Juling 张巨龄, “Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui chuchuang jiping (shang)” 中国回教俱进会初创记评 (上) (Review of the Founding of the China Islamic Progress Association (Part One)); Zhang Juling 张巨龄, “Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui chuchuang jiping (zhong)” 中国回教俱进会初创记评 (中) (Review of the Founding of the China Islamic Progress Association (Part Two)); Zhang Juling 张巨龄, “Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui chuchuang jiping (xia)” 中国回教俱进会初创记评 (下) (Review of the Founding of the China Islamic Progress Association (Part Three)).

<sup>173</sup> Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui, *Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui benbu tonggao*, 49–50.

<sup>174</sup> Yang Chengzhi 杨诚之, “Tan tan gushi de jiaomen” 谈谈固始的教门 (Talking about Religion in Gushi).

local religious institutions were favored venues for subversive organizing and ultimately ordered the demolition. After the area had been pacified, the local CIPA representatives asked that the government rebuild the mosque, but the magistrate refused, arguing that it had been built on government land and thus that there was no need for compensation. The Hui produced the original contract for the land and repeatedly petitioned the magistrate and then the provincial governor, but to no avail. At this point, in late 1923, they wrote to the newly established Islamic League in Tianjin, who in turn petitioned several officials in Henan. More Hui organizations in Shanghai joined the chorus. The campaign managed to get the provincial governor to order the county magistrate to investigate the matter and consider whether the government should restore the mosque.<sup>175</sup> The mosque was never restored, though this was not necessarily due to continued official opposition. In 1925-1926, Gushi was again consumed by banditry in the fallout of the Second Zhili-Fengtian War, and no fewer than fourteen mosques within the county were set ablaze.<sup>176</sup> The West Mosque congregation would eventually recover and took to heart the difficult lesson of this ordeal: the local government was unreliable, community survival precarious, and whatever chance there was of overcoming these challenges lay in maintaining ties with other Huis.

These ties were not always available to all Hui communities, however. Violence in Gushi was catastrophic but sporadic. In other parts of the province, chronic insecurity engendered other

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<sup>175</sup> “Tianjin huimin lizheng lijiao zhi fenkai wei henan qingzhensi bei chai shi” 天津回民力爭禮教之憤慨 為河南清真寺被拆事 (Resentment of Tianjin Hui Vying for [Their Religion]: A Mosque Demolished in Henan); “Huilianhui jie yu shengzhang dian wei gushi xian chaihui dasi shi” 回聯會接豫省長電 為固始縣拆毀大寺事 (Islamic Federation Receives Telegram from Henan Governor: Demolition of the Great Mosque of Gushi County); “Huijiao ge gongtuan zhi huyu” 回教各公團之呼吁 (An Appeal by Various Islamic Public Associations); “Huijiao lianhehui jin xu er ze” 回教联合会近訊二則 (Two Recent Notices on the Islamic League); Henan shengzhang gongshu 河南省長公署, “Henan gushi xian qingzhensi zhao jiu peichang” 河南固始縣清真寺照旧赔偿 (Mosque in Gushi County, Henan to Be Compensated as [Ordered] Before).

<sup>176</sup> “Henan gushi bei fei fen qingzhensi sishi chu” 河南固始被匪焚清真寺十四处 (14 Mosques Burned by Bandits in Gushi, Henan).

forms of organization. Hui were not the only victims of this violence. Throughout rural north and central China during this period, a lack of security increased rural communities' reliance on elites who could organize and acquire arms for local defense. These "protective strategies" accelerated the spiral of local militarization. Others engaged in "predatory strategies" and survived by raiding.<sup>177</sup> To the extent that rural Hui congregations were isolated from non-Hui neighbors, they were at greater risk of attack than others. But by and large, rural Hui survival strategies were locally determined and followed the pattern of the non-Hui around them. Where lineage organizations or religious groups such as the Red Spears provided the basis for local defense, local Hui played the same tune in a different key, organizing around the mosque rather than the temple or ancestral hall.<sup>178</sup> In Wanxi ("West of Nanyang") in southwestern Henan, elite activism revolved around local militia leaders.<sup>179</sup> In Neixiang, Yang Bin, a Hui and close associate of the militia leader Bie Tingfang, was chairman of the county of commerce, headman of the largest mosque (to which Bie donated), and later chairman of the local Islamic association and board of directors of the local Hui school, both of which were staffed by his family.<sup>180</sup>

Geopolitics also contributed to the development of elite Hui networks in Henan. The Beiyang regime's tenuous control over the far northwestern province of Xinjiang presented an opportunity for Hui militarists to assert themselves as privileged intermediaries between the central government and the so-called "Muslim region" (*hui bu*). In the late 1910s and early 1920s, Li Qian (1881-?), a Hui officer from Henan's Fangcheng County, sought recognition

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<sup>177</sup> Perry, *Rebels and Revolutionaries in North China, 1845-1945*.

<sup>178</sup> "Yubei hongqianghui cansha huimin" 豫北红枪会惨杀回民 (Red Spears Society in Northern Henan Slaughters Hui); "Henan xin Zhuang huijiao minzhong zhi bianzheng" 河南辛庄回教民众之辨证 (An Investigation of the Islamic Masses of Xinzhuang, Henan).

<sup>179</sup> Zhang, "Elite Activism in the Periphery"; Zhang, *Social Transformation in Modern China*, 67–89 passim.

<sup>180</sup> Yang Wenqin 杨文琴 and Yang Yunpeng 杨运鹏, "Henan neixiang huizu gaishu" 河南内乡回族概述 (Overview of the Hui Nationality of Neixiang, Henan); Yang Huazhi 杨华志, *Yang shi zongzu zhi* 杨氏宗族志 (Yang Lineage Gazetteer), 17–21; "Henan neixiang xian huimin gongli xuexiao" 河南内乡县回民公立学校.

from Beijing as the “Plenipotentiary Representative of the Muslim Territory.” In 1923-24, he attempted to broaden his base of support by calling for Muslim representation at the National Assembly. Li was a Hui and not from Xinjiang, not an uncommon situation for officials in the province. When he lobbied for Muslim delegates to the National Assembly, he meant delegates from the “Muslim region,” which he claimed to represent. He appealed to religious sympathies among Hui when he made his case, but he was not proposing delegates elected by Huis throughout the country. In any case, he found little support, both in the capital and among the Muslim (Hui and non-Hui) aristocracy in Xinjiang, who were already represented through geographically apportioned seats.<sup>181</sup> For this campaign, Li allied with the warlord Wu Peifu (1874-1939), who at the time controlled Henan and parts of surrounding provinces from his base in Luoyang. Under Wu’s Zhili-Shandong-Henan Inspectorate, Li established the Muslim Region Office, which he staffed with his allies.<sup>182</sup>

In 1925 the office published a compilation of petitions and letters endorsing Li’s leadership.<sup>183</sup> Many letters were from local Hui elites throughout Henan, who affirmed the need for Muslim representation in the National Assembly and called for political equality among the diverse peoples of the Republic. But it is not clear whether Li’s Hui supporters in Henan counted themselves among the underrepresented peoples. At the time, prominent Hui intellectuals in Beijing and Tianjin insisted that the Chinese-speaking Muslims scattered throughout China were racially Han, as opposed to the “Turbaned Huis” (*chan hui*), the Turkic Muslims who lived in

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<sup>181</sup> Brophy, “Five Races, One Parliament? Xinhai in Xinjiang and the Problem of Minority Representation in the Chinese Republic.”

<sup>182</sup> A list of the staff of the office may be found in the final pages of *Hui Bu Gong Du*. There is extensive overlap between the staff and the authors of the petitions included in the main text. Li Qian 李谦, “Huibu gong du” 回部公牍 (Official Documents on the Muslim Region), 399–405, *passim*.

<sup>183</sup> Li Qian, “Huibu gong du.”

Xinjiang.<sup>184</sup> Protestations by some of Li's supporters that there was "not a single difference" between them and their coreligionists in Xinjiang could not have been taken seriously and were probably meant simply as repudiations of those eastern intellectuals' insistence on racial difference. Even if these petitions reflected some Huis' sense of Muslim political solidarity across China—and a belief that more Muslim delegates from the "Muslim region" would mean better representation of Hui in Henan—we should not overstate their commitment to Li's cause. They did not attempt to mobilize their communities in support of Li. Moreover, in the context of the elite network-building we have already seen, their support appears transactional. By supporting Li, these local Hui elites would have an ally in the administration of the warlord in control of their province. In fact, many of them were also listed as staff of the Muslim Region Office and, mirroring Li at the more local level, signed their petitions as the "Hui representatives" of this or that county. Among the Hui of Henan, Li Qian's campaign was significant insofar as it provided yet another forum for cultivating relationships with provincial powerholders and one another.

To sum up what we have seen so far: the first quarter of the twentieth century witnessed the development of pockets of Hui commercial power throughout Henan. Their emergence and spread coincided with the debilitation and fragmentation of the late Qing and early Republican state. The warlord crisis and associated strains on local finance and order were especially severe in Henan. The state's incapacity to provide adequate education and security increased communities' dependence on local elites, leaving room for those elites to entrench their status and extend their control over communal affairs. Hui and non-Hui elites alike had to navigate these conditions, and their strategies for doing so were similar: they cultivated and appealed to

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<sup>184</sup> Cieciura, "Ethnicity or Religion? Republican-Era Chinese Debates on Islam and Muslims."

various identities to build networks and secure supralocal resources for local purposes. Compared to other elites, Hui simply had one additional and distinctive set of symbols—Islam—that they often wove into other identities such as lineage and native place. Hui elites in Henan donated to mosques, established schools, and petitioned officials on behalf of their communities. What they notably did not do was invest in the popularization of religious knowledge and perpetuation of a *popular* Hui political identity.

Yet within a few years, Tie Zifang would zealously pursue these very goals. Moreover, he would do so in partnership with fellow members of the provincial Hui elite. What would drive these scattered merchants, professionals, and military officers to devote time and resources to the energetic dissemination of religious knowledge—in a word, Islamic propaganda? As we will see later in the chapter, this shift in Hui elite strategy was tied to the institutionalization throughout the province and the country of a new political culture: the pedagogical politics of Leninism.

## **2.2 The Islamic Culture Movement**

The consolidation of the Nationalist Revolution in the late 1920s marked a watershed in Chinese political culture. How did it affect Hui activism and political identity? On one hand, besides eradicating the Communists, Chiang Kai-shek's regime was intent on bringing all significant networks and organizations within Chinese society under its control. Hui organizations had to demonstrate their loyalty to the regime and the compatibility of their programs with GMD ideology and policies. On the other hand, the permeating discourse of culture and nationhood provided Hui intellectuals with new terms for political claim-making as they argued that Huis throughout the country were entitled to designated representation in the National Assembly. This section introduces the Islamic Culture Movement, a network of

institutions and people dedicated to propagating “Islamic culture” (*huijiao wenhua*) as the basis of a Hui political identity. It situates the movement in the politics and ideological debates of the late 1920s-30s. In the next section I examine the development of the movement in Henan.

### *Islam and the Nationalist Revolution*

By early 1928, Chiang’s National Revolutionary Army had completed the Northern Expedition and brought China under the at least nominal control of a single government for the first time in more than a decade. But the Guomindang (GMD) remained factionalized, and the government divided, even as the threat from the Empire of Japan loomed increasingly large. In what Brian Tsui has called a “conservative revolution,” Chiang’s regime in Nanjing devoted itself over the following decade to consolidating control and neutralizing rivals at home through a Leninist program of party discipline, state-building, and violence.<sup>185</sup> In Henan, strategically located but outside the government’s main tax base and center of power in Jiangnan, civil war, banditry, and Communist activism persisted, exemplifying the limits of central control even at the height GMD power. Nevertheless, for most of the “Nanjing Decade” (1928-1937), the Nationalist Party-State was the dominant power in Henan and managed to shape, if not always control, the elite networks that had developed during the preceding period of disorder.

The Nanjing government exerted control through ideology as well as institutions at both the national and the local level. Its rhetoric of national unity grew more homogenizing and Han-centric over the course of the Nanjing decade, the Xinhai-era rhetoric of harmony of the “five races” gave way to an adamantly monist conception of the unitary “Chinese Nation” (*zhonghua minzu*) descended from the Yellow Emperor.<sup>186</sup> Multiple times in the 1930s, Hui organizations were forced to change their names from “Hui people” (*huimin*) to “Islam” or “Islamic” (*huijiao*)

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<sup>185</sup> Tsui, *China’s Conservative Revolution*.

<sup>186</sup> Dikötter, *The Discourse of Race in Modern China*.



to conform to official claims about national unity encompassing religious diversity.<sup>187</sup>

Simultaneously, the government perpetuated the discourse of legitimate “religion” and illegitimate “superstition” in order to justify expropriation of temple property, coopt religious leaders for state-led and -sanctioned projects, and signal China’s deliverance from the backward past.<sup>188</sup> Hui associations, like comparable institutions administered as “people’s associations” during this period, organized themselves according to government regulations and incorporated official rhetoric into their charters.<sup>189</sup>

Guomindang ideology thus constrained Hui organizing in the early 1930s. But it could cut both ways. As John Chen and others have shown, Hui intellectuals and officials in Nanjing and other eastern cities maintained that their modernist interpretation of Islam was not only compatible with but integral to Chinese nationalism and state-building. These Hui leaders positioned themselves as dual intermediaries for the Guomindang regime competent to represent the government at home to Muslims in the far northwest and abroad to the Middle East and South and Southeast Asia.<sup>190</sup> Islamic modernism may well have been “coopted”<sup>191</sup> to serve Guomindang ends, but this did not exhaust the political activities of Hui elites.

Even as they adapted to and collaborated with the Nationalist government’s state-building project, Huis also agitated for significant changes to regime policy and recognition as a distinct political constituency. Defining and propagating a national culture (*wenhua*) that distinguished them from Hans and other groups were central to this endeavor.

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<sup>187</sup> Wan Lei 宛磊, “Minguo sanci ‘huimin’ shetuan gaiming ‘huijiao’ kao” 民国三次‘回民’社团名改‘回教’考 (A Study of Three Instances “Huimin” Social Associations Were Renamed “Huijiao”).

<sup>188</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*; Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*; Duara, “Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity.”

<sup>189</sup> For a collection of many of these charters, see Wang Zhengru 王正儒 and Lei Xiaojing 雷晓静, *Huizu lishi baokan wenxuan shehui juan: shetuan* 回族历史报刊文选 社会卷: 社团 (Selections from Historical Newspapers of the Hui Nationality: Society Collection: Social Associations), 1:1–116.

<sup>190</sup> Chen, “Islamic Modernism in China”; Mao, “A Muslim Vision for the Chinese Nation.”

<sup>191</sup> Chen, “Islamic Modernism in China,” 297.

## *A Culture for a Nation*

In both GMD and CCP discourse, “culture” (*wenhua*) was foundational to political order and identity. The politicization of the concept was rooted in earlier discourse of China’s awakening and the reconstruction of Chinese culture, especially in the New Culture Movement of the late 1910s (to which exponents of the Islamic Culture Movement in the 1930s were quite consciously alluding).<sup>192</sup> Moreover, as the “nation” (*minzu*) emerged after and against empire as the legitimate form of political community, the two concepts were fused and understood as mutually constitutive: to have a culture was to be a nation, and to be a nation was to have a culture.<sup>193</sup>

The ideological link between *minzu*/nation and *wenhua*/culture was premised on a social-scientific understanding of culture as an objective aspect of collective life. In this framework, culture referred to the system according to which life was organized within a group or society as well as the products or expressions of that system. It comprised norms and practices, observance of which defined a group. Corresponding to the predominantly secularist and even anti-religious inflection of Chinese nationalism, many religious practices and traditions were seen as relics of a backward past and marginal if not antithetical to modern political identity. Elite notions of legitimate “religion” (*zongjiao*) were based on a vision of modern Protestantism marked by a church-like organization, a canon of scripture, and an emphasis on belief and morality.<sup>194</sup>

Culture, not religion, was the criterion of political identity, and it was therefore as a culture, more than just a religion, that champions of Hui political identity defined Islam. This classification did not imply an unreligious or anti-religious perspective. Hui intellectuals rooted

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<sup>192</sup> Hui, “The Transformation of Culture and Politics.”

<sup>193</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*, 239–56.

<sup>194</sup> Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*; Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.

Islamic culture in Islamic belief and piety. They placed Islam squarely on the “religion” (*zongjiao*) side of the religion/superstition binary, which was integral to the larger matrix of categories through which the Nationalist regime governed. In anathematizing “superstition” (*mixin*), Hui intellectuals stood shoulder to shoulder with representatives of Buddhism, Christianity, and other traditions in laying claim to the rights and protections to which recognized “religions” were entitled.<sup>195</sup>

Yet, unlike their counterparts, Hui intellectuals, at least a powerful and growing segment of them, took several steps more. They maintained that Islam was “not just a religion” but the basis of a political identity. They also argued that this political potential distinguished Islam from other religions.<sup>196</sup> The Hui historian Jin Jitang wrote in 1936, “Only those who believe in Islam can form a nation; other religions by contrast lack this integrative capacity.”<sup>197</sup> What made Islam unique, according to Jin, was that it transcended the narrow confines of *zongjiao*/religion: “...the lessons of Islam do not merely instruct people with murky principles... truly they encompass every system for organizing society.” Observance of the shari‘a made Muslims a nation. Writing of the various Muslim peoples who in previous centuries had migrated to China, Jin explained, “...because they belonged to a single religion, had the same beliefs, and were uniform in their observance of religious tenets,” over time they “became the Hui nation.” “Essentially,” concluded Jin, “the Hui nation is the nation that has formed under the control of Islamic doctrine.”<sup>198</sup> In other words, for Jin, the Hui were a nation because of their common observance of the norms, laws, and rites of Islam. They represented a case of ethnogenesis through shari‘a.

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<sup>195</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*; Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*; Duara, “Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity.”

<sup>196</sup> Glasserman, Aaron, “On the Huihui Question: Islam and Ideology in Twentieth-Century China.”

<sup>197</sup> Jin Jitang 金吉堂, “Huijiao minzu shuo” 回教民族说 (On the Islamic Nation), 2008, 328–29.

<sup>198</sup> Jin Jitang, 327–28.

The arguments for Hui political identity involved a manipulation of the mainstream ideological categories of *zongjiao*/religion, *wenhua*/culture, and *minzu*/nation. As political circumstances changed, so did the terms in which political claims were made. But we should not lose sight of the ultimate aim of these varied, occasionally contradictory arguments: to secure recognition of the Hui as a distinct constituency entitled to various group rights, including representation at the National Assembly.

In May 1936, when the Nationalist government announced elections for the new National Assembly, Huis petitioned for a quota of designated seats. Some, like Jin, used the term *minzu* and argued that the Hui and Uyghurs together were entitled to reserved seats as one of the five *minzus* of China recognized by Sun Yat-sen before the Xinhai Revolution of 1911.<sup>199</sup> This claim contradicted Jin's separate argument that the Uyghurs and Huis were different *minzus*.<sup>200</sup> It also equated *minzu* with *zu*, though the latter did not necessarily connote political independence or difference. Other petitioners avoided the Uyghur question as well as using the term *minzu* for Huis and simply used *huizu*, preserving Sun Yat-sen's original formulation.<sup>201</sup> Still others avoided *zu* altogether and used the term *huimin*, "Hui people,"<sup>202</sup> while nevertheless implying an equivalence with "other *zu*" (*ta zu*, i.e. Mongolians, Tibetans, Manchus, and Hans). Even those who adamantly rejected the terms *zu* and *minzu* did not oppose Hui representation in the National Assembly. Indeed, looking ahead to 1947, one of the elected Hui delegates to the National Assembly maintained that the Hui outside of Xinjiang were not a separate *minzu* from the Hans

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<sup>199</sup> Jin Jitang 金吉堂, "Guanyu guomin daibiao dahui" 关于国民代表大会 (Regarding the National Assembly); Jin Jitang 金吉堂, "Jin jitung cheng guofu wen" 金吉堂呈国府文 (Text of Jin Jitang's Petition to the Government).

<sup>200</sup> Jin Jitang, *Zhongguo huijiao shi yanjiu*, 1971; Cieciura, "Ethnicity or Religion? Republican-Era Chinese Debates on Islam and Muslims."

<sup>201</sup> Shang Kexing 闪克行, "Pingdeng de zuihou huyu" 平等的最后呼吁 (A Final Appeal for Equality).

<sup>202</sup> *Zhonghua huijiao gonghui xianggang fenhui* 中华回教公会香港分会, *Zhonghua qiaogang huimin daibiao dahui* 中华侨港回民代表大会, and *Zhonghua huijiao bo'ai she* 中华回教博爱社, "Xianggang kuaiyou daidian" 香港快邮代电 (Express Telegram from Hong Kong).

but, due to their religiously informed customs and way of life, as well as the need to encourage their political participation, were entitled to designated representation.<sup>203</sup> In sum, we should not let discursive inconsistency obscure what by the mid-1930s was a growing consensus among Hui elites: that they were a distinct constituency and, whether as a *minzu* or otherwise, should be recognized and represented as such.

The pursuit of political recognition was a two-pronged endeavor: it involved simultaneously persuading the government and broader society that the Hui were a culturally (and not just religiously) distinct group and accentuating that difference to conform as closely as possible to the political claim. This is not to say that Hui were somehow the same as the Han until the mid-1930s. Rather, as those reifying demonyms suggest, what was new was the notion that the boundary between them divided two historically evolved and internally homogenous cultures—as well as the technologies and institutions used to do so.

The Islamic Culture Movement comprised the associations, media, and discourse involved in this project of defining and disseminating “Islamic culture” (*huijiao wenhua*) as the basis of a distinct, popular Hui identity. The core of this “culture” consisted of basic Islamic creed and norms and elementary Arabic language—essentially, the knowledge and practice that made a Hui a Hui. The educational and social associations and print media that propagated this knowledge in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai as well as Tianjin and Guangzhou have been thoroughly documented in other studies.<sup>204</sup> These initiatives won praise from non-Huis, including the eminent historian and geographer Gu Jiegang (1893-1980), who helped introduce

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<sup>203</sup> Gong Yuzhong 龚御众, “Xingxianqi zhong huimin yingyou zhi nuli” 行宪期中回民应有之努力 (The Effort Hui Ought to Make in the Era of Implementing Constitutional Government).

<sup>204</sup> Yu Zhengui 余振贵, *Zhongguo lidai zhengquan yu yisilanjiao* 中国历代政权与伊斯兰教 (China’s Historical Dynastic Political Authority and Islam); Ma Jing 马景, *Minguo shiqi yisilanjiao hanwen yizhu yanjiu* 民国时期伊斯兰教汉文译著研究 (A Study of Islamic Chinese-Language Translations and Compositions from the Republican Period).

the movement to broader Chinese intellectual and political circles.<sup>205</sup> Hui intellectuals in these cosmopolitan centers saw themselves as the enlightened vanguard of their largely uneducated, impoverished, and backward comrades in the interior and far west of the country. As late as 1947, Pang Shiqian, the *ahong* introduced the previous chapter, looked condescendingly on Hui culture in his own province of Henan: “The Huihui (Hui) of the Central Plains have their strengths; as stated above, religion is widely in good condition, and they have a deep religious enthusiasm and are always developing outward. But they also have their shortcomings: a low level of culture, a lack of any new collaborative enterprise underway, and an immense conservatism.”<sup>206</sup>

Was the Islamic Culture Movement in fact confined to the cosmopolitan Hui elite in Nanjing, Beijing, and other eastern cities? As we will see in Chapter Four, one of the lessons those leaders took away from the 1936 National Assembly failure was the need to organize Huis on a truly national scale. But this judgment does not imply stagnation in the interior provinces. In fact, the Nanjing decade witnessed the proliferation of Islamic cultural institutions throughout Henan too, as the local Hui elites turned to propaganda and popular mobilization to pursue their interests.

### 2.3 Building Islamic Culture in Henan

We saw before how in the first quarter of the twentieth century, provincial Hui elites built networks and founded voluntary associations to entrench their status and improve their communities. In doing so they followed a general pattern of elite activism that responded to and capitalized on government weakness. They made no concerted effort to popularize Islamic

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<sup>205</sup> Gu Jiegang 顾颉刚, “Huijiao de wenhua yundong” 回教的文化运动 (The Cultural Movement of Islam).

<sup>206</sup> Pang Shiqian, “Zhongyuan huihui.”

knowledge as the basis of a mass political identity. Their subsequent investment in institutions designed to accomplish precisely those goals, to promote “Islamic culture” and disseminate Islamic knowledge, marked a shift in strategy. The key questions are how and why this provincial elite came to support Islamic propaganda of the sort championed by Tie Zifang.

The reasons for this shift are to be found both in the intensifying relationship between Hui elites in Henan and national-level institutions in the east as well as in the changing political culture within the province. We saw earlier how Hui entrepreneurs from Henan settled in Shanghai and maintained ties with merchants there. As a result of their commercial success, Henanese Hui were well represented in several of the leading Hui institutions in the east.<sup>207</sup> To the extent that these high-profile figures retained ties to their home communities, Henan was never insulated from intellectual currents and activism in the east. The proliferation of Hui periodicals in the early 1930s further strengthened these transregional ties.

Important changes were also afoot within Henan. The proliferation of Hui periodicals, mostly published in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai, enabled Hui in Henan to keep up with intellectual trends and political affairs in the east, as well as to contribute surveys and reports about local developments. Like their counterparts in other parts of the country, Hui elites in

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<sup>207</sup> For example, the fur exporter Ma Jinqing was a major donor to the China Islamic Learning Society, established in Shanghai in 1925. Several prominent Henanese *ahongs* (Ma Guangqing [Ma Zuowu], Liu Langxuan, and Shang Xixian) were members of the Tianjin-based China Islamic Study Society, and among the 30 committee members of the Nanjing-based China Huizu Cultural Promotion Association, 6 were from Henan, 4 of whom had also supported Li Qian's campaign as members of his Islamic Region Office (Ding Zhennan, Gao Du, Ma Guangqing, Liu Zhisan, Ding Shangzhi, and Dan Ziwan were from Henan; Ma Guangqing and Liu Zhisan were from Henan but were not members of the office). Yang Rongbin 杨荣斌, *Minguo shiqi shanghai huizu shangren qunti yanjiu* 民国时期上海回族商人群体研究 (A Study of Hui Nationality Merchant Groups in Shanghai in the Republican Period), 154–57; Wang Jingzhai 王静斋, “Faqi zhongguo huijiao yanjiushi qishi” 发起中国回教研究社启事 (Announcement of the Establishment of the China Islamic Culture Study Society); Zhongguo Huizu Wenhua Cujinhui Choubiechu 中国回族文化促进会筹备处, “Zhongguo huizu wenhua cujinhui choubeichu wei qing zuzhi xinbian diaocha weiyuanhui zhixing zhengyuan daidian” 中国回族文化促进会筹备处为请组织新变调查委员会致行政院代电 (Telegram from the China Huizu Cultural Advancement Association Preparatory Office to the Executive Yuan Requesting to Organize a Committee to Investigate the Xin[Jiang] Uprising); Li Qian, “Huibu gong du,” 399–405.

Henan proclaimed the compatibility of Islam and Chinese nationalism. However, underlying these assertions of the coherence of Islamic modernism and Chinese nationalism was a congruity in the institutions through which both ideologies were elaborated.

The greatest impact of Nationalist-era Leninism on Chinese Islam was not the content of the propaganda espoused by politically active Hui but their development of Islamic propaganda in the first place. GMD-supported committees, propaganda squadrons, lecture halls, and youth groups aiming at mass mobilization proliferated throughout Henan during the Nanjing Decade. The largest campaign was the New Life Movement, launched in 1934 by Chiang Kai-shek to counter Communist organizing and modernize the citizenry. Famously ineffectual, the New Life Movement's main achievement was the dissemination of legitimating symbols, the use of which transformed daily life into political performance. The vast pamphlet literature published by the NLM's sprawling web of "Promotion Associations" (*cujinhui*) was saturated with slogans, lyrics, images, and above all, lists of rules linking hygiene, discipline, and labor to Chiang's fascistic blend of Confucian ideology, Christianity, and militarism.<sup>208</sup> By 1936, NLM committees had been formed in all 111 of Henan's counties and oversaw over two hundred service corps units with a total of over 9,000 registered members.<sup>209</sup>

The "pedagogical politics"<sup>210</sup> of Leninist mobilization was on display throughout Henan in the late 1920s and early 1930s. But Chiang's Nationalists were not the only faction endeavoring to rouse popular support through propaganda. If the New Life Movement was the

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<sup>208</sup> Dirlik, "The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement"; Ferlanti, "The New Life Movement in Jiangxi Province, 1934-1938"; Liu, "Redefining the Moral and Legal Roles of the State in Everyday Life"; Oldstone-Moore and Loebbecke, "The New Life Movement in Nationalist China: Confucianism, State Authority and Moral Formation"; Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism*.

<sup>209</sup> Xu Youli 徐有礼, *Dongdang yu Shanbian: Minguo Shiqi Henan Shehui Yanjiu* 动荡与嬗变: 民国时期河南社会研究 (Upheaval and Transformation: Studies on Henan Society in the Republican Period), 179-83; Zuo Yuhe 左玉河, "Xinshenghuo yundong zai henan" 新生活运动在河南 (The New Life Movement in Henan).

<sup>210</sup> Fitzgerald, *Awakening China*, 20.



main event, Feng Yuxiang's reform campaigns were the opening act, and Communist organizing a popular sideshow. In 1927, after regaining control of the province, Feng had launched his own (earlier) "New Life Movement" to reform "backward customs" and "smash superstitions."<sup>211</sup>

Feng was a student of Leninist revolutionary methods and attached great importance to the disciplining of day life for soldiers and civilians alike.<sup>212</sup> Like their neighbors, Hui living under Feng's regime were thus exposed to an intense program of political messaging. In some places Feng's forces not only modeled this approach to "consciousness raising" but delivered the skills required to undertake it; in Nanyang and Xiping counties, for example, Hui veterans of Feng's army and regime went on to found or join local Islamic associations.<sup>213</sup>

Communist movement-building in Henan also provided a model of propaganda and mobilization, albeit from a more marginal and persecuted position, especially in the south of the province prior to the most brutal of the GMD's purges in the mid-1930s. As mentioned earlier, an early, short-lived revolutionary government was established in Tie Zifang's home county of Queshan in the late 1920s, and the Eyuwan Base in the border area of Henan, Anhui, and Hubei coordinated underground activities in Nanyang, Zhumadian, and Xinyang in the early 1930s. In this earlier period of organizing, cadres in Henan built inroads into communities through partnerships with local leaders. In parts of Xiping and Tongbai counties, for example, Hui were

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<sup>211</sup> Sheridan, *Chinese Warlord: The Career of Feng Yü-Hsiang*, 232; Xu Youli, *Dongdang yu Shanbian: Minguo Shiqi Henan Shehui Yanjiu*, 147–79; Feng Yuxiang 冯玉祥, "Banbu jiu yiqi xin sheng mingling" 頒佈九一七新生活命令 (Issuing of the September 17th New Life Order).

<sup>212</sup> Sheridan, *Chinese Warlord: The Career of Feng Yü-Hsiang*, 197–202.

<sup>213</sup> Ding Zhenguo (1885-1940) was an officer under Feng Yuxiang until the latter's defeat in the Central Plains War in November 1930; he later joined the Xiping branch of the China Islamic Association for National Salvation. Shui Zili served in Feng's government around 1927-28; he had previously formed the Nanyang branch of the China Islamic Progress Association and later formed and led both the China Islamic Guild and the China Islamic Association for National Salvation in Nanyang. 买顺祥, 桑坡志, 318; "西平县支会成立"; 水普慈, "南阳回族兴教水氏昆仲," 186; "回教公会南阳县支会成立."

given positions of leadership in revolutionary committees.<sup>214</sup> In addition, as with Feng's Hui officers, there is some evidence of overlap between Communist and Islamic cultural activism.<sup>215</sup>

### *A Survey of the Movement in Henan*

The development of the Islamic Culture Movement in Henan depended on the survival of mosques as spaces of communal life and organizing. The vast majority of voluntary associations that made up the backbone of the Movement were based in or around mosques. We saw earlier that mosques, like other religious institutions, fell victim to looting, arson, and other forms of violence in Henan amid the tumult of the late 1910s and 1920s. The relative stability of the Nanjing decade brought some respite from banditry but did not guarantee the survival of religious property. Under both Feng Yuxiang's and later Nanjing's control, expropriation of temple property by the government increased. Mosques, however, managed to avoid this fate and in fact multiplied over the course of the Republican era. The divergent trajectories of Islamic and other religious institutions, especially Buddhist ones, are reflected in the landscape of the old city of Kaifeng. In 1927, the Xiangguo Temple, a fixture of the city center since the sixth century CE, was divested of its land (handed over to the county's Education Bureau) and converted into a marketplace and amusement park, while statues and paraphernalia not given to the city's

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<sup>214</sup> See for example Lü Baiquan, who served on the Xiping County Revolutionary Committee in 1932; and the brothers Jin Rongzhen and Jin Fuguang, who helped organize CCP branches in Tongbai in the late 1920s. 中共河南省西平县委组织部中共河南省西平县委党史办, 河南省西平县档案局, and 河南省西平县档案局, *中国共产党河南省西平县组织史资料 1927-1987*, 17-18; 《南阳民族宗教志》编辑室, 南阳民族宗教志, 54-55.

<sup>215</sup> In the railroad town of Yancheng, the principal of the Ming Yuan School, located at the County Mosque and founded by an *ahong* in 1934, was Yuan Zhiyuan, former member of the Propaganda and Organization Committees for the local Communist Party, active in several local publications, and a future chairman of the local Islamic association during the war. Zhonggong henan sheng yancheng xian wei zuzhibu 中共河南省郾城县组织部, *Zhongguo gongchandang henan sheng yancheng xian zuzhi shi ziliao* 中国共产党河南省郾城县组织史资料 1925-1987 (Sources on the History of the Organization of the Chinese Communist Party in Yancheng County, Henan Province: 1925-1987), 26; Meng Fankun 孟凡坤, "Zhonggong shoujie yancheng xian wei lingdao xia de gongnong geming douzheng" 中共首届郾城县委领导下的工农革命斗争 (The Revolutionary Struggle of Workers and Farmers Under the Leadership of the First Session of the Yancheng County Committee of the Chinese Communist Party), 10-11; "Henan fenhui baocheng yi chengli ge xian zhihui shi san chu" 河南分会报称已成立各县支会十三处.

museum or carried away by banished monks were burned.<sup>216</sup> By contrast, between 1920 and 1937, five new mosques were built in the city.<sup>217</sup> One visitor remarked in 1935 that while Kaifeng's temples and churches had fallen victim to disaster, violence, and strongman abuse, "the mosques, as if standing alone in another world, are totally unharmed."<sup>218</sup>

There were two main reasons for this divergence. Wealthy and land-rich temples and monasteries presented more than space for modern schools; they were potential sources of revenue for government projects and personal enrichment. By contrast, mosques were relatively small and poor and therefore relatively unappealing targets for confiscation.<sup>219</sup> In addition, mosque ownership was qualitatively different from that of larger Buddhist and Daoist institutions: mosques were owned and managed collectively by community leaders rather than individual clergy. As the Nationalist regime imposed new rules governing registration and control of temple property,<sup>220</sup> Hui leaders appealed for exemptions to these regulations, arguing that mosques were fundamentally different from Buddhist and Daoist institutions.<sup>221</sup> The state

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<sup>216</sup> Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 154.

<sup>217</sup> Hu Yunsheng, "Kaifeng shi yisilanjiao qingzhensi."

<sup>218</sup> Xiao Yu 萧愚, "Kaifeng xiaoji" 开封小记 (Kaifeng Notes), 101.

<sup>219</sup> Prior to Feng's seizure of the property, the Xiangguo Temple drew in a monthly revenue of over 2000 *yuan* from shop rents alone (this figure is for 1918-1919). This far exceeds the total (not just from store rents) monthly income of the Wenshu Mosque in Kaifeng of the 1935, which at the time was viewed as a suitable amount for a mosque, of around 140 *yuan*, before adjustment for inflation (which would make the difference in value even greater). A 1940-41 survey conducted by officials for 48 counties in Henan and submitted to the Ministry of the Interior estimated the total value of all immovable property (store spaces and land) of 201 mosques at a little less than 378,000 *yuan*, or roughly an average of 1,880 *yuan* per mosque, or less than one month's shop rent income for the Xiangguo Temple, again before adjustment for even more drastic inflation in the period in question). These figures are based on sum of estimated values (in *yuan*) of rooms and shop spaces (*jian*, valued at 252,384 *yuan*) and land (*mu*, valued at 125,357 *yuan*) for mosques in Henan, for a total value of 377,741 *yuan*. Lu Zhenming 卢振明, "Tantan kaifeng de huijiao: wenshushi" 谈谈开封的回教: 文殊寺 (Talking about Islam in Kaifeng: The Wenshu Mosque); Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 161; "Ge sheng huijiaotu ji qi siyuan tongji" 各省回教徒及其寺院统计 (Statistics on Islamic Believers and Their Temples in Each Province).

<sup>220</sup> See especially the 1928 "Rules for Temple Registration" and the 1929 "Temple Management Rules" and "Regulations for Temple Oversight," translated in Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 295-300.

<sup>221</sup> China Islamic Association for National Salvation 中国回教救国协会, "Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui huiwu baogao" 中国回教救国协会会务报告 (1938年8月-1942年2月) (China Islamic Association for National Salvation Association Affairs Report (August 1938-February 1942)), 189-90.

accepted this reasoning and granted the exceptions,<sup>222</sup> which were codified in 1936 by the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>223</sup>

The defining feature of the Islamic Culture Movement at the local level was the linking of community welfare and elite status to the promotion of “Islamic culture.” Whereas the earlier generation of Hui elites focused on delivering modern education to their communities without much attention to religious instruction, participants in the Islamic Culture Movement sought to harness modern institutions of cultural reproduction for the popularization of Islamic knowledge. This shift in aspirations was reflected in the criticism, published in the early-1930s Hui press, of Hui schools that did not include religious instruction, which remained numerous.<sup>224</sup> When Tie Zifang was hired as principal of Yang Zheng Elementary in Kaifeng in summer of 1934, he emphasized religious instruction to such a degree that one observer wrote that the school had been “religion-ified” (*zongjiaohua*).<sup>225</sup> Growing elite commitment to popularizing religious knowledge was also evident in the establishment of Islamic preaching halls, reading rooms, propaganda teams, and study societies. These institutions performed the same function as religious instruction integrated into modern school curricula, including in communities where,

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<sup>222</sup> In early 1930, after local governments in Beiping (Beijing) and Sichuan attempted to register mosques according to the clergy-focused Rules for Temple Registration, Muslim associations in both places successfully petitioned superior levels of government to clarify that those regulations were not applicable to mosques. Huang Yin 黄隐, “Xunling shehui, gong’an ju wei zhuan ershi si jun xunling qingzhensi bu shu simiao dengji yi anwen” 训令社会、公安局为转二十四军训令清真寺不属寺庙登记一案文 (Order to the Society and Public Safety Bureaus to Relay the Order of the 24th Army That Mosques Are Not Subject to Temple Registration).

<sup>223</sup> Neizhengbu nianjian bianzuan weiyuanhui 内政部年鉴编纂委员会, *Interior Ministry Yearbook* 内政年鉴, 4:109.

<sup>224</sup> A 1931-32 survey of mosques in 54 of Henan’s 110 counties (counting Zhumadian as part of Queshan) indicates limited but growing efforts to integrate elementary Islamic learning (including basic Arabic) into modern schools. Out of 60 mosque-based schools recorded (distributed among 54 mosques across 22 counties), six were recently established modern schools that definitely included Arabic and religious instruction. In addition, several already-established schools integrated religious instruction into modern education in the early 1930s. These included Chinese-Arabic School based at Kaifeng’s Wenshu Mosque, the Shen Xiu School (Branch) in Gushi, and the Hui Public School in Neixiang. Wang Zhengru 王正儒 and Lei Xiaojing 雷晓静, “Quanguo qingzhensi diaocha biao” 全国清真寺调查表 (Countrywide Mosque Survey Chart), 540–62.

<sup>225</sup> “Yangzheng Elementary Principal Hired” 养正小学校长得人.

for various reasons, elementary Islamic and secular education remained institutionally separate.<sup>226</sup>

This activism revolved around mosque-based Islamic associations. The local Islamic association was the umbrella organization coordinating and representing various institutions involved in education, religious study, and propaganda, as well as economic cooperatives, dispute mediation, women's issues, and hygiene. Association operations were typically managed by a group of five to ten elected officers who in turn elected a chairman from among themselves. Some associations organized propaganda teams, published pamphlets, or opened branch offices of larger Hui periodicals. Between 1929 and 1937, at least 24 new Islamic associations were established in Henan.<sup>227</sup>

The inconsistent names of this second wave of associations reflect their lack of centralization and independence from Nanjing- and Beiping-based efforts to build a unified Hui organization for all of China. In some cases, local associations were established and subsequently affiliated with national institutions, while leadership remained the same. For example, in Neixiang County in southwest Henan, Yang Bin, the chairman of the county

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<sup>226</sup> For example, in Xuchang, where religious instruction was integrated into the local Hui school only in the 1940s, an Islamic study society was established at nearby mosque in late 1935. Likewise, in Zhumadian, where Yu Ying Elementary also lacked integrated religious instruction, Tie Zifang established a society for Muslim youth to “come together in study, observe religious rulings, eliminate vulgar customs, and rouse ordinary believers to return to the Great Way.” The study society staff included eight designated “propagandists” (*xuanchuanyuan*). Similar institutions were also established in Gushi, Sangpo, and Zhengzhou in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and later on in Lushan and Luoyang. “Xuchang huijiao yanjiushe” 许昌回教研究社 (Xuchang Islamic Study Society); “Zhumadian chengli jiaoyi yanjiushe” 驻马店成立教义研究社 (Religion Study Society Established in Zhumadian); Tao Shuhua 陶树华, “Liushudian yisilan jiaoyi yanjiushe jinkuang” 柳树店伊斯兰教义研究社近况 (Recent Circumstances of the Islamic Religion Study Society of Liushudian); Mai Shunxiang, *Sangpo zhi*, 147; “Lushan xian datang zhen quhui zuzhi jiaoyi xuanjiangsuo” 鲁山县大汤镇区会组织教义宣讲所 (Ward Association of Datangzhen, Lushan County Establishes Religious Preaching Venue); Tie Zifang 金泽周, “Tawan xisi jiaoyi yanjiuban fangwenji” 塔湾西寺教义研究班访问记 (Record of a Visit to the Religion Study Class at the Tawan West Mosque).

<sup>227</sup> A 1934 survey by the provincial government gives a somewhat higher number, recording that 31 counties had Islamic associations.) “Henan sheng (shi yi) guanyu simiaoze” 河南省: (十一) 關於寺廟者 (Henan Province: (11) Regarding Temples).

chamber of commerce and an ally of one of the powerful militia bosses in that region of the province, established an Islamic association in 1929. The association was located at the county town's main mosque, which Yang's lineage controlled. The association was initially organized as a branch of the China Islamic Progress Association, more than a decade after most branches in Henan had been established, but there is no indication that it maintained any relationship with CIPA headquarters in Beiping. Later, in November 1935, the Association was reorganized as a branch of the Nanjing-based China Islamic Guild (CIG). As we will see in Chapter Four, the CIG was supported by Chiang Kai-shek and competed against the CIPA and other organizations to monopolize national Hui leadership. But Hui activism in Neixiang was far removed from these capital politics, and the Yangs remained in control of the reconstituted county Islamic Guild. This pattern would repeat in 1939, when yet another association would attempt—this time more successively than any of its predecessors—to establish a truly national Hui organization, and the Yangs would again retain control of it.<sup>228</sup> Supralocal political organization did not supplant local politics.

Compared to their predecessors, the branches of the CIPA, these newer associations of the late 1920s and 1930s were more organized and took on a wider portfolio of work. In Xuchang, Tie Zifang helped organize a local branch of the Henan Islamic Association in the first half of 1934. This province-level organization was separate from both the CIPA and the CIG, based in Beiping and Nanjing, respectively, though its branches subsequently affiliated with the CIG (changing their names to, for example, the “China Islamic Guild Xuchang County Branch Association”). A summary of one of the new Xuchang Islamic Association's preparatory

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<sup>228</sup> “Henan neixiang xiping liang zhihui chengli” 河南内乡西平两支会成立 (Two Branch Associations Established in Neixiang and Xiping, Henan); Yang Wenqin and Yang Yunpeng, “Henan neixiang huizu gaishu”; Wen Hongjia 闻洪甲, Hong Bing 洪兵, and Ma Yunfei 马云飞, *Nanyang qingzhensi zhi* 南阳清真寺志 (Nanyang Mosque Gazetteer), 174–80.

meetings indicates that officers included leadership of the former CIPA. It also reveals that the Association was subdivided into different offices, including one for propaganda (*xuanchuan gu*), which collected books and newspapers, established a library and reading room, and printed pamphlets. When the Association was formally established in May 1934, it had registered over 2,000 members and organized sub-county branches in mosques in nearby villages within the county.<sup>229</sup> Another Henan Islamic Association branch was established in Yancheng in 1933. According to its charter (which also indicates independence from the CIG), its main responsibilities included expounding Islamic doctrine and reforming backward practices, eradicating bad habits, establishing schools and universalizing education, promoting factory education for the poor and unemployed, setting up clinics, distributing medicine, and purchasing land for public cemeteries. Its officers were divided into eight offices: General Affairs, Religious Affairs, Statistics (for surveys), Education, Industry, Health, Correspondences, and Propaganda.<sup>230</sup>

In addition to managing local Hui affairs, these associations represented Hui interests and concerns to the local government and surrounding community. They did not position themselves as adversaries of the state, but they were not direct extensions of it either. Like all “social associations” (*shehui tuanti*), their structure and activities fell under official regulation; charters typically proclaimed loyalty and subservience to the GMD and government and included official slogans (such as the “Three Principles of the People”). But we should not overestimate the consistency of regulation. Tie Zifang’s All-Henan Muslim League was forced to reorganize as the Henan Province Islamic Association after an inquiry from a local cadre brought the

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<sup>229</sup> “Xuchang huijiaohui choubei weiyuanhui chengli” 许昌回教会筹备委员会成立 (Xuchang Islamic Association Preparatory Committee Established); “Xuchang jiao wen er ze” 许昌教闻二则 (Two Items of Religious News from Xuchang).

<sup>230</sup> Hai Junliang 海俊亮, “Henan huijiaohui yancheng fenhui jianzhang” 河南回教会郾城分会简章.

organization to Nanjing's attention.<sup>231</sup> The crux of the matter in that case was the category of "religious association" and the inappropriateness of the term "nation" (*minzu*) to refer to Hui. However, that same term appears repeatedly in a transcript of a speech delivered by a Hui leader at the inaugural ceremony of an Islamic association in Gushi—organized as a branch of Tie's reformed Henan Province Islamic Association.<sup>232</sup> The speaker insisted that "we Islamic masses indeed fully qualify" as a "weak nation," quoting Sun Yat-sen to legitimate his subversive language.

Defense of Hui interests was not limited to rhetoric. An Islamic association was the nexus of local Hui financial resources, services (including education and public health), and propaganda. Mutual aid and collective need reinforced one another. In Kaifeng, where Hui dominated the butchery trade, the Islamic association regulated distribution of and fees for signage indicating *halal* meat and administered endowments made by wealthy Hui merchants to finance private Hui schools.<sup>233</sup> In Neixiang, Fangcheng, and Zhoukou counties, for example, Islamic associations organized credit cooperatives.<sup>234</sup> These institutions did not necessarily exclude non-Huis but still helped consolidate Hui identity. The Zhoukou cooperative charter

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<sup>231</sup> Sheng Zhi Wei (Provincial Executive Committee) 省执委, "Guanyu bu de zuzhi huimin lianhehui zuzhi de xunling" 关于不得组织回民联合会组织的训令 (Regarding the Order That the Organization [Called] the Hui Federation May Not Organize); Hai Junliang 海俊亮, "'Henan zhumadian huijiaohui chengli tekan' fakan ci" 《河南驻马店回教会成立特刊》发刊词 (Inaugural Remarks for the "Special Bulletin on the Establishment of the Islamic Association of Zhumadian, Henan").

<sup>232</sup> "Henan gushi xian liushudian huijiaohui xuanyuan" 河南固始县柳树店回教会宣言 (Proclamation of the Liushudian Islamic Association in Gushi County, Henan).

<sup>233</sup> Bai Zixiang, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange"; Bai Zixiang, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu yi)"; Bai Zixiang, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu er)"; Bai Zixiang, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu san)."

<sup>234</sup> "Yuebaoshi" 阅报室 (Newspaper Reading Room); Yang Yuqing 杨玉清, "Cong zhonghua huijiao gonghui dao yisilanjiao xiehui" 从中华回教公会到伊斯兰教协会 (From the China Islamic Guild to the Islamic Association), 148; Ba Guoying 巴国英, "Zhoukou huijiao jiaoyu cujinhui huiwu xianzhuang" 周口回教教育促进会会务现状 (Current Situation of Association Affairs of the Zhoukou Islamic Education Promotion Association); Ba Guoying 巴国英, "You zhengli zhoukou huijiao zhi jingyan er tan dao gaijin zhongguo huijiao xianzhuang fangce shixing zhi keneng" 由整理周口回教之经验而谈到改进中国回教现状方策实行之可能.



indicates that non-Hui could join, but also specifies that all members were forbidden from drinking, gambling, or smoking and that all Hui members were required to attend Friday congregational prayers. Shareholders were also entitled to free access to publications of the Islamic Association, which was the legal custodian (*jianhu ren*) of cooperative funds.<sup>235</sup>

### *Ahongs and the Movement*

There was an affinity between the duty to teach that defined the shari‘a-minded ethic and the activism called for by the Islamic Cultural Movement. This affinity is nicely illustrated in the careers of two *ahongs* who organized Islamic cultural institutions in Henan in the early 1930s: Ma Zhenjiang (1895-1974) and Bai Xinzhai (1895-1959). Ma Zhenjiang, whose courtesy name was Huichuan and Islamic name (*jing ming*) was ‘Uthmān, was born in Lushi County in western Henan. As a young *hailifan* he studied under the *ahongs* Hu Yanzhang and Li Zhenduo and then headed west to Pingliang, Gansu to study with Xining Chang and Poli Ma. All four teachers were key figures in the shari‘a-minded network outlined in Chapter One. After completing his *hailifan* training and “donning his robes,” he returned to Henan to serve as a cleric in Sangpo to the northwest of the province, which was linked to Pingliang via the hide trade. From there he moved south to the West Tower Mosque in Luoyang, a short distance from the Tongxiang Mosque, also in Luoyang, where his old teacher Hu Yanzhang was cleric.<sup>236</sup> In around 1929 Ma moved farther south to Xixia County near Nanyang. Between 1930 and 1935 he held successive year-long positions throughout the Wanxi region (west of Nanyang).<sup>237</sup> It was there that he

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<sup>235</sup> Ba Guoying, “You zhengli zhokou huijiao zhi jingyan er tan dao gaijin zhongguo huijiao xianzhuang fangce shixing zhi keneng.”

<sup>236</sup> Liu Baoqi and Jin Yaozeng, *Luoyang qingzhensi*, 138.

<sup>237</sup> Hai Junliang, *Minguo baokan henan huizu shiliao jilu*, 1:179; Liu Baoqi and Jin Yaozeng, *Luoyang qingzhensi*, 110; Run 润, “Ma zhenjiang aheng fu shayan lüxin” 马振江阿衡赴沙彦履新 (Ahong Ma Zhenjiang Goes to Shayan to Take up a New Post); “Ma zhenjiang aheng lixin” 马振江阿衡蒞新 (Ahong Ma Zhenjiang Takes a New Position); Run 润, “Henan lushi xian tongxun” 河南卢氏县通讯 (Dispatch from Lushi County, Henan); Wen Hongjia, Hong Bing, and Ma Yunfei, *Nanyang qingzhensi zhi*, 127, 189; Ma Chao, “Minguo henan yisilanjiao jingshi yu jingxue.”

gained recognition for his efforts to promote education, reform religious practice, and strengthen Hui communities. In Zhenping County alone, his projects, reported in the nationally circulating Hui press, included establishing an Islamic association, a preaching group, a relief organization, a library, a dispute mediation association, and two schools, one for boys and one for girls. In 1935, Ma was hired by his home community in Lushi, where he raised funds to restore the local mosque, opened a Muslim school, and established an Islamic association for the county.<sup>238</sup>

Bai Xinzhai was born in Sangpo, where he studied as a young *hailifan* under Yang Liangjun and Ding Zhenren, both of whom were part of the same shari‘a-minded milieu as Ma’s teachers. Bai went on to serve at Sangpo’s East Mosque for several years in the 1920s, after which he moved south, taking up a series of posts in Biyang, Xiangcheng, and Yancheng in the 1930s.<sup>239</sup> During this period, Bai earned a reputation as a skilled propagandist; Tie Zifang praised him as a “bright star among the honest ‘*ulamā*’” (scholars) and repeatedly reported in the Hui press on his tireless preaching.<sup>240</sup> In Yancheng, Bai served as director of the local Islamic study society and headed the county Islamic association.<sup>241</sup> During the war, Bai would go on to establish additional Islamic associations and cultural institutions.<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Ma Mingcheng 马明程, “Ma Zhenjiang aheng zhi yiwang chengji” 马振江阿衡之已往成绩 (What Ahong Ma Zhenjiang Has Already Achieved).

<sup>239</sup> Huang Dengwu and Ma Xiaoping, *Zhongguo jingtang jiaoyu yu shaanxue ahong*, 103–4.

<sup>240</sup> Tie Zifang 铁子房, “Yancheng huijiao gaikuang” 郾城回教概况 (General Circumstances of Islam in Yancheng); Tie Zifang 铁子房, “Tan yi tan xiangjian de jiaomen (henan zhi yi: xiangheguan)” 谈一谈乡间的教门 (河南之一: 象河关) (Talking about Religion in the Countryside (Henan No. 1: Xiangheguan)).

<sup>241</sup> “Henan yancheng dongchezhan qingzhensi xuanyang jiaoyishe zhengqiu tushu baozhang qishi” 河南郾城东车站清真寺宣扬教义社征求图书报章启事 (Religion Propagation Society at the East Station Mosque in Yancheng, Henan Soliciting Books and Newspapers); “Yancheng County Branch Association Convenes Inaugural Assembly - Bai Xinzhai Elected as Secretary General” 郾城县召开支会成立大会 白心斋当选总干事 (Inaugural Assembly of the Yancheng County).

<sup>242</sup> In Yancheng, he established and led a branch of the CIANS in 1939. Around 1944, in Pingliang, Gansu, he taught at the Islamic Normal School, which had relocated there from Shanghai during the war. “Henan fenhui baocheng yi chengli ge xian zhihui shi san chu”; Ma Ruilin 马汝邻, “Pingliang guoli longdong shifan” 平凉国立陇东师范 (The Longdong Public Normal School at Pingliang).

The comparison of Ma and Bai is instructive in two respects. First, they held opposing views in debates over rituals that, as we will see in later chapters, divided *ahongs* and Hui communities in the early twentieth century. Ma, likely under the influence of his old teacher Hu when the two were in Luoyang, began to style himself as a reformer and aligned with likeminded *ahongs*,<sup>243</sup> while Bai was known as a “Gedimu” traditionalist.<sup>244</sup> Yet their careers followed a remarkably similar trajectory and together suggest that the *ahong* activism called for by the Islamic Culture Movement and that both *ahongs* engaged in was not unique to one group or the other. Second, neither *ahong* traveled abroad or studied at contemporary centers of Islamic modernist education in other provinces. The Islamic normal schools in Beijing, Shanghai, and elsewhere that sought to train a new generation of *ahongs* to offer religious instruction within a modern curriculum did take students from Henan; however, graduates from these new institutions alone cannot account for all *ahong* participation in the Islamic Culture Movement. The shari‘a-minded network to which Bai and Ma were both connected evidently supplied some of the local Movement’s most energetic *ahongs*.

This affinity between shari‘a-mindedness and the Islamic Culture Movement was also evident in the content of propaganda used by these cultural institutions. In addition to general assertions about the need for “belief,” “patriotism,” “hygiene,” and the like, we find the technical terminology of the *aḥkām*, the shari‘a rulings introduced in Chapter One. Popular textbooks intended for religious instruction in modern schools emphasized the need for students to understand the *aḥkām* classifications (“obligatory,” “recommended,” “licit,” “detested,” “forbidden”) and to differentiate between rituals accordingly. One textbook, originally printed in

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<sup>243</sup> In 1937, Wang Jingzhai identified Ma Zhenjiang as one of the scriptural-reformist *ahongs* active in Henan. Wang Jingzhai, “Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi,” 11218.

<sup>244</sup> Li Shusheng 李树生, *Pingliang xi si zhi* 平凉西寺志 (Pingliang West Mosque Gazetteer), 37–38.

Beijing and endorsed by several of the country's leading Hui intellectuals, included the *aḥkām* among the basic Arabic vocabulary (a list of 40 words) all students should know.<sup>245</sup> Another primer used widely in the northwest and published repeatedly in the Republican period also emphasized classification and the need to “truly believe in *farḍ* as *farḍ*, *wājib* as *wājib*, and *sunna* as *sunna*.”<sup>246</sup> Similarly, an early chapter of primer published by the Chengda Academy in Beijing and widely used throughout Henan enjoined students to “recognize as licit (*halāl*) what God has deemed licit” and to “recognize as forbidden (*harām*) what God has deemed forbidden.” Subsequent chapters detail the procedure for ritual ablution, worship, fasting, and funerals, discrete elements of which are each classified as “obligatory,” “recommended,” and so forth.<sup>247</sup> Determining and disseminating knowledge of the status of different rituals according to the shari‘a was one of the purposes of the aforementioned “study societies” and a measure of an employed *ahong*'s abilities. The Kaifeng-born *ahong* Bai Fengping, who ran one study society in Zhumadian in the early 1930s, was praised for opening a similar institution in Fuyang in nearby Anhui Province. He and his colleagues there purchased, among other texts, the Chengda primer and gave classes every day after evening worship. Among other achievements they were praised for in the Hui periodical press was the fact that within a short period time, ordinary believers “all clearly distinguished among the ‘obligatory’, ‘necessary’, ‘prophetic example’, ‘permitted’, and ‘forbidden’.”<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Yang Kun (Yang Shaopu) 杨昆 (杨少圃), “Xiaoxue jiaodian keben” 小学教典课本 (Elementary Textbook in Religious Canons), 155–58.

<sup>246</sup> Li Xiangting Anonymous, “Huijiao bizun (yi)” 回教必遵 (乙) (Observance of Islam), 36.

<sup>247</sup> This was listed as one of the conditions of faith (*īmān*). Beiping chengda shifan xuexiao minzhong jiaoyuhui 北平成达师范学校民众教育会, 清真教典速成课本, 7.

<sup>248</sup> Ren Yi 认一, “Fuyang zhongcunzhen yisilan minzhong jiaoyuguan chengli wo de ganxiang yu xiwang” 阜阳中村镇伊斯兰民众教育馆成立我的感想与希望 (My Feelings and Hopes Regarding the Establishment of the Zhongcunzhen Islamic Mass Education Office in Fuyang).

Propaganda rhymes and verse from this period reflect the same concern with popularizing shari‘a knowledge. Wang Letian (1896-1970), a convert to Islam born in Lushi County and contemporary of Ma Zhenjiang and Bai Xinzhai, traveled throughout China as a propagandist in the Republican period.<sup>249</sup> In addition to setting up preaching venues in Shanghai, Zhengzhou, and Xi’an, he wrote several rhyming tracts to reach audiences with less formal education. He used a simple and memorable style to introduce the shari‘a as a sophisticated system of ethical classification. In addition to the *ahkām* rulings, Wang’s verses informed about the five ranks of jurists and internal coherence of the “regarded” or “renowned” books (*al-kutub al-mu‘atabara*) of the properly ordered Hanafi tradition. As one 1935 tract began: “Urge our comrades of what’s pressing/Know the texts of Islam’s rulings/Heed the five-fold graduation/Books renowned are not in tension.”<sup>250</sup> These tracts, which could be taught and learned orally, also opened this written tradition to a wider audience with limited literacy. Students who recited Wang’s verses spoke of texts they could not necessarily read, such as the *‘Umda al-Ri’āya*, which as we saw in Chapter One was an important text in the shari‘a-minded network: “Study with care meticulous/what’s within the *‘Umda*’s preface...”<sup>251</sup> Through exposure to this sort of propaganda, even illiterate Hui acquired some sense that part of what it meant to be a good Muslim was to learn and apply the categories of the shari‘a.

## 2.4 A Tense Congruity

In this chapter we have examined the social, cultural, and institutional changes that propelled the Islamic Culture Movement in Henan. The associations and activism that

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<sup>249</sup> Wang Jingzhai includes Wang Letian in the same list of reformist *ahongs* in Henan with Ma Zhenjiang. Hai Junliang, *Minguo baokan henan huizu shiliao jilu*, 1:79; Wang Jingzhai, “Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi,” 11218.

<sup>250</sup> Wang Chunli 望纯理, “Huijiao xuanyan lue” 回教宣言略 (Summarized Proclamation of Islam).

<sup>251</sup> Wang Chunli.

constituted the movement at the local level were at once legacies of the turn-of-the-century migrations and commerce that reconfigured elite Hui networks; supplements to eroding state capacity and security in the early Republican era; and responses to the Leninist turn across the political spectrum. By the mid-1930s, there was mounting pressure on Hui elites throughout Henan to adapt the relationships on which they and their communities depended to the new order of pedagogical politics. The dual pressures to legitimate Islam according to GMD ideology and to fortify it against the Nationalist attempt to monopolize symbolic power in China drove these elites to search for the cultural resources out of which they could craft a popular Hui identity. They found these resources in elementary Arabic language, Islamic creed, and shari‘a knowledge, the popularization of which was already underway thanks to the efforts of a segment of *ahongs* already motivated by the shari‘a-minded ethic introduced in the previous chapter. The preaching halls, reading rooms, propaganda teams, study societies, and other institutions of Islamic cultural propagation that proliferated throughout Henan during the Nanjing decade were founded on a congruity between the shari‘a-mindedness of the *ahong* ranks and the Leninist political culture of the lay elite.

This congruity was tight but also tense. Shari‘a-mindedness and pedagogical politics might appear in retrospect to have been made for one another, but their conjunction in the institutions of Islamic propaganda was a contingent process, an accidental confluence of two intensely deliberate and ultimately antithetical ways of understudying the contents of that propaganda. For the shari‘a-minded, the purpose of religious knowledge was ethical classification, the recognition of the moral-legal status of a given action according to the shari‘a. Indeed, the mental procedure of classification or intention, *nīyya* (Ch. *ju yi*), was a step in many periodic rituals, including worship, ablution, and fasting. From this perspective, the purpose of

ritual as well as the shari‘a knowledge deployed in it was obtained individually. By contrast, for the lay elite, their purpose was to forge solidarity and manifest Islam’s essential coherence with rationality, hygiene, frugality, patriotism, and other tokens of Chinese modernity. The basic tension between these two positions lay not in explicit controversy over what Islamic rituals symbolized but in the implicit dispute over whether they were symbols at all.

There was thus an inherent antagonism in the seemingly natural partnership between *ahongs* and lay elites in the production of Hui identity. In a meeting of the China Islamic Youth Association in Nanjing in June 1936, an *ahong* in attendance briefly made enough of a scene for the secretary to take note. Toward the end of the morning meeting, one participant proposed that for meetings at which a supplication (*du‘a*) prayer would be made, everyone present should perform the ritual ablution in accordance with religious law. An *ahong* immediately corrected the participant’s proposal. The *ahong*, Li Zhenji (1883-1960), was a celebrated teacher throughout Henan and part of the shari‘a-minded network, and he shared a teacher with the aforementioned Ma Zhenjiang.<sup>252</sup> *Ahong* Li reportedly informed the attendees that the proposed ablution was in fact not a requirement for participation in a supplication, but added that regular washing “was a good habit of Muslims.”<sup>253</sup> In this case, the pious pedantry of shari‘a-mindedness asserted itself and then quickly made room for the practice, properly reclassified as a “good habit” and not an obligation, to proceed. But its potential disruptiveness was clear.

Yet the shari‘a-minded emphasis on the ethical primacy of reasoning and intentions did not simply fuel debate—though debates over ritual were widespread and intense throughout the

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<sup>252</sup> Hai Junliang 海俊亮, *Minguo baokan henan huizu shiliao jilu* 民国报刊河南回族史料辑录 (Compilation of Historical Materials from Republican Newspapers on the Hui Nationality in Henan), 2:245.

<sup>253</sup> “Zhongguo huijiao qingnian xuehui huimin xueshu yanjiuhui di san ci hui kaihui jilu” 中国回教青年学会回民学术研究会第三次会开会记录 (Record of the Third Meeting of the Hui Academic Research Committee of the China Islamic Youth Learning Association).

Republican period. As we will see in the next chapter, the approach to the shari‘a as a set of categories and way of arguing opened new pathways to consensus through discourse based on a shared set of norms even as individuals and congregations remained intensely committed to their particular understandings of orthopraxy.



## **Part Two:**

### **Nationalization**

The two chapters of Part One, “Popularization,” traced the emergence of a consensus between a network of *ahongs* and local Hui elites throughout Henan on the need to popularize elementary Islamic knowledge as the basis of a Hui identity. It examined the religious foundations of *ahong* efforts to disseminate knowledge of the shari‘a as well as the political and institutional shifts of the Nationalist era that pushed local elites to invest in the propagation of “Islamic culture.”

Part Two, “Nationalization,” examines the formation of the Hui nation on the basis of this popularized religious knowledge and identity. As discussed in the Introduction, “nation” does not correspond perfectly to the charged and continually redefined concept of *minzu*. As an analytical category, “nation” here refers to the idea that the Hui scattered throughout China were a distinct political constituency and entitled to representation as such, and to the institutions through which that idea was realized. Translating that claim into the language of *minzu* was one of several rhetorical strategies Hui pursued.

But the process of nationalization involved much more than rhetoric. As we will see, in 1947, the Nationalist government effectively recognized the Hui nation and granted it designated representation in the National Assembly, even if it formally avoided referring to the Hui as a *minzu* (and they were inconsistent on even that front). At its core, nationalization, or the successful assertion of a countrywide Hui political constituency, was a process of cultural and institutional rationalization. In earlier centuries, Islamic ritual had been central to the constitution of local community and social life for individual mosque congregations. The effort to construct

an internally unified and externally differentiated identity on top of those localized relationships and embedded cultural resources involved appeals to a higher, supralocal form of solidarity.

Each of the chapters of Part Two examines one aspect of this process, in what can be thought of as the soft and hard institutions through which the Hui nation was realized. I hope to convey some sense of the challenges and tensions inherent in the deployment of traditional cultural resources for modern and impersonal forms of political community. Chapter Three looks at the formation of a national public in the Hui periodical press and the evolving role of argument about ritual and shari‘a-minded debate in the perpetuation of shared norms of reasoning. Chapter Four looks at Huis’ repeated efforts to establish a national organization in the Republican period. It focuses on the China Islamic Association for National Salvation, established in late 1937, and its expansion nationally and in Henan. I show that the ability of Hui to coordinate local action through these institutions was decisive in their eventual success in winning national recognition in 1947.

## Chapter 3:

### A National Public

To form a nation, Huis had to address one another as fellow nationals. This involved not just a new identity, but a new sort of communication, with organizations and media that could compress the gaps in time and space that separated Huis from one another. These institutions would also have to be specifically Hui, distinct from those tied to other groups defined by place, profession, or politics.

In the Republican era, and especially during the Nanjing decade (1928-1937), civic associations and periodicals flourished in many Chinese cities. The innumerable pages they disseminated in turn have furnished debates among scholars over the relationship between state and society in modern China,<sup>254</sup> and more recently over the nature of critical political participation among urban Chinese in dialogue with one another and the state through public discourse.<sup>255</sup> In line with this approach, we can ask whether and how Huis across the country participated in a shared discourse on matters of common concern—in other words, whether and how they came together as a distinct, national Hui public.

A growing body of literature answers affirmatively the “whether” half of this question. Over the Republican period, hundreds of Hui associations and periodicals mushroomed across the country.<sup>256</sup> Many of these associations were short-lived or abortive, and many periodicals

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<sup>254</sup> Huang, “‘Public Sphere’/‘Civil Society’ in China?”; Wakeman, “The Civil Society and Public Sphere Debate”; Rowe, “The Problem of ‘Civil Society’ in Late Imperial China”; Rankin, “Some Observations on a Chinese Public Sphere.”

<sup>255</sup> Lean, *Public Passions*.

<sup>256</sup> The most comprehensive analysis of the authors who contributed to this press and the content of their writings can be found in 马景, 民国时期伊斯兰教汉文译著研究 (北京: 社会科学文献出版社, 2014). Lei Xiaojing has compiled tables of contents for 52 Chinese Muslim periodicals in the first half of the twentieth century. 雷晓静, ed., 回族近现代报刊目录提要 (银川: 宁夏人民出版社, 2006). Wang Zhengru and Lei Xiaojing have compiled Muslim periodical articles into more than forty volumes in their series *Selected Writings from Historical*

never ran a second issue. But many others lasted longer, some for several years, and Huis were for the first time able to know and discuss the news of the day from their coreligionists in other cities, provinces, and even countries. They experienced something like what Eickelman and Salvatore call a “shared anticipation,” a sense of moving through time together connected to one another.<sup>257</sup> This sense, or else the lack of it, was most acute during the sacred time of ritual, and particularly during the fast month of Ramadan. When it was accomplished, the synchronized entering and breaking of the fast was, in the words of one Hui intellectual, “the sign of unity”; when it was not accomplished (as was often the case), it was “the manifestation of division, opposition, and fragmentation.”<sup>258</sup> Likewise, authors and activists who lamented defunct and ineffective institutions did so out of a belief in their indispensability to the unification of a national political constituency. Hui scholars today continue to celebrate these achievements by publishing compilations of Republican-era essays and articles, one of the few remaining avenues for Hui cultural expression in an increasingly censored field, and themselves important sources for the present study.

Beginning from the premise reflected by these texts, that the Hui did form a public, in this chapter I pursue the “how” half of the question. As in previous chapters, I focus on the north-central province of Henan, and here I zoom in further on the old city of Kaifeng, the bygone capital of the Northern Song dynasty (960-1127) and the seat of Henan’s provincial government until 1954. I take what can be thought of as a ‘snapshot’ approach, comparing two

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*Newspapers and Periodicals of the Hui Nationality*: 王正儒 and 雷晓静, eds., 回族历史报刊文选 (银川: 宁夏人民出版社, 2012). Hai Junliang has recently compiled Henan-specific writings from Republican-era Muslim newspapers in a three-volume set: 海俊亮, 民国报刊河南回族史料辑录, 民族地理丛书 (郑州: 中州古籍出版社, 2019).

<sup>257</sup> Eickelman and Salvatore, “Muslim Publics,” 15–18. Eickelman and Salvatore derive the concept of “shared anticipation” from the work of John Dewey and Norbert Elias.

<sup>258</sup> Hui Shiwen 虎世文, “Tuanjie de zhengzhao” 团结的征兆 (A Sign of Unity).

cases of communal argument about ritual, one in the nineteenth century and one in the twentieth. I examine how reasoning evolved in relation to changing institutional conditions and communicative capabilities. I am particularly interested in the tension between congregational and national identities defined by the same set of rituals, and in the role of shari‘a-minded reasoning in resolving or accommodating it.

Much of the chapter therefore divides into two acts, each centered on one scene to which other sites and moments are connected. The first scene takes place in the fall of 1840, one day (we know only the range) between October 25<sup>th</sup> and November 3<sup>rd</sup>, in the courtyard of the Great North Mosque of Kaifeng, where the elders of the congregation gathered for erection of a stone tablet inscribed with, among other things, thirteen rules concerning the ritual practice of the community. The second scene takes place on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935, with the publication of the inaugural issue of the Kaifeng-based periodical *Yisilan* (Islam), which included, among other “Islamic news” items from around the country, a notice that the nine mosque congregations of the city had all begun the fast on the same day, December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1934. By comparing these moments, I show how the major developments traced in the previous two chapters—the rise of shari‘a-mindedness and the Islamic Culture Movement—led to a new form of argument about ritual and a new, national public in which that argument played out.

The two scenes have much in common. They take place within the walls of Kaifeng and involve acts of collective writing about ritual. Both occur during the holy month of Ramadan, thus comprising acts of writing about ritual which are themselves set apart in ritual time. Both are also tied to broader social and economic life of the authors’ communities: the other side of the 1840 tablet is inscribed with a contract memorializing the donation of property to the Great North Mosque; the lower half of the page of the 1935 announcement reports a work stoppage by

the Kaifeng's cattle and sheep slaughterers—an industry dominated by the city's Huis<sup>259</sup>—in response to onerous new taxes and regulations.

But there are differences too, beyond the intervening century. First, and most concretely, there is the medium of writing: the heavy, carved, virtually immobile stone of the 1840 inscription versus the flimsy, printed, widely circulating pages of the 1935 periodical. Second, more abstractly, there is the scale of community: in 1840, the elders of the Great North Mosque address their own mosque congregation and implicitly, as we will see, nearby congregations with similar rules as well as the city's prominent imperial and Buddhist institutions with their own rituals and ways of writing about them. In 1935, the staff of the journal *Islam*, headquartered in Kaifeng but collaborating with editors and contributors in Zhoukou, Shanghai, Beijing and elsewhere, spoke of the congregations of the city as a whole when they addressed a national readership. And third, more abstractly still, there is the mode of reasoning at work. As I will show below, the rules inscribed on the 1840 tablet instruct action and are justified in terms of the particularistic authority of specific people and place. By contrast, the 1935 periodical and similar writings of the time are marked by the shari'a-minded argumentation introduced in Chapter One. As argued previously, one of the distinctive features of shari'a-mindedness is the careful attention in rule-making and argument to questions of classification, similar to what Dresch and Skoda call "legalism": "the explicit use of generalizing concepts, and a disposition to address in such terms the conduct of human life."<sup>260</sup>

In this chapter I examine these two instances of communal writing to develop a model of how the Hui public functioned. The distanced, impersonal connections linking contributors,

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<sup>259</sup> Lu Zhenming, "Kaifeng huijiao tan."

<sup>260</sup> Dresch, "Legalism, Anthropology, and History: A View from the Part of Anthropology"; Skoda, "A Historian's Perspective on the Present Volume."

editors, and readers of public discourse in the Hui press were entangled in personal, local relationships within and between mosque congregations. As Bryna Goodman has shown regarding native place associations in Shanghai, Chinese modernity was structured in part by traditional forms of community and identity.<sup>261</sup> An analogous point can be made about the national Hui public: it did not displace but emerged from and continuously interacted with older and more local processes of social integration. Moreover, these disparate processes of integration—intra-congregational and inter-congregational, local and national—were in constant tension with one another. As we will see, rituals that defined membership within an individual congregation could be points of dispute and conflict with other congregations. The power of ritual to establish strong ties within the mosque could hinder such ties between congregations and among members of the emerging national Hui public.

My understanding of “public” builds on a convergence of several fields of scholarship, including Chinese history,<sup>262</sup> the study of Islam and Muslim societies,<sup>263</sup> and religion-state relations,<sup>264</sup> that have engaged and critiqued the social theories of Jurgen Habermas as well as John Dewey. Here a “public” is a voluntary and shared discourse on matters of common interest among people who address and read one another primarily as fellow members of this discourse.<sup>265</sup> A focus on discourse allows us to set aside questions of strict institutional

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<sup>261</sup> Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation*, 312–13.

<sup>262</sup> Lean, *Public Passions*; Bryna Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation: Regional Networks and Identities in Shanghai, 1853-1937* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1995); Rowe, “The Problem of ‘Civil Society’ in Late Imperial China”; Rankin, “Some Observations on a Chinese Public Sphere.”

<sup>263</sup> Salvatore and Eickelman, *Public Islam and the Common Good*; Salvatore, *The Public Sphere*; Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse*.

<sup>264</sup> Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World*.

<sup>265</sup> This definition owes much to the work of Michael Warner, Dale Eickelman, and others. See generally Warner, “Publics and Counterpublics”; Lean, *Public Passions*; Eickelman and Salvatore, “Muslim Publics.”

autonomy of a “public sphere” vis-à-vis the state without ignoring individuals and organizations who spoke and wrote openly about politics and society.<sup>266</sup>

The constant of ritual draws our attention what the two scenes have in common and accentuates what makes them different. But it is more than a rhetorical device. The broader thesis of this chapter is that ritual has been integral to Hui solidarity since the late imperial period and, correlatively, that we cannot understand the Hui public without making sense of the role of ritual within it. This claim requires further elaboration, however, because “ritual” here encompasses two dimensions of behavior: practice and discourse. In other words, we can examine the integrative function of the collective performance of rituals, such as congregational worship in the mosque; and also the integrative function of the collective discussion, oral and written, of collective rituals, such as gathering in the mosque to debate or codify the protocols of congregational worship.

These aspects of ritual—the practical and the discursive—have both been studied by anthropologists and historians. The former is a central concern of the Durkheimian tradition within social anthropology, which emphasizes the role of ritual in sacralizing the collective and cultivating strong emotional ties among participants. In China studies, this approach has been fruitful, and there is now a large body of literature within the field demonstrating the importance of ritual orthopraxy, especially death rites, to the Chinese political system and Chinese identity.<sup>267</sup> The latter, the discursive aspect, has also been addressed by China scholars interested in the long history, especially within Confucianism, of writing about ritual. For most of the last a millennium, reading and writing about ritual was a core element of literati culture, and this trend

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<sup>266</sup> Lean, *Public Passions*, 6–11.

<sup>267</sup> Watson, Rawski, and Joint Committee on Chinese Studies (U.S.), *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*; Watson, “Rites or Beliefs? The Construction of a Unified Culture in Late Imperial China”; Cohen, “Being Chinese.”



intensified in the early eighteenth century.<sup>268</sup> Moreover, as Patricia Ebrey has documented, this discourse was not limited to abstract theorizing about the meaning of ritual (*li*) in general (though there was much of that too) but also included extensive writing on the details of capping, marriage, funeral, and sacrifice protocols.<sup>269</sup>

Extensive discussion tended to generate extensive debate, and this tendency was no less true among Huis, whose late imperial and modern history forms a gradient of sporadic disputes about ritual growing more frequent and interconnected over time. By the late 1920s, the Hui press was magnifying local disputes into matters of countrywide concern, such that a debate that happened in Kaifeng, or Xi'an, or Guangzhou was portrayed as a local instance of a split within Chinese Islam into two sects, the “New Teaching” and the “Old Teaching,” distributed throughout China. I trace this process and the classification of “sects” (*jiaopai*) in Chapter Five. Here I want to focus on the anxiety among Hui that they were divided nationwide over questions of ritual practice. Where there should have been national unity, there was national fracture. As one commentator lamented in 1937:

...not only is there a total lack of united organization and united strength, but [the Islamic nation]<sup>270</sup> has also split into factions. Opinions between the factions are irreconcilable. For disputes to arise because of a tiny trifle—it really is no blessing for our religion. For the one Islam to be irrationally divided into the new and old sects—truly it shatters the heart.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China*; Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*; Szonyi, “Making Claims about Standardization and Orthopraxy in Late Imperial China.”

<sup>269</sup> Ebrey, *Confucianism and Family Rituals in Imperial China*, 10.

<sup>270</sup> *Huijiao minzu*. This term appears in the original text; the brackets indicate that I have reordered the wording to fit the sentence in which the quotation appears.

<sup>271</sup> You Shu 牖庶, “Zai huijiao wenhua yundong qi zhong wo dui huijiao wenren de xiwang” 在回教文化运动期中我对回教文人的希望 (My Hope for Islamic Scholars in the Period of the Islamic Culture Movement).

The very practices that held individual congregations together were also generating tensions between congregations and dividing the national Chinese Muslim public. The persistence of local, congregational integration frustrated national, public integration.

We can empathize with those frustrated by the incessance of disputes over seemingly the most minor, and some would say private, of matters. The litany of contested acts includes the timing of the Ramadan fast, the wearing of shoes for the funeral prayer, and the full prostration during supererogatory nighttime worship. And yet there was always a touch of denial in the insistence that these rituals were merely “minor details,” since they were evidently of great importance to the many people who argued about them in speech and writing. The enduring significance of performing rituals the right way, however that was understood, also energized public discourse.

Argument arising over difference in practice could also foster solidarity, albeit through a form of integration different from that described by Durkheimian studies of ritual. Where and when Hui met to debate their differences in ritual practice, whether in civic associations that brought different congregations in a city or county together, or in the pages of the periodical press, they gave reasons for their positions, and subjected those reasons to the scrutiny of their peers. Occasioned by greater contact between communities with different ways of performing rituals, this public reasoning about rituals engendered the elaborate legalism identified above as a common norm of discussion and debate. To the extent that Hui engaged one another about their disagreements over ritual, discourse transcended difference in practice. The division of the New and Old Teachings, bemoaned as pathological to Hui unity, was in fact symptomatic of the growing interconnectedness of ritually defined communities.

In this chapter, “ritual constitution” refers to the interplay between ritual practice and discourse. It can be analogized to the ideal function of democracy in some societies today: democracy should encompass both the occasions and procedures (one could say rituals) of collective life and be a subject of collective deliberation and discussion. People come together democratically to discuss democracy. Likewise, a ritually constituted community is one in which collective rituals both occasion community and are a subject of communal discourse. By framing our analysis around this nexus, we can trace change and continuity in the structure of Hui community over time. In the next section I will outline two sets of collective rituals that have been central to Hui communal practice and discourse. I will then turn to the two scenes described above, 1840 and 1935, and examine the evolution in argument and public reasoning the comparison reveals.

### 3.1 Rites of Ramadan and Death

Ramadan and death—these two recurring elements of Hui life have proven among the most controversial. Each marks a crescendo of a different ritual chronology: death the life cycle, Ramadan the Hijri calendar. Not all debates among Hui have to do with their attendant rituals, but a great many do, as are the ones examined in this chapter. Before turning to those debates, it may be useful to walk through the series of rituals involved in each case. We can synthesize the instructions from late-imperial and Republican texts to construct an outline of the rituals.<sup>272</sup> This synthesis inevitably entails generalization, both over time and across congregations and, later on,

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<sup>272</sup> Liu Zhi, “Tianfang dianli zeyao jie”; Ma Youlin, *Zeyao zhujie zaxue*; Li Renshan 李仁山, Zhang Chunsan 张春三, and Ma Lixian 马礼贤, “Huiyu Duben: Chuji” 回语读本: 初级 (Islamic Language Reader: Elementary Level), 2008; Li Renshan 李仁山, Zhang Chunsan 张春三, and Ma Lixian 马礼贤, “Huiyu Duben: Chuji” 回语读本: 初级 (Islamic Language Reader: Elementary Level), 2008; Beiping chengda shifan xuexiao minzhong jiaoyuhui, 清真教典速成课本.

sects. What follows is only an overview of what most practices have in common with a few indications of where disputes arise.

### *Ramadan*

Ramadan is a month, the ninth in the lunar Hijri calendar, during which practitioners observe a sunrise-to-sunset fast and abstain from drinking, sex, and various other activities. As a lunar month, it begins with the appearance of the new moon and ends with the appearance of the next one.

Here already there is cause for disagreement. Who says when a new moon has appeared? A Hijri month can be 29 or 30 days depending on the time of year. This interaction of the lunar and solar cycles is further complicated by vagaries of weather: sometimes the moon should be visible but is obscured by clouds. On top of this comes human error: false and contested sightings. A widely cited tradition attributed to the Prophet Muhammad instructs believers to begin the fast when they see the new moon of the month of Ramadan and to end the fast when they see the new moon of Shawwal (the following, tenth month of the Islamic calendar). In most versions this is followed with the qualification that if it is cloudy (and thus the moon cannot be seen), one should complete the month in 30 (and not 29) days. But is sight of the new moon a condition of the beginning of the new month, or simply an indication of it? If astronomers calculate the precise date and time when the new moon will be visible, must the moon still be seen by human eyes for the new month to begin? If a moonsighting is reported in one country, in one city, in one mosque, do Muslims elsewhere accept it?

Regular obligations of daily worship and weekly congregational worship continue throughout the month of Ramadan. In addition, clerics may deliver daily exhortations to congregants independent of the usual Friday one. Beginning on the first night of Ramadan (the

day begins at sunset, so the night of the moon sighting is the first day of Ramadan), many perform an additional set of prayers known as *tarāwīh*, after the final obligatory nighttime prayer and before the supererogatory *witr* prayer. Some emphasize the “recommended” classification of the *tarāwīh* according to the shari‘a, and so even Muslims who agree that Ramadan has begun and both perform the *tarāwīh* may disagree if one does so as a matter of course without acknowledging its “recommended,” non-“obligatory” status.



**Figure 3.1: Kai Zhai Jie (Eid al-Fitr) in Zaojiaoping Village, Yuzhou (in central Henan).** Pictured left: The donations table in the courtyard in front of the main prayer hall. Obligatory alms, voluntary donations (*niyeti*), and “grain money” (*maizi qian*) are given and recorded separately. Pictured right: The ahong delivers the exhortation (*wa’z*, Ch. *woerzi*) before Eid al-Fitr worship in the main prayer hall. Women worship in a separate part of the mosque. Photos by author.

The final ten days of Ramadan are considered especially holy, and good acts performed during them are considered especially meritorious. These final nights also include Layla al-Qadr, the “Night of the Decree,” which celebrates the revelation to Muhammad of the final verses of the Quran. Many also consider it “obligatory” (*wājib*) to spend one night in silent meditation in the mosque to reflect upon and purify their belief. Special congregational prayers on that night and on the last night of Ramadan are further points of dispute.

The end of the month of Ramadan promises the same controversies as the beginning, tied as it is to the moonsighting. When the new moon of Shawwal (the next month) is seen, Ramadan is over, and the festival of fast-breaking, Eid al-Fitr (Ch. *kai zhai jie*), begins. Eid al-Fitr is one of two (or in some traditions, three) occasions for a special congregational worship. This prayer begins with an act of intention (*nīyya*), which classifies the subsequent prayer as Eid worship. The special sequence then begins, distinguished from ordinary Friday congregational prayers in the number of prostrations performed, the number *takbīrs* recited, the order of worship, exhortation, and *khuṭba* sermon. After the *khuṭba*, supplicatory prayers (*du‘a*) are offered, not just within the mosque, but in homes and, more controversially, before graves.<sup>273</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> This “visiting graves” (*zou fen*) is among the most contested rituals associated with Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr. Controversy surrounds not just the practice per se, but the rules on participation (can women join?), the purpose ascribed to it (can it bring benefits to the living as well as the deceased?), and even the terminology used to describe it (do we “ascend to the graves,” *shang fen*, or just “walk” to them, *zou fen*?).



**Figure 3.2: Zou fen (visiting graves) in Zaojiaoping Village, Yuzhou (in central Henan).** Pictured left: Walking to the family's grave plots after Eid al-Fitr worship. Pictured right: Supplication (*du'a*) offered at a different family's grave plots. Barely visible behind the shrubs is a community member who knows how to recite the supplication. There is no requirement that the *ahong* perform the supplication, and because he is particularly busy visiting graves for different families after Eid al-Fitr worship, capable community members help out as well. Note the participation of women in both cases. Photos by author.

## Death

Chinese Muslim rituals associated with death begin around the deathbed, as the dying person “faces the end” (*lin zhong*). The will should be taken down in writing, and the dying person should recite the repentance prayer (*tawbah*, Ch. *taobai*). Here already disputes arise. Is it permissible to hire others to recite the Quran over the dying person, or to recite the repentance on her behalf?

When the last breath has expired, relatives and friends must be notified of the death. The family of the deceased then begin preparations for the funeral and burial, which must take place as soon as possible. Speed is paramount, even if the deceased has died away from home. Against

the Confucian tradition of sending the corpse home for display and to “bury after three months” (*san yue er zang*), Hui literati wrote of the need to “bury within three days” (*san ri bi zang*).

The corpse must be ritually washed before the funeral. Same-sex kin wash the corpse according to the rules for the major ablution (*ghusl*, Ch. *da jing*). The corpse is then clothed in white garments (three pieces for men, four for women) and finally wrapped in a white shroud (*kafan*, Ch. *kafan*). Incense may be burned throughout the process, but some traditions stress that this is only to cover the smell of the corpse and should not be done after the ablution and shrouding. Some recite Sura al-Taha while the corpse is being prepared; others reject this as an innovation. Once cleansed, the body is placed in a bier, in which it will eventually be transported to the graveyard for burial.

The funeral prayer (*janāza/jināza*, Ch. *zhenaze*) takes place outside, usually in the mosque courtyard, and never inside the ritually pure prayer hall. Congregants and the corpse are positioned differently depending on the congregation. Some place the bier on a platform; others insist that it remain on the ground. Some place the bier in front of the congregants and the prayer leader; others place it in between the prayer leader and the congregants. The *janāza* itself consists of a modified worship routine,<sup>274</sup> with the act of intention (*nīyya*) for the funeral prayer, four *takbīrs*, and without bowing or prostration. The wearing of white, hemp mourning robes in keeping with Confucian tradition is another point of controversy between congregations.

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<sup>274</sup> Holding a funeral prayer for a Muslim is an obligation incumbent on community as a whole (a *farḍ kifāya*) rather than individual Muslims (*farḍ al-‘ayn*). Other questions of classification have spurred debate. Some believe that the *janāza* prayer is a supplication (*du‘a*) to God for the benefit of the deceased; others believe that it is the deceased’s final act of worship (*ṣalā*), done on his or her behalf by the living with a modified procedure and without the full prostrations. Depending on where one stands on this point, one may or may not wear shoes during the *janāza*. Some argue that because the *janāza* is worship, congregants must perform the normal pre-worship ablutions and be ritually clean, and thus may not wear shoes (as they would not in normal worship), since shoes touch the ground and are unclean. On the other hand, if the *janāza* is just supplication and not worship, then shoes may be worn since the conditions for ritual purity do not apply. On top of this, some insist that shoes *must* be worn, citing a hadith that instructs Muslims to differentiate themselves from Jews, who putatively remove shoes for worship and funerals. Still others insist that whether one wears shoes does not matter as long as they are clean.



After the *janāza*, mourners may encircle the bier and perform the *isqāt* (Ch. *yisigati*), the “expiation” of any worship or fasting neglected by the deceased. Those who have formed a circle take turns chanting verses from the Quran. Some “pass money” (*zhuan qian*) contributed by the deceased’s family from reciter to reciter. The sum is calculated based on how many religious obligations the deceased has neglected and is donated to the mosque or given as charity. Others “pass scripture” (*zhuan jing*), passing around the Quran and not money.<sup>275</sup>

After the *isqāt*, the bier is taken to the graveyard for burial. In earlier centuries this would have been done by a procession directly from the mosque to the graveyard, but as graveyards have been pushed out of cities, congregants may first travel by car or bus to the graveyard and then assemble for the procession. An L-shaped (down into the ground with a nook to the side where the corpse is placed) grave is dug in advance, and when the procession reaches it, the shrouded corpse is removed from the bier and interred without a coffin. If the deceased was a woman, the corpse is covered with a tarp as it is transferred from the bier into the grave. Some congregations have the practice of inscribing (usually done by the prayer leader or cleric) the *tasmiya* or a verse from the Quran on the burial shroud, while others insist that this is an unlawful innovation.

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<sup>275</sup> “Passing scripture” is condemned by some on the grounds that it attributes monetary value to the (invaluable) Quran.



**Figure 3.3: Burial in Nanyang.** About an hour's drive from a mosque in the old city of Nanyang, funeral attendees reconvene for the burial. Pictured left: the bier, delivered by truck, will now be carried by attendees. For this congregation, women join in the burial. Pictured right: the shrouded corpse, removed from the bier, is placed inside the grave. The *ahong* will then inscribe a supplicatory prayer in Arabic on the shroud. Because the deceased was a woman, a tarp is held above the corpse as it is transferred from the bier into the grave. Note in both photos that some grieving relatives wear white mourning belts. Photos by author.

After the corpse is buried and the grave is sealed, a supplication is offered, after which it is traditional in some congregations offer other supplications at nearby graves. Here again positioning is controversial: some congregations insist that the prayer leader stands in front of the burial attendees and before the grave; others insist that he stand in front of both the grave and the attendees. Upon returning home from the graveyard, some congregations support the grieving family with food; others have the grieving family throw a feast for the congregation. Controversy may continue into the night and beyond, as communities differ in whether special congregational prayers are held the night of the burial and whether the 7<sup>th</sup>, 49<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup>-day and annual anniversaries are commemorated.

The performance of these collective rituals of Ramadan and death defined community. The range of practices and multiplicity of disagreements surrounding them reflect the maintenance of local, congregational identity in addition to a more general Islamic one. In other words, a mosque congregation articulated a distinct identity against several backdrops: the hegemonic institutions of imperial Confucianism, the cloistered compounds of monastic Buddhism, the diffuse panoplies of popular religion, and, perhaps more subtly but no less decisively, other mosques. Moreover, this identity comprised more than the accumulated customs of collective ritual. It was not just tacitly practiced; it was also explicitly discussed, and written about, by the community. As we will see in the next two sections, this collective writing, no less than the collective practice written about, was embedded in the broader social and economic life of the community.



**Figure 3.4: *Du‘a* (supplication) before family graves in Nanyang**, at the nearby grave of a relative after the burial is completed. The *ahong*, not visible here, stands on the other side of the grave stone, behind the trees. Note that three grieving family members wear white mourning belts. Photo by author.

### 3.2 Kaifeng, 1840



**Figure 3.5: Rubbing of the 1840 Great North Mosque Inscription (yang side).** Image courtesy of Ma Chao.

One day during the first third of the tenth lunar month of the twentieth year of the reign of the Daoguang Emperor, the elders of the Great North Mosque of Kaifeng convened to erect an inscribed stone tablet. This period corresponded to October 25<sup>th</sup> through November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1840—a correspondence known to few if any people in the city at the time.<sup>276</sup> A bit more than six feet tall, two feet wide, and around four inches thick, the tablet resembles stelae erected in temples, schools, government buildings, and other social spaces throughout China for millennia. Today preserved in a plastic case in one of the mosque’s side rooms, it originally stood in the mosque’s interior courtyard, where some other tablets commemorating donations to the mosque and recording some of the mosque’s former clerics still stand. This particular stone is a minor monument to a moment when the congregation’s leadership convened to articulate in writing some of their community’s basic rules. The outward-facing (*yang*) side of the tablet bears a multilingual inscription

<sup>276</sup> The Gregorian calendar was not adopted in China until 1912 and was not widely implemented until 1929, and foreign Christians who would promote its use were still far from Kaifeng, which in 1902 became the last provincial capital to open its gates to missionaries.

combining Arabic, Chinese, and a few words in Persian. The inscription combines two texts: an Arabic text composed much earlier (probably around 1743-44), copied from a separate tablet erected in 1744 in the same mosque, and a Chinese summary of part of the Arabic text, composed around the time of the inscription and erection of the newer tablet, in 1840. The Chinese summary does not appear on the older (1744) tablet. The fall 1840 gathering thus culminated two processes: a re-ratification of the Arabic text of the 1744 tablet, and a partial translation of it into Chinese.

The tablet opens with the *tasmiya* (“In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate”) followed by a verse from the Quran (4:59): “O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.” The reference to disagreement sets the stage for the next section of the text, which hints at the circumstances that led to the inscription and erection of “this stone.” “The way of the North Mosque of Bianliang” (an old name for Kaifeng) was once completely “traditional, Sunni, and Hanafi,” as manifested in the community’s strict adherence to thirteen “well-known practices.” But later “came those who disagreed with these practices...” The inscription enumerates in Arabic the thirteen practices, all of which pertain to various collective rituals such as congregational worship and funerals. It goes on to insist that all of these ritual practices are based on strong scriptural evidence, and then lists titles of 27 Arabic and Persian texts where such evidence can be found. Following the list of texts, another source is invoked. The author(s) asserts that “the path of China,” which includes the thirteen specified practices, is based on the proof-based teachings of Shaykh Wali Ma Tai Baba of Huguang (referring to present-day Hunan and Hubei Provinces), a moniker for the seventeenth-century

Hui literatus Ma Minglong (1597-1679). The Arabic text concludes with a self-referential explanation (“But this stone has been erected as a protection against novelties of mankind and deviation”) followed by the date according to the Hijri calendar.<sup>277</sup>

Beneath the Arabic text, written horizontally, are several lines of Chinese text, written vertically. The format itself indicates that the Chinese text comprises a list of discrete items. Farthest to the right, opening the Chinese text, is the title: “Enumeration of the Thirteen Articles.” The thirteen practices are then written in a combination of Chinese as well as Arabic and Persian vocabulary transliterated into Chinese characters. Unlike in the Arabic above, here each practice receives its own line, each set off by a dash. All this is followed by a collective signature and date from which we glean the setting described earlier: “On an auspicious day in the first third of the tenth month of the twentieth year of the Daoguang Era (again, 25 October-3 November 1840), the elders of the mosque convened for the public erection of [this] stone.” A full translation of the inscription (excluding the 27 titles, which may be found in other studies) may be found in Figure 3.10 (section divisions inserted by author and do not appear in original text) at the end of the chapter.

The polyglot textual tradition to which this outstanding source attests merits far more attention than can be given here. The handful of studies that examine this tablet read it primarily as a record of intellectual history and Islamic scholastic culture in China.<sup>278</sup> Here, however, I

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<sup>277</sup> The Hijri date written is the seventh month of the year 1121, corresponding to 1709. As Ma Chao has shown, this Hijri year was likely miscalculated, and should correspond to 1743-44. In either case, however, the date the Arabic composition long precedes (by most of if not more than a century) the date of the erection of the tablet (1840).

<sup>278</sup> Li Xinghua 李兴华, *Zhongguo yisilanjiao shi* 中国伊斯兰教史 (A History of Chinese Islam), 618–23; Ma Chao 马超 and Ma Xiaoyu 马晓玉, “Henan yisilanjiao guxing bei chutan: yi zhuxianzhen qingzhensi nan beiting wei li” 河南伊斯兰教古行碑初探——以朱仙镇清真寺南碑亭为例 (A Preliminary Exploration of Steles of the Ancient Practices of Islam in Henan--The Case of the Southern Stele Pavilion of the Zhuxianzhen Mosque); Ma Chao 马超, “Jingxue dashi she yunshan ‘shiba tiao’ zhuzhang kaoshu” 经学大师舍蕴善“十八条”主张考述 (A Textual Study of the Positions of the “Eighteen Articles” of the Master of Classical Learning She Yunshan); Nakanishi 中西, Morimoto 森本, and Kuroiwa 黒岩, “17-18 seiki kōtaiki no chūgoku kokōha isurāmu: Kaihō shusenchin no

want to take a more social-historical approach to this source as an artifact of a specific moment in the congregation's history.

The significance of this tablet for our understanding of ritual in Hui community lies as much in its spatial and temporal context as it does in the text itself. It was no accident that the elders of the Great North Mosque gathered when they did: the first third the Chinese lunar calendar's tenth month in 1840 corresponds to the beginning of the Hijri calendar's ninth month—Ramadan, which lasted from late October through late November that year. Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr immediately following it formed a period of homecoming and gathering.<sup>279</sup> Eid al-Fitr functioned for Hui kinship networks as the Spring Festival (marking the lunar new year) and the Tomb-Sweeping Festival did in wider Chinese society: as an occasion to gather, strengthen relations, and participate in the imperially sanctioned culture of filial piety.<sup>280</sup> It was also a time of intensified economic exchange, including almsgiving and other donations of money and grain, and of a change in community leadership, when some congregations hired and dismissed clerics and rotated mosque directors.<sup>281</sup>

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arabiago hibun no kentō kara” 17・18 世紀交替期の中国古行派イスラーム：開封・朱仙鎮のアラビア語碑文の検討から (Islam of the Old-Practice Sect at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century: A Study of Arabic Inscriptions from Kaifeng and Zhuxianzhen); Weil, “The Vicissitudes,” 217–19.

<sup>279</sup> Mosque attendance increased around Ramadan: two late nineteenth-century inscriptions commemorating expansion of the West Ta Mosque in Luoyang specify the crowding within the prayer hall around Ramadan and fast-breaking when explaining the need for additional space. Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 280–83.

<sup>280</sup> As recorded in the 1883 edition of their genealogy (*jiapu*), the “family rules” of the Zhao family of Fengqiu County (the county to the north of Kaifeng), many of whom at the time resided in Liuyuan on the outskirts of Kaifeng, required that “Every year after the fast-breaking festival, [the lineage] shall gather in Liuyuan Village, go together to visit the graves of our ancestors, and reminisce amid the affection [felt for those of our] lineage.” Ma Wenqing 马文清, *Huizu puxu yu zongyuan kaolue* 回族谱序与宗源考略 (Survey of Genealogy Frontmatter and Ancestral Origins of the Hui Nationality), 679–83.

<sup>281</sup> An 1877 inscription in a mosque in Longhui County in Hunan, for example, specifies in the nineteenth rule of its “compact” (*gui yue*) that mosque leadership (“elders in charge”) shall change hands based on collective discussion (*gong yi*) each year at Eid al-Fitr. Yu Zhengui 余振贵 and Lei Xiaojing 雷晓静, *Zhongguo huizu jinshi lu* 中国回族金石录 (Recorded Inscriptions of the Hui Nationality of China), 386–87.

We find further indication of Ramadan as a period of gathering, exchange, and decision-making if we turn to the *yin*, “inward-facing” side of the tablet. Inscribed on this side is a different sort of memorialized norm: not a list of rules, but a contract, dated, like Chinese inscription on the *yang* side, to the tenth month of twentieth year of the Daoguang Era, i.e. late October through late November 1840, roughly the month of Ramadan for that year. Notwithstanding the inclusion of some Arabic text (such as the *tasmiya*) in the upper portion of the inscription, the Chinese text is a conventional late imperial donation contract, specifying the voluntary nature of the donation, the parameters of the donated property and its purpose, and the admonition against any abuse.<sup>282</sup>

For the community of the Great North Mosque, ritual was not just something to be performed; it was something to be codified, and that codification was itself a culturally meaningful act. Codification linked the Great North Mosque elders to their ancestors: as mentioned, the 1840 Arabic text was copied from another of the mosque’s tablets inscribed about a century earlier. It also put them in conversation with nearby congregations with their own ritual rules. An Arabic text quite similar to that inscribed on the Great North Mosque’s 1744 and 1840 tablets is inscribed on a tablet erected in 1805 at the mosque in Zhuxianzhen, a once-thriving town on the Jialu River about 15 miles southwest of the old city of Kaifeng. The 1805 Zhuxianzhen inscription varies slightly from the Great North Mosque one in some vocabulary and in the explanation of why the stele was erected. It also gives a date of composition that long

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<sup>282</sup> The text records the donation by one Mr. Liu Baikui of some of his property (twenty rooms for shops by the Great North Gate Road, perpendicular to which runs the main path to the Great North Mosque) to the mosque “in perpetuity” (*yong yuan wei ye*). It specifies the area of the property (“eastward to the cattle; westward to the street; northward to the wall of the houses”), the annual income from renting out the rooms (420 *qian* coins), and the use of that income for an “education fund” (*xue jin*) for an *ahong*. Like the *yang*-side inscription, the *yin*-side inscription also justifies itself: in order to ensure that the property and funds are used for their designated purposes, “besides lodging a file with the government... [this agreement] shall also be preserved forever in stone, to prevent any regrettable affairs in the future.” Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 280–81.



predates the date of erection (similar to the 1840 Great North Mosque tablet), and it is possible that an earlier tablet with the same text was erected in 1733 but has since been destroyed. In 1835, another tablet was erected in Zhuxianzhen, this time only in Chinese, with twelve (rather than thirteen) slightly different rules. A pair of tablets in a mosque in Fancheng, about 90 miles southwest of Kaifeng, include the same 1835 Zhuxianzhen rules in both Arabic and Chinese, as well as a preamble, list of titles, and other surrounding text similar to that found in the 1805 Zhuxianzhen Mosque tablet and the 1744 and 1840 Kaifeng Great north Mosque tablets.<sup>283</sup>

This constellation of tablets indicates that religious knowledge and personnel circulated among these congregations. However, the tradition they undeniably share should not obscure the uniqueness of each inscription and erection. I have already shown how the erection of the 1840 Great North Mosque tablet was tied to a specific moment in the life of that congregation. The content of the rules also reflects the uniqueness of each codification. For example, not all tablets include a rule about Ramadan moonsighting. Figure 3.6 lists nine tablets erected in Henan between 1744 and 1915.<sup>284</sup> It indicates both that farther congregations (in Biyang and Qinyang) also felt compelled to codify their rules in stone; and that the inclusion of a rule about moonsighting varied independently from time and place.<sup>285</sup> Through codification, a congregation asserted its uniqueness as much as its connections to the larger shared tradition.

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<sup>283</sup> Ma Chao, “Jingxue dashi she yunshan ‘shiba tiao’ zhuzhang kaoshu”; Ma Chao 马超, “Qingdai henan yisilan jingxue yanjiu” 清代河南伊斯兰经学研究 (A Study of Islamic Classical Learning in Henan during Qing Dynasty), 154–55; Ma Chao and Ma Xiaoyu, “Henan yisilanjiao guxing bei chutan: yi zhuxianzhen qingzhensi nan beiting wei li”; Weil, “The Vicissitudes,” 217–19; Nakanishi, Morimoto, and Kuroiwa, “17-18 seiki kōtaiki no chūgoku kokōha isurāmu: Kaihō shusenchin no arabiago hibun no kentō kara.”

<sup>284</sup> To the six addressed above (as indicated in Figure 3.6 nos.: 6.1, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7) I have added three: a 1787 tablet at the Great East (not north) Mosque of Kaifeng (6.2), a 1877 tablet in Biyang in southwestern Henan (6.8), and a 1915 tablet (6.9) in the Qinyang Great Mosque in northern Henan. The 1787 one (6.2) contains just seven rules; the 1877 (6.8) and 1915 (6.9) ones are lengthier inscriptions dealing with just one rule: the timing of Ramadan.

<sup>285</sup> The Great North Mosque in Kaifeng originally (6.1) had no moonsighting rule. In 1787, the nearby Great East (not North) Mosque congregation chose to include a moonsighting rule on a tablet. In 1805, the Zhuxianzhen Mosque congregation erected a tablet with the same rules as the 1744 Great North Mosque one, and then thirty years later (1835) erected another one with a moonsighting inscription. Subsequently, in 1840, the Great North Mosque

| Figure 3.6<br>Two Centuries of Moonsighting Rule Inscriptions in Henan <sup>286</sup> |              |                            |                   |                    |
|---|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| No.   | Year Erected | Mosque                     | Language of rules | Moonsighting rule? |
| 6.1   | 1744         | Kaifeng Great North Mosque | Ar.               | No                 |
| 6.2   | 1787         | Kaifeng Great East Mosque  | Ch.               | Yes                |
| 6.3   | 1805         | Zhuxianzhen Mosque         | Ar.               | No                 |
| 6.4   | 1835         | Zhuxianzhen Mosque         | Ch.               | Yes                |
| 6.5   | 1840         | Kaifeng Great North Mosque | Ar. + Ch.         | No                 |
| 6.6   | 1867         | Fancheng Mosque            | Ar.               | Yes                |
| 6.7   | 1867         | Fancheng Mosque            | Ch.               | Yes                |
| 6.8   | 1877         | Biyang Baiqiudian Mosque   | Ch.               | Yes                |
| 6.9   | 1915         | Qinyang Great Mosque       | Ar.               | Yes                |

As suggested earlier, this inter-congregational ritual discourse took place within a larger context in which ritual, and writing about ritual, were central elements of Qing ideology and elite culture. By inscribing and erecting these tablets, congregation leaders performed an act that was recognizably Confucian. Indeed, community members trained in the Confucian classics and other aspects of literati culture played an important role in these inscriptions too. The 1835 Zhuxianzhen Mosque tablet was calligraphed by one Xie Guanglin, an imperial examination degree-holder and teacher at the prefectural academy. Moreover, a closer inspection of other tablets reveals that Xie was one of the directors (*dongshi*) of Kaifeng's Wenshu Temple Street Mosque (henceforth "Wenshu Mosque") and composed and calligraphed the contract on the *yin* side of the 1840 tablet in the Great North Mosque.<sup>287</sup>

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evidently declined to follow either the Zhuxianzhen congregation or the Great East Mosque congregation and re-ratified the old inscription on a new tablet without including a moonsighting rule, in contrast to the Fancheng Mosque congregation, which in 1867 reproduced the Zhuxianzhen Mosque's 1835 Chinese inscription along with a modified Arabic inscription.

<sup>286</sup> Data drawn from Ma Chao, "Qingdai henan yisilan jingxue yanjiu," 154–55; Ma Chao, "Jingxue dashi she yunshan 'shiba tiao' zhuzhang kaoshu."

<sup>287</sup> Guo Baoguang 郭宝光, "Kaifeng shi huizu guji mingke shuji lei tiyao zongmu huibian" 开封市回族古籍铭刻书记类提要总目汇编 (Catalogued Compilation of Ancient Writings, Carved Inscriptions, and Books of the Hui Nationality of Kaifeng City), 284; Ma Chao and Ma Xiaoyu, "Henan yisilanjiao guxing bei chutan: yi zhuxianzhen qingzhensi nan beiting wei li," 32; Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 280–81.

The built environment of Kaifeng must have made the Great North Mosque congregation even more acutely aware of this cultural context. These congregations resided within the walls of an ancient Chinese dynastic capital that still served as the seat of both the Henan provincial government and the Xiangfu County government. The county yamen, the imperial examination hall, and the Manchu garrison, were all a short walk from the Great North Mosque and two of the other four mosques located within the city in 1840. As the map below (Figure 3.7) indicates, these mosques were also located close to other religious institutions, including multiple Buddhist monasteries and dozens of shrines and smaller temples. This was a society whose elites took concern of ritual propriety as a mark of refinement and legitimacy. To a non-Muslim who happened to come across the tablet, whether a monk familiar with the commandments (*jielü*) of his monastery, or a minor official versed in the *Family Rituals* of Zhu Xi, the 1840 tablet and summarized translation conveyed a familiar and culturally sanctioned message: we have rules too.

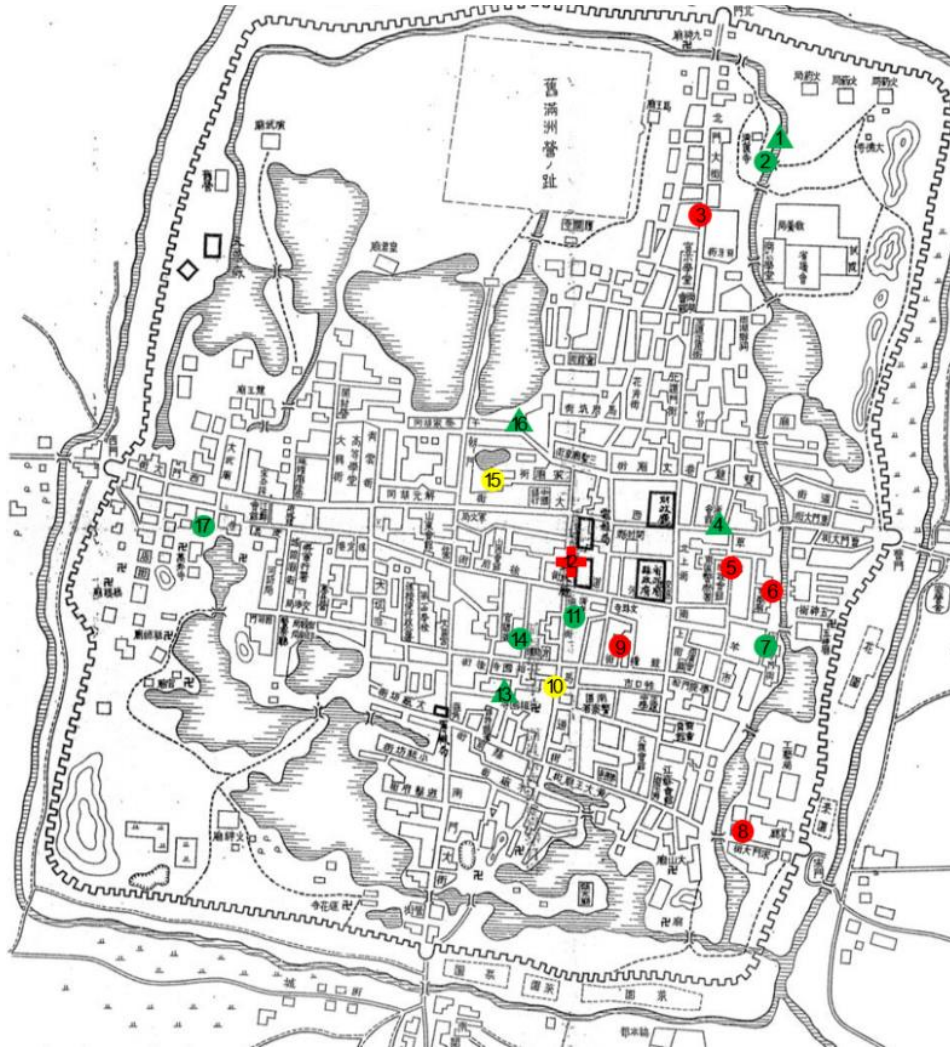


Figure 3.7: Major Religious Institutions in Qing and Republican Kaifeng. Circle = mosque; triangle = Buddhist monastery; cross = cathedral. Green = built pre-nineteenth century. Yellow = built during nineteenth century. Red = built during twentieth century.<sup>288</sup>

| Figure 3.7: Key |                                  |               |    |                               |               |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|---------------|----|-------------------------------|---------------|
| #               | Name                             | Built/Rebuilt | #  |                               | Built/Rebuilt |
| 1               | Iron Pagoda (Buddhist) Temple    | Song          | 10 | Shanyitang Mosque             | Early 1870s   |
| 2               | Great North Mosque               | Song          | 11 | Wenshu Temple St. Mosque      | Ming          |
| 3               | Beimen St. Mosque                | 1933          | 12 | Catholic Cathedral of Kaifeng | 1919          |
| 4               | Baiyi Pavilion (Buddhist) Temple | Ming          | 13 | Xiangguo (Buddhist) Temple    | Tang          |
| 5               | Jiaojing Hutong Mosque           | 1937          | 14 | Sanmin Hutong Mosque          | Song          |
| 6               | Wangjia Hutong Mosque            | 1937          | 15 | Jiamiao St. Mosque            | 1851          |
| 7               | Great East Mosque                | Song/Ming     | 16 | Baozhu (Buddhist) Nunnery     | 1925          |
| 8               | Songmen Mosque                   | 1920          | 17 | Xipiqu Mosque                 | Song          |
| 9               | Hongheyan Mosque                 | 1922          |    |                               |               |

<sup>288</sup> Base map taken from: Sanbō Honbun 参謀本部, “Sōga 59 kaifon shinai shuyō hōgeki mokuhyō” 挿図 59 開封市内主要爆撃目標 (Major Bombardment Targets Within the City of Kaifeng).

### 3.3 Kaifeng, 1935

The New Year brought a new periodical to the burgeoning Hui press. On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1935, the inaugural issue of the journal *Islam* was published in Kaifeng. The publisher, the Henan Islamic Society, was located off the city's central east-west thoroughfare of Gulou Street and around the corner from the Wenshu Mosque. *Islam* was printed farther down Gulou Street at the Henan branch of the Commercial Press.

The journal was based on a network of relationships at once more remote and more intimate than the unadorned front and backmatter suggest (see Figure 3.8). Contributors wrote from Beijing and Shanghai as well as Kaifeng, and short news items came in from as far as Qinghai. The editor, a young Bai Shouyi (1909-2000)<sup>289</sup> back home in Kaifeng after completing his studies at Beijing's prestigious Yenching University, wrote of his desire for contributions from different places.<sup>290</sup> Bai likely had in mind as a model the growing number of Hui periodicals based in Beijing and other eastern cities that featured writings and news from across the country and around the world. Chief among these was *Yue Hua (Crescent China)*, the flagship Hui periodical based at the Islamic Chengda Teachers' Academy in Beijing, whose faculty and students Bai acknowledged as close collaborators in his new enterprise.<sup>291</sup>

These ties were local as much as institutional: one Chengda associate, Hu Shiwen (c. 1908-?), was the nephew of the recently departed *ahong* of the Wenshu Mosque; another, Zheng Guangrong (1905-1960), was a native of Kaifeng and had studied at the Wenshu Mosque (under the teacher of Hu's uncle) prior to enrolling in the Chengda Academy. Not just the content of *Islam* but the mechanics of printing it depended on such personal relationships. Bai himself was

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<sup>289</sup> Bai Zhide 白至德, *Bai shouyi de shixue shengya* 白寿彝的史学生涯 (Bai Shouyi's Career in Historical Studies).

<sup>290</sup> Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, "Bianji houji" 编辑后记 (Editor's Postscript).

<sup>291</sup> Bai Shouyi.

a manager at the Henan Commercial Press, which had been established around 1920 by Wei Ziqing (1870-1929), a Hui entrepreneur, former chairman of the provincial chamber of commerce, director of the Great East Mosque, and a business partner of Bai's father, Bai Jifu (c. 1850-1932).<sup>292</sup>

The date of publication coincided with the last ten days of Ramadan and came just before Layla al-Qadr, the Night of the Decree, on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. It would be a night of worship and reflection in each of the city's nine mosques, which, as the first issue of *Islam* reported, had all reported moonsightings on the same night in early December and therefore "entered the fast" in unison. The journal also included a separate corroborating message from the Shanghai Mosque Federation reporting that the congregations under its purview had jointly determined that the Ramadan moon had been seen on the night of December 7<sup>th</sup> (as had, separately and individually, the nine congregations in Kaifeng), began the fast on December 8<sup>th</sup>, and determined that January 2<sup>nd</sup> would be the date of Layla al-Qadr.<sup>293</sup>

Like the journal in which it was published, the Shanghai message implicated a web of personal relationships never made explicit but nonetheless of great importance to some of the city's Hui notables. The message explains that an *ahong* and hajji by the name of Wang Mingde had been in Shanghai on business and, on December 7<sup>th</sup>, alerted the Federation that people in Huaiqing in northern Henan, his hometown, had reported a moonsighting. As one of the few Henanese Huis in those days to have made the Hajj, he would certainly have been a known personage among Kaifeng's Hui leadership, and his prestige was further enhanced by having studied under the renowned *ahong* who had just left his position at Kaifeng's Great East Mosque

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<sup>292</sup> Kaifeng Shi Di Er Jing Gongyeju Gongyezhi Bianjishi 开封市第二轻工业局工业志编辑室, "Yinshua gongye" 印刷工业 (Printing Industry), 104; Chen Tingliang, "Wei Ziqing"; Ma Zhiyuan, "Henan zaoqi shiyejia wei ziqing."

<sup>293</sup> "Baogao xin yue" 报告新月 (Reporting the New Moon).

for a new appointment in Huaqing. The message also specified the mosques whose clerics (unnamed) gathered to assess and ultimately accept Wang's claim. Two of the five Shanghai mosques listed had clerics with close ties to Kaifeng. One was a native of Kaifeng and had been the teacher of the aforementioned Zheng Guangrong and Hushiwen's uncle; the other was another rare Henanese hajji from the west of the province. Both had previously served at the Wenshu Mosque.



**Figure 3.8: The Republican-era Hui press.** Pictured left: the front page of the inaugural issue of *Islam*, printed and published in Kaifeng in January 1935. Photo taken from the Shanghai Library's Full-Text Periodical Database. Pictured right: "Moslem Publications," various Chinese Muslim weeklies and monthlies collected and photographed by the Reverend Claude Pickens, Jr., c. 1934-1935. Photo taken from the Pickens Collection at the Harvard-Yenching Library, item number CP03.28.03.

Like the Great North Mosque tablet erected during Ramadan a century earlier, *Islam* represented an act of collective writing about ritual itself set apart in ritual time. Ramadan remained central to the social and economic life of mosque congregations in the 1930s. Tithing and donations were typically given at the end of the month. This year, as reported in the first issue of *Islam*, a Muslim in the bathhouse business in nearby Zhengzhou donated a new water boiler to Kaifeng's Great East Mosque, whose congregants from over 3,000 households

continually ran out of hot water in the ablution chambers (and this year Ramadan fell during the cold months of December-January).<sup>294</sup> This year's Ramadan also occasioned collective economic action: as was also reported in *Islam*, in late December the city's lamb and cattle slaughterers, virtually all of whom belonged to the Great East Mosque, had halted work in response to onerous new taxes and regulations on butchering.<sup>295</sup> (They resumed work on February 1<sup>st</sup> after an agreement was reached with the local government).<sup>296</sup>

The collective rituals of Ramadan thus reconsolidated ties that held a congregation together. But they also accentuated ritual differences between congregations. It was (and remains) not uncommon for mosques quite close to one another to begin and end Ramadan on different dates. This discordance was repeatedly reported and lamented in the Hui press, and Pang Shiqian mentions in his memoirs that one year in Kaifeng Ramadan began on no fewer than four different days.<sup>297</sup> Even in December 1934, when the nine congregations of Kaifeng all began the fast on the same date, the timing of the daily fast could still be a matter of contention. According to Guo Qingxin, an *ahong* from Kaifeng who taught at the Wenshu Mosque, some mosques tended to begin the fast slightly later and end the fast slightly earlier, with the effect that every evening during Ramadan one set of mosques would announce the end of the fast, and ten minutes later a second set would do the same—a recurring sonic reminder of the lack of ritual synchrony.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>294</sup> “Dongdasi shuifang tian zhi guolu” 东大寺水房添置锅炉 (Additional Boiler Installed in Ablution Hall of the Great East Mosque).

<sup>295</sup> “Niu yang tuye quanti tingye” 牛羊屠业全体停业 (Cow and Sheep Butchers Collectively Halt Work).

<sup>296</sup> “Niu yang tu shang quanti fuye” 牛羊屠商全体复业 (Cow and Sheep Butchers and Merchants Collectively Resume Business).

<sup>297</sup> Pang Shiqian, *Aiji jiu nian*, 109.

<sup>298</sup> Bai Zongzheng, “开封伊斯兰教派简介,” 402.



As described in Chapter Two, Hui civic institutions, including local Islamic associations, periodicals, libraries, preaching venues, and schools, proliferated in Henan (and throughout China) in the 1920s and 1930s. In general, these institutions were located within or next to a mosque, but they typically also served or represented multiple congregations. Thus in addition to their stated purposes of education, publishing, and so forth, these institutions intensified interaction between mosque congregations.

In counties where mosques were dispersed, this inter-congregational interaction was usually limited to planned assemblies such as the inauguration ceremony or elections for the county's Islamic association. For example, in March 1933 the nine congregations spread throughout Jia County in central Henan dispatched representatives to the county town, where one mosque was located, for the opening ceremony of the Jia County Islamic Association, where they welcomed more than 400 attendees (the ceremony had been scheduled during Ramadan, in January, but was postponed due to inclement weather).<sup>299</sup> A similar event was held in Liushudian, Gushi County in southeastern Henan in late June 1932. Elders and *ahongs* from eleven of the county's mosques assembled in front of the Liushudian Mosque with representatives from the local government, schools, and professional associations to inaugurate the county's Islamic association.<sup>300</sup>

Inter-congregational interaction was naturally more frequent in towns and cities, where mosque multiplicity (see the Introduction) was more common. As we have seen, Kaifeng was exceptionally dense in terms of the number of mosque congregations within the city walls. But by 1935-1937, it was one of several counties in the province where a single association brought

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<sup>299</sup> “Zheng xian huijiaohui chengli zhi” 郑县[回]教会成立志 (Record of the Establishment of the Islamic Association of Zheng County).

<sup>300</sup> Yang Qingsheng 杨庆升, “Gushi xian liushudian huijiaohui shimo ji” 固始县柳树店回教会始末记 (Record of the Islamic Association of Liushudian, Gushi County from Beginning to End).

together multiple neighbor congregations. Of the 24 counties in that period with a county-level Islamic association, 10 had the association headquartered in a locale (in most cases the county seat) with multiple mosques.<sup>301</sup> The burgeoning railroad towns of Yancheng and Zhengzhou, the old river hub of Zhoukou and Huaiyang, and the historic Hui center of Luoyang (like Kaifeng) had a particularly high ratio of nearby mosques to associations.

These institutions were intended to foster unity, but they could also accentuate inter-congregational tensions. The close quarters of urban life were not necessarily conducive to harmony. Disagreements about ritual could separate congregations that were physically quite close to one another. Besides Ramadan, another traditional occasion for Hui gathering was Mawlid, the commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's birth (and by some traditions, death). In March 1932, the Kaifeng Islamic Association took advantage of the Mawlid ceremony in the Great Eastern Mosque to report to an assembly of over one thousand congregants. A report on the gathering in *Crescent China* notes that an *ahong* from the Sanmin Hutong Mosque down the road joined the ceremony to deliver the *wa'z* exhortation.<sup>302</sup> Conspicuously absent was any participation by the cleric of the Wenshu Mosque, which is just as close (a short walk) as the Sanmin Hutong Mosque to the Great Eastern Mosque but rejects observance of Mawlid as an unlawful practice.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>301</sup> Based on author's survey of mosque, county, and provincial gazetteers and Republican-era surveys.

<sup>302</sup> "Kaifeng dongdasi buzhu shengji dahui" 开封东大寺补祝圣忌大会.

<sup>303</sup> Mawlid was yet another point of contention between congregations and in the Muslim press. The first issue of *Yislan* included one article, "The Origins of Mawlid," in which the author, a Henanese Muslim studying at the Chengda Academy in Beijing, repudiated the practice. By that time, the old Kaifeng Islamic Association had been reconstituted as the Kaifeng Islamic Guild, headquartered at the Wenshu Mosque.



**Figure 3.9: *Sheng Ji* (Mawlid) in West Liu Homestead.** Pictured left: *Ahongs* from the twenty-five Hui villages in Yuzhou (in central Henan) sit together in the front of the prayer hall to recite praise (*madh*) of the Prophet Muhammad, while congregants listen from behind. Women attend but are segregated in a separate section. The screen in the distance cycles through pictures of Mawlid celebrations in other countries. Pictured right: the festive meal (soup with lamb, eaten with bread as seen in the bundle in the middle of the table without people) after the Mawlid ceremony, which men and women both attend. Photos by author.

In Kaifeng the various congregations apparently managed to participate in a single association, even as disputes over ritual split congregations and led to the building of even more mosques. But differences were not always so easily reconcilable. In a widely reported case in Guisui (what is today Hohhot in Inner Mongolia), representation of the eight mosques of the city was split between the Municipal Islamic Progress Association and the Provincial Islamic Progress Association. By late 1931, the city's New Teaching faction controlled the municipal association, while the Old Teaching faction controlled the provincial one.<sup>304</sup> A decade later, in Huaidian in central-eastern Henan, it was cause for celebration that the Islamic association there had finally managed to bring together for Eid al-Fitr the town's four mosques, split between the New and Old Teachings.<sup>305</sup>

<sup>304</sup> “Suiyuan huimin xin jiu zhi zheng” 綏遠回民新旧之争 (Dispute between New and Old among the Hui of Suiyuan); “Xin jiu zhi zheng” 新旧之争 (The Dispute between New and Old).

<sup>305</sup> “Henan shenqiu huaidianzhen huibao relie juxing kaizhai dianli” 河南沈丘槐店镇回胞热烈举行开斋典礼 (Hui Brothers of Huaidianzhen in Shenqiu, Henan Enthusiastically Hold Ceremony for Breaking the Fast).

New media technology had a similarly ambiguous effect on inter-congregational unity. We saw in the Shanghai Mosque Federation's message above how the periodical press could be used to synchronize ritual practice in different locales: the hajji from Huaiqing had been in Shanghai when he received word from back home that the new moon had been seen, which he told to the Mosque Federation leadership, who sent a message to the Henan Islamic Society in Kaifeng, which published the message in *Islam*. For this Ramadan (1934-35), every link on the chain worked in concert, but things could, and often did, prove more troublesome thanks in part to the increasingly available and increasingly entangled press and telegraph.

The frustrating cacophony of moonsighting claims was expressed vividly around Ramadan of 1928—a leap year in the Chinese calendar requiring an intercalary month—by Wang Jingzhai, an *ahong* in Tianjin and editor of the periodical *Yi Guang* (Light of Islam). Wang wrote in terms of the Chinese lunar calendar and the Hijri calendar; I have indicated the Gregorian correspondences in parentheses:

On day two of the second month of this year (February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1928), the moon had not yet been seen in Beijing, Tianjin, [Inner] Mongolia, or Shanghai, and so those places fasted on day four (February 24<sup>th</sup>). During the last month notice was sent from Shanghai saying that there a message had been received from Suiyuan saying that the moon had been seen on day two (February 22<sup>nd</sup>), and that on this basis, the moon of Shawwal (the tenth month of the Islamic calendar, after Ramadan) should be sought on day one (of the next lunar month, the intercalary month in the Chinese lunar calendar, i.e. March 22<sup>nd</sup>). But [here in] Tianjin, because I expected that nobody would accept this statement, I did not transmit it.

Wang's difficulties did not end here. Access to foreign information, generally celebrated in the Hui press, only complicated matters further:

In addition, as I wrote last month, I received another bizarre report saying that a Russian in Vladivostok had telegraphed a Russian in Fengtian saying that there [in Vladivostok] the moon had been seen on day one (February 21<sup>st</sup>) of the second month. This

statement was even less worthy of recognition, it goes without saying. I then heard news that on day one of the second month (February 21<sup>st</sup>), the weather in Beijing had not been clear, but that in Niujie, Tianqiao, Outer-Pingzemen Flower Market, and West-Beijing Changxindian (all congregations in Beijing), it was estimated that as many as several tens of people at the same time sought and saw the moon, upon which they sent word to their respective places. And so there were those who acknowledged [the new moon] that evening (February 21<sup>st</sup>), and those who acknowledged it the next day (February 22<sup>nd</sup>) after verification. Thus the more than thirty *jun* (a small administrative division) of Beijing were divided among those who broke the fast on the three days of day two (March 23<sup>rd</sup>), day three (March 24<sup>th</sup>), and day four (March 25<sup>th</sup>)—truly an unprecedented situation.<sup>306</sup>

Telegraphy exacerbated the difficulties of reporting and following moonsightings. In this case, greater interconnectivity simply brought Wang more conflicting claims, dubious reports, and editorial dilemmas. As a prominent *ahong* and editor of an important Hui journal, Wang likely received more reports than most, and so his circumstances were exceptionally vexing. On the other hand, reports of Ramadan timing disparities were a recurring element of the Hui press in this era. During Ramadan of 1948, an *ahong* in Zhoukou (in central-eastern Henan) wrote that for not one of the 27 years he had been observing Ramadan had the eight mosques in his city entered the fast in unison.<sup>307</sup>

### 3.4 The Ritual Constitution of the National Public

In the preceding sections I examined the role of ritual in Muslim communities in two acts, each centered on one scene: the 1840 erection of a tablet at the Great North Mosque in Kaifeng, and the 1935 publication of the Hui periodical *Islam*, also in Kaifeng. A common

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<sup>306</sup> Wang Jingzhai 王静斋, “Jin nian kai zhai fen zhai zhi fenluan” 今年开斋封斋之纷乱 (Many Chaotic Cases of Breaking the Fast and Closing the Fast This Year).

<sup>307</sup> Liu Fuchu 刘复初, “Xin yue wenti yi feng gongkai taolun de xin” 新月问题一封公开讨论的信 (A Letter of Open Discussion of the New Moon Question).

element in both acts was the ritual constitution of Hui community: the interplay of the practice of and discourse about ritual. Ritual constituted Hui communal relations even as the basic media and scope of those relations transformed dramatically, from stone tablets to printed periodicals and telegraphs, from ritually defined congregations to a national Hui public.

From the investigation above we can draw two broad conclusions about the structure and function of the national Hui public that emerged in early twentieth century. First, complex, higher-order relationships did not replace but were built on top of simpler ones: the national upon the congregational, the institutional upon the personal. This public was “imagined”<sup>308</sup> in the sense that far-flung strangers perceived themselves and each other to be part of something larger and moving through time together. But that perception was enabled and framed by a scaffold of institutions and technology holding together the irregular bricks of thousands of congregations.

Second, ritual remained integral to Hui community as it expanded into its modern form of a national public. This point is counterintuitive in two respects. First, some of the most consequential political forces in early twentieth-century China were defined by a fierce criticism of ritual and its alleged obstruction of social, cultural, and political progress. The young radicals of the New Culture Movement in the 1910s decried what they saw as the intractable conservatism of Confucianism, which they famously derided as a “cannibalizing” ritual teaching (*lijiao chi ren*).<sup>309</sup> The reactionary New Life Movement in the 1930s sought not to restore the traditional Confucian order but to commandeer its practices and symbols for the legitimation of the Nationalist Party’s modernization and militarization of society.<sup>310</sup> The ferocious iconoclasm and modernism of the era, even under the guise of New Life neo-traditionalism, “peripheralized”

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<sup>308</sup> Benedict R Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006).

<sup>309</sup> Lee, *Voices from the Iron House*, 54.

<sup>310</sup> Dirlik, “The Ideological Foundations of the New Life Movement”; Clinton, *Revolutionary Nativism*, chap. 4.

the ritual core of Chinese identity, at least among many urban elites.<sup>311</sup> The same cannot be said of Hui identity, and therefore community, both of which, though by no means unaltered by modernity, have remained centrally defined by ritual.

This persisting centrality of ritual is also counterintuitive in light of more general expectations about ritual and modernity. It is by now a commonplace to state that religion did not disappear but rather transformed as societies become more complex, atomized, and functionally differentiated. One repeatedly identified pattern in the modern transformation of religion is “rationalization”: broadly, the systematization of beliefs, symbols, and practices according to some totalizing conception of the nature and meaning of the world.<sup>312</sup> Modernity may not have inaugurated this process, but it has accelerated and intensified it. One of its recurring casualties has been ritual, widely regarded as an irrational vestige, formality, or the mere outer expression of inner meaning. In this view of ritual we find a curious convergence of perspectives: the Protestant missionary who sees in it the hollowness of faith; the New Culture radical who sees in it the constraint of tradition; and even the occasional contributor to the Hui press who, like the author of the passage quoted in the introduction of this chapter, bemoans division of a would-be united nation.

What accounts for the persistence of ritual in Hui community against these countervailing forces? The anthropologist Mary Douglas has posited a correspondence between the rigidity of social positions and the strictness and intricacy of ritual practice. Based on the theory that bodily

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<sup>311</sup> Harrison has documented repeated efforts by the Nationalist Party to construct a ritual basis for the political identity of Republican citizens even prior to the New Life Movement in the 1930s. Likewise, Nedostup has shown how the Nationalist Party-state in the 1930s sought to appropriate ritual spaces (temples) to cultivate their own political authority. In different ways these two accounts challenge the notion that the modern Chinese state has simply abolished tradition, but neither undermines the narrative of cultural rupture in early twentieth-century China. Harrison, *The Making of the Republican Citizen*; Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.

<sup>312</sup> For a synthesis of much of the work on this subject by Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Bellah, see Geertz, Clifford, “‘Internal Conversion’ in Contemporary Bali,” 171–75.

practice reflects social structure, Douglas argues that highly structured societies with fixed and well-defined roles will tend to be more ritualistic, while more egalitarian or liberal societies will tend toward anti-ritualism, elaborating instead a religion and, more broadly, culture, that match the individualist pursuit of meaning.<sup>313</sup>

At root here is an understanding of ritual as a “condensed symbol”: a ritual is not an expression of a single value or belief but an instantiation of an entire symbolic system and identity.<sup>314</sup> Regarding the working-class “Bog Irish” Catholics in 1960s London, Douglas contends that their abstention from eating meat on Fridays should be understood as an assertion of identity against a social order from which they were increasingly alienated rather than as some irrational vestige of tradition. In another well-known example, the “Abominations of Leviticus,” Douglas likewise maintains that the litany of ritual prohibitions observed by the Biblical Israelites were not, as they are often construed, encoded wisdom regarding the hazards of consuming certain animals, but an expression and means of maintaining purity. For Douglas, the concepts of purity and defilement describe, respectively, the maintenance and breach of categories by which a society classifies the natural world and which correspond to the organization of that society.<sup>315</sup> A hypothetical demonstration of the benefits of eating pork would not persuade against observance, because observance was not a matter of reasoned belief. Along somewhat similar lines, it has been argued elsewhere that the formality of ritual is the antithesis of open-ended inquiry and conversation.<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols : Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Routledge, 2003). For a useful synthesis of Douglas' writing on the function of condensed symbols, see Robert N. Bellah, “Durkheim and Ritual,” in *The Robert Bellah Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 165–70.

<sup>314</sup> Douglas' conceptualization of “condensed symbols” is based on Victor Turner's work. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols; Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, 19–47.

<sup>315</sup> Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 42–58.

<sup>316</sup> Bloch, “Symbols, Song, Dance and Features of Articulation: Is Religion an Extreme Form of Traditional Authority?”



This explanation of what Douglas calls the “contempt of ritual” in certain societies contains a clue to the account we seek. I want to return to the two scenes recounted earlier, in 1840 and 1935, and examine the logic of ritual rules. I have already traced two broad changes over time by focusing on the ritual constitution: the development of more widely and rapidly circulating media, and the expanding scale of community. To these I will now add a third. A comparison between ritual discourse in the two periods indicates a growing concern with justification and classification according to the categories of the shari‘a.

The thirteen rules inscribed on the 1840 tablet of Kaifeng’s Great North Mosque are instructions of practice. They do not instruct congregants to think about the acts one way or another; classification, of paramount importance for the shari‘a-minded, is not involved. Certainly, the preamble and other surrounding text feature what can only be called legalistic shari‘a terminology. But the rules themselves concern, in tablet’s own terms, “acts” (sing. *‘aml*) without any explicit classificatory thinking. In general the rules do not reason according to the *aḥkām* (sing. *ḥukm*, “rule,” “judgment”) scheme of moral classification (whether something is “obligatory,” “recommended,” “licit,” “detested,” “forbidden”); in fact, they hardly involve any reasoning at all. Only the tenth rule, concerning the full prostration for the nighttime *witr* prayers (“The tenth is the two prostrations that are deemed recommended after the *witr*”), deploys a *ḥukm* category (“that are deemed recommended,” *allatān tustaḥbabān*); and only the fifth rule, concerning wearing shoes for the *janaza* funeral prayer (“the fifth is the performance of the funeral wearing shoes, because it is not [done as] worship”), contains a “because” construction.

The tablet also indicates that this sort of classificatory thinking was not intended for ordinary people. To the extent that the rules involve classification, it is represented as esoteric knowledge. (Recall that one of the arguments of Part One of this study was that it was only in the

early twentieth century that *ahongs* and lay elites cooperated to popularize shari‘a knowledge.) The shari‘a reasoning limited to the fifth and tenth Arabic rules was not conveyed in the Chinese summary. Both Chinese renderings are compressed and logically simplified. The fifth rule becomes “Whenever there is a funeral and burial and the *janāza* is held for the deceased, shoes must be worn and [people] may not go barefoot”; the tenth rule becomes “The final prophet, after the *witr* (*weiteilie*) prayers, kowtowed twice.” Recognizing and affirming this classification was not enjoined as part of performing the ritual.

By contrast, classification and reasoning are central to the ritual discourse of the national Hui public. The second issue of *Islam*, published in February 1935, included an essay “On *Taqwa*” (“piety,” transliterated as *tegewa*) by the aforementioned Zheng Guangrong, a Kaifeng native and collaborator with Bai Shouyi on the journal. Zheng himself had studied at the Wenshu Mosque and had just graduated from the Chengda Academy. Writing from Beijing, Zheng criticized what he saw as the narrow and distorted piety promoted by many *ahongs*. For Zheng, a misunderstanding of the reasons behind rulings (sing. Ch. *houkun*, Ar. *ḥukm*) led to false piety. In the essay, he conjures an example of naïve Muslims who, upon hearing a sermon against eating the food of non-Muslims and enjoining believers to abstain from the “vinegar, soy sauce, noodles, and tofu” of others, consider themselves pious for buying their own jars of vinegar and dousing their food themselves. Such Muslims “blindly follow” (*mang cong*) *ahongs* without consideration of whether what they do is in observance of what God has deemed obligatory and in avoidance of what God has forbidden.<sup>317</sup>

Growing emphasis on grasping the reasons behind the rules, of not just observing the shari‘a but of thinking in its terms, animated public discourse about ritual in Republican-era Hui

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<sup>317</sup> Zheng Guangrong 郑广荣, “Shuo tegewa” 说特各瓦 (On Tegewa (Taqwa)).

press. Old debates were waged in new media and in new terms. Journals continually reported disputes over the wearing of shoes during the *janāza* funeral prayer. The aforementioned *Light of Islam* (edited by Wang Jingzhai in Tianjin), for example, published in its October 1933 issue “A Great Exposition Concerning the Need to Pursue Purity to Hold the *Janāza*,” “The Reason Why It is Not Permitted to Remove Shoes for the *Janāza*,” and “A Minor Reference Concerning the Need to Pursue Purity to Hold the *Janāza*.” Several related works also appeared in *Crescent China*, including: “The Question of Wearing Shoes During the *Janāza*” and “*Janāza* Is Supplication, not Worship.” In some cases these contributors were in direct conversation with one another. Thus the subsequent issue of *Crescent China* included an response, “Upon Reading ‘*Janāza* Is Supplication, not Worship’.” The matter was also addressed in longer pieces and serialized essays dealing with multiple contested rituals.

The link between classification and comprehending the underlying logic of the shari‘a is particularly clear in one article on the subject in the September 30<sup>th</sup>, 1935 issue of *Crescent China*: “My View on the Question of Removing Shoes to Hold the *Janāza*.” The author, Ma Hongyi (1910-1966), was a fellow Henanese (from Luoning County in the western Henan) classmate of Zheng Guangrong at Chengda.<sup>318</sup> In the piece, Ma expressed frustration with both sides of the debate—those who remove shoes for the *janāza* and those who do not—for misunderstanding what was really at stake. As hinted by the Arabic inscription on the 1840 Great North Mosque tablet (“...for it is not [done as] worship”), part of the persistent controversy concerned whether the *janāza* was worship (Ar. *ṣalā*) or supplication (Ar. *du‘a*), which have different conditions. Shoe-wearers claimed that because the *janāza* is not worship, which requires ablution and thus the removal of (dirty) shoes, and also because there is a hadith

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<sup>318</sup> Ma Hongyi was also the son of the renowned cleric and Muslim educationist Ma Zicheng (馬自成, 1886-1936) and would join the Chinese student delegation to Al-Azhar University in Cairo in 1937.

instructing Muslims to differentiate themselves from the Jews (who putatively remove shoes for funerals) in matters of prayer, shoes must be worn during the *janāza*. Shoe-removers, on the other hand, claimed that because the *janāza* is worship, the ablution condition applies, and that shoes may not be worn during the *janāza*.

Ma Hongyi affirmed that *janāza* was a form of worship but also insisted that the shoes per se were not the real issue at hand, implying that both sides erred in their reasoning:

... Whether you wear shoes or take them off to hold the *janāza* does not matter. Rather, what matters is whether the shoes are clean or dirty. If the shoes are clean, one may wear them for worship and holding the *janāza*. If they are not clean, worship or holding the *janāza* [while wearing the shoes] is impermissible. This is a very clear rationale...<sup>319</sup>

The challenge and confusion arose, Ma suggested, out of a misclassification of the relevant issues. Proper practice here depends on comprehending the logic of the underlying rules. This comprehension, moreover, is expected of everyone. What had been esoteric knowledge in the Arabic inscription was now exoteric knowledge in the Hui press.

The persisting centrality of ritual discourse in the Hui public initially seems to contradict Douglas' theory that societies characterized by more flexible, ad hoc relations between individuals rather than rigid social positions tend to oppose ritual as "condensed" symbols in favor of "elaborated" symbols or codes: individuated, precise, verbal ways of conveying meaning. On the other hand, the fierce anti-ritualism of elite Chinese society in the late 1910s

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<sup>319</sup> The passage continues: "But I have recently heard people say: 'Holding *janaza* is a supplication, not worship. It cannot be discussed on the same terms as worship'. They therefore say that worship with dirty shoes on of course is impermissible (because clean clothes are a condition for worship), but that wearing dirty shoes to hold the *janaza* makes no difference. Oh! *Janaza* is not worship? I had never heard anyone say this before. To now suddenly hear this strange view really makes people a bit suspicious." Zhongyuan (Ma Hongyi) 重远 (马宏毅), "Zhan zhenaze tuoxie wenti zhi wo jian" 站者那则脱鞋问题之我见 (My View on the Question of Removing Shoes to Hold the Janaza (Funeral)).

and 1920s provides strong evidence in favor of Douglas' theory. What made the Hui public exceptional?

The rise of shari'a-mindedness and the popularization of shari'a-knowledge through the Islamic Culture Movement (see Chapters One and Two) help explain how ritual remained central to the Hui community even as expanded into its modern form. This function was linked to what we have seen was an enduring structural feature of Hui community over the late imperial and Republican periods: the ritual constitution, the interplay of ritual practice and ritual discourse. The collective performance of ritual continued to provide the basis for intra-congregational solidarity. A full awareness of the powerful integrative function of collective ritual motivated Hui leaders aiming for national Hui unity to promote wider ritual uniformity and synchrony. As we have also seen, the institutions and communication technology they used in pursuit of this unity had only limited success; congregations, even neighboring ones, remained divided over ritual practice, due in no small part to the enduring importance of ritual to their community.

At the same time, the other component of the ritual constitution, ritual discourse, was able to support inter-congregational unity at a larger scale. More precisely, the ritual discourse of the Hui public fostered common norms and inter-congregational unity where ritual practice could not. This integrative capacity derived from the increasingly legalistic character of ritual discourse in the Hui public. The emphasis on reasoning and classificatory thinking according to the shari'a enabled Huis who disagreed over how a ritual should be performed to at least address one another, in person or on the page, and explain their positions, in the process affirming common norms of argument.

In his essay on the funeral shoes debate, Ma Hongyi ultimately sought not to resolve the problem case-closed, but to prompt further engagement from other members of the Hui public—

engagement, that is, according to specific protocols and principles. He concluded the piece with an appeal for more public discussion:

This author believes that the question of removing shoes is actually not the crux of the issue. I therefore desire to have a public discussion and respectfully ask each of you scholars (Ch. *alinmen*, Ar. *'ulamā'*) who maintain that *janāza* is not worship to take your evidence and reasons and compose an article, explained in detail, and submit it to the *Crescent China* newspaper office, so that we unlearned people may gain a deeper understanding of religious rulings. At the same time, I also hope that you scholars who maintain that the *janāza* is worship take your evidence and reasons and submit them to the paper for public study, so that one day what is really true and what is really false will be made clear, there will be no confusing fish eyes for pearls, and longstanding confusion will be done away with. However, your basis must be reliable jurisprudence (Ch. *feigehai*, Ar. *fiqh*) texts, and you cannot contrive explanations by twisting meanings. In addition, you must transcribe and submit the title of the texts and the original texts, to the letter, as well as fully translate them into Chinese, and this journal ought to create a special column for [these materials] to be disseminated.<sup>320</sup>

The same norms of evidence and reasoning were affirmed by Bai Shouyi. To return in conclusion to the inaugural issue of *Islam*: Bai insisted in the rules governing contributions to the journal that source texts be submitted with translations and properly cited.<sup>321</sup> In the same issue, at the end of one contributor's article criticizing observance of Mawlid, Bai inserted an editor's note calling for a similar continuation of the debate:

Editor's note: The custom of performing Mawlid is common throughout the entire country. According to [the sources] the author of this essay has consulted, this [practice] is actually erroneous. This truly is a major issue in our Islam, pertaining to the promotion or elimination of [particular] customs and ceremonies. It is hoped that domestic as well as foreign upright and sagacious scholars who agree or disagree with this theory shall all bestow their teachings. Only after research shall truth and fact be clear. If

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<sup>320</sup> Zhongyuan (Ma Hongyi).

<sup>321</sup> "Ben kan zhenggao jianyue" 本刊征稿简约 (Short Guidelines on This Journal's Solicitation of Contributions).

there are [additional] submissions that are clear and plausible, this journal shall run them too.<sup>322</sup>

By virtue of the ritual constitution, the practices that divided Hui congregations stimulated discourse that brought them together.

### 3.5 Reasoning Unity

This unity through discourse in the national public was in turn re-localized in the form of “scripture debates” (*jiang jing*) in the early twentieth century, discussed in Chapter One. These were public events inside or between mosques in which representatives of different congregations would duel, sometimes before assembled congregants, displaying their mastery of scripture and rhetoric skill. There was an element of theater to these debates. *Ahong Guo* Qingxin, who participated in a series of such debates between the New and Old Teachings in Kaifeng in the summer of 1944, recalls them drawing crowds of hundreds of people. Befitting this localization of national norms, these debates brought together Hui from different scales of community: representatives came from mosques in Kaifeng and in other cities including Shangqiu to the east and Luoyang to the west. They were held outside the headquarters of the Kaifeng branch of the local Islamic association (then under the control of the Japanese occupation) beside the Catholic cathedral in the heart of the old city, just north of the Wenshu Mosque and surrounded by municipal and provincial government buildings.<sup>323</sup>

These debates in print and in person fostered a mode of integration quite different from that described in most functionalist studies of collective ritual. China was already a highly complex, commercialized, and functionally differentiated society by the late imperial period

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<sup>322</sup> Ding Shaoyun 丁少云, “Tan shengji zhi youlai” 谈圣忌之由来 (A Discussion of the Origins of Mawlid).

<sup>323</sup> Bai Zongzheng, “开封伊斯兰教派简介,” 402.

(thus a comparison to Durkheim’s “mechanical solidarity,” characteristic of the simplest societies, is inappropriate). As the sense of cultural crisis became acute and those characteristics intensified in the early twentieth century, so too did anti-ritualism among many elements within Chinese society, as Douglas and other Durkheimians would expect. Yet ritual remained central to Hui communities. Common norms of argument according to the categories of the shari‘a left room for a sort of “elaborated”<sup>324</sup> rationalization that typically negates ritual as irrational tradition while also conserving the integrative power of the collective practice of rituals as “condensed symbols.”

| Figure 3.10<br>Composition and Translation of the 1840 Inscription at the Great North Mosque of Kaifeng |   |          |   |
|---|---|----------|---|
| No.   | Translation   | Language | Notes   |
| 6.1   | In the name of God, the most merciful, the most compassionate, the word of the Almighty: <i>O you who have believed, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. And if you disagree over anything, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you should believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and best in result.</i>  | Arabic   | Italics: Quran 4:59 (translation from International Sahih)  |
| 6.2   | This [stone tablet] is the record of those who have preserved the Book and the prophetic tradition from the Prophet. [What it consists of is disseminated] among the [community of followers] of Abu Hanifah, God’s mercy upon him. [In its entirety the way of the North Mosque of Kaifeng] was traditional, Sunni, and [Hanafi], keeping afar from innovation and heresy and meticulously embracing evidential scrutiny. [It is traditional in that the enacted [rules] have not changed] since the day of [the] arrival of Islam in China, [and in that it is proper conduct, practiced in various ways until now] as the ancestors did initially without [deficiency or] omission. [And it is Sunni in that] it accords with the [acts of the Messenger and his words in [his] affairs] and follows [him] in [movement and in silence and in what is internal and what is manifest], [particularly in] thirteen [well-known practices]. At a later period came those who disagreed with these practices without examining their textual basis, as well as those who recognized the textual basis, yet denied it and described it as disgraceful and despicable. | Arabic   | Translation based on Weil’s with some modification (indicated in [brackets]); based on transcription by Nakanishi et al.                            |
| 6.3   | The first of them is the repetition of Sura al-Fatiha during the recitation of the Quran. The second is the [recitation of] Sura al-Ikhlās three times without completing the Quran. The third is the [public?] reading of the magnification (“takbir”) for every sura from al-Duha to the end [of the Quran]. The fourth is the silent recitation of Sura al-Taha during the ablution of the corpse. The fifth is the performance of the funeral wearing shoes, because it is not [done as] worship. The sixth is the hosting of the grieving kin with a slaughtering [of an animal for a feast] for the deceased as alms. The seventh is the hanging of the tassels of the turban freely (flat?) from its top to its bottom. The eighth is the reading  | Arabic   | Translation by author; consulted Chinese translation by Ma and Japanese translation by Nakanishi et al.; based on transcription by Nakanishi et al. |

<sup>324</sup> Douglas, *Natural Symbols*; Bellah, “Durkheim and Ritual”; Bernstein, *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse*.



|     |  |                    |   |
|-----|--|--------------------|---|
|     | of the Fatiha in the dawn and afternoon litanies. The ninth is the shaking of hands by the worshipper after Eid, Friday, and dawn [prayers]. The tenth is the two prostrations that are deemed recommended after the <i>witr</i> (prayers). The eleventh is the [upward] pointing with the index finger during the <i>shahada</i> (testament of faith). The twelfth is the proclaiming of <i>amin</i> [during prayers] except for the morning and afternoon prayers. The thirteenth is a public call to prayer ( <i>adhān mashhūra</i> ) after the [recitation of] Sura al-Kahf as group worship.  |                    |   |
| 6.4 | As for the thirteen aforementioned [things], each one of them has a specific proof and a strong evidentiary basis, and for he who practices them there are great and innumerable rewards and clear recompense; but it is not possible to go through every single proof one by one [because of] how long it would take to say and the narrowness of the space for writing [here] and the great number of letters going on and on. Whoever is uncertain about these thirteen [practices] or doubts them greatly, let him seek and let him see these well-known books:  | Arabic             | Ibid.   |
| 6.5 | [The 27 titles]  | Arabic and Persian | Transcribed and annotated by Nakanishi et al; see also Ma Chao  |
| 6.6 | ...and other books with yet other proofs. In sum, the path of China is traditional and <i>summi</i> and based on what was intended by Shaykh Wali Ma Tai Baba of Huguang. All else is unfounded. The ruling[s] [are] based on what he discerned from exquisite proofs, not his personal whim. But this stone has been erected as a protection against novelties of mankind and deviation. O believers, far and near, [following] this most noble path [is incumbent] upon you, for it saves from the fires of hell and gives entrance into paradise.   | Arabic             | Translation by author; consulted Chinese translation by Ma and Japanese translation by Nakanishi et al.; based on transcription by Nakanishi et al.           |
| 6.7 | On the date of Friday in the glorious month of Rajab in the year one-thousand one-hundred and twenty-one of [the Prophet Muhammad's] hijra.  | Arabic             | This year is erroneous and based on a miscalculation by the original author. The erroneous year corresponds to 1709. The year should be 1743-44. See Ma Chao. |
| 6.8 | Enumeration of the Thirteen Articles:  | Chinese            | Title   |
| 6.9 | —Whenever the Quran is chanted, Sura al-Fatiha ( <i>fatihao sulie</i> ) must be recited two times.<br>—Whenever the Quran is chanted, Sura <i>Gulihu</i> (i.e. Sura al-Ikhlās) must be recited three times.<br>—Whenever the Quran is chanted, recite the magnification of God ( <i>takbir</i> ), and the magnification of God is [also] said [after] each of the [suras] from <i>wansugao</i> ( <i>waḍaḥ</i> , “brilliance” or brightness,” referring to Sura al-Ḍuḥā, “Sura of the Morning Bright”)<br>—Whenever there is a funeral, at the time of washing the corpse, <i>taha</i> (Sura al-Taha) must be read silently.<br>—Whenever there is a funeral and burial and the <i>janaza</i> is held for the deceased, shoes must be worn and [people] may not go barefoot | Chinese            | Based on transcription by Nakanishi et al.; also Hu Yunsheng  |

|      |   |         |   |
|------|---|---------|---|
|      | <p>—Whenever there is a funeral and burial and the funeral president hosts guests, they should be admonished not to revel and overstay their welcome.</p> <p>—Whenever it is time to worship, the tassels of the turban (<i>teisitalie</i>, i.e. <i>dastār</i>) must hang from top to bottom.</p> <p>—After both the dawn prayer (<i>babudade</i>, i.e. <i>bābdād</i>) and the afternoon prayer (<i>digelie</i>, i.e. <i>dīgar</i>), recite Sura al-Fatiha (<i>fatihao sulie</i>).</p> <p>—After the prayers of the two fast-breaking festivals each year, the prayers of the day of gathering (i.e. Friday), and the dawn prayers, shake hands and seek peace.</p> <p>—The final prophet, after the <i>witr</i> (<i>weiteilie</i>) prayers, kowtowed twice.</p> <p>—While reciting the <i>shahada</i> (<i>sehadetei</i>) a finger must be extended.</p> <p>—Do not say <i>amin</i> for the dawn prayer or the afternoon prayer; for all of the remaining three times of [daily] prayer, festival (<i>erde</i>, i.e. <i>‘īd</i>) prayers, and prayer of the day of congregation (Friday), recite <i>amin</i>.</p> <p>—At the time for congregational (<i>zhumuer</i>, i.e. <i>jum‘a</i>, congregation or Friday) prayer, recite the call to prayer (<i>bangke</i>, i.e. <i>bāng</i>, or <i>adhān</i>) only after reciting <i>kefei</i> (i.e. <i>kahf</i>, referring to Sura al-Kahf).</p> |         |   |
| 6.10 | On an auspicious day in the first third of the tenth month of the twentieth year of the Daoguang Era (25 October-3 November 1840), the elders of the mosque convened for the public erection of [this] stone.   | Chinese | Copy of stele rubbing shared by Ma Chao |

## Chapter 4:

### A National Organization

In March of 1949, less than seven months before the formal establishment of the People's Republic of China in October of that year, a young Hui from Zhengzhou celebrated his people's emancipation by the Chinese Communist Party. In Kaifeng, still the capital of Henan Province, the provisional People's Government convened an inaugural People's Representative Assembly, where one Li Jiarong, on behalf of some 13,000 fellow Hui of Zhengzhou, embraced the new status of a "minority nationality" (*shaoshu minzu*): "In the past Hui had no right to participate in politics. Now we are liberated, and we are able to represent Hui and attend this meeting. This truly is to have [our] political status raised, and it truly is the equality of nationalities spoken of by Chairman Mao."<sup>325</sup>

Li's comments fit the official narrative of the People's Republic of China, according to which the CCP overturned centuries of ethnic oppression and Han chauvinism by recognizing Huis as a distinct *minzu*. They also fit much of the scholarship on Hui, which generally views the establishment of the PRC in 1949 as a turning point in Hui identity, the inception of the "*minzu* paradigm" of ethnic governance, and the ethnogenesis of the Hui nationality. More recently, however, historians have probed the pre-1949 origins of Hui ethnic identity and discovered deep wells of Hui nationalist discourse in the Republican era.<sup>326</sup>

Recent studies of this pre-1949 history have focused on the discourse of this movement and the categories in terms of which it and the state defined Hui identity. Were Huis a distinct

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<sup>325</sup> Hai Junliang 海俊亮, "Kaifeng huimin daibiao liu dequan, zheng shi huimin daibiao li jiarong" 开封回民代表刘德全 郑州市回民代表李家荣 (Kaifeng Hui Representative Liu Dequan, Zheng(Zhou) Hui Representative Li Jiarong).

<sup>326</sup> Benite, "From 'Literati' to 'Ulama'"; Cieciora, "Ethnicity or Religion? Republican-Era Chinese Debates on Islam and Muslims"; Eroglu Sager, "A Place under the Sun."

*minzu*, or simply a religious group? This question of classification was more than trivial for Communists and Nationalists who debated it: granting nationality status where the Nationalists had not was a central point in Communist claims to legitimacy. On the other hand, the question and its subsequent politicization by the CCP and historians alike obscure the concessions the Nationalist Party had already granted to Huis in the late 1940s. By 1947, facing mounting pressure from an increasingly well-organized Hui constituency, the GMD agreed to a quota of 17 delegates to the National Assembly designated for Huis. Holding fast to its insistence on the ethnic unity of the “Chinese Nation” (*zhonghua minzu*), the GMD avoided using the term *minzu* for the Hui (in contrast to the CCP) and officially gave these seats to “citizens of China proper with special life customs” (*neidi shenghuo xiguan teshu de guomin*). But subsequent ordinances clarified explicitly that this awkward phrasing referred exclusively to the Hui of the interior, that is, excluding Xinjiang, with its Uyghurs and other Muslim peoples. Huis, the GMD effectively conceded, were a distinct people entitled to designated representation.

It was a new answer to an old demand. A decade earlier, in the summer of 1936, the Nationalist government had rejected a proposal from Hui notables for designated Hui representation at the National Assembly, noting that “there was no longer a difference between the culture of Hui and that of the Han.”<sup>327</sup> The assumption of assimilation (“no longer a difference”) was in line with one side of an ongoing debate over whether Huis, separate from the peoples of Xinjiang, had become “Hanified” (*han hua*) over centuries of intermarriage and acculturation. The original proposal had pointed to the Tibetans and Mongolians as precedent for cultural quotas in the National Assembly, but the government rejected the comparison, explaining that the Tibetan and Mongolian quotas were a function of Tibet’s and Inner

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<sup>327</sup> “Huimin daibiao ming’e bu ling guiding” 回民代表名额不另规定 (Quota for Hui Representatives Shall Not Be Separately Fixed).

Mongolia's special administrative status: they were "not yet" equivalent to other provinces, and thus the government had no choice but to organize special elections for them. Huis, by contrast, lived throughout the country's provinces and already enjoyed the rights of citizens to vote and be elected in regular, geographically defined elections.

What happened in the intervening decade that led the Nationalist government to reverse its position? National crisis and eventual victory in the face of the full-scale invasion by the Empire of Japan, whose strategies included efforts to divide and rule by promoting Hui separatism; the reestablishment and later breakdown of the second United Front between the Communists and Nationalists against Japan; the political, economic, and humanitarian crises that accompanied the disorder and violence—all these developments informed the Nationalist government's effective reversal on the "Hui question" in 1947. But their influence was indirect. They did not, in other words, change the government's priorities, which remained essentially a matter of reinstating and maintaining control over all of China. Indeed, the Nationalist imperative for political unity and a monist conception of the "Chinese Nation" had only intensified since 1936, as the insurgent Communist Party increasingly emphasized its promise of ethnic equality under a future "multiethnic state" (*duozu guojia*). Moreover, victory against Japan did little to mollify territorial anxieties on the part of the government, which could now look southwest to the recently partitioned India and Pakistan to see the consequences of politicized religious or cultural identities. Rather, these developments enabled the Hui to institutionalize as a political constituency and then leverage their institutional strength to win political concessions, including designated representation.

This chapter examines the institutionalization of a Hui political constituency in the China Islamic Association for National Salvation (CIANS), which was established in late 1937 and

which by 1948 comprised hundreds of branch associations throughout virtually every province of China. I argue that the CIANS was decisive in securing designated Hui representation at the National Assembly in 1947 and more broadly in institutionalizing the Hui as a national political constituency. The chapter also seeks to explain the organizational success of the CIANS, assessed in terms of its consolidation and expansion and in comparison to earlier Hui organizations.

What distinguished the CIANS from its less successful predecessors was the sustained commitment it received at the local (county and sub-county) level. Two factors contributed to local commitment. On one hand, branch offices and the Association as a whole generally accommodated diverse local interests. In part out of an expressed desire for it and in part out of administrative necessity, Association leadership prioritized “rationalized” (*helihua*) organization. So long as local offices were properly registered, organized, and connected to the central Association, they were able to pursue their own agendas using the network and resources the Association afforded them. On the other hand, integration of associational affairs into the religious life of communities both legitimated the Association and brought religious discipline to bear on the mundane operations of the local office.

This chapter joins a few recent studies in examining the CIANS as an independent institution rather than simply an instrument of Nationalist control or a manifestation of Hui patriotism in the War of Resistance against Japan.<sup>328</sup> When it comes to religious organizations in Republican China, historians have been interested mostly in the grand visions of state-building

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<sup>328</sup> Yukubo 矢久保, “Nikkyū sensō ni okeru chūgoku kaikyō kyūoku kyōkai no seizon senryaku to sono ninshiki” 日中戦争期における中国回教救国協会の生存戦略とその認識 (Self-Recognition and Political Activity for Survival of the Chinese Islamic Association for National Salvation in the Sino-Japanese War); Wan Lei 宛磊, “Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui yusheng fenhui zhi bianan” 中国回教救国协会豫省分会之变迁 (The Transformation of the Henan Branch Association of the China Islamic Association for National Salvation); Wan, *The Chinese Islamic National Salvation Association and the Hui Minority: 1937-1948*.

and social transformation conjured by the Nationalist government at the height of its power during the Nanjing decade (1928-37). In pursuit of such visions, scholars have found, the government adopted a “corporatist” model of religion-state relations, through which it could coopt and control patriotic and modernist religious leaders through countrywide religious bureaucracies while eradicating putatively backward, superstitious, and disloyal elements.<sup>329</sup> The exigencies of wartime mobilization following the outbreak of war with Japan in July 1937 entrenched this corporatist model. As multiple scholars have suggested, the PRC government’s use today of the so-called “Patriotic Religious Associations” to regulate religion is institutionally if not ideologically a continuation of the bureaucratic arrangement of its predecessor.<sup>330</sup>

The development of the CIANS in Henan is particularly instructive. Removed from both the bastions of Hui military might in the northwest and the halls of political power—whether in Nanjing or the wartime capitals of Wuhan and Chongqing—Hui communities in Henan faced chronic security and financial challenges. Nevertheless, they managed to establish more county- and ward-level branches of the CIANS than coreligionists in any other province. Moreover, the expansion of the CIANS coincided with the rapid debilitation of the Nationalist state; the majority of its branches were established between 1939 and 1943, as war, flood, and famine ravaged the province.

Focusing on the *process* of institutionalization at both the national and local level, this chapter revises our understanding of the CIANS in two respects, and with implications for our more general understanding of state-society relations in Republican China. First, I show that the

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<sup>329</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*; Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*.

<sup>330</sup> André Laliberté, “Managing Religious Diversity in China: Contradictions of Imperial and Foreign Legacies,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 45, no. 4 (December 1, 2016): 495–519. For an earlier genealogy, see Timothy Brook, “The Politics of Religion: Late-Imperial Origins of the Regulatory State,” in *Making Religion, Making the State: The Politics of Religion in Modern China*, ed. Yoshiko Ashiwa and David L. Wank (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2009), 22–42.

establishment and expansion of the CIANS was enabled but not determined by the Nationalist government. The Nationalist government regulated the Association's activities, and major figures within the Association—including its Chairman, General Bai Chongxi (1893-1966)—were powerful members of the Nationalist Party. Nevertheless, the CIANS was not an extension of the government. It had to raise its own funds (which included government support for which it applied) and especially at the local level was more a target of government control than an instrument of it. Most accounts of religion-state relations in modern China interpret the national religious associations as attempts at state regulation, even if they differ in their assessment of the degree to which the state actually managed to exert control. In other words, there are different understandings of the de facto extent of institutionalization, but there is general consensus that institutionalization, to the degree it was achieved, was a state-driven process. This means that we tend to overlook the potential political significance of religious institutions in terms of how they could challenge and transform Chinese politics.

Second, it was the ultimately the weaknesses of the Nationalist government more than its strengths that fostered the expansion of the CIANS at the local level. Weak state capacity in Henan made Hui communities more reliant on those organizations that could secure supralocal resources for local projects and interests. The close relationship of the CIANS to the state at its higher levels incentivized affiliation where the state was absent or at least not paying much attention. As we will see, one of the key functions of the CIANS was to convince the state to enforce its own laws and policies where and when local officials, armies, and other powerholders flouted them.

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows. I first review early efforts to build a national Hui organization. Hui elites around the centers of political and financial power in the



east established a series of associations, some of which nominally included local branches at the provincial, county, and sub-county level. On the whole, though, local institutions (like those we saw in Henan in Chapter Two) remained disconnected from each other and from the central associations in the east. Hui warlord rivalries, administrative incompetence, and the failure to build an effective organization at a national level (that is, not just in the capital or a few provinces) kept these organizations politically weak. From the failure to secure designated representation in the National Assembly in 1936, these elites concluded that building a truly nationwide institution was the key to political strength, and that rational organization was the key to building a truly nationwide institution. I then examine the next national Hui organization, the China Islamic Association for National Salvation (CIANS), established in late 1937 after the Japanese invasion. I review its goals, structure, development, and activities at the national level and at the local level in Henan. Unlike its predecessors, the CIANS succeeded in organizing at the local level. I go on to investigate this organizational success, which I argue resulted from sustained commitment from local officers and communities. I attribute this sustained commitment to two factors: the appeal of affiliating with the Association, which could secure supralocal resources for local enterprises (including education, commerce, protection of mosques), and an elective affinity between the disciplining practices of shari‘a-mindedness (the content and spread of which was described in Chapter One) and the skills and disposition necessary to rational organization. Finally, I examine the CIANS-led nationwide campaign to win designated Hui representation in the National Assembly and the resulting institutionalization of Hui political identity prior 1949.

#### **4.1 Toward a National Organization**

## *Early Efforts*

In the wake of the Xinhai Revolution of 1911, representatives of Buddhism, Daoism, Islam, and Catholic as well as Protestant Christianity established national organizations for their respective religions. Many among China's modernist elite hoped to reconstitute the country's religions as countrywide, church-like institutions. Influenced by the "Christian normative model" of religion, they understood the rationalization of religious authority and abolition of "superstition" as indispensable steps along China's path to modernity. When examining these institutions, we should not discount the rationalizing tendency from within religious traditions either. As Goossaert, Palmer and others observe, modernizers in government found allies among reformers within each religion.<sup>331</sup> Indeed, at least in the case of Islam, the impulse for a national organization predated the Xinhai Revolution; in 1908, Hui students studying in Tokyo wrote of the need for a national "mechanism" to reform their religion and promote modern education in their communities.<sup>332</sup>

Established in 1912, the China Islamic Progress Association (CIPA) was the first Hui association in the Republic of China that claimed to represent all Muslims in China, including the Turkic peoples in the "Muslim region" (*hui bu*) in the far northwest.<sup>333</sup> It pursued a program of religious and educational reform. Its leadership comprised top Hui officials and prominent *ahongs* and merchants.<sup>334</sup> Under its auspices, many mosques established modern Hui schools, but on the whole its achievements were limited. A 1934 evaluation of various Hui associations

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<sup>331</sup> Goossaert, "Republican Church Engineering: The National Religious Associations in 1912 China"; Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*.

<sup>332</sup> Liu Dong Qingzhen Jiaoyuhui 留东清真教育会, *Xing hui pian* 醒回篇 (The Awakening of Islam).

<sup>333</sup> As Cieciora notes, this unified organization won out over an earlier plan to have separate institutions to represent the Turkic Muslims of Xinjiang and the Hui throughout the other provinces. Cieciora, "Ethnicity or Religion? Republican-Era Chinese Debates on Islam and Muslims," 119–20.

<sup>334</sup> Zhang Juling, "Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui chuchuang jiping (shang)"; Zhang Juling, "Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui chuchuang jiping (zhong)"; Zhang Juling, "Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui chuchuang jiping (xia)."

judged that the CIPA had failed to establish itself outside of the General Association in Beijing and the two provincial branches in Sichuan and Yunnan, a limitation the article attributed to lack of funds and skilled staff. In fact, numerous branch offices of the CIPA were established throughout the country in its early years.<sup>335</sup> A 1914 compilation of communiques between general and branch offices lists 170 county-level branch offices, 43 in Henan alone, and the organization was formally dissolved only in 1935.<sup>336</sup> But only a small minority of branch offices appear to have actually corresponded with the organization's central leadership in Beijing. Most left behind no documentary record, and the few that did bear little of any relationship to the General Association.

If establishing a national Islamic association was logistically difficult in the early years of the Republic, it became practically impossible as the country devolved into warlord rivalry and political fragmentation. It was only in the fall of 1928, after the consolidation of political authority under the new Nationalist government in Nanjing, that the idea of a national organization again found support among the country's most powerful Hui leaders. On October 28<sup>th</sup>, three Hui generals representing different regions and warlord factions—Ma Fuxiang (1876-1932) of the Ma Clique in the northwest, Bai Chongxi of the Guangxi Clique in the southeast, and Ma Liang (1875-1947) of Shandong in the east—met in Nanjing with other Hui representatives to form a national Islamic organization, the Chinese Islamic Guild (*zhongguo huijiao gonghui*), and were elected to its executive council.<sup>337</sup> However, the outbreak of the Central Plains War in the spring of 1929 pitted these generals against one another. Ma Fuxiang sided with the ultimately victorious National Revolutionary Army under Chiang Kai-shek, leader

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<sup>335</sup> Mu Yigang, “Wu nian yi lai zhi zhongguo huimin zuzhi.”

<sup>336</sup> Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui, *Zhongguo huijiao jujinhui benbu tonggao*, 203–6.

<sup>337</sup> “Huijiaohui chengli bai chongxi deng ren zhiwei” 回教会成立 白崇禧等任执委 (Islamic Association Established - Bai Chongxi Appointed Executive Officer).

of the new Nationalist government in Nanjing. Bai sided with Chiang's opponents and eventually retreated to his home province of Guangxi.<sup>338</sup>

Warlord ambition energized and then foiled successive attempts at a national Hui organization. Any effective national organization would require joint support from Hui military-political powerholders (warlords, military officers, and officials), cultural authorities (educators, *ahongs*, intellectuals), and merchants. No category was in short supply, but the country's severe political fragmentation for much of the 1910s and 1920s precluded unity under a single powerholder. Even in the early 1930s, when relative political stability fostered a proliferation of Hui associations, organizational unity remained out of reach. Associations of this era tended to be local and issue-focused (e.g. education, anti-defamation) rather than national and dedicated to the comprehensive management and representation of Huis.

The next attempt at a national organization came in 1934, when General Ma Liang again made his way from Jinan (the capital of Shandong Province) to Nanjing and established the Islamic Guild of the Republic of China (henceforth China Islamic Guild, different from the *Chinese* Islamic Guild founded in 1928).<sup>339</sup> Ma Liang held the lucrative position of chairman of the Shandong Narcotics Suppression Committee under the provincial government of Han Fuju (1890-1938), now in control of the entire province after the defeat of rival General Liu Zhennian (1898-1935) in 1932. Ma Fuxiang had died, and Bai Chongxi remained far to the southwest in Guangxi. By 1934 Chiang Kai-shek's government was increasingly devoting its resources to its anti-Communist campaigns. In February of that year, Chiang inaugurated the New Life

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<sup>338</sup> Eastman, "Nationalist China During the Nanjing Decade, 1927-1937," 11-12.

<sup>339</sup> The 1928 organization was called the *Zhongguo Huijiao Gonghui* (中国回教公会); the 1934 organization was (ultimately) called the *Zhonghua Huijiao Gonghui* (中华回教公会). I will call the former the "*Chinese* Islamic Association" and the latter the "*China* Islamic Association."

Movement, aimed at “rejuvenating” the citizenry through with Confucian morality and military discipline, to be implemented by branch offices and smaller units in counties in every province.

A temporary absence of rivals together with the regime’s new ambitions to regulate citizens’ daily life and eradicate communism provided Ma Liang with the opportunity to present himself to the government as the “leader of Hui of the entire nation.” Ma’s move to establish the China Islamic Guild, was met with surprise, then skeptical endorsement, and ultimately contempt by the Hui intelligentsia of Nanjing, Shanghai, and Beijing. Wang Zengshan (1903-1961), a prominent Hui official and at the time a member of the Legislative Yuan, recounted in October of 1935 his frustrations with multiple good-faith attempts to cooperate with Ma Liang, who, Wang eventually determined, was interested only in his own self-aggrandizement. Ma’s new China Islamic Guild sidelined older Hui organizations, including the China Islamic Progress Association and the Chinese Islamic Guild, which were subsequently dissolved when the government decreed that there should not be more than one organization of a single type.<sup>340</sup> According to Wang, a majority of the new organization’s leadership committee took orders from Ma Liang, who used the Guild as an organ to promote his image as *the* Hui leader. Wang and other prominent Huis who initially went along with Ma Liang’s plan publicly resigned from the China Islamic Guild in late summer of 1934. Wang’s faction resented Ma Liang, not just for his cynical maneuvers but for his and the entire Guild’s organizational incompetence. When the Guild, which had nominally been in its preparatory stage (as a *choubeihui*, under association regulations), was formally inaugurated in October 1934, its proposed budget and organizational

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<sup>340</sup> “Zongjiao tuanti shixiang” 宗教团体事项 (Items Concerning Religious Organizations).

plan were scrapped, and local branch associations were arbitrarily established contrary to protocol.<sup>341</sup>

Ma Liang resigned as chairman of the Guild in late December 1934 and returned to Jinan. But his departure proved temporary. In February of 1935, Chiang's government asked Ma Liang to resume leadership of the Guild, which he reconstituted in April of that year, only to abandon it once again within a matter of months. The cycle of invitation, reconstitution of the Guild, and resignation repeated three more times, in September 1935, February 1936, and then September 1936.<sup>342</sup> To Wang Zengshan and likeminded Hui elites in Beijing, Nanjing, and Shanghai, the fate of the Guild confirmed their initial skepticism. With the aforementioned government ruling in August 1936, it became clear that Huis would not receive designated representation at the National Assembly scheduled for November of that year—a failure rising Hui leaders in Nanjing attributed to the poor organization of the Guild. Even Hui leaders who were initially more optimistic about the Guild were disappointed by its failure to bring their communities under the direction of a single institution.<sup>343</sup> Nevertheless, the Guild remained *de jure* the sole national organization for Huis until the Japanese invasion in July 1937, when Ma Liang joined the Japanese occupation government, which later appointed him governor of Shandong and an officer in its organization for managing Islam in occupied China.

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<sup>341</sup> Wang Zengshan 王曾善, "Zhonghua huijiao gonghui choubai zhi shimo" 中华回教公会筹备之始末 (The Preparations for the China Islamic Guild from Beginning to End).

<sup>342</sup> "Jing huijiao gonghui qing zhongyang weiliu ma liang" 京回教公会 请中央慰留马良 (Islamic Guild in the Capital Requests Central Government to Persuade Ma Liang to Keep His Post); "Ma liang ming ri lai jing choushe huijiao zonghui" 马良明日来京 筹设回教总会 (Ma Liang to Arrive at the Capital Tomorrow - Plans to Establish Islamic General Association); Wang Zengshan, "Zhonghua huijiao gonghui choubai zhi shimo."

<sup>343</sup> "Zhonghua huijiao gonghui suo wei he shi?" 中华回教公会所为何事? (What Is the China Islamic Guild For?).

The ordeal of the China Islamic Guild clarified the importance of “rational organization” (*helihua de zuzhi*) for uniting all Hui and securing designated representation.<sup>344</sup> True, Ma Liang’s self-interestedness had, in the view of many Hui leaders, proved fatal to the cause. But the similar failure of genuine efforts to build a national association was ultimately a question of poor organization, which in turn required transparent, regular, and democratic protocol. A national association claiming to represent all Huis had to be truly representative, with leaders elected by constituents at each administrative level. Extending the organization beyond the major eastern cities and down to the county and sub-county level of every province was thus a matter of democratic principle as well as administrative practicality: such elections would be impossible without an effective apparatus in place to carry them out. The experience also clarified the need for a leader who was seen as legitimate, as a believer, a patriot, and an executive, among the Hui population. On the other hand, it demonstrated that regime approval, while probably necessary for a building functioning national association, was not sufficient for doing so. As the government’s repeated requests to return to the Guild indicate, Ma Liang enjoyed Chiang Kai-shek’s support as the Hui leader, but that support was not enough to realize Ma Liang’s claims.

*The China Islamic Association for National Salvation*

The China Islamic Association for National Salvation (*Zhongguo Huijiao Jiuguo Xiehui*, CIANS) was first established as the China Hui Association for National Salvation (*Zhongguo Huimin Jiuguo Xiehui*) at the burgeoning railroad junction of Zhengzhou, where several contingents of the national Hui leadership converged in the final months of 1937 in retreat from the Japanese invasion and in preparation for the wartime reconstitution of their movement. Like

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<sup>344</sup> Ping Qiu 萍秋, “Tongyi huimin jiuguo zuzhi de shangtao” 统一回民救国组织的商讨 (Discussion of a Unified Hui Organization for National Salvation); Sha Lei 沙蕾, “Guanyu huijiao zuzhi” 关于回教组织 (Regarding an Islamic Organization).

the Guild and its predecessors, this institution was led by a joint force of political, military, and cultural elite: its founding leaders included the cleric Wang Jingzhai (1880-1949), the Hui educationist and GMD official Shi Zizhou (1879-1969), and the Hui general Ma Liang of Liaoning (different from the Ma Liang of Shandong who headed the Guild).<sup>345</sup> Also like the Guild and its predecessors, this institution was involved in one of several ongoing projects to organize and leverage Hui power for political gain: the Qinghai Islamic Education Promotion Association under the powerful northwestern warlords Ma Bufang (1903-1975) and Ma Hongkui (1892-1970); the All-China Islamic Union, sponsored by the Japanese occupation government in early 1938; and the Shaan-Gan-Ning Division of the China Hui Association for National Salvation, founded with CCP support in January 1940.<sup>346</sup>

It was in the context of this mounting competition and national crisis that Chiang Kai-shek, in the provisional government headquarters in Wuhan in early 1938, directed his former rival and new partner Bai Chongxi, the Hui general of the former Guangxi clique, to form a unified organization for Huis. Bai called a meeting with several leaders of the Islamic Culture Movement in Wuhan, where it was decided that the recently established China Hui Association for National Salvation in Zhengzhou would be renamed the China Islamic Association for

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<sup>345</sup> Wan, “How China Islamic National Salvation Federation Protected Hui Minority’s Interests During W.W.II: Taking Central China’s Henan Province as an Example”; Wan Lei, “Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui yusheng fenhui zhi bianan”; Guan Xiaocheng 关晓成, “Huimou zhengzhou qingpingli qingzhensi” 回眸郑州清平里清真寺 (A Look Back at the Qingpingli Mosque of Zhengzhou); Yukubo, “Nikkyū sensō ni okeru chūgoku kaikyō kyūoku kyōkai no seizon senryaku to sono ninshiki.”

<sup>346</sup> Haas, “Qinghai Across Frontiers”; Hammond, *China’s Muslims and Japan’s Empire*; Ando 安藤, “日本占領下の華北における中国回教総聯合会の設立回民社会: 日中戦争期中国の「民族問題」に関する事例研究へ向けて” (Foundation of the All China Muslim League and Muslim Society in North China under Japanese Occupation: Toward a Case Study of the Ethnic Problems during the Sino-Japanese War 1937-1945 [Original Author’s Translation]); Matsumoto, *Chūgoku minzoku seisaku no kenkyū: Shinmatsu kara 1945-nen made no “minzokuron” o chūshin ni.*



National Salvation and relocated to Wuhan.<sup>347</sup> The CIANS would follow the government to Chongqing and then to Nanjing as it moved during and after the war.

The structure of the central CIANS evolved in response to new pressures and objectives within and outside the organization. Figure 4.1 outlines the expansion in leadership and reorganization of offices between 1938 and 1948. Areas of sustained focus included promotion of Hui education, coordinating wartime relief, and conducting surveys of Hui communities. The central Association also added new committees to different divisions as the organization grew. For example, in May 1941, the Association formed a Religious Affairs Committee consisting of more than a dozen of the country's most prominent *ahongs*. Its responsibilities included drafting standardized regulations for mosque management, promoting religious reform, and editing religious textbooks for Hui schools. The Association engaged in diplomacy with Muslims abroad on behalf of the Nationalist government and in competition with parallel efforts by the Empire of Japan to present itself as the protector of Muslims in East Asia.<sup>348</sup> The central Association also supported Hui periodicals and propaganda, including its bulletin, a separate monthly magazine *Huijiao Wenhua* (Islamic Culture), and booklets on religion and patriotism.

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<sup>347</sup> Jia Tingshi 賈廷詩, 白崇禧先生访问纪录 白崇禧先生訪問紀錄 (Records of Interviews with Mr. Bai Chongxi), 571–76.

<sup>348</sup> Chen, “Just Like Old Friends.”

| Figure 4.1 Structure and Functions of the China Islamic Association for National Salvation, 1938-1948 <sup>349</sup> |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
|  | First National Congress<br>(July 1939)   | Second National Congress<br>(March 1942)  | Third National Congress (May<br>1948)  |
| Standing<br>Committee<br>Members   | 5  | 5   | 9  |
| Managers   | 49-77  | 31 (+ 15 deputies)  | 77 (+ 35 deputies) (+ unspecified<br>number of honorary managers)  |
| Supervisory<br>Standing<br>Committee   | 3  | 3   | 9  |
| Supervisors  | 7-13   | 9 (+ 4 deputies)  | 25 (+ 9 deputies)  |
| Association<br>Responsibilities  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elaborating (Islamic) doctrine and improving religious affairs</li> <li>2. Carry out propaganda on the significance of the war of resistance and nation-building according to the spirit of Islam</li> <li>3. In accordance with the Program for the War of Resistance and Nation-Building, train Hui to take part in war of resistance and nation-building work</li> <li>4. Promote Hui education</li> <li>5. Advance the National Economic Construction Movement and increase production</li> <li>6. Manage Hui relief enterprises</li> <li>7. Connect Chinese and world cultures</li> <li>8. Other matters related to the elaboration of doctrine and national salvation</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elaborate doctrine, improve religious affairs</li> <li>2. Organize Hui, support the nation</li> <li>3. Promote Hui education, advance Hui economy and construction</li> <li>4. Through citizen diplomacy, link up with Islamic countries and connect the world's Islamic culture</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Matters related to elaborating doctrine, improving religious affairs, and promoting education</li> <li>2. Matters related to organizing Hui in support of state policies</li> <li>3. Matters related to Hui economic welfare and relief</li> <li>4. Matters relating to Hui social issues and political participation</li> <li>5. Matters relating to Islamic international connections and connecting Islamic culture</li> <li>6. Other matters pertaining to the general aims of this association</li> </ol> |
| Main Divisions   | Division 1: clerical work, general affairs, accounting, other work<br>Division 2: organization, training, surveying<br>Division 3: education, religious affairs, propaganda<br>Division 4: production, relief<br>Division 5: women's affairs   | Division 1: clerical work, general affairs, receipts and expenditures, production, relief, other work<br>Division 2: organization, training, surveying, statistics, women's affairs<br>Division 3: religious affairs, education, propaganda<br>Accounting Office: accounting  | Division 1: clerical work, general affairs, receipts and expenditures, production, welfare, relief, other work<br>Division 2: organization, training, surveying, statistics, women's affairs, youth affairs<br>Division 3: education, religious affairs, propaganda<br>Accounting Office: accounting, budget planning  |

<sup>349</sup> Quanguo Tushuguan Wenxian Suowei Fuzhi Zhongxin 全国图书馆文献缩微复制中心, “Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui di yi jie quanti huiyuan daibiao dahui tekan” 中国回教救国协会第一届全体会员代表大会特刊 (Special Bulletin of the First Session of the All-Association Member Assembly of the China Islamic Association for National Salvation); Wang Zhengru and Lei Xiaojing, “Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui gongzuo baogao”; Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang’anguan 中国第二历史档案馆, “Zhongguo huijiao xiehui baosong xiuzheng qingzhensi guanli banfa bing zhaokai di san jie daibiao da hui cheng ji gongzuo baogao” 中国回教协会报送修整清真寺管理办法并召开第三届代表大会呈及工作报告(1947年6月--1948年) (China Islamic Association Submits Revised Measures for Mosque Management, Request to Hold Third Congress of the Representative Assembly, and Work Report (June 1947-1948)).

| Figure 4.2<br>Growth of the China Islamic Association for National Salvation, Countrywide and in Henan Province, 1938-1948 <sup>350</sup> |   |                                      |  |   |                                       |                |
|---|---|--------------------------------------|--|---|---------------------------------------|----------------|
|   | First National Congress<br>(July 1939)      |                                      | Second National Congress (March<br>1942)                                 |   | Third National Congress (May 1948)    |                |
| Branches  | Nationwide                                  | Henan                                | Nationwide   | Henan                                     | Nationwide                            | Henan          |
| Province  | 10 (+ 6 in<br>prep or<br>encouragem<br>ent) | -                                    | 17 (+ 2 in prep)   | -   | 27 (+ 1 in prep)                      | -              |
| Municipal   | 1 (+ 1 Hong<br>Kong)                        | 0                                    | 1 (+ 1 Hong<br>Kong)   | 0   | 10 (+1 Hong<br>Kong) (+ 2 in<br>prep) | 0              |
| County  | 45 (includes<br>those in<br>prep)           | 14<br>(includes<br>those in<br>prep) | 252 (+9 in prep)   | 52 (+ 2 in prep)                          | 388<br>(qualification,<br>see chart)  | 68             |
| Ward<br>(including<br>directly<br>administered<br>ward<br>associations)   | -   | -                                    | 174 (+ 250 in<br>prep)   | 63  | 324                                   | 105            |
| Youth<br>Associations   | -   | -                                    | ?  |   | 46 (+ 13 in prep)                     | 6 (+2 in prep) |
| Youth<br>Discussion<br>Groups   | -   | -                                    | 24   | 0   |                                       |                |
| Battlefield<br>Service<br>Squadrons   | -   | -                                    | 28 (more than<br>3000 members)<br>(61 by end of<br>war against<br>Japan) | 15 (28 by end<br>of war against<br>Japan) | N/A (dissolved)                       |                |

Under the leadership of General Bai Chongxi, the central Association pushed to monopolize representation of Hui to the Party-State. Potential competitors to the central Association can be divided into four groups: those supported by the Japanese occupation, chiefly the aforementioned All-China Islamic Union; those supported by the CCP in Yan'an; those controlled by Hui warlords in the northwest; and independent local organizations. There was little more than denunciation that could be done against the first two types, since they involved challengers to Nationalist Party-State itself. Rather, the central Association justified itself and

<sup>350</sup> Quanguo Tushuguan Wenxian Suowei Fuzhi Zhongxin, “Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui di yi jie quanti huiyuan daibiao dahui tekan”; Wang Zhengru and Lei Xiaojing, “Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui gongzuo baogao”; Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang’anguan, “Zhongguo huijiao xiehui baosong xiuzheng qingzhensi guanli banfa bing zhaokai di san jie daibiao da hui cheng ji gongzuo baogao.”

elicited official support based on the argument that it was an indispensable ally against these rivals. The second two types, by contrast, could be coopted or otherwise incorporated under the Association's leadership. General Ma Bufang, Governor of Qinghai Province, and General Ma Hongkui, Governor of Ningxia Province, were both brought on as managers (*lishi*) of the central Association while retaining effective control of the Association within their respective provinces. As for local competitors, Bai won an important victory in June 1940, when GMD leadership issued a 3-part order that 1) recognized the CIANS as the "principal organization for the Islamic masses" and endorsed its efforts to set up branch associations throughout the country; 2) cancelled the certifications for all branches of Ma Liang's China Islamic Guild leftover from the central organization's disbandment in 1937; and 3) directed all leftover and unregistered branches of the China Islamic Progress Association to either dissolve or affiliate with the CIANS.<sup>351</sup>

The central Association prioritized rational organization over speedy redress of local issues. Maintaining bureaucratic hierarchy and protocol was a lesson from the failures of earlier organizations. The Association's bulletin included regular reports on "organization" matters (*zuzhi*), meaning the preparation, establishment, and election of leaders of local branches. It also insisted that local branches conform to official administrative jurisdictions. For example, it denied a request by two counties in Yunnan to form a joint branch and instructed the provincial division to order them to either establish two separate county-level branches or directly administered ward-level branches.<sup>352</sup> Provincial divisions were repeatedly urged to organize

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<sup>351</sup> Sheng Zhi Wei 省执委, "Guanyu qudi feifa huijiao minzhong zuzhi gei shangcheng xian zhiwei de xunling" 关于取缔非法回教民众组织给商城县执委的训令.

<sup>352</sup> "Han dian fenhui zhuanchi wuding lugong liang xiang fenbie zuzhi zhihui, bu ying hezu yi zhihui" 函滇分会转饬武定禄功两县分别组织支会或直属区会, 不应合组一支会 (Letter Sent to the Yunnan Division to Relay the Order to the Two Counties of Wuding and Lugong That They Are to Separately Organize Branch Associations and Should Not Jointly Organize a Single Branch Association).

county- and ward-level branches and report on developments promptly to ensure an orderly process.<sup>353</sup> But the central office also avoided antagonizing local authorities by contacting them prematurely. A county branch was supposed to first get in touch with its provincial division or petition the government itself before seeking intervention from the central CIANS. For example, when the Xinzheng County branch directly wrote to the central office asking to help keep local gentry from forcing Hui to contribute to a temple fair, the central office forwarded the appeal to the Henan Provincial Division and instructed it to handle the matter.<sup>354</sup> Likewise, when the Baofeng County Branch requested the central office's assistance in exempting mosque donations from taxation and covering educational expenses, the latter instructed the branch to first get in touch with the county government and appeal again only if that course of action failed.<sup>355</sup>

Limited available sources suggest that the central Association was funded principally but not entirely by the government, and that the inflationary crisis of the war years increased reliance on Bai Chongxi's personal connections and on the Association's own fundraising. The Ministry of Finance provided a subsidy (divided and distributed monthly) of 110,000 *yuan* to help cover Association expenses for August-December of 1939, followed by a subsidy of 264,000 *yuan* in 1940 and again in 1941. For each respective period (Aug-Dec 1939; Jan-Dec 1940; Jan-Dec 1941), these subsidies equaled around 2%, 63%, and 36% of total central Association revenue (including funds leftover from the previous year) and 167%, 67%, 45% of total central

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<sup>353</sup> “Fen han ge fenhui yu suo shu ge zhi qu hui zhong jian suishi hanbao wu shi jiya yiwei chengxu” 分函各分会对于所属各支区会中件随时函报勿率积压以维程序 (Letter Sent to Each Division to Report on Items Regarding Their Affiliated Branch and Ward Associations in a Timely Way and to Not Allow Them to Accumulate So As to Maintain Order).

<sup>354</sup> “Han qing henan fenhui chuli xinzheng jingshen yanxi lan xiang huimin lejuan an” 函请河南分会处理新郑敬神演戏滥向回民勒捐案 (Letter Sent to Henan Division to Handle the Case of the Deity Veneration Performance [Organizers] Excessively Pressuring Hui to Donate).

<sup>355</sup> “Henan baofeng zhihui qing huomian sijuán” 河南宝丰支会请豁免寺捐 (Baofeng, Henan Branch Association Requests Exemption for Mosque Donations).

Association expenditures. The full-year 264,000 *yuan* subsidies represented around 0.5% and 0.26% of Ministry of Finance expenditures for those years. For the same periods, the GMD provided subsidies to the central Association of 22,000 *yuan*, 44,000 *yuan*, and 44,000 *yuan*.<sup>356</sup>

At least in these early years for which data is available, neither the government nor the Party increased subsidies in pace with inflation. In fall 1940, the GMD Central Committee rejected a request from Bai to increase monthly support because of inflation and insisted that the Association raise its own funds to make up for whatever expenses the money it already received was unable to cover (though in both years the Association still ran a surplus overall). Bai ultimately resolved the discrepancy by appropriating surplus army funds, taking advantage of his powerful position on the Standing Committee of the Supreme Council for National Defense. Donations collected from the Association's South Seas Delegation also proved critical; the 352,118 *yuan* used to support Association activities in 1941 (out of a total of 8 million *yuan* collected) constituted nearly half (48%) of all revenue for that year.<sup>357</sup>

How should we characterize the relationship between the CIANS and the Nationalist Party-State? In terms of the central Association, we have seen that the Party-State, headed by Chiang Kai-shek, encouraged the establishment of a unified Hui organization to contribute to the war effort and help preserve territorial integrity following the Japanese invasion of July 1937. On the other hand, the organization that eventually took shape, the CIANS, was hardly a spontaneous outburst of patriotism or anti-Japanese sentiment, as it is sometimes portrayed; rather, it was born of marriage of the decades-long effort by a coalition of Hui elites to build a national organization and the uneasy GMD recognition of the geopolitical importance of channeling that force to its advantage.

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<sup>356</sup> Wang Zhengru and Lei Xiaojing, "Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui gongzuo baogao," 209–14.

<sup>357</sup> Wang Zhengru and Lei Xiaojing, 209–14.

## 4.2 The CIANS in Henan

### *Expansion in the Province*

The greatest expansion of the CIANS in Henan took place during the War of Resistance against Japan (1937-1945). Figure 4.3 indicates the growth of the Association in terms of county- and ward-level branches. As shown above, the CIANS was first established (as the “Hui” association) in Zhengzhou in north-central Henan, but it relocated to the provisional seat of the Nationalist government in Hankou in March of 1938 and then to Chongqing (which would remain the capital until the end of the war) in November of that year. By June, Kaifeng, then the capital of the Henan, had fallen under Japanese occupation. The provincial government retreated south to Zhenping near the regional center of Nanyang. As Japanese forces occupied more and more of the province over the course of the war, the provincial government relocated several times; from Zhenping to Luoyang in late 1939, to Lushan in April 1942, to Neixiang in September 1944, finally returning to Kaifeng after the war. Like the central CIANS and the national capital, the provincial division of the CIANS generally followed the provincial government; it was established in Nanyang in December 1938 and later relocated to Luoyang, Neixiang, then Kaifeng after the war.<sup>358</sup> Unlike the central CIANS, however, the provincial association did not bring its leadership as it moved around; in Nanyang it was led by Nanyang Hui elites, in Luoyang by Luoyang Hui elites, and so forth. In late 1944, when the Henan Provincial Division relocated to Neixiang, the Central Association appointed the county branch as the provisional provincial office.<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>358</sup> Wan Lei, “Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui yusheng fenhui zhi bianan.”

<sup>359</sup> “Zhong hui xie taolun neixiang zhihui zanqie daiban henan sheng fenhui huiwu an” 中回协讨论内乡支会暂且代办河南省分会会务案.

| Figure 4.3 <sup>360</sup><br>Expansion of the CIANS in Henan |                                    |                                |
|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Date   | County ( <i>xian</i> )<br>Branches | Ward ( <i>qu</i> )<br>Branches |
| March 1939   | 13                                 | 0                              |
| March 1942   | 52                                 | 63                             |
| September 1945   | 50                                 | 58                             |
| May 1948   | 68                                 | 105                            |

Administrative instability at the provincial level of the CIANS reflected the difficult conditions under which it developed in Henan and accentuated the organization's reliance on local, i.e. county- and ward-level, activism. The provincial division played an important role in mediating between higher and lower levels of organization and corresponding levels of the Party and government, but most Association work was undertaken by county-level officers. Earlier Islamic associations were an important foundation for the CIANS. Of the 34 branch associations established between January 1939 and January 1941, 18 were in counties with preexisting Islamic associations; and of the 10 of those counties for which sources were available, 9 had at least one officer in common between the preexisting Islamic association and the CIANS branch that replaced it.<sup>361</sup>

The CIANS instituted a hierarchy of administration corresponding to the jurisdictions of the Nationalist government: the center governed provincial divisions, provincial divisions (*fenhui*) governed municipal and county branches (*zhihui*), and municipal and county branches

<sup>360</sup> Quanguo Tushuguan Wenxian Suowei Fuzhi Zhongxin, "Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui di yi jie quanti huiyuan daibiao dahui tekan"; Wang Zhengru and Lei Xiaojing, "Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui gongzuo baogao"; Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang'anguan, "Zhongguo huijiao xiehui baosong xiuzheng qingzhensi guanli banfa bing zhaokai di san jie daibiao da hui cheng ji gongzuo baogao."

<sup>361</sup> This figure is based on my survey of the CIANS bulletin and records of earlier associations' membership in periodicals and local gazetteers.



governed ward branches (*quhui*). The relationship between county and provincial offices was outlined in the Association's "Branch Organization Charter," first promulgated in 1938 and revised twice, in 1942 and 1948. The formal organization remained similar across all three iterations. Leadership of the provincial office would first appoint members of a county preparatory committee (*choubeihui*) to convene representatives from Hui communities in the county. These representatives, which could number several dozen or more, depending on the county, would then elect from among themselves officers to serve on the branch's board (an officer board *ganshihui* in 1938 and a management board *lishihui* in 1942 and 1948), which would in turn elect one member as the executive (head officer *ganshizhang* in 1938 and director *lishizhang* in 1942 and 1948). In principle virtually any adult Hui, man or woman, was eligible for membership, but charters of individual branches (different from the central Association's charter, which outlined general principles of organization) could impose additional restrictions. The county board would divide responsibilities into different offices (*gu*). The board was to meet regularly as well as on extraordinary occasions, submit a report monthly to the provincial CIANS office, and also convene an assembly once a year for the entire county. All positions carried a one-year tenure with the possibility for reelection at the assembly.

A comparison of the three charters indicates modest organizational changes, including an expansion of board size, from 3-7 officers in 1938 to 3-9 managers in 1942 and 5-15 managers in 1948; reduced frequency of regular board meetings, from once every two weeks in 1938 to once a month in 1942 and 1948; specification of internal offices, unspecified in 1938 but enumerated as "general affairs," "organization and training," and "culture" in 1942 and 1948; the addition of a supervisory board (*jianshihui*) of 3-5 people to meet once every two months in 1948; and the requirement that both boards have a cleric (*jiaozhang*) participate in 1948.

## Local Organization

Beneath the de jure isomorphism of county branches was substantial de facto variance. In the first place, each branch was required to pass its own charter, so a certain degree of variety was built into the system. Branch charters reflect slight differences, for example, in the enumeration of the association's purposes as well as its internal organization. Reports of county elections in the CIANS' bulletin suggest widespread adherence to the numerical requirements of board membership. However, the number of registered branch members who were not officers varied; as Figure 4.5 indicates, membership could range at least from around 50 to nearly 360 and consist of different proportions of women, GMD Party members, and county natives. Figure 4.4 shows that officer composition varied as well, including in terms of GMD Party membership. Finally, branches varied in terms of member and executive occupation. Data presented in Figures 4.6 suggest that county- and ward-level executives tended to work as merchants, educators, or sub-county officials, with a smaller number working as clerics, military officers, and other professions. Figure 4.7 indicates that county association members were mostly merchants.

| Figure 4.4 Officer Composition of County-Level Branches <sup>362</sup> |               |          |             |                |       |              |
|--|---------------|----------|-------------|----------------|-------|--------------|
| Branch   | Date Recorded | Officers | GMD Members | County Natives | Women | Average Age  |
| Shaan, Henan   | October 1939  | 7        | ~0          | 0              | N/A   | 35           |
| Luoning, Henan   | July 1940     | 7        | 6 (86%)     | N/A            | 0*    | N/A          |
| Huaidian, Henan  | February 1943 | 14       | 8 (57%)     | 14 (100%)      | 0     | 41           |
| "Yubei," Henan <sup>363</sup>  | June 1948     | 18       | ~1 (6%)     | 11 (61%)       | 0*    | 48.5         |
| Pingba, Guizhou  | March 1944    | 9        | 0           | N/A            | 2     | 31.5 (1 N/A) |

<sup>362</sup> "Hunan sui yuan henan sichuan si sheng huimin jiuguo xiehui zhizhi jianzhang" 湖南绥远河南四川四省回民救国协会支会组织简章 (Organizational Charters for Branch Associations of the Hui National Salvation Association in the Four Provinces of Hunan, Suiyuan, Henan, and Sichuan); "Xikang guizhou shaanxi san sheng ji tianjin shi huimin jiuguo xiehui fenzhizhi jianzhang" 西康贵州陕西三省及天津市回民救国协会分支会组织简章 (Organizational Charters for Division and Branch Associations of the Hui Association for National Salvation in the Three Provinces of Xikang, Guizhou, and Shaanxi and the City of Tianjin); "Hui xie yubei xinxiang xian zhizhi lijian shi jianlibiao" 回协豫北新乡县支会理监事简历表. The "Yubei" chart is dated June 1948 even though the file in which it appears is dated December 1947.

<sup>363</sup> "North-Henan," a multi-county branch covering Xinxiang, Bo'ai, Qinyang, Meng, Wuzhi, and Jiyuan counties.

| Figure 4.5 Membership Composition of County-Level Branches <sup>364</sup> |               |         |             |                |          |             |
|---|---------------|---------|-------------|----------------|----------|-------------|
| Branch  | Date Recorded | Members | GMD Members | County Natives | Women    | Average Age |
| Ya'an, Xikang   | May 1939      | 55      | 7 (13%)     | 44 (80%)       | 15 (27%) | 37          |
| Shaan, Henan  | October 1939  | 72      | ~0          | 0              | N/A      | 46          |
| Luoning, Henan  | July 1940     | 357     | 6* (2%)     | N/A            | 0        | N/A         |
| Pingba, Guizhou   | March 1944    | 81      | 0           | N/A            | 9 (11%)  | 35          |

| Figure 4.6 Henan County- and Ward-Level Branch Association Heads by Occupation (1938-1942) <sup>365</sup> |     |
|---|-----|
| Merchant  | 9   |
| Military  | 1   |
| Education <sup>366</sup>  | 12  |
| Ahong   | 3   |
| Agriculture   | 1   |
| Journalism  | 1   |
| Local Official ( <i>baozhang, quzhang</i> )   | 6   |
| Unidentified  | 82  |
| Total   | 115 |

| Figure 4.7 County Association Members by Occupation <sup>367</sup> |                 |              |                |
|--|-----------------|--------------|----------------|
|  | Pingba, Guizhou | Shaan, Henan | Ya'an, Sichuan |
| Merchant   | 35              | 63           | 34             |
| Education  | 11              | 1            | 4              |
| Ahong  | 5               |              | 1              |
| Government/Local Official  | 4               | 1            |                |
| Laborer  | 14              | 2            | -              |
| Agriculture  | 6               | 1            | -              |
| Retired  | 6               |              | -              |
| Butchery   | -               |              | 15             |
| Firewood   | -               |              | 1              |
| Unidentified   | -               | 4            | -              |
| Total  | 81              | 72           | 55             |

<sup>364</sup> “Hunan suiyuan henan sichuan si sheng huimin jiuguo xiehui zhihui zuzhi jianzhang”; “Xikang guizhou shaanxi san sheng ji tianjin shi huimin jiuguo xiehui fenzhihui zuzhi jianzhang.”

<sup>365</sup> “Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui gedi fen zhi qu hui jianyaobiao” 中国回教救国协会各地分支区会简要表 (Summary Chart of Different Places' Ward and County Branches of the China Islamic Association for National Salvation); “Henan sheng ge xian huijiao siyuan ji huijiaotu gaikuang diaochabiao” 河南省各县回教寺院及回教徒概况调查表 (Survey of Circumstances of Followers of Islam and Islamic Temples in Different Counties in Henan Province). Compiled by author by comparing list of association heads in the “Summary Chart” document to occupation data in the “Survey” document and additional research for individuals named in the former. As the large number of “unidentified” occupations indicates, many association heads in the “Summary Chart” document are not included in the “Survey” document.

<sup>366</sup> Includes one “gentry” (*shenshi*) and one *tongsheng* imperial examination candidate.

<sup>367</sup> “Hunan suiyuan henan sichuan si sheng huimin jiuguo xiehui zhihui zuzhi jianzhang”; “Xikang guizhou shaanxi san sheng ji tianjin shi huimin jiuguo xiehui fenzhihui zuzhi jianzhang.”

According to all three iterations of the central Association's branch organization charter, there were two primary sources of funding for county-level branches: voluntary donations by members and contributions granted by central Association. To these two sources prescribed in the 1938 charter was added a third category, "other subsidies," in 1942.<sup>368</sup> Provincial and municipal offices could apply to the Central Association for subsidies, which might be distributed monthly, annually, or in a single instance by the Standing Committee. Administrative protocol dictated that county branch requests had to be made through provincial offices, though CIANS budget sheets differentiate between subsidies made to provincial and municipal offices and county branches. Between 1939 and 1942, about 15-25% of the central Association's total expenditures went to subsidies for offices and branches collectively. Annualized figures first two months of expenditures in 1942 together with the total number of offices (40) and branches (252) in March 1942 indicate that the CIANS gave on average 1,320 yuan to each office and 286 yuan to each branch per year, or around 110 yuan and 115 yuan monthly, respectively, with the qualification that subsidies did not have to be distributed equally.

The helpfulness of these subsidies naturally depended on the sort of work a local branch undertook. We will look more closely at branch activities in Henan in the next section. Here we can focus on finances. A lack of sources on branch budgets makes this inquiry difficult, so it is necessary to piece together occasional reports to the central Association's bulletin and to compare branches of the CIANS to those of other institutions, such as those affiliated with the

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<sup>368</sup> "Zhongguo huimin jiuguo xiehui gedi fenhui zhihui zuzhi chengzhang" 中国回民救国协会各地分会支会组织章程 (Organizational Regulations for Local Division and Branch Associations of the China Hui Association for National Salvation); Wang Zhengru 王正儒 and Lei Xiaojing 雷晓静, "Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui fen zhi qu hui zuzhi tongze" 中国回教救国协会分支区会组织通则 (General Principles of Organization for Division, Branch, and District Associations of the China Islamic Association for National Salvation); "Zhongguo huijiao xiehui fenzhiquhui zuzhi tongze" 中国回教协会分支区会组织通则 (General Principles of Organization for Division, Branch, and District Associations of the China Islamic Association).

New Life Movement. Officers of CIANS county branches did not receive salaries (in contrast to officers at the Central Association and on special assignments), which was a major expense for other institutions. For example, the Sichuan Province New Life Movement association in 1936 spent around 65% of its regular monthly expenses on personnel.<sup>369</sup> Records from Fushun County in Sichuan from 1934 suggest that at the county level personnel costs would have been lower, closer to 40%.<sup>370</sup> The New Life Movement association in Fushun budgeted over 90 yuan per month on office, printing, and miscellaneous expenses, compared to about 150 yuan for the provincial NLM branch two years later. County branches of the CIANS, which, like local branches of the New Life Movement, were required to submit monthly reports to provincial office and maintained contact with local officials, would have had comparable office expenses. Thus, it is quite unlikely that average monthly subsidies (around 115 yuan) from the central CIANS in 1942 could not have covered much more than basic office expenses, even if we set aside the hyperinflation that severely devalued the Yuan during and after the war.

Local branches of the GMD offer another comparison. In 1943, county-level branches of the GMD in Henan had monthly budgets between 650 and 1,300 yuan, roughly equivalent to average *annual* central CIANS subsidies (1,320 yuan) for *provincial* offices in the previous year.<sup>371</sup> In terms of administrative (non-personnel) costs and again leaving aside the devaluation of the yuan between 1942 and 1943, the central CIANS subsidized provincial offices to do in a

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<sup>369</sup> “Benhui shouzhì duìzhào biāo” 本会收支对照表 (民国二十五年四月份) (Table Comparing Income and Expenditures of This Association (April 1936)); “Benhui shouzhì duìzhào biāo” 本会收支对照表 (民国二十五年五月份) (Comparative Chart of This Association’s Income and Expenditures (May 1936)), 1936; “Benhui shouzhì duìzhào biāo” 本会收支对照表 (民国二十五年六月份) (Comparative Chart of This Association’s Income and Expenditures (June 1936)), 1936.

<sup>370</sup> New Life Movement Promotion Association Monthly Income and Expenditure Funds Budget Chart, “Xinshenghuo yundong cujinhui meiyue shouzhì jingfei yusuan biāo” 新生活运动促进会每月收支经费预算表.

<sup>371</sup> “Zhongguo guomindang henan sheng zhixing weiyuanhui sa er niandu gongzuo zongbaogao” 中国国民党河南省执行委员会卅二年度工作总报告 (Nationalist Party of China Henan Province Executive Committee Overall Year-End Work Report for 1943).

year what the central GMD enabled county offices to do in a month. The disparity for CIANS county branches was an order of magnitude greater.

These data and comparisons suggest that county branches of the CIANS for the most part had to fend for themselves financially. One solution to chronic financial strain was to request funds from the local government. Another was to make contributions a formal requirement of association membership, as did the Ya'an County (in Xikang Province) branch of the CIANS, which specified in its charter that all members were obliged to pay 5 *jiao* (half of one yuan) as an annual fee and were also responsible for contributing to or fundraising for nonrecurrent expenses.<sup>372</sup> With its 55 members, those fees probably covered a mere fraction of regular expenses. Sustained work required greater contributions from local community leaders; for example, in spring 1940, after being granted only 140 yuan annually from the county government, the Shaan County branch of the CIANS raised over 800 yuan for its new Hui Elementary School.<sup>373</sup>

That better-off members of a community would take charge of local welfare and services, including education, is not itself surprising and marks a continuity from the late imperial tradition of local elite activism, where an investment in communal affairs was an investment in one's social and cultural capital. The question here is why these elites would tie this investment to the CIANS. In other words: What did local Hui elites gain by establishing a branch of the CIANS? A relationship to the central Association offered access to a modicum of funding, but as we have seen the amount was hardly enough to make up for the administrative costs of running a branch and communicating with the center in the first place. As I will show in the next section,

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<sup>372</sup> "Xikang guizhou shaanxi san sheng ji tianjin shi huimin jiuguo xiehui fenzhizhui zuzhi jianzhang."

<sup>373</sup> "Hunan suiyuan henan sichuan si sheng huimin jiuguo xiehui zhizhui zuzhi jianzhang"; "Shaan xian zhizhui chuangan huimin xiaoxue" 陕县支会创办回民小学 (Shaan County Branch Association Founds Hui Elementary School).

affiliation with the CIANS was materially beneficial. It provided access, or at least improved chances of getting access, to a resource of increasing scarcity and value: a line of communication with the central party-state.

### 4.3 Securing Local Commitment

#### *Benefits of Affiliation*

We can discern two types of benefits for local elites who organized and invested in the activities of a CIANS branch. The branch could bring attention and resources from superior institutions, including the central CIANS as well as the government, to local educational and welfare projects. At the same time, the formal and informal flexibility of branch organization and work meant that the same institution could meet an array of local needs, including representing merchant interests and organizing local defense.

By establishing a CIANS branch and informing the central association of their work, local Hui elites gained access to a network of aid. Direct material support from the central association was especially important in the face of the violence, environmental catastrophe, and famine of the early 1940s.<sup>374</sup> Branches in counties where Hui suffered damage due to Japanese air raids, flooding, or other disasters requested and were granted small financial support from the central association,<sup>375</sup> which in early 1941 also seeded a small credit fund for the provincial CIANS,<sup>376</sup> at the time headquartered in Luoyang. The CIANS also supported local branches'

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<sup>374</sup> On the environmental and humanitarian impact of the Second Sino-Japanese War in Henan, see Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China*. On the CCP's efforts to win popular support by addressing the related crises, see Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 315–27.

<sup>375</sup> “Jiuji zhengzhou huibao” 救济郑州同胞 (Relief Aid to Hui Brothers in Zhengzhou); “Bokuan jiuji suiping huibao” 拨款救济遂平同胞 (Funds Allocated for Relief Aid for Hui Brothers in Suiping).

<sup>376</sup> “Yu fenhui chengli xiaoben daikuan jijin weihuiyuan shishi shengchan jiuzhu” 豫分会成立小本贷款基金委员会 实施生产救助 (Henan Division Establishes Small Capital Loan Fund Committee to Implement Production Assistance).

educational initiatives. The central association's work report for 1939-1942 records a tiered funding system that supported over three hundred Hui elementary schools affiliated with CIANS branches. The report estimated that in 1941, a total of 18,000 yuan was distributed to 138 schools.<sup>377</sup> This aid was supplementary and not sufficient for operating a local school, but it helps explain why local elites might establish a branch association rather than an independent one (which also happened). Established institutions and their leaders could retain and entrench their status by affiliating. In Xuchang County, as we saw in Chapter Two, the first local Islamic association was established as early as 1912 under the leadership of Zhang Ganqing, the Hui chairman of the county chamber of commerce. Zhang retained control over both the Islamic association and the chamber of commerce in subsequent decades (he was the chairman of both in 1947), even as the name and affiliation of the association changed from the Xuchang County CIPA branch to the Xuchang County Islamic Association to the Xuchang County CIG branch to the Xuchang County CIANS branch. The elementary school managed by this series of associations received an award of 150 yuan from the central CIANS in late 1941.<sup>378</sup>

By affiliating with the CIANS, Hui elites also gained leverage in dealings with local government. As described earlier, one of the main functions of the central CIANS was to represent Hui interests to the party-state and negotiate certain privileges and exemptions. In April 1939, the CIANS negotiated with the Ministry of Education to secure government funding for Hui schools under its jurisdiction, i.e. those run by local branches. The Ministry notified local governments of the arrangement, but compliance was inconsistent. In May 1940 and again in March 1942, CIANS representatives met with the Ministry to implement the policy. In the context of the limited enforceability of central government decisions, the advantages of CIANS

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<sup>377</sup> Wang Zhengru and Lei Xiaojing, "Zhongguo huijiao jiuguo xiehui gongzuo baogao," 178–79.

<sup>378</sup> "Buzhu xuchang huimin xiaoxuexiao" 补助许昌回民小学校 (Xuchang Hui Elementary School Subsidized).



affiliation become clearer; it provided a way to bring central or provincial government attention to local violations of policy. Thus, for example, in early 1942 the central CIANS wrote to the Wuyang County government requesting that they provide regular financial assistance to the local Hui school.<sup>379</sup> These requests continued through the 1940s; in 1946, after the Sino-Japanese War, the central CIANS wrote to the Henan Provincial Education Department requesting that it provide support for Islamic schools “in accordance with the directives of the Ministry of Education.”<sup>380</sup> In his study of the CIANS in Henan, Wan Lei emphasizes the influence of the central office over local governments,<sup>381</sup> and it is clear that in some cases, counties did provide support for Hui schools.<sup>382</sup> In other cases, however, the county refused to provide funding even after CIANS intervention. In 1941, the central CIANS wrote to the Neixiang County government requesting that it fund the Hui school run by the local CIANS branch.<sup>383</sup> The government did take action; in November, it sent inspectors to the review school, which generally earned high marks but was found to insufficiently large classes.<sup>384</sup> A later report in the CIANS bulletin by the principal of the school in CIANS bulletin lamented the continued failure to secure government funding.<sup>385</sup> Thus there were limits to CIANS influence, but the fact that the county sent

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<sup>379</sup> “Han qing wuyang xian zhengfu buzhu gaixian yisilan xiaoxue jingfei” 函请舞阳县政府补助该县伊斯兰小学经费 (Letter Sent to Wuyang County Government Requesting That They Subsidize Costs of That County’s Islamic Elementary School).

<sup>380</sup> “Han henan sheng jiaoyuting qing buzhu gedi qingzhnesi xiaoxue jingfei” 函河南省教育厅请补助各地清真寺小学经费 (Letter Sent to Henan Province Education Office Requesting It Subsidize Costs of Islamic Elementary Schools in Various Places).

<sup>381</sup> Wan, *The Chinese Islamic National Salvation Association and the Hui Minority: 1937-1948*, 28.

<sup>382</sup> In Shahedian in Biyang County, for example, the county government provided 400 yuan a month in “long-term assistance.” “Shahedian yisilan xiaoxue zhi chengli” 沙河店伊斯兰小学之成立 (Establishment of Islamic Elementary School in Shahedian).

<sup>383</sup> “Han qing neixiang xian zhengfu shefa buzhu huimin xuexiao jingfei” 函请内乡县政府 设法补助回民学校经费 (Letter Sent to Neixiang County Government Requesting That They Devise Way to Subsidize Costs for Hui School).

<sup>384</sup> “Henan neixiang qingzhen guomin xuexiao mengjiaobu shicha” 河南内乡清真国民学校蒙教部视察 (Education Department Inspection of the Islamic Citizen School in Neixiang, Henan).

<sup>385</sup> Yang Lisheng 杨丽生, “Neixiang yisilan xiaoxue” 内乡伊斯兰小学 (Neixiang Islamic Elementary School).

inspectors suggests that affiliation at least increased a community's chances of receiving (even if it did not guarantee) support.

A similar pattern can be seen in other areas beyond education: in terms of troop stationing and cow slaughtering regulations, affiliation with the CIANS helped local communities pressure the local government to observe national law and policy. A recurring problem for Hui communities during the war was forced stationing of troops in mosques (this practice occurred with other religious institutions as well). In 1940, the central CIANS persuaded the Party's Military and Political Affairs Committee to prohibit the stationing of troops in mosques and Hui schools. Through the fall of that year, the central office continued to receive complaints of troop stationing from local branches.<sup>386</sup> In October the prohibition was issued as an order to all Nationalist forces. Still, the problem continued. In Nanyang County, for example, the local CIANS branch reported in May 1941 that troops had been stationed in a school it ran in a mosque-owned school.<sup>387</sup> Two months later, the CIANS bulletin reported that after its negotiations with the Military and Political Affairs Department, the latter had ordered the stationed company to relocate.<sup>388</sup>

Prohibition of cow slaughtering was another challenge facing many Hui communities during the war. Many counties banned private slaughtering to preserve cattle for plowing. The CIANS sought exemptions for Huis on the grounds that beef was an important part of their diet (they did not eat pork), and as we saw in Chapter Two, butchery, tanning, and other bovine

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<sup>386</sup> "Qingzhensi jinzhi zhubing" 清真寺禁止驻兵 (Stationing Troops in Mosques Prohibited).

<sup>387</sup> "Dian qing junweihui chaban jundui qiangzhan nanyang siyuan xuexiao an" 电请军委会查办军队强占南阳寺院学校案 (Telegram to Military Affairs Committee Requesting to Handle Case of Forced Army Occupation of School in Nanyang Mosque).

<sup>388</sup> "Jundui qiangzhan nanyang jingmu xiaoxue junzhengbu yi chi guihuai" 军队强占南阳景穆小学 军政部已饬归还 (Army Forcibly Occupies Nanyang Jingmu Elementary School - Military and Political Affairs Department Has Already Ordered Them to Go Back).

industries were central to Hui livelihood. In January 1942, after two years of petitioning and negotiation, the central office finally worked out a solution with the government to permit Huis to slaughter and eat certain classes of cows. Despite the order from the Ministry of the Interior, however, Huis continued to be prevented from private slaughtering and relied on the CIANS to intervene. For example, in May 1944, the Fangcheng County CIANS notified the central office that the county government was preventing local Huis from slaughtering and eating cows. In response, the central office wrote to the county government and requested that permit the Huis to do so in accordance with the measures issued by the Ministry of the Interior.<sup>389</sup>

In addition to providing access to more aid and official attention, local CIANS branches also fulfilled local organizational functions that had no connection to the specific needs of Huis as a distinct cultural or religious group. We saw in Chapter Two how in earlier decades Hui merchants used Islamic associations to form and institutionalize useful relationships. This practice continued during the war. The Second Historical Archives in Nanjing contain records of local guild, chamber of commerce, and “people’s association” (*renmin tuanti*) meetings in 1942-1943 from nine counties in Henan. Meetings in six of those nine counties included local Islamic associations. These were the only nominally religious organizations present.<sup>390</sup> The local CIANS

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<sup>389</sup> “Han fangcheng xian zhengfu zhun huimin zaishi niuzhi” 函方城县政府 准回民宰食牛只 (Letter Sent to Fangcheng County Government to Permit Hui to Slaughter and Eat Cows).

<sup>390</sup> The six counties were Xuchang, Xingyang, Lushan, Nanyang, Xinye, and Xi. The three counties with records that did indicate Islamic association presence at these meetings were Wenxiang, Xinzheng, and Xincui. These three counties had CIANS branches by 1942. There were 111 counties in Henan in total; records for the vast majority were not available or do not exist. “Henan sheng yiyang xian deng xian ge ji renmin tuanti gongzuohui bao jilu ji youguan wenshu” 河南省宜阳县等县各级人民团体工作会报纪录及有关文书 (Record of Report on Work Meeting of Various Levels of County People’s Associations of Yiyang County, Henan Province and Related Documents); “Xinye xian renmin tuanti lianhehui baojilu” 新野县人民团体联合会报纪录 (Record of Report on the Federation of People’s Associations of Xinye County); “Henan sheng lushan xian zhengfu banli renmin tuanti gongzuo jihuashu” 河南省鲁山县政府办理人民团体工作计划书 (Government of Lushan County, Henan Province Work Plan for Management of People’s Associations).

did for these counties' Hui elites what the local chamber of commerce, barbers guild, women's association, or other groups did for their constituencies.

Local defense was another need a CIANS branch could be used to serve. During the Sino-Japanese War, 61 “wartime service brigades” (*zhanshi fuwudui*) and “battle-zone service brigades” (*zhandi fuwudui*) were registered with the central CIANS, 28 of which were in Henan.<sup>391</sup> This figure excludes Hui brigades that did not affiliate with the CIANS, which the latter attempted to have dissolved.<sup>392</sup> In theory these brigades were unarmed. In fact, however, many if not all of them possessed guns and functioned like local militias. The case of Nanyang County is instructive. The county CIANS branch organized a local service brigade with 764 members carrying 417 guns. County CIANS oversaw seven ward-level (*qu*) CIANS branches, each of which had its own armed “ward brigade” (*qu hui*), which in turn was divided into between one and eight village-level armed teams.<sup>393</sup> In other words, pre-existing forms of social organization dictated the structure of local defense, much as it did with Red Spears and other armed local groups in earlier decades. These too could be an instrument of local elite dominance and entrenchment. In nearby Zhenping County, for example, the chairman and vice-chairman of the county CIANS branch and commander of the affiliated armed group were both headmen at the local mosque and were leaders in the local self-government movement in the late 1920s-30s.

These unofficial and quasi-official militias could lead to tensions with the local government. In Fangcheng County, a dispute between the commander of the local CIANS brigade (and chairman of the branch) and the Guomindang Secretary ended in the latter cutting

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<sup>391</sup> Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang'anguan, “Zhongguo huijiao xiehui baosong xiuzheng qingzhensi guanli banfa bing zhaokai di san jie daibiao da hui cheng ji gongzuo baogao,” 728–29.

<sup>392</sup> “Han deng xian zhengfu zhizhi ma junsi sizi chengli zuzhi an” 函邓县政府制止马君朴私自成立组织案 (Letter Sent to Deng County Government to Stop Ma Junpu's Privately Established Organization).

<sup>393</sup> Wang Zhenming 王振明, *Nanyang xian minzu zhi* 南阳县民族志 (Nanyang County Nationalities Gazetteer), 50–54.

all local funding to the CIANS and attempting to confiscate its weapons. It was only after Bai Chongxi's personal intervention on a military visit that the dispute was resolved.<sup>394</sup> Moreover, neither the central CIANS nor the central government could fully control the brigades. In 1942, the Society Department issued an ordinance specifically for the CIANS prohibiting its brigades from arming. This same prohibition (along with a ban on deferring military conscription based on brigade service) was included in a compilation of explanations of ministry rulings concerning "people's associations." In other words, the CIANS was for the Society Department the prime example of the type of organization that should *not* be armed.<sup>395</sup> Nevertheless, the central CIANS continued to order local brigades to disarm during the later war years.<sup>396</sup> The CIANS officially ordered the dissolution of all brigades in October 1946,<sup>397</sup> but as late as February 1947, the central office wrote to the Neixiang branch ordering it to comply and disband its brigade.<sup>398</sup>

### *Religious Legitimation and Discipline*

These benefits of CIANS affiliation also should have applied to another countrywide institution with local branches, the New Life Movement, which also funded local relief, education, and defense. Unlike the CIANS, the NLM enjoyed consistent regime support and local government funding; it was both ideologically and administratively closer to the party-state than the CIANS. But it was ultimately less successful than the CIANS in Henan in terms of maintaining local branch offices and surviving the war with Japan. By its second year, in 1935,

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<sup>394</sup> Yang Yuqing, "Cong zhonghua huijiao gonghui dao yisilanjiao xiehui."

<sup>395</sup> "Shehuibu daidian" 社会部代电 (三十一年七月二十八日) (Society Department Telegram (28 July 1942)); "Shehuibu shehui tuanti faling jieshi huibian" 社会部社会团体法令解释汇编 (Compiled Explanations on Society Department Orders on Social Associations), 21.

<sup>396</sup> "Tong han ge sheng fenhui, zhao shehuibu ling, renmin tuanti, bu de you wuzhuang zuzhi" 通函各省分会，照社会部令，人民团体，不得有武装组织 (Circular Sent to Every Provincial Division That According to Order from the Society Department, People's Associations May Not Have Armed Organizations).

<sup>397</sup> Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang'anguan, "Zhongguo huijiao xiehui baosong xiuzheng qingzhensi guanli banfa bing zhaokai di san jie daibiao da hui cheng ji gongzuo baogao," 728.

<sup>398</sup> "Han neixiang zhihui zhanshi fuwudui zunling jieshu" 函内乡支会 战时服务队遵令结束 (Letter Sent to Neixiang Branch, Wartime Service Squadrons Terminated in Accordance with Orders).

the NLM had established county-level “promotion associations” (*cujinhui*) in all of Henan’s 111 counties. At that point, only one other Province, Shanxi, had associations for every county; several others had near-total penetration, and still others had substantially lower levels.<sup>399</sup> All of Henan’s associations were disbanded over the course of the war, and in 1946, only 10 had been reestablished.<sup>400</sup> By contrast, as we have seen, the CIANS consolidated and grew over the course of the war and after, despite financial strain and inconsistent official support. How did the CIANS in Henan manage not only to survive but grow during the war, while the NLM in the province, despite its stronger connections to the Party-State, collapsed?

One advantage enjoyed by the CIANS was its embeddedness within an established form of solidarity: the mosque. Virtually all branches were based in mosques and thus integrated into the space and schedule of ritual gathering. Balancing the need to harness the mobilizing power of traditional symbols with an overtly modernist and at times anti-religious ideology was a continuous challenge for the Nationalist regime.<sup>401</sup> The CIANS also spoke in terms of reform rather than simply reproduction of Islamic practices, and its relationship to local tradition was not necessarily devoid of tension. But it consistently prioritized unity and inclusion over reform. Its charters for mosque administration in the 1940s defer to “local custom” on “personal matters” (meaning marriages, funerals and burials, and other ritual occasions) and questions of *ahong* hiring and dismissal. The local CIANS branch would get involved only in the event of a dispute.<sup>402</sup> To the extent that the CIANS accommodated rather than antagonized the existing

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<sup>399</sup> Xiao Jizong 萧继宗, *Xinshenghuo yundong shiliao* 新生活运动史料 (New Life Movement Historical Materials).

<sup>400</sup> “Henan xinyunhui qingjie you gui” 河南新运会清洁又规矩 (Henan New Life Movement Association Clean and Proper).

<sup>401</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*.

<sup>402</sup> “Qingzhensi guanli banfa” 清真寺管理办法 (Measures for Mosque Management); Zhongguo Huijiao Xiehui 中国回教协会, “Xiuding qingzhensi guanli banfa” 修订清真寺管理办法 (Revised Methods for Managing Mosque Administration).

order and encouraged participation rather than imposing change, local tradition strengthened local commitment to the organization.

A related advantage stemmed from the disciplining function of popular religious instruction and propaganda. As seen in Chapters One and Two, by the mid-1930s, a network of shari‘a-minded *ahongs* and lay elites were collaborating to popularize knowledge of the shari‘a as the basis of a Hui identity. The core of the cluster of ideas and Arabic vocabulary known as “Islamic culture” was a personal commitment to understanding and fulfilling these ritual obligations. The link between personal discipline and organizational strength was a tenet of Leninist political culture in both the GMD and the CCP. During the Sino-Japanese War, the Nationalist regime invested in personnel “training” (*xunlian*) programs to restore its administrative capacity in fast decline thanks to its reduced tax revenue, wartime strain, and Chiang Kai-shek’s personal monopolization of power.<sup>403</sup>

The CIANS implemented its own training programs, but it also saw religious practice and “Islamic culture” as potent sources of organizational discipline. In a 1939 essay, the ethnologist and historian Bai Shouyi explained the relationship between Islamic culture, individual moral discipline, and collective action:

Worship, for example, is by no means just a course of study (*kecheng*) with purely religious significance, and in fact includes several sorts of ethical training (*daode xunlian*). Every day there are five occasions for worship; every seven days there is also one occasion for collective worship; and every year there are also two occasions for festival worship. For every occasion of worship, many or all believers [in the community] must be assembled around the mosque; individuals must first, according to stipulated rules, bathe parts of or their entire body; each must [worship] at a fixed time and follow the motions of the leader, moving amid solemn orderliness, not needing another person to correct him, nor even another person to inspect him. This is Islam’s training for

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<sup>403</sup> Strauss, “Strategies of Guomindang Institution Building: Rhetoric and Implementation in Wartime Xunlian.”

collective life, its training for cleanliness, and its training for order.<sup>404</sup>

To the extent that individuals internalized this commitment, they formed stronger attachments to the congregation and the institutions associated with it, including the local CIANS.

The impact of these religious factors—legitimation and discipline—on local commitment were clearest in places where the lay elite were weak and faced high barriers to institution-building. In this respect the development of the CIANS in Zhoukou is a revealing case. Unlike in Neixiang and Xuchang, where commercial power and Hui leadership were concentrated in the local CIANS (recall that in both counties, the chairman of the CIANS was also the chairman of the chamber of commerce), and unlike in Luoyang and Nanyang, where Hui officials and military officers headed the CIANS, in Zhoukou Hui leadership fell to local professionals: doctors, teachers, and journalists. The large size of the city’s Hui population and its economic degeneration made organization even more difficult. In the early and mid-1930s, local Hui professionals repeatedly attempted and failed to build a lasting Islamic association. The problem, according to these organizers, was not a lack of available people but a lack of personal commitment and responsibility among officers. Reflecting on the failure of an earlier, local organization, the Zhoukou Islamic Education Promotion Association, the Hui doctor Ba Guoying resolved that henceforth, when forming an association, he would invite only “true Muslims (*huijiaotu*) and those of upright character.”<sup>405</sup> Muslim members of the credit cooperative organized by the association were required to attend congregational prayers on Fridays.<sup>406</sup> The leadership of the Zhoukou CIANS branch (including Ba Guoying’s son and colleagues) applied

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<sup>404</sup> Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, “Huijiao wenhua yanjiu zhi yiyi” 回教文化研究之意义 (The Significance of the Study of Islamic Culture).

<sup>405</sup> Ba Guoying, “Zhoukou huijiao jiaoyu cujinhui huiwu xianzhuang.”

<sup>406</sup> Ba Guoying, “You zhengli zhoukou huijiao zhi jingyan er tan dao gaijin zhongguo huijiao xianzhuang fangce shixing zhi keneng.”



the lessons from the earlier failures and invested in Islamic culture as a form of organizational discipline. It organized an Islamic division of the local Guomindang youth corps and a training program for Hui merchants that included religious instruction. It raised funds for and ran an Islamic elementary school and night school, printed religious textbooks, and posted propaganda posters twice a month. Religious observance was emphasized; in late 1942, the branch sent word to local mosques to encourage fasting and estimated that that 60% of the Hui population did so that year.<sup>407</sup> In keeping with the central CIANS policy, the branch organized monthly citizen assemblies (*guomin yue hui*) where the chairman proclaimed the “Believers’ Compact” (*mumin gongyue*), a later (1946) copy of which reads as follows:

Believers’ Compact:

1. To recognize that there is only one God;
2. To believe in the Prophet Muhammad;
3. To strictly observe the Quran;
4. To abide by the Prophet’s Instructions;
5. To cherish the state and nation;
6. To uphold righteousness and truth;
7. To carry on the spirit of loyalty and bravery;
8. To make education universal and develop productive enterprises;
9. To sincerely unite;
10. To seek liberation of the oppressed Islamic nations of the world;
11. To practice the Three Principles of the People;
12. To obey the laws and ordinances of the state;
13. To uphold the central government;
14. To follow the supreme leader.<sup>408</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> “Zhoukou zhihui juban huishang xunlianban” 周口支会举办回商训练班 (Zhoukou Branch Association Holds Training Class for Hui Merchants); “Zhoukou zhihui chuangan yisilan xiaoxue” 周口支会创办伊斯兰小学 (Zhoukou Branch Association Finds Islamic Elementary School); “Henan zhoukou zhihui ba jiu yue gongzuo gaikuang” 河南周口支会八九月工作概况 (August-September Work Situation for the Zhoukou, Henan Branch Association); “Henan sheng zhoukou zhihui huiwu jinzhang” 河南省周口支会会务紧张 (Associational Affairs Strained for Zhoukou Branch Association in Henan Province); “Zhoukou zhihui huiwu jinkuang” 周口支会会务近况 (Recent Situation of the Associational Affairs of the Zhoukou Branch Association); “Zhoukou zhihui nuli xuanchuan” 周口支会努力宣传 (Zhoukou Branch Association Works Hard at Propaganda); “Zhoukou zhihui gongzuo jinkuang” 周口支会工作近况 (Recent Situation of Work of the Zhoukou Branch Association); “Zhoukou zhihui jianbao” 周口支会简报 (Brief Report on the Zhoukou Branch Association).

<sup>408</sup> “Mumin gongyue” 穆民公约 (Believer’s Compact).

#### 4.4 Gaining National Recognition

One of the principal achievements of the CIANS was gaining recognition for the Hui as a distinct political constituency. Although the Nationalist government resisted extending the language of *minzu* to the Hui, by 1947 it granted them equivalent rights of designated representation in the National Assembly in Article 135 of the new constitution of the Republic of China. These rights would be further institutionalized and accommodated to the political program of the new regime after the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949. This recognition was a concession to the institutionalized political strength of the CIANS. That strength was in turn a function of the CIANS' success, demonstrated above, where its predecessors had failed: combining a powerful core leadership with close access to the Nationalist party-state with a broad base of institutional support at the local level.

##### *Article 135 and the Chinese Civil War*

The resumption of civil war between the CCP and GMD shaped the contours of Hui political activism after World War II. The loss of a common enemy with the defeat of the Empire of Japan in August 1945 led the two parties to once again train their sights on one another. Among the issues left unresolved by American-supported negotiations that fall was the composition of the National Assembly. The Political Consultative Conference in early 1946 failed to produce a lasting agreement. The agreed-upon date for the convening of the Constituent Assembly to adopt a new constitution, May 5<sup>th</sup>, was postponed indefinitely by general agreement, but the CCP and other parties lost faith in the GMD's willingness to share power as hostilities broke out in Manchuria in the late spring. In August, Chiang Kai-shek unilaterally decreed that the Constituent Assembly would convene on November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1946, which the

government affirmed after capturing Zhangjiakou from the Communists on National Day (October 10<sup>th</sup>). With additional victories over the communists, Chiang called a ceasefire on November 8<sup>th</sup> and attempted to secure the participation of other parties in the Assembly to enhance the legitimacy of the government's strengthened position. The CCP and the Democratic League boycotted, but other parties and independents joined. The new draft constitution was adopted on November 15<sup>th</sup>, to be revised and then promulgated on 1 January 1947.<sup>409</sup>

Bai Chongxi, chairman of the CIANS and one of the most powerful men in the GMD and military, played a crucial role in securing designated representation for the Hui in the National Assembly. As CIANS chairman and self-proclaimed Hui “leader” (*lingxiu*), Bai likely expected that the formal recognition of the Hui as a political constituency would enhance his own power. At the same time, he was fiercely anti-communist and, despite his earlier rivalry with Chiang, a loyal GMD officer. Bai wanted to avoid pushing the issue too forcefully too early, lest it weaken the GMD's grip on power. The challenge was to encourage and channel Hui political activism without losing control.

In supporting Hui representation, Bai may have adopted a fringe cause within the top ranks of the GMD, but within the CIANS he stood at the conservative end of the spectrum. In the mid-1930s, the loudest calls for representation of the Hui as a *minzu* came from the Huizu Youth Association, independent of both the Islamic Guild and, initially, the CIANS. Bai managed to coopt the Association, which was reconstituted under the CIANS as the Islamic Youth Association in 1940. In early 1946, the CIANS relocated to the restored Nationalist capital at Nanjing, and the Islamic Youth League once again changed its name, this time to the Hui Youth Association (arguably less restrictively religious than “Islamic” but also less overtly political

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<sup>409</sup> Fung, *In Search of Chinese Democracy*, 263–97; Xiao-Planes, “Of Constitutions and Constitutionalism: Trying to Build a New Political Order in China, 1908-1949,” 54–57.

than “Huizu”). In May, when the Constitutive Assembly was previously set to meet, the Youth Association began publishing calls for Hui representation. In a declaration to its national congress that month, the Youth Association leadership criticized those who overemphasized the narrowly religious aspect of Hui solidarity for fear that acknowledging the “unique nature of Hui society” (*huimin shehui de tezhi*) would lead to national division.<sup>410</sup> Over the next year and a half, the Youth Association would continue to make the most ambitious demands for establishing and raising the Hui delegate quota.<sup>411</sup>

Bai encouraged the post-WWII campaigns for Hui representation and personally delivered the first successes on that front. As he traveled throughout China in his capacity as general and, starting in late May 1946, Minister of National Defense, he also visited local Hui communities and branches of the CIANS. In late April 1946, he arrived in Xinxiang in northern Henan, and in a speech to over 1,300 Hui and local officials, pointed to the low representation of Hui (“Islamic,” *huijiao*) in government as one consequence of poor education. The speech was printed in the inaugural issue of *Hui Sheng Yue Kan* (Voice of the Hui Monthly), edited and published by the leadership of the local CIANS branch.<sup>412</sup> Its front pages consistently featured “Bai Chongxi” in large letters, demonstrating the publication’s support for Bai and lending his credibility to its message. The October issue, closer to the November convening of the Constituent Assembly, included an essay on Sun Yat-sen’s recognition of the “Islamic nation” (*huijiao minzu*) in China, invoking the father of republic’s commitment to equality among nations (*minzu pingdeng*) in an implicit call for Hui delegates analogous to for Tibetans and

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<sup>410</sup> Wang Zhengru 王正儒 and Lei Xiaojing 雷晓静, “Zhongguo huimin qingnianhui quanguo daibiao dahui xuanyan” 中国回民青年会全国代表大会宣言 (Proclamation of the All-Country Assembly of the China Hui Youth Association), 179.

<sup>411</sup> Da Dan 大丹, “Xian gei guomin dahui” 献给国民大会 (Contributed to the National Assembly), 6.

<sup>412</sup> Bai Chongxi 白崇禧, “Bai fu zongzhang dui yubei jiaobao xunhua” 白副总长对豫北教胞训话 (Deputy Minister Bai’s Admonition to Brothers in Religion in Northern Henan).

other recognized nations.<sup>413</sup> In Hankou, the local CIANS branch was more explicit. In late August 1946, it began publishing *Yi Li Yue Kan* (Islamic Truth Monthly), also featuring Bai's name on the front page. The first issue linked Islamic doctrine, patriotism, and political participation (*can zheng*) in a Ramadan open letter urging Hui to seize the opportunity of the upcoming Assembly to take part in national affairs.<sup>414</sup> A petition for Hui representation at the National Assembly ran in the September issue.<sup>415</sup>

The struggle for Hui representation involved fighting on two fronts: first, applying pressure on the Nationalist government to expand political rights to ethnic minorities, and second, ensuring that Huis scattered throughout the country were counted among those designated groups. Neither battle's outcome was certain in the mid-1940s. The "May Fifth Draft Constitution" of 1936 from which the 1946 drafting process picked up gave sweeping powers to the presidency and the Guomindang and, as Chiang articulated an increasingly monist definition of the "Chinese Nation" (*zhonghua minzu*), made virtually no concessions to minority rights and autonomy. Article 5 of that document stated that "all nations (*minzu*) of the Republic of China are completely equal as components of the Chinese nation (*zhonghua minzu*)."<sup>416</sup> A decade of war and national fracture left the Guomindang in a somewhat weaker position in 1946. In a revised draft of the "May Fifth" constitution completed by a committee in the Legislative Yuan in mid-November, Article 5 was changed to: "All nations (*minzu*) of the Republic of China are

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<sup>413</sup> Mai Yungong 买韵公, "Zongli duiyu huijiao minzu de renshi" 总理对于回教民族的认识 (The Prime Minister's Recognition of the Islamic Nation).

<sup>414</sup> "Zhongguo huijiao xiehui hankou shi fenhui qingzhu 'kaizhai jie' gao quanguo jiaobao shu" 中国回教协会汉口分会庆祝'开斋节'告全国教胞书 (Letter from the Hankou City Division of the China Islamic Association to Brothers in Religion in the Entire Country Celebrating the Festival of Breaking the Fast).

<sup>415</sup> "Women wei shenme qingqiu zhongyang poke kuochong guomin daibiao dahui huibao daibiao ming'e" 我们为什么请求中央破格扩充国民代表大会回胞代表名额.

<sup>416</sup> "Zhonghua minguo xianfa cao'an" 中华民国宪法草案 (Draft Constitution of the Republic of China), May 3, 1936.

completely equal. The autonomous rights of minority nations (*shaoshu minzu*) concentrated in certain places should be guaranteed.”<sup>417</sup> But Sun Ke, President of Legislative Yuan (and son of Sun Yat-sen), opposed the second half of the article (regarding autonomous rights) and argued that the “certain places” (elsewhere in the draft called “national autonomous areas”) applied only to Tibet and Inner Mongolia and that they should therefore be specified as such.<sup>418</sup> His committee left the decision to the Constitutive Assembly, and the draft that passed on 28 November accorded with Sun’s views.<sup>419</sup>

Even if the “autonomous rights” clause had remained in the draft, it would not necessarily have meant anything for the Hui. As we saw earlier, back in 1936, the Nationalist government rejected Hui petitions for designated representation on the grounds that they differed from Hans in terms of religion alone, not culture. At the same time, the Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang, who had a more obvious claim to “cultural” (as well as linguistic and territorial) distinctiveness, lived in a province (unlike Tibet and Inner Mongolia) and were thus covered by the normal territory-based election system. Both points remained equally valid (or invalid, depending on one’s perspective) in 1946.

What had changed in the intervening decade was the degree of Guomindang control and the degree of Hui political organization. The Guomindang had captured important cities in the late summer and early fall of 1946, but Communist strength continued to grow, especially in the hinterlands and interior. In 1944, a late effort by the Empire of Japan to knock the Guomindang

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<sup>417</sup> “Wu wu cao’an xiuzheng’an cao’an dingzhenggao” 五五草案修正案草案订正稿 (Corrected Draft of Revised Draft of the May 5th (1936) Draft [Constitution]).

<sup>418</sup> “Xiancao wancheng lifa chengxu chengsong zhengfu tijiao guoda” 宪草完成立法程序 呈送政府提交国大 (Draft Constitution Completes Legislature Procedure, Delivered to Government for Submission to National Assembly).

<sup>419</sup> “Zhonghua minguo xianfa cao’an” 中华民国宪法草案 (Draft Constitution of the Republic of China), November 30, 1946.

out of Henan provided the Communists with an opportunity expand its base. Throughout 1946, CCP and GMD forces jockeyed for control of strategic parts of the province.<sup>420</sup> By the early 1940s, granting the Hui recognition as a *minzu* had become a tenet of the CCP's united front strategy. In 1944, the first ward-level (*qu*) "Huizu area" in the entire country was established under CCP control in Shangqiu.<sup>421</sup> The Communists also made inroads in other parts of eastern Henan. In October 1946, the Guomindang's Youth Corps in Zhoukou reported that the local "Islamic Youth Party" was secretly an arm of the Democratic League (at the time allied with the CCP) and that it and other branches were plotting assassinations of Youth Corps officers.<sup>422</sup> In December, the provincial government relayed multiple warnings of "traitorous bandits" (i.e. Communists) stirring up trouble among Hui with promises of protections for mosques, religious freedom, and customs and calls to "unite and implement democracy with the (Communist) government."<sup>423</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> Wou, *Mobilizing the Masses*, 329–54.

<sup>421</sup> Yang Shaohua 杨少华, *Shangqiu huizu shigao* 商丘回族史稿 (Draft History of the Hui Nationality of Shangqiu), 86–87.

<sup>422</sup> Henan Zhiganhui 河南支干会, "Guanyu yanfang huijiao qingniandang huodong de daidian" 关于严防回教青年党活动的代电 (Telegram Regarding Strictly Preventing the Activities of the Islamic Youth Party).

<sup>423</sup> Cheng Huimin 程惠民, "Wei fangzhi 'jianfei' dui gedi huijiao tuanti shanhua liyong wo gedi hui bao ying shefa jiaqiang yu huimin lianluo gei liu quansheng de daidian" 为防止"奸匪"对各地回教团体煽惑利用我各地会报应设法加强与回民联络给柳泉生的代电 (Telegram to Liu Quansheng That Connections with Hui Should Be Strengthened in Our Conferences in Various Places in Order to Prevent Traitorous Bandits from Incitement and Instrumentalization of Islamic Associations); Yu Xinya 余新亚, "Jianfei fachu tuanjie zunzhong huimin xinyang de kouhao wei fangzhi gongdang dui shaoshu minzu de shandong liyong te niding fangzhi banfa" 奸匪发出团结尊重回民信仰的口号为防止共党对少数民族的煽动利用特拟定防止办法 (Traitorous Bandits Put Out Slogans of Unity and Respect for Hui Beliefs; Specifically Drafting a Method to Prevent Incitement and Instrumentalization of Minority Nationalities by the Communist Party); Yu Xinya 余新亚, "Wei fangzhi 'jianfei' liyou huimin tuanti te zhiding er zhong banfa gei li xinhe de daidian" 为防止"汉匪"利诱回民团体特制定二种办法给栗心合的代电 (Telegram to Li Xinhe on Specifically Stipulating Two Measures for Preventing "Traitorous Bandits" from Luring Hui Organizations); Yu Xinya 余新亚, "Guanyu niding fangzhi 'jianfei' shanhua huimin banfa de daidian" 关于拟定防止"奸匪"煽惑回民办法的代电 (Telegram Regarding Drafting Measures to Prevent "Traitorous Bandits" from Inciting Huis); Di Ershi Liu Jun Silingbu 第二十六軍司令部, "Guanyu zhuyi fangji huijiao qingniandang de daidian" 关于注意防缉回教青年党的代电 (Regarding Telegram to Pay Attention to Guarding Against and Tracking Down the Islamic Youth Party).

Meanwhile, in the capital, Muslim (Hui, Uyghur, and Kazakh) leaders increased pressure on the Nationalist government. There was no quota for Muslim delegates, but at least 34 representatives (including Bai Chongxi) in the Constituent Assembly were Muslims (again, including Uyghurs and Kazakhs) selected in other capacities. On November 18<sup>th</sup> these representatives met at CIANS headquarters and established the Society of Islamic Representatives to the National (Constituent) Assembly and the Islamic Representative Advisory Group, to convene twice a week while the Assembly was in session.<sup>424</sup> On December 6<sup>th</sup>, following the publication of the draft constitution that made no mention of Hui representation, Bai personally chaired a session of the Draft Constitution Review Committee in which Mongolian autonomy and Tibet were discussed.<sup>425</sup> It is likely that in that meeting the question of Hui representation was also raised, and on December 13<sup>th</sup> a majority of the First Review Committee passed a resolution to add an article to the constitution stipulating that measures for National Assembly elections for various professional associations and “citizens of China proper with special life customs” would be established separately by law.<sup>426</sup> The latter was the rather awkward phrasing used to refer to Huis without formally granting them *minzu* status.

The classification *minzu* was important to the extent that it guaranteed group rights. The current emphasis in PRC historiography on the denial of formal *minzu* status by the GMD reflects the centrality of that category to PRC governance and political identity. But it obscures the real stakes of politics before the establishment of the PRC. Hui leaders demanded designated

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<sup>424</sup> “Zhengqu huibao zhengzhi diwei guoda huijiao daibiao zai jing huodong” 争取回胞政治地位国大回教代表在京活动 (Activities of Islamic Representatives to the Constitutive Assembly in Beijing Vie for Political Position of Hui Brothers).

<sup>425</sup> “Ba zu xiancao weiyuanhui zuo fenbie juxing huiyi” 八组宪草委员会昨分别举行会议 (Eight Divisions of Constitutional Drafting Committee Held Separate Meetings Yesterday).

<sup>426</sup> “Di yi shencha weiyuanhui jin xu juxing huiyi” 第一审查委员会今续举行会议 (First Review Committee Holds Continued Meeting Today).



representation whether or not they were called a *minzu*. On December 15<sup>th</sup> the various constitutional review committees completed a week of consideration of over 400 petitions and recommended, among other points, adding a modified version of the aforementioned clause to Chapter Twelve of the constitution, which dealt with elections: “[Representation of] professional associations, free professional associations, and descent groups (*zongzu*) with different life customs in a small number of places should be determined proportionally, and the measures [for elections] shall be established separately by law.”<sup>427</sup>

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, some fifty Hui representatives and CIANS leaders called a press conference to publicize their demands, which now went beyond representation in the National Assembly and included the quotas for seats in the Legislative Yuan, the Control Yuan, democratic institutions at every administrative level, and opportunities for every level of education and special accommodations “in life,” i.e. in terms of their “special life customs.”<sup>428</sup> The press conference organizers also read a petition co-signed by the CIANS leadership and the Islamic (*huijiao*, here meaning Uyghurs and other Muslim groups in addition to the Hui) representatives at the Constitutive Assembly. The petition asserts that the Hui of the “interior,” i.e. excluding Xinjiang, constitute a minority nation (*shaoshu minzu*) entitled to group rights:

The Hui compatriots of our country who live scattered throughout the interior number over 40 million. Over more than a thousand years they have all come through the northwest and by sea. Everywhere they live together in clans, not only holding their own distinctive life customs, but also still preserving the pure bloodline of their descent group (*zongzu*). Thus, of all the places where Hui live together, not one has failed to form a separate society. Truly they are a nation possessed of a common faith; but because over

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<sup>427</sup> “Xiancao fenzu shencha jieguo” 宪草分组审查结果 (Results of Review by Constitutional Draft Divisions); “Xiancao fenzu shencha jieguo (xuwan)” 宪草分组审查结果 (续完) (Results of Review by Constitutional Draft Divisions (Continued)).

<sup>428</sup> “Huizu daibiao zhaodai jizhe chenshu dui guoda xiwang” 回族代表招待记者 陈述对国大希望 (Huizu Representatives Receive Journalists, Declare Hopes for National Assembly).

the years they have suffered the oppression of the age of autocracy and discrimination by outsiders, and the government has still not been able to give consideration to the interests of this minority nationality, they have fallen behind economically, culturally, and in their social position, and ambitious parties will offer them carrots and sticks [for personal advantage]. When it comes to the military service and tax contributions they provide the state as obligations, they are entirely the same as ordinary citizens, yet when it comes to the various rights they ought to enjoy, they suffer disappointment.

When we consider this National Assembly: among Gansu's mere 6 million people, Hui compatriots make up more than 2 million; in Yunnan they make up 3 million; and nearly 4 million in Hebei.<sup>429</sup> The above are all provinces with great masses of Hui compatriots, and there are innumerable similar situations. Now this Association and our colleagues are receiving appeals in letters and from our division-, branch-, and ward-level associations and Hui compatriots everywhere, increasing daily by the hundreds. We hereby relay these cries of unfairness to the press and the National [Constitutive] Assembly, with the hope that when the rights of minority nationalities are stipulated in the constitution, these more than 40 million Hui compatriots in the interior shall not be disregarded and thereby disappointed.<sup>430</sup>

The petition was widely disseminated in the Hui press and reported in the national media.

Clearly, as Eroglu Sager has also shown, the PRC discourse of Hui nationhood and national recognition was a response to earlier political claims by Hui themselves.<sup>431</sup>

The question of proportional representation remained contested. On December 19<sup>th</sup>, a Hui representative at a joint review committee session proposed that the quota of "representatives of citizens of China proper with special life customs" be stipulated in the constitution, but the group delegated the decision to yet another committee.<sup>432</sup> The next day, a provisional meeting one of the review committees recommended the following clause: "The quota of representatives of

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<sup>429</sup> These figures are great exaggerations.

<sup>430</sup> The text appears as a single paragraph in the original. "Xianfa yi mingding huimin zhengquan" 宪法已明定回民政权 (Hui Political Rights Clearly Established in Constitution).

<sup>431</sup> Eroglu Sager, "A Place under the Sun."

<sup>432</sup> "Zongshenhui jieguo (xuwan)" 综审会结果 (续完) (Results of Joint Review Committee (Continued)).

citizens of China proper with special life customs should be fixed for each type of election, and the measures for the elections shall be determined by law.”<sup>433</sup> A revised version stating simply that “the measures concerning the quota and election of representatives of citizens of China proper with special life customs shall be determined by law,” making no mention of different types of elections, was presented to the Constitutive Assembly on December 21<sup>st</sup>.<sup>434</sup> This was included as the 135<sup>th</sup> article of the final draft of the constitution, passed by the Constitutive Assembly on 25 December 1946, promulgated on 1 January 1947 and set to take effect on 25 December 1947.

### *Hui Politics and Elections*

The CIANS and Hui Youth Association immediately set to work trying to build on the Article 135 compromise to secure and expand Hui representation. In January 1947, the Youth Association devoted a special issue of its bulletin to the National Assembly question. It included, among other proposals, a call for a quota of at least 300 Hui delegates to the National Assembly, or roughly 10% of seats corresponding to an asserted (and dramatically exaggerated) 10% of the population.<sup>435</sup> Another proposal affirmed the need for proportional representation (based on the even higher claim that Huis were one ninth of the total population of China) and recommended revising the constitution to include the “citizens of China proper with special life customs” language in articles defining the composition and quotas for the National Assembly (rather than simply the election process), the Legislative Yuan, and the Control Yuan.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> “Zongshenhui linshi hui” 综审会临时会议 (Extraordinary Meeting of Joint Review Committee).

<sup>434</sup> “Xiancao zonggang di yi tiao jingfu erduhui taolun” 宪草总纲第一条迳付二读会讨论 (Article 1 of General Principles of Draft Constitution Goes to Second Reading Committee for Discussion).

<sup>435</sup> Da Dan, “Xian gei guomin dahui,” 6.

<sup>436</sup> “Guo da huijiao daibiao ti'an yuanwen” 国大回教代表提案原文 (Text of Proposal by Islamic Representatives to the National Assembly).

In February, the CIANS began preparations to establish a “China Hui Association for Advancing the Implementation of Constitutional Government.” It was established in March and elected twelve members to present a six-point petition to the Guomindang: 1) to clarify that Article 135 “specifically designated the Hui of China proper and was applicable to all [those Hui] outside of Xinjiang Province”; 2) to set the quota for Hui representatives to the National Assembly as at minimum 90, on the basis of their countrywide population and the principle of proportional representation; 3) to ensure that Article 135 not be used to limit Hui representation or 4) exclude Hui from running in other elections; 5) to guarantee at least 40 Hui seats in the Legislative Yuan and 6) at 8 seats in the Control Yuan.<sup>437</sup>

These efforts were almost entirely unsuccessful. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, the Legislative Yuan rejected a petition from one of its Hui members, Fu Tongxian (1910-1985), reiterating the call for a quota for Hui (citizens of China proper with special life customs) legislators corresponding to the one for the National Assembly. Sun Ke, president of the Legislative Yuan, pointed to the unfolding crisis in South Asia in his rejection of what he saw as religion-based representation.<sup>438</sup> On March 31<sup>st</sup>, the government promulgated the Law of Election and Dismissal of National Assembly Representatives, which stipulated only 10 delegates for “citizens of China proper with special life customs,” alongside 168 for women’s associations, 450 for professional associations, 65 for overseas Chinese, 17 for nations in borderland areas, 40 for Tibet, and 57 for Mongolia.<sup>439</sup> It also stipulated that county- and municipal-level election offices would be in charge of

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<sup>437</sup> Wang Zhengru 王正儒 and Lei Xiaojing 雷晓静, “Huiwu baogao” 会务报告 (二十三) (Report on Associational Affairs (23)), 2012; Wang Zhengru 王正儒 and Lei Xiaojing 雷晓静, “Huiwu baogao” 会务报告(二十四) (Association Affairs Report (24)), 2012.

<sup>438</sup> “Fu tongxian jiaoshou ti’an zao foujue” 傅统先教授提案遭否决 (Professor Fu Tongxian’s Proposal Rejected); Eroglu Sager, “A Place under the Sun,” 19–20.

<sup>439</sup> Lifayuan Xian Fa Gui Weiyuanhui 立法院宪法规委员会, “Guomin dahui daibiao xuanju bamian fa” 国民大会代表选举罢免法 (Law on Election and Removal of National Assembly Representatives). Article 4.2-8.

elections for these (Hui) representatives, with the provincial elections office as the superior institution.<sup>440</sup> The Implementation Regulations of the law, promulgated on May 1<sup>st</sup>, did specify that “citizens of China proper with special life customs” referred to “Hui living in various places” and stipulated that the overseeing institutions were to create separate ballots (based on separate voter rosters) and calculate and report the election results separately to the superior office.<sup>441</sup>

In the months leading up to General Assembly elections, scheduled for November 1947, the CIANS pursued a three-pronged strategy to increase its political leverage and base of support. First, it redoubled efforts to deliver protections and exemptions for Huis at the local level and continued to invest in the propagation of Islamic culture. Here again Bai Chongxi’s high rank was crucial. In early 1947, the CIANS successfully petitioned the Ministry of National Defense to ban troop quartering in Hui homes. In April the central office directed all local branches and Hui elementary schools under its purview (roughly 300) to introduce religious instruction if they had not done so already. Ahead of Ramadan (mid-July to mid-August) 1947, it also announced a countrywide *Zhumahui* (*jumu’a*, gathering for mid-day worship on Fridays) Movement “to create a spirit of unity.” The central association also continued its work on behalf of local branches. In Henan, for example, it wrote to various county governments requesting that they abide by the regulations of the Ministry of Education and fund local Hui schools and petitioned for tax exemptions for mosque property.<sup>442</sup>

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<sup>440</sup> Lifayuan Xian Fa Gui Weiyuanhui.

<sup>441</sup> Lifayuan Xian Fa Gui Weiyuanhui 立法院宪法规委员会, “Guomin dahui daibiao xuanju bamian fa shixing tiaoli” 国民大会代表选举罢免法施行条例 (Statutes for Implementing the Law on Election and Removal of National Assembly Representatives). Article 52.

<sup>442</sup> “Zhuan qing lingbao xian zhengfu xiezhu lingbao zhihui choushe xuexiao deng shiyi” 转请灵宝县政府协助灵宝支会筹设学校等事宜 (Relaying Request to the Lingbao County Government to Assist the Lingbao County Branch Association with Matters Concerning the Establishment of a School).

Second, together with the Youth Association, the CIANS organized a countrywide campaign demanding that the Hui quota for National Assembly delegates be raised and extended to the Legislative Yuan and Control Yuan. In April and May, over a hundred petitions from CIANS branches and other supportive organizations poured into Nanjing. Petitioning continued through the summer, as Hui periodicals published editorials and other content supporting the cause.<sup>443</sup> The partition of India in August added new momentum to the campaign. On August 1<sup>st</sup>, roughly two weeks after the British Crown assented to the Indian Independence Act, the journal *Gu'erban* renewed attention to Sun Ke's India comment by publishing a new response to it.<sup>444</sup> In September, the Youth Association published the third issue of its journal, *Huimin Qingnian* (Hui Youth), which included several articles on the new Islamic Republic of Pakistan, as well as a picture of Muhammad Ali Jinnah.<sup>445</sup> It also announced a new "One Million Members, One Billion in Dues" campaign to coordinate organization efforts and resources and published a survey asking readers, among other questions, whether they were satisfied with the Hui representative quota and whether they believed that the association was fundamentally religious or political in character, or both.<sup>446</sup>

The final prong of the strategy concerned the categorization of the CIANS. If prong one was to strengthen local support for the CIANS and prong two was to increase the quotas, prong three was to work within the system to achieve the greatest number of Hui representatives. The

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<sup>443</sup> "Zhongguo huijiao xiehui ge sheng shi fen zhihui qing zengjia huimin guomin dahui daibiao ji lifa, jiancha weiyuan ming'e" 中国回教协会各省市分支会请增加回国民大会代表暨立法、监察委员名额 (Divisions and Branch Associations of the China Islamic Association in Different Provinces and Cities Request Increased Delegate Quotas for Huis at National Assembly and the Legislative and Control Committees).

<sup>444</sup> Dawude 达乌德, "Wo dui sun ke yuanchang suo biao shi de biao shi" 我对孙科院长所表示的表示 (My Statement in Response to [Legislative] President Sun Ke's Statement).

<sup>445</sup> Da Dan 大丹, "Kan zhenna lun hui yun" 看真纳论回运 (A Look at Jinnah on the Muslim Movement).

<sup>446</sup> Ma Zhilun 马稚伦, "Wei zhongguo huimin qingnian hui fadong baiwan huiyuan shi yi huifei yundong" 为中国回民青年会发动百万会员十亿会费运动 (On the China Hui Youth Association Mobilizing for the "One Million Members, One Billion in Dues" Movement); "Ben hui minyi ceyan" 本会民意测验 (Popular Opinion Poll for This Association).

key feature of the elections on this respect was the multiplicity of voter and election types. There were eight types of elections for the National Assembly: general elections for counties and cities defined by administrative areas; for Mongol leagues and banners; for Tibet; for nations (*minzu*) in border regions; for overseas Chinese; for professional associations; for women's associations; and for Hui. Voters could participate in one and only one election, but it was not clear whether participation was tied to *specific* election. At least in theory, a Hui who was a member of a women's or professional association could vote in one of those elections instead of the Hui election, or simply in the general election. The May 1947 Implementation Regulations for the election law reiterated the one-voter-one-election limit and stipulated that in the event that someone had the right to participate in multiple elections, the person should choose one type on their own accord (*zixing rending*) and notify the appropriate office.<sup>447</sup>

Through the spring, the CIANS apparently hoped it would be able to coordinate Hui voting across elections. As long as there was some chance that Hui representative quotas would be increased, the leadership would not want to release all Hui voters from Hui elections, lest they lose control over that process. It also remained unclear how Hui delegates would be apportioned geographically; would Hui in every province vote according to the same list of candidates, or would each province have its own Hui representatives? By June, however, an additional concern had emerged: the potential requirement that all Huis register exclusively for Hui elections. The CIANS had to balance retaining control over candidates—who would eventually represent Huis in government—and maximizing opportunities for Hui to vote and run. That month, the Youth Association sent a joint message to all its branches as well as those of the CIANS restating the

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<sup>447</sup> 立法院宪法规委员会, Article Five.

injustice of the ten-delegate limit and criticizing the prospective “coercion” of all Hui to register in Hui elections.

On July 28<sup>th</sup>, the Elections Office issued new guidelines for voter registration, scheduled for mid-late August. The new guidelines required local offices responsible for surveying and registering voters to create of a separate Hui roster (*huimin mingce*),<sup>448</sup> presumably to facilitate election auditing. Municipal regulations for Tianjin published on August 16<sup>th</sup> specified that citizens registering to vote were to be asked if they were Hui and if they were going to participate in the women’s or professional association elections.<sup>449</sup> CIANS leadership may have assumed that ordinary Hui citizens would readily register as Hui to participate in the Hui elections, thereby forfeiting their ability to run and vote in other elections. Whether in response to these or similar regulations, by August 21<sup>st</sup> the CIANS leadership was convinced that the government was coercing Huis to register in the Hui—what in some documents was called a “type seven” (of eight)—roster. Their suspicions, if not already confirmed, soon were. On August 24<sup>th</sup>, another set of measures in Tianjin stated explicitly that “Huis should participate in the Hui elections and be registered separately” at the local *baozhang* office.<sup>450</sup>

On August 21<sup>st</sup>, Bai Chongxi proposed a new plan to work around the new registration requirements to a joint session of the central CIANS Management and Supervisory Committees. The basic principle was to spend as few Hui votes as possible on the Hui elections and for local CIANS branches to coordinate strategic registration in other elections. Local CIANS branches

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<sup>448</sup> “Guodai liwei xuanju ren mingce bianzao banfa xuanju zongshiwusuo te jiayi shishi” 国代立委选举人名册编造办法 选举总事务所特加以释示 (Elections Office Adds Specific Instructions Concerning Measures for Compiling Rosters for National Assembly and Legislative Committee Voters).

<sup>449</sup> “Guoda daibiao xuanmin dengji banfa” 国大代表选民登记办法 (National Assembly Representative Voter Registration Measures).

<sup>450</sup> “Xuanju guoda daibiao lifa weiyuan yingyou de renshi yu zhuyi shixiang” 选举国大代表立法委员应有的认识与注意事项 (The Proper Recognition and Items to Be Kept in Mind Regarding Electing National Assembly Representatives and Members of the Legislative Committee).



would coordinate registration to get as many Hui as possible into different types of local elections, while the “type seven” Hui election work would be handled by the Jiangsu Provincial Branch of the CIANS (Jiangsu being the province surrounding the capital Nanjing). Specifically, Bai’s “Five Measures” instructed that 1) every province-level branch of the CIANS should put forward one candidate for the Hui elections, to register for the “type seven” election; 2) every branch (province and county-level) should consider the number, professions, and sex of the local Hui population and “mobilize” (*fadong*) them to register and compete in various elections, while those who had already been “forced” to register for “type seven” elections should request a “correction;” 3) all leaders of the Jiangsu Provincial Branch of the CIANS should register for “type seven” elections to facilitate “concentrated voting” (*jizhong xuanju*); 4) candidates from every province (from the first measure) should be reported to the central CIANS; 5) a list of all (“type seven”) candidates should be compiled and handed over to the Jiangsu Provincial Branch, and Hui of that province would formally nominate and then vote for them.<sup>451</sup>

After the CIANS joint session approved the measures, Bai ordered that they be sent to the Central News Office for immediate dissemination and personally led a delegation to the Elections Office to work out appropriate procedures. But the Office objected to the measures. It maintained that the CIANS was a religious organization with no right to meddle in election procedures. From that point on, the Elections Office and the CIANS leadership were increasingly at odds: the former attempted to confine Hui to Hui elections while the latter attempted to strategically coordinate Hui voting in as many elections as possible. After the August 21<sup>st</sup> joint session, the CIANS apparently accepted the fact that, per the early July regulations, there would be separate Hui voter rosters. The critical issue was now control of that registration process.

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<sup>451</sup> Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang’anguan, “Zhongguo huijiao xiehui baosong xiuzheng qingzhensi guanli banfa bing zhaokai di san jie daibiao da hui cheng ji gongzuo baogao,” 720–21.

The law was clear that registration for Hui and other elections was to be organized by local elections offices and carried out by local officials (*baozhang*). But the CIANS attempted to insert itself into this process in order to coordinate voting. Around August 26<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> in Chongqing, for example, the municipal CIANS wrote to local elections offices requesting that they discard the rosters of Hui voters on file. The CIANS explained to the district (sub-municipal) offices that it had notified the “Hui brothers of this city” (*ben shi huibao*) that, per municipal election rules, they should fill out their registration forms and submit them to the CIANS to be “compiled and reported” to the (superior) elections office. The local CIANS framed their request as a means of avoiding duplicate voting and complying with the requirement that no one vote in more than one association election. This was either an error or a trick, since the key principle of the requirement in question was that voters vote in only one election, and if they vote in an association election as a member of an association, and if they hold membership in multiple associations, that they declare one and only one affiliation. Moreover, these “associations” (*tuanti*) referred to professional and women’s associations. The CIANS was not included. On August 30<sup>th</sup>-September 1<sup>st</sup>, the Chongqing CIANS again wrote the district offices requesting that the previous request to discard the rosters be disregarded based on new instructions from the central CIANS.<sup>452</sup> This follow-up request was also somewhat misleading,

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<sup>452</sup> The Chongqing Municipal Archives hold these requests from the local CIANS to the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 14<sup>th</sup> wards (*qu*) within the municipality. Zhongguo Huijiao Xiehui Chongqing Fenhui 中国回教协会重庆分会, “Guanyu qingqiu huibao zixing canjia xuanju zhi di qi qu qugongsuo de han” 关于请求回胞自行参加选举致第七区公所函 (Regarding the Letter to the Seventh District District Office Requesting That Hui Brothers Freely Participate in Elections); Zhongguo Huijiao Xiehui Chongqing Fenhui 中国回教协会重庆分会, “Guanyu you benhui jizhong banli huibao canjia guoda daibiao xuanju zhi di yi qu qugongsuo de han” 关于由本会集中办理回胞参加国大代表选举致第一区公所函 (Letter to First District District Office Regarding This Association Concentrating and Taking Charge of Hui Brothers Taking Part in National Assembly Representative Elections); Chongqing Shi Di Shisi Qu Qugongsuo 重庆市第十四区公所 and Zhongguo Huijiao Xiehui Chongqing Fenhui 中国回教协会重庆分会, “Guanyu benshi huibao xuanju zhun qi ziyou xuanze canjia xuanju de xunling gonghan” 关于本市回胞选举准其自由选择参加选举的训令公函 (Regarding the Order and Circular That In Elections the Hui of This City May Freely Choose the Election in Which to Participate); Zhongguo Huijiao Xiehui Chongqing Fenhui 中国回教协会重庆分会, “Guanyu neidi huibao dandu xuanju zhi di si qu qugongsuo de xunling” 关于内地

however; it stated that those Hui registered on the district's rosters that would have been discarded ought to freely choose the election in which they would participate (*ziyou xuanze canjia xuanju wei yi*), a violation of what was by then the government's clear position that Hui were to vote in Hui elections alone.

On September 12<sup>th</sup>,<sup>453</sup> Bai convened another joint session of the CIANS leadership and proposed a number of “corrective” (*bujiu*) measures and all provincial branches. Bai relaxed the earlier instructions that CIANS leadership not participate in “type seven” (Hui) elections. According to the new September measures, central CIANS supervisors and managers who desired to run in the “type seven” elections had to resign their CIANS position, but this rule did not apply to local (provincial and below) branches. One possible explanation for this change of course, merely speculative, is that Bai still hoped to have the CIANS represented in association elections, and that it would be easier to justify doing so if its leadership was not already participating in the “type seven” elections.

Over the same period, the Elections Office continued to emphasize the separateness of Hui elections and the importance of one-voter-one-vote and Hui participation in Hui elections. In August, the Henan Provincial Elections Office ordered that all Hui ballots have the character *te* (“special,” for “special life customs”) stamped in red ink on the left side in order to facilitate

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同胞单独选举致第四区公所的训令 (Order to the Fourth District District Office Regarding Independent Elections for Hui Brothers in China Proper); Zhongguo Huijiao Xiehui Chongqing Fenhui 中国回教协会重庆分会, “Guanyu huibao ke ziyou canjia xuanju zhi di liu qu qugongsuo de han” 关于同胞可自由参加选举致第六区公所函 (Regarding Letter to the Sixth District District Office That Hui Brothers May Freely Participate in Elections).

<sup>453</sup> The CIANS work report cited above does not indicate the date of this second session. The September 12<sup>th</sup> date is based on a September 15<sup>th</sup> report in *Shen Bao*: “Zhongguo huijiao xiehui zhaokai li jian lianhui” 中国回教协会召开理监联会 (China Islamic Association Holds Joint Session of Management and Supervisory Committees).

ballot counting and differentiation from other types of ballots.<sup>454</sup> In early September, it reiterated that there was to be no discrimination based on property, education level, sex, or religious belief, with a parenthetical qualification that “Hui election candidates have separate rules” and were not subject to the same regulations.<sup>455</sup> A separate notice clarified to local election offices that signatories (for nomination) and candidates in Hui elections had to be Hui.<sup>456</sup>

Whether because identifying and keeping separate rosters for Huis was onerous, or out of ignorance of the national Elections Office rules, or some combination, local offices were apparently willing to use rosters submitted by the local Islamic Associations, as the Chongqing CIANS branch had done initially in late August. In early October, provincial elections offices in (at least) Henan and Taiwan expressed concern that many subordinate offices were sending Hui voter rosters both “submitted by local Islamic Association branches and without the seal of the local office in charge” and reiterated that the rosters had to be produced by the local election office.<sup>457</sup> An October report from Jiangxi Province includes a table with the number of registered voters from various women’s and professional associations. A footnote explains that 675 Huis

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<sup>454</sup> Guoda, Liwei Henan Sheng Xuanjusuo 国大、立委河南省选举所, “Guanyu shenghuo xiguan teshu guomin xuanpiao gaichu de daidian” 关于生活习惯特殊国民选票盖戳的代电 (Telegram Regarding Affixing Seals on Ballots of Citizens of China Proper with Special Life Customs).

<sup>455</sup> Guoda, Liwei Henan Sheng Xuanjusuo 国大、立委河南省选举所, “Guanyu fa ge xian shi cha guoda daibiao houxuanren zige yingxing zhuyi shixiang de daidian + zhuyi shixiang” 关于发各县市查国大代表候选人资格应行注意事项的代电+注意事项 (Telegram Regarding Sending Every County and City Items to Implement and Pay Attention to for Inspecting Qualifications of National Assembly Representative Candidates + Items to Pay Attention To).

<sup>456</sup> Guoda, Liwei Henan Sheng Xuanjusuo 国大、立委河南省选举所, “Guanyu jieshi zhiye ji huimin xuanju yiyi de daidian” 关于解释职业及回民选举疑义的代电 (Telegram Regarding Explaining Points of Doubt on Professional and Hui Elections).

<sup>457</sup> In October (date not specified), the elections office of Lin County, Henan, received the notice from the provincial elections office. 国大、立委河南省选举所, “关于催报回民选册的代电,” 查各主管選舉機關造報回民選舉人名冊應依照國大代表選舉觸免法施行條例第九條規定辦理近擬各主管選舉機關依法造報者同屬甚多但來依規定格式辦理者亦復不少尚有即以各該地回教支會所送名冊並不加蓋各該主管機關印信即備文轉報到所殊與規定不合. The same message is relayed by the Taiwan provincial elections office to subordinate offices. See “為催送回民選舉人名冊轉電遵照.” The fact that these two provincial offices relayed the same message suggests that it was originally sent from the superior (national) Elections Office and thus would have been relayed to other provinces too.

that had been included in the materials on which the table was based were not included in the current table.<sup>458</sup> This suggests that Huis in the province were initially registered for the association elections, in which case it would have been the Islamic Association branches that handled the registration.

Similarly, the number of Hui voters recorded for Suiping County in Henan was categorized under “Hui association” (*huimin xiehui*), indicating that the county’s Hui voter roster had been compiled by the local CIANS branch.<sup>459</sup> In Xinxiang, the North-Henan Joint Islamic Association, an exceptional multi-county branch, submitted a roster of Hui voters for the Legislative Yuan elections. Given that Hui did not have separate Legislative Yuan elections and had the right to participate in the general (geographically defined) elections, we can infer that the North-Henan branch was providing the local elections office with the National Assembly Hui roster so that those listed could be added to the general elections roster. The document, “Islamic Association Registry of Voters for Legislator Elections,” includes roughly 1,000 names as well as information on sex, registered place of birth, age, occupation, and address. Notably, the first one listed is the chairman of the North-Henan Islamic Association, further suggesting that the roster was produced by the association, if not the chairman himself.<sup>460</sup>

This anecdotal evidence suggests that at least in some counties where they took the initiative to do so, local CIANS branches had the de facto authority to register Hui voters. Some if not most Huis who registered did so via the local *baozhang* office as prescribed by law. However, given the chaotic conditions under which registration and voting took place, last-

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<sup>458</sup> “Jiangxi sheng ge xian shi xuanmin renshu” 江西省各县市选民人数 (Voter Totals in Every County and City in Jiangxi Province), 17.

<sup>459</sup> “Henan sheng guomin dahui daibiao xuanju xuanguan anjuan” 河南省国民大会代表选举相关案卷 (一) (Files Related to the National Assembly Representative Elections in Henan Province), 77.

<sup>460</sup> “Huijiao xiehui lifa weiyuan xuanju ren mingce” 回教协会立法委员选举人名册 (Islamic Association Legislative Committee Voter Roster).

minute changes in relevant regulations, repeated requests for separate Hui rosters from superior offices, and generally limited resources, it is not surprising that local election officials sometimes used the rosters CIANS branches presented to them. It is virtually impossible to know whether and how branches coordinated voting outside of “type-seven” elections, since by definition doing so would involve keeping Hui voters off the special Hui rosters. In Kaifeng, the Hui merchant Du Xiushen was elected as a representative to the National Assembly in the association election on behalf of the local chamber of commerce.<sup>461</sup> Du was a former chairman of both the chamber and the Henan provincial CIANS. If a Hui of his prominence was able to participate as a candidate (and win) in a non-Hui election, it is likely that others managed to do so as well.

Hui registration continued through October. By the end of the month, the elections office had received Hui voter registration rosters from nearly 60 out of 111 counties. Only 67 counties managed to submit any rosters (Hui or non-Hui) due to the civil war, and several the counties that did not submit any had sizeable Hui populations and numerous mosques, so it is likely that, under more stable conditions, more Hui rosters would have been submitted. According to these county-level rosters, over 82 thousand people registered as Huis by late October to vote in the National Assembly elections scheduled for November.<sup>462</sup> This figure is a relatively small fraction of the 1.3 million estimate for the population’s Hui population at the time, but compared to the estimate used by the CCP of roughly 200,000, it is a much larger proportion—especially considering that the population estimates included children, but voting registration was limited to adults 21 and older.

## 4.5 Maximal Frustration

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<sup>461</sup> “Ge di xuanpiao xu zhi” 各地选票续志 (Continued Record of Ballots in Different Places).

<sup>462</sup> “Henan sheng guomin dahui daibiao xuanju xuanguan anjuan.”

In late October, central CIANS leadership managed to secure support from a number of government officials and opposition party leaders to persuade the State Council to raise the Hui National Assembly quota from 10 to 17. A later CIANS report on the association's work to win Hui designated representation credits the increase in part to a petition from Burhan Shahidi,<sup>463</sup> the Kazan-born Xinjiang official recently arrived Nanjing in advance of the National Assembly.<sup>464</sup> The number was unimpressive compared to some Huis' more ambitious goal of over 300 delegates, the quotas for other groups, and the roughly 3,000 delegate total. In any case, within two years from the elections of November 1947, the CCP on the mainland and the GMD on the island of Taiwan were both engaged violent campaigns to consolidate one-party rule that left even less room for the non-state organizing and political maneuvering outlined above.<sup>465</sup>

The true significance of these constitutional tussles was their contribution to the politicization of Hui identity: both the establishment of a precedent for recognizing the Hui throughout China as a distinct political constituency entitled to designated representation; and the charging of Hui recognition as a political symbol. Both processes were a function of the CIANS' ability, described earlier in the chapter, to organize local Hui communities across the country. Hui political power in the form of the CIANS was never great enough to gain a large number of seats in the National Assembly, but it did manage to secure national recognition in Article 135 of the constitution and subsequent legislation. It also succeeded in mobilizing Hui across China to petition for national recognition and increased quotas, even if those petitions were themselves largely unsuccessful.

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<sup>463</sup> Zhongguo Di Er Lishi Dang'anguan, "Zhongguo huijiao xiehui baosong xiuzheng qingzhensi guanli banfa bing zhaokai di san jie daibiao da hui cheng ji gongzuo baogao," 722.

<sup>464</sup> Benson, *The Ili Rebellion*, 172.

<sup>465</sup> Strauss, *State Formation in China and Taiwan*.

Indeed, as a national organization, the CIANS was too strong to accept Article 135 but too weak to change it. Its forceful but unsuccessful campaigns for more seats together with the Nationalist government's own maneuvers led to the unhappy compromise of designated but highly limited representation. By the fall of 1947, all Huis were supposed to register as Huis on separate voting rosters to elect a small number of delegates while also being denied the right to participate in non-Hui elections. Hui political identity was inscribed on thousands of forms and made known throughout the election bureaucracy, yet recognition was ultimately restricting—not only for those who had sought it out, but for those otherwise unconcerned Hui who simply attempted to cast a vote. Hui political power was just great enough to raise hopes and provoke an official reaction that arguably left them less represented politically than they otherwise would have been. In the disorder of the day, the insecurity of the regime and the ability of the CIANS to lead a truly nationwide movement conspired to stoke and then frustrate Hui political ambitions. This late frustration in the Nationalist era gave a new allure to the Communist promise of national recognition and helped define the ethnic policy of the early years of the People's Republic.



## **Part Three:**

### **Localization**

In the previous four chapters I have attempted to answer the primary question of this study: How did the Hui become a national political constituency and secure official recognition as one before the establishment of the PRC in 1949? In Part One, comprising Chapters One and Two, I outlined the emergence of a social movement consisting of a network of shari‘a-minded *ahongs* and lay elites in Henan committed—if for different reasons—to the popularization of shari‘a knowledge through activism and civic associations. In Part Two, comprising Chapters Three and Four, I examined the institutions that translated this social movement into a political force: a national public based on new norms of reasoning in the Hui press, and a national organization that enjoyed the support and commitment of local Hui elites. Representing this scattered but organized population, the China Islamic Association was powerful enough to pressure the Nationalist government into recognizing the Hui as a distinct political constituency entitled to designated representation, but it was too weak win a satisfactory number of seats. The result was maximal frustration for Hui voters and another injustice against which the CCP could rally support for revolution.

Readers interested only in the question of Hui national recognition can stop here. In the next and final part, I will reorient my investigation away from political and institutional outcomes toward cultural change. Having shown, I hope, that local changes within Islamic learning and understandings of the shari‘a were of great consequence for ethnic politics and policy in modern China, I turn now to examine how the new political conditions of the early twentieth century altered the dynamic culture and relationships that had helped produce them. I am particularly interested in the evolving meaning of the “local” in Hui identity in relation to

both the expectation of a uniform national culture and the uniquely de-territorialized quality of that culture given the “wide dispersal, small concentrations” pattern of Hui settlement.

Part Three, “Localization,” explores how Hui nationhood was brought back down and given new meanings in local contexts. Its two chapters give an ethnographic history of two of the major concepts in terms of which Hui today classify and make sense of their persisting differences and division. In Chapter Five, I look at how Hui have come to frame inter-congregational differences in ritual practice as local instances of a larger, national division of Chinese Islam into two main “sects” divided over their interpretation of scripture. In Chapter Six, I take up the question of “custom” and trace the evolving relationship, memorialized in Hui folklore and scholarship, between Islam as a tradition carried by itinerant scholars interpreting dislocated texts and the actual practices of local people.

## Chapter 5:

### Sect

In China today, asking about Islamic sects is a curious taboo that, when breached, provokes neither gasping nor gawking but the measured insistence that the inquiry will not be fruitful. “Strictly speaking,” wrote Pang Shiqian in his 1951 memoir, “the divisions of Chinese Islam... cannot be called sectarian, since they lack both scholastic theory as well as innovative propositions and [involve] nothing more than some formal differences in minor details.”<sup>466</sup> In the first half of the twentieth century, Hui elites decried the tendency of their communities to form factions and maintained that the differences between them were simply questions of ritual particulars rather than belief or politics. Since 1949, the regime’s anxieties about instability and disunity have increased pressure on Huis to downplay their internal frictions. According to a 2013 textbook for *ahongs*-in-training published by the China Islamic Association, “The sects are all the same in terms of basic belief and doctrine; they differ only in the details of some religious rulings and ritual observances.”<sup>467</sup> As a topic of research in the People’s Republic of China, “sect” falls squarely into the category of “sensitive questions” for foreign as well as Chinese scholars.

*Jiaopai*, the word I am translating as “sect,” is a compound of the Chinese characters *jiao* (“teaching” or “religion”) and *pai* (“faction,” “school”) and generally refers to a group within a religion. Like many social-scientific terms in modern Mandarin, it gained currency in the late nineteenth century as Japanese intellectuals combined Chinese characters to translate writings in

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<sup>466</sup> Pang Shiqian, *Aiji jiu nian*, 97.

<sup>467</sup> Zhongguo Yisilanjiao Xiehui 中国伊斯兰教协会, *Ahong jiaowu zhidao jianming jiaocheng (shiyong ben)* 阿訇教务指导简明教程 试用本 (Concise Curriculum for Ahong Religious Affairs Guidance), 123.

Western languages, and Chinese intellectuals (a considerable number of whom studied in Japan) incorporated the new compounds into their own writings.<sup>468</sup> These neologisms often preserved the assumptions and norms of the mostly European contexts of their source-terms. *Zongjiao*, the word for “religion,” denotes a particular type of institution and system of beliefs modeled on post-Enlightenment Protestantism that does not exhaust the practices and traditions that make up what could be called “religious life” in China.<sup>469</sup> The term *jiaopai* (and the Japanese cognate *kyōha*) comes with similar baggage. It was used prominently in the late nineteenth century to designate Lutheranism and other denominations within Christianity and with reference to religious violence in European history.<sup>470</sup> At least by 1919, the Chinese military governor of Xinjiang extended the term’s use to rival Muslim groups under his jurisdiction.<sup>471</sup> Using “sect” to refer to groups within Chinese Islam in particular involves additional issues, both because it is commonly associated with what is in this case the irrelevant distinction between Sunni and Shi‘i groups (almost all Muslim groups in China are Sunni), and because that common association is the product of a roughly contemporary encounter between Western powers and the objects of their colonial and missionary ambitions in the Middle East and South Asia in the late nineteenth century.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Liu, *Translingual Practice*.

<sup>469</sup> Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*, 7–8; Goossaert and Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China*, 44–50; 73–79.

<sup>470</sup> According to the *Nihon Kokugo Daijiten* on the JapanKnowledge database, one of the earliest uses of *kyōha* appeared in volume three of Fukuzawa Yukichi’s (1835-1901) influential treatise *Bunmeiron no Gairyaku* (Outline of Theory of Civilization). The term is used by Fukuzawa with reference to Protestantism and Catholicism. “kyōha” きょう-は [ケウ..] 【教派】 (Sect); Fukuzawa Yukichi 福澤諭吉, *Bunmeiron no gairyaku* 文明論之概略 (Outline of a Theory of Civilization), 48.

<sup>471</sup> “Jinghua duanjian” 京华短简 (Capital Brief).

<sup>472</sup> Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*; Weiss, “Practicing Sectarianism in Mandate Lebanon: Shi‘i Cemeteries, Religious Patrimony, and the Everyday Politics of Difference.”

Understandable qualms about the connotations of the word “sect” have led some scholars writing in English to adopt alternatives such as “solidarity” and “teaching school.”<sup>473</sup> These are thoughtful and valid choices, but they neutralize the political charge of “sect” that continues to animate *jiaopai*, and which is precisely what makes it such a sensitive and contested term in Chinese as well as English and other Western languages. I therefore translate *jiaopai*, and in certain cases *pai*, as “sect.” I am interested in how this term, with all its sensitivity and connotations, has been integrated into popular as well as official discourse on Chinese Islam.

“Sect” has become part of the PRC’s Islamic lexicon. If sects are a potential problem, they are one about which relevant officials ought to know something. The term is used to refer to different groups within Chinese Islam in, for example, a textbook for Party cadres dealing with ethnic and religious issues and a dictionary for United Front work.<sup>474</sup> Closer to this study’s focus in time and place: a 1956 survey of mosques in Henan province includes data on sectarian affiliation in addition to mosque location, size, personnel, and date of construction. The column is titled “Orientation: New/Old,” but the entries clarify that this is an abbreviation for “New Sect” and “Old Sect.”<sup>475</sup>

These correspond to two categories from the dominant taxonomy of Chinese Islam. This taxonomy distinguishes groups on two levels. First, there is the institutional distinction between *menhuan*, which are hierarchical and hereditary Sufi institutions centered on a *shaykh* (Ch. *jiaozhu*) atop a network of mosques and tombs, mostly in northwestern China; and *jiaopai*, or

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<sup>473</sup> Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*; Erie, *China and Islam: The Prophet, the Party, and Law*.

<sup>474</sup> Shen Xiaolong 沈小龙, *Minzu zongjiao zhishi ganbu duben* 民族宗教知识干部读本 (Cadre Reader on Nationalities and Religions Knowledge), 137–38; Chen Yuan 陈元, *Zhongguo tongyi zhanxian cidian* 中国统一战线辞典 (China United Front Dictionary), 457.

<sup>475</sup> Shunhe Huizu Qu Difang Shizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 顺河回族区地方史志编纂委员会, *Kaifeng shi shunhe huizu qu zhi* 开封市顺河回族区志 (Kaifeng City Shunhe Hui Nationality District Gazetteer), 628; Wen Hongjia, Hong Bing, and Ma Yunfei, *Nanyang qingzhensi zhi*, 8–18; “Henan sheng ge di huijiao qingzhensi dengji biao” 河南省各地回教清真寺登记表 (Registration Form for Islamic Mosques in Different Places in Henan Province).

“sects,” which are more diffuse, lack a centralized organization, and are defined by differences in interpretation of doctrine. The taxonomy also differentiates within these two main categories, yielding the common formulation “four great *menhuan*, three great sects.”<sup>476</sup> Somewhat confusingly, the first phrase actually refers to the four main Sufi orders under which numerous of *menhuan* are organized; the second phrase refers consistently to two sects, the Old Sect and the New Sect, and usually but not always to one of two possible third groups, neither of which fits neatly into the *menhuan/jiaopai* typology.<sup>477</sup> The Old Sect and New Sect have many names, including, respectively, the Gedimu (from the Arabic *qadīm*, meaning “old”), the Old-Venerating Sect (*zun gu pai*), and the Old Teaching; and the Yihewani (from the Arabic *ikhwān*, meaning “brothers”), the Scripture-Venerating Sect, the New Teaching, and the New New Teaching.

Within the taxonomy, the Old Sect and New Sect are structurally most similar to one another and together most different from the rest. They are distinguished first and foremost by their detachment from any particular place and person and diffusion across China; there is no formal center and no formal leadership of either sect, in contrast to the *menhuan*. In addition, as their names suggest, they are defined chronologically in relation to one another: the Old Sect is the oldest sect in Islam’s more-than-a-millennium of history in China, followed by the Sufi orders and *menhuan*, the earliest of which formed beginning in the sixteenth century, and finally the New Sect, which emerged after a hajj pilgrim returned from Arabia in the 1890s and began

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<sup>476</sup> See for example work by Ma Tong and Feng Jinyuan. On the development of this taxonomy by Ma Tong and its relationship to sectarianization and state regulation of Islam in Linxia, see Erie. Ma Tong, *Zhongguo yisilan jiaopai yu menhuan zhidu shilue*; Feng Jinyuan 冯今源, *Zhongguo yisilanjiao gailun* 中国伊斯兰教概论 (An Overview of Chinese Islam), 67; Erie, *China and Islam: The Prophet, the Party, and Law*, 130–42.

<sup>477</sup> The contenders for the “third sect” position are the Xidaotang and the Sailaifeiye. Ma Tong treats the latter as a division within the Yihewani and engages with the debate on whether the former qualifies a distinct sect, concluding that it does. But some sources reflect the opposite conclusion; the Henan Provincial Gazetteer, for example, lists three sects, the Old Sect/Gedimu, the New Sect/Yihewani, and the Sailaifeiye/Santai. Ma Tong 马通, *Zhongguo yisilan jiaopai menhuan suyuan* 中国伊斯兰教派门宦溯源 (Tracing the Origins of the Sects and Menhuan of Chinese Islam), 119–23; 139–44; Henan Sheng Difang Shizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 河南省地方志编纂委员会, *Henan sheng zhi* 河南省志 (Henan Province Gazetteer), 9:81–84.

promoting reform of allegedly heterodox practices. This brings us to the third common and distinguishing feature of the Old and New Sects: they are defined by differences in ritual practice rooted in differences in interpretation of scripture. The understanding of the sectarian division in Chinese Islam implicit in the taxonomy can be summarized as follows: *the two main sects are defined by their 1) countrywide distribution, 2) successive emergence before and after the 1890s, and 3) division over interpretation of scripture.* A corollary claim is also implicit in the taxonomy and find expression in documents such as the 1956 Henan mosque survey mentioned above: *differences within Chinese Islam are primarily sectarian.*

Checking for discrepancies between formal taxonomies and observed social realities has become a routine procedure in historical scholarship. Once detected, a discrepancy has to be diagnosed, and in the study of modern China, and in particular of religion in modern China, one of the most frequent diagnoses is state formation.<sup>478</sup> This often makes sense, because states exercise power through classification of the social world, and states with access to modern media and coercive abilities do so with unprecedented range and intensity. Moreover, states deploy standardizing categories to organize development, modernization, and governance in large and complex societies. Religious practice and institutions, often deemed irrational and an obstacle to these projects, are a prime target of official efforts to impose “legibility” and order.<sup>479</sup> These efforts are rarely just a matter of labeling; when classifications are linked to specific institutions and conditions, they entail changes in the material world. To take a well-known example from modern Chinese history: practices deemed “superstitious” rather than “religious” enjoyed no

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<sup>478</sup> Mayfair Mei-hui Yang, *Chinese Religiosities*.

<sup>479</sup> Scott, *Seeing like a State*; Lam, *A Passion for Facts*.

legal protections, and labeling something “superstitious” was one way in which officials and modernizing elites dominated society.<sup>480</sup>

Earlier chapters have already suggested some ways in which the framing of the sectarian split between the Old and New Sects is historically and sociologically inaccurate, and I will expand on this point later in this chapter. But I am interested in more than debunking the sectarian frame as a set of state-imposed categories. To do so and nothing more would be insufficient for two reasons: first, because this sectarian narrative, however fabricated it may be, has become meaningful to the people to whom it is applied; and second, because the state is in fact not its sole, or even its primary, author. Analyzing the sectarian framework of Chinese Islam as an attempt by the state to make the unfamiliar or unruly legible will therefore not be very revealing.

In short, the state does not enjoy a monopoly on the exercise of classificatory power. More generally, in light of both the severe limitations on the Chinese state in the first half of the twentieth century and the legacy of sophisticated symbolic manipulation at the local, “sub-bureaucratic” level, I am skeptical of the notion that the state’s imposition of legibility is the main act in the drama of cultural change in modern China.

Expressions of the idea of the sectarian split are claims about the nature of the divisions within Chinese Islam and thus about the nature of Chinese Islam as a whole. From this perspective, it is useful to think in terms of Durkheim’s analysis of the totem, which he understood as a symbolic representation (an “emblem”) of society upon which individuals project fundamental norms and sentiments with such intensity that it becomes sacralized and

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<sup>480</sup> Duara, “Knowledge and Power in the Discourse of Modernity”; Nedostup, *Superstitious Regimes*; Poon, *Negotiating Religion in Modern China*.



taken to be the source rather than an externalization of their binding force.<sup>481</sup> The idea of the sectarian split functions analogously; it is a *totemic concept* that represents the collectivity of Chinese Islam in terms of the norms governing its integration, both internally as the cultural basis of the Hui nation and externally in relation to modern Chinese society and culture. It is, in other words, a story some Hui want to tell about what holds them together and makes them part of modern China, even as it is invoked as evidence of the incompleteness of the ongoing project of Hui unification and the troublesome persistence of internal divisions.

This claim emerged in a particular time and political context—Nationalist China—and crystallized by late 1930s, precisely at the blossoming of the key institutions of Hui nationhood examined in earlier chapters: a national public and a national organization. The concept of the sectarian split legitimated Chinese Islam and the Hui nation in three ways, corresponding to the threefold definition elaborated above. In framing the sects as distributed countrywide, it encompassed under a single framework all Hui throughout China; in framing the sects as successively emergent before and after the late nineteenth century, it synchronized the main surge of “reform” within Chinese Islam with the major break from tradition in broader Chinese society; and in framing the sects as divided over the interpretation of scripture, it translated ritual differences into rival readings of a textual tradition.

## 5.1 Ma Guangqing Returns to Kaifeng

We turn now to what I will refer to as the “gazetteer account,” which represents the prevailing narrative about the sectarian split in China, in Henan, and in Kaifeng, today. A gazetteer (*zhi*) is like an atlas. By convention, a gazetteer focuses on a particular place or

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<sup>481</sup> Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, 165–82 and passim.

institution and contains a range of information from geography to history to local customs and famous figures. Gazetteer production, publication, and consultation have been important parts of Chinese governance and elite social life for many centuries.<sup>482</sup> In the PRC era, the genre has continued to flourish while adapting to the new terms of classification, including *minzu* (nationality), and it is not uncommon to find a “Nationalities and Religions” or even specifically “Hui Nationality” gazetteer of this or that district, county, or province. These texts are mostly compiled and published with official support, but they are not simply the Party line. Local scholars, not necessarily affiliated with government offices or universities, often contribute, and information that has been censored in the archive or in other publications can sometimes be found in local gazetteers. Likewise, many of the contributors to the gazetteers consulted in this study are scholars who have also contributed to “popular” (*minjian*), i.e. unofficial and unsanctioned, magazines that have occasionally been banned.

The gazetteer account of the sectarian split in Henan hinges on two moments of return: 1892, when Hajji Guoyuan (1849-1934), the alleged founder of the New Teaching, returned to China from the hajj pilgrimage and years of study in Mecca; and 1917, when one of his disciples, Ma Guangqing (1880-1951), returned to Kaifeng from years of study west of Henan under Hajji Guoyuan. Gazetteers that address Islam in China generally agree on the following national-level account of Hajji Guoyuan’s return, and those addressing Islam in Henan generally agree on the subsequent provincial-level account:

*At the national level:* The oldest sect of Islam in China is the Gedimu or “Old Teaching.” Prior to the arrival of Sufism and the establishment of the *menhuan* in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, all of Chinese Islam was Gedimu. In the late 1880s, Ma Wanfu of Guoyuan Village in present-day Ningxia in northwest China, known as Hajji Guoyuan, made the hajj pilgrimage. He

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<sup>482</sup> Dennis, *Writing, Publishing, and Reading Local Gazetteers in Imperial China, 1100-1700*; Wang, “Chinese Local Gazetteers.”

returned to China in 1892, bringing with him previously unknown texts. He assembled a group of followers and established the Yihewani sect, also known as the “New Teaching,” “New Sect,” “New New Teaching,” and “Scripture-Observing Sect.” Since then, he and his disciples spread the Yihewani throughout China. The Yihewani and Gedimu differ primarily in matters of ritual; for example, the Yihewani do not wear white mourning robes for funerals, they do not commemorate the various death anniversaries (which they see as a Buddhist influence), and they do not accept the “gift” for reciting the Quran.

*In Henan Province:* All Hui in Henan were originally Old Sect/Gedimu. (The *menhuan* were mostly a western phenomenon and did not penetrate as far east as Henan.) In 1917, the New Sect arrived in Henan. It first appeared in Kaifeng, with the return of Ma Guangqing, a native of the city who had studied under Hajji Guoyuan. Ma Guangqing first won over a group of fishmongers at the Wenshu Mosque in Kaifeng, as well as two prominent congregants. In 1919 he became *ahong* at the Wenshu Mosque and began to challenge the practices of the Great East Mosque (the largest congregation in the city). Ma was eventually forced to leave Kaifeng because of his activism, but managed to return two years later, and with the Wenshu Mosque has his base, began to train disciples who would spread the Yiehewani throughout Henan.

This is related in three pertinent gazetteers: the *Henan Sheng Zhi* (Henan Province Gazetteer, “Religions” volume), the *Kaifeng Shi Minzu Zongjiao Zhi* (Kaifeng City Nationalities and Religions Gazetteer), and the *Shunhe Huizuqu Zhi* (Shunhe Hui Nationality District Gazetteer).<sup>483</sup> These can be thought of as concentric circles zooming in on the site of Ma Guangqing’s first propagation of the New Sect: the Wenshu Street Mosque, located in what is today the Shunhe Hui Nationality District in the old city of Kaifeng. Although these gazetteers vary in how much local detail they provide, their accounts of the sectarian split share the following points: before 1917, all congregations in Henan belonged to a single sect, the Old Sect/Gedimu; in 1917, Ma Guangqing returned from the west and brought the New

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<sup>483</sup> Henan Sheng Difang Shizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, *Henan sheng zhi*, 9:81–84; Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 203–7; Kaifeng Shi Shunhe Huizu Qu Difangzhi Zongbianshi 开封市顺河回族区地方志总编室, *Shunhe huizu qu zhi* 顺河回族区志 (Shunhe Hui Nationality District Gazetteer), 433–47.

Sect/Yihewani, antagonizing the Old Sect establishment at the Great East Mosque of Kaifeng; and in subsequent decades, the New Sect spread throughout Kaifeng and throughout Henan, and now claims about 20% of the Hui population of the city and the province.

I will now examine some contemporary (1910s-40s) sources and more recent scholarship to piece together the context of and events following Ma Guangqing's return to Kaifeng around 1917. By reconstructing this story and comparing it to the gazetteer account, we can determine what history is obscured by the narrative of the sectarian split and gain some insight into the conditions under which the latter was crafted. Once again, my purpose is not to show that the gazetteer account has simplified the more complex historical record. It is to explain how the simplification has taken hold and become meaningful to people. Identifying patterns of revision to that record is an important step in this process.

### *Just Another New Teaching*

We begin the story of Ma Guangqing's return to Kaifeng knowing very little about his departure. He was born in 1880 in a suburb of Kaifeng some forty *li* (around 12 miles) outside of the walled city. Based on interviews with one of Ma Guangqing's descendants, the scholar Ma Chao writes that Ma Guangqing received some religious education from his father and the *ahong* of the local mosque but was not considered a promising *hailifan* student. Sometime after marrying a Muslim woman from nearby Lankao County, around 1905, he abruptly set out to pursue a religious education, leaving Kaifeng and abandoning his wife (who eventually remarried), thus ending what in a 1942 letter he would characterize as his "unstudious youth" (*younian shao du shi shu*).<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> Ma Guangqing, *Da wang dianfu ahong shu*, 1; Ma Chao 马超, "民国著名经师马广庆阿訇传略" (Biographical Sketch of the Famous Republican [Era] Ahong Ma Guangqing).

Ma Guangqing's pursuit of learning brought him to Hezhou (present-day Linxia), where he became one of a growing group of disciples of Hajji Guoyuan, based since around 1900 at the Hejia Mosque.<sup>485</sup> Hajji Guoyuan's continuous opposition to payment for recitation of the Quran and inveighing against the *menhuan* and mounting influence won him enemies among the local authorities and *menhuan* leaders, and he was forced to flee southeastward. In 1909, he secured a position as *ahong* of the Great Mosque of Ankang County, south of Xi'an in Shaanxi Province, bringing with him two disciples, Ma Guangqing and Li Renshan. Li Renshan (1881-1939). Li's early life foils Ma's; the former had completed his *hailifan* training in his home city of Changde, Hunan, in 1901, at which point his community, recognizing his scholarly skills, funded his travels to Hezhou.<sup>486</sup> By different paths the two contemporaries both came to study under Hajji Guoyuan, and all three ended up in Ankang in 1909. Li Renshan returned to Changde in 1911, and around 1912-1913, Hajji Guoyuan left Ankang, leaving Ma Guangqing to fill his vacancy as *ahong*. In 1916, Ma Guangqing returned to Henan—not directly to Kaifeng, as the gazetteer account implies, but first to nearby Zhengzhou, where he served at one of the burgeoning railroad hub's three mosques and began promoting Guoyuan-style reforms.<sup>487</sup>

During his first year back in his home province, Ma Guangqing occasionally returned to Kaifeng, which is quite close to Zhengzhou. He would visit the Wenshu Mosque and meet with the cleric, “Red Date Ma.” Originally from Tongxin in Ningxia, Red Date Ma had been on his

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<sup>485</sup> Wang Jingzhai's 1937 account says that Ma Guangqing and Li Renshan “followed” Hajji Guoyuan to Ankang, so we can infer that they were with him wherever he had been previously. According to Ma Quanlong, Hajji Guoyuan taught at the Hejia Mosque in Hezhou (Linxia) for ten years beginning around 1900, during which time he taught *hailifan* from as Henan (Ma Quanlong names one “He Ahong”) and Hunan (Zhang Chunsan, one of Li Renshan's future collaborators). Ma Quanlong also writes that Hajji Guoyuan headed to Ankang after an incident in 1908. If Hajji Guoyuan left Hezhou in late 1908 or 1909, that would fit both Li's and Ma's timeline. Wang Jingzhai, “Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi,” 11216; Ma Quanlong 马全龙, “Zunjing gesu de ma wanfu” 遵经革俗的马万福 (Ma Wanfu, Observer of Scripture and Reformer of Custom), 106–7.

<sup>486</sup> Hunan sheng difang zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 湖南省地方志编纂委员会, *Hunan sheng zhi: zongjiao zhi* 湖南省志: 宗教志 (Hunan Province Gazetteer: Religion Gazetteer), 27:346–47.

<sup>487</sup> Wang Jingzhai, “Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi,” 11216.

way east to the coast make the Hajj pilgrimage around 1916, but proliferating violence by warlord armies made the journey impossible, and he paused his journey in Kaifeng and took up the Wenshu Mosque post.<sup>488</sup> Perhaps because of his Ningxia background or frustrated piety, Red Date Ma was apparently identified by Ma Guangqing as receptive to his reforms.<sup>489</sup> The latter would also preach in front of the Hui-owned Yuhua Bathhouse, around the corner from the Wenshu Mosque and in the heart of the Hui quarter of the old city.<sup>490</sup> Most of the Wenshu congregation leadership initially rejected these reforms, and Red Date Ma was soon dismissed from his post. But Ma Guangqing managed to secure a sufficient base of support among the poor fishmonger congregants (who presumably appreciated his refusal of the recitation fee) as well as key elites<sup>491</sup> in the city, including Bai Deqing, who helped run the province's largest electric lighting company that had just expanded into Zhengzhou (possibly where he first met Ma Guangqing).<sup>492</sup> Recall also that Ma Gunagqing was a native of Kaifeng, and thus likely could draw on a network of social ties unavailable to the sojourner Red Date Ma. Before 1918, Ma Guangqing was hired to succeed Red Date Ma as cleric of the Wenshu Mosque.<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>488</sup> According to Wang Jingzhai, this *ahong* was nicknamed "Little Ma." Wang does not write anything about his hajj plans, which are mentioned in later gazetteers. Wang Jingzhai, 11217; Kaifeng Shi Shunhe Huizu Qu Difangzhi Zongbianshi, *Shunhe huizu qu zhi*, 441; Shunhe Huizu Qu Difang Shizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, *Kaifeng shi shunhe huizu qu zhi*, 623.

<sup>489</sup> Wang Jingzhai, "Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi," 11217.

<sup>490</sup> Ma Chao, "民国著名经师马广庆阿訇传略," 197–98.

<sup>491</sup> Wang Jingzhai does not mention fishmongers and names two *xianglao* of the Wenshu Mosque who supported Ma Guangqing: Zheng Jiale and Li Chengjiu (李成久). The Shunhe gazetteers mention the fishmongers and name Li Bogong and Bai Deqing. Mu Daoyuan identifies Li Chengjiu (李成九) as Li Bogong, whose given name (*zi*) Guochao. We can assume that either Wang or Mu swapped the homophonous characters for *jiu* (九 vs. 久) in error, or that Li used both. This identification is corroborated by a 1920 petition in defense of Ma Guangqing, to which one of the signatories was Li Guochao, identified as a leader of the Wenshu Mosque. Wang Jingzhai, "Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi," 1217; Kaifeng Shi Shunhe Huizu Qu Difangzhi Zongbianshi, *Shunhe huizu qu zhi*, 441; Shunhe Huizu Qu Difang Shizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, *Kaifeng shi shunhe huizu qu zhi*, 623; Mu Daoyuan 穆道元, "Kaifeng huizu zayi" 开封回族杂忆 (Miscellaneous Recollections on the Hui Nationality of Kaifeng), 154; "Kaifeng huijiaotu zhi bianwu" 开封回教徒之辩诬 (Kaifeng Muslim Refutes Accusation).

<sup>492</sup> Wang Jingzhai, "Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi," 11217; Kaifeng Shi Shunhe Huizu Qu Difangzhi Zongbianshi, *Shunhe huizu qu zhi*, 441; Shunhe Huizu Qu Difang Shizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, *Kaifeng shi shunhe huizu qu zhi*, 623; Chen Tingliang, "Wei Ziqing," 490.

<sup>493</sup> Wang Jingzhai, "Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi," 11217.

By the spring of 1920, Ma Guangqing would be forced to leave the city, despite a petition in his defense with the support of the Wenshu congregation.<sup>494</sup> Thus far the antagonism his activism provoked was limited to the community that eventually hired him. It was opposition from other communities that would culminate in his flight from Kaifeng. From his new post at the Wenshu Mosque, Ma Guangqing continued to make a name for himself as an iconoclast and reformer of corrupt customs and innovations in ritual, but initially at least his criticism seems to have been a problem confined to *ahong* circles. In 1918, the death of a local Hui elder brought more than 60 *ahongs* from around Henan and beyond together for a funeral in Zhengzhou, where Ma Guangqing stood out as one of just two *ahongs* who did not wear customary white mourning robes. After a tense encounter with Ma, one robed attendee, the Sichuan-born Hu Yanzhang (c. 1873-1958), reflected on the question of mourning robes when he returned to Luoyang, where he was serving as cleric. Hu later visited Ma in Kaifeng, where he had studied as a *hailifan* (at the Shanyitang Mosque<sup>495</sup>), and after a lengthy the debate was eventually persuaded. He returned to Luoyang and began promoting Ma's reforms, antagonizing the local community elders and fellow *ahongs*, whom he condemned as fee-charging ritualists: "The only thing they're missing are the drums of a monk." Meanwhile, Ma Guangqing continued to refuse "gifts" for recitation in Kaifeng, frustrating the city's "scattered *ahongs*" (*sanban ahong*) who lacked formal employment and relied on such fees for their livelihood.<sup>496</sup>

Tensions mounted over the first half of 1919. Hong Baoquan (c. 1860s-1937)<sup>497</sup> was hired as cleric at the Great East Mosque. A native of the city, Hong had occupied the same post

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<sup>494</sup> "Kaifeng huijiaotu zhi bianwu."

<sup>495</sup> Ma Chao 马超 and Wang Huimin 王惠民, "Minguo shiqi henan yihewani wu da ahong" 民国时期河南伊赫瓦尼五大阿訇 (Five Great Ahongs of the Yihewani in Henan in the Republican Period), 1055–56.

<sup>496</sup> Wang Jingzhai, "Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi," 11217–18.

<sup>497</sup> According to Ma Chao, Hong Baoquan was born in the 1860s and died around 1936 while serving as cleric in Luoyang. However, the *Sangpo Zhi* (Sangpo Gazetteer) indicates that Hong served as cleric briefly in 1937 and was

more than two decades earlier and had also studied under multiple *ahongs* in the shari‘a-minded network (see Chapter One) who served in the Shanyitang Mosque.<sup>498</sup> At this point Kaifeng was in the unusual situation of having locals serving as clerics at two of the city’s main mosques. It was during Ramadan of that year, around June, that the two *ahongs* first clashed. The precipitating issue was whether the scent of *youxiang*, fragrant oil-fried cakes traditionally eaten at the end of Ramadan, compromised the fast. This began a number of disputes concerning gift-giving and recitation, worship protocol, veiling, *tajwid*, donning mourning robes, and other matters.<sup>499</sup> Subsequently, Hong Baoquan began to outline his positions in writing,<sup>500</sup> while the imam of the Great East Mosque, Shang Qingxuan, prepared to take legal action against what his congregation perceived to be the increasingly disruptive activism of Ma Guangqing. (Here it is important to remember that the imam (*yimamu*) and cleric (*jiaozhang*) are different positions.<sup>501</sup>)

In the summer of 1919, probably in July, Shang brought a lawsuit against Ma Guangqing before the provincial government.<sup>502</sup> This initial suit failed, and according to Ma Guangqing’s later petition, Shang himself was found to have brought a frivolous lawsuit and “harbored resentment and caused harm.”<sup>503</sup> In August, Shang escalated the dispute by bringing it to the

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replaced in that same year. From the extremely short tenure we can infer that Hong died in office in Sangpo in 1937, which close to Ma Chao’s given date of 1936. Ma Chao, “Yihewani zai henan de chuanbo yu fazhan,” 319; Mai Shunxiang, *Sangpo zhi*, 131.

<sup>498</sup> Ma Chao, “Qingdai henan yisilan jingxue liupai chutan,” 93.

<sup>499</sup> Ma Chao, “民国著名经师马广庆阿訇传略,” 198; Guo Qingxin and Guo Chengmei, “Kaifeng yisilan xin lao jiaopai ‘jiang jing’: guo qingxin ahong fangtanji.”

<sup>500</sup> Ma Chao, “民国著名经师马广庆阿訇传略,” 198; Hong Baoquan et al., “Ming Zhen Shi Yi.”

<sup>501</sup> The imam is the prayer leader. The position is typically held by a local and may be passed on hereditarily, as was the case with Shang. The cleric is a contracted position, typically held by an outsider or someone who is hired from another congregation, and is in charge of religious affairs, officiates major rituals, and leads religious instruction for *hailifan* students. See the Introduction and Chapter One of dissertation.

<sup>502</sup> A later order banning Ma’s “New New Teaching” as well as Ma’s petition against the charges both refer to two suits. According to Ma in his petition, the first one was dismissed. If the dispute came after Ramadan, which ended in late June, and before the second suit, which came in August, it is likely that the first suit was brought in July. “Chajin xinjinjiao zhi xunling” 查禁新新教之訓令 (Order to Ban the New New Teaching); “Kaifeng huijiaotu zhi bianwu.”

<sup>503</sup> “Kaifeng huijiaotu zhi bianwu.”



attention of the national Ministry of the Interior.<sup>504</sup> We will examine the details of the petition shortly; the main accusation was that Ma Guangqing was falsely invoking “freedom of religious belief” to interfere with the freedom of others, coercing them to join his “New New Teaching” (more on this below), and provoking religious strife. On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the Ministry notified Henan provincial authorities about Shang’s petition and dispatched an officer to secretly investigate whether Ma Guangqing had violated the law or was being framed.<sup>505</sup>

The case stalled for several months, but on May 10<sup>th</sup>, 1920, the Ministry of the Interior abruptly sent word to officials in every province to ban the “New New Teaching” wherever they encountered it.<sup>506</sup> In Kaifeng this order was apparently interpreted as requiring the arrest and punishment of Ma Guangqing. On May 25<sup>th</sup>, Ma and the Wenshu congregation leadership appealed to decision, but to no avail.<sup>507</sup> On May 29<sup>th</sup>, the order banning the New New Teaching was recirculated.<sup>508</sup> Ma Guangqing would likely have been arrested but for the intervention of a local official, one Mr. Li,<sup>509</sup> who secured him safe passage out of the city and southeast to

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<sup>504</sup> “Chajin xinxinjiao zhi xunling.”

<sup>505</sup> “Bu ling chaban xinxinjiao” 部令查辦新新教 (Ministry Orders Ban on New New Teaching).

<sup>506</sup> “Neiwubu ziqing chajin xinxinjiao yi an” 內務部咨請查禁新新教一案 (Ministry of the Interior Communique on the Request to Ban the New New Teaching).

<sup>507</sup> “Kaifeng huijiaotu zhi bianwu.”

<sup>508</sup> “Chajin xinxinjiao tongling” 查禁新新教通令 (General Order Banning the New New Teaching).

<sup>509</sup> Wang Jingzhai writes that Ma Guangqing was helped by the provincial senator (*henan sheng fu canyi*) Li Xianggao (李翔皋), but I have been unable to find any official by that name. In the early Republican era, there were two provincial legislators in Henan surnamed Li: Li Zaigeng (李載賡) in the lower house and Li Pan (李槃) in the upper house (senate). A few points of Li Zaigeng’s biography suggest the possibility that he is the Li that Wang Jingzhai meant. Li Zaigeng was from Qi County, which is close to Kaifeng, so he may have had some local clout and connections. Second, Li Zaigeng hosted banquets for his 1913 political campaign in a restaurant east of Ma Dao Street, the same location where a Hui-owned banquet hall opened in 1910. If it was the same restaurant, it is possible that Li had dealings with local Hui businessmen and entrepreneurs. Third, Li abandoned politics and returned to his home in Qi County after a failed campaign to reelection in the reconstituted provincial lower house, but returned again in the spring of 1922, when he was elected as a deputy. This coincided with Feng Yuxiang’s first regime in Henan as well as Ma Guangqing’s return to Kaifeng, so it is possible that the latter was facilitated by Li’s return to power. But this is merely circumstantial. Wang Jingzhai, “Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi,” 217; “Ge zhi sheng zhongyiyuan yiyuan biao” 各直省众议院议员表 (Chart of Members of Lower Houses of Each Province and Directly Administered Area); “Ge zhi sheng canyiyuan yiyuan biao” 各直省参议院议员表 (Chart of Members of Upper Houses of Each Province and Directly Administered Area); Xu Youli, *Dongdang yu Shanbian: Minguo Shiqi*

Huaidian near Zhoukou,<sup>510</sup> where Ma was hired as cleric at the Zhiyuan Mosque.<sup>511</sup> Huaidian was peripheral town relative to the provincial capital of Kaifeng, so it is likely that the order to ban the “New New Teaching” was not a major concern, or possibly even known, to local authorities. In late April 1922, Ma Guangqing was able to return to Kaifeng, perhaps owing to the chaos amid the outbreak of the First Zhili-Fengtian War, the promised changing of the guard with the eastward march of General Feng Yuxiang, and the political ascent of old allies.<sup>512</sup>

### *1917: Rupture or Repeat?*

The gazetteer account portrays Ma Guangqing’s 1917 return to Kaifeng as a rupture in local Hui history. According to the *Kaifeng Municipal Nationalities and Religions Gazetteer*, “Before 1917, all the mosques in Kaifeng belonged to the Gedimu sect.” It goes on to explain the founding of the “Yihewani Sect” (New Sect) by Ma Wanfu in the late nineteenth century and how in 1917 “it was spread to Kaifeng by his disciple Ma Guangqing.”<sup>513</sup> This framing implies that the city’s Hui communities were homogeneous leading up to 1917, at least in terms of the ritual disputes that divided sects.<sup>514</sup> It also suggests Ma’s reforms and the disputes they instigated were understood at the time in sectarian terms, that is, as the arrival in Kaifeng (and Henan in general) of a distinct Islamic faction or movement. Perhaps Ma would have agreed with these points; after all, from his perspective, most of his coreligionists in China were united in their

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*Henan Shehui Yanjiu*, 6; Zhang Hefeng 张鹤峰, “Li Zaigeng” 李载赓; Chen Tingliang 陈廷良 and Wang Huimin 王惠民, “Henan huizu jinji” 河南回族经济 (Economy of the Hui Nationality of Henan), 395.

<sup>510</sup> Wang Jingzhai, “Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi,” 11217.

<sup>511</sup> Ni Shengzhang 倪胜章, “Ji minguo shiqi shenqiu ‘huijiao’ xinlao jiaopai shanbian” 记民国时期沈丘“回教”新老教派嬗变 (Record of the Transformation of the New and Old Sects of Islam in Shenqiu in the Republican Period); Ma Chao, “民国著名经师马广庆阿訇传略,” 198.

<sup>512</sup> See previous note on Li Zaigeng.

<sup>513</sup> Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 204, 206.

<sup>514</sup> The gazetteer acknowledges earlier reform in the Old Sect/Gedimu in the eighteenth century but does not address heterogeneity within Islam in single period. In other words, whatever change occurred within Islam in the past affected Kaifeng’s mosques uniformly. The provincial gazetteer puts this more boldly, stating that the reformed Gedimu “replaced” the old Gedimu. Zhao Jiachen, 204–5; Henan Sheng Difang Shizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, *Henan sheng zhi*, 9:82–83.

deviance from true Islam, while he was part of a small but growing contingent of reformers committed to eradicating errors based on newly available texts brought back by pilgrims.<sup>515</sup> But how were the events described above experienced by Ma's rivals? Was Ma Guangqing's return seen at the time as the beginning of a new period of division and reform in local Hui history? And was Ma, and were his teachings, seen as representative of a new and distinct sect spreading throughout China?

When Ma Guangqing entered Kaifeng and began to preach, he was playing a part that had been played many times before. He may have acted with particular zeal and charisma, and his performance benefited from what seems to have been an unprecedented (before Hajji Guoyuan) technique of refusing fees for recitation. But his role, the seasoned scholar championing reform of religious practice in accordance with Islamic texts, was a familiar one. He was simply the bearer of yet another new teaching.

Ma Guangqing was the latest, and possibly the most disruptive, in a line of reformers in Kaifeng and the surrounding area. A few years earlier, in 1912, the Great East Mosque had hired the Beijinger Wang Haoran as cleric.<sup>516</sup> Wang had made the hajj pilgrimage in 1906 and traveled to Istanbul, where he had an audience with Sultan Abdülhamid II and arranged for Ottoman scholars to come to China to teach Arabic and Islamic subjects.<sup>517</sup> When he returned to Beijing,

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<sup>515</sup> As Ma wrote in 1921: "With the convenience of transit in recent years, no small number of people have gone to and returned from Arabia, and as a result the canonical texts they have brought back with him have also been numerous, and we believers naturally have all endeavored to reform the errors of the past based on all these canonical texts." Ma Zuowu (Ma Guangqing) 马做吾 (马广庆) and A Xiao (Wang Jingzhai) 阿校 (王静斋), "Henan ma zuowu aheng zhi benshe yuan suo xiansheng han" 河南马做吾阿衡致本社怨菽先生函 (Letter from Ahong Ma Zuowu to Mr. Yuansou of This [Journal's] Office).

<sup>516</sup> Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 153.

<sup>517</sup> Yi Boqing, "Wang haoran ahong chuanlue"; Unno, Noriko 海野典子, "Kyōdō kyōiku to shinshiki kyōiku: nijusseiki shotō no pekin musurimu no kyōiku kaikaku o meguru giron to jissen" 経堂教育と新式教育: 20世紀初頭の北京ムスリムの教育改革をめぐる議論と実践 (Scripture Hall Education and New Method Education: Debates and Practices on the Educational Reform of Beijing Muslims in the Early Twentieth Century), 231–34; Chen, "Re-Orientation," 37–38.

Wang began to reform mosque learning and criticized what he viewed as backward and corrupt customs. He established the China Islamic Progress Association, which as we saw in Chapters Two and Four had branches throughout Henan. While in Kaifeng, Wang established five lecture halls throughout the old city where his students preached.<sup>518</sup> His associate Zhang Yingxian of Tong County near Beijing succeeded him as cleric of the Great East Mosque.<sup>519</sup> The Sangpo-born (in northwestern Henan) *ahong* Ding Xiren (1877-1950) traveled to Ankara in the 1890s and studied Turkish, and in 1901 he made the pilgrimage to Mecca and then studied in Cairo as well as India and Iran before returning to China in 1904. None other than Hong Baoquan, Ma Guangqing's rival *ahong* at the Great East Mosque, arranged for Ding to teach (though he apparently was not employed as cleric) in Kaifeng in 1912. In 1915, he returned home to Sangpo, where he served as cleric and translated (into Chinese) some of the works of the Egyptian reformist Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905).<sup>520</sup> The Shaanxi-born *ahong* Liu Yuzhen (1861-1943) made the hajj and studied in Mecca twice during a similar period, in 1891-96 and 1902-1909, and after both trips he returned to Xi'an and promoted ritual reform.<sup>521</sup> Liu himself never taught in Henan, but his students did,<sup>522</sup> and close ties between Hui communities in Xi'an and Kaifeng meant that his influence was pronounced in both cities.

These recent reformers did not provoke the sort of retaliation we saw with Shang Qingxuan and Ma Guangqing, but this is not to say that there were no religious disagreements or disputes in the decades leading up to 1917. A 1915 inscription at the Great North Mosque of Qinyang (in northwestern Henan, not far from Sangpo) proclaimed the composer's (Zhou De of

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<sup>518</sup> Hu Yunsheng, "Kaifeng shi yisilanjiao qingzhensi," 396.

<sup>519</sup> Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 153.

<sup>520</sup> Mai Shunxiang, *Sangpo zhi*, 150, 203-5.

<sup>521</sup> Huang Dengwu and Ma Xiaoping, *Zhongguo jingtang jiaoyu yu shaanxue ahong*, 204-5.

<sup>522</sup> For example, Liu's student Wu Zhenming (乌振明, sometimes written 吴振明) served as cleric at the Wenshu Mosque in the 1920s and at the Tongxiang Mosque in Luoyang in the 1930s. Hu Yunsheng, "Kaifeng shi yisilanjiao qingzhensi," 393; Liu Baoqi and Jin Yaozeng, *Luoyang qingzhensi*, 138.

Kaifeng) opinion on the question moonsighting for the Ramadan fast, indicating that that old debate (see Chapter Three) continued to play out into the twentieth century.<sup>523</sup> One 1904 text printed at the Shanyitang in Kaifeng indicates a number of disputes associated with that mosque. The text, *Qingzhen Juzheng* (Right Islam), comprises two independent works in Arabic, including a *masa'la* (responsa) covering around two-dozen ritual questions, as well as miscellaneous front and backmatter (in Chinese). The two works were originally composed by an Egyptian scholar traveling in China in 1897. The frontmatter contextualizes the printing of the compilation in 1904 in relation to earlier disputes. Apparently, in 1887, father-and-son *ahongs* set out on the pilgrimage to Mecca. Upon their return, they were asked about the conduct they saw during the hajj (*hanzhi de xingwei*), and there were disagreements about what they reported. Ten years later, in 1897, two “scholars” (*danhei*, probably from the Persian *dānā*) came and confirmed what the father and son had said. That same year, Ma Zibao of the Shanyitang went to Liangyuan (in Shangqiu in eastern Henan), where he met the Egyptian scholar, who composed the two works. Ma Zibao then had the woodblocks of the text produced and kept them in the Shanyitang, according to the frontmatter. In 1904, another *ahong* (from Shaanxi) with “foreign learning” (*hai xue*) came to Kaifeng and preached based on the work on three occasions and finally “compiled and distributed [the texts] in Kaifeng” (five original prints are now stored in the Henan Provincial Library in Zhengzhou). Notably, the *masa'la* title includes similar language of “old and “new” subsequently associated with the Ma Guangqing affair: “A Noble Exposition Regarding How the New Differed from the Old among the People of China” (*kitāb faṭḥ al-karīm fī bayān mā ikhtalafa fīhi al-ḥudūth ma‘ al-qadīm min ahl bilād al-ṣīn*).<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>523</sup> Ma Chao, “Qingdai henan yisilan jingxue yanjiu,” 127–28.

<sup>524</sup> Ma Zibao, “Qingzhen juzheng,” 259–61, 265.

Shang Qingxuan's response to Ma Guangqing likewise drew on precedent. There is a long history of Hui not only turning to officials to settle inter-congregational disputes but of playing to official anxieties and sympathies when crafting accusations and defenses. Linking disturbances to a "New Teaching" and to a specific text was also a tried-and-true tactic.<sup>525</sup> It is in this light that we should understand the details of Shang's accusation, which charged that Ma was a follower of the "New New Teaching" and had distributed "numerous copies of the *Xing Mi Lu*, composed by Bao Dezhen..."<sup>526</sup> Here, either Shang or someone in the chain of bureaucratic transmission made a few errors; the book that cleric Hong Baoquan wrote *Elucidation of Truth* in response to (irrespective of whether it was Ma Guangqing who distributed it) was *Xing Mi Yao Lu* (Registered Essentials for Awakening from Confusion, see Chapter One), not *Xing Mi Lu* ("Registry" or "Record of Awakening from Confusion"), and the author was Xiao Dezhen (1884-1947); the surname was Xiao, not Bao, and the characters for Dezhen were homophones of Xiao's actual given name.

The label "New New Teaching" also took advantage of contemporary geopolitics and security concerns. Shang claimed that this "Bao" was linked to the "head of the New New Teaching" who was previously "expelled by Xinjiang Military Governor Yang," i.e. Yang Zengxin (1864-1928). Here the subsequent historical record makes Shang appear more prescient than he was. The designation "New New Teaching" today definitely refers to Hajji Guoyuan and the Yihewani, also known as the "New Teaching," "New Sect," and "Scripture-Observing Sect." At the time, however, this association was not mainstream, if it existed at all. A 1912 article in

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<sup>525</sup> Lipman, "Head-Wagging and Sounds of Obscenity: Conflicts over Sound on the Qing-Muslim Frontiers"; Lipman, "Sufism in the Chinese Courts: Islam and Qing Law in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries."

<sup>526</sup> An irony almost certainly lost at least to the officials involved was the erroneous *Xing Mi Lu* was actually the title of a seventeenth-century translation by She Qiyun (1630-1703), an Islamic scholar teaching in central Henan. This error allowed Ma to protest in his defense, coyly or not: "What teaching is the New New Teaching? What book is the *Xing Mi Lu*? I do not know." "Kaifeng huijiaotu zhi bianwu."

*Shen Bao* on Hui-related unrest in Gansu Province referred to an Old Teaching, a New Teaching, and a New New Teaching. The leader of the last one was identified as Ma Yuanzhang (1853-1920) and the grandson of Ma Hualong (1810-1871), a shaykh and leader in one of the great Muslim rebellions of the previous century.<sup>527</sup> Not only did Hajji Guoyuan have no connection to these prominent figures in the Jahriyya Sufi order, but he adamantly opposed them. In a missive dated April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1920, Yang Zengxin used the term “New New Teaching,” but it clearly designated a branch of the Jahriyya,<sup>528</sup> not Hajji Guoyuan, who by this point (1919) was in Xining with the protection and patronage of the local warlord Ma Qi, making it unlikely that Shang would point to a connection to him as cause for suspicion.<sup>529</sup> Recall that for months (since August 1919) nothing had come of the case against Ma Guangqing, but then in May 1920 the government banned the “New New Teaching.” If it was Yang’s April order (in which he mentioned a “New New Teaching”) that convinced officials to finally side with Shang against Ma Guangqing, it would appear that the government too had no reason to believe that the “New New Teaching” had anything to do with Hajji Guoyuan.<sup>530</sup> A later (1937) source on these disputes attests that Shang accused Ma of being a descendent of Ma Hualong.<sup>531</sup> Moreover, one of Ma Hualong’s surviving grandsons and one of Ma Yuanzhang’s rivals, Ma Jinxi (1878-1940), had secretly taken refuge in Kaifeng in 1916 and was forced to flee in around 1918.<sup>532</sup> For a local

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<sup>527</sup> “Gansu luanji you dongwu” 甘肃乱机又动物 (More Stirrings of Disorder in Gansu).

<sup>528</sup> Yang Zengxin 杨增新, “Buguo-zhai wendu xu bian” 补过斋文牍续编 (Documents and Letters from the Studio of Correcting Transgressions (Continued Compilation)), 374–75.

<sup>529</sup> Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 206–8.

<sup>530</sup> It is true that in January 1918 Yang Zengxin issued an order expelling from his dominion Hajji Guoyuan (Yang uses the characters 果元 instead of 果园), the person who is today known as the leader of the “New New Teaching” and who, as we know, was also the teacher of Ma Guangqing. But it is Xiao (or “Bao”), not Ma, who Shang claims is linked to Hajji Guoyuan, even though Xiao actually belonged to a separate intellectual lineage and was a student of another cleric, the aforementioned Liu Yuzhen of Xi’an. Yang Zengxin 杨增新, “Buguo-zhai wendu san bian” 补过斋文牍三编 (Documents and Letters from the Studio of Correcting Transgressions (Third Compilation)), 418–19.

<sup>531</sup> Wang Jingzhai, “Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi,” 11217.

<sup>532</sup> Jinji Baobanqiao Xidaotang Zheherenye Shi Zhengli Xiaozu 金积堡板桥西道堂哲赫忍耶史整理小组, *Zheherenye shi* 哲赫忍耶史 (History of the Jahriyya), 149–50.

Hui like Shang, the accusation of being Ma Hualong's descendant would likely have been an appealing and top-of-mind ruse to get an opponent like Ma Guangqing expelled from the city.

It is important to establish that Shang Qingxuan did not have Hajji Guoyuan or what has become known as the Yihewani in mind when he brought a suit against Ma Guangqing because it indicates that, at the time, this affair was not seen as the confrontation between two distinct sects distributed throughout the country. In fact, as I have shown, the action followed a familiar script. Shang used established tactics to try and have Ma Guangqing removed from Kaifeng; the conflict was not seen in the sectarian terms in which it is narrated today. Yet, in subsequent years, a sense of sectarian division did set in among the congregations of Kaifeng. It is to that process that we now turn.

## 5.2 The Social Context of Sectarianization

Thus far we have seen how the events of 1917-1920 in Kaifeng unfolded in a context that is obscured and reconfigured in the gazetteer account. In and of itself revision is unremarkable, since the writing of history, like translation, always involves selective contextualization. What is significant here is that the revision seems to have corresponded to actual change in the ways religious difference and dispute were experienced and imagined locally. Ma Guangqing was not initially seen as an agent of sect different from that to which the (at the time) eight congregations of Kaifeng belonged. But in subsequent years, a distinct sense of sectarian division at the congregational level set in among the Hui of the old city. In 1942, the cleric of the Great East Mosque wrote of the irreconcilable positions entrenched “due to more than twenty years of enmity between the Wen[shu] and [Great] East Mosques.”<sup>533</sup> Two years later, the scripture

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<sup>533</sup> The Great East Mosque cleric, Wang Dianfu, is quoted in Ma Guangqing's response. Ma Guangqing, *Da wang dianfu ahong shu*, 4–5.



debates (see Chapter One) of the summer of 1944 dramatized this division as representatives from different congregations convened to defend the Old and New Sect positions before crowds of hundreds of people.<sup>534</sup> And, as mentioned in the opening of the chapter, a later (1956) mosque survey by the new Communist government recorded the New/Old Sect affiliation for each of the city's mosques.<sup>535</sup>

Evidently, Ma Guangqing's was not the first new teaching to come to Kaifeng; nor were his reforms the first to instigate controversy and division. Yet it was only after his arrival and in response to his teachings that the city's congregations polarized into two sects. Instead of viewing ritual disputes as confrontations between distinct sects whose distinguishing teachings, texts, and figures we can trace back to a founding moment, we should investigate the conditions under which ritual differences are seen in sectarian terms. We should examine the *sectarianization* of congregational difference: the process by which ritual practice, which as we have seen has historically been used to differentiate as well as unite mosque congregations, comes to be read as signs of sectarian affiliation. We can do so by attending to the social context in which this process occurs.

The binary (New/Old) sectarianization of Kaifeng's congregations took place alongside two other related processes: a reconfiguration of established Hui commercial networks and the formation of new institutions for managing and representing the city's Hui community as a whole.

Over roughly the second half of the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, there were two main bundles of commercial ties institutionalized in mosques in Kaifeng. In 1851, Sangpo merchants engaged in the hide trade and related industries established the

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<sup>534</sup> Guo Qingxin and Guo Chengmei, "Kaifeng yisilan xin lao jiaopai 'jiang jing': guo qingxin ahong fangtanji."

<sup>535</sup> Shunhe Huizu Qu Difang Shizhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui, *Kaifeng shi shunhe huizu qu zhi*, 628.

Jiamiao Street Mosque.<sup>536</sup> In the early 1870s, around 300 Hui families, mostly horse traders (hence the community moniker “horse visitors”) left Shaanxi after the suppression of the Hui rebellions there and established the Shanyitang near the Xiangguo Temple and city drum tower.<sup>537</sup> As we saw in Chapter Two, the development of the Jing-Han and Long-Hai Railroads beginning in the first decade of the twentieth century transformed commerce in Henan and drove migration, Hui communities included, to the towns along the railroad lines and to the treaty ports of Hankou and Shanghai. A population swell in the southern part of Kaifeng, near the new railway station, led to the renovation and expansion of the Nanguan Mosque (first built in 1874) in 1907 and the construction of the Songmen Mosque in 1922.<sup>538</sup> Previously a migration target, Kaifeng gradually became a migration source, as many of the city’s Hui left and established mosque-based communities in nearby Zhengzhou (the Lüzheng Mosque, built in 1915),<sup>539</sup> in Yancheng (the South Mosque, built in 1920),<sup>540</sup> in Zhumadian (the South Mosque, built in 1907 and expanded in 1927),<sup>541</sup> and elsewhere along the railroads. Prominent Hui merchants formed networks linking Kaifeng to Xuchang, Luoyang, and Xinyang within Henan as well as Hankou and Shanghai and led local and provincial chambers of commerce.<sup>542</sup>

Over the 1920s and 1930s, the Wenshu Mosque became the main local node of this treaty-port and railroad-based network and emerged as a rival to the Great East Mosque, the traditional “head congregation” (*shou fang*) of the province. This rebalance was a contingent process. Through the 1910s, the Great East Mosque remained unquestionably dominant,

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<sup>536</sup> Wang Huimin, “Mantan jiamiaojie qingzhensi.”

<sup>537</sup> Ma Jiwu, “‘Ma ke huo’ de dingju yu shanyitang de chuangjian.”

<sup>538</sup> Hu Yunsheng, “Kaifeng shi yisilanjiao qingzhensi.”

<sup>539</sup> Liu Baoqi, *Zhengzhou qingzhensi*, 37–40.

<sup>540</sup> Ma Wenzhang and Ma Baoguang, “Luohe wu fang qingzhensi diaojiu ziliao huibian.”

<sup>541</sup> Yang Shaohua 杨少华, *Zhumadian diqu qingzhensi gailan* 驻马店地区清真寺概览 (General Survey of Mosques in the Zhumadian Region), 56–57.

<sup>542</sup> See Chapter Two on these merchants and their connections.

economically as well as culturally, and drove development of the new network. It controlled the city's cow and lamb butchery; the butcher's guild was headquartered inside the Great East Mosque complex, and its one-time chairman Du Qinglin also helped found the Lüzheng Mosque in Kaifeng.<sup>543</sup> The Great East Mosque counted among its headmen Wei Ziqing (1870-1928), chairman of the provincial chamber of commerce and owner of the province's largest electric lamp company, a nearby coalmine, the local Commercial Press printing house, and, together with Du Xiusheng (1881-1960), a large emporium and entertainment venue in the heart of the old city.<sup>544</sup> Bai Deqing, son of Wei's close business partner Bai Jifu, managed the Zhengzhou branch and factory of Wei's electric lamp company, while another employee of the company joined Du Qinglin as a headman of the Lüzheng Mosque.<sup>545</sup> Wei himself helped found another mosque in Zhengzhou.<sup>546</sup> As we saw earlier, the Great East Mosque attracted renowned scholars from outside of Henan, including Yang Zhuping of Guangdong as well as Wang Haoran and Zhang Yingxian.<sup>547</sup> The Kaifeng branch of China Islamic Progress Association (CIPA) included representatives from different congregations but was headquartered at the Great East Mosque, which also housed Yang Zheng Elementary until it relocated due to space constraints in 1918.<sup>548</sup>

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<sup>543</sup> Lu Zhenming reported that the Great East Mosque dominated the slaughter industry in his 1937 report on the Hui in Kaifeng. Du Qinglin is listed as the chairman of the cattle and sheep slaughtering guild, located in the Great East Mosque, "before liberation" (1949). His name also appears in an inscription commemorating the founding of the Lüzheng Mosque recorded by Hu Yunsheng. Lu Zhenming, "Kaifeng huijiao tan"; Li Yuchun, "Tongye gonghui," 54; Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 289–90.

<sup>544</sup> Chen Tingliang, "Wei Ziqing"; Ma Zhiyuan, "Henan zaoqi shiyejia wei ziqing."

<sup>545</sup> The employee was Yang Shaolin, who is listed together with Du Qinglin on the inscription recorded by Hu. Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 289–90; Ma Shixin, *Zhengzhou qingzhensi*, 63–65.

<sup>546</sup> Wei Ziqing as well as Tie Zilu are named in a 1922 inscription listing donors to the Qingpingli Mosque in Zhengzhou. Ma Shixin, *Zhengzhou qingzhensi*, 37–38.

<sup>547</sup> Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 153.

<sup>548</sup> A 1923 letter to Li Qian (see Chapter Two) from the Kaifeng CIPA indicates that clerics and headmen from seven congregations in the city were represented in the organization. Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 226–27; Li Qian, "Huibu gong du," 168; Bai Zixiang, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange."

The rise of the Wenshu Mosque was a function of both the new prominence of its leadership and the waning influence of the Great East Mosque. Around 1909, Ma Yunwu (1887-1955), son of a prominent Hui family in the restaurant and foodstuffs business and member of the Wenshu congregation,<sup>549</sup> graduated from Henan University and moved to Shanghai, where he worked at one of his father's shops. He moved in progressive merchant circles and supported the Xinhai Revolution of 1911. In 1914, he returned to Kaifeng after the death of his father and continued to expand the family business, opening new stores and restaurants. He held positions of leadership in local guilds and the city's chamber of commerce and became director of its arbitration office in 1919. In 1921, he was elected head investigator of the city's boycott of Japanese products led other "enemy products" (*chou huo*) boycott organizations in 1925 and 1928.<sup>550</sup> In commerce there was no inherent competition between different congregations, and Ma Yunwu and Wei Ziqing were colleagues in some of the aforementioned merchant associations as well as on the board of the Yang Zheng school. Notably, however, Ma Yunwu was not a signatory on the Kaifeng CIPA's 1923 letter in support of Li Qian's bid for recognition as the "plenipotentiary representative of the Muslim regions" (see Chapter Two), nor did he join Wei's appeal for international Muslim solidarity following the May 30<sup>th</sup> Incident in 1925.<sup>551</sup> After a spurt of post-May 30<sup>th</sup> activism, the Kaifeng CIPA lost steam and disbanded.<sup>552</sup>

Over the next decade, the Wenshu Congregation found itself at the center of both local Hui leadership and Hui professional networks with ties to major eastern metropolises like

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<sup>549</sup> Kaifeng Shi Shunhe Huizu Qu Difangzhi Zongbianshi, *Shunhe huizu qu zhi*, 1035.

<sup>550</sup> Wu Kai 吴凯, "Ma yongcen he ma yunwu" 马永岑和马运五 (Ma Yongcen and Ma Yunwu); Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 107-8.

<sup>551</sup> Li Qian, "Huibu gong du," 168; Li Guangyi 李光一, Li Guoqiang 李国强, and Zhonggong Henan Sheng Dang Shi Ziliao Zhengbian Weiyuanhui 中共河南省委党史资料征编委员会, *Wu sa yundong zai henan* 五卅运动在河南 (The May Thirtieth Movement in Henan), 86.

<sup>552</sup> Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 227.

Shanghai and Beijing. In 1926, a new Kaifeng Islamic Promotion Association succeeded the CIPA. Like its predecessor, it was based at the Great East Mosque.<sup>553</sup> Its leadership included Xu Yaqing<sup>554</sup> of the Great East Mosque, who had helped edit Hong Baoquan's *Elucidation of Truth* in response to Ma Guangqing five years earlier; but it also included Zhang Zhuqian,<sup>555</sup> then the principal of Yang Zheng Elementary, who had studied in Tianjin and then in Shanghai, where he and Sai Chengti<sup>556</sup> of the Wenshu Mosque organized Henan Huis residing in the city in response to the May 30<sup>th</sup> Incident.<sup>557</sup> After Wei Ziqing's death in 1928, his Pulin Electric Lamp Company was nationalized. This put financial strain on the Yang Zheng school, which was no longer able to collect interest monthly interest on an investment in the company made in its name. Some leaders of the city's butchery trade based at the Great East Mosque briefly introduced a slaughtering fee on cows and sheep to compensate for the lost revenue, but it was cancelled at the end of 1929. The school was increasingly dependent on contributions from board members and individual merchants and fundraising events,<sup>558</sup> for which the Wenshu congregation's wider-ranging connections proved useful.

At the same time, the Wenshu congregation strengthened its position on the local Islamic organization meant to represent all congregations in the city. After the 1930 Central Plains War, the Islamic Promotion Association was reorganized as the Islamic Association, still at the Great

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<sup>553</sup> Zhao Jiachen, 227.

<sup>554</sup> Xu is listed as Xu Liangchen (许良辰) in Hong's work and credited as an editor (*xiaoding*), so we can infer he was a congregant of the Great East Mosque. Based on his entry in the records of the Kaifeng Lawyers Guild, we know that he also went by Xu Yaqing (许亚青), which some sources render as 许雅青 or 许亚卿, and in one case 徐亚青. Hong Baoquan et al., "Ming Zhen Shi Yi," 340; Kaifeng Lüshi Gonghui 开封律师公会, *Kaifeng lüshi gonghui jishilu* 开封律师公会记实录 (Records of the Kaifeng Lawyers Guild), 108.

<sup>555</sup> Kaifeng Shi Shunhe Huizu Qu Difangzhi Zongbianshi, *Shunhe huizu qu zhi*, 1036–37.

<sup>556</sup> For Sai's congregational affiliation, see Li Zeng 李曾, "Wenshusi jie qingzhensi" 文殊寺街清真寺 (The Wenshu Temple Street Mosque), 414.

<sup>557</sup> They did so together with Bai Shouyi, who was studying in Shanghai at the time. Bai Zhide, *Bai shouyi de shixue shengya*, 17.

<sup>558</sup> Bai Zixiang, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu yi)"; Bai Zixiang, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu san)"; Bai Zixiang, "Kaifeng yangzheng xiaoxuexiao de yange (xu er)."

East Mosque but with more Wenshu members than had been in earlier organizations.<sup>559</sup> In late 1934, the association was again reorganized, this time as an affiliate of the Nanjing-based China Islamic Guild and based at the Wenshu Mosque. As one local wrote in a 1935 survey of the mosque, “Although the Wenshu Mosque is relatively small in terms of area, it has the Islamic Guild attached to it. It is virtually the leader of all the mosques, and religion flourishes [there] more than in other places.”<sup>560</sup>

The polarization between the Wenshu and Great East Mosque also played out in local clerical appointments. In the 1920s, the two mosques diverged sharply in terms of the frequency of changing clerics. Hong Baoquan served as cleric of the Great East Mosque from 1919-1931.<sup>561</sup> During that same period, the Wenshu Mosque hosted approximately seven different clerics in addition to Ma Guangqing, several of whom were hired from or went on to serve in Shanghai and Hankou.<sup>562</sup> Later on, the Wenshu Mosque also attracted *hailifan* graduates who had studied under Hajji Guoyuan’s other disciples in Qinghai and elsewhere in the northwest, as well as those who headed east to train at the modernist academies in Beijing and Shanghai.<sup>563</sup>

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<sup>559</sup> These were Bai Ruisan and Sai Chengti. Bai Ruisan’s congregational affiliation based on his being listed as a teacher at the Wenshu Mosque’s separate (from the Yang Zheng School) elementary school. See above for Sai’s. Zhao Jiachen, *Kaifeng shi minzu zongjiao zhi*, 227; Li Zeng, “Wenshusi jie qingzhensi,” 414.

<sup>560</sup> Lu Zhenming, “Tantan kaifeng de huijiao: wenshusi,” 13.

<sup>561</sup> Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 158.

<sup>562</sup> For example, Ma Guangqing served in Hankou and at the Xiaotaoyuan Mosque in Shanghai. Mai Junsan served at the Xiaoshadu Mosque in Shanghai. Wu Zhenming (misnamed in the source as Wu Zhengming 郭正明), at the Minquan Street Mosque in Hankou. served Hu Yunsheng, “Kaifeng shi yisilanjiao qingzhensi,” 393–94; Wuhan Difangzhi Bianzuan Weiyuanhui 武汉地方志编纂委员会, “Wuhan shi zhi” 武汉市志 (Wuhan City Gazetteer), 246; Ma Chao, “民国著名经师马广庆阿訇传略,” 198–99; “Duanxun xisi” 短讯西寺 (Short Notice on the West Mosque); “Duanxun jiangwan” 短讯江湾 (Short Notice on Jiangwan); “Shanghai xiaoshadusi zhi jinkuang” 上海小沙渡寺之近况 (Recent Circumstances of Teh Xiaoshadu Mosque in Shanghai).

<sup>563</sup> For example, Guo Qingxin, Dan Pengju, and Zheng Guoguang all studied in the northwest and the returned to Kaifeng; Guo and Dan served (apparently not as head clerics) at the Wenshu Mosque in 1944. Zheng later served as cleric there. Zheng Guangrong graduated from the Chengda Academy in Beijing in 1935 and later served as cleric at the Wenshu Mosque as well. Guo Qingxin and Guo Chengmei, “Kaifeng yisilan xin lao jiaopai ‘jiang jing’: guo qingxin ahong fangtanji,” 273; Hu Yunsheng, “Kaifeng shi yisilanjiao qingzhensi,” 393; “Biyesheng yilanbiao” 毕业生一览表 (Table of Graduating Students); Guo Chengmei 郭成美 and Wang Huimin 王惠民, “Minguo shiqi fu xibei nianjing de henan jingxue: guo qingxin ahong fangtanji” 民国时期赴西北念经的河南经学: 郭清心阿訇访谈

New appointments at some of Kaifeng's other mosques also fell into the orbit of either the Wenshu or Great East Mosque. In the previous decade, it had been the Great East Mosque that hired prominent *ahongs* from the east. In 1920, the Great East Mosque leadership supported the construction of the Songmenguan Mosque near the southeast corner of the old city.<sup>564</sup> The next year, a few hundred households that originally belonged to the Wenshu congregation broke off and established a new congregation by Hongheyan Street.<sup>565</sup> According to a 1937 survey by a Kaifeng local, the 1921 split was due to religious disagreements,<sup>566</sup> almost certainly related to the reforms of Ma Guangqing and his successor Hu Yanzhang. But the religious division was quickly reinforced by the two congregations' integration into separate socioeconomic networks: the first cleric of the Hongheyan Mosque, who served for two decades, belonged to the Sangpo Bai lineage of hide-traders that had established the Jiamiao Street Mosque some seventy years earlier,<sup>567</sup> while, as we have seen, the Wenshu congregation established ties with Shanghai and other treaty ports. In 1933, Ma Guangqing (at the time serving as a cleric in Shanghai) helped raise funds to build a new mosque in the northern part of the old city of Kaifeng, the first cleric of which was hired from the Wenshu Mosque.<sup>568</sup> The Wenshu Mosque continued to extend its influence over other congregations into the 1940s, when several *hailifan* who had studied under prestigious *ahongs* in the northwest returned to Kaifeng and took up posts at a number of the city's mosque, including the old Sanmin Hutong Mosque and one of two mosques built by

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记 ([Scholars of] Classical Learning in Henan Who Went to Study Scripture in the Northwest in the Republican Period: An Interview with Ahong Guo Qingxin).

<sup>564</sup> Hu Yunsheng, "Kaifeng shi yisilanjiao qingzhensi," 389–91.

<sup>565</sup> Hu Yunsheng, 387–88.

<sup>566</sup> Lu Zhenming, "Kaifeng huijiao tan."

<sup>567</sup> This was Bai Jinyong (白金庸), according to the *Sangpo Gazetteer*. Elsewhere he is named Bai Jinrong (白金荣). It is possible that these are two brothers, but both sources emphasize that the person was cleric for an extraordinarily long period (more than 20 years in one source, more than 40 in the other), so it is likely that one source simply has the name wrong, or that the same person went by one name. Mai Shunxiang, *Sangpo zhi*, 320; Hu Yunsheng, "Kaifeng shi yisilanjiao qingzhensi," 388.

<sup>568</sup> Ma Chao, "民国著名经师马广庆阿訇传略," 198.

members of the Great East Mosque congregation in 1937. The latter, the Wangjia Hutong Mosque, would become the site of the city's new Arabic School in 1946, a collaborative effort involving the young *ahongs* recently returned from the northwest.

In the summer of 1944, congregants and *ahongs* affiliated with different mosques convened in the center of the city outside the offices of the local Islamic association (then run by the All-China Islamic Union under the Japanese occupation) for a series of “scripture debates” between the New and Old Sects. As we saw in Chapters One and Three, this was one of numerous such debates that took place throughout Henan (and elsewhere) in the first half of the twentieth century and reflected the new, “shari‘a-minded” norms of argument about ritual. What we have seen in the foregoing is that these arguments took place in a particular context: the polarization of Kaifeng’s Hui community around the Wenshu and Great East Mosques, occasioned by changes in the two mosques’ relative power and influence across multiple domains, from control of local institutions to the hosting of the most sought-after and prestige-conferring *ahongs*. Divergence and competition between these congregations and, increasingly, other congregations in the city, found expression in public arguments about ritual.

### **5.3 Textualization: From Local Disputes to National Division**

The ritualization of congregational boundaries itself was nothing new, and several of the points of debate, such as the such as the raising of the finger during worship, standing alongside the imam during worship, and wearing shoes during the funeral, had been argued over for centuries. What was new were the political assumptions and values—among Hui as well as the broader Chinese society—in terms of which the sectarianization of intra-Hui difference would be understood, as well as the capacity for people across the country to read about and comment on it



through the periodical press. I want to turn now to the discussion of the sectarian split in the Hui press to understand how these congregational disputes, evidently shaped by their social contexts, came to be framed as local instances of a national problem. This framing involved an erasure of contexts like the one outlined above and a corresponding *textualization* of intra-Islamic division, that is, the construal of the sectarian split as a function of differences in the canonization and interpretation of texts.

This process of textualization can be seen in the Tianjin-based *ahong* Wang Jingzhai's early commentary on local disputes in Kaifeng and Xi'an. Wang had ties to both cities; he visited Ma Guangqing at the Wenshu Mosque in 1919, and his cousin Xiao Dezhen was a cleric in Xi'an. In January 1921, the Beijing-based periodical *Qingzhen Zhoukan* (Islamic Weekly), which Wang (in Tianjin) helped edit with his former student Ma Hongdao (1899-1968), published a letter by Ma Guangqing on the need to reform Islam in China according to Islamic texts that were increasingly available thanks to new means of travel to the Middle East. In a note appended to the letter, Wang Jingzhai mentioned his 1919 visit to Kaifeng, praised Ma Guangqing's efforts to reform local religious practice, and recounted how Ma had been accused of being the leader of the "New New Teaching." In his criticism of the "stubborn faction" (*guzhi pai*), alluding to Shang Qingxuan and the Great East Mosque establishment, Wang subtly acknowledged the social context of the ensuing division: he hinted at the fact that Ma's refusal to accept compensation for reciting the Quran threatened the livelihood of some of the city's *ahongs* who relied on such fees.<sup>569</sup> But in a later essay that included an account of Ma Guangqing's return to Kaifeng, published in 1937, Wang Jingzhai made no mention of the material interests at play and

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<sup>569</sup> Ma Zuowu (Ma Guangqing) and A Xiao (Wang Jingzhai), "Henan ma zuowu ahong zhi benshe yuan suo xiansheng han."

cast the matter as a dispute over whether what Ma Guangqing and his predecessor Red Date Ma “were reasonable and with evidentiary basis” (*dou heli qie you genju*).<sup>570</sup>

Another account by Wang of a dispute in Xi'an involved a more pronounced erasure of social context. In early 1925, the Beijing-based journal *Mu Sheng Bao* (Voice of Muhammad) began reporting on an ongoing “dispute between the New and Old Sects” (*xin jiu pai zheng*) in Xi'an. *Voice of Muhammad*, like the *Islamic Weekly*, was edited by Ma Hongdao, Wang's former student, and the two *ahongs* had recently returned from the hajj and months of travel in Egypt and the new Turkish Republic.<sup>571</sup> The first related article featured a petition from the leaders of the Xiaopiyuan congregation of Xi'an. The petition sought official intervention to resolve an ongoing dispute. At the heart of the matter was control over a local Hui school. In this case the dispute was not between congregations but within a single congregation, which, like the Hongheyan and Wenshu Mosques in Kaifeng, would ultimately divide. The petition opens by asserting the historic unity of Islam in China and, by implication, that it is the historic, or “old,” form of Islam that has been unifying and stabilizing. It then explain that, several years prior, in 1915-16, one Mr. Xiao and one Mr. Liu—in fact, these were Wang Jingzhai's cousin Xiao Dezhen and his teacher and father-in-law, Liu Yuzhen—“suddenly appeared” and began spreading a “New Teaching” in Shaanxi, winning over a number of households. Then, in April of 1922, the congregation decided to hire a teacher for religious (“Islamic letters,” *hui wen*) instruction, precipitating a dispute. According to the petition, the “New Teaching households” obstructed the process of hiring a teacher and abetted an “outsider” (implying suspiciousness) and disciple of the New Teaching by the name of Wu Yanzhang (in fact, this was *Hu* Yanzhang, recently departed from the Wenshu Mosque). Suits and countersuits ensued, and the situation

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<sup>570</sup> Wang Jingzhai, “Zhongguo huijiao gaizheng shi,” 11216–17.

<sup>571</sup> Ma Jing, *Minguo shiqi yisilanjiao hanwen yizhu yanjiu*, 169.

was further complicated by the coming and going of different officials who issued different rulings. It was eventually agreed that the two factions within the congregation would each nominate a teacher, and that administrative and faculty positions at the local Hui school would rotate every six months. But, over two years later, the New Teaching households had remained in charge the entire time and were refusing to abide by the terms of the agreement. The petition signatories requested that the provincial government enforce the original power-sharing agreement.<sup>572</sup>

Two weeks later, in the next issue of *Voice of Muhammad*, Wang Jingzhai (writing under a pseudonym) weighed in on the matter and drew an explicit comparison to Kaifeng: “This matter is mostly the same as the dispute in previous years in Kaifeng between Shang and Ma,” that is, Shang Qingxuan and Ma Guangqing. Indeed, there were some important parallels: the congregations of Xi’an, like their counterparts in Kaifeng, witnessed a proliferation of new institutions, including schools and local social associations, following the late Qing reforms and the establishment of the Republic of China.<sup>573</sup> But these were not the similarities Wang had in mind. In addition to overlap in characters involved (Wang corrected the earlier account’s *Wu* Yangzhang to *Hu* Yanzhang and identified the latter as a follower of Ma Guangqing), Wang noted that the disputes “had no value,” harmed unity, and embarrassed Muslims before members of other religions. He then offered an explanation for the disputes. Echoing Ma Guangqing’s 1921 letter (cited above), Wang raised the issue of the availability of texts, and added the question of provenance. According to Wang, the problem was not merely that *ahongs* in China

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<sup>572</sup> “Zhengdai jie jue zhong zhi huimin xinjiu jiao wenti” 正代解决中之回民新旧教问题 (Hui New and Old Teaching Issue Awaiting Resolution).

<sup>573</sup> Zhang Laiyi 张来仪, “Minguo shiqi de shaanxi yisilan jiao” 民国时期的陕西伊斯兰教 (Islam in Shaanxi in the Republican Period), 47–48; Zai Wenrui 蔡文瑞, “Minguo shiqi xi’an huizu jiaoyu yanjiu” 民国时期西安回族教育研究 (A Study of Hui Nationality Education in Xi’an in the Republican Period), *passim*.

historically had few texts, but also that the few that they did have were mostly from India and Persia and were filled with “personal,” that is, arbitrary, writings.<sup>574</sup> Now, in recent years, numerous texts from Egypt, Arabia, and Turkey have “come to China,” yet some stubborn and corrupt people disregard them as “foreign scriptures” (*yang jing*) belonging to a “New Teaching.” The privileging of Arabic texts and Arab styles was a broader trend among cosmopolitan Hui at this time, one to which Wang contributed.<sup>575</sup> Recall that he had just returned from the hajj and studies in Cairo. He brought back hundreds of texts to China, and later in the decade published numerous translations of Arabic articles taken from *Al-Manār*, *Nūr al-Islām*, and other Arab outlets (he also named his own Tianjin-based newspaper *Yi Guang*, “Light of Islam,” and titled it *Nūr al-Islām* in Arabic).<sup>576</sup> Once these backward community elders (*xianglao*) and *ahongs* understood that these texts were authentic, Wang implied, the disputes would cease.

By the late 1920s, resolving the sect problem was a recurring topic in the Hui press. In 1926, the editors of the Shanghai-based *Zhongguo Huijiao Xuehui Yuekan* (China Islamic Learning Association Monthly) included “eliminating the turmoil of the New and Old Sects” in a list of aims for the journal in its inaugural issue.<sup>577</sup> The editors of *Yue Hua* (Crescent China), the preeminent Hui journal of the Republican period, likewise proclaimed the goal of “resolving misunderstandings between the New and Old Sects of Islam.”<sup>578</sup> These and other journals

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<sup>574</sup> Yuansou (Wang Jingzhai) 怨藪 (王静斋), “Guanyu shaanxi xinjiu jiao zheng zhi ganyan” 关于陕西新旧教争之感言 (A Comment Regarding the Dispute Between the New and Old Teaching in Shaanxi).

<sup>575</sup> Benite, “‘Nine Years in Egypt.’”

<sup>576</sup> Feng Jinyuan 冯今源, “Wang jingzhai ahong chuanlüe” 王静斋阿訇传略 (Biographical Sketch of Ahong Wang Jingzhai); Jing Jun 敬军, “Wang jingzhai yu ‘yi guang’ yuebao” 王静斋与《伊光》月报 (Wang Jingzhai and the “Yi Guang” Monthly).

<sup>577</sup> “Ben bao bianji dagang” 本报编辑大纲 (General Editorial Principles of This Journal).

<sup>578</sup> “Ben kan zongzhi” 本刊宗旨 (General Aims of This Publication).

published out of Guangzhou, Beijing, Tianjin, and elsewhere featured essays on the problem of sectarianism in general as well as reports from different places on local disputes.

Information flowed in two directions: contributors reported on local conditions, including disputes, and readers were exposed to an increasingly standardized vocabulary for talking about these disputes. The notion that these disputes were fundamentally a matter of textual access and interpretation spread back down to the local places Wang initially wrote about. In April 1935, Bai Shouyi's Kaifeng-based journal *Yisilan* (Islam) published an essay titled, "On the Difficulty of Arabic and the Crux of the Matter of the So-Called New and Old Sects." The author was named "Xincheng," but we can infer that this was Cheng Songping (1864-1938), a Guilin-born Hui *ahong* and student of Chinese medicine who moved to Kaifeng in the late nineteenth century and became known as one of the city's "four great doctors" (the title of the essay actually contains a medical metaphor: the term for "crux of the matter," *zhengjie*, was originally a term for an abdominal lump in Chinese medicine).<sup>579</sup> Chen Songping was also a subscriber to *Crescent China*.<sup>580</sup> Chen's diagnosed the sectarian problem as a symptom of linguistic incompetence. He began by acknowledging the difficulty of Arabic grammar, morphology, and semantics, which he then linked to sectarian disputes:

In the past the times when the disputes between the New and the Old have been fiercest mostly have arisen from dilettantes on both sides understanding only half of something and making waves by splashing about. Those of broad learning, by contrast, move gracefully... I say that China and the Arab [lands] are separated by more than 2,000 *li*, and that the geographical distance makes even harder what is already the great difficulty of studying the profundities of Arabic, so the higher aims (*zhi*) of scripture are more difficult to grasp in full. If with respect to language a scholar's cadence is set by where he is and is not competent, if he

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<sup>579</sup> "Chen songping aheng chuangan guoyi yuekan" 陈松坪阿衡创办国医月刊 (Ahong Chen Songping Founds National Medicine Monthly); Chen Xincheng 陈心诚, "Saixian yanzheng zhi an" 腮腺炎症治案 (Treating a Case of the Mumps).

<sup>580</sup> "Kaifeng chen songping xiansheng" 开封陈松坪先生 (Mr. Chen Songping of Kaifeng).

makes general references to (merely) similar principles, if he is not thoroughly knowledgeable and lacks a true grasp—then how, when it comes to religious judgments, will he be able to handle himself as a master, without the slightest hesitation?<sup>581</sup>

The sectarianism that plagued China was rooted in an even deeper pathology in Chen's analysis than in Wang's; the problem was not only a matter of which texts one had access to, but also whether one could properly understand them at all.

On one level Chen's essay was a grave indictment of his fellow Hui: its scholars sorely lacked linguistic abilities, and as a result, the religious community had divided into opposing factions. Yet on another level it reflected a distinctly scholastic idealism about the nature of social division: the Hui were divided because they were insufficiently educated in their tradition. Unity would come with learning. They were sick, but the illness could be cured through Arabic study and rigorous scholarship. It was all a matter of texts.

In "The History of the Rectification of Chinese Islam," published in May 1937 in his Tianjin-based journal *Light of Islam* (which Kaifengers, including those specifically concerned with the sectarian question, read<sup>582</sup>), Wang Jingzhai extends this concept of a community divided over texts to the national level. The subtitle of the essay identifies some of the major characters (e.g. Hajji Guoyuan) and location (the northwestern provinces) for Wang's narrative: "Begun by the great '*ulamā*' of the northwest, accomplished by old Guoyuan Ma. Ma Guangqing, Hu Yanzhang and others carry it forward." Wang then states his thesis: that Chinese Islam, long corrupted, is finally being corrected thanks to the efforts of scholars (*'ulamā*') with access to previously unavailable texts:

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<sup>581</sup> Xincheng 心诚, "Lun awen zhi jiannan ji suowei xinjiupai zhi zhengjie" 论阿文之艰难及所谓新旧派之症结 (On the Difficult of Arabic and the Crux of the Matter of the So-Called New and Old Sects), 18.

<sup>582</sup> Guo Wenqi 郭文奇, "xie zai 'zhongguo huijiao xinjiu pai zheng zhi jinxi guan' hou" 写在《中国回教新旧派争之今昔观》后 (Responding to "A View of the Past and Present of the Disputes Between the New and Old Sects of Chinese Islam").

For over a millennium Islam mixed with Jews, Shi'a, Shafi'is, and the polytheist variety of this country. This was passed down from generation to generation, and none exposed it, until the last days of the dying Qing dynasty, when 'ulamā' from Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai and Ningxia were able to distinguish fish eyes and pearls by increasingly reading various orthodox texts from Western countries.

Wang proceeds to introduce several of these scholars: Hajji Guoyuan, Liu Yuzhen, Ma Shanqing, Ma Guangqing, and Hu Yanzhang. Wang focuses on the efforts of each of these scholars to reform erroneous practices and unlawful customs in Chinese Islam, as well as the social and political obstacles they overcame, though he goes into greater detail about Hajji Guoyuan and Ma Guangqing than the rest. Most of the action takes place in the 1910s-20s and in Shaanxi and Henan, despite the subtitle's focus on the northwest and the late Qing. Wang hops from one story to another, and although there are intersections (for example, Ma Guangqing goes to study under Hajji Guoyuan; Ma Guangqing and Ma Shanqing are both in Kaifeng), they are not fully integrated into a coherent narrative.

This elliptical quality hints at Wang's higher aim, beyond simply recounting the trials of reformist scholars: to cast scholars active in different parts of China and associated with distinct intellectual lineages as characters in the same drama of Chinese Islamic reform. Consider Hajji Guoyuan (1849-1934), Liu Yuzhen (1861-1944), and Ma Shanqing (1849-1922). On what basis can these three scholars be linked in a common program of "rectification?" It is true that they are of roughly the same generation, traveled abroad (though Ma Shanqing went to Java,<sup>583</sup> not Mecca), and gained a reputation for promoting certain reforms.<sup>584</sup> But their programs of reform

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<sup>583</sup> Huang Dengwu and Ma Xiaoping, *Zhongguo jingtang jiaoyu yu shaanxue ahong*, 72.

<sup>584</sup> Hajji Guoyuan was known for his "ten *hukm*" (*Guoyuan shi tiao*), Liu Yuzhen for his twelve *hukm* "helpful to the living and faithful to the dead" (*youyi yu sheng zhe, zhongcheng yu si zhe*), and Ma Shanqing for his "not after day three" (*bu fang chu san*) ruling on the start of Ramadan relative to the Chinese lunar calendar. Ma Xiaoxu 马晓旭, "Ma wanfu zongjiao sixiang tanxi" 马万福宗教思想探析 (Exploration and Analysis of the Religious Thought of

were not identical (and, as we have seen, involved many ritual issues of longstanding debate, so they were not distinguished by raising them), and they were taught by and in turn taught different scholars. It is in Wang's essay that they become part of a shared story. Wang broadens the scope of his integration in the final part of the essay, which includes a list of 50 scholars in twelve provinces whom Wang classifies as either the "Old Sect that follows custom" and the "revivalist, scripture-observing sect"<sup>585</sup> (6 and 44, respectively). Several of those listed as scripture-observers were disciples of Hajji Guoyuan, or disciples of his disciples, but this was not the rule. For example, in addition to Liu Yuzhen and Ma Shanqing, Mai Junsan and Ma Zicheng, both of Henan, belonged to separate intellectual lineages.<sup>586</sup>

By constructing a unified genealogy for these scattered and in some cases idiosyncratic reformers, Wang not only stretched the project of Chinese Islamic reform to encompass the geography of the Republic of China, from Qinghai to Guangxi; he also placed that geographically defined project in a particular time. The timing was not arbitrary. Wang synchronized that which was "accomplished by old Guoyuan" with the rise of Chinese nationalism at the turn of the century. In aligning the trajectories of Islamic and Chinese progress, Wang echoed earlier self-styled reformists. Three decades earlier, a group of young Hui elites studying in Tokyo published the *Xing Hui Pian* (Awakening of Islam, titled in Arabic *Istīqāz al-Islām*), a collection of essays mostly concerned with Hui education and modernization in China.<sup>587</sup> But whereas the Tokyo group (made up of lay elites, not clerics) understood

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Ma Wanfu), 388–89; Ma Bin 马斌, "Yihewani jiaopai zai xi'an diqu de chuanbo guocheng" 伊赫瓦尼教派在西安地区的传播经过 (The Course of the Development), 245–46; Pang Shiqian, *Aiji jiu nian*, 108–9.

<sup>585</sup> Wang previously avoided the term "New Sect" on the grounds that it connoted heresy and unlawful innovation, though later in the 1937 essay he abbreviates these two sects as "New and Old."

<sup>586</sup> Although both served at the Wenshu Mosque in the late 1920s, each had his particular opinion on reform. Indeed, according to Bai Shouyi, Ma Cheng was distinguished by his avowed commitment to follow only the Quran and not the Hanafi jurisprudential tradition. Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, "Zhongguo yisilan jingshi chuan" 中国伊斯兰经师传 (Biographies of Islamic Scripture Masters in China), 436.

<sup>587</sup> Liu Dong Qingzhen Jiaoyuhui, *Xing hui pian*; Benite, "'Nine Years in Egypt,'" 6.



progress in terms of bringing Islam in line with their idea of modernity, Wang understood progress as a function of scripture-based reform.<sup>588</sup> And although Wang did not write in terms of *minzu*, Chinese Islam as he articulated it possessed an essential characteristic of nations in contemporary Chinese political thought: self-conscious progress through time.<sup>589</sup> Insofar as debates about texts—or what are framed as debates about texts—mark progress in Chinese Islamic history, Wang’s essay converts intra-Hui difference into the potential for Hui national unity.

#### 5.4 Reading Sect

The sectarian frame exposes divisions among the Hui while casting them in favorable light—favorable, at least from a certain, shari‘a-minded perspective, because arguments about texts reflect a shared if incompletely realized intention to abide by them. At the same time, the frame obscures the context of debate and the underlying economic and institutional relationships, wholly unrelated to the content of the texts, that make debate and division socially useful. In this chapter, zooming in on and out from the Kaifeng scene following the return of Ma Guangqing, I have attempted to reveal that context as well as the tendency of contemporary observers to keep it out of sight.

This tendency itself reflected the new values of shari‘a-mindedness and national unity examined in earlier chapters. By representing the Hui as a collectivity that is divided, and

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<sup>588</sup> In fact, one of the *Awakening* essays did address the issue of internal divisions within Islam in China. The essay “The New Teaching of the Huihui” has to do with an entirely separate “New Teaching,” the Jahriyya order in Yunnan, and one “Elder” (*laorenjia*) Ma from fifty years prior (c. 1860s). The anonymous author’s main argument is that this “New Teaching” among the Hui should not be compared to the “New Teaching” of Christianity (i.e. Protestantism) or Buddhism (Nichiren’s reforms), because the latter were the results of progress and surpassed the “Old Teachings,” while the former (Islam’s “New Teaching”) was hardly different from what came before it, and disputes between the two were harmful rather than productive. Liu Dong Qingzhen Jiaoyuhui, *Xing hui pian*, 50–52.

<sup>589</sup> Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 1–5, 33–50.

therefore also composed of, rival interpretations of texts, the narrative of the sectarian split construes intra-Hui difference as an expression of those same values. In this respect, the idea of the New/Old Sect division functions like a totem. It is a totemic concept that integrates religious division into national unity. It is perhaps because of this crucial yet ambiguous function that the topic of sect seems both ubiquitous and taboo in the study of Chinese Islam.

Once articulated in print, the sectarian frame was available to any reader to apply and incorporate into a particular worldview. Ironically, the idea of division between old and new sects jibed with the Chinese Communist Party's progressive interpretation of history. In *Huihui Minzu Wenti* (The Huihui National Question), first published in 1941, the CCP's National Question Research Association laid out the Party's justification for recognizing the Hui as a distinct *minzu*. This argument involved a reading of history wherein the Hui progressed through a still incomplete process of "national formation" (*minzu xingcheng*) in imperial China rooted in but ultimately not limited to Islam. The authors (none of whom were Hui) had limited sources but consulted what they could find, including *Crescent China* and other periodicals, which they cited.<sup>590</sup>

Mirroring in a curious way some of the Hui scholars examined above, the authors engage in their own type of textualization when they come to the question of "sects," which they understand as "distinguished based on religious doctrine and religious law" (in contrast to the *menhuan*, which are distinct, hereditary concentrations of property and power).<sup>591</sup> Like Wang, the CCP authors ultimately construe the sectarian division in terms of their particular political

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<sup>590</sup> The authors also drew on, but did not cite, Jin Jitang's argument that Islam was "not just a religion" but also a social system and therefore could provide the basis for a national identity. Leibold, *Reconfiguring Chinese Nationalism*, 154; Glasserman, Aaron Nathan, "On the Huihui Question: Islam and Ideology in Twentieth-Century China."

<sup>591</sup> *Minzu wenti yanjiuhui* 民族问题研究会, *Huihui minzu wenti* 回回民族问题 (The Muslim Nationality Question), 58.

assumptions and aspirations; their successive emergence (these authors actually identify four different groups rather than two) reflects the resistance of the oppressed classes against the oppressor classes, and the latter's gradual cooptation of the new religious system. Of an earlier group from the eighteenth century, the authors write: "To a certain degree, the New Teaching was a reflection of the interests of the Hui masses."<sup>592</sup> In the 1950s, as mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the new regime classified mosques in Henan according to New/Old sectarian affiliation. Evidently the CCP had already encountered the problem more than a decade earlier, and its early theorization of Hui history, albeit done under strained circumstances and in a different province, may have informed its approach to the survey. But that early theorization itself was informed by Hui scholarship. The sectarian categories ultimately inscribed in the state's registry were a type of "superscribed symbol"<sup>593</sup> bearing layers of divergent meanings attached to them by local people, distant commentators, Hui scholars, as well as the party-state.

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<sup>592</sup> Minzu wenti yanjiuhui, 64.

<sup>593</sup> Duara, "Superscribing Symbols."

## Chapter 6:

### Custom

The Master She Yunshan (1630-1703) has lived many lives since his death and (likely)<sup>594</sup> burial in the outskirts of Xiangcheng in central Henan. In different chapters of Hui lore and literature, he appears as a mystic or philologue, an outcast truthteller or charismatic teacher, an eclectic or a fundamentalist, an innovator of religion or a preserver of it. Despite the variety of roles, the drama always involves a relationship, sometimes amicable, sometimes antagonistic, between the itinerant master of scripture and the local people with their way of doing things. A particular configuration of this relationship became salient in the historical writings of prominent Hui intellectuals in the late 1920s-40s: the Master as an iconoclast champion of true Islamic ritual against local deviations and a forerunner of the “observe scripture, reform custom” (*zun jing ge su*) movement within Chinese Islam.

As the slogan suggests, this movement is widely understood as a variety of scriptural reformism, i.e., bringing religious practice in line with understandings of canonical texts and eliminating local customs lacking scriptural basis. In scholarship as well as Hui popular culture, this project is associated with the Yihewani or “New Sect,” said to have emerged after a hajj pilgrim returned to China in the 1890s and began to criticize what he considered deviations from

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<sup>594</sup> Another story recounted by some detractors is that Master She drowned in the Liao River in present-day Liaoning Province in northeast China, his just deserts for spreading a “New Teaching.” In 1934, Master She’s descendent and defender She Xueren clarified in Wang Jingzhai’s journal *Yi Guang* that the Master had in fact been buried outside of Xiangcheng, pointing to his tomb there as evidence. But the alternative history lives on in strange ways: in the entry for She Yunshan’s translation *Xing Mi Lu* (Record of Awakening from Confusion) in the catalogue to the *Complete Collection of Texts of the Hui Nationality* anthology, the editors state that the Master was buried in “Liaoning, Henan.” She Xueren 舍学仁 and Wang Jingzhai 王静斋, “She xueren ahong jieshao qi xianzu she yunshan jiaozhang” 舍学仁阿訇介绍其先祖舍蕴善教长 (Ahong She Xueren Introduces His Ancestor Cleric She Yunshan); Wu Jianwei 吴建伟 and Zhang Jinhai 张进海, *Huizu diancang quanshu zongmu tiyao* 回族典藏全书总目提要 (Catalog and Abstracts of the Complete Collection of Texts of the Hui Nationality), 23.

orthopraxy, especially regarding death rites, that had accumulated over centuries of isolation from the Islamic heartland.<sup>595</sup> The prime example of these alleged corruptions in reformist polemics as well as academic scholarship is the wearing of coarse white robes and other garb during mourning, and it is not uncommon for this practice to be construed as a sign of sectarian identity, as though one sect wears mourning robes while the other sect does not.<sup>596</sup> In the previous chapter I problematized this narrative and showed how the concept of the New/Old sectarian division is a product of the politics and ideology of the Nationalist era. In this chapter I pursue a parallel agenda with respect to the linked ideas of “scripture” and “custom” in Chinese Islam.

The dominant understanding of “observing scripture and reforming custom” as a reaction against Chinese corruptions of Islam ignores the context in which “scripture” and “custom” came to be opposed. It also ignores the changing status of “custom” and of the practices it designated in contemporary discourse. In the early twentieth century, many Chinese elites abandoned the theoretically universalist tradition of Confucianism and replaced it with the immanent and particularistic frame of the territorially bound Chinese nation-state.<sup>597</sup> From the Confucian perspective, local custom (*su*) was subordinate to what was prescribed in scripture (*jing*) as ritual propriety (*li*), precisely the class of practices into which wearing mourning garb fell. With the rise of territorial nationalism, “local custom” came to be seen as an automatic and authentic

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<sup>595</sup> Ma Quanlong, “Zunjing gesu de ma wanfu”; Ma Tong, *Zhongguo yisilan jiaopai yu menhuan zhidu shilue*, 94–107; Gao Wenyan 高文远, *Guoyuan hazhi: zunjing gesu de changdao zhe* 果园哈智: 遵经革俗的倡导者 (Hajji Guoyuan: Advocate of Observing Scripture and Reforming Custom); Bian Weilin 勉维霖, Yu Zhengui 余振贵, and Na Guochang 纳国昌, *Zhongguo huizu yisilan zongjiao zhidu* 中国回族伊斯兰宗教制度 (The Religious System of Islam of the Hui Nationality), 363–79.

<sup>596</sup> Jin Yijiu 金宜久, *Yisilan wenhua 150 wen* 伊斯兰文化 150 问 (150 Questions about Islamic Culture), 330.

<sup>597</sup> This is essentially Levenson’s influential thesis. Duara cautions against characterizing premodern China “simply” as “universal,” noting that ethnocentrism is not a uniquely modern phenomenon. Levenson, *Confucian China and Its Modern Fate*; Duara, *Rescuing History from the Nation*, 56–65.

expression of national character. The donning of mourning garb was repudiated as a backward (and later “feudal”) practice.<sup>598</sup>

My principal argument is that the dichotomization expressed in “observing scripture and reforming custom” is the shari‘a-minded response to these developments in broader Chinese politics and society. Local custom has become central to Han and Hui identity, but in opposite ways, since the Hui not only lack a common territory but are, according to modern ethnologists, distinguished by their diasporic “wide dispersal, small concentrations” pattern of settlement. Whereas Han politicians and social scientists defined local custom as a source of their culture, their Hui counterparts and colleagues defined it as the antithesis of theirs. Yet, as we saw in Chapter Four, it was in terms of “special life customs” or “habits” (*teshu shenghuo xiguan*) that the Nationalist government ultimately granted the Hui effective recognition as a political constituency in the late 1940s, and it is primarily as minority “national customs” (*minzu fengsu xiguan*) that Islamic death rites and other practices are ostensibly protected today.<sup>599</sup> This tension between the internal construction of Hui identity and its official institutionalization is an important continuity in modern Chinese history across the divide of 1949.

In this chapter I will examine the discourse of “observing scripture and reforming custom” as it emerged the 1920s-40s. I begin, however, by surveying several earlier accounts of the Master She Yunshan in Hui literature and scholarship. These earlier accounts, dating back to the late seventeenth century, reflect the various configurations of the relationship between scriptural tradition and local custom that Huis have articulated and serve to clarify the

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<sup>598</sup> See for example Hu Shi’s (1891-1962) criticism of traditional mourning garb as a “nonsensical hodgepodge” (*meiyou daoli de da zacou*). Hu Shi 胡适, “Wo duiyu sangli de gaige” 我对于丧礼的改革 (My Reforms for Funerals), 572.

<sup>599</sup> On evolving ideas about Islamic law and custom among Chinese officials in the twentieth century, see: Erie, *China and Islam: The Prophet, the Party, and Law*, 54–67.

contingency of the dominance of the “observe scripture, reform custom” dichotomy. I then focus on the early career of Bai Shouyi (1909-2000), the leading Hui ethnologist and historian of the twentieth century, and some of his contemporary Hui intellectuals. Born in Kaifeng, Henan in 1909, Bai studied under and collaborated with some of the country’s preeminent Han scholars, including the geographer and folklorist Gu Jiegang (1893-1980). I show how Hui elites were influenced by the new enthusiasm for the local but came to define the shari‘a as conveyed and interpreted in Islamic scripture as the basis of their national culture *against* local custom. I then review a number of Hui arguments from the Nationalist era about the permissibility of wearing coarse white mourning garb. Continuing the critique of the previous chapter, my analysis of these arguments reveals the inadequacy of the binary (wear/do not wear) sectarian framework. There were important differences among opponents and defenders of the practice as well as between those groups, and exponents of different positions were equally concerned with justifying their rulings according to the shari‘a. If the “reforming custom” half of the maxim reflected the new importance of the local in Chinese nationalism, the “observing scripture” half reflected the ethic of shari‘a-mindedness we have examined throughout this study. As a whole, “observing scripture and reforming custom” is a reflection of broader and contingent changes in China and in the understanding of Islam in the early twentieth century.

## **6.1 Tradition and the Local in Accounts of Master She**

### *Zhao Can’s Genealogy in Beijing: 1697-1714*

A disjuncture in the earliest extant account of the Master directs our attention to the relationship between texts and place in it and subsequent stories. For most of this account, the Master works and lives in harmony with the local communities who host him. It is only in a

lengthy parenthetical comment, likely inserted by the author after the Master's death, that introduces a tension between itinerant scholars and the community elders who provide them material support.

This account is found in a chapter on Master She Yunshan in the *Genealogy of Classical Learning*. As we saw in Chapter One, the *Genealogy* memorializes a network of schools and teachers across northwest, central, and eastern China engaged in the transmission of Islamic classical learning (*jing xue*) from the late sixteenth through the early eighteenth century. The main text the *Genealogy* was compiled by Zhao Can, one of Master She's students, and includes a preface contributed by the Master, written in present-day Huaiyang in eastern Henan in 1697.<sup>600</sup> Master She died in 1703, and Zhao Can continued to add new material to the original work through 1714. In a "guide for readers" included in the 1714 copy, Zhao Can explains that there were originally just two copies of the *Genealogy*, one kept in his own home and one at Master She's residence in Xiangcheng. Years later, around 1713-1714 while in Beijing, Zhao Can fell ill and rushed to produce two additional copies of the *Genealogy* from memory with, he acknowledges, minor differences from the original.<sup>601</sup> The latter edition, completed about a decade after Master She's death, is the only known extant version of the *Genealogy*.

According to his biography in the *Genealogy*,<sup>602</sup> the Master was born into the (non-Muslim) Wei family of Yuanling in today's Hunan Province. He was a precocious child who

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<sup>600</sup> As explained in Chapter One, the widely used 1989 edition of the *Genealogy* contains numerous transcriptional errors, and I therefore use and cite Na Jufeng's edited version included in his 2013 dissertation. Na Jufeng, "Ming wanli zhi qing kangxi zhongguo huihui jingxue jiaoyu kao: yi jingxue chuanxipu wei zhongxin," 223–24; Zhao Can, *Jingxue xichuanpu*.

<sup>601</sup> Na Jufeng, "Ming wanli zhi qing kangxi zhongguo huihui jingxue jiaoyu kao: yi jingxue chuanxipu wei zhongxin," 235–36.

<sup>602</sup> The following discussion is based on She's biography in Zhao Can's *Genealogy*. Translations are mine. I have also consulted Benite and Liu's translation of an excerpt that chapter, as well as Ma Chao's critical biography of Master She and studies by Benite and Weil. Na Jufeng, 254–59; Ma Chao 马超, "Jingxue dashi she yunshan ruogan wenti kaoshu" 经学大师舍蕴善若干问题考述 (A Survey of Several Questions Regarding the Great Master of



studied the Confucian classics intensely and composed elegant verse. When he was nine years-old, a Muslim general from Weinan (in Shaanxi Province) surnamed She was given command of the area, and his wife grew fond of the young boy. At age eleven, the Master sat for the prefectural civil service examination and was recommended as the best candidate by the examiners. But owing to the death of his father, the Master halted his studies and did not receive an official degree, remaining at home instead to bury his father (in keeping with Confucian mourning protocol). General She and his wife adopted the Master, who “entered Islam” (*jin qingzhenjiao*) and took the name She Qiling and the courtesy name Yunshan.

The Master, now named She Yunshan, was sent to study at a military camp with a teacher named Yang. When the Master was “able to proclaim the words of the sages to exhort the masses,” he asked if it was time to stop his studies. Teacher Yang replied that to continue his studies the Master would have to travel in search of further learning. The Master asked where he should go. Yang listed several options but said that Masters Chang and Li of the area near the Ji River (in Shandong) were the greatest. A new military campaign led by his adoptive father General She provided the Master the opportunity to advance his career as an official, and he joined the army for a short time. But soon he had the chance to travel to Weinan, his adoptive father’s place of birth, to pursue his studies, and did so. There he studied several Arabic and Persian texts with Master Feng and then Master Ma, after which traveled to study in Xi’an.

The death of his adoptive father brought the Master back to the She family home in Weinan, and he gave up his studies for two years. Then, in around 1657, he finally managed to go to Jining to study under Masters Chang and Li and begin to teach. Much of the rest of the biography narrates She’s career teaching for four decades in over twenty schools in what are

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Classical Learning She Yunshan); Benite and Liu, “The Story of Master She Yunshan’s Conversion in Changzhou, China”; Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 52–54; Weil, “The Vicissitudes,” *passim*.

today Shaanxi, Henan, Hebei, Beijing, Anhui, and Liaoning. Wherever the Master went, he was treated well by the people he met, and leaders of different congregations vied to host him as a teacher at their particular mosque. Twice he relied on local people to help him marry. Their respect for him, moreover, was rooted in an appreciation for his integrity. “Everyone one was fond of his sincerity,” we are told, because he not only sought knowledge but reflected on his conduct and practiced what he learned.

The harmony between local people and the Master breaks briefly toward the end of the chapter. She’s long tenure of eight years teaching in Kaocheng (in eastern Henan) was supported by a wealthy local elder and retired military officer surnamed Jin, who “served the Master with the humble propriety with which he had served the commandership.” During this period, She reflected on the precarity of his tradition and the great efforts of his predecessors, including his late teacher Master Chang, in preserving it. The main text is then interrupted by a note in smaller script with a direct quotation (indicated below in italics). In the quotation, the Master compares the work of expounding and preserving his tradition to the work of the Song Confucian Zhu Xi (“Master Zhu”) and then laments how a corpus of false texts distributed by one “Sharif” has corrupted Islamic learning and sown discord: “...*The crisis began with the madness and obstinance of Sharif, who disguised the useless as valuable and successively compiled numerous texts (47 in total), obscuring the teaching’s principle and presenting [the products of] his shallow and biased learning as evidence! Each of the indulgent fools who count on discord gave in to his prejudice and found pretexts for dispute, leading to a whirl of accusations, with lasting harm to classical learning. Now [they] resemble the factions left over from the Northern and Southern Schools, each following his own clique without turning to face another... If we search for the origin of it all: it was caused by Sharif!*” The note ascribes one additional complaint to

She, linking the persistence of Sharif's corruption to the obstinance of the local village elders:

*"What is most pitiful concerns those who seek learning. The village elders see their meritorious deeds and practice and, when they are found to contravene their own [ways], send them away to other places in poverty and hardship, refusing them any support or care. I fear that, as a result of this difficulty of study, classical learning will, after some time, vanish, and the whole world will lose its way. How tragic!"* The first complaint has to do with the corruption of tradition and demonstrates the necessity of rigorous criticism of scriptural provenance and interpretation—a complaint that would have resonated with the contemporary “evidential scholarship” movement in broader literati circles. The second complaint introduces a new object of scrutiny: the institutional context in which learning takes place and the motives the *xianglao* who maintain it.

The antagonism between the scriptural tradition of the teacher and the idiosyncratic practices of the village elders departs from the earlier narrative of harmony, and I suggest that this departure reflects the author's, i.e. Zhao Can's, experiences after the first draft of the *Genealogy* was completed in 1697 and even after Master She died in 1703. In around 1699, Master She was invited to teach in Changping, near Beijing (from this detail it is already clear that the extant copy of the *Genealogy* had material added to it after Master She wrote his preface in 1697). He taught for two years in Changping, during which time he also participated in at least two debates with scholars affiliated with Beijing's Niujie Hui community, one on the metaphysical question of the number of essences in nature and one on the legal question of the positions of the imam and congregants during worship.<sup>603</sup> The latter issue had divided the Niujie community in recent decades, to the point that proponents of one position (that the imam should

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<sup>603</sup> Beijing Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Yanjiu Weiyuanhui, *Beijing niujie zhishu--gang zhi*, 17–19; 45–50; Mu Weibin 穆卫宾, “lun yisilanjiao zhongguohua de shixian: yi ‘gan zhi’ jiaoli zhi zheng wei zhongxin” 论伊斯兰教中国化的实践: 以《冈志》教礼之争为中心 (On the Practice of the China-Fication of Islam: Focused on the Dispute Over Religious Rituals in the “Gang Zhi”).

stand in front of the congregation on his own, rather than in a line) had established a separate mosque.<sup>604</sup> The debates devolved into acrimonious name-calling, and accounts differ on the outcome.<sup>605</sup> What is clear, however, is that participants disagreed over the legitimacy of certain texts and that the 1699 debates did not bring an end to the quarreling. When Zhao Can returned to Beijing in 1713-1714, he bemoaned the corruption of the scholars in charge of mosques' religious and educational affairs, who knew what was correct but did not enforce or practice it, by implication in order to maintain their employment.<sup>606</sup>

Indeed, the “additional compositions” (*zeng zhu*) that supplement the original genealogy reify the “village elders” and “teachers” as distinct components of the transmission of Islamic learning. Zhao Can provides a list and description of exemplary village elders who perform their proper role as supporters of learning as well as a criticism of “inferior teachers” (*lie shi*) who fail to play their part. Zhao's response to the persisting discrepancy between the knowledge of the scholars and the practice of the locals in Beijing is to clarify the function each type is supposed to perform.<sup>607</sup>

Although the unusually long parenthetical about Sharif and corrupt village elders breaks the pattern of harmony between scholar and local community seen in the rest of Master She's entry in the *Genealogy*, it fits with the delineation of roles in the material we know Zhao Can added to the 1714 edition, written after the Master's death in 1703. Also of note is absence in the Master's entry of any mention of one of his works, the *Xing Mi Lu* (Record of Awakening from Confusion), a translation of the *Munabbihāt* of al-ʿAsqalānī (1372-1449),<sup>608</sup> which is one of the

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<sup>604</sup> Beijing Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Yanjiu Weiyuanhui, *Beijing niujie zhishu--gang zhi*, 6–7.

<sup>605</sup> Beijing Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Yanjiu Weiyuanhui, 45–50; Na Jufeng, “Ming wanli zhi qing kangxi zhongguo huihui jingxue jiaoyu kao: yi jingxue chuanxipu wei zhongxin,” 263.

<sup>606</sup> Na Jufeng, “Ming wanli zhi qing kangxi zhongguo huihui jingxue jiaoyu kao: yi jingxue chuanxipu wei zhongxin,” 268–69.

<sup>607</sup> Na Jufeng, 263–67.

<sup>608</sup> Weil, “The Vicissitudes,” 275.

false texts distributed by Sharif that Zhao lists in a later preface. In fact, that preface is the only other time “Sharif” appears in the *Genealogy*.<sup>609</sup> These discrepancies suggest the possibility that “Sharif” and the question of the provenance of certain texts became a concern for Zhao sometime between 1697 and 1714, that is, after the first draft of the *Genealogy* was written but before the second, into which he inserted the new prefaces and additional materials and amended the Master’s entry by inserting a quotation criticizing Sharif and removing any link between the Master and the newly suspect *Munabbihāt*.

Zhao Can portrayed the Master in the *Genealogy* as the exemplary scholar conscious of the dangers posed by falsehoods and corruption, but the symbolism was apparently forgotten for centuries. The *Genealogy* was never converted to woodblocks for printing, and no reference to it has been found in any Hui writings from the late imperial period. It was only in 1984 that a copy of the manuscript was rediscovered and printed as a book.<sup>610</sup> But if the *Genealogy* was quickly lost, the Master credited with inspiring it lived on in other forms.

#### *The Master’s Epitaph and Tomb in Xiangcheng: 1795-1812*

Around a century after his death, the Master emerged at the center of a different sort of genealogical practice: the inscription of two commemorative stelae and the restoration of his tomb. In 1795, the Hui community of Xiangcheng selected one of the Master’s great-grandsons, She Wenpu, as a cleric (*zhangjiao*) and marked the occasion by inscribing a new stele. Less than two decades later, in 1812, She Wenpu convinced the community to repair his great-grandfather’s dilapidated tomb on the outskirts of town, which occasioned the inscription of yet

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<sup>609</sup> Na Jufeng, “Ming wanli zhi qing kangxi zhongguo huihui jingxue jiaoyu kao: yi jingxue chuanxipu wei zhongxin,” 229.

<sup>610</sup> Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 30–31.

another stele. Both inscriptions<sup>611</sup> were composed by imperial examination candidates from the same family, the Ties. Together, they extend the harmonious relationship between Master She and the local people that dominates his biography in Zhao Can's *Genealogy*, before the complaint about village elder corruption.

The story recounted in the 1795 inscription contains some of the key elements of Zhao Can's biography while accentuating different themes; Master She's authority here derives not from his rigorous philology but from his ecumenical mastery of different traditions and sagely charisma. The inscription opens with a reference to a corroding older stele, inscribed 91 years earlier, from which biographical information is taken. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the blood relationship between She Wenpu and She Yunshan, there is no mention of adoption, and the given names (not the family names) of his biological grandfather and father are given, and the latter is recognized as a recipient of the highest examination degree during the Ming dynasty. Rather than the Master being adopted by the Shes of Weinan in Shaanxi, here the Shes (including She Yunshan) are originally from Yuanling in Hunan, where, according to Zhao Can's biography, Yunshan was born into the Wei family.

As in Zhao Can's account, the Master is described as a brilliant student since childhood who turns to the study of Islam after excelling in his Confucian studies. "At eighteen years of age, he had mastered the classics, and people all had a great estimation of him. He abandoned pursuit of high office and thought only of his origins in the western regions, whence Muhammad had spread forth [his] teaching." Also like Zhao's *Genealogy*, the inscription alludes to the

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<sup>611</sup> Published transcriptions of the 1795 inscription vary slightly. I have had to mix and match, as each one has problems in different places. I have revised punctuation (not included in the original inscription) in some places. Yu Zhengui and Lei Xiaojing, *Zhongguo huizu jinshi lu*, 642–43; Ma Chao, "Jingxue dashi she yunshan ruogan wenti kaoshu"; Yang Yongchang 杨永昌, "'Jingxue xichuanpu' ji she qiling jianjie" 《经学系传谱》及舍起灵简介 (A Brief Introduction to the Genealogy of Classical Learning and She Qiling); Mu Bai 穆白, "She yunshan" 舍蕴善 (She Yunshan).

precarious transmission of the tradition, but where the *Genealogy* valorized the Master's philological scrutiny of specific texts, the inscription celebrates his integration of different teachings into a coherent system: "The law (*fa*) was originally pure and right, but when it flowed into the lands of the east, rarely could anyone uphold it; therefore [the Master] brought together the transmissions of the three schools of the Confucians, the Buddhists, and the Daoists." The inscription even cites the *Yi Jing* (Book of Changes) to characterize the Master's achievement. This integration won the Master many students; "Because [he] aligned [himself] with no aim other than grasping the divine brilliance of that which can be found only at the convergence [of the teachings], many scholars hastened to attach themselves to him."

In the next section the inscription situates the Master in specific time and space: after the establishment of the Qing dynasty and in Xiangcheng, where the stele is located. The leaders of the community both invite the Master to teach but are also careful to test him to ensure that he does not simply seek profit and esteem from local notables.

With the establishment of the current dynasty, people were able to gather in peace, and [the Master] was invited to take charge of instruction in [Xiangcheng]. On the day he arrived, he humbly presented himself to the virtuous notables of the town. They recognized each other as if they had known each other for a long time. Later [the notables] tested [the Master] by meeting him in ordinary clothes. They engaged him in discussion and for the whole day were incapable of departing. [The Master's] teaching was so great that among all the lords and relatives of heaven and earth (i.e. all people), none dared to not respect him; and it was so exquisite that [among all things] movement became still and eating ceased, and none dared to not be reverent.

In this account, the relationship between the village elders and the Master is defined by scrupulous concern for virtue and earned reverence—precisely as Zhao Can would have liked it. It is, moreover, not just any, generic "village elders" or place, but this specific community, in Xiangcheng, that enable this harmony. And it is in turn this specific community and within it the

She lineage that derive legitimacy from their particular relationship to the Master. The inscription concludes with a list of the Master's children and male grandchildren and great-grandchildren, the memorialization of the community's selection of She Wenpu as *zhangjiao*, and the names and titles of the composer and calligraphers, and the date.

Bound though it is to the place and people of Xiangcheng, the 1795 inscription also reflects broader, empire-wide shifts in the political status of Islam. In recent decades, events on opposite ends of the empire had prompted new official scrutiny of Hui religious affairs and seemingly benign scholarship. In the early 1780s, Qing attempts to manage feuding between rival Sufi orders in Xunhua to the far northwest led to a brief attack on the provincial capital of Lanzhou and a brutal subsequent crackdown. Meanwhile, in 1782 in Guilin to the far south, the discovery of a collection of Islamic texts (in Chinese as well as Arabic and Persian) in the luggage of an arrested traveler prompted local officials to warn the capital that the ongoing unrest in the northwest might soon spread southeast.<sup>612</sup> The Qianlong Emperor issued an edict in the summer of 1782 responding to both incidents and warning against overzealous suppression of Islam and comparing it to the tolerated practices of Daoism, Buddhism, and Lamaism (a rather pejorative term for Tibetan Buddhism). Caught in the remote middle between these borderland affairs, Hui in Henan nevertheless took note; the edict was inscribed on tablets at least two mosques in the province, one in Zhengzhou and one in Zhuanqiao Village around 40 miles northwest of Xiangcheng.<sup>613</sup> The composers of the 1795 inscription would have been aware of

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<sup>612</sup> Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 98–99; 107–12; Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 215–35; Weil, “The Vicissitudes,” 232–36.

<sup>613</sup> Gu Fengying 古风英, “Zhengzhou qingzhen beidasi shiji kaozheng” 郑州清真北大寺史迹考证 (Evidential Study of Historical Artifacts of the Great North Mosque of Zhengzhou), 1095–98; Hu Yunsheng, *Chuancheng yu rentong: henan huizu lishi bianqian yanjiu*, 337; Yang Yurun 杨玉润 and Yuzhou Municipal Office for Ethnic and Religious Affairs 禹州市民族宗教事务局, *Yuzhou huizu zhi ji zongjiao zhi* 禹州回族志暨宗教志 (Yuzhou Gazetteers of the Hui Nationality and Religion), 166–68.



the new scrutiny with which officials would view their tradition and used their cultural capital as examination candidates to cast Islam in terms favorable to a Confucian scholar, even defining it against potentially deviant and disruptive Buddhist practices. Of the Master's teaching, they wrote: "It was the same as the teaching of the Confucians and also had strict observances: not believing in spirits; not making offerings to the Buddha. Because drinking wine, fornication, and eating meat muddle the mind, those who commit these offenses must be severely punished for them." It is worth noting that the specifically Islamic dietary rules are generalized ("meat" rather than "pork") and justified in terms of their consequences rather than scripture.

In Xiangcheng the legitimacy of Master She is a function of his alignment with the moral tenets of imperial Confucianism and of his particular connection to the place and its people. His harmonious relationship with the locals is cast a sign of virtue, not corruption. There is one passage toward the end of the inscription that subtly conveys the Master's iconoclastic side: "Even if the multitudes are defiled; one is pure by oneself; [even if] the multitudes are deceitful, one is upright by oneself." But the inscription quickly reverts to generalizing justification of Islamic practice ("Perform ablutions and fast to purify the mind and reduce desires"), with no explicit reference to antagonism between teachers and locals or factionalism within Islam.

The 1812 inscription, completed most of two decades later, tidies the Master's harmonious relationship with the locals further. There is no allusion to standing up against the multitudes, let alone the local elders of Xiangcheng; the Master is simply a gifted scholar, including of "the true transmission of the Sage Muhammad," and "traveled throughout the world dwelling in different places. The disciples whose virtue he nurtured and who therefore grew goodhearted were no fewer than three thousand." In recognition of his achievements, the locals built him a tomb (*qubr*) in Xiangcheng. Now, in 1812, the locals again virtuously honor the

Master and his great-grandson, who ultimately relies on them to fund the repairs of the tomb: “He intended to rebuild it but lacked the means. He relied on the village elders, who raised funds from far and wide and came together to help with this affair.” The construction of the tomb itself thus manifested the harmony between scholar and local community exhibited in this account of the Master.

*Li Huanyi’s Tale and Commentary: Nanyang, 1874*

Some sixty years later, to the southwest in Nanyang, the Master’s story was recorded again. In 1874, the *xiuca* (having passed the lowest, county-level examination) and teacher Li Huanyi of Tanghe County completed his decade-long project of compiling the *Qingzhen Xianzheng Yanxing Lue* (Outline of the Words and Deeds of Islamic Exemplars, henceforth “Words and Deeds”). According to the author, woodblocks for printing the manuscript were made in Beijing, and other sets could be found in Jiangnan and Guangdong, as well as in the author’s hometown in southwestern Henan. It was reprinted in Tanghe in 1917 with an additional preface by the author’s son.<sup>614</sup> The text’s two volumes include entries on 95 “exemplars” (four include only names) from the Sui through Qing dynasties.<sup>615</sup> The 31<sup>st</sup> entry in the second volume is titled: “She Qiyun.”<sup>616</sup> Unlike most entries, it is divided into two sections: the tale of Master She and then a brief commentary on it, signed by Li Huanyi.

The recombinant characters from different names (Qi from Qiling, Yun from Yunshan) mirror the entry’s rearrangement of some of the familiar elements of the Master’s story. This

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<sup>614</sup> Li Huanyi 李焕乙, “Qingzhen xianzheng yanxing lue” 清真先正言行略 (Outline of the Words and Deeds of Islamic Exemplars), 229–37.

<sup>615</sup> On Li Huanyi’s *Outline*, see Chen, *Chinese Heirs to Muhammad*, 91–118; Li Songmao 李松茂, *Hui jing zhai wencui* 慧镜斋文萃 (Collected Writings from the Huijing Studio), 106–13; Lü Fenglin 吕凤林, *Nanyang xiaodongguan qingzhensi zhi* 南阳小东关清真寺志 (Nanyang Xiaodongguan Mosque Gazetteer), 146–49.

<sup>616</sup> Li Huanyi, “Qingzhen xianzheng yanxing lue,” 412–15.

Qiyun was from “West of the pass,” here meaning Shaanxi, his adoptive father’s hometown according to Zhao Can. There is no mention of adoption. Again we are told of the Master’s brilliance from a young age. This time it acquires a miraculous quality; the boy seemingly possesses innate knowledge of the Confucian classics. When he overhears a teacher quoting a line from the *Zhongyong* (Doctrine of the Mean), he spontaneously produces a line from the same text and then demonstrates his comprehension of it by posing a question.

Intelligent and clever from birth, when he was nine years old, he heard a teacher lecturing many students on the Great Mean. When [the teacher] reached the sentence “the sun, the moon, and stars are suspended in it,” [She Qiyun] alone stood straight and approached, saying: “‘The doings of the supreme Heaven have neither sound nor smell’. If pure energy bursts up and becomes Heaven, then how can it be that the three lights (the sun, moon, and stars) are suspended in Heaven, may I ask?” The teacher was startled and said, “You are not my student, you are my young friend, and it is you who has helped me!” He turned to his followers and said, “This child’s intelligence is extraordinary, his achievement immeasurable. Some day he will sit in the teacher’s place and lecture on scripture; you lot should serve him with the propriety with which you have served me.” Afterward, [She] delved into the study of Confucian books and Islamic scriptures.

The entry then describes Qiyun’s talents as a *zhangjiao* and growing number of disciples. The Master achieved great influence in the Xiangcheng inscriptions too, but here his career is not rooted in any particular place, and the story unfolds in generic space.

The remainder of the first, larger part of the entry (the account Li has recorded) can be divided into two sections. The first is a scene involving an exchange between the Master, now a teacher, a questioner (presumably a student), who asks if, just as the Way had been transmitted from the ancient sage-kings down to Confucius, the “Teaching of Adam” likewise had a completer and “utmost sage.” The Master responds by recounting the transmission over fifty generations of transmission from Adam to Muhammad, naming Nuh (Noah), Ibrahim

(Abraham), Musa (Moses), Dawud (David), Sulaimon (Solomon), and Isa (Jesus). The questioner then asks whether the dates of Muhammad's life, death, and hijra from Mecca are known. The Master replies with the information and repudiates an alternative date as an error. As a result of this correction, "She *Baba* ("father," here a respectful epithet) was exalted for his erudition. His talents were so outstanding that he could go through a given part of the Qur'an sentence by sentence and word by word, exhausting its significance in his commentary and interpretation."

Debate and discord, present in Zhao Can's account but absent in the two Xiangcheng inscriptions, return in final section of the main account before Li's commentary. "In addition," the account continues, "[the Master] examined all the rites of worship, recitation, weddings, and funerals in Islam [and found that] among them there were a few that did not suit the times and omitted or changed more than ten rules." Notably, the Master's alleged criterion for reforms is contemporary suitability (to "the times"), not scripture. But the account nevertheless casts these changes in a positive light and criticizes those who resisted or failed to promote them.

[His reforms] spread throughout the world. Those who understood saw them as a new principle without preventing [people from following] the old regulations; those who stuck [to the old regulations] were confused and deemed [the reforms] new and in contravention of the ancient teaching. Alas, the wise who observe their errors and have come to know what is true [still] conceal their criticism!

The main account thus celebrates the Master's wise reforms and criticizes both the ignorant who misunderstand them and the learned who recognize what is correct yet fail to implement it.

The lamentation on concealed criticism is followed by the only line break in the chapter, dividing the main account of the Master and Li's commentary. In the subsequent commentary, Li specifies the number of reforms as 18 rather than "more than ten," suggesting that he has more

information than the story he just recorded and establishing a critical distance from it. He also expresses a different opinion on the impact of the Master's reforms. While the main account clearly celebrates the reforms, Li is ambivalent. Like in Zhao Can's *Genealogy*, a comparison is drawn between Islamic learning and Song Confucianism, but in this case, it serves as a warning against factionalism:

Comparing the Song Confucians Zhu and Lu, their teaching was contaminated with the practice of narrow partisanship, [leading to] a schism in Confucian scholarship. Islamic learning is like this too. [As a result of] the 18 rules changed by Mr. She, clear factions formed; slanderers and acclaimers clustered together, and to this day there is no verdict on [his changes]. I am deeply worried about how they flaunt [their way] to one another. With time they will be like water and fire, like ice and coals, like fragrant and foul refusing to be mixed—to what can it be compared?

In contrast to the narrator in the main account, who complained about those who knew the truth but took no action to enforce it, Li counsels precisely that sort of tolerance and accommodation. He addresses the traditional scholars of scripture (*jingshi*):

I hope that every great master (*da jingshi*) will feel out his conscience and seek what is reasonable, following what accords with the order of human relations and preventing what violates righteousness, or not commenting or imposing an opinion on it. The teaching of all prophets is of a single substance [and forms] a great body. If we do not make an account of trivial matters and are careful not to tread into division like the factions of Luo and Shu that attacked [each other], sowing disorder for later scholarship, it would be extremely fortunate.

Unlike most others in *Words and Deeds*, this entry ends with the offset characters “Lianfang,” Li's courtesy name, further indicating that this is his commentary on a recorded tale.

Like the Ties with their inscriptions in Xiangcheng, Li recorded and commented on the tale of Master She in the context of broader changes concerning Islam and Muslims in the Qing empire. The two decades preceding the completion (in 1874) of *Words and Deeds* witnessed

multiple Muslim-led uprisings, in Yunnan, in Shaanxi and Gansu, and to the far northwest in Xinjiang. Qing officials themselves drew connections between the recent unrest and the violence of the late eighteenth century from which the Ties of Xiangcheng had tried to distance themselves. Zuo Zongtang, the general credited with finally suppressing the rebellions in Shaanxi-Gansu and Xinjiang, put the blame where the Qianlong Emperor would not most of a century earlier: it was the “New Teaching,” here referring to the Jahriyya order, that was the source of trouble in Zuo’s view. It had fomented insurrection in the 1780s, and it did so again in the 1860s-70s. Foreshadowing the labeling and prohibition discussed in Chapter Five, Zuo banned the New Teaching in 1872 as part of his postwar reconstruction program and warned of its spread throughout the empire.<sup>617</sup> In addition to the renewed toxicity of the label “New Teaching,” Li had cause from closer to home to caution against communal division. Less than a decade prior, in 1864, a congregation in Fancheng, Linying County, a little more than 100 miles northeast of Li’s home in Tanghe, had erected two stelae affirming their adherence to the “ancient” ways and memorializing local debates about ritual, as had been done in Kaifeng and Zhuxianzhen farther north in earlier decades.<sup>618</sup> It was thus with a looming sense of the possibility of division and the risks of official repression that Li implored the “great masters” to refrain from imposing or resisting Master She’s reforms against local practice.

#### *Historical Research: The Nationalist Era*

Each of the accounts of the Master examined thus far frames in a particular way the tension between scripture as an external standard for ritual and the local as the site where rituals

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<sup>617</sup> In his memorial proposing to ban the New Teaching, Zuo made explicit reference to the unrest in Xunhua in the 1780s. Zuo Zongtang 左宗棠, “Qing jinjue huimin xinjiao zhe” 请禁绝回民新教折 (Memorial Requesting Prohibition of the New Teaching of the Hui); Chu Wen Djang, *The Moslem Rebellion*, 153–55; Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 135–38.

<sup>618</sup> On the Fancheng stelae and earlier inscriptions in Kaifeng and Zhuxiazhen, see Ma Chao, “Jingxue dashi she yunshan ‘shiba tiao’ zhuzhang kaoshu.”

are actually practiced. In the *Genealogy* (1697/1714), Zhao Can clarified the roles he believed the teacher (exemplified by Master She) and the village elders respectively ought to play. In the two epitaphs for the Master in Xiangcheng (1795/1812), the Ties and the community they represented resolved the tension by eliding the two roles, that is, by making the Master into a local sage and affirming their relationship to him and his teachings in the particularistic terms of place and biological descent. In the *Outline of Words and Deeds of Islamic Exemplars* (1874), Li Huanyi presented a celebratory account of the Master and his reforms but then questioned the criticism levied against those who declined to enforce them, subordinating scripture to local stability and unity. Each of these was also linked to a particular context and genre: for Zhao Can, the perceived corruption of the Niujie community's leadership, the "Sharif" problem, and project of establishing an authoritative intellectual genealogy through Master She; for the Xiangcheng community, the selection of a descendent of Master She as the new *zhangjiao* amid growing official scrutiny of Islam; and for Li Huanyi, the aftermath of Muslim unrest and the persistence of disputes over ritual of the sort promoted by She Yunshan.

To these three types we may add a fourth, several expressions of which can be found in the historical writings of Hui intellectuals in the late 1930s and 1940s: the celebration of She's iconoclasm and steadfast opposition to local practice. I will focus on the early work of Bai Shouyi, the most influential Hui historian and ethnographer of the twentieth century, but also introduce some of his peers, whose writings influenced his own. Bai wrote about the Master in multiple works and in various terms between the 1940s and the 1980s, indicating the significance Hui intellectuals have continued to attach to this figure.

Bai first touched on the Master in an article "Islam in Liuzhou and Ma Xiong," which he drafted while visiting Liuzhou (in the southern province of Guangxi) on the way from Guilin to

Kunming in December 1938 and published in *Xinan Bianjiang* (Southwestern Frontier) the following year.<sup>619</sup> The article investigates the history of Islam in Liuzhou and the impact of Ma Xiong, the Shaanxi-born military commander of Guangxi in the late seventeenth century who supported the construction of the local mosque and allegedly hired several renowned scholars to teach there, including Master She (though this claim is probably false).<sup>620</sup> Bai Shouyi cites an earlier source<sup>621</sup> for a list of ten teachers and contributes his own research to short entries on eight of them. The entry on Master She is influenced (though, as we will see, not exclusively based on) by Li Huanyi's account in *Words and Deeds*, which Bai cites.

She Qiyun, from Shanxi. He was deeply versed in both Islamic scholarship and the classics and history of China. Regarding the ceremonies of worship, recitation, weddings, and funerals commonly practiced in Chinese Islam, he corrected 18 rules that did not accord with the times or canonical scriptures. Most [of his corrections] were denounced by ordinary people. But Qiyun continued to practice on his own [in accordance with] his views and was not moved by empty talk, and his followers grew more numerous day by day. For an account of Qiyun, see the *Outline of Words and Deeds of Islamic Exemplars*, second volume.<sup>622</sup>

Bai then provides an entry for one more scholar, after which he explains the significance of these scholars' teaching in Liuzhou, attaching particular significance to Master She:

In Ma [Xiong's] hiring of these famous teachers to come to Liuzhou, we can see the flourishing atmosphere of Islamic instruction in Liuzhou at the time. The influence this had on the Islamic people of Liuzhou was not small. Moreover, from the fact that he was able to hire She Qiyun, we can see [Ma Xiong's] relatively enlightened attitude toward Islam, which probably could

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<sup>619</sup> Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, "Liuzhou yisilan yu ma xiong" 柳州伊斯兰与马雄 (Liuzhou Islam and Ma Xiong).

<sup>620</sup> Zhao Can's *Genealogy*, not available to Bai Shouyi at the time of writing, gives no indication that She ever actually went to Liuzhou, and Bai omitted this point from later accounts of the Master. The claim that the Master was hired by Ma Xiong is based on a 1681 preface Ma Xiong's son contributed to another work, Ma Zhu's *Qingzhen Zhinan* (Guide to Islam), which also includes a short ode to the Master (under the name She Qiyun). Ma Zhu 马注, *Qingzhen zhinan* 清真指南 (Guide to Islam), 2, 13.

<sup>621</sup> Ma Zhu, 2.

<sup>622</sup> Bai Shouyi, "Liuzhou yisilan yu ma xiong," 51.



not have but served some function for the Islamic people of Liuzhou.<sup>623</sup>

Although Bai cites *Words and Deeds*, his framing of Master She differs from Li Huanyi's. Whereas Li praised the Master but criticized others' overzealous promotion of his reforms, Bai presents the Master as the steadfast ("not moved by empty talk") and ultimately successful ("his followers grew more numerous") iconoclast ("denounced by ordinary people") and celebrates these attributes. In the second passage, Bai points to Ma Xiong's hiring of She as evidence of the former's "enlightened attitude toward Islam" and a salutary development for the Liuzhou community.

Bai's account was part of a larger trend among Hui intellectuals in revising the narrative of She Yunshan to celebrate his iconoclasm against local practice. The first such revision appeared in Jin Jitang's 1935 *Zhongguo Huijiaoshi Yanjiu* (Studies in the History of Chinese Islam), the earliest book-length study of Chinese Islamic history in the Chinese language. In a chapter on Islamic scholarship in China, Jin includes a brief entry on the Master, using his correct name She Yunshan:

A disciple of Chang Xianxue. Because he advocated observing scripture and reforming custom (*zun jing ge su*), he was not accepted by most people, who collectively condemned him as an innovator—innovation meaning, in other words, heresy, actually beginning the split of the New and Old Sects in modern Chinese Islam.<sup>624</sup>

In a serialized study published in Beijing in 1938-1939, the journalist Tang Zhenyu (1905-1986) similarly approved of Master She's reform and steadfastness in the face of opposition:

He advocated observing scripture and reforming custom... he was disregarded by most people... denouncers considered themselves to be of the ancient practice and condemned [She's teachings] as a

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<sup>623</sup> Bai Shouyi, 51.

<sup>624</sup> Jin Jitang 金吉堂, *Zhongguo huijiao shi yanjiu* 中国回教史研究 (Studies in the History of Chinese Islam), 2000, 89.

new practice, calling him *houdusi* (Ar. *ḥudūth*), meaning innovated heresy. There were even those who simply called him *hou* (Ch. “monkey”)... Following the spread of She’s teachings, the conflict between the New and Old [Sects] began; yet the Islamic revival movement was also founded on them.”<sup>625</sup>

The Nanyang Hui educationist and local official Shui Zili (1885-1970) likewise cast She as a teacher “thoroughly learned in Islamic and Confucian [scholarship] and a reformer who “aimed to revive religion” and “gave no consideration to the customs of the times.”<sup>626</sup>

In one way or another, all four contemporaries (Bai, Jin, Tang, and Shui) configure the itinerant Master and the written tradition he expounds in opposition to the practices of particular places and times. The successive accounts of the Master examined before index the dichotomization of these concepts: Zhao Can delineated the separate roles of itinerant scholar and local teacher; the Xiangcheng community localized the authority of the itinerant scholar; Li Huanyi warned of the dangers of letting the itinerant scholar dominate the local; and Bai and his peers rooted the authority of the scholar in opposition to the local. The dichotomy crystallized in the formulation “observing scripture and reforming custom” (*zun jing ge su*). Invoked by Jin and Tang, this expression circulated in the Hui press. It did so amid a broader resignification of “the local” and its relationship to national identity in the early twentieth century. I turn now to that broader discursive shift and the institutions and people involved in it.

## 6.2 Confronting the Local in Early Twentieth-Century China

The varied and competing ideologies invoked by rulers, reformers, and revolutionaries in China in the early twentieth century were linked by a common preoccupation with “the local”

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<sup>625</sup> Tang Zhenyu 唐震宇, “Zhongguo huijiao congtao (xu)” 中国回教丛谈 (续) (A Discussion of Chinese Islam (Continued)), 5.

<sup>626</sup> Shui Zili 水子立, “Zhonghua lidai huijiao mingxian shilue huibian (xia)” 中华历代回教名贤事略汇编 (下) (Compiled Biographical Sketches of Historical Famous Worthies of Islam in China (Part 3)), 17.

and its relation to essential character of the Chinese nation. The cultural crisis that befell the waning Qing dynasty doubly challenged officials and scholars throughout the empire, whose authority had long been tied to the tradition of Confucianism. In the face of foreign domination and an unfavorable and inescapable international order, these elite had to demonstrate that China was a modern nation in Western terms while simultaneously surveying and transforming their country with unprecedented intensity to make that representation a reality.

This scrutiny of local culture was in and of itself nothing new; as historian Prasenjit Duara has characterized it, from the view of orthodox Confucianism, the local “was seen less as a source of value than as the index of this value and object of cultivation.”<sup>627</sup> Local mores were to be evaluated and reformed according to the ostensibly universalist principles of Confucianism. But the collapse of the Confucian system and influence of Western conceptions (especially German, transmitted to China via Japan) of “the people,” “the nation,” and “law” forced a change in perspective—or more precisely, imposed an additional one: “the local,” however and wherever defined, was now not just a manifestation of the national character, but its source.

The search for an authentic national identity in local, popular culture unfolded in the shadow of China’s political fragmentation and subordination to foreign powers. What national identity could encompass the dispersed and ethnically diverse constituencies of the former Qing empire? If local people constituted the nation, why did their practices need to be reformed? And on what basis were these elites the rightful vanguard in the simultaneously primordial and progressive process of the masses’ awakening?<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>627</sup> Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 211.

<sup>628</sup> I borrow this formulation from Duara’s review of Fitzgerald’s *Awakening China*. Duara, “Book Review: Awakening China.”

The tensions inherent in these questions shaped a range of elite-led projects in the early twentieth century. Legal experts and officials keen to demonstrate that China possessed an indigenous tradition of civil law attempted to survey and compile local customs throughout the empire beginning in 1908, ostensibly to provide the basis for a modern civil code. Codification of custom continued into the Republican period, with officials continuously struggling to bring China's legal reality in line with Western ideals.<sup>629</sup> Codification also carried on in new terms the old imperial practice of occasionally recording and correcting local mores, transforming "the local" rather than building up from it. In this respect it was a solidly elitist project; as Bourgon observes, Qing and later Republican officials encouraged local elites to form local associations to help carry out the surveys and related reforms.<sup>630</sup> Language policy was another field shaped by the tension between centralizing and localizing conceptions of national identity. Gina Anne Tam has traced the development of two narratives of language and nation that emerged in official and scholarly discourse in late Qing and Republican China (and more recently as well): one of a unified nation with a unified language, casting local idioms as variant dialects of Mandarin; the other of a linguistically diverse nation bound together by every citizen's deep ties to native place and mother tongue.<sup>631</sup> An analogous tension played out in the folklore studies movement of the 1920s-30s as well, as researchers from China's most prestigious universities went "to the people" to discover and define the elements of a national culture.<sup>632</sup>

Definitions of China through law, language, and folk culture all involved some form of scrutiny of the local and its relationship to the nation. As Bryna Goodman has shown, the early

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<sup>629</sup> Xu, "Law, Custom, and Social Norms"; Huang, *Code, Custom, and Legal Practice in China*; Erie, *China and Islam: The Prophet, the Party, and Law*, 54–64.

<sup>630</sup> Bourgon, "Rights, Freedoms, and Customs in the Making of Chinese Civil Law, 1900-1936," 1900–1936.

<sup>631</sup> Tam, *Dialect and Nationalism in China, 1860-1960*, 1860–1960.

<sup>632</sup> Gao, *Saving the Nation through Culture*; Liu, "Translingual Folklore and Folklorics in China"; Schneider, *Ku Chieh-Kang and China's New History*, 121–37.

twentieth century was a period of intensifying expression of local as well as national identity. Local elites and advocates of decentralized political power in particular championed the notion of a loyalty to the nation rooted in attachment to one's native place, of "loving one's country through loving one's hometown" (*tongxiang*, "native place").<sup>633</sup>

What did this territorially rooted nationalism mean for the Hui? Under the newly hegemonic association of place and political identity, how could thousands of mosque congregations scattered throughout China and everywhere intermingling non-Muslims unite as a political constituency? How could a people without a common place form a nation? The local could not serve as the source of authentic national culture for Hui elites as it could for their non-Muslim counterparts, since the former were distinguished precisely by their lack of a common, distinct territory. The problem of place was particularly acute in the central province of Henan, where the large Hui population is dispersed throughout dozens of counties and several ancient imperial capitals celebrated as the "origin of Chinese civilization" (*zhonghua wenming de fayuandi*).

### 6.3 Hui Elites and the Problem of Custom

To answer this question, we can examine the early career of Bai Shouyi. Bai was born into one of the prominent Hui families of old Kaifeng, the seat of the provincial government. Bai's father, Bai Jifu (c. 1850-1932) had risen to local prominence together with a group of Hui merchants, who by the early 1900s dominated the city's hide trade, cattle and lamb slaughtering industry, bathhouses, and electric lighting business and were well represented in the provincial chamber of commerce. Bai Jifu himself had never received formal schooling and attached great

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<sup>633</sup> Goodman, *Native Place, City, and Nation*, 269–75.

importance to the education of his son. At the time of Bai Shouyi's birth, Bai Jifu sat on the board of the city's first new-style Hui school, Yangzheng Elementary, based at the Great East Mosque, the largest and most renowned of the city's eight mosques and counting. The Bais were a religious family, and Bai Shouyi was given the "scripture name" Jamāl al-Dīn and studied Arabic privately with his mother. However, Bai Jifu felt that Yangzheng's resources were insufficient and opted to hire a private tutor for his son for the first years of schooling and subsequently enrolled him for over two years at St. Andrew's College outside the old city, run by the newly established Canadian Anglican mission in Kaifeng, where he learned English.<sup>634</sup>

In 1925, at the age of 16, Bai Shouyi was admitted to Shanghai College of Arts and Government and left home for the first time to pursue his studies in the burgeoning treaty-port city to the southeast. Following the Shanghai Massacre that spring, Bai partnered with fellow Henanese Hui residing in the city to establish a relief organization. Warlord military conflict in Shanghai the next year forced Bai to leave the city and continue his studies at Zhongzhou University (today's Henan University) back home in Kaifeng, where he studied Sinology and philosophy under the tutelage of Feng Youlan (1895-1990), recently returned from Columbia University, where he wrote a dissertation on comparative philosophy.<sup>635</sup> Bai graduated in 1929.<sup>636</sup>

After a brief partnership with a group of intellectuals in Kaifeng editing a journal of literature and scholarship, Bai was admitted to the Institute of National Studies at Yanjing University in Beijing, where he studied for three years under the guidance of the renowned

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<sup>634</sup> Bai Zhide 白至德, *Zhang wang zhi lai: fuqin bai shouyi de jiushi yi nian* 彰往知来 父亲白寿彝的九十一年 (Clarifying the Past to Know the Future: 91 Years of My Father Bai Shouyi), 3–11.

<sup>635</sup> Feng, *A Comparative Study of Life Ideals; the Way of Decrease and Increase with Interpretations and Illustrations from the Philosophies of the East and the West*.

<sup>636</sup> Bai Zhide, *Zhang wang zhi lai: fuqin bai shouyi de jiushi yi nian*, 11–20.

scholar and translator of Western and Chinese philosophy Huang Zitong (1887-1979). At the Institute Bai completed a study of forged and authentic texts of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Confucian scholar Zhu Xi, finally published in 1931.<sup>637</sup> Bai would continue along this path of philosophical-historical study in the years to come, but it was at this point at he began devoting more of his energies to what would become a pillar of his scholarly career: folklore studies.

It was while working on his first study of Zhu Xi at the Institute of National Studies that Bai Shouyi first came into contact with Gu Jiegang, the famous historian and ethnologist and one of the pioneers of folklore studies in China. In 1920, Gu and a group of intellectuals in Beijing established the Society for Folk Customs Survey and an affiliated periodical, *Geyao* (Folksongs), two years later. Several of these colleagues relocated south to Guangzhou in 1926, where they established the Society for Folklore Studies and the journal *Minsu* (Folklore) in 1928, but Gu apparently remained connected to the Beiping scene and supported Bai in his research. He also encouraged Bai to pursue folklore studies and bring to bear his personal expertise—not as a Hui, but as a Kaifeng native. In 1929, Bai published several articles and a book with *Folklore* and Gu's series, including "Kaifeng Proverbs," "On Henanese Riddles," and *Collected Kaifeng Folksongs*.<sup>638</sup>

Upon the death of his father in 1932, Bai moved back to Kaifeng, where he helped edit a local journal and worked at the local Commercial Press printing house, owned by his wife's family, the Weis, another prominent Hui merchant family. Bai's late father-in-law, Wei Ziqing (1870-1929), founded and ran multiple electric lamp companies in Henan in partnership with Bai's late father and served as chairman of the provincial chamber of commerce. Bai continued

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<sup>637</sup> Bai Zhide, 21–23; 37–38.

<sup>638</sup> Bai Zhide, 24–27; Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, "Kaifeng yanyu" 开封谚语 (Kaifeng Proverbs); Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, "Lun henan miyu" 论河南谜语 (On Henanese Riddles); Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, "Yi zhong chanlianshi de mi" 一种蝉联式的谜 (A Type of Repeating-Style Riddle).

his historical studies of Chinese philosophy while remaining in touch with Gu Jiegang. He also turned his attention to the study of Islam, in which he sought to balance his dual, potentially conflicting intellectual interests: philological analysis of scriptural tradition and ethnographic scrutiny of the particularities of place and time.

In 1935, Bai founded a short-lived periodical, *Yisilan* (Islam).<sup>639</sup> As discussed in Chapter Three, the journal represented an emerging network of Hui writers and editors around Henan and beyond. At the same time, it was a decidedly local operation, published out of the printing house Bai managed and dedicated to the study of not only—as the title might suggest—religious questions, but also the local Hui population of Kaifeng and the management and economy of each of its mosque communities. This same concern with local variety would inform Bai’s subsequent, more ambitious project of writing the history of Chinese Islam. In his program “Compiling Historical Sources of Chinese Islam,” published in April 1935, Bai enumerated five broad categories of sources, including “records of the dispersed conditions (i.e. dispersed residence), life circumstances, customs and rites, and commonly studied scriptures of Muslims (*jiaomin*) in various places.”<sup>640</sup>

Bai’s turn to the study of Islam coincided with an intensification of Nationalist anxiety over territorial integrity. Uncertain control over much of Tibet and Xinjiang and the Japanese occupation of Manchuria drove the regime to promote the monist notion of a single “Chinese nation” (*zhonghua minzu*) over the “republic of five races” (Hans, Manchus, Mongolians, Tibetans, and Muslims) championed after the Xinhai Revolution of 1911. Politics and scholarship were tightly bound up with one another, and the study of China’s frontier regions and

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<sup>639</sup> Bai Zhide, *Zhang wang zhi lai: fuqin bai shouyi de jiushi yi nian*, 31–33; 39–43.

<sup>640</sup> Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, “Zhongguo huijiao shiliao zhi bianji” 中国回教史料之辑录 (The Collection of Historical Materials on Chinese Islam), 3.



peoples became at once more urgent and more sensitive. Based in Beijing but travelling throughout the country, including to the far southwestern border province of Yunnan, Gu Jiegang focused more and more on these issues. In 1934, he established a journal of historical geography, *Yu Gong*, much of which was devoted to original research and translation of foreign scholars' work on the frontiers.<sup>641</sup> In 1936, Gu secured Bai a position at the Institute for Historical Studies in Beijing, where the two began a close collaboration on research on Yunnan, including its large Muslim population. *Yu Gong* published several articles relating to Islam and Muslims in China, and in 1937 Bai helped edit a special issue devoted to Islam. Notably, and despite the frontier focus of much of the journal's work, the special issue and the issue immediately following it featured writings by and about Hui in central and eastern China, including Kaifeng.<sup>642</sup> Beneath the rhetoric of preserving the territorial integrity of the unitary Chinese nation and developing "the great northwest," scholars continued to study Islam in contexts in which it was territorially least distinct.

Bai's early career exemplifies how modern scholarship of Chinese Islam developed alongside and in collaboration with the study of Chinese culture at the country's most prestigious institutions. In practice and outside of academia, this entanglement was even knottier, as Hui elites participated in the same projects of surveying and reforming local customs as their non-Muslim counterparts. Indeed, it was through such elite projects—not just historical and folklore scholarship but also the local elite activism described earlier—that the category of "custom" and the problem of place more generally became salient in Hui discourse and institutions in different parts of China.

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<sup>641</sup> Schneider, *Ku Chieh-Kang and China's New History*, 272–74.

<sup>642</sup> Bai Zhide, *Zhang wang zhi lai: fuqin bai shouyi de jiushi yi nian*, 43–46.

Here we can return to the 1921 *Ming Zhen Shi Yi* (Elucidation of Truth and Resolution of Doubts), which, as discussed in earlier chapters, was compiled by leadership of the Great East Mosque following debates with Ma Guangqing and the distribution of Xiao Dezhen's 1916 *Xing Mi Yao Lu* (Registered Essentials for Awakening from Confusion). Today the work is widely viewed as a Gedimu/Old Sect response to the Yihewani/New Sect criticism that Islam in China was corrupted with local customs. Perhaps unsurprisingly, *Elucidation of Truth* rejects this claim. The final line of the preface celebrates the translation of Hong Baoquan's (the cleric at the Great East Mosque) original Arabic rulings, "so that all may know that the authentic transmission of our religion neither confines [itself] to social mores nor [merely] follows custom; that being observed over generations and passed down eternally as a mirror [against which we judge ourselves] is likewise the joy of our teaching."<sup>643</sup> Interestingly, however, this is the only point in the entire text where "custom" appears. While most of *Elucidation of Truth* is made up of Hong's Arabic rulings and the editors' summaries and translations into Chinese, this preface is only in Chinese, and it was authored by Wang Xiangxian, a registered lawyer in Kaifeng—in fact, one of two to take part in the production of the text—and recently retired chairman of the city's Lawyers Guild.<sup>644</sup> Thus, local activism and professional trends among the lay Hui elite were tightly bound up in the elaboration of shari'a debate and linked "observing scripture and reforming custom" to the interest in custom (whether glorifying or critical) in broader society.

This link to lay elites was also evident in Beijing. In 1931, Yang Shaopu (1909-1996), a leader of the Niujie Mosque congregation, set up an "Islamic Rectification of Customs and Frugality Society" and wrote a lengthy treatise "On the Correction of Rites and Customs"

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<sup>643</sup> Hong Baoquan et al., "Ming Zhen Shi Yi," 337–38.

<sup>644</sup> The other lawyer was Xu Liangchen, mentioned in Chapter Five. Kaifeng Lüshi Gonghui, *Kaifeng lüshi gonghui jishilu*, 106–8.

serialized in the Hui periodical *Yue Hua* (Crescent China) in the same year. And the south in Guangzhou, Huis established organizations to promote frugality in weddings and funerals—a common theme in Chinese “custom reform” of the era—in 1929-31. During the same period, the local Hui periodical *Islamic Learning Monthly* featured a “reforming custom” column, while its competitor *Mumin* (Believer) repeatedly published articles criticizing improper customs and ran a special issue on Islamic weddings and funerals. Like with *Elucidation of Truth* in Kaifeng a decade prior, these projects brought together clerics and lay elites to collaborate to reform custom.

If “the local” was for Chinese elites the romanticized source of authentic Chinese culture—albeit potentially in need of rectification or “awakening”—it could not serve that function for Hui, who lacked a common territory and thus located their essential character in a self-consciously universalist and *dislocated* scriptural tradition. “Custom” and its association with the local became central to Han and Hui conceptions of their national identity. The elaborations of these identities were linked, even as they came to adopt opposite perspectives on “custom.” In an early issue of *Folklore* in Guangzhou, an author writing under a pseudonym outlined the plan for the folklore studies group’s surveys. It began with a question:

What is custom? It is the habit of the collective. When a person does something by following custom, the act is not directed by his free consciousness; it is prompted by a sort of force, such that the person does not know why he does what he does. It is just like a habit; but a habit is held privately by an individual person, while the force of custom extends to all of society. Thus we say, custom is the habit of the collective, the rules by which a person does something in a society, the social model that transforms the individual into the social person, the consciousness of the group, a reflection of the group’s psychology. Furthermore, a person in some situation adapts through the most economical behavior, and if this situation occurs often, that action becomes habit, and when it comes to [this process] for the group it is called “custom.” Thus, from its perspective, “custom” is the crystallization of the

experiences of the group, or simply put it is culture, if we when we say culture it is not in reference to material culture but in reference to human beliefs and attitudes. This of course is worth researching, and investigation is but the first step of research.<sup>645</sup>

For this author and the folklore studies group whose project is outlined, the controlling, socializing function of custom was part of what made it a reflection of a collective's authentic culture.

In sharp contrast, consider one of if not the earliest Hui article to address the category of custom from an Islamic legal perspective. Echoing the opening question of the folklore studies group plan, this article was entitled "What Is Custom?" It was published in 1930 in the Guangzhou-based Hui periodical *Mumin* (Believer). In fact, it was a posthumous publication of the late cleric Wu Shiqin (d. 1930), an active contributor to the local Hui press until his death. Thus the two articles were written and published in the same city around the same time, and criticism of other *Folklore* articles in periodicals in which Wu published suggest that knew and may have read Gu Jiegang's journal.<sup>646</sup> Wu's definition of custom began along similar lines but quickly departed from that of the *Folklore* group:

When many people establish some regulation and it becomes a [general] norm, and when, if you do [what this norm says], there is no reward, and if you don't do it there is no offense, and if you do it nobody find it strange or unexpected, but if you do not do it people will ridicule you, and its only significance is to placate ordinary people—this sort of matter is called "custom."<sup>647</sup>

Wu then situated "custom" in relation to the basic judgments of the shari'a (whether something is obligatory, recommended, neutral, detested, or forbidden) and important categories such as "unbelief" and "innovation." All of these, Wu argued, could potentially be applied to a given

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<sup>645</sup> Lin You 林幽, "Fengsu diaocha jihuashu" 风俗调查计划书 (A Plan for Surveying Customs), 8–9.

<sup>646</sup> Yisimayi 易司马仪, "Xiang yi ge quefa jiaoli xueshi de qingnian shuo ji ju jieshi de hua" 向一个缺乏教理学识的青年说几句解释的话 (Telling a Few Words of Explanation to a Youth Who Lacks Religious Knowledge).

<sup>647</sup> Wu Shiqin 吴事勤, "Fengsu shi shenme?" 风俗是什么 (What Is Custom?).

custom, and thus one had to determine the permissibility of a custom and, if it was found to be forbidden or detested, do away with it (the non-italicized transliterations in parentheses below are included in the original, in the Latin alphabet).

However, these customs, which are neither blameworthy nor praiseworthy, become established over a long period, while people's actions also continue changing. Because of this, it is a common thing to go from habitual customs to going against God (shirk), contravening the Prophet (bida), unbelief (kufr), or detestable [deeds] (makruh); so if you realize you have gone from customary bad habits and arrived in the domain of what is listed above, then you must do away with [such things].

Wu then turned to the problem of recognition, of identifying custom as custom and not confusing it with what was obligatory or forbidden according to the shari'a. He continued:

There is a sort of custom that, although it is neutral (mubah), people go so far as to treat it as just as important as a "Divine Command" (i.e. a *fard*) or a "sagely act" (i.e. a *sunna*) and naturally give you compliments when you do [the custom], and ridicule you when you don't, or going so far as to reprimand you [when you don't]. From this we can see how custom is seen as an important matter in the hearts of people.<sup>648</sup>

In Wu's framework, it was incumbent on every person to assess the moral-legal status of all things customary. Wu did not deny the powerful force custom could have on individuals, but it was in resisting and overcoming that force that a person deployed his religious knowledge and moral courage. Thus, while for Chinese elites local custom was becoming the quintessence of identity, for Huis, it was becoming its antithesis.

"Custom" also marked Huis as Chinese and distinguished them from Muslims elsewhere. This division between "custom" and scripturally rooted Islamic practice was reflected in the work of another of Gu Jiegang's Muslim collaborators and a contemporary of Bai Shouyi, the historian Jin Jitang. Jin was one of the first intellectuals to argue that Huis constituted a distinct

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<sup>648</sup> Wu Shiqin.

nation, separate from the Han Chinese, on the basis of their common observance of Islamic rites and strict communal endogamy (in fact, historically speaking both points are in need of serious qualification). In his 1935 *Zhongguo Huijiao Shi Yanjiu* (Studies of the History of Chinese Islam), Jin reflected on the still unsuccessful efforts by scholars to produce an encyclopedic gazetteer of Chinese Islam (*zhongguo huijiao zhi*). The idea was first broached by the Chinese historian Chen Yuan (1880-1971), one of the so-called “four great historians” of modern China, in 1928. Chen’s primary interest was in the history of Islam’s spread through China, but he envisioned a more comprehensive work comprising ten volumes, beginning with “religion” and “rites” followed by “lineages,” “population,” “mosques,” “ancient ruins,” “texts,” “personages,” and “major events.”<sup>649</sup> In his 1935 study, Jin proposed a revision to Chen’s plan, beginning with the first two volumes. He suggested eliminating those two volumes and replacing them with a separate volume on “custom,” reasoning:

It is my humble view that the distinctions between Chinese Islam and Islam of foreign countries are only differences in custom, language, or the script in use; as for the observance of religious canons, the positions of religious law, the spirit of conduct, and the rites and ceremonies—these are the same in all places, and the aforementioned volumes 1 and 2 (“religion” and “rites”) are therefore unnecessary and can be removed. A separate volume of “custom” can be added, to give an overview of those ‘branches and leaves’ that have been added from outside religious canons. For example, the “new” and “old practice” into which Chinese Islam has divided are not found in foreign countries; and the Han rites that have been added to Chinese Muslims’ (*zhongguo huimin*) system of weddings and funerals, and the superstitions that have been mixed in as well—all these sorts of things [would be included].<sup>650</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> As an aside: it may have been Chen Yuan himself who provided Bai Shouyi with a copy of Li Huanyi’s *Words and Deeds*, discussed earlier. Very few prints of the book were available until it was included in the 2008 *Complete Collection of Texts of the Hui Nationality* anthology. That edition must have been based on one of the very few copies around before then, and it includes the personal seal of Chen Yuan on the first page of the each of the work’s two volumes. Li Huanyi, “Qingzhen xianzheng yanxing lue,” 243, 352.

<sup>650</sup> Jin Jitang, *Zhongguo huijiao shi yanjiu*, 2000, 44–45.

What sorts of “Han rites” did Jin have in mind? It is not specified here, but there can be little doubt that this included the practice of *chuan xiao* or *dai xiao*, the wearing of coarse white robes, headwear, sashes, belts, and other attire during periods of mourning. This practice was central to elite and officially sanctioned Confucian death ritual since ancient times, as well as to popular mourning practices.

#### **6.4 The Question of Mourning Robes**

Over the course of the Republican period, one of the recurring points of contention in Hui discourse was the question of wearing white mourning robes and garments. Today the arguments over this practice are interpreted as competing interpretations by two factions, the Gedimu/Old Sect and the Yihewani/New Sect. Yet, as I will show below, this characterization does not match the reality. On one hand, there was considerable diversity of reasoning among both those who ended up opposing the practice and those who tolerated it; on the other hand, participants in these discussions had a great deal more in common than is typically suggested, for while they may have reached different conclusions about the permissibility or justification of wearing mourning robes, they were all engaged in fundamentally the same activity: scrutinizing the permissibility of local practice in relation to the scriptural tradition of the shari‘a.

Hui engagement with the shari‘a on the question of wearing mourning robes can be broken down into the following categories.

##### *Forbidden as Unbelief*

Some of the earliest criticism of wearing Confucian mourning robes deemed the practice *kufri*, or “unbelief,” the gravest offense in Islam. Among the earliest criticism of the practice of wearing Confucian mourning robes came from the aforementioned Xiao Dezhen, in his 1916

tract *Registered Essentials for Awakening from Confusion*. Chapter 14, on funerals, includes the following rule:

If one dresses in coarse hemp or wears mourning robes, both of these are customs of the Han religion. Among the thousand books and ten-thousand scrolls, not one has any mention of wearing mourning robes. Nowadays believers incline to do so, but I am afraid it is harmful. The noble prophet said: “In matters of religion, whoever follows the customs of the Han religion is [a believer in] the Han religion.”<sup>651</sup>

The key point in this passage is the statement attributed to the Prophet Muhammad. Xiao here quotes a variant of the well-known hadith “whoever imitates a people becomes one of them” (*man tashabbaha bi-qawm fa huwa minhum*). The Arabic *tashabbaha*, “to imitate,” is rendered in Chinese as *gen sui* (“to follow”). In addition, the doctrine of “imitating the infidels” (*tashabbuh al-kuffār*), drawn from the work the 13-14<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), who wrote prolifically of the dangers of imitating non-Muslims and the importance of maintaining differences from them, and whom Xiao cites in *Registered Essentials*.<sup>652</sup> Xiao renders the Arabic *kuffār* (“infidels” or “unbelievers”) as “people of the Chinese religion.” With this definition in mind, it becomes clear that “customs of the Han religion” (*hanjiao fengsu*) means “customs of the unbelief,” or *kufur*. To sum up Xiao’s reasoning: first of all, no scripture or source of law, least of all the Quran, makes any mention of wearing coarse hemp mourning robes; second of all, wearing mourning robes is a custom of the unbelievers, and because when one “imitates” or “follows” the unbelievers “in matters of religion,” one becomes one of them, the practice is tantamount to unbelief (*kufur*), and therefore forbidden.

*Forbidden as Wasteful*

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<sup>651</sup> Xiao Dezhen, “Xing Mi Yao Lu,” 209.

<sup>652</sup> Masud, “Cosmopolitanism and Authenticity: The Doctrine of Tashabbuh Bi'l-Kuffar (‘Imitating the Infidel’) in Modern South Asian Fatwas”; Patel, “‘Whoever Imitates a People Becomes One of Them’: A Hadith and Its Interpreters.”



Not all who deemed wearing mourning robes “forbidden” did so on the ground that it was unbelief. Ma Hongyi, a Henanese Hui studying at Al-Azhar University in Cairo in the late 1930s and 1940s, submitted a translation of an article “innovations in funerals” from the Egyptian journal *Al-Ahrām* (*The Pyramids*) to the Hui journal *Yue Hua* (Crescent China) in 1940. At the end of the translation, he added a note condemning one innovation unique to China and that his Egyptian coreligionists knew nothing about: “wearing mourning robes” (*chuan xiao*). Like Xiao, Ma also deemed the practice “forbidden” (Ch. *halamu*, Ar. *ḥarām*), but did not claim that it amounted to unbelief. Ma Hongyi’s reasoning had nothing to do with the problem of “imitation”; rather, it focused on wastefulness. Comparing waste on expensive mourning robes to an Egyptian practice of erecting a tent for a commemoration ceremony (mentioned in the translated article), Ma wrote to his Chinese readers:

When the Egyptians erect the tent to hold their ceremony, the cost is not so great at all, and the religious law still judges it with the serious [ruling of] *halamu* (*ḥarām*, “forbidden”). Now, when it comes to the customs of Muslim brothers in our country (i.e. China): wearing mourning robes not only contravenes prophetic practice (i.e. the *sunna*, the normative behavior of the Prophet Muhammad), but also contravenes scripture (i.e. the Quran), and it is often the case that because of this (i.e. the expense), a person’s household collapses and property is lost, and thus the gravity of the evil is unimaginable.<sup>653</sup>

Ma thus judged the practice harshly, but not as harshly as those who deemed it “unbelief.”

#### *Tolerated but Criticized*

Not all those who deemed wearing mourning robes wasteful concluded that it was “forbidden” according to the shari‘a. The aforementioned *Islamic Learning Monthly*, published in Guangzhou and edited by the Yunnan-born cleric Ma Ruitu (1896-1945), published a long essay by one Ma Yuanqing, possibly a cleric or otherwise a lay intellectual who had studied the

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<sup>653</sup> Ma Hongyi 马宏毅, “Sangzang zhong de yiduan” 丧葬中的异端 (Heretical Innovations in Funerals and Burials).

shari‘a. Ma Yuanqing acknowledged that there was no basis for wearing mourning robes in the Quran or other canonical sources of law, and conceded that it should be eliminated (though importantly he does not use the weighty shari‘a term “forbidden”) because it is unnecessarily expensive. But he also cautioned against what he viewed as extreme and unjustified condemnation of the practice in shari‘a terms.

On this issue of wearing mourning robes—in none of the reliable classical texts is there any decisive ruling saying that [mourning robes] definitely must be worn; nor is there any decisive ruling saying for certain that they definitely should not be worn. So long as we do not view it as a divine command (*wājib*) or a prophetic practice (*sunna*), [the question of] whether or not to wear mourning robes has nothing to do with religious law, and thus in terms of religious law there is no value in discussing this question, since we cannot on the basis of religious law judge whether it is right or wrong!<sup>654</sup>

The lack of a clear ruling (*ḥukm*) on the matter opened the possibility of a sort of utilitarian ethics:

But now let us view it as a social problem and not view it as a religious problem, having a discussion only of [the problem of] wearing mourning robes itself. In the end, is it of any benefit to us, or is it of no benefit? If it is of benefit, then we should preserve it; if it has no benefit, then we should eliminate it completely. Here we are giving no consideration to whether it is lawful or unlawful according to the religious rulings (i.e. because we have established that the religious rulings do not address this matter), and therefore none of you gentlemen [readers] will be under the impression that I have issued yet another *hukun* (*Ar. ḥukm*, “ruling” or “judgment” according to the shari‘a).<sup>655</sup>

For Ma Yuanqing, the question of the permissibility of wearing mourning robes is not the place for the sorts of judgments Xiao Dezhen made and later Ma Hongyi would make. For him,

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<sup>654</sup> Ma Yuanqing 马源清, “Ge su: xiaofu wenti de wo jian” 革俗: 孝服问题的我见 (Reform Custom: My View on the Question of Mourning Robes).

<sup>655</sup> Ma Yuanqing.

precisely because he has consulted the sources of law and found no relevant ruling, he is free to assess the practice in light of its social utility. He goes on to explain that the problem with those who continue the practice is not so much the act itself (though that too is in need of correction), but that they blindly follow custom. Here he anticipates the argument in Wu Shiqin's article "What Is Custom?" described above, which would be published the following year:

There are people who say that whatever the case may be, wearing mourning robes has become a Chinese custom, and that we have no choice but to uphold it. I say that there are good customs and bad customs. The good ones, we certainly should uphold. But as for the bad ones, we must eliminate them; we cannot arbitrarily follow them and harm society. Because we exist within society, whether society is good or bad is of great concern for us. Thus every member of society is responsible for improving society. When a type of bad custom arises in society, we of course must eliminate it. And if we do not set an example in undertaking the enterprise of improving society—and rather have no concern for whether a custom is good or bad, making the problem worse, continually and blindly following, and willingly accepting the piercing stricture of custom as slaves of the ancients—we not only abandon responsibility, but also inevitably think too lowly of ourselves.<sup>656</sup>

Ma Yuanqing's objection to defenders of wearing mourning robes centers on their alleged reasoning that they must follow custom. It is the "blind following" that is the problem.

In theory, even if a custom were beneficial, it should not simply be followed, but constantly assessed in relation both to the sources of law and (if found to be in accordance or at least not mentioned) social utility. Crucially, the slavish obedience to custom applied to Arab customs as much as it did to Chinese ones (parenthetical comments mine, indicating correspondence between the Chinese terms as I translate them into English and the Arabic terms they translate into Chinese):

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<sup>656</sup> Ma Yuanqing.

Some say: in the classical texts it is said that when the Arabs had a funeral, they also wore black clothing, so their wearing black clothing and our wearing white clothing is the same—can it be said there is no ruling in the classical texts? I say that this (wearing black) was a suitable sort of custom of the Arabs; it is certainly not that wearing black clothing has been determined to be a divine commandment (meaning *wājib*), a prophetic practice (meaning *sunna*), or recommended act (meaning *mustahabb*). If we say that we ought to observe every custom of the Arabs, then what about the many bad customs they currently have? Must we also follow them? Recently within our country there have been many fellow Muslims who suffer from this illness. Some take some of the customs of the Prophet Muhammad and the Arabs to be religious law. They have spread it far and with great emphasis, forcing ordinary fellow Muslims of China to observe [the customs]...

Indeed, the conflation of Arab practices with Islamic orthopraxy was a recurring theme in contemporary Chinese Muslim discourse, including on this point of mourning robes.

Writing two years later, in the Beijing-based periodical *Crescent China*, the aforementioned Yang Shaopu (founder of the Islamic Rectification of Customs and Frugality Society), made this sort of argument, though not as dogmatically as the proponents Ma Yuanqing described. As Yang wrote,

In Arabia mourning robes are not worn for funerals and burials, and we may emulate them. If one feels strongly that one should wear them, it should be done according to the religious rules, and it is to be limited to the members of the family of the deceased; other kin and friends need not wear [mourning robes]. As for mourning belts and paper flowers, such things also may not be used.<sup>657</sup>

Ma Yuanqing would have agreed with Yang's conclusion that mourning robes ought not to be worn, but he would have objected to the justification in terms of simply emulating other people. Ma Yuanqing also would have disagreed with Yang's phrasing "limited to the members of the family of the deceased," on the grounds that it was too broad; only the wife would be covered by

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<sup>657</sup> Yang Shaopu 杨少圃, "Lisu gaizheng tan" 礼俗改正谈 (A Discussion of Correcting Rites and Customs).

the rules governing this sort of mourning. Going back to Ma Yuanqing, who took up this issue toward the end of his essay:

...It is also said in the classical texts: “For 170 days after her husband has died, a wife should give up all adornment and beautiful clothing, and men should not propose marriage to her.” This was said specifically to ordinary widows and truly is completely unrelated to [the issue] in China of wearing mourning robes. Yet there are some people who will cite [this statement] as a basis for wearing mourning robes. Truly [the two issues are as different as] a donkey’s head and a horse’s mouth.<sup>658</sup>

Once again, Ma Yuanqing adopts a circumspect approach and warns against extreme or twisted interpretations of the shari‘a. Here he alludes to the concept of *‘idda*, the fixed period of time during which a widow may not adorn herself or marry a new man. While it is true that the shari‘a on this point includes a ruling having to do with attire during the mourning period, this should not be twisted into a justification for the particular practice of wearing white mourning robes, to say nothing of men’s wearing of them, which even more clearly has no basis in the law.

#### *Tolerated as Lawful*

We can turn now to a final example, which addresses, among other questions, the mourning period for widows. The example comes from the text *Verification of Islam (Qingzhen Juzheng)*, given the Arabic title *Al-Taḥqīq al-Masā’il* (“Verification of Questions”), written in Arabic (besides the title and some frontmatter) in 1934 by Yu Fujun (1899-1962) in Pingliang in eastern Gansu province.<sup>659</sup> Today the text represents *a* if not *the* Gedimu position on the subject. Yet it is far from an endorsement of wearing mourning robes, let alone a commandment to do so,

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<sup>658</sup> Ma Yuanqing, “Ge su: xiaofu wenti de wo jian.”

<sup>659</sup> The unpublished text today is widely associated with the Gedimu; the copy I photographed (fall 2018) was owned by a cleric in Luoyang (in western Henan) who identified as Gedimu; and a note on the last page indicates that at one point it was bought in Pingliang in 1998. Yu Fujun 于福俊, “Qingzhen juzheng” 清真据证 (Verification of Islam).

despite the common notion that the Gedimu wear robes while the Yihewani do not. Yu simply argues that the practice is lawful.

The issue of mourning robes is addressed in the fiftieth chapter the Arabic work, “on mourning death” (*fī al-ḥadād ‘alā al-mawt*). The chapter begins with a definition of “mourning” tied to marriage and, implicitly, widows who have lost their husbands in particular:

“Mourning,” in terms of language, is relinquishment, and in terms of the shari‘a, it is relinquishment of adornment and procreation for a period of sorrow over the blessing of marriage, of which [the period] is voided meticulously.<sup>660</sup>

We can divide the rest of the discussion into four parts. First, citing various Islamic legal texts, Yu reviews the restrictions imposed on widows during the mourning period, focusing on those having to do with clothing and adornment. These included dyed clothing and silk, but not white clothes, which are permitted to mourning women (*yujawwaz lihā libs al-bayāḍ*). Second, Yu reviews the duration of the mourning period. He notes that it is “forbidden” (*ḥarām*) to extend the mourning period for widows. Third, he turns to Prophet’s abolition of certain “ceremonies of the [age of] ignorance” (*rusūm al-jāhiliyya*),” such as the tearing of breast garments in grief and gathering around poets (to commemorate the dead). It is important to note that Yu specifies that Muhammad did away with “ignorant” ceremonies practiced by Arabs as well as non-Arabs, implicitly making a point similar to that of Ma Yuanqing regarding the dangers of simply doing as the Arabs do. Yu also points out that at the time, these “ceremonies” were a “custom of the age of ignorance” (*‘āda al-jāhiliyya*) and “normative” (*min al-sunna*).

Thus, also like Ma Yuanqing, Yu suggests that norms not derived from the canonical sources of law cannot simply be followed, even if they appear binding upon a community or

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<sup>660</sup> *Al-ḥadād fī l-lughā al-tark wa fī l-sharī‘a tark al-zīna wa l-khiṣāb li l-‘atida ta’safan ‘alā mā fāta ‘alayhā ni‘ma al-nikāḥ ‘unāyan [sic].* Yu Fujun, 69–70.

society. He also acknowledges that such ignorant practices (such as tearing breast garments as well as wailing) have been done away with in most countries. Fourth, at the end of the chapter, Yu observes that nowadays women in particular may wear black clothing for long periods of time, days or even months. If they (in mourning) must “turn away” (*taraka*) from men, they will not wear ordinary (i.e. possibly black) clothes. Should one be asked about why, the answer is that either the father or the mother has died, and the period of mourning has not yet ended.<sup>661</sup> Implicitly, then, since wearing white is not forbidden, and mourning robes are not ordinary clothing and serve a similar function of signaling that one is in mourning, they are permitted.

To critics like Ma Yuanqing and others,<sup>662</sup> the glaring omission in Yu’s chapter would be the question of men wearing mourning robes. Yu may have believed that this was besides the point; per his interpretation of Hanafi law, all people (including men) were permitted (not required) to mourn for up to three days, and since mourning robes were worn only leading up to and during the burial, which had to take place as soon as possible, the situation of a man wearing mourning robes for an extended period of time would never arise. On the other hand, the same point could be made for Muslim women, who also would not wear mourning robes after the burial, so what was the need for this pedantic discussion in the first place?

## 6.5 Scripture, Custom, and the Virtue of Casuistry

If Yu’s argument appears overwrought, it is perhaps because the act of argument itself had taken on value of its own. “Observing scripture” connotes study, judgment, and compliance, but there can also be a performative aspect to it: qualifying definitions, rehearsing details, and

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<sup>661</sup> Yu Fujun, 70.

<sup>662</sup> See for example Zhang Hongtao 张鸿韬 and Ma Jigao 马继高, “Quan jiaobao zunshou jiaofa yi wei zhengjiao” 劝教胞遵守教法以卫正教 (Urging Brothers in Religion to Observe Religious Law to Protect Correct Religion).

entertaining hypotheticals. In this sense Yu is thoroughly scripturalist, even if today he is classified as Gedimu and thus juxtaposed against the “scripture-observing” Yihewani.

The arguments about mourning robes reviewed above clarify the limits of these sectarian categories when analyzing reasoned positions on questions of ritual, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century. Their authors not only defy the wear/do not wear binary but would reject such a simplistic formulation as inadequate without the accompanying justification. What matters is not just whether one wears or does not wear mourning robes, but why.

The engagement with scripture and shari‘a reasoning that united these authors were increasingly dichotomized against local custom in the early twentieth century. We have seen that the scrutinization of “custom” among Hui elites took place as that category was becoming more central to national identity in the broader society. But while prominent Han intellectuals increasingly looked to the local as the source of their authentic national culture, their Hui counterparts, also in search of a national identity but lacking a common and distinct territory, defined themselves against the local. They regarded as virtues linguistic skill and detailed knowledge of the categories of the shari‘a, so much so that their casuistic display itself became a claim to authority. “Observing scripture,” which all scholars saw themselves as doing, was a shari‘a-minded response not to the accretion of Han customs to Islamic practice but to the new salience of the local in defining nationhood, which for the Hui is tied to a *dislocated*, itinerant textual tradition.

The wearing of mourning robes was, after all, not necessarily a problem, even for the most celebrated scripture-observers. To conclude with one more reference to the Master, this one from the Niujie Mosque community in Beijing in the 1830s and taking place in the wake of his old teacher Chang’s death (c. 1683). “When he died, over a thousand disciples gathered for his



burial.” These included Master She, one of his “famous” students. When they assembled, “their clothes were white as snow, and their cries of grief as loud as thunder.”<sup>663</sup>

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<sup>663</sup> Beijing Shi Zhengxie Wenshi Ziliao Yanjiu Weiyuanhui, *Beijing niujie zhishu--gang zhi*, 45–46.

## Conclusion:

### The Crucible of Hui Nationhood

“They also believe in Islam... but they do things a bit differently,” the hajji (let’s call him “Hajji Ma”) told me, gesturing to the Little Dongguan Mosque across the narrow river that runs through the old city of Nanyang in southwestern Henan. We were perched on the second-floor balcony of a restaurant down the street from the River Street Mosque in late February of 2019. We had just returned from a Muslim burial in a cemetery in the countryside and were waiting for the other attendees to arrive. It would be a group of a few dozen: relatives of the deceased from out of town, congregants from the River Street Mosque to which she and her family belonged, and several *ahongs* from the surrounding area (though not from the Little Dongguan Mosque). “They are Shi’a,” Hajji Ma said of Little Dongguan Mosque. “We are Sunni.” He went on to explain that their way of doing things was influenced by Iran, while “ours,” that of the River Street Mosque, was closer to “Saudi.” Within about ten minutes, the rest of the attendees began to trickle in, and Hajji Ma took me to a back room where the *ahongs* would be eating. But we soon learned that the *ahongs* were going to be eating together in the mosque, and Hajji Ma promptly escorted me there instead. When I asked if it was typical to eat in the mosque, he said that *ahongs* do, since guests in the restaurant might be smoking. With the two groups now out of sight of one another, the meal commenced: a modest Henanese “scriptural hall banquet” (*jingtang xi*) with the traditional “four meats” of lamb, beef, chicken, and fish.



Figure C.1: At the River Street Mosque in Nanyang. Author with ahongs after a burial and “scripture hall banquet” (*jingtang xi*) in February 2019.

The Hui today continue to look to Islamic ritual for symbolic resources to both accentuate and transcend social boundaries, among themselves as well as between them and the broader Chinese society. Those symbols, moreover, are continually re-signified in relation to the dynamic systems of meaning and social relationships in which they are embedded. Hajji Ma’s delineation of Sunni and Shi‘i practice adapts historic and socially maintained divisions between two congregations to expectations of intra-Islamic difference in an age of global knowledge. Yet the comment is also surprising, not only because both congregations consider themselves to be Sunni, but also because when the charge of Shi‘ism is levied among Hui, it is almost always against the Gedimu. In this case, however, it was a River Street congregant making the claim

about the Yihewanis of Little Dongguan. Hajji Ma's sectarian labeling is a continuation, albeit an idiosyncratic one, of the decontextualization of inter-congregational difference examined earlier. In this case, the terms in which that difference is construed derive from contemporary geopolitics and globally circulating tropes of Islamic sectarianism. The fact that few if any people would agree with Hajji Ma clarifies the point that the social production of boundaries and the incorporation of those boundaries into one's view of the world are related but distinct processes.

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In this dissertation I have focused on the relationship between these two processes in a period of profound yet underappreciated significance for modern Hui identity. My principal thesis has been that the recognition and institutionalization of the Hui as a *minzu* "nationality" in the PRC are not merely the manifestation of the CCP's ethnic policy but the consequence of a Hui social movement that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century. The Hui count as a *minzu* today because a coalition of Hui elites managed to popularize a common national culture and form a national organization that pushed for official recognition as such. These efforts culminated in the granting of designated Hui representation in the National Assembly and the separate registration of Hui voters in 1947—that is, *before* the establishment of the PRC in late 1949. The significance of designated representation lay chiefly in its perceived inadequacy: the China Islamic Association proved strong enough to pressure the government to reserve seats for Hui delegates but not strong enough to ensure that the number of seats was commensurate with the expectations of the newly mobilized constituency.

In building this movement, Hui elites faced external as well as internal challenges. Externally, they had to contend with the disorder, violence, and material scarcity that constrained

all political projects and institution-building in the aftermath of the Qing collapse, as well as the Nationalist regime's particular anxieties about ethnoreligious difference and political movements not directly under its control. At the same time, internally, these elites had to accommodate the local politics of the scattered communities they claimed to represent and articulate a national culture using the symbolic resources historically deployed to differentiate mosque congregations from each other as well as from non-Muslim communities.

I have focused on the Hui of Henan both because their history has been neglected in English-language scholarship on Islam in China and because they exemplify the aforementioned patterns and conditions: they are scattered in hundreds of congregations throughout the province, which, during the Republican era, endured violence, famine, poverty, and ineffectual government. They developed and institutionalized a national identity despite these challenges and in the absence of the political and military resources and the cosmopolitan engagement with foreign political movements available to Hui in certain other parts of China. As such, their experience offers an exceptionally clear view of what those other elements sometimes obscure: change in local understandings of Islam and their link to wider social mobilization.

Three broad conclusions may be drawn from the foregoing analysis. First, religious change has been integral to the modern political history of the Hui. A key development in my analysis was the rise of what I have called the "shari'a-minded ethic" among a network of *ahongs* beginning in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Qing reconstruction measures after the unrest and upheaval of the mid-1800s entailed new pressure and opportunities for Muslims in different parts of the empire to participate in the (however briefly) reinforced institutions of imperial Confucianism. This cultural shift, together with the extermination and forced relocation of Hui communities, fostered among *ahongs* a sense of the precarity of their

tradition and a new scrutinization of Islamic ritual and one branch of the mosque learning: the shari‘a. No longer satisfied with the old order, in which the shari‘a had been an esoteric pursuit of secluded specialists, a segment of *ahongs* came to see studying and popularizing that body of knowledge as their vocation.

At the same time, their fundamental understanding of the shari‘a evolved as it became central to their discourse and a criterion of religious authority. They came to engage with the shari‘a not simply as a set of rules to be observed but as a scheme of moral classification and argumentation. Apprehending the precise status of an action according to the shari‘a was understood to be part of its proper performance, and these *ahongs* took it upon themselves to disseminate among the laity the knowledge required to do so. And as they attached greater and greater importance to proper justification of particular shari‘a rulings, reasoning itself acquired a religious significance. The shari‘a-minded ethic motivated *ahongs* to cooperate with lay elites building schools and other institutions to popularize knowledge of the shari‘a. It also enabled individuals and communities with divergent understandings of orthopraxy to attain a degree of overarching unity rooted in their shared commitment to reasoning according to the shari‘a. To the extent that the lay elite projects of establishing local Islamic institutions and popularizing a national Hui identity relied on *ahong* participation, the development of the shari‘a-minded ethic was crucial.

The second broad conclusion concerns the way in which we investigate the relationship between politics and religion, and within religion, Islam and the shari‘a in particular. As Zaman has stated the challenge: “Whether the shari‘ah has the resources at all that can lend themselves to the building or strengthening of a civil, democratic society in the contemporary world is an important and difficult question.” Why did the development of the shari‘a-minded ethic matter

for Muslim politics in China? Even when we recognize the exceptional importance of ritual, or *li*, to late imperial religion, elite culture, and statecraft, it is not immediately clear how a new type of argumentation over the details of ritual protocol is politically significant, at least beyond questions of symbolism. My argument has not been that the disputes examined above are simply about conforming Islamic practice to societal notions of propriety, progress, and modernity. Nor have I focused on how *ahongs* and lay intellectuals interpreted Islamic ideas in light of new political conditions. The latter would have been in line with an important strand within Islamic studies, one that focuses on how Muslim thinkers derive or elaborate within their tradition the basic legal concepts of political modernity, such as “sovereignty,” “rights,” and the “the common good.”

This work is indispensable but by no means exhausts the ways in which Islamic traditions interact with and shape modern politics. The political significance of shari‘a-mindedness as examined above lay not in its legitimation or adaptation of overtly political ideas but in the sanction it gave to certain social arrangements: namely, the greater role of *ahongs* in public affairs, constituted by their efforts to popularize knowledge of the shari‘a, and the new centrality of shari‘a debate, in print and in person, in Hui social life. These social and discursive relationships supported the institution-building and propaganda at the core of the Hui national project. To return to Zaman’s formulation, this study has not only offered a case of the deployment of shari‘a “resources” in modern political participation, but also demonstrated that such resources may be cultivated from what is often assumed to be an inflexible and private domain of ritual.

Third, ethnic policy and politics in China today are shaped by the institutional legacies of earlier regimes. In this respect the historical development of modern Hui identity has played a

dual role in my analysis, which draws attention to discontinuity as well as continuity. Regarding the former, I have underscored how, in contrast some other minorities in the PRC and in other post-imperial states, the Hui inherited no system of official representation from the dynastic period. Explaining how they acquired such representation, and documenting the social and cultural changes associated with that political process, have been among my main goals. Regarding the latter, I have traced how certain rituals have been central to the constitution of Hui communities for centuries, even as the terms and technologies through which they are discussed and debated evolve. The wide distribution of Hui settlement and pervasiveness of *minzu* categories in PRC governance ensure that officials in every province regularly confront the outcomes of the story I have told. The Hui discourses of “sect” and “custom,” central to the ways Hui today narrate their history and classify their internal differences, are likewise legacies of the non-so-distant past.

This study has done more than illustrate the banal point that “history matters.” The modern history of the Hui is important for many reasons, not least of which is that it manifests the potential for a social movement to effect change, *even*—perhaps we should say—in China, and *even*—today we must say—for Muslims in China. Future research should continue to look both backward and forward from the 1949 divide: backward, to discover what other institutions of the present testify to the achievements of social movements of the past; and forward, to grasp how local and minority communities preserve, adapt, and assert their traditions.

By drawing attention to differences within Chinese Islam, I do not mean to imply that some sort of latent discord or inescapable divisiveness makes true solidarity impossible. On the contrary, one of my main goals for this study has been to elucidate the capacity for local understandings of Islam to motivate and sustain national political action even as they are



imbricated into longstanding and new disputes. I have also attempted to show how the shari‘a, when conceived as a system of reasoning, equips disputants with the means to “compass dissensus”<sup>664</sup> and rationalize an ethical unity through argument.<sup>665</sup> At the same time, the popularization of such a conception and the ability to organize around it depend on certain material and institutional conditions that do not always or everywhere obtain. The crucible of Hui nationhood followed a course shaped by the tectonic shifts and changing tides of the first half of the twentieth century in China, from the fracturing of the Qing empire and eruption of warlord conflict to the invasion of the Empire of Japan and devolution into civil war, testifying to the political fertility of political fragmentation. Ethnic politics and policy in China today cannot be understood apart from this history, nor can Islam among the Hui be understood except in dynamic relation to the local contexts of its transmission.

Bai Shouyi contemplated this point and its implications. We may end with one of his conclusions, to the “Outline of a History of Chinese Islam,” first published in August 1946, when the Hui nation had still not been recognized by the Nationalist government:

Chinese Islam cannot exist separately from China, nor can the development of Chinese Islam not be influenced by the political environment. The reason why in the past Islam took such a long time to take root in China, and the reason why Islam was so tormented as it grew, were closely related to the contemporary political environment. If we wish for Islam to soon enter a new era, on one hand we must exert ourselves to resolve various problems within our religion, and on the other hand we must also require a stable and prosperous China and a democratic politics.<sup>666</sup>

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<sup>664</sup> Geertz, *Local Knowledge*, 219.

<sup>665</sup> Or as Bowen might put it, become “Hui through discourse.” My conceptualization of debate about ritual and its relationship to public forms of reasoning owes much to his work on Indonesia. See Bowen, *Muslims through Discourse*.

<sup>666</sup> Bai Shouyi 白寿彝, “Summary of a Historical Outline of Chinese Islam” 中国伊斯兰史纲要, 386.



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